Julian Baldick (1950–2012) was formerly Reader in the Study of Religions at King's College London. He was the author of *Homer and the Indo-Europeans: Comparing Mythologies*; *Imaginary Muslims: The Uwaysi Sufis of Central Asia*; *Black God: The Afroasiatic Roots of the Jewish, Christian and Muslim Religions*; *Mystical Islam: An Introduction to Sufism* (new edition, 2012) and *Animal and Shaman: Ancient Religions of Central Asia* (new edition, 2012), all published by I.B.Tauris.

'Julian Baldick seeks to do for the ''Austronesian'' world, which ranges from Taiwan to Australasia, what Georges Dumézil sought to do for the Indo-European world: show a once-unified culture. Like Dumézil, who is his inspiration, Baldick starts with language but then extends language to culture as a whole, and to religion in particular. Again following Dumézil, Baldick offers a tripartite scheme, but one that fits the distinctiveness of Austronesia: mortuary rituals, headhunting and agrarian rituals tied to the calendar. Baldick is not the first to propose a unified culture for this area, but he systematically brings together the many disparate studies of individual peoples to make the strongest case to date for a uniquely Austronesian cultural domain.'

– Robert A Segal,
Sixth-Century Professor of Religious Studies,
University of Aberdeen

'This is a book inspired by the great French Indo-European comparativist, Georges Dumézil. It is an attempt to identify central features of early Austronesian religious life: first, a deep concern with incorporative mortuary rituals that generally included secondary burial; second, an associated commitment to headhunting to bolster prosperity and community prestige; and third, the performance of agrarian rituals linked to hunting whose emphasis was on human fertility. To illustrate these ancient Austronesian religious ideas, Julian Baldick has selectively surveyed a considerable ethnographic literature covering the Austronesian populations from Madagascar to Hawaii to document the diverse and varied evidence that can be considered as lingering refractions of an earlier Austronesian way of life. This is a book with a broad sweep that retains its clear focus. It is a welcome endeavour and will undoubtedly stimulate further comparative Austronesian research.'

– James J Fox, Professor,
Research School of Asia and the Pacific,
The Australian National University

Ancient Religions of the Austronesian World

FROM AUSTRALASIA TO TAIWAN

JULIAN BALDICK

I.B. TAURIS
LONDON · NEW YORK

To Julian, father and husband, who did not live to see his final book published: in loving memory always.
Junaid, Yusuf and Feroza

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INTRODUCTION

This book presents a comparative study of the traditional religions of the Austronesian-speaking peoples, from Taiwan to Madagascar and New Zealand. It argues that there is a common inheritance to be found in the religions of various peoples: Taiwanese aboriginal groups, inhabitants of the Philippines, Indonesia, Malaysia and New Guinea, and also Oceanic speakers of the Pacific. This common heritage is to be found in myths and rituals: what is observed by anthropologists today goes back to an ancient, prehistoric past.

Thus we have to begin with a number of questions. What is meant by the term 'Austronesian', and who were the Austronesians? Who are the various peoples whose geography and religious heritage are designated by these terms? What methods and concepts are to be used in examining their religions?

The Austronesians

The word 'Austronesian' was coined from the Latin *australis*, 'southern', and the Greek *nesos*, 'island'. It designates a family of languages spoken in a large number of islands, from Taiwan to Madagascar and New Zealand. Thus the term is primarily linguistic: one must avoid imagining that it corresponds to any biological or genetic unity. On the other hand, there is archaeological evidence for the spread of Austronesian-speaking peoples in prehistory: there must have been an original, proto-Austronesian population, with a homeland. It is now generally believed that that homeland was Taiwan. Some archaeologists have argued that it

was in the islands of South-East Asia, but other archaeologists have counter-argued convincingly that the proto-Austronesians must have lived in Taiwan after coming from south-eastern China and before subsequent migrations. Linguists are agreed that the homeland must have been Taiwan, as the area of the greatest linguistic diversity.

When would the proto-Austronesians have reached Taiwan? Their journeyings must have been preceded by the revolutions of the 'Neolithic' period, the last part of the Stone Age. In this period, after that of hunting and gathering food, plants and animals were domesticated. Thus in China the domestication of rice and millet happened by around 6000 BCE. By around 5000 BCE, on China's eastern seaboard, we find archaeological evidence of this Neolithic culture: pottery, agricultural tools and the bones of domesticated chickens, dogs and pigs. Similar evidence is found in Taiwan for the period from around 4000 to 3000 BCE.[1]

After the proto-Austronesians had settled in Taiwan there would have been, before further migrations, a 'long pause', according to the Hawaii-based linguist Robert Blust, whose reconstructions have been widely followed. Blust originally argued that Taiwan was the home of the four main trunks of the Austronesian language family, three of which stayed behind while the fourth migrated and fanned out. Later, after further research, he decided that the language family had ten main trunks, nine of which remained in Taiwan while the tenth, called 'Malayo-Polynesian', split off and moved first to the northern Philippines and then elsewhere. Later, Malayo-Polynesian would have divided into 'Western Malayo-Polynesian' and 'Central-Eastern Malayo-Polynesian'. Then the latter would have split into 'Central Malayo-Polynesian' on the one hand and 'Eastern Malayo-Polynesian' on the other.[2]

According to Blust the proto-Austronesians on Taiwan would have encountered a rich variety of plants and animals there. They would have cultivated rice, millet, taro and sugarcane, and had pigs and dogs. The latter would have been used in hunting, which was done with bows and spring-set traps, while basket traps were used for catching fish. Fish and meat would have been smoked. Blust reconstructs proto-Austronesian words for 'headhunting' (**kayaw*) and 'war trophy' (**taban*, which means 'head trophy' in some Taiwanese languages). (An asterix denotes a reconstructed form.) He observes: 'As in other parts of the world, headhunting was inextricably tied up with religious ideas, in particular

notions of human and agricultural fertility resulting from the capture and ritual incorporation of souls or spiritual force from outside the community.'[3] (Tattooing, which was also practised, may have been associated with headhunting.) But there are no words for 'war' or 'battle': fighting seems to have been of a guerrilla kind, for revenge or booty. There was loom weaving, along with the plaiting of mats, while personal adornment involved beads and jade. A bamboo nose flute was played, and the Jew's harp (or mouth harp) was probably used in courtship. The proto-Austronesians evidently buried their dead, and appear to have had a word for 'ghost' (**qanicu*).[4]

Blust has also reconstructed a number of elements of proto-Malayo-Polynesian culture, from the time after the proto-Malayo-Polynesians split away from the other Austronesian speakers in Taiwan before migrating to the northern Philippines and until their own division into sub-families. The breadfruit and the coconut were important, and sago was known. Food was cooked in a pot, resting on a trivet or three stones, or alternatively was roasted over a fire or baked in an earth oven. Gold was also known. There was a concept of 'inhabited territory' (**banua*), as opposed to the wilderness, and there was a 'public building' (**balay*), probably a men's house. Houses in general were substantial timber ones, raised on piles and entered by a ladder. Pigs' jaws were probably hung up in them, the pigs having been killed in a hunt or at a feast. The term **hamuk*, which has gone into the English expression 'to run amuck', is seen by Blust as referring to 'a violently antisocial psychological state which may or may not have had connections with warfare.'[5] In addition to the proto-Austronesian concept of the ghost or spirit of the dead (**qanicu*) the proto-Malayo-Polynesians had the ideas of a 'breath-soul' (**nawa*) and a 'life-force' or 'spirit' (**sumanged*), as in the 'spirit of the rice' in the islands of South-East Asia.[6]

These proto-Malayo-Polynesians would probably have spread throughout the Philippines. The Austronesian languages spoken there belong to the Western Malayo-Polynesian sub-family. Other speakers of this sub-family migrated to Borneo, Sumatra, Java and parts of mainland South-East Asia. Some migrated from Borneo to Madagascar, probably around 700 CE. The other main sub-family, the Central-Eastern Malayo-Polynesians, probably moved from the Philippines to northern Sulawesi. They then split up. The Central Malayo-Polynesians moved into the small islands of eastern Indonesia (the lesser Sunda Islands) and

the southern Moluccas. As for the Eastern Malayo-Polynesians, they migrated to Halmahera or New Guinea. Some stayed in this area, and some moved east, to become the Oceanic speakers of the Pacific.[7]

These Oceanic speakers are associated with the highly-distinctive and finely-decorated 'Lapita pottery' (named after a beach site in New Caledonia), which appeared in the Bismarck Archipelago by 1500 BCE and is characterized by its 'toothed-stamp' patterns. The patterns resemble those of Polynesian tattoos, and often represent human faces. Apart from pottery, 'Lapita' also designates a culture, which involved tree crops, the hunting of wild birds and the use of stone and shell adzes. From around 1250 BCE the Oceanic speakers spread quickly eastwards, and from around 1000 BCE onwards they moved further eastwards from the Tonga area, eventually, much later, reaching Easter Island and Hawaii, and finally colonizing New Zealand in the south. The original proto-Oceanic speakers, as linguists have shown, had extensive vocabularies for seafaring, fishing, gardening and pottery. Evidently some people were specialists in these occupations. Lots of terms have been reconstructed for canoe parts and coconut culture.[8]

Canoes were all-important in these migrations. Around 2000 BCE the Austronesian speakers must have adopted a triangular sail, pushed up by a tilting pole, and the 'outrigger', a wooden attachment that floats parallel to the canoe to increase stability. Later, by around 500 BCE, they had the 'double canoe', which could carry families, animals and plants for colonization. Oceanic speakers navigated by the stars and the sun, the 'swells' of the sea, 'dead reckoning' estimates of the canoe's progress, clouds covering mountain islands and birds flying out from islands to fish. It is thought that their constant eastward expansion to uninhabited islands was due to Austronesian social structure, with its emphasis on inheritance of leadership by a chief's eldest son. This led younger sons to emigrate in order to found new chiefdoms for themselves.[9]

The Austronesian-Speaking Peoples

There are about 1,200 Austronesian languages, from Madagascar in the west to Easter Island in the east. Many are spoken in Malaysia, Indonesia and the Philippines. Others are spoken in areas of Vietnam and Cambodia. More still are spoken in New Guinea, Taiwan and the rest of the Pacific. Today there are over 300 million Austronesian speakers, but

only around two million live east of New Guinea's Bird's Head peninsula.[10] In this book we shall devote a short chapter to the religions of Taiwan, as the original homeland of the Austronesian language family and nearly all of its primary sub-families. Then, in a longer chapter, we shall consider representatives of the Western Malayo-Polynesian sub-family, in the Philippines, Borneo, Madagascar and the small island of Nias, off Sumatra. In another short chapter we shall examine peoples of 'eastern Indonesia', an archaic and culturally homogenous group of small islands east of Java. Finally, in another long chapter, we shall analyse the religions of the Eastern Malayo-Polynesian speakers, in New Guinea and the Pacific.

Taiwan

Taiwan used to be inhabited only by Austronesian speakers. Now, however, it is mainly Chinese-speaking, and most of the aborigines have taken to the mountains in the interior of the island. Fourteen Taiwanese languages are still spoken, though some are dying out: speakers number around 200,000. All of the original groups grow millet, and their religious calendars are based on the millet-growing cycle. By 1624, when the Dutch arrived, 25,000 Chinese had settled in Taiwan. The Dutch found many 'idols' and 'priestesses': they claimed to have converted thousands of aborigines to Christianity, and it is not clear what influences their teachings might have had upon Taiwanese traditional religions. In 1661 the Chinese drove the Dutch out, and in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries they largely absorbed the aborigines into their own population. From 1895 to 1945 Taiwan was occupied by the Japanese.[11]

Already, in 1628, a Dutch missionary observed that the 'native religion' had been undergoing great decay in the previous 60 years, and that old people said that previously people had been taught to believe quite different things. As regards aboriginal material culture, however, some things can be said with confidence about all earlier Taiwanese groups. Loom weaving was almost universal, and bark-cloth making and ironsmithing were widespread. Illnesses were treated by shamanesses (religious specialists who, by going into trance, brought back a soul stolen by a spirit). Deer and wild boar were hunted, and headhunting was universal. In contrast to these shared aspects of past material culture,

the groups vary greatly nowadays with regard to religion. One mountain group, the Atayal, just placate 'the spirits' in general. Another, the Bunun, have hereditary millet ritual priests and male shamans as well as shamanesses. Yet another, the Tsou, are unusual in attributing humankind's origin to a deliberate act of creation (by a goddess, out of tree leaves). A fourth mountain group, the Paiwan, have considerable variation in their lists of deities, which constitute well-developed pantheons, in contrast to the vagueness of the Atayal. Of the coastal groups one, the Ami, sometimes say that their ancestors came from overseas: they are unique in having elaborate myths about the origins of the universe and the gods, which are also unusual in having an oddly Polynesian flavour.[12]

The Bunun are particularly noteworthy for their complicated system of clans. In this one inherits one's spirit (*hanido*) from one's father, but can increase its power by one's own efforts and transmit it to one's descendants, founding a new clan. Some of the Bunun used to have a distinctive form of political organization, with two leaders, one a shaman who resolved disputes within the community, the other a military leader who dealt with people on the outside. The Paiwan are also noteworthy in having both male and female chiefs, the firstborn inheriting without distinction of sex. Thus their society had three 'status levels': chiefs, their siblings and cousins, and ordinary villagers. They also used to be unusual in refusing to cultivate rice, on the grounds that this would anger the spirit of millet and destroy the harvest.[13]

We shall pay particular attention to the Tsou, who in the past were famous for headhunting for reasons of ritual and prestige. Thus they had a developed organization of generals and combat leaders. The Tsou are also keen hunters of animals, and engage in an elaborate taking of omens before every hunt. They have important 'men's houses', traditionally used for training boys in military matters. Like other Taiwanese aboriginal groups, the Tsou extract adolescents' teeth (the side incisors), and used to bury the dead beneath the house (except in the case of a 'bad', that is unlucky, death). They had (before conversion to Christianity) a hierarchical pantheon with a supreme male deity alongside the creator-goddess. Finally, we shall consider the Puyuma of Taiwan's south-eastern seaboard. In the past the Puyuma had a distinctive division of labour between the sexes: women did the farming and gathering of food, while the men were occupied by hunting and war.

The Puyuma are also noteworthy for their highly-developed institution of shamanesses and their complicated headhunting festival.[14]

Western Malayo-Polynesian Speakers

The vast majority of Austronesian speakers belong to the Western Malayo-Polynesian sub-family. They are found mainly in the Philippines, Indonesia, Malaysia and Madagascar. For our purposes large areas have had to be excluded, because Austronesian traditional religions have long been replaced in them. Indian religions came to Java and Sumatra in the first century CE, and to Borneo and Sulawesi in the fourth. Then, from the end of the twelfth century, Islam came to the same region and the Philippines. Thus here we shall concentrate on selected peoples of the Philippines, Borneo, Madagascar and the small island of Nias to the west of Sumatra.

The Philippines

In the Philippines we shall pay particular attention to the Ifugao, in the north of the island of Luzon, itself in the north of the country. They live in little villages in the mountains, where they grow rice on extraordinary stone terraces, built over many centuries. Ifugao religion is also extraordinary, with around 2,000 gods. A nearby people, the Kalinga, lead similar lives, but their religion differs in having a supreme deity above several classes of others, while expecting no good from the souls of the dead, seen rather as maleficent. In the past headhunting was a very important aspect of Kalinga culture, and was most often explained by them as done for prestige, being about the only source of this for a man. Another nearby people, the Ilongot, also used to headhunt on a large scale. Headhunting has been explained by them as performed in order to remove the 'weight that grows on one's life like vines on a tree'.[15] This is done by 'tossing' the severed head, so that men become 'light' and 'quick of step'.[16]

Borneo

In Borneo we shall begin in the north, a hilly country with rain forests and rivers, and small, scattered communities. Here one people, the Berawan, cultivate rice and sago, and hunt all kinds of game. They live in large longhouses, a single one housing hundreds, raised high above the

ground. The Berawan have elaborate death rituals, which dominate their lives. Neighbouring peoples also have complicated religions. The Kayan and the Kenyah have many 'departmental' gods for the various aspects of life and nature, presided over by a more powerful deity, along with a multitude of spirits. By contrast, the Iban lack a supreme god, but have the idea of a 'secret helper', a special spirit who protects an individual. Further south in Borneo we shall examine the Ngaju people, who also live along rivers, in an area consisting mainly of jungle. Here slavery, headtaking and human sacrifice were widespread, and the traditional secondary burial rituals have dominated Ngaju religion.[17]

Madagascar

Madagascar, as colonized from Borneo around 700 CE, has to be studied next. Here we shall concentrate on the Merina people, who live in the north of Madagascar's central plateau. Their year is divided into a wet season, from mid-October to April, and a dry one, from May to October. The Merina's main activity is rice-growing, and they also keep cattle. They have strikingly impressive and old fortifications and tombs. It is these tombs that are all-important in Merina ritual, since in them people are united with their ancestors. Secondary mortuary rites are spectacular and extremely expensive. Another important aspect of Merina religion is the festival of the 'Bath' or new year feast, traditionally accompanied by orgies. Such orgies have also formed part of mortuary rituals in Madagascar, while royal funerals have involved the sacrificing of slaves. Slaves, as elsewhere in the Malayo-Polynesian speaking world, used to form a third class beneath nobles and commoners.[18]

Nias

The small island of Nias, to the west of Sumatra, has had the same tripartite social structure. Most of the people are engaged in agriculture and pig farming. When reaping their rice they rarely speak and, if they do they do so only in a whisper. (A similar taboo on talking while working in the fields is found among Taiwanese aborigines.) The Niasans have much-admired monumental architecture, with famous megaliths. Their villages are oriented on an upstream–downstream axis, and people are supposed to sleep with their heads facing upstream, while the dead are laid out in the opposite direction. Each local lineage group used to worship its own ancestors. The Niasans are noteworthy for their

interest rate of 100 per cent per annum, which was recorded in the earliest sources as universal throughout the island. In the past this led to bondage for debtors had feelings of guilt, assuaged by sacrificing slaves, captives or pigs. 'Feasts of merit' are still given by rich men, in order to gain prestige and 'blessing': in these, large numbers of pigs are slaughtered, and previously megalith was put up.[19]

Central Malayo-Polynesian Speakers

Central Malayo-Polynesian speakers are found in eastern Indonesia, more specifically in the Lesser Sunda Islands and the Moluccas. Here we shall focus on the culturally homogenous area formed by the islands of Sumba, Flores and Timor, using this area to represent 'eastern Indonesia' and excluding the Moluccas (where little research has been done on traditional religions). Most of the peoples of this region used to live in small states or communities, which were then taken over by Dutch or Portuguese colonial governments. They are characterized by clan systems and a preference for marriage between 'cross-cousins', the children of a brother and sister. In their marriage systems they restrict this in specific ways: thus, for example, there is often preference for marriage between a man and his mother's brother's daughter, while he is not allowed to marry his father's sister's daughter.

The peoples of the island of Sumba attribute much significance to livestock, as having to be obtained and preserved. Abundance of livestock is seen as 'cool', something for which one prays when addressing spirits. One's possessions are intimately connected with one's life or 'vitality'. This is reflected in the custom of calling an important man by the name of his horse. Thus one slaughters lots of water buffalo at a burial feast, giving this wealth to the ancestors so that they will give one wealth in return. Water buffalo also figure in annual rituals, when the rains start to fall: the Sumbanese pray that the buffalo may not be injured when treading the rice fields and, later, when they are brought back from the fields, more rites are performed to 'cool' them after the heat produced by trampling the earth. An animal must be slaughtered with respect, and never by its owner.[20]

On the island of Flores, in its eastern part, we shall encounter the 'People of the Forest Land' (Ata Tana 'Ai), who live between mountain ridges, isolated from other peoples and thus preserving an extremely archaic religion. Every 15 to 20 years they hold their most important

ceremony, to ensure the fertility of their land. Often they have bad rice harvests, and thus they see this ceremony as the only remedy. It includes animal sacrifices, the blood of which 'cools' the earth and the people, whose fertility is threatened by 'heat'. The ceremony also includes the chanting of 'histories', recounting the creation of the world and humanity and the coming of the ancestors to the land. There are also the 'histories' of hunting, the acquisition of dogs, the making of fire and the building of houses. The 'histories' stretch up to the present day, and the chanting of the whole corpus takes an entire week.[21]

The island of Timor presents similar agricultural problems. In the mountains of the centre of the island the rains come according to unpredictable patterns, and the maize and rice can easily be ruined. Thus among the Atoni people of central Timor all social institutions are based upon rituals connected with growing maize and rice, which culminate in the presentation of harvest gifts. (By contrast, the sea does not appear in Atoni myths.) The harvest gifts are taken into a shrine with the same hook as that used for the 'harvest of death', a skull taken in headhunting.[22]

Eastern Malayo-Polynesian Speakers

Eastern Malayo-Polynesian speakers are divided into groups: the South Halmahera–West New Guinea group and the Oceanic group. The former, as we have seen, has remained in its original homeland, while the latter has migrated eastwards. Here we shall examine peoples of north-western New Guinea (in what is now called Irian Jaya). Then, among Oceanic speakers, we shall consider first of all the peoples of the Admiralty Islands to the north of the Papua New Guinea mainland. Their languages form a separate sub-group. Next we shall study speakers of the Western Oceanic sub-group, in Papua New Guinea and the north-western Solomon Islands. Finally we shall turn to the speakers of the Central-Eastern Oceanic sub-group, in the south-eastern Solomons, Micronesia, Vanuatu, New Caledonia, Fiji and Polynesia.

North-Western New Guinea

In north-western New Guinea we shall encounter the Windesi people, who are noteworthy for their customs when returning successful from a headhunting raid: they used to decorate their canoes with branches, and

the faces of the headtakers were blackened with charcoal. We shall also encounter the Biaks, who have a taboo on names: adults related by marriage cannot mention each other by name, and so refer to each other as the parents of their children. Moreover, they cannot even look at each other, and must avoid words that sound like the forbidden names. (The same taboo on names is found among Austronesian speakers in the Western Oceanic sub-group, and in Borneo and Sumatra.) It is also believed by the Biaks that if they pronounced the name of an island that their boat was facing it would be attacked by the elements. (Similar taboos are found among Indonesian sailors.)[23]

The Admiralty Islands

The Admiralty Islands, like the other islands to the north-east of New Guinea, have long been characterized by the cultivation of taro, yams, bananas and sugarcane. Most of this has been done by women. Fishing is also important, along with trade. Here the Manus people have a striking final mortuary feast, with perhaps 2,000 guests. An elaborately-decorated scaffold is erected, and a large orchestra of drums produces an enormous boom. The deceased's son makes a speech, congratulating himself on his generosity. His eloquence has been prepared by a 'sorcerer', by kneeling on his shoulders and pulling his hair. The orator then hits his father's skull with dracaena leaves, which are treated as holy throughout Indonesia, while invoking him, before the feasting starts. In the Admiralty Islands we also find myths about the origin of death: as elsewhere in the world, it is caused by somebody who says or does something inappropriate.[24]

Western Oceanic Speakers

Western Oceanic speakers are found in the Papua New Guinea mainland, its neighbouring islands and the north-western Solomons. On the northern coast of the mainland we find the Yabem people, who have traditionally made clearings in the forest to plant their crops. It has been said that among them religion did not exist, but they were ruled by fear of witchcraft and the spirits of the dead. As for the islands neighbouring New Guinea, one finds to the south-east the famous Trobriands, best-known for having been studied by the great Polish anthropologist Bronisław Malinowski. The latter noted there the considerable 'sexual licence' in the post-harvest festival. Finally, in the

north-western Solomons we find the Roviana people of New Georgia, notorious for their extreme enthusiasm for headhunting. In New Georgia all illnesses are attributed to witchcraft (as in New Guinea and Madagascar).[25]

Central-Eastern Oceanic Speakers

Central-Eastern Oceanic speakers are divided into two groups: the South-East Solomons group and the 'Remote Oceanic' group. In the former we find the idea that the spirits of the dead die a second death, and also, among the Kwaio people, the tabooing of the names of important ancestral spirits and the words used as their titles. The 'Remote Oceanic' group covers the peoples of Micronesia, Vanuatu, New Caledonia, Fiji and Polynesia. 'Micronesia', from the Greek for 'small' and 'island', is well named, consisting mainly of coral atolls. In this group society was usually divided into three classes: high chiefs, lower nobles and commoners. New Caledonia is noteworthy for the worship of the spirits of the dead, which used to involve orgies every five months. Fiji also used to have orgies in honour of the ancestors, along with frequent human sacrifices and widespread cannibalism. 'Polynesia', again well named from the Greek for 'many' and 'island', had the same striking practices in its funeral rituals for high chiefs.[26]

Methods

The methods which I have used are those of the history of religions, in the European sense of 'history as applied to religions' (as opposed to the North American sense of 'studies relating to religions'). In this discipline the investigator seeks first of all to gather the evidence available and then to establish the internal logic of a given people's religion, or the religions of a group of closely-related peoples. Only then does one proceed to make comparisons with the patterns found in the religions of more distantly-related peoples and to draw inferences of a general character.[27]

I have also taken inspiration from the work done in comparative mythology by Georges Dumézil (1898–1986) and his followers. Comparative mythology compares the myths of a given language family, so that the patterns on the religion of one people cast light on that of another. Work in this discipline has been done almost entirely in the Indo-European language family, which includes English, Latin, Greek,

Russian, Persian and Sanskrit. It is thought that these languages are descended from a hypothetical proto-language or group of dialects, called 'Proto-Indo-European', in a homeland which might have been in Eastern Europe, Turkey, the Caucasus or the area to the north of the Black Sea. Dumézil argued that early Indo-European ideology was centred on an articulation of three concepts, as follows:

(1) religious sovereignty (notably in its magical and legal aspects);
(2) physical force (notably that of the warrior);
(3) fertility (notably in its erotic and agricultural aspects).

Can one find a corresponding pattern typical of Austronesian religions? I think that one can. There is what might be best called a nexus, containing (1) mortuary rituals, often dominated by a so-called 'second funeral', with the incorporation of the deceased's spirit within the community of the ancestors; (2) headhunting, often connected with mortuary rituals and performed to obtain general prosperity and give the community strength and the headtaker prestige; (3) agrarian rituals of the annual calendar, often involving headhunting and culminating in a post-harvest, pre-sowing new year festival period, frequently including orgies. It is of course obvious that this resembles Dumézil's schema for the Indo-European field: ancestor worship is an important part of Austronesian religion, with the ancestral spirits often being lumped together with higher spirits or 'gods', and headhunting is often the main form of warfare, not only requiring but also conferring strength, while agrarian rituals include erotic elements for the purpose of promoting fertility. However, in the Austronesian domain these aspects usually appear combined only in anthropologists' descriptions, while in texts in Indo-European languages they frequently appear in clearly-defined tripartite patterns.

Chapter 1

TAIWAN

In our survey of the religions of Taiwanese aboriginal groups we shall begin with seventeenth and eighteenth-century Chinese sources. Then we shall proceed to twentieth and twenty-first-century publications by anthropologists. Finally, we shall end with conclusions about the general characteristics of Taiwanese aboriginal religion.

Seventeenth and Eighteenth-Century Chinese Sources

The seventeenth and eighteenth-century Chinese sources for the study of Taiwanese aborigines have been translated by the French researcher Chantal Zheng. Zheng has equipped her translations with copious notes, which include materials from early European sources and twentieth-century anthropological studies.

The earliest seventeenth-century source is the *Notes on the Barbarians of the East* [*Dongfanji*], by Chen Di (1541–1617), an army officer who wrote in 1603. He notes the Taiwanese tradition of headtaking: the aborigines remove the flesh from enemies' heads and then hang them by their doors. Zheng comments that, up to the 1950s, in the courtyards of the Paiwan, one found display cases filled with skulls. The British explorer W.A. Pickering says that the brains would be mixed with alcohol and then consumed. The French writer Camille Imbault-Huart records a prayer addressed to the victim: 'You are welcome among us. You must take your meal with us. Ask also your parents and your brothers to join us.'[1]

Chen Di also reports that Taiwanese women break their teeth, this being thought to add to their beauty, and that, at the age of 15 or 16, the

girls have two incisors extracted. Zheng observes that this extraction of teeth has been practised among the Atayal, Bunun, Saixia, Shao, Tsou and some of the tribes of the plains. Among the Atayal the teeth are placed beneath the overhang of the roof, while among the Bunun they are put near the central pillar of the granary.[2]

As regards death and burial, Chen Di tells us that the corpse is dried by means of a fire before being exposed in the dead person's house, without a coffin. When the condition of the house deteriorates and it has to be rebuilt a hole is dug in its foundations and the body is buried in it, standing up. Zheng comments that this is in effect 'double burial', as is done elsewhere in the same region, on the Ryukyu Islands, and on Darnley Island, Krafto and Sakhalin.[3]

Chen Di continues by informing us that when agricultural work is being done nobody speaks or kills anything. The aborigines explain that otherwise Heaven would not help them, the spirits would not grant their favours and they would have one year's famine. Zheng notes that among the Paiwan, during the sowing season, nobody can talk on the roads and in the countryside.[4]

Chen Di's account of 'double burial' is echoed by the teacher Lin Qianguang, who seems to have lived in Taiwan between 1687 and 1691, and wrote *Brief Notes on Taiwan* [*Taiwan jilüe*]. He says that when someone dies he is buried in the house. Three days later the people of the village gather, exhume the corpse and fill it with alcohol before reburying it, without a coffin. When the family moves house they exhume it again in order to rebury it in their new house.[5]

Lin Qianguang also tells us that as soon as women give birth they are washed in cold water, at the same time as the new-born babies. He explains that the aborigines have no medicines, but, whenever they are ill, bathe in rivers, claiming that there are medicines in the water.[6]

Much more extensive information is provided by the administrator Huang Shujing (1677–1753), in his *Notes on an Inquiry Overseas* [*Taihai shichalu*], probably composed around 1736. He divides the aborigines into 13 groups, ten in the north and three in the south. Huang Shujing gives us details of the aborigines' funerary customs for each of the 13 'sectors' into which he divides the island.

As regards sector 1 of the north, Huang Shujing says that the aborigines put the corpse in a coffin, which is placed temporarily inside the deceased's house. Zheng comments that several Taiwanese groupings

bury their dead beneath the floor of the house. In sector 2 the aborigines build a little hut for the deceased inside his house, and adorn it with chicken feathers and little flags. A good number of the objects used by the deceased in his daily life are hung up inside the hut. In sector 4 a very big jar is used as a coffin and buried in the deceased's house. Zheng notes that among the Paiwan, for example, some people are said to be dead 'in a state of sin' for various reasons, such as being killed by a weapon or a snake bite. They are seen as very inauspicious, and have to be put in a large jar filled with water, which is then buried. In sector 5, if someone is dying, all his clothes are placed on his body, but when he dies he is stripped completely naked before being buried in his home. An aborigine who dies in sector 6 is wrapped in a mat before being buried in his house, together with all his goods. In sector 7 four slabs of schist are used to make a tomb, in which the body is placed seated, the knees bent. Zheng comments that this resembles the customs of the Paiwan or the Lukai, among whom the tomb is inside the home. This practice was gradually abandoned under the Japanese occupation, owing to pressure from the Japanese – which met with incomprehension. For some aboriginal groupings putting the 'good dead' in a cemetery was tantamount to letting them live with evil ghosts and demons. In sector 8 the burial is again performed in the home. Mourning lasts 12 days, during which the family is forbidden to go out. At the end of this period the local shamaness is asked to pray and make offerings to bring the mourning period to an end. In sector 9 the body is taken to the summit of a mountain, where it is buried. Zheng suggests that here we may have a link with the beliefs of the Atayal, who believe that when someone dies his spirit goes to the summit of a high mountain. In sector 1 of the south the body is placed in a coffin, which is buried in the deceased's house, but the latter is then abandoned. As for sector 2, a vault is built inside the house, with stone walls on all four sides. The dead are placed inside in order of their deaths, seated, without coffins. If a woman dies in childbirth she is buried on the summit of a mountain.[7]

Apart from funerary rites, Huang Shujing gives us other pieces of information about Taiwanese aborigines. In the northern sector 2, in one village, after a wedding the bride and groom break two of their front upper teeth. Each keeps those of the other to symbolize the fact that they will never leave each other. As for the aborigines of the

southern sector 2, they have the habit of killing all those whom they meet, and cutting off the heads of their victims before running away. They decorate the skulls thus obtained with gold. When one of them is killed his male heirs must, after four months of mourning, go and kill someone else. They sacrifice the severed head to their dead relative. When there is a drought they pray, and do not go out for five days, during which time they do not light a fire or smoke, and eat just dry taro. If rain falls they remain inside for five more days, in gratitude. Every five years they have a feast. The local administrator and 100 other people form a circle, each holding a long bamboo pole, while one of them throws a rattan ball into the air. The others compete to see who can pierce the ball. Zheng comments that this quinquennial feast is held among the Paiwan: the village priest controls the game, and every player who succeeds in winning a ball shouts: 'There's an enemy!' When the game is over the balls are hidden in the forest, in a special hut that evokes the presentation cases for skulls. The Maori have the same game. Huang Shujing tells us that the women of the sector play on swings, singing without interruption, day and night. Zheng comments that swings are indeed widespread among the Paiwan, and connected with shamanesses, who are chosen by the gods when swinging during the harvest festival: if a girl behaves unusually she is designated as a shamaness. The same custom is found in Borneo. In the southern sector 3 the birth of twins is considered inauspicious: they are attached to a tree branch until they die, and then the family moves house. Zheng observes that among the Paiwan the birth of twins is indeed very inauspicious, and they are sacrificed and buried in the house.[8]

Huang Shujing also provides more information about marriage. Among the aborigines of the north, in sector 1 the groom is taken to the bride's house (as Zheng comments, here and elsewhere we see evidence of matriliny, descent through the mother). Divorce is easy (notably in the case of adultery) and extra-marital sex is not forbidden. The same tolerance is shown in sector 2, but here adultery is punished by a fine, as it is in sector 4, where pre-marital sex is allowed. In sector 7 marriage by capture is practised. As for adultery in sector 9, a cuckolded husband can kill the guilty pair, whereas in sector 10 the house of the adulterer's parents is ransacked and they have to pay a fine: this is to show that the family has not brought its children up well.[9]

Twentieth and Twenty-First-Century Sources

Ishii: the Atayal

In 1917 the Japanese anthropologist Shinji Ishii published an article on the Atayal people of Taiwan's central mountains. He noted that, unlike nearby groups, they punished extra-marital sex severely. Often they committed suicide, when they lost face, and a wife did this if her husband was killed in war. They believed only in the spirits of the dead: if a man had been a successful headhunter his spirit would go to the top of their highest mountain, but if not it would go down to hell. The Atayal performed headhunting to propitiate their ancestral spirits, who, they believed, produced disasters.[10]

Ishii tells us that the Atayal had a sowing ritual, held in February or March, when the moon was on the wane. Before it the men would hunt and kill game for the feast, and new fire was prepared in every house. The use of metal objects was forbidden. During the feast itself seeds of rice and millet were sown at night, and another hunt took place. Previously, in one district, heads were taken. The harvest ritual also required new fire and a ban on the use of metal objects. Harvesting again began at night, and required silence or a very low voice. Soon after, in May or June, the crop was offered to the ancestral spirits, and then the men ran around shouting, 'Stab wild pigs!'[11]

The Atayal also had purification rituals for marriage, divorce, childbirth and crimes. A pig would be killed, the blood having the required purifying effect. In the case of a birth this had to be done within ten or 20 days, after a piece of camphor had been burnt and thrown out of the house. The dead were buried inside the house, in a contracted position, with their belongings, and often facing west. Men who were killed in war or headhunting were abandoned in the forest. The period of mourning lasted for eight to 20 days.[12]

Mabuchi: Myths of the Origin of Grains

Japanese researcher Toichi Mabuchi in 1964 published an article on the origin of grains in myths from Taiwan, the Ryukyus, Japan and 'Malaysia', in which he included the Philippines and Indonesia. He distinguished three types of origin: (1) heaven or overseas, (2) the underworld, and (3) the corpse of a deity or ancestor.[13]

As regards type 1, Mabuchi found, among the Paiwan in southern Taiwan, a story in which a man visited a friend in heaven, and found millet and tubers growing there. His friend refused to share these with him, and so he stole them by hiding them in his penis. Another story from the same area says that the ancestor deities had five children, who lived on a mountain: the fourth created millet and tubers. Type 2 is represented among the Bunun in central Taiwan, who have a vague idea of a supreme deity or deities, without any worship thereof. In one of their stories people go down into the underworld and visit its inhabitants. They discover rice and ask to be given its seed, but meet with a refusal and steal it, hiding it in their foreskins. Type 3 is not found in Taiwan, but the Ami people of the eastern seaboard tell stories of this kind with reference to tobacco and the betel nut. The former is said to have grown out of the grave of a girl who killed herself. In one story two kinds of tobacco come from the graves of a brother–sister pair who commit incest, are rebuked by their parents and kill themselves. Similarly, in another story, a shaman and a shamaness commit adultery, are found out and turn into the betel pepper vine and betel nut tree respectively. The Bunun have a story in which a buried corpse gives rise to the sweet potato.[14]

Ferrell: an overview of Taiwanese aboriginal culture

A survey of Taiwanese aboriginal cultures and languages was published in 1969 by the Paris-based researcher Raleigh Ferrell. He observes, with reference to all groups: 'By contact times [i.e. times of contact with foreigners] flexed burial [i.e. with the legs drawn up under the chin] often under the house, had widely replaced more varied earlier burial practices in most of Taiwan.'[15] All aborigines practised headhunting. Illnesses were treated by specially trained shamanesses.[16]

As regards individual peoples, Ferrell starts with the Atayal in the northern part of the island, and notes that they had no men's houses or other public buildings. The Atayal believe that the first ancestors of humankind came out of an enormous stone or mountain. They have no gods, but only a variety of spirits, who are placated collectively. Unlike many Taiwanese peoples, the Atayal condemn pre-marital sex as offensive to the spirits and dangerous for the community: atonement requires fixed rituals and pig sacrifice.[17]

The Bunun, according to Ferrell, used to extract both men and women's lateral incisors, like the Tsou and the Atayal. He says that other

Taiwanese groups did not do this in the recent past, but quite possibly did so before. (Later he concedes that the practice was found among some other groups, and probably existed among others.) The Bunun, says Ferrell (contradicting Mabuchi), lack individual gods and spirits, but used to make offerings to the moon. They have stories of sexual relations between humans and animals, reflecting their dependence upon hunting, and they have shamans as well as shamanesses.[18]

As for the Paiwan, Ferrell reports that they believe their chiefly families to be descended from the sun. The sun is said to have come down to a mountain and produced a red egg and a white one. A giant serpent bit the eggs, and they yielded a man and a woman, the ancestors of the chiefly families, whereas the eggs of a green snake yielded the ancestors of ordinary ones. The Paiwan have specialized deities, such as a god of thunder and millet and a sky-goddess of creation and life. They placate the spirits of the dead collectively. Every five years, after the late autumn harvest, the Paiwan hold their 'Five-Year Festival' (described, as we have seen, by Zheng). The ancestral spirits are brought from their mountain home to the villages to see that customs are respected. They stay for five days, and take part in the festival's special ball-game. Balls made out of bark are thrown in the air by an agricultural priest, and men in a circle round the priest try to catch them with long bamboo poles. Then the spirits are sent home to vouchsafe prosperity.[19]

Ferrell sees the Paiwan as closely linguistically related to the Saisiyat Saisiyat people of northern Taiwan, who also have specialized deities, such as a male–female pair with 'jurisdiction over all living creatures', and a god with a snake's body, invoked only to remove evil or grant benefits. Some of the Saisiyat Saisiyat have four deities, concerned respectively with birth, death, rain and agriculture. Every two years the Saisiyat observe a ceremony of 'worshipping the spirits', in which the spirits of the dead are brought to their territory and taken round it before being sent home after five days.[20]

The Ami of the eastern seaboard have complicated myths of the origins of the world and the gods. Ferrell gives us one, in which we are told that, before heaven and earth existed, the world was in darkness. A god and goddess appeared and had a son and a daughter. The son turned himself into the sky, which produces shadows or souls, looked after by his sister. This brother–sister pair produced more sons and daughters, including a goddess who became the sun, a god who became the moon,

another goddess who created life, and, finally, a god who made the others assume their particular duties. Ferrell comments that these Ami myths are unlike those of other Taiwanese aborigines. He notes that the Ami say that they came from overseas or a small island to the south-east, and thinks that many cultural elements on the east coast suggest a foreign, southern origin.[21]

The Archaeology of Prehistoric China and Taiwan

In 1969 the leading Chinese archaeologist Kwang-chih Chang presented a study of the archaeology of prehistoric Taiwan. He devoted much attention to the site of Dapenkeng, near Taipei in northern Taiwan, where he found a 'Corded Ware' culture dating from the fifth millennium BCE. Chang also noted a human lower jawbone found on a shellmound on the south-west coast of Taiwan, where shellfish gathering was important from about 1500 BCE. This jawbone had a hole bored through it, evidently so that it could be carried with a string. Apparently it had been used as a handle for a gong, as is done today by the Ifugao and other inhabitants of the northern Philippines. Chang observes that, since in the Philippines such a jaw has usually been taken from an enemy, this is evidence for headhunting in ancient Taiwan. After about 2500 BCE tooth extraction was practised, as among twentieth-century aborigines.[22]

Seventeen years later Chang published the fourth edition of a book called *The Archaeology of Ancient China*. In Neolithic North China (5000–3000 BCE) he found several examples of secondary burials. These are evidenced at the Dawenkou site near the lower Yellow River. Here Chang reports on the skeletal remains: 'Some skulls show artificial deformation, and many had their upper lateral incisors extracted in adolescence.'[23] It has been concluded that the population was of the Polynesian type. In the late Dawenkou period (c.2900–c.2400 BCE) the graves of the rich contained pigs' lower jaws. In Neolithic southern China Chang finds, opposite Taiwan and off Fukien, early cord-marked pottery on Quemoy Island, resembling that found in northern Taiwan in the same period, the fifth millennium BCE.[24]

During the third millennium BCE Chang sees the dominance, in both China and Taiwan, of what he calls 'Lung-Shan' cultures, after a township in Shantung in north-east China. These cultures are characterized by innovations: metalwork, the potter's wheel, institutionalized violence,

rituals, divination from burning animals' shoulder bones to produce cracks and, finally, political and economic divisions. Thus, in the middle Yellow River Lung-Shan Culture, at Chien-kou in Hopei, Chang notes a house foundation containing six human skulls with signs of scalpings. At Hou-kang in Honan, belonging to the same culture, infants were buried under house foundations, sometimes under wooden posts. Again in the same culture, at Wang-ch'eng-kang, also in Honan, in the foundations of the town wall, both adults and children were buried. As at Chien-kou, these burials have been seen as representing rituals relating to building.[25]

In 1995 Chang made a contribution to a volume of essays entitled *Austronesian Studies Relating to Taiwan*. Here he insisted on the 'crucial date' of 2500 BCE as dividing Taiwanese prehistory into two: the earlier phase, recounted above all by Dapenkeng in the fifth millennium, and the later, 'Longshanoid' one. The earlier phase is also reflected, as we have seen, on Quemoy Island, and further by sites on or just off the Chinese mainland. Thus the village of Xitou has pottery 'with rows of comb designs and shell-edge tooth patterns', as on Quemoy. The site of Keqiutou, on an island off the Fujian coast, has pottery that parallels that of the Dapenkeng culture, notably in the use of shells to impress patterns. This appears in two other coastal sites in eastern Guangdong.[26]

Another contributor to the same volume, the Taiwanese archaeologist Cheng-hwa Tsang, considers data from the Peng-hu Islands in the middle of the Taiwan Strait, from c.3100 to c.2600 BCE. Here he finds that the cord-marked pottery and stone artefacts (net sinkers, hoe-axes, flake knives, etc.) are strikingly similar to what has been discovered in the Dapenkeng culture of Taiwan and on the Chinese coast. In a second phase, dating from c.2700 to c.2300 BCE we see reddish-brown cord-marked pottery and much larger settlements. The former sometimes resembles the red cord-marked pottery of the earlier Longshanoid culture on Taiwan.[27]

Yet another contribution is made by another Taiwanese archaeologist, Chao-mei Lien. He examines the site of Peinan in eastern Taiwan, where he sees one stratum before 3300 BCE and corresponding to the Dapenkeng culture, and a second stratum from 3300 to 300 BCE and corresponding to the Longshanoid cultures. Here bodies were buried beneath the houses, the latter's floors being disturbed for this purpose. The bodies were usually extended, the heads facing south. Buried with

them were grave goods, usually pottery, jade and slate, but also, and in most instances, slotted earrings.[28]

Ho: Taiwanese Myths in Comparative Perspective

The Taiwanese folklorist Ting-jui Ho in 1971 published a study of Taiwanese aborigines' myths and legends. He begins by noting Austronesian elements in their culture, such as gabled, raised and thatched houses, brimless caps and bamboo altars. Ho also notes 'the belief in a rice soul or rice mother'.[29] He observes that Taiwanese myths lack stories about the beginning of the universe, which is thought always to have existed. Many myths say that there used to be several suns, until a culture-hero killed the unnecessary ones. Similar myths are found in Asia and America, where, as in Taiwan, they also account for the origin of the moon. In the same way, many myths relate that the sky, after being very close to the earth and thereby producing much distress to humans, was raised to its present position. These myths are paralleled in the islands of South-East Asia. Other Taiwanese myths relate the origin of man from a rock, bamboo joints, a gourd, eggs, a dog ancestor or incest. The motif of the rock is a South-East Asian theme, while that of bamboo joints belongs both to South-East Asia and adjacent areas. As for the story of the gourd, it is found only among the Bunun in Taiwan, but also in the Philippines, mainland South-East Asia and Japan, whereas the idea that humans came out of eggs is found all over the world and the dog ancestor motif is widespread in east and South-East Asia. The myth of the world's repopulation by incest after a flood is often found in both South-East Asia and adjacent areas. Taiwanese myths frequently speak of fire being regained after his flood by an animal: this is found in the Philippines and Melanesia.[30]

Ho further observes that Taiwanese myths about millet and rice reflect beliefs in the spirits of both, found also in China and South-East Asia and manifested in rituals. One myth, told by the Saisiyat group, explains the origin of the festival that several of their villages hold every two years for the spirits of the dwarfs (to be distinguished from the 'worshipping the spirits' ceremony mentioned by Ferrell). The latter used to live in a cave, and taught the Saisiyat to perform the millet harvest ceremony. Then the dwarfs molested the Saisiyat's women, and the Saisiyat exterminated them. Thus, every two years, a festival is held to appease their spirits.[31]

Höllmann: The Tsou

The Tsou are a tiny aboriginal people, numbering just 3,500, in the central mountains of Taiwan. They have been studied in an excellent monograph by the German researcher Thomas Höllmann, published in 1982. This incorporates a lot of work done by Chinese and Japanese anthropologists, along with historical sources.

Höllmann gives us an account of Tsou headhunting, taken from a local chronicle of 1716. We are told that whoever kills humans wins great popularity. Because of this there are reciprocal attacks, but also any stranger who is spotted on a path is killed and has his head taken. The head is cooked until the flesh and skin fall off and decorated with gold. Such trophies are put up in front of houses and handed down to sons and grandsons.[32]

According to Höllmann there are two accounts of the origins of headhunting among the Tsou. In the first we are told that originally people were living in the mountains and were unfamiliar with cereals. One day they killed a dog to eat and put its head on a pole. As they derived great pleasure from this they did the same thing later, when they had killed a monkey. Since they obtained even greater pleasure from this they thought that with a human head it would certainly be even better. There happened to be bad children in the village: they killed them, put their heads on spears and were all happy. After the primordial flood abated peoples scattered and lived far away from each other. Then it was decided to hunt for heads in strange places and rejoice at the trophies displayed. Thus reciprocal headhunting began.[33]

In the second account we are told that the Tsou's ancestors once migrated to the region of a people called the Takupueanu. The latter had a lot of military leaders and sorcerers, and were extremely strong. Although the Tsou already practised headhunting they were still unsure as to whether the spirits appreciated this custom. One day the Great Spirit Hamo revealed himself before all of them and said, 'Gather as quickly as possible in the common-house!' When they did so a stone the size of a human head fell through the common-house's roof, making a tear. Through this came a lance and a wonderfully handsome youth. Then came a knotted cloth with a freshly-severed head inside. The youth was a descendant of the Takupueanu who had disappeared as a child. Thus they all knew that Hamo took pleasure in humans' heads. Höllmann comments that archaeological

discoveries have shown that headhunting was practised in Taiwan in prehistoric periods.[34]

Höllmann's Chinese anthropological sources give us an account of how headhunting used to be practised. One of the Tsou would be leader. A few days before an expedition he would go into the mountains, acquire a bough and then, in the common-house, make a fire drill out of it. On the next day he would go before daybreak with a torch in his hand to the common-house and then leave it, armed with the fire-drill and his bag of fire-making equipment, for the wild, in order to consult a bird oracle. There the call of a bird called the oaimu would be seen as either a good or a bad omen. If the omen was bad he would do nothing, but would try again the next day. If the omen was good he would hang his bag on the tree on which the bird had perched and return, shouting, 'The bird call is lucky! The day after tomorrow we set off!' Then he would return to the tree and light a 'holy' fire', taking care that it did not go out. He would sleep during the night there, in order to predict the future by means of a dream. At the same time all the warriors of the village would do the same in the common-house. In the morning he rejoined them, and they interpreted the dreams. (One source tells us that each of the warriors had a skin bag, in which one of the dreams was stored. A dream was auspicious if in it one experienced triumph. If one had doubts, one had to go early in the morning to the wild and listen to the oaimu sing. If it sang three times on the branch of a tree this meant that the dream was good; if it sang five or six times beside the path, this was a sign of an unfavourable battle.) If the dreams were favourable the leader would again spend the night by his fire, and the warriors would again sleep in the common-house. At dawn he would rejoin them and tell them to beat the floor of the common-house with their feet and lances, in order to ask the heaven-spirit, Hamo, and the war-spirit, Iafafeoi, for victory. Then they would set off. At a fixed point near enemy territory they would stop, and the leader light a fire. Animal hairs would be burnt in it: if this produced an exploding sound it was taken as a good omen, and the men would all thrust their knives and lances into the fire. Then they would hold hands and go a few steps in the direction of their goal. After this they would come back and eat for the first time since they had set off. Before eating, however, the food had to be broken into small bits, which were offered to their weapons and their leather clothing with a request for protection. They would spend the night there, again looking for omens

in dreams. If the dreams were unlucky, the next morning they would go home. If the dreams allowed a positive decision, the men with good dreams went on ahead, while the others stayed as a rearguard.[35]

Höllmann's sources tell us that a successful expedition's return was accompanied by a number of rules. The severed heads were put in nets on the warriors' backs, and they all shouted 'Paehai!' The shout was repeated five times on the march home, and one last time shortly before the village, to inform those left behind of the victory. At this the old men and the women would come and give the warriors millet beer and congratulations. The women would carry the heads on, until the leader or a particularly brave warrior put them onto a shield, to take them to the common-house. There they were put on bamboo poles, which were placed in front of the common-house's red fig tree. Then people joined hands, formed a circle and sang a song of victory. The men would celebrate their victory with a great feast in the common-house. On the next day the people celebrated the skull-offering and engaged in dances of triumph. If any of the warriors had been killed the expedition counted as a failure, even if the number of heads taken surpassed that of men lost. Then, on the return, there was no singing or feasting. Only the skull-offering was celebrated, from which the relatives of those killed were excluded. The bodies were buried on the way or covered with branches or reeds. In homage to the dead those left behind would cut a little flesh from the heads of their enemies.[36]

In Höllmann's sources we also find a Tsou myth about the origins of millet. In the beginning the millet-spirit instructed the ancestors of the Tsou in the sowing and cultivation of millet, and she attached to this the following wish: 'At sowing time and harvest time you shall bring me offerings; then you will never suffer need.' Then a millet plant could bear fruit five times, and five grains would be enough to fill the saucepan when the millet was cooked. Later people became lazy and stopped the offerings, the ceremonies being complicated or difficult, or offended against the taboos during them. One day all the millet in the fields and store-houses suddenly flew away, nobody knew where. Fortunately, however, there was one sheaf left behind. People took it and used it for sowing. But since then the millet withers after it has borne fruit just once, and the old roots bring no new shoots; when it is cooked it does not yield much food, barely fills the saucepan and is not enough to satisfy stomachs.[37]

As for the origins of rice, Höllmann's Chinese anthropological sources give us another myth. In the old times, when the Tsou were living in the mountains, there was neither millet nor rice, and the people lived off the flesh of wild animals. One day someone discovered a taro plant and pulled the tuber, which was unusually long, out of the earth. This revealed a cave some 100 feet deep. Into this a clever man lowered himself with the help of a long liana and found, in another, lower cave, people who were having a meal. However, they were not eating a solid substance, but feasting on the rising steam of a soup. When the man asked what was steaming, he was told that it was rice. He asked for a little, took a few grains and climbed back to the surface. The rice eaten today goes back to those grains.[38]

As regards hunting, Höllmann observes that in the past it was not just an economic activity. Each clan used to possess a display case for animals' bones. Whenever hunters returned successful from the hunt they had to make a special offering at it. They would bring their booty in front of the display case and chew a little raw millet. Then they would put a few crumbs in the animal's mouth. After this they would pray to the hunt-spirit: 'Please grant us, when we go hunting again, a rich booty.' Finally they would carve the animal up and place the jawbones in the display case.[39]

Höllmann observes that in the context of the annual ritual cycle of the Tsou, the *meesi*, which has aspects of agriculture, war, hunting and wealth, there used to be two ritual hunts, in which men used to be involved for several days. In addition to these, every communal hunt had important religious aspects. According to his Chinese sources, the day before the hunt men would gather in the common-house and spend the night there. During this time it was forbidden to eat shallots, leeks or fish, or to have contact with women. The men would look for omens from dreams, and, if the dreams were unlucky, the expedition was cancelled. On the day of the hunt the leader would, very early, consult a bird oracle and listen to the oaimu. Here a happy staccato sound would be a positive omen and a sad legato sound a negative one. In the latter case the expedition would be abandoned, just as if, later, on the way, one passed the trace of a snake across the path, or ran into a boar, or if several people sneezed at the same time. Possibly the leader might consult the bird oracle again, the next day, and then, if all the signs were unlucky, the expedition would definitely be abandoned.[40]

According to Höllmann's Chinese sources activities have traditionally been divided up between Tsou men and women. Men have been allocated hunting, fishing, war, development of land, building houses, woodcutting, tanning, production of weapons, utilization of wood and bamboo, basket-making, trade and public affairs. Women have been allocated agriculture, spinning, weaving, reaping, care of domestic animals, food production, firewood gathering, cooking, net-making, mat-making, bringing up children and drawing water.[41]

This separation between men and women is reflected in the institution of the common-house. Höllmann informs us that it used to be the meeting place for men and a school for youths. A woman was never allowed to enter it or even climb its steps. Boys, by contrast, would come to it after the age of one, and had to play in it. Youths lived in it, in order to learn from their elders how to use bows and arrows and hunt. Grown men would practise their military and technical skills there, and married men would spend most of their time in it.[42]

Behind the building there was a broad open space, where sacrifices were performed by the entire village. There was also a red fig tree, which was surrounded on all four sides by a small fence, to emphasize its being 'taboo'. Normally it was forbidden to disturb it or break off its twigs or leaves.[43]

According to Höllmann's sources the Tsou used to kill twins. If two boys were born, the weaker of the two would be killed; if a boy and a girl, the girl would have to die; if two girls, both would be got rid of.[44]

A pregnant woman had to observe a number of taboos. She was not allowed to take part in activities linked to ceremonial offerings. She could not come near weapons or hunting equipment, and was not allowed to kill insects or catch fish. After the birth she was not allowed to leave the house to work in the fields for ten days. Her husband was not allowed to go to the fields or go fishing for three days, and for ten days he was forbidden to go hunting, go near bows and arrows, travel long distances or take part in clashes with enemies.[45]

A few days after birth the new-born baby was washed in cold water. In the first year of a boy's life, at the end of the *meesi* festival (a condensed form, as we shall see, of the main part of the annual ritual cycle), he would be taken by his father, holding a bamboo cup full of beer in his free hand, to the common-house for the first time. There the chief or an old and respected member of the community would stroke his head, to

indicate that he was to be reckoned as one of the village's men. From then on his relatives could take him to the common-house, until, when he was able to run, he came on his own to play there.[46]

Among children aged between 12 and 15 the traditional extraction of teeth would take place. Either the side incisors or, in addition, the canines (in the upper jaw) would be removed. Höllmann comments that archaeological discoveries in Taiwan show that this was done in prehistoric times. According to one myth once, when the Tsou's ancestors were living in the mountains, the chief's son suddenly fell unconscious. People wanted to pour cool water into his mouth, but he kept his teeth tightly clenched. An intelligent man took a stone and knocked his front teeth out, so that he began to breathe again. The practice of extracting teeth goes back to this. According to another myth there were once two brothers, the elder mild and good-tempered, the younger bad-tempered. One day they went hunting and quarrelled over the booty, and the younger brother was killed in the heat of the moment. The chief ordered the arrest of the elder brother, who fled to the plains. The chief said, 'In case one day he comes back, we shall today make ourselves recognizable by the extraction of four front teeth, so that we can identify him on that day.' All were astonished by the chief's cleverness, and from then on everyone has had four front teeth extracted.[47]

Höllmann says that of greater importance for an individual's status was the maturity ritual, which marked the accession to the group of adolescents, and which, modified, has continued as a part of the *meesi* festival. When a child reached the age of 15 or 16 the child's mother would steam some sticky rice and they would go to her parents' house. There some of the rice would be taken by the grandmother and passed to the Earth-spirit with a whisper. The grandmother, after she had uttered her blessings for her grandchild, would eat the rest of the rice with her son-in-law, grain by grain. The finishing of the meal would signify that the child had grown up. After the latter had gone home there began a phase of food prohibitions, during which he or she was forbidden fish, pepper, salt, taro and beans, and was fed only millet and rice. When this period of fasting was over, the child could take part in the actual maturity ritual itself.[48]

This ritual took place on the afternoon of the day in the *meesi* festival on which the repair of the paths, the first entry into the common-house

and the skull-offering took place. While the elders gathered in the common-house the young males being initiated gathered in the open area before the entrance. Finally they entered the building one after another, and there they were hit on the bottom with a rattan cane by one of the elders and instructed with the following words: 'From now on you count as an adolescent and must not play children's games again, but must emulate the usages of the ancestors with bravery and diligence and without idleness.' The other elders had the right to give instructions. In the end the young males left the common-house and were led to the houses of the various clans, where they spent a little time. Then they went to the chief's house, at the entrance to which the chief held a large cup of beer in his hands. They drank a little from this, and then they went home to put on the clothes now appropriate to them as adolescents. Finally they went back to the wide area in front of the common-house to dance.[49]

The young women who took part in the maturity ritual gathered with black cloths in their hands in the chief's house, where they were instructed by his wife. Then, one after another, they wound the black cloths round their heads as turbans, and went, led by the chief's wife, to the area in front of the common-house, with torches in their hands. There they sang and danced with the young men all night long.[50]

According to Höllmann's sources the maturity ritual ended a long period of education, in which the sexes were separated from the 11th or 12th year of their lives. The boys had to leave their homes for the common-house. There they were instructed in the techniques of hunting and war, and learned how to use the apparatus of war, hunting and fishing. They also listened to the traditions of kinship groups and the stories of daring expeditions of warriors and hunters. During the agricultural rest period (especially November and December) hunting practices and military manoeuvres often took place. Then a domesticated pig often took the place of its counterpart in the wild, and the boys learned how to handle a spear correctly, or how to pursue and kill an animal. Sometimes a strong man would take the role of the enemy, and the boys would engage in single combat with him. Finally, collective fights were staged, with bamboo spears, and these fights were given marks by a panel of judges composed of elders. At the time of the collective expeditions in winter all the youths had to follow the path taken by the elders, for the purpose of practice. At the same age the girls had to learn

all activities relating to agriculture and household management: sowing, taking care of and harvesting plants, rearing domestic animals and food production.[51]

Marriage among the Tsou, Höllmann observes, used to be not a personal matter, but an association between two kinship groups: the patron had to be chosen from another clan. His sources say that the levirate and the sororate were practised, that is to say that if a man's brother died he had to marry his widow, and if a man's wife died he had to marry her sister. The bridegroom had to work for his father-in-law for a period stretching from one or two to five or six years. Only after the ending of this period could he go back home to live with his wife.[52]

As regards death, Höllmann reports that the Tsou held the following beliefs. A person's life was guaranteed by a bodily soul (*hio*) and a spirit (*piepira*). The first was a steering instrument in the brain, and when it left the body this caused death. The spirit, by contrast, guided human behaviour from the outside. After death the bodily soul went back to the mountains, whereas the spirit wandered around in the neighbourhood as a house-spirit (*hicu-no-emoo*). As we shall see, a different account of this is given below.[53]

House spirits could also, according to Höllmann, turn into malevolent ghosts, as often happened in the case of a bad death, one which happened when the deceased was young, or died when travelling, or from an injury, snakebite, drowning or magic, or was murdered or committed suicide. A good death was one from old age or illness or in war. Only in the latter case was the deceased buried in the house. A round grave was dug in the middle of the house and the body was placed in it in a seated position and his clothing, jewellery and smoking materials with him, but not his weapons. When there was no more room in a house for a grave the building was abandoned and a new one erected. During the first five days after the burial the whole community would live in seclusion, and it was forbidden for anyone to work outside the house, to fish in the river, to hunt in the mountains or to go to the fields. In this period it was also forbidden to consume beer or to wear fine clothes or jewellery. On the fifth day the kinship group gathered in the house of the deceased. The local sorcerer was invited, and he, while the relatives prepared sticky rice for the dead person, sprinkled beer as a libation over the grave. At the beginning of the ceremonial driving away of the soul the sorcerer would hide outside

the house and wait until the relatives had got ready split bamboo and chenopodium straw with fruit and a bamboo container with beer at the back door. Then the sorcerer would spring out of his hiding place and, after he had taken the split bamboo and straw, enter the house. There he would first call out the deceased's name and then say, while he struck the pieces of split bamboo against each other noisily, 'Hurry far away! Hurry far away! Never come back again! Even if you are strong, you can never come back again, so as to harm your relatives.' After this he would go through the house and, after leaving it by the back door, tip the beer container onto the floor. Then he would make a bundle out of the straw and, while he strode round the house, pluck the grains left on it and strew them on the ground. Finally he would enter the house by the front door and scatter more grains onto the relatives' heads, to drive the evil away. At the end they would all sit down and have a drink by the fire.[54]

The body of someone who had died a bad death was not buried in the house. In this case there would be no mourning or ceremonies. If someone died, for example from a rockfall or a snakebite, the body was buried by its finder where it lay. If someone drowned and the body was swept away by the river nothing was done; if it was washed onto the bank one buried it there. People killed by the enemy in war were simply allowed to lie where they fell, or were covered with straw. If a child died or if one suspected that a death was caused by magic, then the body was taken out into the wilderness and buried there. By the grave straw was tied to a branch, to show that the place was tabooed.[55]

Höllmann's sources show the Tsou as believing in good and bad spirits. The former are in the majority, protect people and function as original powers of reproduction in society, or in a rich harvest. By contrast, the role of the bad spirits is limited to harming people. To be sure, the spiritual power of the good spirits is superior, but it cannot completely conquer that of the bad spirits. All good spirits share the jobs of protecting the living under the aegis of the supreme spirit, but do not constitute a complete and closed system; the bad spirits exist for themselves alone and act independently.[56]

The bad spirits are also always bringers of death. Thus, for example, the smallpox-spirit, Hicu-nokuah'oho, and the darkness-spirit, Eatavoe-cuvcu, are held responsible for the outbreak of epidemics, and the water-spirit, Engohcu, for death by drowning. Even today the Tsou have

countless anecdotes about the activities of the bad spirits, which appear often in human or animal form.[57]

The activities of the good spirits are more complicated. There are two categories, 'heavenly' and 'earthly'. The heavenly spirits influence humans' destiny, whereas the earthly spirits help people in a localized or restricted manner. Chief of the heavenly spirits is Hamo, the greatest spirit, whose function is to be the master of all the good spirits. Alongside him is the female Nivnu, the creator-spirit, who is a culture-heroine and responsible for cultivation of the fields and putting up buildings. Just beneath Hamo is Iafafeoi, the war-spirit, who helps Hamo and maintains contact between the 'heavenly' sphere and humans. He protects the common-house and warriors, and has a special relationship with headhunting. Also just beneath Hamo is Posonfihi, the life-spirit, who also helps Hamo and is particularly important for birth and destiny. Moving down to the level of the earthly spirits, we find at the top the earth-spirit, Ak'emameoi, whose name means 'old (in the sense of 'venerable') man', and who is master of all the earthly good spirits and lord of the ground. Beneath him we encounter the hunting-spirit, Hicu-no-emoikiengi, whose name means 'spirit of the chase'. He is responsible for hunting expeditions and is closely connected with the display case for animals' bones. Beside him stands the river-spirit, Ak'eco'oyeha, whose name means 'old river'. He is the deputy of Ak'emameoi in the waters, is made responsible for the result of fishing, and fights the evil water-spirit Engohcu. Alongside him is the spirit of millet, Bai-ton'u, whose name means 'Grandmother Millet'. She is made responsible for the result of the millet harvest, and is a culture-heroine. Her counterpart is the spirit of rice, Bai-pai, 'Grandmother Rice,' also a culture-heroine and responsible for the rice harvest. Beneath these spirits stands the communal spirit, Hicu-no-pa'mumutu, whose name means 'spirit of the boundary stone'. He protects the village from illness and harm. Beside him is the house-spirit, Hicu-no-emoo, whose name means 'spirit of the house' and who protects the family. He sometimes overlaps, on the conceptual level, with Bai-ton'u, and is recruited largely from the bodily souls of the dead, who can, however, especially in the case of a bad death, also belong to the evil spirits. (This disagrees with what we have heard above about Tsou beliefs concerning the dead, but inconsistency in this area is universal.)[58]

Höllmann observes that contact with the spirits is not the responsibility of religious specialists, but that of individuals or chiefs representing society. His Chinese sources give a description of the sacrifices. Those made to 'heavenly' spirits differed from those made to 'earthly' ones. Whereas the former were usually given skull trophies, the latter were given above all raw millet, or products made from it, such as cakes and beer. The most copious were those offered to the millet-spirit, Bai-ton'u, who received cooked millet and rice and boiled pork. Game, fish and cereals other than millet and rice were, in principle, not used. The gifts offered to the spirits could in addition have magical functions. Thus cakes and beer for the millet-spirit or beer for the hunting-spirit could be used at the same time as magical means for ensuring a good harvest or as 'bait' for animal spirits. During the rituals it was not permitted to stand around without showing respect; rather, one was obliged to adopt a crouching position. Alongside ceremonies which were held on farms and in settlements, at the display case for animals' bones or at the millet granary, one was obliged, when a religious ceremony took place out in the open, in the hunting ground, to erect expressly a 'place of sacrifices' (*snoecava*). For this one would bundle up four or five reeds, 70–160 centimetres long, to which one fastened strips of marshmallow at the top, middle and bottom, cutting the points to make them equal in length. One would pour the offerings (in the case of beer) onto the bottom end of the 'place of sacrifices', stuck into the ground, or one would place them (in the case of food) on top of the upper end. The beer was poured into a specially prepared bamboo container, which was then emptied over the display case, the millet granary or the 'place of sacrifices'. In one ceremony one dipped one's fingers in the beer and then sprinkled it on the ground. As for the skull trophies brought to the Great Spirit Hamo, one would place them on three-pointed split bamboo canes, and if one offered pork to the souls belonging to them one skewered the meat with stalks of reed or dendrobium. Gifts for the millet spirit were always given in special containers, which had the same form as the vessels used in everyday life (meat and sticky rice were divided between different utensils), but which were distinguished from them in order to underline their sacral function.[59]

Finally, Höllmann concludes that the 'everyday' life of the Tsou was deeply anchored in beliefs about supernatural beings. Their most important ritual activities, however, were concentrated in an annual cycle

of feasts, the *meesi*, which was not limited to agricultural rites, but consisted of numerous and varied rituals, connected with headhunting, the hunting of animals, fishing and other activities. During the Japanese occupation (1895–1945) the main part of the *meesi* cycle was cut down from its original length of 24 days, so that only fragments remained. When the Japanese left, 15 August was chosen as the fixed day for the performance of the rites, but in one of the two main Tsou villages 15 February was selected instead. The main elements are as follows: repairing the common-house; killing, carving up and eating a pig; lopping the branches of the local sacred tree; setting up a 'place of sacrifices' outside the village; festive drinking among the village's five families; ring dances and singing. At the end there would be lively consumption of alcohol late into the night, around a fire in front of the common-house, with dancing, singing and shouting. Höllmann rejects earlier interpretations of the *meesi* cycle, such as the Japanese theory that it was a 'millet festival', or Chinese views that it was a 'harvest thanksgiving festival' or a 'war ritual'. In contrast, he thinks that it was 'a synthetic ceremony including aspects of agriculture, war, hunting and wealth'.[60] Originally it corresponded to the agricultural cycle of cultivating millet: sowing, weeding and harvest. Thus the sowing festival, which went on for nine days, took place around January; the two-day weeding festival in April or May; and the harvest festival, consisting in two parts of 12 days each, around August.[61]

Kaneko: Taiwanese Mythology

A dictionary of Taiwanese aboriginal mythology was produced in 1986–7 by the Japanese scholar Erika Kaneko. She notes myths of primordial incest, presented as widely practised before being forbidden. As regards the afterlife, the Saisiyat and the Atayal believe in a 'bridge of souls', crossed by the dead, and from which the wicked fall into a dirty pond. This belief was noted by the Dutch in 1640 among the aborigines of the west coast. The Atayal say that the most important thing is to be a true man or woman: a successful headhunter or a skilful weaver. Only such a person can pass over the bridge (often identified with the rainbow). The Saisiyat believe that after crossing the bridge the good live in a village of magnificent houses, where later one dies a second death. Kaneko stresses that each expression of belief is valid only for the place in Taiwan where it is found.[62]

Headhunting, like incest, is prominent in the myths, and is seen as an indispensable preliminary to marriage. We find the idea that headhunting is done for aesthetic and ornamental reasons, and for pleasure, with people killing first small birds, then monkeys and finally humans. (This tripartite structure is repeated in other Taiwanese myths.) A Puyuma informant declares that a head taken is a companion of the crops, game and seed: heads have to be taken for success in hunting animals and obtaining a good harvest, as well as good luck generally. The myths also give us the idea of a headhunting raid as a trial by ordeal, success proving that the headtaker is innocent. It can moreover, strengthen oaths and alliances.[63]

As regards Taiwanese gods, Kaneko says that lack of interest in them among earlier Japanese researchers and subsequent cultural change have combined to erase the evidence. The Tsou, however, have a well-documented and well-developed pantheon, and this unusual instance goes together with their anomalous culture: their houses have atypical forms, with rounded corners and conical roofs, and they have used a lot of leather for clothing. Their highest god, Hamo, has little contact with people, except in the festival cycle, where he appears before the men's house to receive offerings of pork or human skulls. Hamo has the form of a man with enormous, shining eyes, and his body shines forth as well, clothed in bearskin (for the bear represents him).[64]

Another Taiwanese people, the Amis, are also unusual, with a bewildering profusion of deities, along with classes of gods. Thus in their myths of the world's beginnings we find planter-gods, gods of hunting and deities who are religious experts. There is a Tester of Good and Evil, a Primeval Shaman, a Protector of the Orators and Chiefs, a Leader of the Black Clouds, a Protector of the Ritual Race and Lords of Animals, Fish, Dogs, Rain and Breezes. As Kaneko comments, both the proliferation and the classification are found elsewhere only in the northern Philippines.[65]

Beliefs about souls or spirits are extremely confused. In general, it is believed that a human has a number of souls. Among the Atayal of northern Taiwan domestic animals, birds and plants have no souls, unlike wild animals killed in hunting, whose souls follow the hunter into the 'world of the ancestors in the hereafter'. So too does the soul of a man whose head is taken in headhunting, unless it stays to protect the headtaker's village. Beliefs about the origins of humankind are also of

various kinds. Sometimes it is presented as coming out of a stone or trees: these beliefs are reflected in the ritual veneration of tree-stone pairs, widespread in Taiwan and the neighbouring Ryukyu Islands.[66]

Zheng: The Paiwan

In an article published in 1991 on the Paiwan, Zheng notes that the Paiwan priest is usually male, and has a round magic stone, which he takes out to deal with typhoons or drought. The Paiwan shamaness invokes a female pantheon: Muakai, who created humankind and protects the people, having power of life and death over humans; Salimet, the first ancestress, who taught humans magic; and Lenele, the first shamaness, who grants her successors communication with the gods and has four sisters (also shamanesses), invoked after her. A future shamaness shows herself on a swing, in a ceremony performed at the harvest feast, by abnormal behaviour (illness or extreme excitement). Zheng observes that Paiwan babies are swung in cradles, hung from the roof, while the song of the origins is sung, and that swings are used in Borneo by priests and priestesses to obtain inspiration from the spirits.[67]

Early and Whitehorn: Paiwan Texts

Further information about Paiwan religion has been provided by the Vanuatu-based linguist Robert Early and the British Protestant missionary John Whitehorn, in a collection of Paiwan texts published in 2003. One text describes the traditional aftermath of the quinquennial festival. After the five days of feasting there used to be a hunt, followed by a headhunting expedition. This led to a celebration, also lasting five days, with dancing and the killing of a pig to feed the person killed. The origin of the festival is linked to the origin of shamans. Shamans and shamanesses blow on people in pain, and remove swellings on their bodies with stones, wood chips or charcoal, explaining that spirits have produced them. They perform a rite of breaking bamboo to enter heaven, or yawn repeatedly, inviting the spirits.[68]

Cauquelin: The Puyuma

In 2004 the French anthropologist Josiane Cauquelin published a book about the Puyuma of south-eastern Taiwan, based on fieldwork done from 1984 onwards. She presents myths about the Puyuma's origins: in one a brother and sister marry and give birth to the people's ancestors.

The Puyuma believe in spirits (*bima*), some of which are 'homeless'. Chief among these is 'He Who Watches From Afar'. Among one subgroup of the Puyuma he is called 'the Creator'. Others live 'on high', 'masters' of nature, the ground, rivers and so forth, along with the ancestral spirits. There is also a special abode in which shamanesses meet their own ancestors. Alongside shamanesses there are male 'bamboo diviners', who split bamboo stems into splinters, in which they read the answers to questions. These diviners also perform rituals for the community as a whole. In one such ritual, called 'giving the share', they put down seven bamboo beakers, and, in front of each one, seven pieces of meat for the spirits. Formerly the diviners performed the 'rite of the deer' after a successful headhunting expedition, in order to reintegrate the warriors into society. In this rite, which takes place in an ancestral cult house, a deer is eaten and the ancestors (who have been invoked by a diviner) are fed by throwing a few grains of rice.[69]

Twins used to be killed at birth by the Puyuma. After an ordinary birth the father must not hunt or go to the fields for seven days. On the second day the baby is 'introduced' to the supernatural world by its parents, who scatter a few grains of rice. The dead used to be buried in the house. Two days after the burial the shamanesses purify the dead person's home and family. The next morning the men fish in a mountain stream and, on their way home, throw a stone into a fire next to a stone altar, in order to unite the deceased's spirit with it. 'Bad deaths', by accident or in childbirth, produce vengeful spirits and necessitate special rituals, which culminate in the 'recall' of the dead person's spirit to its altar after five years. Marriage used to be 'uxorilocal', that is to say with incorporation of the groom into the bride's family.[70]

A Puyuma village, Cauquelin tells us, is divided into halves, each with three founding households. Males are divided into age grades: 'children', 'young men undergoing initiation', 'virile warriors' and 'elders'. From the age of 13 boys are educated in a 'boys' house'. On the fourth evening of the annual headhunting festival they join the older boys to drive out the pollution that has accumulated in all the houses of the village during the past year. The younger boys curl up in the houses, shouting, 'Enter into us!', and the older boys hit them with sticks: in the past the boys blackened their faces, hiding behind banana leaves. On the fifth day they take part in a procession, and an effigy of a monkey is sacrificed. After this initiation the boys live in the 'boys' house'. In the past the older boys

were allowed to have sexual relations with the wives of the 'virile warriors'. Battles take place between the boys, and military exercises take place at night.[71]

At the age of 18 males enter the 'men's house'. Here all men used to spend their time, preparing for hunting expeditions. It is central to the annual headhunting ritual in December. In this, on the first day, the 'virile warriors' repair the men's and boys' houses. On the second day two diviners 'clean the village', going to the ancestral cult houses and removing the forces of evil contained there. On the third day two groups of men make offerings to the protecting ancestors of the two halves of the village at the latter's entrance. Later they put bows and arrows at the village's gates, to frighten restless spirits away. On the third day the 'virile warriors' prepare the area in which the effigy of a monkey is sacrificed on the fifth. On the fourth day the two diviners thank the two ancestors who gave the gift of rice to two brothers: three handfuls of rice are thrown onto a rock. Then, as we have seen, boys are initiated.[72]

On the sixth day the 'virile warriors' and elders go to the mountain. On the way they make barriers, to put the domestic spirits and women behind them. Then they camp on their hunting site. On the seventh and eighth days the 'virile warriors' set traps. On the ninth day the 18-year-olds are initiated into their three-year marginal period, and then the males return to the village. The 21-year-olds end their marginal period, and men and women will dance for three nights. On the tenth day the elders expel pollution from houses where a death has happened in the previous year. The 18-year-olds now have 'godfathers', and sleep in the entrance to the men's house, while being forbidden to engage in sexual relations, for three years. In the past this period was ended by killing an enemy, an aborigine from another group, at the end of the annual cycle and bringing back his head. On returning the young warrior had to stay in a hut outside the village, with the head, while the men hunted a deer for the 'rite of the deer' mentioned above.[73]

The point here, explains Cauquelin, is that the head's spirit might bring disaster to the villagers. Thus the 'rite of the deer' was duly performed. In the meantime the young warrior 'fed' the head, addressing it as 'friend', explaining that it liked him and therefore had met him, and offering it wine. (He had to keep feeding the head every year, at the end of the ritual in which the two ancestors are thanked for giving rice.) The ancestors were called on to help separate the head from its spirit.

A diviner effected this by making an image of the enemy out of millet paste. Then the head could be brought into the village and put on a shelf above the latrines in the men's house. There men urinated while saying to it, 'You have come here, friend, to strengthen your centre.' After seven days it was put on a skull rack at the edge of the village. Cauquelin points out that in Puyuma myth two brothers build the first boys' house, tell their father not to come, kill him when he does come and then perform the 'rite of the deer'.[74]

Puyuma informants have provided different accounts of past headhunting. We are told that it was done before the millet harvest and before the pre-sowing rites. It was also done by someone who felt that he had been unfairly treated when judgment was given against him in a dispute, in which case, if he came back successful, the decision was reversed. Headhunting was also done to avenge a relative or punish violation of a frontier. A victorious headhunter would have a good harvest. Every year, at the end of the headhunting ritual, men go to the site of the skull rack, make a substitute body and put up a stone altar. Then a diviner sets out offerings of wine and food, and the men circle the altar three times before kicking it over. This headhunting ritual, observes Cauquelin, is also an initiatory and a purificatory one, and the start of the new year, when marriages of the new 'virile warriors' are arranged. Headhunting brings fertility, as in the Philippines and Borneo, where the victim is also turned into a friend, part of society. Women's heads also used to be taken.[75]

Cauquelin provides more information about Puyuma shamanesses. (A few feminized male shamans exist, and in the past some of them were transvestites.) A future shamaness is chosen by a spirit and suffers illnesses. She is invested in a ceremony lasting six days and culminating in her being given a bag (the most important moment). After this her soul, which had been taken away, so that she was in effect dead, by the spirit that had chosen her, is restored to her. Later, to meet the ancestral spirits and visit their domain, she has to cross a bridge. The shamanesses have a great annual festival, lasting eight days, when they visit the ancestors. This involves a 'voyage', which used to be made to cure the seriously ill by recalling their souls, stolen by the spirits.[76]

Finally, we may note points made by Cauquelin concerning Puyuma culture, along with more data. Like other Taiwanese aboriginal groups, they are indifferent to the sea and the fact that Taiwan is an island. The

Puyuma used to be a society of hunters, in which everything was shared. Before a hunting expedition a diviner would consult his bamboo splinters to nominate one hunter to take bird omens at dawn. (In general Taiwanese aborigines used to do this any way, for all activities.) For several nights the hunters had to sleep in the men's house, to avoid contact with women. If a man out hunting killed a tiger, black bear or snake he had to stay in a small hut outside the village, like a headhunter, until a diviner had performed purification rituals.[77]

The General Characteristics of Taiwanese Religion

Much of what we have found in Taiwanese religion is very much the same. The specialists think that this is because the different groups have all influenced each other, so that in burial customs, for example, there was a move from variety to uniformity in burial beneath the house. It is important to bear in mind that there must have been constant change: this was noted in the seventeenth century, when the Dutch were told that religious change was going on in front of them. Here we need to summarize and compare our data, beginning with lifecycle rituals.

The practice of washing new-born babies in cold water may reflect Dutch Christian influence, but on the other hand we are told that the aborigines believe medicines to be present in river water. As regards the birth of twins, the Paiwan are more severe, always killing both (as the Puyuma used to), whereas the Tsou do this only in the case of girls. Both Tsou and Puyuma fathers are prohibited from going to the fields and hunting after a birth. The extraction of teeth is done, says Chen Di, to add to girls' beauty, whereas Huang Shujing reports that in one village bride and groom do this to indicate that they will never separate. As regards marriage in general, there is evidence of widespread matriliny, and both uxorilocal (the groom entering the bride's family) and virilocal (the reverse) marriage. The Tsou bridegroom's work for his father-in-law is evidently a vestige of the former. Divorce is easy, while adultery is usually punished by a fine and pre-marital sex is generally allowed.

Death is followed by 'double burial' in the house, according to the seventeenth-century Chinese sources. For the eighteenth century Huang Shujing confirms burial in the house. The reason, it appears from Zheng's commentary, is that according to some groups burying the 'good dead' in a cemetery would be to put them among evil spirits. One

notes that in the northern sector 8 the family is obliged to stay inside the house for 12 days, and then the local shamaness is asked to pray and make offerings. In the northern sector 9 the body is buried on the top of a mountain, as happens in the southern sector 2 when a woman dies in childbirth. As we have seen, the Atayal believe that a dead person's spirit goes to the top of a high mountain. Likewise, the Tsou believe that a dead person's bodily soul goes back to the mountains, while the spirit stays in the neighbourhood. The spirits of people who die a 'bad death' have to be prevented, as far as possible, from causing harm. Among the Paiwan such people have to be put in a large water-filled jar, and among the Tsou they are buried far from the house. Finally, we may note that among the Puyuma, on the tenth and last day of the annual headhunting festival, the old men drive the 'pollutions of death' from the houses in mourning, and that previously this festival was held at the end of the harvest.

Like death, headhunting is a prominent feature of the materials that we have surveyed. One notes Pickering's evidence that the brains, mixed with alcohol, would be consumed, and Imbault-Huart's testimony that the victim was welcomed by the headtakers and told to bring his relatives. The Puyuma used to welcome the head as a friend, 'feeding' it. Huang Shujing says that in the southern sector 2 headhunting is obligatory after one of the aborigines is killed: the male heirs sacrifice the head to their dead relative. This partly ties in with one of the Tsou myths: headhunting, we are told there, is reciprocal, and is due to peoples' dispersing and living far away from each other. In this myth, however, the real original cause of headhunting is pleasure. Another Tsou myth attributes pleasure at headhunting to the supreme spirit. A Chinese chronicle of 1716 says that headhunting is done because anyone who kills humans wins great popularity. Among the Puyuma taking a head was an obligatory part of a young warrior's initiation: afterwards he had to stay in a hut outside the village, before being reintegrated into society by a ritual in an ancestral cult house. Headhunting was linked to the agricultural cycle, and brought fertility, as well as purification.

Tsou headhunting greatly resembles Tsou hunting of animals. In both the leader consults a bird oracle, the oaimu, and the men practise divination by dreams, spending the night in the common-house. (Similarly, Puyuma hunters sleep in the men's house, to avoid contact with women.) One notes that the principal Tsou headhunting ritual is

the skull-offering, performed even if the expedition is counted a failure and singing and feasting are suppressed. This skull-offering takes place on a special day in the *meesi* festival-cycle, that of the maturity rite, the repair of the paths and the first entry into the common-house. The skull trophies are brought to the supreme spirit, Hamo, and pork may be offered to their souls. (Imbault-Huart says that the victims were told, 'You must take your meal with us.') Among the Puyuma the headhunting festival is again one of repair and initiation. It is also one of hunting animals, just as the Tsou *meesi* festival-cycle used to contain two ritual hunts.

Another festival is described by Huang Shujing: the southern sector 2 has one every five years, with a ball-game, and Zheng confirms that this continues among the Paiwan. It is evidently related to headhunting: a player who wins the ball shouts: 'There's an enemy!', and the balls are put in a hut like a presentation case for skulls. Ferrell explains that in this festival, which follows the late autumn harvest, the spirits of the dead are brought from their mountain to inspect the villages and stay for five days before being sent home to grant prosperity. Similarly, the Saisiyat have a festival every two years, in which, again, the ancestral spirits are brought and taken round their territory, and sent home after five days. Likewise, the Puyuma shamanesses have an annual festival in which they visit the ancestors. The Tsou *meesi* festival-cycle, as we have seen, includes the 'maturity rite', which used to take place on the most important day, that of the skull-offering. This ended with young men and women singing and dancing together all night long. There was also lively consumption of alcohol late into the night. The main part of the festival-cycle was linked to the harvest, just as the Puyuma 'headhunting' festival was. Höllmann concludes that it resembled the similarly-structured Paiwan festival-cycle in including 'aspects of agriculture, war, hunting and wealth'.[78]

The Taiwanese aborigines' gods and spirits are present or absent in different patterns in different groups. Ferrell says that the Atayal have no gods, but only spirits, placated collectively. He goes on to say that the Bunun lack individual gods and spirits, but used to make offerings to the moon. However, Mabuchi declares that they do have a vague idea of a supreme deity or deities, without any corresponding worship. By contrast, says Ferrell, the Paiwan do have specialized deities, and also placate the spirits of the dead collectively. Zheng observes that a Paiwan

shamaness has a female pantheon: the goddess who created humankind, the first ancestress and the first shamaness. Ferrell reports that the Saisiyat also have specialized deities, along with the worship of the spirits of the dead. He thinks that the myths in which the Ami gods are found are of foreign origin. Tsou spirits appear in a myth in which the Tsou are uncertain about whether they appreciate headhunting: the Great Spirit Hamo reveals himself to show that he does. Among the Tsou most spirits are good. The good spirits, apart from their master Hamo, include, alongside him, the female creator-spirit Nivnu and, beneath him, specialized spirits. There is also belief in 'spirits' among the Puyuma, notably in a supreme spirit who in one sub-group is called 'the Creator'.

Religious specialists appear in various contexts. As we have seen, Huang Shujing, speaking of the northern sector 8, tells us of a 'shamaness', and Höllmann, speaking of the Tsou, tells us of a 'sorcerer': their functions seem to be much the same. Among the Ami, in one myth, a shaman and a shamaness commit adultery. Zheng reports that the Paiwan village priest is usually male, and deals with the weather, while the Paiwan also have important shamanesses. Ferrell tells us that the Bunun have shamans as well as shamanesses, and Cauquelin says that this is the case among the Puyuma, the shamans being feminized. The Puyuma also have male 'bamboo diviners', who perform rituals for the community.

The men's common-house is evidently important for the Tsou and the Puyuma. It appears in Tsou myth, when Hamo tells the people to gather in it. The common-house is used by Tsou warriors for divination by dreams before headhunting and hunting animals. Among the Tsou heads are taken to it, and victory is celebrated with a feast inside. The Tsou war-spirit protects the common-house, and it has to be repaired during the *meesi* festival-cycle. This work is also obligatory in the Puyuma headhunting festival. From the age of 18 Puyuma youths have to spend three years in the common-house before becoming full members of it. In Puyuma religion there is also an important 'ancestral cult house'. The Atayal, by contrast, seem to be unusual in having no men's houses or other public buildings.

As we have seen, women are strictly excluded from the Tsou common-house. Work is strictly divided between the sexes, which are separated from the 11th or 12th year of their lives and educated in completely different skills. This leads one to wonder to what extent dualism is

prevalent in Taiwanese religion. Ami myths give us male–female pairs, but, as we have observed, may be of foreign origin. The number two does not occur often in the materials that we have surveyed. Among the Tsou one festival lasts for two days, and another is divided into two parts, while the Saisiyat have festivals every two years. Two is found more often among the Puyuma. They have a two-day interval between burial and purification, and a Puyuma village is divided into two halves. Two Puyuma diviners give thanks to two ancestors (corresponding to these two halves) who granted the gift of rice to two brothers. In Puyuma myth two brothers build the first boys' house. However, as regards numbers the Puyuma seem to be anomalous, as we shall see.

The number three occurs in Lin Qianguang: a corpse is exhumed three days after burial. For the Tsou, if the oaimu sings three times on a branch, then a previous dream is a good omen. A Tsou husband is not allowed to go to the fields or go fishing for three days after his wife gives birth. The Tsou use three-pointed split bamboo cane altars. In general the number three does not occur often in our materials, but it seems that it is particularly important for the Puyuma. Each half of a Puyuma village has three founding households, and in one ritual three handfuls of rice are thrown. After Puyuma 18-year-olds are initiated into a three-year period there is dancing for three nights. In another ritual Puyuma men circle an altar three times.

As for the number four, Huang Shujing's report that four slabs or walls are used to make a tomb or vault is probably without significance, as a rectangular arrangement is normal throughout the world. On the other hand there may well be significance in his information that four months of mourning are observed in the southern sector 2, and it is noteworthy that some of the Saisiyat have four deities.

It is the number five, however, which is most prominent in Taiwan. Huang Shujing says that in the southern sector 2 a drought is countered by staying inside for five days, followed by five more if rain falls. It is the same sector that has the five-yearly festival still held among the Paiwan. Among the Tsou the headhunters' shout of victory is repeated five times on the march home. In a Tsou myth of the origin of millet we are told that in the beginning a millet plant could bear fruit five times, and when cooked five grains would fill the saucepan. During the first five days after a Tsou burial the community is in seclusion and, on the fifth, a special ritual is performed. (We may add that, in a Tsou ritual not noted above,

five arrows used to be offered to the earth-spirit when ownership of land was transferred.)[79] Among the Paiwan one story says that the ancestor-deities had five children. Both the Paiwan and the Saisiyat make the spirits of the dead stay for five days in their festivals. The first Paiwan shamaness is one of five sisters. In the case of a 'bad death' among the Puyuma the dead person's spirit is 'recalled' after five years. Otherwise five does not seem significant for the Puyuma.

Other numbers appear to be of little importance. The Puyuma, however, are again anomalous. For them six is the number of days for a shamaness's initiation, and seven is important, as the number of beakers and pieces of meat offered to the spirits. Seven is also, for the Puyuma, the number of days of restrictions for a father after a birth, and of days for exposing a newly-taken head on a shelf. Eight is the numbers for the Puyuma shamanesses' annual festival. Returning to the Taiwanese field in general, we find that nine is the number of days of the Tsou sowing festival. Ten is the number of days for which a Tsou mother, after delivery, cannot go out of the house, while her husband is not allowed to go near anything involved in violence. The Puyuma headhunting festival takes place over ten days. Twelve days make up the period of mourning, says Huang Shujing, in the northern sector 8. Both parts of the Tsou harvest festival also lasted 12 days.

In conclusion, we may observe that Taiwanese aboriginal religion is characterized by specific beliefs and practices related to the dead, headhunting and annual festivals. As regards the dead, 'double burial' and burial in the house are also prominent. Headhunting is religious: the head is sacrificed to a dead relative or supreme spirit. Linked to headhunting is the annual festival-cycle, dominated by the harvest festival. Now burial in the house is linked to the widespread Austronesian belief that a person has two souls, one of which goes to the next world and one of which stays behind. Thus the practice, also widespread in the Austronesian field, of burial beneath or very close to the house evidently corresponds to fear that the soul that stays behind would be attacked by evil spirits if its body were to be buried far away. A death necessitates a headhunting expedition, the idea apparently being that the victim, welcomed into the community, 'replaces' the dead person as an active producer and provider in agriculture, hunting and general prosperity. The sacrifice of the human head is also beautiful and pleasing to the spirits, better than that of animals. In law it proves that

the headtaker is right and that his oath is true. Headhunting is prominent in annual festivals, in which it is linked to agriculture (and in particular the harvest), hunting, initiation and purification, as well as the spirits of the dead. Thus it is headhunting that provides the vital link between the souls that go to the next world and the supply of food.

Chapter 2

WESTERN MALAYO-POLYNESIAN SPEAKERS

As indicated above, our survey of Western Malayo-Polynesian speakers will concentrate on selected peoples of the Philippines, Borneo, Madagascar and Nias. We shall be using twentieth-century anthropological sources, sometimes the work of administrators and missionaries. Finally, we shall come to some general conclusions regarding Western Malayo-Polynesian religion.

The Philippines

Barton: The Ifugao

The Ifugao live in the western mountain ranges of Northern Luzon, in the north of the Philippines. Their religion has been efficiently studied by the American anthropologist Roy Barton, who did his fieldwork in 1908–14, 1937 and 1941. He notes that the Ifugao deities inhabit five regions: the earth on which we live, the Skyworld, the Underworld, the Upstream Region, from which a river flows down to the earth, and the Downstream Region, where it continues its flow. Barton also observes that the number of Ifugao gods is enormous – he estimates around 1,500. There is no creator or supreme god, but the Ifugao have deified ancestors, parts of nature and society, emotions, illnesses, characters in myths and magical powers. There are over 40 classes of deities. Often the deities come in sequences, which suggest that their names have been

derived from magical invocations, to assist in, for example, hunting or the recovery of debts.[1]

One of these classes of deities are called the 'Paybackables' (*Matungulan*), because they receive the principal offering at feasts, in which they are 'paid back' for previously providing the Ifugao with their domestic animals, equipment and rites. The 'Paybackables' include nature gods, teachers, thieves and predators. One of them, 'Lidum the Giver', is the great teacher of ritual, and has plenty of offspring in the Skyworld. Another, 'Gold' (*Balitok*), is the most important of Ifugao culture heroes, and was taught the greatest number of rites by the other gods. He is the main character in most Ifugao myths. Another class of deities is that of the 'Clustered' (*Napulungot*), so called because they live in villages closely clustered together. These gods own the locusts, and let them loose every six years or so. They are also associated with the return of the souls of pigs, chicken and rice, once eaten, to be reborn.[2]

Yet another class are called the 'Deceivers' (*Manahaut*s), after one of its principal gods, Deceiver, Sun and Moon. The Deceiver brings people into danger and death, and coaxes their souls away with gold and meat. Deceiver's descendants among the gods inflict illnesses upon people. The Sun and Moon have the stars among their descendants. In the war rituals one priest is possessed by Deceiver and brandishes his arms over a pig, a second priest is possessed by Sun and spears the pig and a third is possessed by Moon and drinks the pig's blood. Another group are the 'Omen Deities' (*Gahidu*), who guide humans through snakes, birds, insects and so on. Yet another are the 'Gods of Reproduction' (*Maknongan*), who, like all Ifugao deities, can bring illnesses and death, but are also benevolent and carry humans in the 'blanket sling' (*oban*) used for carrying Ifugao babies. They control reproduction, and their names reflect the Ifugao belief that birth is connected with fishing and water, as regards conception, pregnancy and delivery.[3]

Barton also lists 'deities of social relations'. Among these are the 'Convincers' (*Halupe*), who are used with regard to debt collection, but also in war and headhunting, in order to confuse the enemy. They are mainly in the Skyworld, for example *Kidul hi Kabunian* ('Thunder in the Skyworld'), who startles the debtor with his thunder. There are also the *Hidit*, regulators of relations between enemies. Some of these punish violation of the taboo against eating the enemy's food, while others are characters in myths used in peacemaking. Yet others are the *Pili*,

guardians of property, who protect the dignity of the upper class vis-à-vis commoners. A man safeguards his property by building a shrine for the Pili and sacrificing a chicken to them: they inflict illnesses on people who come near.[4]

There are, furthermore, 'Messengers' (*Makalun*), who intercede with and summon other deities. One also finds 'Gods of the Winds' (*Puok*), who can be invoked to blow talismans to the enemy, so as to make him renounce his vengeance. Other classes of deities have no function other than causing illnesses, such as dysentery, boils, abscesses, liver disease, headaches, wounds and arthritis. Similarly malevolent are the 'Spitters' (*Bumugi*), who try to deceive the soul of someone who has recently died, so as to make it bring its living relatives into their power. The point here is that gods can cause death only if the souls of dead relatives agree. There are also 'minor war deities' (*Hipag*), mainly figures in myths about a stronger contestant's defeating a weaker one: the former is called to stay on the invoker's side, the latter to join the enemy and weaken him.[5]

This last class of gods is connected with talismans, which are usually stones, and require 'talisman-activating deities' to be used to protect one, notably against enemies. There are also 'Deities of the Chase' (*Alabat*), who own game and have raw meat offered to them. Many of them operate to annul the dangers of the hunt. Yet another class is that of the 'Granary Image Deities', who increase the rice in the granary. During the feast in which an image is activated priests are possessed by these deities and run around on all fours before picking the image up and dancing with it. Afterwards, at granary feasts, it is doused with wine and has rice cakes smeared on its face.[6]

The most feared of deities are the 'Flying Monsters' (*Taiyaban*), who carry off people's souls or devour the 'soul-stuff' of parts of the body. They live in rocks, thickets and trees. Usually they are bird-like, and are perceived by dogs when humans cannot see them. Also feared are the 'Place Spirits' (*Pinading*), who also live in rocks and trees, as well as springs and the banks of rivers, and also steal the souls of humans, as well as those of rice. They produce about a third of all illnesses.[7]

Barton begins his survey of Ifugao ritual by emphasizing the fact that virtually all adult males are priests. A rite consists of an invocation of ancestors or deities, a prayer to the latter, an invitation to an ancestor or a deity to possess a priest, the possession itself and an exhortation to the

ancestor or deity. An offering is made: in important rites this consists of chickens and sometimes pigs as well. Rice wine and betel nuts are also offered. Rites are usually performed in or under a house or under a granary. Each priest recites a myth.[8]

Hunting rituals begin with the sacrificing of chickens to the 'Gods of Reproduction' and the 'Deities of the Chase', along with prayers for protection. After a day's ceremonial idleness the hunters go to a hill to take the omens from a bird. If the bird sings quickly it is a good omen, but if not the hunt is put off. When good omens have been obtained the hunters go to the forest and burn dry sticks. They fetch water and quench the coals, praying that the mouths of snakes and wild boar be quenched as well. After the game is caught a bit of its belly fat is given to the local 'place spirits'.[9]

Various rituals relating to rice are performed throughout the year. Noteworthy among these is the eating of new rice in May or June. Here the main rite is called 'tied up' (*binudbud*). The aim is to 'tie up' people's stomachs so that they will not eat much. Also, spears and knives are 'tied up' to avoid violence during the harvest. The priests eat a small amount of rice in order to set a pattern for others. On the night before the harvest rich people have a ritual of their own. A ballad is chanted by those who have given 'prestige feasts'.[10]

These 'prestige feasts' are held not just to maintain or secure prestige, but also to ensure fertility. The giver is always concerned to spend as little as possible and to avoid brawling among his guests. Thus the leading priest must eat and drink sparingly, so that the guests will do likewise, and performs a special rite for the purpose of 'tying up' the guests' words, spears and knives. The special ballad just mentioned is chanted: it is reserved for the upper class. On the main day of the feast people get drunk and quarrel.[11]

Headhunting rites are particularly complicated. They begin with the throwing of spears at a target in the form of a man and given the enemy's name. Chickens are sacrificed, notably to the deities of reproduction and war. Then the headhunters sleep beneath the house. Myths are recited for almost the entire night. The next morning the hunters go to a hill to look for an oracle from a bird (the blue-headed fantail, *Rhipidura cyaniceps*). If the omen is good they set off the same day; if it is bad they try again on the next. When they go they stop at the boundary of their own region and build a shack. They light a fire in it: if the flames or an insect make a circular movement this is a bad omen. Then the hunters sleep on their

arms: a priest inspects them and sends home any whose scabbards are at an odd angle or who have parts of their bodies swollen.[12]

Now the headhunters enter the enemy's domain. They spread themselves out on the way to their target: one or two go ahead to attack the victim, who will probably be a woman near a hill farm, far from male protectors in the enemy's village. The victim is speared and the head is severed. At this point the headtaker dips a finger in the blood and licks it. The head is carried back in a relay system and finally thrown to the ground and told to become light. Then the hunters begin to yell, as do the people of their region. Women praise them and themselves for having given birth to such brave warriors. The head is left in the outskirts of the hunters' village.[13]

When the party enters the village it is greeted by speeches made by the old men. 'Entrance' rites follow, that is to say rituals performed before anything new or important is brought into the village. The party's leader brings the head to his house and puts it on a stake: dancing and speeches follow. The next day a rite is performed to counter the vengeance rituals taking place at the same time among the enemy. Ancestors are invoked to pray to the deities to visit the enemy with death and economic ruin. The gods are asked, in a particularly vindictive manner, to bring death with overwhelming terror. On the following days each member of the raiding party performs the main headhunting ritual, in which several chickens and at least two pigs are sacrificed. Ancestors and deities are called on to turn round the enemy's sorcery and attempts at vengeance. The priests become possessed, spears are brandished and hurled across the victims and oblations are poured onto them.[14]

Usually the head is buried until the flesh rots off: it will be put on a shelf by the front door of a house. In one region, Kurug, it is boiled until the flesh drops off. Then the man who cleans the skull eats a bit of the flesh, saying, 'You are eaten, flesh of the beheaded, so that I may be ferocious.' He declares that he is and will be healthy, unafflicted by the Hidit (regulators of relations between enemies). Barton comments that ritual cannibalism seems to have been practised by all the headhunters of this part of the Philippines, for the purpose, it would appear, of obtaining invigoration through the beheaded person's 'soul-stuff'.[15]

According to Barton another ritual is required before second and third cousins can marry (marriage between first cousins being prohibited).

In the past, before this ritual, a mock fight took place between the families of the bride and groom, and spears were thrown. Then a peacemaking rite followed, in which the ancestors and the Hidit were invoked, before a feast.[16]

Ifugao death rites are, like headhunting ones, extremely complicated. Barton points out that disease is attributed to ancestral spirits or deities. As for death itself, one opinion is that the soul is brought to the ancestor or god who wants it by the Conductor of Souls, Imbagaiyan. Another opinion is that the soul escapes from the body through the flesh, as a thin haze or smoke. The corpse is tied to a 'death chair' beneath the house. Animals are sacrificed to the soul, and the ancestors, who are considered responsible for the death, are invoked to take care of it: it must never return. Some days later the corpse is taken to the sepulchre and put, seated, on an earthen shelf by a wall. Meanwhile, in the village, a priest 'pushes' the soul to prestige feasts in nearby valleys until it is delivered to the Region of the Dead.[17]

Two to five years later one of the bereaved will suffer from an illness ascribed to the soul of the deceased. This necessitates a second funeral 'for the bones'. These are placed beneath the house and may stay there for weeks or months, while pigs and chickens are obtained for the funeral feast. The soul is told to share the animals with its ancestors and to refuse any summons from enemies: it will be invited to later feasts. Its bones are returned to the shelf in the sepulchre. Along with 'second funerals' the Ifugao also have a 'funeral while living', in which old people who wish to die sacrifice to their own souls and carry out their own funeral rites. This funeral is soon followed by death. Barton further notes that the Ifugao practise different forms of interment. There is the sepulchre, which is dug into a bank of soft stone and contains many corpses: it is clearly a substitute for the caves used for burials elsewhere in the Philippines. Rich people sometimes use a coffin, placed under the house, or a mausoleum in the form of a granary. Jars are used for burying infants.[18]

Barton also provides a statistical survey of Ifugao ritual, which shows that the benefit most sought after in religion is 'abundance of life', meaning health, vitality and so forth. Tying for second place are 'miraculous increase of harvest' and 'immunity from enemies'. He further notes that all invocations in hunting rituals stress prestige, which may be the main reason for hunting, since the Ifugao are not dependent on it for food. Barton concludes with a harsh judgment upon Ifugao

religion: it is a reflection of the people's weaknesses, transformed into conceptions of refuge from reality. The main basis of the religion is magic, to be found in the recitation of the myths. Thus the myth is freed to act when recited.[19]

Rosaldo: The Ilongot

Further light on headhunting in the Philippines is shed by the US anthropologist Michelle Rosaldo, in her *Knowledge and Passion*, devoted to the Ilongot people of Northern Luzon, and based on fieldwork done in 1967–9 and 1974. The Ilongot headhunt, they explain, because it is their custom, and their ancestors had done it. They do it because of what they call *liget*, 'anger, energy, passion'. Sometimes it is because of bereavement and its consequent grief and 'bad feelings', which weigh down upon one until a beheading. Sometimes it is for the sake of vengeance. Mainly, however, it is because of young men's desire to emulate their fathers. In headtaking the raiding party ambushes a group of enemies, firing shots at them and then rushing chaotically upon the dead and injured. A 'master' calls upon a young man to behead a victim. The young man may then do this or just hold the head as it is cut off, since 'beheading' is credited to whoever then performs the all-important act of 'tossing' the head to the ground. If someone else catches it before it hits the ground the thrower does not gain credit for the 'beheading'. The young men who have been successful will now wear special ornaments and be qualified to find wives. Thus, when making roof beams, the Ilongot carve 'headhunting knives' and 'maidens' breasts'.[20]

The Ilongot further explain that their aim in beheading and 'tossing' heads is to acquire an *'amet*, 'a spirit of one beheaded'. Such spirits are unlike other spirits, and simply enable the owner to boast and to curse others. Before beheadings these spirits are an aspect of the hearts sought by the headhunters from the Forest Lord. The latter encourages the hearts to perch on the hunters' earlobes. After the beheadings these hearts, now called *'amet*, enhance the beheaders. They continue to hang on to the killers' ears, where they are joined by the red hornbill earrings granted only to a headtaker.[21]

Dozier: The Kalinga

Another people of Northern Luzon, the Kalinga, were studied by yet another US anthropologist, Edward Dozier, in 1959–60. He observes

that among the Kalinga misfortunes are attributed to spirits, often those of ancestors. There is one creator-god, Kaboniyan, but appeals are made to him only rarely. The spirits are addressed by women mediums, who are possessed by their own spirit helpers and journey into the spirit world to bring back the soul of someone who is ill. As for headhunting, it is often directed against an isolated man, woman or child of any age. If the victim's cries bring help before the head is severed only a hand or fingers may be taken. When the hunters return to their region they shout piercing cries, and the women reply with a staccato cry called the *ayaya*, produced by rapid movements of the tongue against the upper teeth, and made only on this occasion. The head is placed in a basket at the sacred shrine of the hunters' village. Sometimes some of the brains are mixed with wine, the mixture being drunk by the hunters to make them brave and successful. Later the head is boiled and bits of the skull are given to the hunters. The most highly regarded bit is the lower jaw, which is used as the handle of the Kalinga's favourite musical instrument, the Chinese gong. All of the hunters now have the right to be tattooed, whether they have killed or not, and all the hunters' female relatives also share this right. In the celebratory feast veteran headhunters re-enact their past killings and denounce young men who are afraid to emulate them as contemptible weaklings. Dozier notes that the Kalinga most often mention prestige as the reason for headhunting: a young headtaker will easily acquire mistresses, who will increase his prestige yet further. Finally, Dozier reports that victims of headhunting tend to be old and infirm, since children and women who are not old stay together with men in the prime of life, whereas old people stubbornly insist on going around alone. Killers' prestige is not diminished by their victims' age, and in the ceremonial recitals of their exploits they often refer to their victims as being old.[22]

Borneo

Hose: Northern Borneo

In 1912 there appeared a remarkable study of the tribes of northern Borneo, published by the British administrator Charles Hose and the Oxford founder of social psychology, William McDougall. Hose (the real author) tells us that one north Bornean people, the Iban, had gone on foraging expeditions to the territories of other tribes, accepted their

hospitality and taken the heads of old men, women and children while their protectors were absent. The Iban sometimes rob other tribes' tombs of heads, smoke them and bring them home. Women urge men to take heads, and a young woman will taunt a suitor who has not done this. Nearly all tribes require a head to end a period of mourning. Some tribes bring a newly-taken head to the tomb of a recently-dead chief.[23]

Hose concentrates his attention upon one particular northern Bornean people, the Kayan. These have a supreme god, Laki Tenangan, and gods of war, life, thunder, fire, the harvest and so forth. There are also minor spirits, the most important of which are linked to the heads suspended in houses. These spirits and heads are believed to bring prosperity, notably in the crops, to the house. Hose reports that in the case of another northern Bornean people, designated by his now discredited umbrella term 'Klemantan', a head had recently been obtained for a chief's tomb by the killing of a slave: the latter was given small spear wounds by each of the guests at the funeral. As regards the Kayan, a man can have his hands fully tattooed only after he has taken a head. In one recent instance some Kayan, in order to obtain a head, had killed an old woman captive by thrusting a pole against her body, and then hung her flesh on other poles: this, they said, was much finer than killing a pig. Previously they would normally kill three slaves when a chief died, nailing them to the tomb, for the purpose of accompanying him to the next world and paddling his canoe. Formerly another neighbouring people, the Kenyah, would kill a girl by letting a new house's foundations fall upon her.[24]

One 'Klemantan' tribe claims to be descended from a mythical man called Tokong, whom they present as the founder of headhunting. In the myth Tokong and his people were once about to attack a village, when a frog said to him, 'Cut through the neck!' Previously the people had cut off only enemies' hair, to ornament their shields, and so they rejected this advice. The frog, however, insisted that headtaking would give them prosperity in all its forms, and, by way of demonstration, beheaded a small fellow frog. So Tokong removed his enemies' heads and, as his war party came home through their rice fields, the crops shot up with miraculous rapidity. When they neared their relatives the latter came out rejoicing at various bits of good luck. Tokong's people continued to take heads, and others learnt this from them.[25]

The Kayan, notes Hose, have other interesting customs. When a mother gives birth to twins only one is selected to survive, usually a boy if

the other is a girl. The one selected for death is exposed in the jungle. It is explained by the Kayan that they do this to save the surviving twin's life. One reason is that to divide the mother's care and milk between a pair of twins would bring death to both; the other is that twins are bound to each other and share their misfortunes. Another custom, shared by most Kayan pubescent males, is the perforation of the penis, along with the insertion of a short rod of bone or wood. Yet another noteworthy aspect of Kayan society, shared with the Kenyah, is its tripartite stratification into a chiefly, a middle and a lower class, the last consisting of slaves.[26]

Nieuwenhuis: The Kayan

Yet more information about the Kayan is provided by the Dutch explorer A. Nieuwenhuis, in a work published in 1904–7 and based on observations made from 1894 to 1900. He found that the religion of the Kayan of central Borneo was dominated by the cultivation of rice. In the sowing rituals the first day has a ban on bathing, after which people rest for a period of eight nights. Then the one-day ban is repeated and during another eight-night period the rice is sown. Men play with tops, and on the evening of the second one-day ban they dance in masks, their bodies covered with banana leaves, imitating demons. After this dancing the men go in a procession and use long hooks to draw home the spirits of the rice, which sometimes wander to other countries. Later on in the evening eight young women dance to the sound of a Jew's harp. A third nine-day period resembles the second. Subsequently rituals are performed for the weeding of the fields: these are sprinkled with a decoction of edible leaves. The post-harvest new year festival lasts eight days, during which the spirits are summoned and pigs are sacrificed to them.[27]

The number eight is also found in hunting rituals. When a panther has been shot the Kayan step over it eight times, saying, 'Panther, your soul beneath my soul!' Afterwards they rub themselves with chicken blood and bathe for eight days and nights; then they must return to the hunt. The point, explains Nieuwenhuis, is that they are afraid that the panther's powerful soul will draw their souls away.[28]

Jensen: The Iban

In 1974 the Danish anthropologist Erik Jensen published a book called *The Iban and Their Religion*, based on fieldwork done from 1959 to

1966. He gives us useful evidence concerning the Iban shaman, called *manang*. Most of the manangs have been afflicted with a physical handicap, usually blindness. To become a manang one has to be called by the spirits. A man is often called by dreaming that he is dressed as a woman, wearing a skirt and with his hair in a chignon. The highest grade of shaman is that of the *manang bali*, who is described as man changed into woman. Such a shaman wears women's dress, lives as a woman and may have a husband, but is still recognized as a man. A manang's function is to diagnose a spirit's intervention in an illness, go to the spirit world and bring the patient's soul back.[29]

Metcalf: The Berawan

1982 saw the appearance of another study of a northern Bornean people's religion, that of the Berawan, by the US anthropologist Peter Metcalf, based on fieldwork conducted from 1971 to 1975. This study concentrates on death rituals, which, among the Berawan, last up to ten days. In a minority of cases there is a second funeral, after at least one year. Here the remains are transformed from a temporary shelter to the 'longhouse', a structure that houses hundreds of people, for a celebration. Then the bones are taken to a mausoleum. In the first funeral a 'death throne' is prepared, upon which the dead person is displayed for a day or so before being placed in a jar or coffin. A hole is made in the front wall of the family room, since the corpse cannot go through the door. The body is taken through the hole in the wall and put on the throne. It is dressed, and valuables are hung around it. The widow or widower is imprisoned in a cubicle of mats stood on edge in front of the corpse. As for the latter, it is transferred to a coffin or jar after a night or two. More and more mourners arrive, and more and more women join in a chorus of dirges. People keep awake at night, and maintain a festive spirit. Special 'death songs' are sung. During the night before the entombment there is a feast, with songs that bring the dead person's soul to the land of the dead. The next day a large meal is eaten and the coffin or jar is taken by boat to the graveyard. There it is placed inside a mausoleum. The next day is one of inactivity: nobody can enter or leave the house.[30]

Two or three days later there is a re-enactment of a headhunting raid. Young men, armed, go off in canoes to find palm leaves, which they tear into ribbons and weave into triangles, called 'heads'. They tie these to a pole and return to the longhouse, uttering 'peculiar shrieking war cries'.

Young women rush to them with water and mud. The men counter-attack, and usual constraints are abandoned as men and women throw each other around. An older person plants the pole in front of the longhouse, and the 'heads' are collected by the widow or widower, who is only now allowed to bathe and change into new clothes. Sometimes a chicken is formally sacrificed with prayers to the Creator Spirit, the supreme spirit most commonly invoked. One 'head' is hung upon the deceased's mausoleum. The young men come back into the longhouse, each passing between two married women. These pour rice wine over a broken egg in a sieve onto the man as he crouches, thus releasing him from the taboos observed on war expeditions. An omen is taken from the eagle and, if it is favourable, the Berawan believe that no further deaths will take place. There is now a blessing of the war swords. Previously this was accompanied by a special dance to honour the real heads that had been taken, and this dance was dominated by women, with lewdness and transvestism. The next rite, that of the initiation of warriors, has also changed since the days of headhunting, when someone who had taken a head at once assumed all of a warrior's insignia. Nowadays boys and men are splashed with the blood of a decapitated black pig, along with that of chickens, and the men run around waving their swords as if in battle. Those taking part are henceforth allowed to wear hornbill feathers in their 'war bonnets'. Finally, there is the rite of 'putting up the effigy'. A decorated post is erected, with two crossbars, representing arms and legs, and crudely carved on its summit is a human face. The whole effigy is covered with palm leaves. A chicken is decapitated against the upper end, and its head and liver, together with a green leaf, are skewered to the top. Metcalf comments that the effigy clearly represents the victim of the headhunting raid. Meanwhile, men stand with their legs around the post, and women throw water over them and pelt them with the resulting mud. The men try to seize them, and they all roll around together on the ground as the mud covers them. Later, the proceedings end with a meal.[31]

Metcalf observes that according to the Berawan these headhunting rituals are performed in order to lift the condition of *lumo*, the range of taboos that follows a death. The Berawan, like neighbouring peoples around 1900, maintained that headhunting gave the community more strength, as represented by increased health, birthrate and crops. Metcalf sees the problem of 'how' as 'the central conundrum of headhunting'. He

further notes that the Berawan see a death as producing more deaths if nothing is done. Previously a slave would be put in the hole to be filled by a mausoleum's main post, so that he was crushed to death. The aim was to grant peace to the person to be put inside the mausoleum and stability to the structure. Today, it is believed, foreign firms pay headhunters to obtain heads to secure the foundations of oil rigs. The Kayan maintain that they used to kill to provide servants in the land of the dead, whereas the Berawan claim that they did so in order to provide company for the transition to the next world. Another northern Bornean people, the Melanau, had a similar practice in the nineteenth century: they tied slaves to the uprights of mausoleums, so that they would die of exposure. This is because, they believed, a slave executed violently would go to another region of the land of the dead and thus be unable to serve his master. Metcalf further comments that the uninhibited joint behaviour of the sexes in the Berawan rituals is paralleled in the funeral rites of the Bara of Madagascar, in which intercourse is frequent and 'lewd behaviour' encouraged.[32]

Sometimes, but rarely, the Berawan decide to give someone a second funeral, a *nulang*. This is a very grand affair, involving a lot of people and food, and in the past was preceded by the construction of a tall and imposing wooden mausoleum. The Berawan wait for 'the bones to become dry', which takes at least eight months. The *nulang* begins with a prayer to the ancestors' spirits to come to the longhouse. Then two games are played, one with tops and one with rice pounders. In the first, one man sets a target top spinning, and the other players shoot their tops at it, trying to knock it out of the area of play. Among the Berawan's neighbours top spinning is associated with fertility: the Iban believe that it makes the new rice open more quickly. The Berawan themselves say that the whirring noise made by the tops as they fly through the air is like the speech of the dead. In the second game two rice pounders are used, five feet by three inches, and placed, parallel, upon two piles of timber. Two people bang them against the timber and each other, and the 'player' dances between them.[33]

After this the remains of the deceased are taken out of their temporary resting place. If the bones are to be cleaned this is done now. The jar or coffin containing the bones is taken to the longhouse and placed in a small lean-to just outside. There now follows the 'final night', with its feasting. Monkeys are hunted, roasted and hung up, so that the unwary

bump into them, to great amusement. The next day the bones are taken to their permanent resting place, and the following one is the 'great day of silence'.[34]

During the 'final night' prescribed 'death songs' are sung. In one village, called Long Jegan, at the start of the most important one the lead singer strikes the coffin or jar with a section of bamboo. He calls on the deceased's soul to prepare to depart. Then the singers tell the soul to bathe and get dressed, and afterwards to get into a canoe and paddle along the river. As the soul goes on its journey the singers explain what the various places are. Finally, the soul is told to paddle up a couple of minor streams, to beach the canoe and to look for the leaves used in chewing betel nut. Here the song ends: it is believed that while looking for the leaves the soul is joined by the 'radiant spirits of the dead'.[35]

At another village, called Long Teru, there are important variations. As the soul journeys the souls of seven bachelors are sent along with it. They eventually reach the longhouse in which the dead ancestors reside, and are greeted and entertained by them. Metcalf says that at this point 'a mystical union is supposed to occur between the entire community of the living and that of the dead.'[36] The souls of the seven bachelors are sent home. After this another song is sung, to ensure that the souls of all present are back, after the confusing event that has just happened. Divination by means of dropping sticks is performed to make sure that this is the case.[37]

Metcalf notes that the Berawan have contradictory ideas about where the souls of the dead are: they are both in the tombs and in the land of the dead, and there are different opinions about where the latter is situated. At Long Teru it is believed that the soul eventually reaches a deep ravine, which can be crossed only by a dangerous, wobbly bridge, guarded by a spirit. If the soul falls into the ravine it will be devoured by horrible worms. The Kayan also believe in this ravine with a wobbly bridge guarded by a spirit: the soul crosses over to be met by its relatives. Metcalf further observes that the Berawan sometimes hint that souls guilty of 'antisocial acts' will fall down to the worms, but he feels that this is most probably a result of Christian influence. Usually the idea is that respectable people whose relatives put beads in their mouths for the spirit guarding the bridge will be saved.[38]

The Berawan also have a concept of 'bad death': some forms of death are so horrible that they produce evil spirits. If a woman dies in

childbirth her soul turns into a vengeful spirit that desires to castrate men. Other bad deaths are those caused by wild animals, accidents or self-inflicted injuries. In the case of a bad death there is no funeral: at most there are some truncated rites. When a woman dies in childbirth the husband must at once take the corpse through the floorboards and into the jungle. In other cases there may be a short wake and some prayers, but the corpse may not be brought near the longhouse or buried in the graveyard. The Berawan believe that the bad dead are 'unripe': they have not fulfilled the period of time granted them by the Creator Spirit. Thus they cannot enter the land of the dead.[39]

Schärer: The Ngaju

In 1946 the Swiss missionary and anthropologist Hans Schärer (1904–47) published his doctoral thesis on the Ngaju of southern Borneo, among whom he had lived from 1932 to 1939. He tells us that the Ngaju have two supreme deities, who are sometimes combined, one of the 'Upperworld', Mahatala, male, and one of the 'Underworld' or primeval waters, Jata, female. Mahatala lives on a mountain, surrounded by the other sovereign spirits, and Jata lives in a village, surrounded by crocodiles. This duality pervades Ngaju religion, and also forms a unity. Among the spirits there are five 'kings' (rajas), representing (1) law, (2) divine gifts, (3) misfortune, (4) witches and (5) smallpox and other diseases.[40]

The Ngaju's view of the universe is reflected in their social organization. There is the 'good' or 'rich' group, which is linked to the colour white, and represents the Upperworld and Mahatala. It provides judges and chiefs, responsible for the maintaining of customs. Beneath this is the 'low' or 'poor' group, agriculturalists who provide priests and priestesses, and who are linked to the colour red and the Underworld. A third group are the slaves. Priests and priestesses are also recruited from this group. Slaves play an important part in funerals: a slave sits astride the coffin when it is carried out of the house. This, explains Schärer, represents the human sacrifice that used to be performed over the coffin. A fourth group is that of the witches, seen as the lowest and the worst of people. At night they sever heads from bodies and fly around with the intestines trailing behind. But they are also healers. Nevertheless, they have often been tortured and beaten to death.[41]

A fifth group is that of the priestesses (*balian*) and priests (*basir*). In the past beautiful young slave girls were called balian and taught religious chants, myths and rites. They were hired out as prostitutes and priestesses. Sometimes the prostitution was religious: for some 'incantations' a male celebrant had to spend the night with the priestess. The balian are highly regarded, though it is shameful if one's daughter becomes one. This is also the case with the male priests, the basir, who dress like women and engage in homosexual acts, many being married to men. They include hermaphrodites and impotent men.[42]

According to Schärer the most important period in the Ngaju liturgical calendar is that of the two months 'between the years' (*helat nyelo*), after the harvest and before the next year's resumption of work in the fields. Now marriages take place, and central to these is a coconut, placed on rice heaped up in a gong, upon seven holy mats. Into the coconut is stuck a ceremonial spear: previously this was lodged in a skull, taken in headhunting or from a sacrificed slave. In this period the 'harvest' or 'new year' feast is held. It climaxes with total and mass sexual exchange and intercourse.[43]

Schärer provides further information about headhunting and human sacrifice. The inhabitants of the Katingan River region say that two neighbouring tribes are descended from a couple of pets that they used to keep, a dog and a monkey. Thus they themselves are entitled to headhunt among them. Human sacrifice often took the form of an execution of an incestuous couple by drowning in a basket in a river or crucifixion on a tree. This sacrifice followed flooding or drought, caused by the incest. Headhunting itself involved cleaning the head of its soft parts, removing the brains and smoking the skull. It was followed by a ceremonial reception and a 'skull dance'. Once a headtaking entailed compensation, including 'sprinkling with water' (*tipok danum*), which traditionally involved the sacrificing of a slave. The latter's blood was mixed with water and sprinkled upon people to stop them dying of illnesses.[44]

Another aspect of Ngaju religion consists of the *penyang*, carved figures of humans and animals made of stone, wood or tiger and crocodile teeth. Incense is burned in front of them, and they are smeared with blood to keep headhunters away, or when a man intends to go headhunting, to make him invisible, or he carries them to make himself invulnerable and brave.[45]

Schärer further observes that priests and priestesses become such through divine command: the spirits (*sangiang*) call people to this profession, in which they are mediums, possessed during a ceremony. The spirits enter the pits of their stomachs. Thus the priests are seen as the spirits' wives, and the spirits' entry is seen as an act of fornication. This is related to the intercourse between the organizer of the ceremony and the community's representatives on the one hand and the priestesses and priests on the other, before and during the ceremony. Towards the end of a ceremony a slave is killed on a sacrificial post. This killing begins towards sunset and lasts all night. Everyone dances around the slave, stabbing him. Finally he receives the last, fatal wound, and falls. The corpse is laid on the ground, covered with a cloth, with its head facing the direction of sunrise and its legs that of sunset. Everyone passes over it in the sunset–sunrise direction, and the officiating priest pronounces an end to misfortune. The slave is buried, and the priest smears everyone with blood.[46]

As Schärer notes, the Ngaju have a concept of the 'bad dead', those who have had a premature death. These are criminals, those dead from long illnesses like leprosy, victims of accidents, women who die in pregnancy or childbirth and witches. They become evil spirits, are buried outside consecrated land and have no major funerary rites held for them. As for the 'good dead', they are consulted by an old man when one goes on a journey, or headhunting or after an enemy. The old man strews rice, which changes into seven maidens or seven youths, who go to a shrine outside the village and bring the good dead there.[47]

Schiller: Ngaju Mortuary Rituals and Marriage

The US anthropologist Anne Schiller in 1997 published the results of her fieldwork among the Ngaju, undertaken from 1982 to 1996. She observes that according to the Ngaju at death the soul separates into three souls: that of the intellect, that of the body's fleshy parts and that of the bones, nails and hair. The aim of mortuary rituals is to send these souls to the Upperworld. After death the corpse may stay for two to seven days on a platform in the front room of the house. The nights are spent in wakefulness. Previously, Schiller was informed, ritual specialists would make the corpse walk around. Lizards and pigs, covered with excrement, are set running among those present, and the liquids produced by the decomposing corpse are smeared on cloths and put on the faces of those

who fall asleep. Games are played: outside, a coconut soaked in a flammable liquid is setalight and used as a football, and inside ants' nests, animal faeces and scorching rice are thrown around. When the body is taken away in its coffin a descendant of the dead person sits on top of it, to provide an escort. Taken by canoe to the graveyard, it is lowered into the earth. A wooden statue, representing a human being of the same sex, may be erected by the grave. As the mourners return they laugh and push and race each other, especially if they are young and the deceased was well-liked. When they return they must be immersed in water.[48]

A second stage of mortuary ritual provides further purification and sends off the deceased's three souls. It happens in theory two days after the burial, but may come over a month later. It starts just after dusk and goes on till just before dawn. Chanting and drumming are done in the house's front room, and food is offered to the souls. Heated sections of bamboo are struck against the house's window sills and doorways, and consequently explode: these loud noises drive out the evil 'cloud of death'. Then the bamboo sections are tied to wooden figurines, which represent the family of the deceased, and are taken to the river and set adrift on a little raft. Just after midnight a tiny house of sticks is put in a bowl of rice: this house's spiritual essence is supposed to shelter the deceased in the Upperworld until the secondary burial is done. The principal specialist performs a chant and scatters rice, the spiritual essence of which is transformed into seven messengers to the Upperworld. These messengers contact a supernatural being, Raja Duhung, who contacts souls and brings them to the Upperworld from the village. Now the souls of the deceased speak through the head specialist to the relatives. Then the soul of the intellect is sent to the Upperworld, whereas the other two souls are sent to the grave.[49]

The third stage of mortuary ritual is the 'second burial', *tiwah*, which may come years later. A hut is erected, a drum is struck, inviting the spirits to come, and gongs are pounded. Those present engage in 'ululation', which in the past was used to signal victory in headhunting: the 'sponsors' cry out seven times 'Lu-lu-lu-lu-luuuuuu-ueehhh huie'. Later, they construct a 12-foot-high bamboo structure, at the centre of which a pole is topped by a basket containing a coconut. Previously it contained a head taken in headhunting specially for the occasion. Many lay people said that this was to provide a slave in the next world, but several ritual specialists said that it represented a spirit who would protect

the deceased. Men and women dance round the structure and engage in renewed ululations. Sacrificial posts are made ready, and a repository for the deceased's bones is made. In some areas, alongside such repositories, wooden or stone phalluses are erected, ranging from one foot to several metres high. The ritual itself begins with the specialists chanting to Raja Duhung and inviting him and 40 of his assistants to the hut. Next morning, sponsors go to graveyards and collect skeletons, which they will bring to the repository later. Men and women cook or erect sacrificial posts, and then spend the night dancing and drinking. Sometimes a ship comes, bringing animals, rice and coconuts. On it men and women wear huge wooden phalluses and coconut shell halves that represent female genitalia. They engage in obscene dances and mock the sponsors, daring them to copulate with them. The opposing groups throw blunted spears at each other as the ship circles seven times. Afterwards the ship is unloaded and dismantled, and animals (pigs, water buffaloes and cows) are sacrificed. This sacrificing is done in a prolonged manner, with repeated stabbings, as with slaves in the past: some people still identify the animals with slaves. Subsequently the animals' heads are hung, facing upwards, on the sacrificial posts, to prove to those in the Upperworld that all has been done properly. The chief ritual specialist then takes the heads to a temporary shrine dedicated to the spirits who oversee the ritual. He circles the shrine seven times.[50]

Afterwards mourners fetch the skeletons that they have previously collected. Towards dusk the chief specialist begins the chanting that accompanies the deceased's first soul to the 'Prosperous Village' in the Upperworld. Those taking part ululate seven times. The specialist's voice boards a ship, together with supernatural beings, and it goes to the Upperworld's lower region. There the deceased's 'soul of the intellect' is already waiting, but wishes to visit his or her relatives one last time. This happens, as the deceased speaks to the family through the chief specialist. Then the 'soul of the intellect' travels past two mountains of fire and bathes in a pool, which restores the beauty of its youth. It is given a fruit, which makes it forget its life, and then crosses a bridge into the 'Prosperous Village', joining its ancestors.[51]

Next morning the men drink alcoholic beverages from a water buffalo's horn. Previously a skull taken in headhunting was used for this. In the night other ritual specialists chant to accompany the other two souls to the Prosperous Village: there they join the first soul, the 'soul of

the intellect'. On the following day the skeletons are put in their repository. The latter is circled seven times by those taking part, before and after the actual depositing. Before the repository is resealed chaos breaks out as people throw dirt and food at each other. Next morning they get into canoes, which are capsized. Then the bereaved spouses have their clothes cut off and put on their brightest clothing. They 'kill' the temporary mortuary edifices of the ritual, circling them and stabbing each seven times. Honorific titles are bestowed upon sponsors by the main specialist: this may take many days. Then the specialists make a collection, are paid and go home.[52]

Schiller also provides interesting information about Ngaju marriage. This has to be between people of the same generation, or dire consequences would result. When an 'incestuous' couple stay in a village, they have to be purified. Offerings to the spirits responsible are put in the middle of the path leading through the village, and a black pig is sacrificed. Its blood is mixed with rice and scattered. The couple crawl to the offerings from the two ends of the village path, and eat, without using their hands, from a pig trough, because 'like pigs, they don't care with whom they mate'.[53]

Madagascar

Bloch: Merina Mortuary Rituals

A study, *Placing the Dead*, on the Merina people of central Madagascar, based on fieldwork done between 1964 and 1966, was published in 1971 by the leading British anthropologist Maurice Bloch. He notes the traditional division of Merina society into three 'castes', 'nobles', commoners' and 'slaves'. Bloch also observes that the Merina spend enormous amounts of money on building family tombs, partly underground chambers of stone and cement about 20 feet square. It is when death happens that the all-important solidarity of the local community is most manifest. A body is usually buried one day after death, in a tomb or, temporarily, in the earth. First, the north-east corner of the main room is curtained off, and the body is put in it. Relatives sit round the enclosure, and the death is announced to the rest of the villagers. The women of the village immediately come and start to prepare the funeral meal, without anything being asked. In the evening the villagers gather at the house, and, as the women continue to prepare

the meal, the men, around the house, spend the night playing dominoes or draughts or betting, while singing boisterously. Finally, the meal is eaten. It is explained that the neighbours are there to guard against witches, who steal corpses and harm mourners. Next morning the body is put in a coffin and placed in a tomb or a temporary grave. In the latter case men and women return separately, before stepping over a small fire on the house's threshold. The next day all the people of the house wash themselves and all their clothing in a stream. These last two rites, it is stated, are to remove contamination with death.[54]

A much more important ritual is that of the secondary burial, the *famadihana*, 'turning over' the dead. This is not performed for everyone. It happens at least two years after death, and is hugely expensive. Sometimes the ritual just involves reburial in a tomb where the body already is. A temporary hut is built to receive the guests. On the evening before the ceremony the relatives of the deceased stand on the tomb, look towards the north-east and call out to the spirits of all the dead who are to be exhumed. The spirits are called upon to come back to their bodies, and offered rum and honey to encourage them. Then the relatives go back to the other guests in the village, and all-night dancing and singing take place in the hut. Next day, around noon, the relatives dance again in the hut, but now in a tense manner, which reflects their fear and apprehension of the ceremony to come. Bloch explains that coming into contact with the dead is very frightening for the Merina. Afterwards, still dancing, they go to the tomb. Skeletons are chosen to be taken out, wrapped in linen cloths, taken out and further wrapped in papyrus mats. Then they are entrusted to the close women relatives of the dead, who put the bodies on their shoulders and dance with them anxiously, moving back and forth. This anxiety is aroused mainly by the recent dead who are the main object of the ceremony, and gradually turns into 'Bacchanalian high spirits'. Eventually the skeletons are laid on the women's laps as they sit, and the oldest man of the family picks out the expensive silk sheets that are now wrapped round them. Then the women replace the skeletons on their shoulders and dance again, circling the tomb clockwise three times, and again going back and forth. They become increasingly frenzied, throwing the skeletons upwards, and shouting, running, tugging and pulling. Male relatives playfully try to stop the dead from getting back to the tomb. Eventually the bodies are put back there, as this festive mood continues, and the papyrus mats are

thrown out for the women to fight over (they are much valued as helping fertility, as is the dancing in the ceremony).[55]

If the deceased has been buried in a temporary grave, then the corpse is attached to a pole and secured to it with ropes. As the relatives take it to the tomb they swing, jolt and play with it, rushing it back and forth. Bloch says that according to some writers this particular rite is performed to ensure that the soul will not return to the house of the living, but he could find no support for this from his informants. The reason given by them for this kind of secondary burial is that everyone wishes to be buried with one's relatives: there is a terror of being permanently buried alone. At any secondary burial everyone is asking for a blessing from the dead, and this removes guilt.[56]

Blessing is an important element in Merina weddings. The couple has to be blessed by the head of the bride's family, her parents and various old men, and the number of blessings has to be three or seven. These blessings wish the couple seven boys and seven girls, riches and descendants. Bloch comments that both three and seven are propitious numbers in Madagascar. When the wedding party reaches the groom's house they have to go round it clockwise three or seven times.[57]

Decary: Death in Madagascar

The death and funerary customs in Madagascar are further explored by the French administrator Raymond Decary, in a book published in 1962. He refers to the sacrificing of a female slave of a Merina king when he was buried in 1828, along with several fine horses of his. However, they were not buried with him, although it was believed that they would continue to serve him in the next world. In Merina secondary burials, notes Decary, if the shrouds have been torn, or accidentally unrolled, so that the bodies are visible, childless women are summoned to stroke the skulls and pray. After the bodies have been rewrapped they are taken round the tomb seven times. At one royal tomb there is a 'fertility stone', with two hemispheres representing a pair of breasts, and childless women come, kneel before it and rub themselves against it.[58]

Among another people of Madagascar, the Betsileo, says Decary, the funeral wake turns into an orgy: no woman can refuse herself to a man, and no husband can prevent his wife from taking part. Previously such orgies were normal, and they still continue in spite of the hostility of missionaries and administrators. One old Betsileo man explained to

Decary that when a man dies another must come to replace him. Yet another people of Madagascar, the Antaimoro, have a striking ritual in which villagers swear not to reveal to the authorities what is going on among them. For the oath a little earth is taken, coming from the human remains that have accumulated in a tomb. This is mixed with the blood of a sacrificed bull and water, and drunk before the tomb's master as the oath is sworn.[59]

Elsewhere in Madagascar, among the Sakalava people, royal funerals have on occasion involved a month's mourning, followed by a month of pleasure, rejoicing and feasts. The building of the tomb was accompanied by the chanting of erotic songs, addressed to the male and female sexual organs. In the past the night before the burial was one of an orgy, and killings, deliberate or not, were left unpunished. Of all the peoples of Madagascar the Sakalava practised human sacrifice at royal funerals most often. Before 1869, when a king died two slaves, one male, one female, were killed. The woman was eviscerated and fat was taken off her body, enough to anoint the whole coffin, while the man's blood was sprinkled onto the grave. As for their bodies, they were sometimes placed beside the king, but more often beneath him. Among one branch of the Sakalava those sacrificed had to come from one particular caste: four victims, decked out with costly ornaments, had their throats cut to serve as a 'carpet' for the king. Sometimes the victims were volunteers, running to the spot as soon as they heard of the king's death and seeing their fate as a privilege.[60]

Yet another people of Madagascar, the Bara, also have a 'second burial'. Before it a wooden coffin is prepared, and there are feasts in which meat is consumed. The nights are spent awake, with orgies, and after sunset no woman can refuse herself and no union is considered incestuous, but afterwards it is forbidden to make any allusion to what has happened. Among another people, the Mahafaly, in 1889, when one king died five of his wives were rendered unconscious and buried with him and, in 1912, on the death of another king, three slaves were killed and put beneath his coffin. Finally, Decary describes the funeral customs of the Antandroy. In the past, for royal funerals, they would kill slaves, and the pallbearers would walk over their bodies, which were later buried with their master. In Decary's time this custom would sometimes be represented by the killing of a sheep. Antandroy funerals are concluded with the

dedication of a new tomb. Many bulls are killed, and then dancing takes place. When evening comes the bulls are cut up and feasting on the meat is followed by an orgy.[61]

Elsewhere Decary tells us that, in the past, when twins were born, this was seen as unlucky, and the mother would bring up only one, entrusting the other to a female relative or exposing it to die. Another French administrator, Louis Michel, says that previously the Merina would simply kill twins, but later would entrust them to someone who lived far away. Decary also says that in western Madagascar a mother purifies herself by bathing immediately after giving birth: this is seen as an important religious act.[62]

Dubois: The Betsileo

In 1938 the French Jesuit missionary Henri Dubois published his massive study of the Betsileo, based on 35 years of research. He notes the constant repetition of the number seven in funerals: seven cords for tying the limbs, seven mats on which to lay the body, and so on. Dubois says that here there is a pun: *fito* ('seven') suggests *ito* ('separated') and the idea of separation between the living and the dead. He also provides a detailed description of the bullfight that is an important part of a funeral in a rich family. In the bullfight strong young men overwhelm bulls with their bare hands. Often the men are seriously injured, to the great joy of the watching crowd, in which men and women, close together, become extremely excited. This prepares them for the orgy that follows. The aim of the orgy, according to Dubois, is to distract the soul of the deceased, which has left the living but not yet joined the dead, and is trapped in loneliness and silence. An old man utters a formula that suppresses the usual prohibitions concerning the sexes. Everyone dances, and rum is drunk. Suddenly a signal is given, and the women, now all in a hut, are asked by the men outside 'Who is there?' and reply 'It is I!' They come out, the men grab them and 'each man throws himself upon his prey'. Such orgies are repeated for several nights: in the past, for important funerals, they continued for weeks or months. Sometimes they start again in the daytime.[63]

Sometimes, notes Dubois, the soul of the deceased is driven out of the house when the body is taken to the tomb. People even shout at it, 'Go away! Go away!' It may be trapped in a little jug, lured into it with rum. Similarly, a royal funeral is ended with an address to the dead king, who,

after being told to make his subjects rich, is finally ordered: 'But no longer come back among us, you who are now with our ancestors!' Dubois further observes that in the case of royal funerals pus is made to come out of the body by pressing it and making cuts in the soles of the feet. The 'guardians of the royal tombs' (*olom-pady*) drink some of this, and worms form in it. Of these the largest is seen as the reincarnation of the dead king. It is kept carefully and placed in the tomb with him, along with a bamboo tube to enable it to escape. After it does so it reappears as a large snake, and a large bull is sacrificed for it. Some similar practices are found elsewhere in the world. In Tahiti the pus is removed by pressing it firmly. Among the Niasans of Indonesia the pus of a chief's body is drunk by slaves. However, the strongest similarities are found among the Rundi of east Africa: the first worm to come out of a king's corpse is carefully kept, becomes a large snake, leopard or lion and has sacrifices made for it.[64]

Dubois also mentions shamanic practices among the Betsileo. If someone appears to be dying for no obvious reason, it is thought that his soul has left him, and a shaman must bring it back. The latter makes elaborate preparations and, in a special ceremony, finds the lost soul and returns it to the patient. If this does not work the family may resort to the 'solemn sacrifice' (*sao-drazana*). Those rich enough sacrifice a bull, the poor chickens, for the ancestors. The family faces the 'corner of the ancestors' in the north-eastern part of its house. Here there are three shelves: one for the supreme god, the other gods and the spirits of the nobles, one for the spirits of ordinary people and one for those of slaves. On these are little baskets containing offerings. The head of the family recites a prayer to the spirits, asking them to take the food and then go away.[65]

Molet: Merina Ritual

Another French missionary, Louis Molet, in 1979 published an enormous study of the Merina, based on fieldwork done from 1941 to 1967. He explains that for the Merina the number seven symbolizes destruction, annihilation and cutting into pieces, as in dividing sacrificial victims. Molet provides an extended description of the ritual of the Bath (*Fandroana*). This was originally a new year feast of the Arab lunar calendar, but in 1883 it was transferred to 22 November. In the distant past, on the last night of the old year, children, carrying

torches, would run around to chase ghosts away. Everyone engaged in promiscuous intercourse, except for separated spouses, who had to rejoin each other. In the middle of the night everyone purified themselves with abundant ablutions: hence the name of the ritual. At dawn families visited relatives of the previous generation, and gave them strips of preserved meat, representing ties of kinship. Around 1600 the monarchy turned this ancient ritual into one of the ruling sovereign. It was forbidden to spill blood for five days before the new year, when bulls were sacrificed and their meat distributed to the monarch's subjects.[66]

Molet had already, in 1956, argued that the early inhabitants of Madagascar had eaten parts of their dead. This argument ran into considerable opposition, but in 1979 he was able to cite new evidence to support it. There is oral tradition among the Betsileo to the effect that well before 1600 some families would eat the corpse of a relative instead of burying it. This was in order to incorporate the relative's spirit in them and maintain the family's solidarity. The ground was hard, making burial difficult, and to abandon bodies in the forest would result in their spirits' harming the living. As for the Merina, in 1896 a French administrator recorded how, when a former prime minister died, his viscera were put in jars, and one of his slaves asked to be allowed to eat them. He assured the Frenchman that eating the flesh of one's dead loved ones continued to be practised in his country, and that this should not be seen as cannibalism but as evidence of love and friendship for the deceased: it was accepted that if he ate these remains he would assimilate an intelligence and a 'heart of gold' like those of the statesman.[67]

In his work of 1956 Molet points to a lot of evidence for comparative purposes. He quotes Marco Polo, the famous Venetian traveller of the thirteenth century, who says that in one part of Sumatra a dead man is cooked, and all his relatives gather to eat him up completely: they explain that otherwise worms would form and die, and that the soul of the deceased would be held responsible for their death. Moletalso notes that some of the natives of Borneo collect the pus from the corpse and mix it with rice: the close relatives of the deceased eat this. Also in Borneo, when a human sacrifice is made during the *tiwah* (second burial), the victim's blood is sprinkled over the family of the deceased, 'in order to reconcile them with their dead relative'. Similarly, in Madagascar, during

the ritual of the Bath, when bulls are sacrificed, the blood is sprinkled on those present or used to soak part of a reed, which is placed above a house's door, to protect and sanctify the house.[68]

Nias

Loeb: An Overview of Nias Religion

US anthropologist E.M. Loeb, in a brief overview of Nias religion produced in 1935, claimed that the main reason for headhunting in Nias and elsewhere was religious. It was never done for harvest rituals, however. In southern Nias headhunting was done for revenge, important new buildings, funerary rites and major feasts; in the rest of the island it was practised to make the spirits release the souls of the sick. Everywhere people licked the blood from a knife just used to sever a head.[69]

Loeb provides valuable information about lifecycle practices. When twins were born the Niasans would hang one of them up in a sack and leave it to die. On the nearby island of Engano the extraction of teeth (incisors) is practised for women before marriage. In Central Nias dead chiefs were put on platforms, dead commoners were buried and dead slaves were thrown into the jungle. After a death there would be dancing and feasting, and a four-day period of mourning and taboos. The body would be buried on the third day, and on the fourth a priest would go round the house, telling the ghost to stay away. In the case of a chief the bones would be cleaned two months later, and a feast would be held, with headhunting and the killing of slaves to serve in the next world. The ghost itself, corresponding to the shadow, went to the land of the dead, whereas its counterpart, an image like a reflection, stayed near the grave. Ghosts had to cross a bridge to reach the afterworld, with hell beneath. A watchman examined them, and a cat pushed the wicked into hell.[70]

Beatty: Nias Feasts

In 1992 the Oxford-based anthropologist Andrew Beatty published a study of society and exchange in Nias, based on fieldwork done in 1986–8. He explains that every local lineage group had previously worshipped its own set of ancestors, in the form of wooden figures. The ancestor-spirits were greedy and easily bribed. A lineage group would

also have other images for special rituals, the most important being a warrior figure with an erect penis, to which sacrifices were made before headhunting. There was also a rice-spirit, which at harvest time was sent by a priest to increase the crop at the expense of the neighbours'. Afterwards there was a time of 'placing of taboos', when people stayed inside, doing no work, for four days. Then everyone bathed in the river, to 'cool' themselves and their property and thus be successful. A priest put 'cool' sand from the riverbed into a box, to expiate illicit profit.[71]

The Niasans had various other ways of expiating sins. Sex outside marriage used to be punished by drowning, the couple being tied together. A rich man was assumed to be a cheat and extortionist, and indeed was usually a usurer, charging interest at 100 per cent per annum. Thus he would give a feast, in which a slave was rolled off his roof and decapitated: in this way his gold's 'smoke' was let out through the roof and his sins were expiated. Alternatively, if an epidemic occurred, there was a ceremonial 'decrease' of interest rates, with the slaughter of a pig to take the place of the human population. Flooding was answered by a collective confession of adultery and secret profiteering: a priest threw a white pig and a white chicken, tied to an image, into the river, to go to the god of the underworld, as a payment for the people's 'excess'.[72]

A 'feast of merit' still survives among the Niasans. Its host aims at prestige and 'blessing'. In the past one of the famous Niasan megaliths would be put up a few days before. A vertical stone, as high as one and a half metres, had a thick slab put in front of it to sit on: it was a backrest for the host and his ancestral spirits, and a great man's skull might be buried beneath. During the feast the host used to 'swagger and strut like a king'. In the festive meal itself the most honoured guests are given pigs' lower jaws and viscera (the 'portions of honour'). Afterwards other, specially fed pigs, called 'origin pigs' because in the past they were believed to have been chosen by the ancestors, are speared: these pigs are substitutes for the host, who keeps their lower jaws.[73]

Headhunting also used to be an important aspect of Niasan ritual. A dying father would tell his eldest son to get heads for his funeral, and old villagers explained headhunting as a sacrificial substitution for the dead. In the 1980s one villager was sent to prison for murdering a child in order to use the head for 'strengthening' a concrete bridge.[74]

The General Characteristics of Western Malayo-Polynesian Religion

In surveying the general characteristics of Western Malayo-Polynesian religion we shall follow the same order as with Taiwanese aboriginal religion. We shall concentrate on death, funerary rites, second burial and final mortuary rites, along with beliefs about the next world. Then we shall consider headhunting, other forms of human sacrifice, the hunting of animals, beliefs concerning spirits and gods, festivals and feasts, religious specialists and numbers. Although we shall sometimes recall Taiwanese parallels, we shall leave the actual task of comparison till later.

First we must examine lifecycle practices. Birth, among the Ifugao, is connected with fishing and water in beliefs about conception, pregnancy and delivery. This is reflected in Taiwan, among the Tsou, in prohibitions regarding fishing for the parents and in bathing after birth (also performed in western Madagascar). The Kayan expose one of a pair of twins, preferring to keep a boy (like the Tsou) and explaining that this is to protect the survivor. In Madagascar both twins used to be killed (as among the Paiwan), or one might be exposed. In Nias one twin is hung up in a sack and left to die. On Engano women's incisors are extracted before marriage, as in Taiwan. Initiation of warriors, among the Berawan, has changed since the days of headhunting, when it happened straight after a male's first taking of a head. Now it is done a few days after a funeral, in a re-enactment of a headhunting ritual: boys and men are splashed with blood. (Similarly, in Taiwan, the initiation of males is ritually linked to headhunting.) Marriage, among the Ifugao, requires a special ritual, involving a mock fight and a peace-making rite, if it is between second and third cousins. Among the Merina marriage requires formal blessings from designated older people, wishing the couple children and riches. Incest is punished among the Ngaju by death (by drowning or crucifixion), or by public humiliation. In Nias extra-marital sex used to be punished by drowning, and a collective confession of adultery and secretive profiteering was followed by the throwing of a pig and a chicken into the river.

Death, for the Ifugao, is caused by the ancestors, but there are different opinions about how the soul goes to the Region of the Dead. One notes that the Ifugao corpse is tied to a 'death chair' beneath the house before being taken, some days later, to the sepulchre. The Ifugao practise different forms of interment, sometimes using a coffin, placed

under the house. As for the Berawan, they also have a 'death throne' for a day or so, and the bereaved spouse is imprisoned in a cubicle in front of it. People keep awake at night, in a festive spirit, and songs bring the soul to the land of the dead. The Berawan, like Taiwanese aborigines, believe that a 'bad death' produces evil spirits: if a woman dies in childbirth her corpse must be taken into the jungle. A similar belief is held by the Ngaju: they bury the 'bad dead' outside consecrated land. The Ngaju also believe that at death the soul separates into three souls. Among the Ngaju the corpse must stay on a platform in the house for two to seven days, while people stay awake at night, playing games. After the burial (in theory two days later, with the head facing east, as among the Tsou), a ritual is performed in the house, and (again as among the Tsou) a religious specialist strikes pieces of bamboo and scatters grains to make the 'evil' and the soul go away. The Merina, after a death, also play games throughout the night, singing, to guard the corpse and the mourners. Among the Betsileo, according to Decary, the wake turns into an orgy, supposedly in order to replace the deceased. Dubois tells us that in a funeral in a rich family an orgy of this kind takes place after a bullfight, to distract the lonely soul of the deceased. Among the Betsileo, Dubois further informs us, the soul is driven out of the house. In royal funerals the pus from the corpse is drunk. Molet reports that according to oral tradition the Betsileo used to eat their dead, like the Merina. The Sakalava royal funerals, in the past, also involved an orgy during the night before the burial (when killings were not punished), and among the Antandroy this happens at the end of a funeral. We must note that in Nias there would be dancing and feasting after a death, and four days of mourning, with the body being buried on the third: on the fourth a priest would go round the house and tell the ghost to keep away. Finally, it is to be observed that the Merina purify themselves after a funeral by stepping over a fire and bathing.

A second funeral, for the Ifugao, requires that the bones be placed first beneath the house, before the feast, in which the soul is told to share the animals sacrificed with the ancestors: finally, the bones are returned to the sepulchre. The Berawan transfer the bones from a temporary shelter to the 'longhouse' for the feast before they are taken to a mausoleum. Ancestral spirits are summoned to the longhouse, and games are played. The lead singer strikes the coffin with a piece of bamboo, calling on the soul to prepare to leave, and then the singers send it, by canoe, to join

the other dead. Among the Ngaju men and women sometimes engage in obscene dances in the early stages of the second funeral. Previously a head was taken. Animals are stabbed to death, like slaves in the past. Skeletons are brought from the graveyard, and the chief specialist, chanting, sends the 'soul of the intellect', by ship, to the ancestors, before the deceased's other two souls are sent there. Then the skeletons are put in their repository. In Madagascar the Merina take the skeletons out of the tomb and women dance with them before they are replaced. Childless women are summoned to stroke the skulls. People who have been buried in a temporary grave are reburied with their relatives, because of fear of being permanently buried alone. In Nias the feast at the secondary funeral of a chief involved headhunting and the killing of slaves.

Some of the Berawan believe that the soul of the deceased will reach a wobbly bridge over a ravine, guarded by a spirit: if it falls it is devoured by worms, but respectable people will cross because relatives put beads in their mouths for the spirit. The Ngaju believe that the soul will be given a fruit, which will make it forget its life, before it crosses a bridge and joins its ancestors. In Nias the soul has to cross a bridge over hell and be examined by a watchman: a cat pushes the wicked over.

Mortuary rituals, as we have seen, are closely connected with headhunting. Among the Ifugao this is preceded by rites paralleled in Taiwan, among the Tsou. The headhunters sleep beneath a house, and an oracle is taken from a bird. On the expedition they light a fire, like the Tsou, and take omens from it and their subsequent sleep (again like the Tsou). When a head is taken the headtaker licks the blood. Later the head is thrown to the ground and told to become light. Among the Ilongot 'tossing' the head to the ground is all-important: this relieves the weight of 'bad feelings'. The Ifugao, like other peoples, leave the head outside the village before it is formally taken in. In one Ifugao region a bit of the flesh is eaten, as apparently, was the case everywhere in this part of the Philippines, to obtain invigoration.

The purpose of Ilongot headhunting was, we are told, to obtain the spirit of the person beheaded, though mainly it was done by young men to emulate their fathers, and Kalinga old men would denounce those who failed to do so. The Kalinga sometimes consume the brains, mixed with wine (as in Taiwan), to become brave and successful. They particularly prize the lower jaw (again as in Taiwan). A headtaker can be

tattooed (yet again as in Taiwan) and wins great prestige. In northern Borneo, just as in Taiwan, a head is needed to end a period of mourning. There, in a 'Klemantan' myth, headtaking is presented as granting prosperity in all its forms. The Berawan have a re-enactment of a headhunting raid a few days after a funeral. Young men bring substitutes for heads, and they and young women throw each other around in the mud. Previously the headtakers were then allowed to wear hornbill feathers in their 'war bonnets'. An effigy of a headhunting victim is erected, and men and women roll around together in the mud. The Berawan explain that the ritual is performed to lift taboos following death, but in the past they said that they headhunted to give the community strength.

Headhunting among the Ngaju involved cleaning the head and a 'skull dance'. It also entailed 'compensation', including the sacrificing of a slave. Previously a head was taken for the 'second burial': according to ritual specialists this represented a spirit who would protect the deceased. There seems to be no evidence of headhunting in Madagascar, slaves being sacrificed instead. In Nias headhunting was done for revenge, new buildings, funerary rites, feasts and healing. The blood from the knife was licked, as among the Ifugao. Old villagers explained that headhunting was a sacrificial substitution for the dead.

Other forms of human sacrifice involve slaves. The Kayan used to kill three on the death of a chief, to take him to the next world, and the Kenyah would cause a new house's foundations to fall on a girl. This last method was employed by the Berawan when killing a male slave: a mausoleum's main post came down on him in its hole. The Melanau would tie slaves to the uprights of mausoleums, so that, after dying of exposure, they would serve their masters in the afterlife. Among the Ngaju a slave used to be sacrificed over the coffin during a funeral. The Ngaju would sacrifice an incestuous couple after flooding or a drought. As we have just recalled, they sacrificed a slave in compensation for a headtaking: the blood, mixed with water, was sprinkled over people to protect them from mortal illnesses. A slave's blood was also used to smear people after the ceremony in which people became priests and priestesses: the slave was slowly stabbed to death before everyone passed over him. In Madagascar royal funerals involved human sacrifices: a female slave among the Merina, to serve the king in the next world; among the Sakalava a female and a male (the latter's blood sprinkled on the grave);

among one branch of the Sakalava, four victims, often volunteers. Niasans would also kill slaves at their chiefs' final mortuary feasts, to serve them in the hereafter.

The hunting of animals is prominent in Ifugao religion: here many deities give protection from danger. As in Taiwan, omens are taken from a bird, and, as in Ifugao and Taiwanese headhunting, a special fire is lit. The Ifugao hunting rituals stress prestige, perhaps because there is no need to hunt for food. Kayan hunting rituals are performed out of fear that the hunters' souls will be drawn away. The Berawan hunt monkeys and hang them up to cause amusement at a second funeral.

Festivals are conspicuously connected with the harvest and the new year. It is noteworthy that the Ifugao 'tie up' spears and knives to avoid violence during the harvest. This is reflected in Nias, where headhunting was never done for harvest rituals. For the Ngaju the most important feast is that of the harvest or new year, in fact in between the harvest itself and the next year's agricultural labours: it ends in 'total and mass sexual exchange and intercourse'. This festival evidently corresponds to the Merina ritual of the Bath, which was presumably dislocated from the solar calendar when it became a new year feast of the Arab lunar one. Here too, in the distant past, everyone engaged in promiscuous intercourse. In Nias, after the harvest, there is a four-day period of taboos, during which people stay inside and do no work, before bathing in the river, to 'cool' their property and themselves. Similarly, among the Merina, originally there were mass ablutions (the 'Bath'), to purify oneself of the past, before the royal prohibition on spilling blood for five days before the new year. Other feasts are ones of 'prestige' or 'merit'. The Ifugao hosts, however, give these also to ensure fertility, while spending as little as possible, and the Niasan hosts also aim at 'blessing', while keeping the prized lower jaws of the 'origin pigs'.

Differences between souls, spirits and gods are not clear. Among the Ngaju the soul, at death, separates into three souls, corresponding to the intellect, flesh and bones. In Nias (rather as among the Tsou) the ghost, corresponding to the shadow, goes to the land of the dead, while an image like a reflection remains close to the grave. The Ifugao have deified ancestors, alongside very many other deities, but no supreme god. These deities are often criminals and sinister, and include local evil spirits. The Ilongot say that the spirits of headhunting victims are unlike other spirits, such as the Forest Lord, who grants them to headtakers. Among

the Kalinga spirits, often ancestral, are blamed for misfortunes. They are addressed by women mediums, whereas appeals are made only rarely to the creator-god. The Kayan have a supreme god and also specialized gods, along with minor spirits, the most important of which, linked to heads suspended in houses, bring prosperity; there are also significant rice-spirits. Among the Iban, as elsewhere, the spirits intervene to call one to be a shaman and to cause illnesses. The Berawan offer sacrifices with prayers to the Creator Spirit, the supreme spirit most commonly invoked. For the Ngaju there are two supreme deities, and five 'kings' of the spirits. The Betsileo have a supreme god, other gods and ancestral spirits. In Nias ancestral spirits are greedy and easily bribed, and a rice-spirit steals neighbours' rice for one's own group.

Ritual specialists, as in Taiwan, vary from one people to another. Almost all Ifugao adult males are priests, who become possessed in rituals. There is a 'leading priest' in Ifugao prestige feasts, who has to set an example and try to prevent disorder. At an Ifugao funeral a priest 'pushes' the soul of the deceased away. The Kalinga have 'women mediums', evidently shamanesses, who go to the spirit world to rescue patients' souls. As for the Iban, they have transvestite shamans, called by the spirits, and these shamans cure in the same way. Ngaju priests (also transvestites) and priestesses are recruited from agriculturalists and slaves, and constitute one of five social 'groups', corresponding to the spirit-king of diseases. They too are evidently shamans and shamanesses, possessed in their initiation ceremony, over which an 'officiating priest' presides. In Ngaju mortuary rituals there is a 'chief ritual specialist' who leads others in chanting: the soul of the deceased speaks through him. The Betsileo also have shamans, who engage in elaborate preparations before recovering a soul. In Nias a priest invokes the rice-spirit, expiates illicit profiteering and, after a burial, tells the ghost to stay away.

Duality is said by Schärer to pervade Ngaju religion, while also forming a unity: thus the two supreme deities are sometimes combined. However, this may reflect Schärer's studies at Leiden, where the idea of 'complementary duality' has been dominant. The combination of the two deities is typically Indian, and the number two does not occur often in the materials that we have surveyed. In theory the second Ngaju mortuary ritual takes place two days after the ritual. Two slaves were killed in the main Sakalava royal funerals, and in Nias a chief's final death feast took place two months after the first mortuary ritual.

The number three occurs more often (as among the Puyuma), notably in social tripartition. Among the Kayan and Kenyah the tripartite class system is chiefly–middle–slave. The Ngaju have five groups, (1) 'rich', providing judges and chiefs, (2) 'low' or 'poor', consisting of agriculturalists, (3) slaves, (4) witches and (5) priests and priestesses. Evidently the same tripartition is repeated, since witches are extraneous and class 5 is recruited from classes 2 and 3. Merina society was also divided into nobles, commoners and slaves, and the Betsileo have three shelves in their houses for the spirits of these three castes. In Central Nias the same tripartition was reflected in three different ways of disposing of the dead. The Ifugao have three principal gods in the category of the 'Deceivers'. In the war rituals these three gods possess three priests, who seem to act in an Indo-European tripartite manner: one appears to preside, thus representing (1) religious sovereignty, another spears a pig, thus representing (2) warlike force and the third drinks the pig's blood, thus representing (3) fertility as exemplified in nutrition. The Kayan would kill three slaves when a chief died. According to the Ngaju, at death the soul separates into three souls. Bloch says that Merina women circle a tomb three times at a secondary burial, and that at Merina weddings the couple has to be blessed three or seven times, after which the wedding party circles the groom's house three or seven times, these being propitious numbers in Madagascar. At the funeral of one Mahafaly king three slaves were killed. In Nias a body was buried on the third day of mourning.

Four is not a common number. In one branch of the Sakalava four human victims were sacrificed at a king's funeral. The Niasans had a four-day period of mourning and taboos after a death, and on the fourth a priest would exorcize the house. They also had a four-day 'placing of taboos', staying inside and doing no work, after the harvest.

Five is also not a particularly common number (again as among the Puyuma). The Ifugao deities inhabit five regions, and among the Ngaju spirits there are five 'kings', representing elements which to some extent parallel the five Ngaju classes: (1) law/judges and chiefs, (2) divine gifts/agriculturalists, (3) misfortune/slaves, (4) witchcraft/witches and (5) diseases/priests and priestesses. At one Mahafaly king's funeral five of his wives were buried with him. The Merina monarchy forbade the spilling of blood for five days before the new year.

It is the number seven that is most prominent (just as it is important for the Puyuma). The Berawan send the souls of seven bachelors to

accompany the soul in the 'second funeral', and when an old Ngaju man consults the 'sacred dead' he sends, to fetch them, the spirits of seven maidens or seven youths. There are seven holy mats at Ngaju weddings. In the Ngaju 'second burial' the sponsors ululate seven times at the start, the ship circles seven times, the chief ritual specialist circles a shrine seven times and the mourners ululate seven times before the rite involving the 'soul of the intellect' and circle and stab the temporary mortuary edifices seven times. As we have just seen, in Merina weddings the blessings and circlings can be sevenfold or threefold: the couple are wished seven boys and seven girls, and Bloch says that seven, like three, is a propitious number in Madagascar. Decary tells us that in Merina secondary burials the tomb is circled seven (not three as reported by Bloch) times. Dubois notes the recurrence of the number seven in funerals and says that it represents separation. Molet explains that for the Merina the number seven represents destruction and cutting into pieces.

The number eight is significant among the Kayan, occurring repeatedly in both agricultural and hunting rituals: we find periods of eight nights and eight days, eight young women dancing and a shot panther being stepped over eight times. Other numbers do not appear to be important.

Western Malayo-Polynesian religion, then, emphasizes the numbers three and seven most of all (like the Puyuma in Taiwan). Its tripartition reflects colonization and enslavement: the original two classes of nobles (or chiefs) and commoners have added a third class of slaves. Similarly, its religion is dominated by three important aspects: fertility, represented above all in the post-harvest festival and its orgies, headhunting, performed to give the community strength and prosperity and replace the dead with spirits taken from outside, and the ultimate religious feast (in which headhunting is again involved), that of the final mortuary ritual, in which the community's living and dead are united.

Fertility is also granted to childless women among the Merina, when they stroke the skulls of skeletons taken out of the tombs. In the post-harvest or new year festival fertility is combined with purification, as in Taiwan, but more so: in Taiwan the villagers purify the village, but in the Western Malayo-Polynesian field one purifies oneself. Whereas among the Tsou there is only dancing and drinking, among the Ngaju there is a mass orgy. As regards headhunting, the Ilongot say that it is done to obtain the victim's spirit, and the Niasans that it is a sacrificial

substitution for the dead: as in Taiwan, we have the idea of 'replacement', with the new spirit being brought in to be useful. Thus, in northern Borneo, headhunting brings general prosperity, just as in Taiwan it brings good luck. As a natural component of mortuary rituals it can also, as among the Ngaju, be performed for the 'second burial', providing a spirit to protect the deceased. In such rituals, among the Betsileo, it is supposedly to 'replace' the deceased that a wake becomes an orgy. As in Taiwan, there is 'double burial'. Western Malayo-Polynesian speakers, however, have greatly developed the second funeral. The Ifugao put the bones beneath the house, in what looks like a reminiscence of earlier burial beneath it, before they are returned to the tomb, and the Berawan also bring the bones home before the great ceremony in which the soul is sent to the other dead. This ceremony, which resembles the Ngaju one, culminates in a mystical experience: the community is united as the dead are joined with the living.

Chapter 3

CENTRAL MALAYO-POLYNESIAN SPEAKERS

In approaching Central Malayo-Polynesian speakers, as indicated above, we shall focus on eastern Indonesia, and more specifically on the islands of Sumba, Flores and Timor (along with smaller islands near them). We shall use recent anthropological studies, following the chronological order of publication, before coming to conclusions about the general characteristics of Central Malayo-Polynesian religion.

Eastern Indonesia

Schulte Nordholt: Religion and Headhunting Among the Atoni

In 1971 the veteran Dutch anthropologist H. G. Schulte Nordholt published a study of the political system of the Atoni of western Timor, based on observations made from 1939 to 1947. He gives us a brief overview of Atoni religion. There is a supreme god, Uis Neno, the lord of heaven, and there is also a deity complementary to him, Uis Pah, the lord of the earth. Uis Neno's wife is the moon. There are also earth spirits and the spirits of the dead, which have to be appeased and not provoked. Also, there is the concept of the 'holy', *leu*, which designates a force both dangerous and beneficial. As for the dead, they are believed to have 'flown to the other side of the river' – this is the objective of mortuary rituals.[1]

Schulte Nordholt also provides information about headhunting. Just before this happens attention has to be given to the flight of the owl and

the parrot. The Atoni are usually frightened of the owl and, if they hear it, refuse to go outside. Just before a headhunting raid, however, the owl presages death for the enemy, because in war everything is reversed. As for the parrot, it is linked to the spirits of those of the dead who died a long time ago. If the owl flies towards the warriors from the enemy this is a very good sign, and people chant: 'The nono [fertility] is coming. Come, receive your meat and your rice!' The meat and rice are hastily scattered. (Here the point is that the head taken will give the community fertility.) This augury from the owl is taken when a raid is planned for the night, which is the usual strategy, the attack on the enemy village being made at dawn. The parrot takes the place of the owl if the raid is to be made by day.[2]

Once a head has been taken the warrior who has taken it addresses it in a conciliatory manner, as it will be incorporated into his community's nono. Heads are carried not by this warrior himself, but by his 'younger brother'. If this is the first time that he has taken a head he is brought to a leaf hut outside the village. The heads are 'prepared': the brains are taken out and the warrior eats part of them, or rubs his chest with them. On occasion part of a neck muscle is eaten. This is in order to absorb the dead person's *smanaf*, 'vital force' or 'soul'. Then the head is smoked, to dry out the flesh. The young warriors being initiated are brought to the compound outside the *le'u* (holy) shrine. A maiden, dressed as a warrior and holding a sugar cane, comes to them, and each in turn holds the cane by its roots. She pulls each one inside the compound and dances with him four times around the pole (outside the shrine) on which the head will be impaled. The 'lord of the holy' walks four times round an altar, and the skull is placed in a woman's lap. Everyone, in a circle, walks round the woman and the shrine four times. An old woman brings four baskets, containing meat and rice, which are then eaten. The new warrior is given a belt and a purse, and the skull is impaled on the pole.[3]

Fox: 'Bad Death' on Roti

An article on 'bad death' on the island of Roti, to the south-west of Timor, by the Canberra-based anthropologist James Fox, was published in 1973. He begins by describing the Rotinese house: it is oriented lengthwise on an east–west axis, with the west half, the 'inner house', belonging to the women and the east half, the 'outer house', to the men. Spirits are similarly divided into 'spirits of the inside' and 'spirits of the

outside'. The former are ancestors who have died a good death. Each of these is represented by a palm leaf, hung beneath the roof of the house on the third or ninth day after the burial. The leaf is fashioned into a three-pronged fork, the number three being 'essential and propitious'. To see such spirits men must wash their faces three times with water used to wash a corpse. The 'spirits of the outside' are in the bush, forests and sea, where they roam in the night. They are frightening and dangerous, and go around upside down: they have died a 'bad death'. Such a death is caused by falling from a palm tree, by being killed by a man or animal or by drowning. Death in childbirth is also included. If a man dies by falling from a palm tree the first person to find the corpse has to jump over it three times.[4]

For the Rotinese, observes Fox, north is left and south is right. East is represented by the colour white, west by black, south by red and north by a colour category that includes blue, green and some kinds of yellow. In the case of a 'good death' the coffin has to be carried with its 'head' to the front and placed parallel to the house, on the west, before it is brought into the house. There the corpse, before and after being put in the coffin, must also have its head to the east and feet to the west, in the 'outer house'. Before burial the coffin, with the corpse inside, is usually placed lengthwise on the house's east side, outside but still beneath its overhanging roof. When the coffin is taken away from the house it is carried tail first to the graveyard, which is always close by. Previously the Rotinese buried their dead beneath their houses, but the Dutch stopped this. Graves are on an east–west axis: at the grave the coffin is turned round, so that the corpse's head is directed towards the Land of the Dead, in the west, to which it will now journey.[5]

In the case of the 'bad dead' there is lack of ceremony and an inversion of procedures. The most conservative Rotinese insist that there should be no coffin. However, the majority do use coffins. The body is not brought into the house: usually it is put in a temporary structure outside. Now it is sometimes placed beneath the house's outer roof, but on the west side instead of the east. (In the case of death in childbirth the woman stays in the house, but is placed north to south in the 'inner house' before being positioned on the house's west side, just outside.) On the way to the grave the coffin is carried head first. As for the graves of the 'bad dead', they are some way away from the rest, and oriented north–south. The coffin is lowered down with the head to the north or 'left', the direction

to which it is being despatched. Previously a pot of indigo dye was emptied over the grave: this is because the word *tau*, 'indigo dye', is connected with the root *tau*, 'to terrify', which is what evil spirits do. The blue colour of indigo belongs to the colour category of the north. Afterwards those present go to a crossroads (bad spirits are thought to frequent crossroads) and tell the deceased, 'So man helps man, but you are in a state of evil. Therefore we come to drive you away: do not follow us!' The Rotinese explain that the inversions performed for the 'bad dead' cause them to go around upside down, while the 'good dead' are carried away from the house feet first to make them walk upright.[6]

Barnes: Kedang

In 1974 an important study of the people of Kedang, on the small island of Lembata (to the east of Flores), was published by the Oxford-based anthropologist R. H. Barnes, based on fieldwork done from 1969 to 1971. Barnes reports that the Kedangese believe in a god or divinity, who is, however, remote and rarely mentioned. His name is Ula-Lojo ('Moon-Sun'). In Kedang myth seven brothers, on the top of the mountain of Kedang, were the ancestors of humanity, animals and spirits. The number seven is important: odd numbers are incomplete, even ones complete. Thus rungs of a ladder in a granary and spars in either side of a house's roof must have uneven numbers, as they stand in opposition to the 'complete' elements in a building: 'points of transition', namely house posts and corners, which come in fours. A person has seven souls, just as there are seven storms in the rainy season, and seven layers of heavens. The Kedangese explain that odd numbers are those of life, even ones those of death. Thus four in particular is connected with transition: there are four days of restrictions after the rite of 'cleaning the village' and after a funeral.[7]

In funerals the number four does indeed recur repeatedly. After the corpse has been placed on a platform near the grave there may be a ritual called the 'washing of the face', if there has been a 'bad death' from an accident or violence, or if there is some suspicion of guilt. A banana stalk is rubbed against the forehead and then waved around the corpse four times, anti-clockwise, before being thrown away (with its 'fault'). Then the corpse is put in a mat tied by four bindings, by four men. In the case of a very prominent old priest the corpse should be carried by dancing men, with women dancing in front and behind, four times round the

house, anti-clockwise. Once the grave is covered its sides have to be swept four times, in the same direction. The feast follows four or eight days later.[8]

Finally, we must note Barnes' account of the Kedangese ritual for doing away with the consequences of incest. He explains that for the people of Kedang incest involves confusing the sky with the earth: thus the sky must be made to come down and go up again. A chicken is used to represent a large goat, and thus the man and the 'above', while an egg stands for a pig, and thus the woman and the 'below'. The goat–chicken has to be killed by the priest by beating it on the head with the butt of his knife, while uttering squeals.[9]

The 'Flow of Life' in Eastern Indonesia

In 1980 Fox and other researchers published a volume entitled *The Flow of Life*, on various eastern Indonesian peoples. Much of this is concerned with 'cross-cousin marriage', that is to say marriage between the children of a brother and sister. In eastern Indonesia this tends to be 'asymmetric': thus, for example, a man marries his mother's brother's daughter but not his father's sister's daughter. One contributor, Barnes, observes that this is reflected in the culture of the Kedangese. He insists that the opposition between odd and even numbers is the most important element in Kedang thought. Alongside it is the idea that life force flows through everything that has a conceptual structure: life flows through a person, and people are a form of life as it flows through the cosmos.[10]

Another chapter, by Fox himself, includes a brief reference to ceremonies performed after the harvest on Roti. These ended with a 'general ceremony of increase', which anticipated the new year, and had a ritual battle, the purpose of which was to 'bring in' the seeds. This battle was full of headhunting symbolism. It was between the clans of the east and the clans of the west: the latter always had to win because they were ritually superior.[11]

Yet another chapter, by Marie Jeanne Adams, points to patterns of duality and triadic, asymmetric organization. She examines aspects of art on the eastern half of the island of Sumba, where women dye designs onto the men's cloths. These are given as 'feminine' objects of marriage, by the bride's family, in exchange for 'masculine' metal objects, such as gold ornaments. The ordering of designs is both dual and triadic: there are two 'endfields', with identical designs facing in opposite directions,

but there is also, as a third element, a 'centrefield', which has designs that face both ways. Adams observes that in Sumbanese villages there used to be two 'kings' at each end, leading warrior clans, with a third, central area belonging to priestly clans and their supporters. Similarly, in the marriage system one clan takes its wives from a second and gives its daughters to a third. If people from one area wish to exchange their surplus of maize for pottery from a second area, they 'arrange a meeting' in a third area midway between the two. The ratio of exchange is negotiated in advance. In the ordering of designs another important principle is the use of favourite numbers: 2, 4 and 8. Thus there are paired designs, mirrored panels, quarters and eight bands. The east Sumbanese believe that there are eight levels of heaven and eight levels of earth and sea. In major rituals eight functionaries make eight offerings, and festivals are held at intervals of four, eight and 16 years.[12]

Another contribution, by N. L. Kana, considers the houses on the island of Savu (between Sumba and Roti). The Savunese see the west of their island as a 'head' or 'bow', and the east as a 'tail' or 'stern'. Thus houses must be oriented on an east–west axis, so as not to 'cut the land'. By contrast, one has a 'crosscutting' direction for the grave of a person who has 'died salty', by drowning, suicide, being struck by lightning or falling from a palm tree. A house is divided into a male half and a female half, the latter containing a loft. In this loft the woman of the house performs rituals in the dark, unseen by anyone. The loft's darkness is associated with prosperity and protection. During the rainy season there are rituals connected with dry-field agriculture, and directed towards the 'Great Woman' (Bani Ae), who grants rain and seeds. Here sacrificed animals have to be black or grey, like rain clouds. During the dry season rituals are connected with the tapping of lontar palm trees, and are directed towards 'Sun Ancestor' (Pulodo), who is male: here the animals sacrificed have to be white.[13]

Similar patterns are analysed by Schulte Nordholt, in a discussion of the Atoni of central Timor. He points out that among the Atoni the meanings of 'female' (*feto*) and 'male' (*mone*) vary according to context. (*Feto* is connected with the inside, while *mone* also means 'outside'). Sometimes there are symbolic inversions, as with the colours black (for female) and white (for male): in severe drought a white animal is sacrificed, to expiate errors made in rituals, whereas in general the animal should be black if it is wished to bring dark rain clouds.[14]

Schulte Nordholt points to a similar inversion, that of life itself, in the initiation of the Atoni warrior. The latter had to participate in a headhunting expedition. After this warriors were isolated in a hut outside the village, and forbidden contact with women and cooked food. Thus life was turned upside down. The skull which had been obtained, called 'the harvest of death', was pulled into a holy house with a special hook, also used for taking the first fruits of the harvest, maize and rice, into the same house. In this way the skull's 'spirit' was incorporated in the community. Schulte Nordholt notes that the warrior who hunted a head was called the 'female warrior', and the comrade who took the head from him was called the 'male warrior'. Just as the harvesting of rice was done by women, the 'harvesting of heads' was done by the 'female warrior'.[15]

Yet another contribution, by Claudine Friedberg, examines three Atoni myths. In the first a cruel ruler, each year, when the land's produce is brought to him, has a subject killed, so as to 'cool the earth'. The ruler himself is killed, and the maize and rice no longer grow. A baby boy is born, who is recognized as the ruler come again, and the rain starts to pour down. In the second myth we are told that the daughter of one of the first humans was killed: from her body, scattered on the earth, sprang the cultivated plants, notably rice. Her father is the ancestor of an important lineage at a village called Tumbesi. In a third myth we hear that a man of another village, Manela Ane, had large rice fields and used to sacrifice a youth and a girl from Tumbesi each year, in order to obtain a good harvest. Two strangers came and defended Tumbesi, beheading anyone who came from Manela Ane.[16]

Forth: the Rindi

Gregory Forth, the Oxford-based anthropologist, in 1981 published his study of the Rindi of eastern Sumba, based on fieldwork done from 1974 to 1976. He points out that the Rindi recognize a supreme Creator God, but he is never mentioned in rituals. They also believe in ancestral spirits, malevolent earth spirits and witches. When death occurs a golden pendant or coin is placed in the corpse's mouth, and it is wrapped in textiles and made to sit in a wooden container inside the clan's ancestral house. This container supports the corpse's back, but also has the form of a ladder, and is said to help the soul go up to God. At least one horse is slaughtered, and two portions are put in front of the deceased, one for him and one for others who have died. Then the relatives 'guard' the

corpse every night before the burial: some must stay awake. The corpse continues to be presented with food until it is eventually buried: in the past this should have been within eight days for a nobleman and four for others. Nowadays the delay may last months or years, but the poor will be buried within a week or a fortnight and slaves in a day or two.[17]

Just before the corpse is taken out of the house to be buried a horse is slaughtered. In the grave the body is made to face downstream, since the soul must go to the river's mouth before going on to the land of the dead. In the past male and female slaves would be killed at a nobleman's burial, to serve him in the next world. After the burial another horse is killed, to carry the soul to its destination. But the soul is believed to come and go between the house and the land of the dead between death and the final mortuary ceremony. This collective ceremony, for all of the deceased of a clan or clans, is held once in a number of years. A pig and a buffalo are sacrificed, and some of the buffalo meat is dedicated to the deceased by a priest, facing upstream, which is the actual direction of the land of the dead (though the soul has to go downstream to get there). Among the nobility a horse is allowed to run in the upstream direction, and then is stopped and led back: this brings about the souls' definitive and rapid journey to the next world.[18]

The Rindi believe in bad deaths, which they classify as 'hot death': this covers all kinds of death through accident or violence. When this happens the corpse is laid out on the front veranda of the house and cannot be brought inside. It is buried as quickly as possible. Before the burial an elder from a clan that possesses the 'hot cool water', that is to say the power to remove heat, makes an offering to the deity of this power, and the soul of the deceased is removed to a special house sacred to him. At some later date the soul is recovered by the family, brought back to the clan house and introduced to its dead ancestors, who take it to the land of the dead.[19]

Forth notes that the symbolism of numbers is very important for the Rindi, who prefer even numbers as representing completeness. Thus four, eight and 16 are significant in lifecycle rituals: a mother's first bath after giving birth takes place eight days later. The initiation ritual for youths requires seclusion for four or eight days. If a nobleman's grave is granted a temporary shelter it should not be taken down until 16 days have elapsed. Accordingly even numbers are also associated with points of transition. The number seven is found in rites in which the

completeness of eight is to be requested: so in weddings seven pairs of nuts are offered to the clan ancestor in order that he may request God for the completing eighth, which symbolizes 'the means to prosperity and fecundity'. Similarly, offerings in groups of seven are made to witches: in myth they had their origins in eight beings, who lacked food, so that seven of them ate the eighth.[20]

The Rindi, like various peoples in the Austronesian linguistic domain, are divided into three classes: nobles, commoners and slaves. Slaves are divided into a higher sub-class of 'slaves of old', mainly hereditary slaves with long pedigrees as such and a lower sub-class of 'minor slaves', who represent relatively recent purchase or capture. The Rindi often, in the past, called the latter 'persons without worth or value'. It was these 'minor slaves' who used to be killed at noblemen's funerals. Apparently in Indonesia generally this was the case when slave sacrifices were made: hereditary slaves were never sacrificed.[21]

Finally, we shall consider Rindi attitudes to adultery, incest and marriage by abduction. Adultery with wives of men in one's own clan is not taken particularly seriously. There is just a 'cooling' ceremony, involving consecrated 'cool water', and the cuckold is supposed to be magnanimous. But adultery with wives of men in other clans is the worst of crimes, and the cuckold might well retaliate with murder. The woman is given a severe beating, and the family into which she was born must negotiate with the adulterer's clan and receive a hefty fine from it. This fine's components are designated by funerary expressions, because adultery is seen as symbolically killing the cuckold, and bringing the 'life forces' of both him and the adulterer into battle, so that he might physically die.[22]

Incest is seen as most serious. One ritual of purification from it is particularly noteworthy. It is called 'to purify the interior of the house'. A pig is slaughtered, and the elder of the 'hot cool water' comes with three of his clan mates, as the morning star rises. The four of them pound stones, four times, against the house's four external walls. This is to drive the incest out. Everyone goes to the bank of the river, the guilty woman wearing an extra skirt and the guilty man an extra waist cloth. She holds a dog, while he holds a chicken. The pair go into the river, soaking their clothes and immersing the animals. They replace the latter on the bank, and put the extra garments to float downstream. The elder retrieves them and keeps both them and the animals. He later sacrifices

the chicken to the deity of 'hot cool water'. The dog is there just to bark and thus expel 'what is warm and hot'. Here Forth comments that what is 'hot' must be sent off downstream and thus out to sea, for purification to take place.[23]

Forth also reports that in the past the Rindi sometimes practised marriage by abduction. If a woman was against a marriage proposed by her father, or if the latter was against the marriage that others suggested, abduction could happen. This had to be supported by people in her clan. In one method they, using a pretext, took the bride to a lonely spot, where the groom's clan seized her. Another method, used when the bride's father opposed the marriage, involved the local noble ruler, who would summon the father to his residence and detain him. Then the supporters of the marriage in the bride's clan sent the woman on an errand outside the village, and the groom's family abducted her.[24]

Renard-Clamagirand: Ema Ritual

In 1982 the French anthropologist Brigitte Renard-Clamagirand published a study of the Ema people of central Timor, based on fieldwork done from 1966 to 1970. She notes that a birth is followed by a complicated ritual, in which offerings are made in groups of seven, corresponding to the number of months in the rainy season and that of the primordial ancestors. Offerings are also made in groups of five and eight, and rice is scattered towards the four corners of the house. As regards death, if it results from illness or old age the deceased is buried with bent arms and legs, having curled up when dying. If a man is killed in a headhunting expedition he is buried with his limbs stretched out, outside the cemetery. Previously the corpse was kept in the house to dry for several months before being buried. Eventually the soul of the deceased has to be guided to the land of the dead, on a high mountain, in the final 'feast of the dead'. (In the past this included the actual burial.) Again, offerings are made in groups of five, but also in pairs, while six buffaloes are sacrificed. In a separate ritual, performed every five or seven years to ensure a future supply of buffaloes, seven young people represent seven families. Overall Renard-Clamagirand, in her analysis of Ema ritual, finds a dualistic opposition between on the one hand the dry, the hot, the sun and the male and on the other the wet, the cold, rain and the female.[25]

Lewis: The Ata Tana 'Ai

1988 saw the publication, by the Canberra-based anthropologist E. Douglas Lewis, of a study of the Ata Tana 'Ai, the 'People of the Forest Land', of central eastern Flores. The Ata Tana 'Ai have the myth, widespread in the world, of the latter's origination by an 'earth-diver' creator, who dives into the primeval waters and scoops up mud to create the earth. They, again like other peoples, have rituals for the transitions from the rainy season to the dry and back again: in both the water of a coconut is splashed, to provide the necessary 'cooling'. The Ata Tana 'Ai believe that opposite sex twins commit incest in the womb. One of them is furtively given to another clan. Incest itself is compared to eating one's own body and drinking one's own blood. An incestuous marriage is seen as an error that must be corrected by a ritual of 'dividing the house ladder': the husband and wife go down from their house, one by the back door and one from the front, to show that they came there by different paths.[26]

According to Lewis the Ata Tana 'Ai see a person as having a spirit that belongs to the past and future community of ancestors. In his lifecycle a man, who is born 'hot', must be 'cooled' in a ceremony of initiation and circumcision before he can marry. Here there is ritual transvestism: the young men are dressed in women's clothing and have their ears pierced before they are taken to a pavilion in the forest. Then they are stripped and dressed again in men's sarongs. They are joined by many other initiates and the circumcisions take place. Later, when death comes, there is a series of mortuary rituals in which the soul is extracted from the body and a deeper essence of spirit is removed from the soul. If someone dies in the house the corpse is buried at the edge of the clearing round it. Some deaths are 'unfortunate' or 'premature'. They are ascribed to 'errors' or 'sin'. At death the soul must 'cross over': this is compared to walking on a thread or a knife's sharp edge. Before burial the corpse is laid out inside the house, its feet facing uphill, but in the burial itself it is the other way round, with the head facing uphill and east. This is the direction in which houses are oriented, towards the mountain peaks. Thus, Lewis observes, when the corpse is laid out it is in an 'unnatural' position, emphasizing the fact that it is dead and separated from the living. But when it is buried it is returned to its natural position.[27]

The Ata Tana 'Ai have second-stage mortuary rites, for the 'cooling' of the spirits of the dead and the reunion of each spirit with its house and the latter's members. These rites are performed annually, after the harvest, for

those who have died in the previous 12 months. Pigs are sacrificed and eaten, with rice, by relatives. The pigs' lower jaws are distributed among the relatives, and, along with the ritual sharing of the food, emphasize the continuation of relationships. In the third and last mortuary ceremony the spirits are reunited with the gardens and ensure success for the crops therein. The hair and fingernails of the dead are taken from their clan branches and put in a basket in the clan's central house. This is done every six to eight years, and involves the sacrificing of pigs and goats.[28]

To Speak in Pairs: Ritual and Language

Also in 1988, Fox and others published a volume of essays on eastern Indonesian use of 'parallelism', the ordering of words in duplicate form, as in

'The earth demands a spouse
And the rocks require a mate.'

'Parallelism' is found all over the world, and is particularly common in oral poetry, but in eastern Indonesia its use in ritual contexts is exceptionally marked. The formal speech that results relates the living to the spirits: it is 'fashioned' or 'patterned' speech. On Sumba the Rindi call this 'weaving' of words: as elsewhere in the Austronesian linguistic domain, the visual system of textiles, woven by women, is opposed to the oral system dominated by men.[29]

In one contribution Renard-Clamagirand describes a ritual performed among the Wewewa of West Sumba. It was necessitated by the illness of a member of a household. This illness, it was decided by divination, had been sent by the spirits for several reasons, notably the fact that forbidden sexual relations had occurred within the house. The latter required a purification ritual. Six chickens were sacrificed, and then the first speaker, one of a number who assisted the 'chanter', began the ritual proper, announcing:

'We move our bottoms,
We raise our faces.'

He explained that gongs and drums were being beaten in order to expel 'the transgression committed with the brother, the transgression

committed with the sister'. After a lot more speaking and chanting, at dawn the ritual performers went outside, to perform the actual expulsion of the transgression from the village. The men of the house squatted beneath a makeshift shelter. This was set on fire, so that they had to run away: as they did so they were pelted with pieces of a foul-smelling inedible plant, symbolizing the transgression. To atone for the latter a goat and a dog were sacrificed: the latter would bark at the transgression, making it

'Fly high,
Go straight.'

Afterwards the 'chanter' was given a chicken: back at home he would sacrifice it to his own spirits.[30]

Atonement for sexual transgression among the Wewewa is also studied by the US anthropologist Joel Kuipers. Once a man had an affair with his uncle's wife, who was also related to him by birth, so that this was incest. Ten years later accidents and illnesses led to a diviner being brought in and the pair confessed. Chickens, pigs and a water buffalo were sacrificed and a special prayer was recited by a specialist, expelling the guilt from the village by means of a narration of its journey. Afterwards there were more speeches and rites. In the prayer the transgression is condemned as pollution:

'Spiders in the water,
Poison leaves in the pasture.'

The specialist portrays himself as a hunter, chasing the transgression out of the village:

'So that I walk the trail,
So that I follow the spoors.'[31]

Geirnaert-Martin: The Laboya

A study of a West Sumbanese people, the Laboya, based on fieldwork done from 1983 to 1986, was produced in 1992 by the Paris-based anthropologist Danielle Geirnaert-Martin. She devotes much attention

to the Padu ('Bitter') festival, performed each year, in October, at the end of the dry season, to bring the rain. This marks the end of the agricultural year and the start of the next, with the preparation of the soil for planting, and consequently has been compared to a new year festival. It involves a ritual hunt of the wild pig, and also fishing. The festival ends with the expulsion of 'transgression' (*hala*) by the male representative of one clan, who carries a branch of dry coconut palm to the middle of the confluent of two rivers. He dips it in the water three times and prays that all 'transgression' will flow downstream. Then two other men, representing other clans, engage in a 'cock and hen' dance. This signifies the lifting of taboos: the previous ban on noise and sex is lifted. In the evening lots of food can be eaten, and young men and women swap jokes about their sexual experiences, bragging about how attractive they are. Such joking transcends class barriers. Previously young men engaged in ritual fighting, standing on one leg. This has been replaced by boxing. From now till the end of December children have to play with tops, and other games which have a revolving movement also have to be played after the festival.[32]

One subdivision of the Laboya, the Patyala, celebrate Padu in different ways. They fish octopus instead of hunting wild pigs. Young men, on foot, throw light wooden poles at each other in a forest. A goat is burnt and thrown into the sea, removing 'transgression'. At the end of the festival people gather and encounter the kalango, temporarily and ritually mad men and women. These have started to feel 'hot' just before Padu: at times the men behave as women. They become feverish, talk to their ancestors and start to speak foreign languages. The kalango are permitted to take any objects they want. They behave like pigs, eating from the latter's troughs and rolling in mud and dung (and eating both) in order to 'cool themselves'. On the last day of the festival they frighten the crowds who watch the 'Black Men', wearers of black masks who represent their founding ancestor. Geirnaert-Martin comments that these 'Black Men' correspond to the clan representatives in the Laboya 'cock and hen' dance, symbolizing marriage relationships, while the function of the kalango is to concentrate 'transgression' and 'cool it down'.[33]

Hoskins: Kodi Festivals

A book on the Kodi of West Sumba, based on fieldwork done from 1979 to 1988, was published by Janet Hoskins, the US anthropologist, in

1993. She notes that on Sumba, as opposed to 'hereditary slaves', who were never sacrificed, slaves who had been captured in warfare were. Thus young slave girls were sacrificed to cover sacred drums with human skin, a captive was strangled in a sacrifice to a python spirit and it was routine to kill human victims when a sacred house was rebuilt. These sacrifices are echoed in a myth about the origin of rice. A giant python, during a period of hunger, sacrificed his daughter, using a small harvesting knife, cut her into little pieces and buried her. She returned as the rice crop, but her distraught mother went into mourning, a mourning that is repeated now by the priests, with their silent mourning in the months before the rice crop is ready to be harvested after their sacrifices.[34]

These priests are associated with sea worms, the origin of which is explained in another myth. A man called Lendu, again during a period of hunger, journeyed off with his mother's brother, who assumed the form of a giant python. Crossing the sea, they found a rich king, who set Lendu three tests. The first was to eat a whole water buffalo. This was done for him by the python. The second was to hit a post as slender as a hair with a dart. This he achieved with the help of the python, who provided some sticky resin to make the dart hit the post and stick there. The third test was a board game, played with seeds, the aim being to arrange eight in a row. Lendu won, again with the help of the python, who, by magic, produced extra seeds, when there were not enough, out of his mouth. The king now gave Lendu his daughter in marriage, and told him that he was giving him the sea worms, spirits which would ensure good rice harvests and plenty of descendants. When Lendu's ship was about to sail home the king's daughter refused to accompany him, and hurled herself into the sea, breaking up into extremely small pieces, the sea worms that would appear on Kodi's beaches in February.[35]

Here the three tests evidently correspond to the 'three tests of the warrior' often found in the Indo-European field (and elsewhere) by Dumézil and his followers, and frequently preceding the hero's marriage. The first test, involving food, symbolizes the third of Dumézil's 'functions', fertility, while the second, involving a warrior's skill, represents the second, warlike force. In the third test intelligence and magic are required: these belong to Dumézil's 'first function', in which they combine with education and law to produce religious sovereignty.[36]

The festival of the sea worms is preceded by other, important aspects of the Kodi calendar. In October there is a ceremony to start the 'bitter

months', with their ritual silence. Chicken and rice are offered to the Creator, the 'Great Spirit of Prosperity', the 'Elder Spirit', the spirits of the dead, of hunting and so forth. Noise (including music and reciting myths), children's games and the sacrificing of large animals are banned. Now the crops are planted. In early January, in preparation for the new year revels that are about to come, the Sea Worm Priest starts to 'brood', like a woman at a funeral, not moving, controlling the calendar and symbolically female. Soon the taboos governing the people are relaxed, and from the full moon onwards children play games and young people sing. The songs are full of flirtatious mockery, and intercourse takes place discreetly.[37]

In February the sea worms appear in huge numbers, and people collect them. Then there is the pasola, a battle on horseback with spears, involving large numbers of horsemen. During the nineteenth century real spears were used, but the Dutch had these replaced with blunt bamboo lances. The main combat reaches its climax in the physical and ritual heat of midday. In the late afternoon there is another combat, to 'cool down' the excitement generated in the morning. Hoskins comments that this battle is like other Indonesian combats, including cock fighting on Bali, rock throwing on Savu and various forms of animal duels. In between the two pasola combats people have a meal of rice and chicken, sacrificed to the recently deceased and flavoured with the sea worms.[38]

Headhunting on Sumba

In 1996 there appeared a volume of essays on headhunting in South-East Asia, edited by Hoskins. Her own essay considers the heritage of headhunting on Sumba. She points out that Sumba is divided into East Sumba and West Sumba, each characterized by its own language grouping. East Sumba has a highly stratified class system, with nobles who see headhunting as unimportant. West Sumba has considerable social mobility, and sees headhunting as a past tradition that is still extremely important as symbolizing local independence. Here there used to be 'skull trees', wooden altars displaying taken heads, in villages, to display the latter's role in joint ceremonies. Hoskins says that Sumbanese headhunting 'was associated with capturing agricultural fertility from enemy peoples and removing the pollution of mourning by transforming death into new life.' It can be done to end mourning, but even so it still produces health and fertility.[39]

In West Sumba headtaking was done in vendettas between equals, affirming a group's solidarity. In East Sumba headtaking was done to produce tokens of conquest. Thus in the west the head was humiliated and mocked, being pulled along the ground after a thong had been inserted in its cheek. In the east the head was honoured and paraded in a procession, the point being that the enemy's prestige reflected well upon that of his conqueror. In West Sumba the ghost of a person killed by enemies produced trouble until vengeance was taken. Often old men and women were killed, as this was easier. During headhunting expeditions the raiders' wives had to remain silent and inactive within their houses, like the village priest, who remained so until the raiders returned with their screams and cries. These raiders would be relatives of the person for whom vengeance was sought, along with hired warriors, including debtors and men seeking social advancement. By contrast, in East Sumba the raiders were largely hereditary slaves. Thus slaves killed other slaves, since men could fight only social equals.[40]

When the head was brought to the village, in East Sumba it had already had its flesh removed and been 'beautified', but in West Sumba it was untreated and bloodied. In any case the head had to be processed before being put on the skull tree. This could be done by temporary burial, smoking or boiling. The victim's flesh was symbolically, but not actually, eaten: the Sumbanese would only pretend to eat it, because the skin, flesh and blood were seen as extremely dangerous. In East Sumba the skulls were hung on the tree until peace was made, and then buried, the tree being ceremonially uprooted. In West Sumba they were usually taken to people's homes.[41]

The East Sumbanese have a myth about the origin of headhunting. A man marries his sister, but their child is stillborn and she soon dies. Her brother tries to bury her quietly, but divine anger manifests itself through thunderstorms. A culture hero is told by 'the great lord of the heavens' to dig up the sister and feel the side of her body. At this rice seeds fall out, which he plants. To make the rice grow he is told to adorn her grave with the heads of mice, sparrows, a horse and a buffalo. However, the altar is not 'beautiful'. He tries using a monkey's head, and this looks better. In the end he kills the woman's brother, and puts his head above the grave, facing the rice. Now the altar looks beautiful. The hero cuts the brother's body into two, so that the skin and entrails become the commoners, and the bones and flesh become the nobles.[42]

In the corresponding West Sumbanese myth two sisters lend gongs, which are family heirlooms, to borrowers who fail to return them. Their father returns and beats the elder sister to death. The younger sister insists that the borrowers should replace her head with that of their eldest daughter. Her father tries to propitiate her with the heads of a chicken, a buffalo and a monkey. In the end he kills the borrowers' eldest daughter, and is told by the spirits to cut her head off and hang it in the village square.[43]

Hoskins: Spirit and Shaman Among the Kodi

Hoskins published another book on the Kodi in 1998, which provides useful information about spirits and shamans. The Kodi, we are told, invoke their spirits in paired couplets. Thus the Creator is called 'Mother who bound the forelock; Father who smelted the crown'. She explains that this suggests that humans were made by a combination of women's work (binding threads) and men's work (smelting metal). All important deities have two genders: 'Elder Mother, Ancient Father', or 'Mother of the Earth, Father of the Rivers'. A lower rank of spirits appears in pairs: ancestors are addressed as 'dead mothers and fathers', the 'lord of lightning' is invoked with his sister, who spreads his nets along the shore, and the goddess of the swarming sea worms is called to come with the Ipu fish, which in fact swarms some time later. Lower still are spirits of an anonymous character, of no particular gender: the spirits of rice, corn, livestock and cloth.[44]

Hoskins illustrates the role of the shaman in Kodi society with the example of Markos Rangga Ende, a singer and healer. Like all Kodi singers, Markos begins a performance by invoking his drum. He tells of the drum's origins, sufferings and transformation into a 'healing cavity': it has people's troubles put into it, in order to be taken to the upperworld, where help can be given. (Hoskins argues that this story about the drum is largely a story about the singer-healer's own sufferings, which helps a patient to relieve symptoms.) In order to reach the upperworld and its deities the drum has to pierce through the seven levels of heavens. In this journey the singer and drum are united as man and woman, and the singer and the patient are also bound together. After the story of the drum the singer calls on an 'orator' to help him discover the cause of the patient's illness. Together, the orator and the singer examine past history, trying to find mistakes in rituals that could have angered the spirits.[45]

Forth: The Nage of Central Flores

In 1998, after fieldwork done from 1984, Forth published a study of the Nage people of central Flores, which yields fascinating pieces of information. The Nage call the rainbow 'growing snake' (*nipa tebu*), and believe that it has a horse's head. Some of them see the rainbow as a horse, which the supreme god sends down to earth to bring him the souls of the dead. As often in Indonesia, it is believed that rainbows can be harmful. Some Nage consider the rainbow to be a bad omen, as it sucks the blood of the nobility. Also dangerous is the spirit of a tree called hebu (*cassia fistula*), which is used to make the Nage forked sacrificial post. As soon as a hebu tree has been chosen to become such a post, and until it has finally been installed as such, it has to be avoided by women, children and expectant fathers. The last category are excluded because the tree could assume their form and have intercourse with their wives. Females with uncut teeth are most rigorously forbidden to approach the tree. This is because the Nage strictly prohibit intercourse with women whose teeth have not yet been cut; evidently, here again, the tree's sexual powers are feared.[46]

As we have seen, the Nage believe in a supreme god, now identified with the God of Christianity, and called *ga'e dewa*, 'lord god'. He is the creator of all that exists, and decides a person's fate. But 'lord god' is not invoked alone when offerings of food and drink are dedicated: to be sure, he is usually invoked, but it is along with the ancestral spirits or the house spirit. Moreover, he is almost always absent from myths. Myths of creation speak of seven children born to the first parents of the human race. Some of the seven speak to a snake and thereby become witches. They find the moon too bright for their nocturnal searching for victims, and so they cut down the great *leke* vine (*tali leke*), a giant liana (*Entada phaseoloides*), which joins the sky to the earth. This myth is linked to former practice: witches had this vine put round their necks when taken to be executed, and people found guilty of incest were tied up with the same vine, along with a palm fibre rope, and had ash and millet sprinkled on them when being ritually banished.[47]

The number seven, that of the ancestral children, appears also as that of the layers of the sky. Forth points out that seven, as an odd number, is seen as uncompleted and thus offering the possibility of being continued and developed: thus, for the Nage, it is auspicious and symbolizing life itself. Eight, as the ultimate complete number, represents death. One

must trace one's forbears back for seven generations, and make offerings to ancestral and other spirits that include seven portions of food and drink.[48]

Another myth, that of the origin of rice, is, as Forth says, a widespread Austronesian one. On Mount Dota, to the east of the Nage, a father, called Thunder, 'chopped [*dota*]' his daughter into little bits, which he scattered over his garden. These became rice, and he, from the sky, sent down rain onto it. Another mountain, Ebu Lobo ('Grandfather Peak'), is associated with rain in a ritual performed 15 days before an annual hunt. The main aim is to obtain enough rain in the year to come. An offering is made to the supreme god and the ancestral spirits, and the priest, in his recitation, describes a circular journey, made in an anti-clockwise direction ('to the right'), from and back to the mountain.[49]

Other rituals involve rice. If something is lost, uncooked rice may be scattered in the house, in the belief that it has been hidden by the spirits of the dead. In general, Forth observes, the Nage usually scatter uncooked rice in rituals concerning ill-intentioned spirits: the rite is Austronesian. Uncooked rice is also sprinkled onto the head of a pig, along with a little hair from its forehead, when it is about to be killed and have its liver examined for auguries: at the same time the pig is asked for good omens.[50]

Few rituals are connected with death itself. They do not last long, and are aimed at removing the dead person's soul, so that it does not come back, not at assimilating it into the land of the dead and community of ancestors. On the evening after the burial the main grave digger pours water from a bamboo container onto the ground before the dead person's house, thereby isolating the family from the community for two days. The grave digger then beats the container against a rock four times, and throws it to the west (associated with impurity by the Nage). Two days later, at dawn, the mourners bathe in a stream. They all dip a leaf from a special tree in the stream, screw it up and, with their faces to the east, throw it behind themselves. On their way back to the village they step over a trough containing indigo leaves, a plant with burrs and goat droppings. The last person to cross kicks it backwards with his right heel. This is to stop the soul from coming back to the village. Next there are rituals 'to awaken and drive out the soul'. Relatives go to a field tilled by the deceased. One man, bringing four reeds and, going anti-clockwise, throws a reed into each corner of the field. A mature woman goes into

the deceased's granary and takes a small sample of every kind of food, before kicking all this backwards and outside. The soul now goes to the 'land of the dead', which has a variety of locations in Nage belief, on the tops of mountains, beneath the ground and (as often in Indonesia) on the coast.[51]

Forth devotes much attention to Nage buffalo sacrificing, which is done by people to demonstrate their social standing. The buffalo are seen as containing ill-intentioned spirits. They are killed in large numbers, after being tied with a long cable and allowed to run around, and after multiple wounding. The usual occasion for a mass buffalo sacrifice is the installation of a forked sacrificial post. It may take years of preparation. Pigs are sacrificed as well. The owner of each buffalo sacrificed makes a speech, in which he announces his origins, position in society and land ownership. By doing so he maintains his claims to rights to his land and to membership of groups. The sponsors of the sacrifice can reject a claim and his buffalo, but if they allow the buffalo to be sacrificed the claim is accepted. After the speech a man throws a handful of uncooked rice at the buffalo, and gives it the first stab. Other men inflict more wounds before it is speared in the heart.[52]

As Forth observes, this multiple wounding naturally spills a lot of blood. The latter is seen as fertilizing the earth, as purifying and as promoting life. If a wife commits adultery a 'buffalo sacrifice for cleansing the body (*pa zio weki*) may take place, so that the cuckold does not become ill or suffer some other misfortune as a result of what has happened. When this is done some of the buffalo's blood is mingled with a young coconut's milk, and the sacrificer pours this milk over the cuckold's head.[53]

The General Characteristics of Eastern Indonesian Religion

In surveying the general characteristics of eastern Indonesian religion we shall again follow the same order as that outlined above. While concentrating on death, annual festivals and headhunting, we shall also have to pay much attention to numbers and directions.

Birth, among the Kedangese, is associated with even numbers, because it is a transition. Opposite sex twins, for the Ata Tana 'Ai, are unlucky, having committed incest in the womb, and one of them is given away. Initiation, for an Atoni warrior, is performed after a headhunting expedition, in a ritual in which the number four occurs repeatedly.

Among the Ata Tana 'Ai the young men being initiated are dressed as women, taken to a pavilion in the forest, dressed as men again and circumcised. As regards the initiation of women, the Nage insist that they must have their teeth cut before intercourse. Marriage in eastern Indonesia tends to be between the children of a brother and sister, with some patterns encouraged and others forbidden. In Sumba one clan takes its wives from a second and gives its daughters to a third. At Rindi weddings seven pairs of nuts are offered, in order to obtain the completing eighth and thus 'prosperity and fecundity'. The Rindi would sometimes practise marriage by abduction, supported by people in the bride's clan.

Adultery within a Rindi clan was not taken seriously, but outside the clan could be punished with death, as equivalent to murder. Among the Nage adultery entailed the sacrifice of a buffalo, to cleanse the cuckold's body and save him from misfortune. Incest, for the Kedangese, confuses the sky and the earth: thus an imaginary goat, representing the man and the 'above', and an imaginary pig, symbolizing the woman and the 'below', are sacrificed. The Rindi expel the incest from the house and use a dog and a chicken to represent the woman and the man as what is 'hot' is sent downstream and out to sea. For the Ata Tana 'Ai incest is like devouring oneself, and an incestuous marriage has to be corrected by the couple's going out of the house by different doors. The Wewewa react to incest first by purifying the house, and then by expelling the transgression from the village by throwing pieces of a plant, before the sacrifice of a goat and a dog. Alternatively, a ritual specialist may expel the incest from the village by narrating its journey as he hunts it on its way. In East Sumbanese myth a brother–sister marriage produces death and divine anger. People found guilty of incest among the Nage were tied up and ritually banished: yet again, it is expulsion that is most significant.

Death, like birth, is associated with even numbers by the Kedangese, as representing transition. Nage death rituals are aimed at removing the dead soul, so that it does not come back. 'Bad death' on Roti produces evil 'spirits of the outside', and necessitates inversion of funerary procedures, to make these spirits go around upside down. The Kedangese counter 'bad death' by a 'washing of the face' with a banana stalk, which is then thrown away, together with its 'fault'. On Savu, as on Roti, a 'bad death' results in a corpse's being placed in a different orientation. The

Rindi, in the case of a 'hot death', do not bring the corpse inside the house, but bury it quickly, after a 'cooling' ritual. Among the Ata Tana 'Ai 'unfortunate' or 'premature' deaths are attributed to 'errors' or 'sin'.

Funerals, on Roti, used to involve burial beneath the house. The corpse is finally placed with the head towards the land of the dead in the west. Among the Kedangese there are four days of restrictions after a funeral. At the funeral of a very prominent priest men and women dance. The Rindi make the corpse sit in a wooden container, ideally for four days in the case of commoners. On the day of burial two horses are slaughtered, and the body faces downstream, the direction of the journey to the land of the dead. Among the Ata Tana 'Ai it is buried facing uphill and east, the 'natural' position in which houses are orientated. The Nage isolate the bereaved family from the community for two days. Then the mourners bathe and engage in various rituals designed to stop the deceased from coming back to the village, and 'to awaken and drive out the soul.'

The Rindi have a collective final mortuary feast for all the deceased once in a number of years: again, the souls are sent definitively to the next world. Even the 'bad dead' have a final mortuary ceremony, in which the ancestors take the soul to their land. The Ata Tana 'Ai perform their corresponding ritual every six to eight years: here the spirits are reunited with the gardens.

As for the land of the dead, the Atoni say that it is on 'the other side of the river'. For the Rotinese it is in the west, and for the Rindi upstream, while the Nage believe that the supreme god sends a horse in the form of a rainbow down to earth to bring the dead to him: for them the land of the dead is located variously on mountains, under the ground and on the coast. The Ata Tana 'Ai believe that the soul must 'cross over' a thread or a knife edge.

Death, in the form of headhunting symbolism, dominates the Rotinese 'general ceremony of increase' between the harvest and the new year. Atoni headhunting is preceded by taking omens from birds. A head is welcomed into the community (its 'spirit' being incorporated therein), and the warrior sometimes eats part of the victim, to absorb the 'soul'. The skull, the 'harvest' of death, is treated like the first fruits of the harvest. In Sumba headhunting was associated with fertility. The victim's flesh was only symbolically eaten. As in Taiwan, an East Sumbanese myth says that the heads of successive animals were found not beautiful

enough, and only a human head would do. Here the aim was to make the rice grow. The corresponding West Sumbanese myth also says that the heads of successive animals were inadequate, until the spirits insisted that a woman's head be cut off.

Other forms of human sacrifice are attested. In Atoni myth a youth and a girl used to be sacrificed to obtain a good harvest. 'Minor slaves' used to be killed at the burials of Rindi noblemen. The Kodi also sacrificed slaves captured in warfare, to cover drums with human skin, to make an offering to a python spirit and when a sacred house was rebuilt. In Kodi myth a python sacrifices his daughter, who returns as the rice crop.

The hunting of animals also appears in ritual contexts. Among the Laboya there is a ritual hunt of the wild pig at the end of the dry season, with the preparation of the soil for planting. The Nage have an annual hunt 15 days after a ritual performed to obtain enough rain in the year to come.

This agricultural pattern dominates eastern Indonesian festivals. On Roti, after the harvest, a pre-new year festival includes a ritual battle, with the aim of 'bringing in' the seeds. The Atoni use a special hook to pull the first fruits of the harvest into a holy house. As we have just noted, the Laboya hunt wild pigs before planting. The Ata Tana 'Ai splash the water of a coconut in order to provide 'cooling' and the transitions between the rainy and dry seasons. They also have a post-harvest festival to 'cool' the spirits of the dead and reunite them with their families. The Laboya have a most important festival at the end of the dry season, after a ban on noise and sex. 'Transgression' is sent downstream, and men and women swap jokes about their sexual experiences. Ritual fighting used to take place. Among the Patyala ritually mad people 'cool transgression down.' The Kodi also have ritual silence while the crops are planted, before flirtatious mockery and discreet intercourse. Then the sea worms appear, and there are ritual battles. The Nage's annual rain-making ritual involves the description of a journey from and back to a mountain. There also Nage 'prestige feasts', in which men maintain their rights and wound buffalo, so that their blood will grant life-giving force.

As in Western Malayo-Polynesian religions, the differences between souls, spirits and gods are not clear. The Ata Tane 'Ai say that one has a spirit, which belongs to the community of ancestors. After death the soul is extracted from the body and the spirit from the soul. The Atoni, above

the spirits of the dead and earth spirits, have a supreme 'lord of heaven' and a complementary earth deity. On Roti there are good ancestral spirits 'of the inside' and bad spirits 'of the outside'. The Savunese have a 'Great Woman', who grants rain and seeds, and a male 'Sun Ancestor', associated with the tapping of lontar palm trees in the dry season. In East Sumbanese myth 'the great lord of the heavens' appears in a myth about the origins of headhunting, but in the corresponding West Sumbanese myth he is replaced by 'the spirits' in general. For the Rindi there is a supreme Creator God (not mentioned in rituals), along with ancestral and (malevolent) earth spirits. The Wewewa spirits send illnesses to punish forbidden sexual relations. In Kodi myth the sea worms are spirits that grant harvests and descendants. The Kodi also have a Creator and other important spirits as well as lower ranks. The Creator, like all other important spirits, has two genders, being addressed as both 'Mother' and 'Father'. A less important rank of spirits appears in male–female pairings, for example ancestors, the 'lord of lightning' and the goddess of sea worms. Lesser spirits are anonymous. The Nage have a supreme god, who is the creator and summons the souls of the dead. There are also the ancestral spirits and a house-spirit, as well as ill-intentioned spirits, some of whom are present in buffalo.

Religious specialists appear in different contexts. West Sumbanese village priests had to stay silent, indoors, like the raiders' wives, during headhunting expeditions. A Rindi priest dedicates buffalo meat to the deceased in the final mortuary ceremony, and a Kedangese priest kills a chicken in a ritual that expiates incest. In another incest-expiating ritual a Wewewa specialist expels the guilt by narrating its journey from the village. Similarly, a Nage priest, in a rain-making ritual, describes a journey from and back to a mountain. Kodi priests observe a silent mourning before the rice harvest, and are associated with sea worms. The chief Sea Worm Priest 'broods' before the new year revels, like a woman at a funeral. There are also Kodi shamans, healer-singers with drums into which people's troubles are put and which journey, united with the healer-singers, to the Upperworld.

Numbers are particularly prominent in eastern Indonesian religion. Barnes finds the opposition between even numbers, representing transitions, and odd numbers, representing structures between transitions, to be the most important aspect of Kedang thought. Even numbers are complete and are ones of life. Forth similarly finds that for the Rindi

numbers are very important and even ones are preferred as representing completeness and points of transition.

Duality is also extremely significant. In Eastern Sumbanese art there are two 'endfields', and in Sumbanese villages generally there used to be two 'kings' at each end. On Savu a house is divided into halves, male and female, and rituals are directed towards two deities, again male and female. The Atoni have symbolic inversions between male and female and black and white. Use of 'parallelism' in eastern Indonesian rituals is particularly marked The Kodi invoke their more important spirits as two-gendered or in pairs. In Atoni myth two human victims used to be sacrificed each year until two strangers came and stopped the practice. The Rindi put two portions of food in front of a corpse. In East Sumbanese myth a corpse is cut into two, becoming the nobles and the commoners. Among the Nage, after a death, the family is isolated for two days.

The number three is dominant on Roti, being 'essential and propitious'. Sumbanese villages have a third, central area between those of the two kings, and Eastern Sumbanese art has a third element, a 'centrefield', between the two endfields. In Kodi myth a king sets a hero three tests. The Rindi, like various Malayo-Polynesian-speaking peoples, are divided into three classes (nobles, commoners and slaves). Generally, however, three is not prominent in eastern Indonesia.

By contrast, four is well attested. It is found repeatedly in the Atoni warrior's initiation ritual, and in Atoni myth we hear that the first humans were four in number. Among the Kedangese there are four days of restrictions after 'cleaning the village', and after a funeral, while in the funeral itself the number four occurs several times. The Rindi used to bury commoners within four days, and in a ritual purification from incest four men pound stones four times against four walls. Similarly, in Nage funerals, a grave digger beats a bamboo container against a rock four times, and another man throws four reeds into the corners of a field.

Five we have found only in Ema offerings. We have found six chickens sacrificed in a Wewewa ritual of purification from incest, and six buffaloes killed in Ema mortuary rituals. Seven occurs more often. For the Kedangese it is important: there were seven original ancestors, a person has seven souls, and there are seven heavens (as with the Kodi and the Nage) and seven storms in the rainy season. Among the Rindi and the Nage seven solicits the completeness of eight: thus offerings are made

in groups of seven. In Nage myth seven children are born to the original parents of humanity, and for the Nage in general seven, as capable of completion, is auspicious and symbolizes life. The Ema make offerings in groups of seven in the ritual that follows a birth.

Eight is also important. In East Sumba one finds eight bands in textile designs, eight levels of heaven and of earth, eight functionaries and offerings in rituals and intervals of eight years between festivals. A Kodi board game requires one to arrange eight seeds in a row. The Rindi and the Nage, as we have just seen, believe that eight completes seven: for the eight symbolizes 'the means to prosperity and fecundity', while for the Nage it represents death.

Directions are clearly significant. On Roti the east–west axis appears in the house and in burials, with outer–inner, male–female and white–black symbolism, while a north–south axis is used for the 'bad dead' (as among the Savunese). The Ata Tana 'Ai have their houses and graves facing uphill and east, while the Nage associate the west with impurity and face east when purifying themselves after a death.

It is binary oppositions of this kind that dominate Central Malayo-Polynesian religion and give it its specific character within the Austronesian field. Such oppositions generate more of the same, giving numbers their all-important place. The oppositions between rainy and dry seasons and between noise and silence are prominent in agricultural rituals. Here the post-harvest festival, as elsewhere, is linked to sexual activity. Agriculture and fertility are also linked to headhunting: the skull is the 'harvest' of death. Again, the victim's spirit is brought into the community. Incorporation of spirits within the community of the dead happens in collective mortuary feasts once in a number of years, even for the 'bad dead', and the spirits are then united with the crops.

Aptly, a ritual hunt comes at the end of the dry season, and a ritual battle follows the harvest. When the dry season ends there must be 'cooling' of transgression, which has to be sent downstream. The community's 'fertility' is also paramount in headhunting, as receiving the head taken. It is also important in the final mortuary ceremony: the spirits of the dead ensure success for the gardens to which they are brought as they rejoin the living. Here a rite performed every six to eight years, with the sacrificing of pigs and goats, and the bringing together of the clan's branches to its central house, clearly marks a supreme culmination of collective ritual.

Chapter 4

EASTERN MALAYO-POLYNESIAN SPEAKERS

In approaching Eastern Malayo-Polynesian speakers we shall begin, as indicated above, with peoples of north-western New Guinea, before proceeding to Oceanic speakers in the Admiralty Islands, speakers of the Western Oceanic sub-group in Papua New Guinea and the north-western Solomons and, finally, speakers of the Central-Eastern Oceanic sub-group, from the south-eastern Solomons to Polynesia. We shall use both older and more recent anthropological literature before coming to general conclusions concerning Eastern Malayo-Polynesian religion.

North-Western New Guinea

Frazer: Death in and Around Cenderawasih Bay

In 1913 the great British anthropologist Sir James Frazer published a useful survey of attitudes to death among the inhabitants of Cenderawasih Bay in north-west New Guinea. He based himself upon the works of Dutch and German writers from 1854 onwards. Frazer begins with the Biak people, who are thought to have come from the island of Biak in the north of the bay to the other islands therein and the mainland. They have large communal houses, containing 10 to 20 families, and make dug-out canoes with outriggers. The Biaks are extremely afraid of ghosts, especially those of 'heroes'. After the burial of a 'hero' they make a huge noise in their houses for some days, about sunset: they shout and beat and throw sticks, to make the ghost go away

and not make them ill and 'fetch' them. The Biaks say that the land of the dead is beneath the earth or sea, and like our world, but with more luxuriant and faster-growing vegetation. As for the soul, it is in the blood when one is alive, and then goes to the land of the dead. Thus at burial the deceased is given things fitting to his rank: a bow and arrow, ornaments and kitchen utensils. The dead influence life on earth, granting protection and success.[1]

Accordingly, the Biaks have wooden images of their dead. A family communicates with the soul of the departed via an image of this kind, to which food and tobacco are offered. It is often consulted, for example in case of illness. A medium goes into a trance, and is possessed by the dead person's soul: then 'the soul speaks' to give advice. Such an image will also be consulted to explain why a death has taken place: it may ascribe the death to black magic, performed by someone in another tribe, who will then be killed. On the island of Ron an image of this kind is made not only of someone who has died at home, but of someone who has died far away. In this case the soul has to be brought to it. This is done by setting fire to a large tree: the family gathers round the tree and a medium, going into a trance, brings the soul into the image.[2]

In some cases the image's head is replaced by the actual skull of the dead person. On the island of Ron this is done for all first-born children from the age of 12 upward. The body is put in a small canoe, inside a hut behind the house, and the mother keeps watch beside a fire until the head drops off. Then (after the body has been buried) the head is kept in the house until the nose and ears have gone. They are replaced with wooden equivalents, and a feast ensues. Children under two are not buried, but placed in baskets, which are hung from trees. This is because on top of the forest there are two spirits, one male, one female, who kill small children out of desire to have them. The bereaved parents hope that these spirits will be content with their dead child and not take its siblings.[3]

Elsewhere in the bay corpses are sometimes dried over a fire before being kept in the house. When they become too many the older ones are placed in the hollow trunks of trees. When the corpse of a man is dried in this way some tribes insist on collecting the liquids and making his widow drink them.[4]

The family of the deceased is bound by severe restrictions until the image has been made and a feast has taken place. They have to stay inside

and eat unpalatable food. Finally, they have to purify themselves by bathing at a holy spot. Frazer points out that this is probably through fear of the ghost, and observes that at the burial each mourner folds a leaf into the shape of a spoon and holds it over their head, as if pouring something. At the same time the mourners murmur, 'The spirit comes', to stop the ghost troubling them. When a parent dies the eldest son wears the teeth as an ornament.[5]

Another people, the Windesi, who live to the south-west of the bay, bury the corpse one day after the death. It is wrapped in mats and put on a scaffold, along with all of the deceased's possessions. Often this is done on an island. Those present tear a leaf in half and use it to stroke the corpse, so as not to be killed by the ghost. Then one of them takes omens from the sounds of birds and flies. Afterwards the mourners must not eat anything that has been cooked in a pot. Much later, after a year or so, there is the 'festival of the dead', often for several dead people. During two nights and a day there is singing and dancing, and eating and drinking. The wooden images of the dead are made, and the skulls of the deceased are inserted into holes at the back of the wooden heads. Now the mourning comes to an end. Often there is a variation upon this 'festival of the dead': this occurs when there is vengeance for a death caused by an evil spirit incarnate in a human. This vengeance will consist in murdering the latter. Then the singing and dancing are done to the sounds of drums, gongs and triton shells, and the making of a wooden image is replaced by making marks upon the skull, cleaned of its flesh, of the murdered human.[6]

The Windesi believe that everyone has two spirits, and that in the underworld there is a huge house for the dead of their people. In the case of a woman's death both of her spirits go there for a life without any need to work. However, in the case of a man's death one of his spirits goes there and the other goes into a living person, who becomes a healer. Someone who wants to become a healer goes into a trance near a man's corpse, and the latter's spirit possesses them. The candidate is taken into the forest, and there, after an invocation, is possessed by spirits of lunatics. Now the healer is qualified to cure illnesses, which are seen as caused by the spirit of a dead person. The healer operates by massaging the patient, claiming to remove some object from the body and finally diagnosing the sin of omission or commission that has provoked the spirit's wrath.[7]

Finally, Frazer notes some details of Windesi headhunting. When successful headhunters return and come close to their village they blow triton shells. All of the men who have taken a head have their faces blackened. If one head has been taken by several warriors the skull is divided among them. The party always arrives home early in the morning, and makes a lot of noise paddling its canoes, as the women wait in front of their houses, ready to dance. As the canoes pass the young men's common-house the headhunters throw pointed sticks at it, corresponding in number to the people whom they have killed. Then the rest of the day is passed very quietly, but occasionally the headhunters beat drums or blow shells, and sometimes they hit walls with sticks and shout, in order to expel their victims' ghosts.[8]

Rutherford: The Biaks

Danilyn Rutherford, the Chicago-based anthropologist, in 2003 published a book on the Biaks, based on fieldwork done from 1992 onwards. She notes the strong ties between brother and sister, which are reflected in ritual. Thus, in the early twentieth century, when a boy was initiated, his sisters would eat sago cakes mixed with blood from his foreskin. (In some places grown men would drink the boy's blood mixed with palm wine.) When a girl was initiated she had to spend several months, immobile and isolated, in a tent. Then, after her wedding, she had to give feasts for her brothers, notably 'clothing feasts' in which they brought her and her children clothes and porcelain.[9]

As regards death, Rutherford tells us a story of a warrior's children who kept his skull, only for his grandchildren to show it scant respect, playing with it till it shattered. She points out that Dutch sources show how wooden images of the dead, which contained their skulls and spirits, also soon lost their value. Such images were retained only for as long as their spirits were well connected to those of the seas and winds. (Everyone had two spirits, the 'soul' (*rur*) and the 'shadow' (*nin*).) It was the latter that left a person in a dream or as the result of sorcery. Rutherford's informants said that their ancestors made the images partly to contain the 'shadow'. In the end it joined the 'soul' in the next world.[10]

Rutherford reports that Biak men resort to magic to catch fish. They have a myth in which a hero encounters an angel, who has come down on a ray from the Morning Star, and this angel teaches him the art of

fishing. Today the first seven fish caught at the start of the season have to be smoked on a special platform and left there until the season's end. The fishermen have to 'call' the fish to catch them, summoning them as relatives, especially cross-cousins, or propositioning them. Thus a man addresses the fish as female cross-cousins, saying that he will 'lie with' them – such intercourse is forbidden among the Biaks.[11]

Oceanic Speakers in the Admiralties

Parkinson: Customs in the Admiralties

Richard Parkinson (1844–1909), a German ethnographer with an English name, in 1907 published the results of observations made during his 30-year stay in the South Seas. He gives us valuable information about the peoples of the Admiralty Islands, notably the Usiai and the Manus. Parkinson tells us that the Usiai, who live in the interior of the main island, the Great Admiralty, and build their huts on level ground, are cannibals. After one of their number dies the corpse is made to sit and is decorated. Then it is laid out inside the hut for putrefaction to take place. Approximately three days after the death the corpse is buried in the hut, after which women maintain a vigil for months, wailing over the grave. The Usiai's land has many spirits, concentrated in four places, three of which are extremely gruesome, dark abysses. These are the homes of the evil spirits, one of which, the *kot*, is unique and everlasting, flying through the air. The rest are spirits of dead people. Chiefs, the wealthy and the wicked come here after dying. As for the fourth place, it is that of the good spirits, and those who come to it after death do not risk annihilation. A dying person must, however, be claimed by these good spirits before the evil ones can eat him up, and so a relative beats a wooden drum to summon the former.[12]

As for the Manus, who live on the shore in houses standing on poles, they have a system of totems, in which a fish or bird is the sign of a group of blood relatives. This totem is inherited by a child from its mother: members of the group are not allowed to marry one another (that would be incest) or eat the totem fish or bird. After birth mother and baby stay in the hut for 20 days, no men being allowed to enter. Then the mother bathes, and a feast is held. When the child's hair is long enough to tie into a topknot a 'sorcerer' shaves it off completely, and again there is a feast. Not long after the boys go, with all the men, to a special house, and

are isolated there for nine days, eating fish and coconuts. This is to make them big and strong. Older boys and girls have their ears and noses pierced: after this they are confined for 20 days (in the case of a boy) and six months (in the case of a girl), and not allowed to cook, food being brought to them. At the end there is, yet again, a (large) feast.[13]

The Manus have elaborate mortuary rituals. After death the body is laid out inside the women's house with the head facing seaward and the feet inland, for putrefaction to take place. The women mourn and keep vigil for 20 days. Decaying parts of the corpse are placed in baskets and then disposed of in the sea or buried in a variety of places. Finally, the skeleton is washed, and the bones, with the exception of the skull, ribs and forearms, are put in a basket and interred no matter where. The remaining bones are bleached in the sea and put in a bowl, which is placed in the dead person's house. After a while the ribs are distributed to the nearest relatives, with a big feast, and after a further interval a bigger feast honours the skull. To support this latter a tree trunk is made into a scaffold, with elaborate carvings. The 'sorcerer' uses magic to give the deceased's son courage to address the crowd, and puts the skull on the scaffold, which is sited on a north–south axis. A jug of oil stands to the north, and a water container to the south. and after a further interval a bigger feast honours the skull. To support this latter a tree trunk is made into a scaffold, with elaborate carvings. The 'sorcerer' uses magic to give the deceased's son courage to address the crowd, and puts the skull on the scaffold, which is sited on a north–south axis. A jug of oil stands to the north, and a water container to the south. Drums are beaten throughout the following ceremony. The son makes a speech, and the 'sorcerer' picks up the skull. Then the son dips a bunch of dracaena leaves in the oil and strikes the skull with it repeatedly. He says, 'You are my father. Accept the food prepared in your honour! Protect me! Protect my people! Protect my children!' Feasting follows, and the skull is placed in safe keeping.[14]

Fortune: an Overview of Manus Religion

In 1935 the US anthropologist Reo Fortune published an account of Manus religion, based on fieldwork done in 1928–9. He begins by explaining that every Manus man worships his father, in the form of his skull, hung in a bowl just inside the man's house. Any misfortune is attributed to the father's anger, and an 'oracle', that is to say a possessed

person, says what has provoked that anger. The father's spirit is called *Moen palit*, which Fortune translates as 'Sir Ghost'. When the man dies his father's spirit is discredited, having failed to save his son from death: the skull is thrown into a lagoon, and the spirit wanders over the sea before eventually becoming a sea slug. A 'Sir Ghost' is usually kind to his family, but inflicts death on others. The ghost of someone who has recently died, if it is that of a policeman, is a policeman after death, responsible to a bureaucracy of ghosts.[15]

As for the 'oracles', they tend to identify some sin that has caused 'Sir Ghost' to inflict an illness. 'Oracles' are either diviners, men, or mediums, women. A diviner rubs two bones, linked by a string, when putting a question, and then throws them across his shoulder: one bone falls on his chest, one on his back. If the back itches on the left the answer is 'Yes', and if it itches on the right it is 'No'. A medium has to be the mother of a dead boy. The latter's ghost speaks to her in a séance and transmits what is said by the family's 'Sir Ghost' or other ghosts. Along with diviners and mediums, the Manus also consult seers from among the Usiai, who diagnose sins by dreaming or becoming possessed. The Manus have many myths that mock the Usiai's magical familiar spirits, the *tchinal*, as mischievous ogres. However, if there is a serious illness, and all else has failed, the Manus will resort to Usiai *tchinal*-derived black magic.[16]

A different kind of Manus magic is associated with the ghosts on the tiny, uninhabited islands in the lagoons. These ghosts are older and lack independent powers, but obey the incantations of those in a relationship with them, in a matrilineal grouping. Among cross-cousins, that is to say children of a brother and sister, the children of a sister have a special magico-religious power over the children of a brother. This power can be used to curse and to bless.[17]

Fortune illustrates his overview with a narrative from his fieldwork diary. A young man revealed that he had had intercourse with five young women who were betrothed, and in one case this involved what was seen as incest. This revelation was followed by the sudden death of a related boy, attributed to a ghost. An Usiai seer, after dreaming, alleged sexual misconduct in the house of the boy's father. The whole business ended with widespread suspicion that the incest had caused the death. Fortune comments that the Manus see sexual misconduct as the worst possible sin, and attribute all past deaths to it. Illness is viewed as caused by sins of

commission or omission. Similarly, the Usiai believe implicitly in their magic. An Usiai searcher for magic power waits by a hole in the ground to be given it by a snake-like *tchinal*. Then he kills an enemy and leaves his head by the hole. The Manus are derided by their neighbours in the Admiralties for imagining that the ghosts punish any sexual misbehaviour, whereas, according to them, it is the failure to make a funerary feast that brings a ghost to cause illness or death.[18]

Meier: Myths from the Admiralties

The German missionary Josef Meier published a number of myths from the Admiralties between 1907 and 1909. One, a Manus legend, relates the creation of the earth and humans by a snake, which found itself swimming in the sea. It told a reef to lift itself up, and the latter became dry land. Then the snake created two children, male and female, from whom humans are descended. It also created food. Another Manus myth tells how a man and a woman created the earth out of the sea, and then made trees, food, the sun and the moon. In yet another Manus legend the original human pair are born from turtle eggs on the beach. Another has a dove giving birth to a man and a bird. The man commits incest with his mother, who has many children. These marry each other, and are the ancestors of all humans. Other myths relate how all things came out of the belly of a snake, how snakes themselves, along with fish and fire, originated, and how coconut palms came into being. In one of these the head of a man who has been killed is buried in the ground, and becomes the coconut palm.[19]

Western Oceanic Speakers

Eastern New Guinea and the Trobriand Islands

Frazer: Death Among Three Peoples of North-Eastern New Guinea

Frazer's 1913 survey of death in New Guinea considers three Austronesian-speaking peoples on the north-east coast, and bases itself on the works of German missionaries. It begins with the Yabem, who apparently do not have religion as such, but merely an overwhelming fear of witchcraft and the spirits of the dead. They believe that after death spirits go to a world divided into compartments, depending on how one has died. This world is on an island, reached by a ferry. Sometimes the spirits are reincarnated in animals, and some people explain that

everyone has two souls, one their reflection on water, one their shadow on land. The Yabem imagine that sorcery causes all deaths (except those of the very old). They also believe that a ghost needs fire, in order to be guided to the sorcerer who has murdered it. So, on the evening of a burial, they make a fire and carry it in a procession into the forest, where they leave it for the ghost. But the ghost of a murdered person also has to be driven away with shouting and drumming, and with the help of a model of a canoe, to take the ghost to the land of the dead. The Yabem usually bury their dead close to their houses, and put a hut on the grave, for the family to live in for at least six weeks. At times the bodies of important people are tied up in a house till only the bones remain.[20]

Much attention is given by Frazer to Yabem circumcision, which he sees as a rite of death and resurrection. He points out that the Yabem word for 'ghost', *balum*, also means a 'bull-roarer', an instrument found among many peoples and consisting of a piece of wood in the shape of a fish. This is tied to a piece of string and whirled to make the sound of a roaring bull. The bull-roarer is much used in the Yabem's circumcision ritual. When the youths set off to the forest for this the women howl in the belief that the young males will be swallowed by a ghost-monster, a *balum*. This is represented by a long hut, in which they stay for three or four months.[21]

A neighbouring people on the coast, the Bukawa, have extremely similar customs. They believe that the spirits of enemies whom they have killed pursue them to their village and blind them. Thus returning and successful warriors dance wildly around a huge fire, throwing brands in the direction of the enemy. But the Bukawa see their own ancestral spirits as likely to help them, notably in agriculture, and so they pray to them when planting their fields. Again, at harvest time, a part of the first fruits is offered to the ancestors. As among the Yabem, a hut is erected over a new grave (dug next to the house), and a widower stays secluded in it.[22]

Finally, Frazer considers the Tami people, most of whom live on islands to the south-east of the Yabem and are seafaring traders. They believe that everyone has a 'long' soul. Identical with the shadow, which is absent in sleep, and is located in the stomach. After death it flies off to a village on the north coast of New Britain. The Tami also believe that one has a 'short' soul, which abandons the body only after death, and waits near it before going to the land of the dead in the underworld. They bury corpses beneath houses or near them, and think that the

'short' soul takes the offerings made to the dead. Women dance death dances, and the whole village gathers around the temporary hut on the grave, in order to guard the bereaved against the ghosts who are believed to congregate after a death. This vigil lasts some eight days, and a large amount of food and drink is consumed. After two or three years the period of mourning ends. Dancing goes on all night long for up to eight or ten days, at first solemnly but finally in a comic manner. Some families dig up the bones when the flesh has rotted away and keep them in the house for two or three years, before burying them in the earth again.[23]

The Tami have other beliefs, notably in deities (*buwun*), to be found on an island where no humans live. They have human heads and the bodies of fish, but appear as men in their lust for women. The *buwun* are responsible for earthquakes and epidemics. By contrast, there is a good god, not to be feared, called Anuto, the creator of heaven, earth, the first man and the first woman. Anuto is given the first portion of food at feasts and markets: it is put in a basket and taken into the forest. Moreover, the Tami believe in very old spirits called *Tago*, which correspond to clans and families. The Tago are represented by masked men, their bodies covered with leaves: these men dance in a circle to the accompaniment of singing and drumming. At times they go round the village and throw pebbles or fruit at other men. This happens every ten or 12 years, and goes on for a whole year, during which coconuts may not be eaten.[24]

These deities and spirits, however, are unimportant compared to the spirits of the dead, and in particular the recently dead of one's own family: ancestor worship rarely goes back beyond one's grandfather. Such worship is informal: a man offers a cigar to a spirit to drive fish towards him. As for the land of the dead in the underworld, it is more beautiful than this world of ours, with so much fruit that work is not needed. But people there quarrel, are ill and die. In the last case they become worms, ants or wood-spirits. To enter the land of the dead one must cross a river.[25]

Hogbin: Religion on Wogeo

In 1970 the Australian anthropologist Ian Hogbin published a study of religion on the island of Wogeo, off north-east New Guinea, based on fieldwork done in 1934 and 1948. He begins by looking at Wogeo culture heroes in myths. Such heroes form a category of spirits, who

created order out of chaos, and then disappeared, taking with them only the 'shadow' of things. In one myth, during a famine, the daughter of a culture hero marries a 'bush hero' in the forest, but her fellow villagers smash him to pieces and pulverize him, his penis alone remaining. His grieving widow buries this, and it turns into a giant taro. In another myth a hero marries a ghost and pelts it with stones until it falls down and seems lifeless. Several months later he discovers the first coconut palm. When he picks up a coconut he sees in it the ghost's reproachful face. In yet another myth a hero commits adultery with the wife of his blood brother. The latter builds a men's common-house and persuades the adulterer to descend into a post hole and make magic, so that the building will be secure. Then he drops a post onto him and fills the hole in with earth, but the hero turns into an insect and escapes.[26]

Another category of spirits consists of the souls of the dead. They originate in an essence that appears in one's shadow. After death the soul is driven away by mourners, and goes to the mountains in the centre of the island, where the land of the dead is situated. Most of the Wogeo say that the soul can come back as a ghost, but others say that a visible ghost originates from another essence, which appears in one's reflection in water.[27]

A third category of spirits is that of the 'monsters'. One kind of these are called lewa, which also means 'mask', and are linked to food distributions. The spirit monsters are impersonated by men: in the case of men from the village (as opposed to the bush) this means that they are masked dancers. During such a food distribution the gathering of ripe coconuts is forbidden. The other kind of monsters are called nibek, which also means 'flute', and they appear in a prelude to large-scale festivals. Such festivals are held when a common-house is built or a village headman decides that there is a sufficiently important reason. The monsters are summoned before dawn on the beach, and flutes are played for several weeks. Enormous amounts of food are placed on a platform, and then taken home by families. Eventually the monsters are sent back to the spirit world, and ginger is used 'to remove the coldness of the spirits' and its dangers.[28]

Hogbin also notes identical ceremonies in the initiation of boys and girls. When boys are admitted to the men's common-house or club for the first time they are made to stand in a line outside. Several youths come forward, carrying food, and circle the boys three times, going

counter-clockwise. When a girl is initiated on the occasion of her first menstruation she and her 'companions' of the same age stand in line in the centre of the village, and several youths act in the same way as with the boys.[29]

As regards death, Hogbin reports that during the night after it takes place the close relatives wail and embrace the corpse inside the house, while other relatives sing outside. The next day a grave is dug below the house, which is raised off the ground on piles. Then the corpse is buried, with the head facing the rising sun. At the same time a relative drives the spirit of the deceased out of the land of the living, prancing from east to west and then back to east again, brandishing a spear and a torch and spitting gingery saliva. Finally, he yells and throws the spear and torch after the spirit, which is said to go to the east of the island and then the next world. If the deceased was a mature man and had descendants the chief mourner will eventually recover the jawbone and some other bones. This is done after three or four years, and the bones are carried on dangerous journeys in war or on the sea. If a woman dies in childbirth or a man is killed in battle or murdered by violence the burial is done at once, in the bush, and there is no ceremony or mourning. It is explained that people who die a sudden death are so extremely unclean that contact with them would certainly be fatal.[30]

Seligman: Religion in South-East New Guinea

A massive survey of the Austronesian-speaking peoples of south-east New Guinea was published in 1910 by the leading British anthropologist C. G. Seligman, based on fieldwork done in 1898 and 1904. He devotes much attention to tribes speaking the Roro language. Here we again encounter the 'death chair' in which a corpse is placed, and then the positioning of the latter's head towards the rising sun. The burial is done under the house of the deceased. As for warriors who had caused deaths in successful expeditions, they had to go into seclusion in the 'clubhouse of the war magic experts' (*paiha marea*), as they were purified from the pollution of blood. This clubhouse, like that of the war chiefs, received a volley of spears from the victorious warriors when they returned from their expedition.[31]

Seligman also provides information about cannibalism in a nearby area, that of what he calls the 'Southern Massim' population. Usually this cannibalism is done in revenge, but sometimes in desire for flesh, and,

extremely rarely, recently buried corpses are dug up to be eaten. In one revenge attack, described in detail, a man is captured, brought home and speared by as many warriors as can reach him. They take care not to kill him yet, as he has to be severely wounded by the brother of the man for whom revenge is taken. This is duly done, and then the victim is taken to the clan's special stone circle (dedicated to cannibal feasts), covered in coconut leaves and tied to a tree. After this he is burnt to death, cut up, cooked and eaten. Skulls from earlier cannibal feasts are put on sticks and held by the warriors above their heads as they dance.[32]

Burials in the 'Southern Massim' area have traditionally been done close to the houses, sometimes a couple of yards away. To some extent skulls have been exhumed and put in crevasses in rocks. After death the corpse is propped up in the middle of the house and then buried in a squatting position, facing the east, so that the deceased can reach the next world. A big mortuary feast, called the *toreha*, is held a year or later after a death, for all the deaths since the last *toreha*.[33]

The people of this area, says Seligman, do not seem to have any worship of gods or spirits, though they believe in mythical beings, mostly malevolent: 'ogres'. In the hamlet of Wagawaga, on the coast, the spirit of a dead person is called *arugo*, which also means 'shadow' or 'reflection' in water. After death it goes to the other world, which is beneath the sea. It is like this world, and is presided over by a 'big man'. On the small island of Tubetube the spirit is called *yaruyarua*, but this is not, as one might imagine given parallel examples, the word for the shadow of a living person. It remains near the corpse until burial, and then goes to a hill on another island: there the spirits get married, have children and make gardens.[34]

After this Seligman goes on to the people whom he calls the 'Northern Massim', the inhabitants of the islands to the east of south-east New Guinea. In this people's burial customs the skull and other bones are exhumed. On the island of Murua burial is done by women, beneath the house, and two months later they exhume the body and smoke the bones. Later they are placed in caves on cliffs.[35]

Malinowski: The Spirits of the Dead in the Trobriand Islands

Even greater detail about death in some of these islands was provided by the famous Polish anthropologist Bronisław Malinowski, in an article published in 1916 and based on fieldwork done from 1915. Malinowski

observes that in the Trobriand Islands the spirit (*baloma*) leaves the body at death and goes to Tuma, a small island ten miles to the north-west. It is also believed that the dead person's ghost (*kosi*) survives for a short time near the village. After a death villages are extremely frightened of invisible sorceresses (*muluhuausi*), who try to attack the corpse and eat it. As for the spirit (*baloma*), it reaches the island of Tuma by canoe, and makes a payment to the headman of the land of the dead. This payment consists of the valuables buried with the corpse. Regarding the difference between the spirit (*baloma*) and the ghost (*kosi*), it is almost always said that the former is like a reflection in water, and the latter like a shadow.[36]

Malinowski further reports that every year, after the harvest, there is a pause in agricultural activity, filled by dancing and feasting, a period called *milamala*. In this period the spirits of the dead return to the village and gifts are made to them before they are driven away. This period is accompanied by 'sexual licence'. Most of the dances are performed in a circle around drummers and singers. The festival is held in the first half of a lunar month (in the second half of August or the first half of September) and ends on the night of the full moon. Formerly, we are told, nobody would work during this festival, but would be intent upon 'pleasure, dancing and sexual licence', which pleased the spirits, whereas nowadays people work and upset the spirits, who react by sending rain and storms.[37]

The spirits of the dead are also important in magic. This is the case both with agriculture and with fishing (in the latter it is female spirits that are significant). It is also believed that the life of the spirit in Tuma comes to an end with old age, when it becomes an embryo. A female spirit takes this to the Trobriand Islands and puts it in a woman's womb. Thus there is reincarnation, and a universal explanation for pregnancy. Alternatively, it is believed that an embryo floats on the sea and impregnates a woman when bathing.[38]

Weiner on the Trobriand Islanders

A more recent overview of the Trobrianders has been provided by the US anthropologist Annette Weiner, published in 1988 and based on fieldwork done from 1971. Weiner describes the death of a chief, and the ensuing mourning, which is divided between 'owners of the dead person's things', who organize the burial, and 'workers' who do the actual labour. Men sing ancestral dirges (in the past this took three days

and nights). This chief was a powerful sorcerer, and so he was buried face down, so that his malevolent spirit (*kosi*) would not leave the grave and bring illness to others. Heavy taboos affect the deceased's spouse, and include strict seclusion, to avoid suspicion of having used sorcery to cause the death. Such seclusion lasts for months and demands a strict diet. The mourners 'cry' four times a day. Important payments are made to the 'workers'. In the past the deceased's skull and arm bones were disinterred, but then the government banned 'secondary burial'. Before that, in the case of a chief, the skull, adorned with red paint and cowrie shells, was put on top of a cliff. This had to be preceded by an enormous distribution of large yams, and could take place 15 to 20 years after the death. Such a distribution would be the culmination of many smaller-scale distributions, following an important 'women's mortuary distribution' four to eight months after the death.[39]

Weiner also supplements Malinowski's information about the harvest festival. This lasts from July until September. A chief will hold a dancing competition, and invite young and unmarried people from various villages to nightly dances, which continue until dawn. The dancers thrust their lower bodies forward provocatively to the sound of drums, and chase and grab one another before couples go into the bush to make love. This contrasts with the discretion observed during the rest of the year.[40]

Mosko: The Bush Mekeo's Burial and Death Feasts

In 1985 the US anthropologist Mark Mosko published a study of the Bush Mekeo people of south-east New Guinea. He devotes much attention to burial and mortuary feasts, and provides plenty of useful information. When someone dies in a Bush Mekeo village the villagers say that an entire clan has died. People rush, shrieking, to the body, and female relatives above all crowd closest to it, touching and stroking it. Previously they would lacerate their heads and bodies, but now they just beat their arms and breasts. During the days following the death the surviving spouse may be beaten by the blood relatives of the deceased. The male blood relatives keep a vigil over the grave for two or three months. Then the 'burial feast' is held. People work, hunt and fish to provide food for this. The 'burial feast' lacks the joyfulness of the 'final death feast': for the time being the village remains 'cold'. But, as in the

final feast, food is distributed, representing the blood or flesh of the deceased.[41]

A 'final death feast' may be held for several deaths. Again, it requires a huge amount of preliminary work. The village becomes 'hot', and the men and women's bodies are richly adorned, in a manner considered sexually 'sweet', like the dancing and singing of songs about love and courtship. Love spells are uttered silently by the men during the dancing. On each man's face there is a line of black paint, mixed with the fluid of his love charm, which may be smeared on a woman's grass skirt. Lines of men and women 'weave in and out of one another' in what, Mosko argues, is an apparent simulation of the sexual act. The Bush Mekeo see this as the ultimate form of happiness.[42]

Stephen: The Mekeo

Based on fieldwork done from 1969 onwards, in 1995 Michele Stephen, the US anthropologist, published a book on the Mekeo people (as distinct from the Bush Mekeo, who live in the swampy area to the north-west). She begins by telling the story of the Mekeo's culture hero, A'aisa. As a small boy he was found by an old woman, who adopted him. He went hunting with the village's grown men, and caught a lot of game, which they stole. A'aisa took his revenge by stealing their women, whom he eventually returned. Then he gave people knowledge of rituals, and instituted the roles of the 'man of kindness', the 'man of the spear', the 'man of cinnamon bark' and the 'man of sorrow'. He also created death, sorcery and jealousy. Finally, A'aisa left to join the shades of the dead in the west, on a hill on the coast.[43]

The Mekeo, Stephen reports, say that they believe in many spirits, which can be contacted by a 'man of sorrow', a powerful ritual specialist who lives apart, on the edge of the bush. Of these spirits the ones most mentioned are of the dead, who are sometimes present around houses, as they used to be buried beneath them. Sometimes they appear in the form of wild animals. The Mekeo also say that they believe in water spirits, which live in the river and pools, and are invoked to bring rain and fish. They resemble Europeans and are important as agents of illness.[44]

In reality, Stephen observes, Mekeo belief is far more sophisticated and complicated than their public statements suggest. It is founded on 'secret knowledge', for example in fish-calling rituals, used to call big fish in from the sea to the river and make rain to flood the area so that the

fish can come. Once, a myth tells us, a man made the first fish trap, but did not include vital elements. It kept singing a song to indicate these, and he added them until it worked. Now a 'man of knowledge' invites the fish by putting dried substances in a coconut husk, setting them alight and floating them downstream. Then the practitioner summons the rain. For this he first summons the 'myth people' who were with the culture hero A'aisa. He combines a large number of substances and puts them by a fire. After this he sings the song mentioned in the myth, calls the names of the fish and entreats them to come. Rain should now fall, as he sings spells inviting the fish to a feast. Stephen comments that the substances used to bring rain include blood from a number of black animals, so that the sky will be black from clouds.[45]

The 'Meso-Melanesian' Cluster

Hocart: Religion on Simbo

In 1922 the British anthropologist A. M. Hocart published a long article on religion on the tiny island of Simbo, in the west of the Solomon Islands, based on fieldwork done in 1908. He begins by noting that the islanders have chiefs, whose activities generally ended with the ending of headhunting: thus informants complain that nowadays nobody is mighty and people are all alike. Beneath chiefs there were older married men, founders of families, and then younger married men and bachelors.[46]

Hocart, discussing death on Simbo, observes that the word for 'soul', *galagala*, also means 'shadow', 'reflection'. At death the soul comes out by the mouth and stays beneath the ridge of the roof. If a man is killed by the Spirits of Wasting Sickness he is quickly dumped in the sea. Normally, however, the corpse is decked out in fine clothes and taken to the sea-shore, where it is seated facing west. Immediately afterwards, or on the third day, there is the ritual of the 'catching of the soul'. A medium holds out a leaf and falls unconscious as the soul enters it: then the leaf is put in the roof of the house. There a widow has to stay inside a small enclosure. Friends come and sleep in the house, because she will be frightened of the ghost. Women wail and men sing for four nights. Sometimes widows have hanged themselves to follow their husbands. In the past a slave would be killed to honour a dead chief, his head being placed by the chief's body while his own body was thrown into the sea.[47]

A feast is held on the fourth day: a pair of puddings is made out of four times four sweet yams, and the number four is repeated several times

in a prayer that evokes and enables the journey of the soul to the land of the dead, Sonto. Shortly afterwards a 'captive' is brought to the widow: this (or, in previous times, the obtaining of a head) sets her free. About 12 days after the death the skull is fetched and left to bleach, and after 14 days the mourners bathe in the sea and eat a special meal. On the 18th day the skull is placed in the special skull-house. There part of a pudding is put in a fire: this sort of burnt offering is found in other rituals, the point being that it enables the deceased to eat the food. On the 36th day the soul finally departs. Another meal is eaten and the four baskets, containing food, are burnt. The ghosts come from Sonto by canoe and fetch the deceased. Sonto seems to be in Bougainville: there the ghosts work like the living, in a huge cave.[48]

On the 50th day a commoner's final feast is held. A coconut tree is planted by the skull-house and a large banquet takes place. In the case of a chief the feast is held much later, and has the same name, Vavolo, as the war feast. Hocart explains that this is because previously a head was obtained. Two or three dead chiefs are honoured at the same time. A vast amount of food is prepared for many guests. Men sing to the accompaniment of flutes all night long, and then pigs are killed, cut up and shared.[49]

Hocart explains that the word for 'ghost' (*tomate*) also designates other spirits. Men who die by falling off trees and women who die in childbirth are called 'evil spirits' and are thrown into the sea. Other evil spirits cause illnesses, notably a spirit which rides on the rainbow. Alongside spirits there are gods (*tamasu*), which are divided into gods of crops and weather gods. The former created fruits, human genitalia, intercourse and land. Their principal figure, Vanavana, created the people of Simbo. He is represented by a tree stump, and is believed to live beneath the ground and cause earthquakes. The second most important deity is 'the old woman of Nyatuloki': the crocodile, shark and centipede are sacred to her, and she can make the north-west wind blow. A third god, Magoana, is responsible for the profusion of coconuts and bananas in Simbo, and can raise the south-west wind. As for the weather gods, they cause storms, and can be induced to do so, or made to still them, by the use of charms.[50]

It is further reported by Hocart that the people of Simbo have a new year festival in June, just before the small canary nuts are ripe. (Simbo is rich in nuts, which it exports.) On each side of the skull-house two sprays

of small canary leaves are tied, and puddings are made, incorporating the previous year's large canary nuts. The ghosts are addressed in prayer. Ten days later comes the festival of the first fruits, offered to the spirits. At the skull-house the nuts are combined with sweet yams to make puddings, one of which is then burnt. Another festival, held in November, is that of the smoked nuts, which are also put into the fire at the skull-house, again for the spirits, in batches of four portions.[51]

Scheffler: Religion on Choiseul Island

The Varisi speakers on Choiseul Island in the north-west of the Solomons were the subject of a book published in 1965 by the US anthropologist Harold Scheffler, based on fieldwork done between 1958 and 1961. By then Christianity had virtually extinguished the traditional religion, so that only a few old men knew much about it. The Choiseulese had gods (*bangara*), 'good spirits' (*sinipi*), who revealed lost money, 'wild spirits', who were malevolent, and the spirits or ghosts of the dead. As for the gods, they were stronger than the spirits (*manuru*), and got the 'first fruits' of the smoked nuts. When a descent group intended to make a raid a god's 'keeper' would, if the god lived in the sea, go out there in a canoe to take an oracle: if the canoe rocked the answer was favourable. A god had animals that 'followed' it: fish, birds and snakes, which also sometimes acted as oracles. Before a raid they might fly over the enemy, bringing bad luck.[52]

As for ghosts, the ones most venerated were those of 'managers' or 'big-men', the main leaders of descent groups. After death all the ghosts of a group came to the deceased's village to accompany the new ghost to the land of the dead, in Bougainville, where they lived an easy life. The corpse was usually cremated, but sometimes buried and subsequently exhumed. Later there was the 'getting of the bones': the bones and ashes were taken to the group's ancestral shrine, and there was a feast. Groups that did not practise cremation preserved their managers' skulls in special shrines.[53]

Regarding the vexed subjects of headhunting and cannibalism, Scheffler observes that many Solomon islanders practised both on a lavish scale. An earlier observer, the British surveyor S.G.C. Knibbs, paints an horrific picture, naming the 'Meso-Melanesian'-speaking Roviana people of New Georgia as the greatest headhunters, but saying that they do not seem to have eaten their victims, but merely collected

skulls for their men's common-houses. On Shortland Island (also in the north-west Solomons) the building of such a common-house was accompanied by the sacrifice of a human being, crushed as a post came down into its hole.[54] Some Choiseulese admitted that previously their warriors ate small strips of human flesh and muscle taken from the calves of enemies that they had killed, in order to acquire their effectiveness, anger and courage. Human sacrifice also took place: 'captives', normally young children, were taken from other groups, to 'replace' a manager who had just died, and sometimes this was in order to kill them and spill their blood over the manager's ashes or a new war canoe.[55]

Epstein: The Person Among the Tolai

In 1999 the British anthropologist A. L. Epstein published a study of the people of Matupit, a tiny island off New Britain, who speak the Tolai language, a 'Meso-Melanesian' one. It is based on fieldwork done from 1960 to 1994. Epstein concentrated on the idea of the person among the Tolai, and begins by noting the custom of 'rooting' a new-born child. Its father or grandfather circles a cordyline plant round it and then roots the plant in ancestral land, so that the child's identity can never be separated from the community. Here the settled community stands against the bush, haunted by the evil spirits called *tabaran*, who are not persons but are merely terrifying. The word for 'person', *gunantuna*, is a compound of *gunan*, 'an area of human settlement', and *tuna*, 'real'.[56]

A person also has a 'spiritual essence', *tulungene*. Thus a member of a secret society of sorcerers can make his spirit leave his body by falling asleep at a secret place, so that it enters into an animal, fish or bird and wanders through the world, destroying enemies. After death, when shell money still has to be distributed, the *tulungene* goes into the Abode of the Spirits. Previously shell money was also used to fill the corpse's orifices at burial, because when one reached the Abode one had to say, 'Yes', when asked, 'Have you brought it?' Otherwise one was seen as a pauper, and survived in misery.[57]

At the age of six a boy would be taken to a sacred grove and inducted into the cult of the spirits, a secret cult revealed only to males. Afterwards he would join other males on a stretch of beach forbidden to females. He went through more initiatory rituals until he was ready for marriage. Only when married was he a real adult. Eventually he could reach the summit of his career by sponsoring the most important ceremonies of the

spirit cult, and congratulating himself in front of crowds, crying out, 'I'm the fire!', or 'I'm the expert!'[58]

Central-Eastern Oceanic Speakers

South-Eastern Solomon Islands

Fox: Religion in San Cristoval

A study of the people of San Cristoval was produced in 1924 by the British anthropologist C. E. Fox, based on fieldwork done since 1908. His survey of religion there begins with spirits (*figona*), the chief of which appear in the form of snakes. There is a supreme spirit, Agunua, the creator of all things. One female serpent-spirit sometimes asks for a human sacrifice. In one version of her story she is called 'Eight Fathoms'. A man cuts her into eight pieces, but after eight days these are reunited. Then she is again cut into eight pieces, and after eight showers of rain is brought back to life. She promises to grant a fruitful garden and success in war. The people of San Cristoval also believe in ghosts and lesser spirits. Of the latter the spirits of the sea travel along the rainbow, which terrifies people into running into their houses.[59]

San Cristoval religion includes important stages in a boy's education, notably, in the case of a 'bush-boy', 'instruction in killing'. For this a man is killed and the corpse is taken to the boy, who spears it and eats a bit of the right arm. In the case of a coast-boy two years' seclusion in a canoe-house is imposed. These military traditions are echoed in death: whenever this happens men at once engage in jubilation, to stop an enemy's being the first to do so. A man's death is followed by 'the buying after him': the buying of a child, who is adopted to replace the dead man, or, in the case of a chief, that of a man, who is killed and eaten. Such a man will generally be obtained a long way away. If he does not arrive the men become restless, and they all swap their wives for two or more nights. Then, in the end, another chief provides one of his young men to be killed instead.[60]

The people of San Cristoval have a number of other beliefs and practices. They believe that a person has two souls, the *aunga*, which corresponds to one's reflection, and the *adaro*, which corresponds to one's shadow. The former is good, the latter bad. Illness represents the *aunga*'s absence, perhaps in the Land of the Dead. There is also a cult of trees among the islanders. Thus there is a special 'garden tree', beside

which sacrifices used to be made to increase the crops. Often some of the flesh from a man killed in the village would be burnt here. Sometimes such a killing would be done by the tree, so that the blood poured over it, blood being thought necessary for the garden to be fruitful. Red plants were also planted. There is also an important festival, in which a sacred tree is brought in, ornamented and burnt with dancing.[61]

Also important is the feasting that takes place between June, when the gardens are ready, and October, when planting begins. Now there is little work and much to eat. In the past, Fox tells us, there was 'considerable licence, and there was a regular official class of harlots'. Young men and women engaged in courtship. There used to be a curious dance, in which male dancers wore black masks and were completely covered in banana and coconut leaves. They represented the dead, and often plastered themselves with black mud: after the dance they rushed, shouting, to a stream.[62]

Ivens: Human Sacrifice at Sa'a *and on Ulawa*

In 1927 the Australian anthropologist W. G. Ivens published a study devoted to the village of *Sa'a* in south-east Malaita and the island of Ulawa, to the east, based on observations dating from 1896 to 1925. He gives us plenty of information about human sacrifices. On the death of a chief gongs are beaten rapidly, sending the messages 'Off with a head!' and 'Whose head am I offered?' Killing must be done to end mourning. The chief may, before dying, have accused someone of murdering him by magic, and the person will be hunted down to serve as the victim. A 'big death feast' is held, and at some point the victim's body is brought. Sometimes, instead, a live person used to be bought in order to replace the deceased, and adopted. People adopted in this way could be killed as victims. If a victim is killed a long way away the head alone may be brought.[63]

The people of *Sa'a* and Ulawa also have important cults of ghosts and sharks. Ancestral ghosts are seen as benevolent, and may inhabit a shark or swordfish. 'Tutelary' sharks are invoked in danger at sea. Piglets used to be burnt as offerings at altars for the ghosts, and a chief or commoner would do this for his ancestors. The altars consisted of circles of stones piled up to form walls, with a fireplace made of rocks inside. Piglets were sacrificed at the birth of a child, and also to remove 'ceremonial defilement', which angered a ghost and thus perhaps brought illness or

bad luck. Such defilements could be caused by cursing or indirect contact with women. Sacrifices were also made before a war, to the two war ghosts, that of the chiefs and that of the commoners.[64]

Keesing: Kwaio Religion and the Myth of Mana

The Canadian-based anthropologist Roger Keesing has produced several studies of the Kwaio of central Malaita. In one of them, published in 1992, he gives a brief overview of Kwaio religion. The Kwaio, he says, rarely talk about origins, and, if pressed, say that humans 'came out of the earth'. Only a few experts relate myths, such as a story that a snake gave birth to the first human beings. By contrast, the ghosts of the dead are omnipresent in Kwaio life. The soul has two parts, one which goes to the land of the dead (on an islet off Malaita's northern tip), and one which remains to watch over the living. Ancestral ghosts punish the living for breaking rules, and such violations must be 'washed' by sacrificing pigs. They cause disasters, and thus require the consultation of diviners. Mortuary feasting is also very important: an ordinary man sponsors one or two in his lifetime, but an influential leader may sponsor 50, and each involves dozens of investments. The death of a senior person necessitates rituals lasting many months before the taboos are finally lifted. Other rituals used to be demanded by a victim of murder, and were performed upon the murderer's body. Thus, in vengeance, cannibalism was practised upon enemy groups, and also upon incestuous couples abandoned by their relatives: the aim was to demote those eaten to the rank of animals.[65]

In 1987 Keesing published an encyclopaedia article in which he demolished the widespread fallacy that in Oceanic religions there existed an omnipresent and invisible substance called *mana*, which provided spiritual power. He points out that in the languages of Malaita *mana* is an adjective, meaning 'effective', or a verb, 'to be effective'. To make a noun, 'effectiveness', one has to add a suffix. The illusion of an all-pervasive energy called *mana* was created in the nineteenth century by a pioneering observer in the Solomon Islands and then spread by others.[66]

Micronesia

Kiribati

The religion of Kiribati has been well described by Frazer, on the basis of nineteenth and early-twentieth-century studies. He notes the severe

punishments for incest: sometimes the offenders would be asphyxiated in a pool of water, sometimes they were set adrift in the sea on a log and sometimes they were sent off on a canoe. In the last case the idea was that the sun would refuse to shine on them: the idea is linked to a mythical hero, Bue, who committed incest with his sister beneath the sun (their father) at noon, whereupon the sun wrecked their boat.[67]

As regards death, Frazer observes that the corpse was usually buried beneath the house's floor. Often the skull was preserved, and planted in the ground for the relatives to visit when seeking help from the deceased. The soul was identified with the shadow, and believed to live a happy life on a nearby island. So the islanders worshipped their ancestors, but they also worshipped gods. Of these most people worshipped Tabuariki, a god of thunder venerated in the form of a stone, who had a wife, Lightning. Alongside him were Auriaria, whose hair is to be seen in the appearance of a few straggling bushes; Teweia, who was extremely murderous towards those who crossed him; and Riiki, who separated heaven and earth and created the first man and woman.[68]

More on religion in Kiribati is to be found in the writings of one of Frazer's sources, the British administrator Sir Arthur Grimble (1888–1956), based on fieldwork done between 1916 and 1932. Grimble records a number of spells: love spells, an invocation to the sun, a spell for stealing one's neighbour's fruit and a spell for killing someone. Such spells have to be repeated three times. Grimble also gives us myths of the beginnings. At first, we are told in one of these, there were just 'the Darkness and the Cleaving together', and one man called Na Areau te Moa-ni-bai (Sir Spider the first-of-things). He told the Sand and the Water to produce children, and they produced a male and a female child, who brought forth children of their own. The youngest of these was also called Na Areau, and fathered a number of 'ancestors', notably 'Kanii and the skull Batuku', who were 'Kings beneath the tree of Samoa', their food being the 'heads of the eldest children of the people of Niku-maroro'.[69]

Grimble goes into more detail about birth and death. After birth mother and baby had to stay in the north end of the house for three days, so that the child would be protected by a female spirit who lived in the north. A bonfire blazed close to the house's eastern side, and the relatives danced around it: this was to encourage the child's soul to take up residence in its body. Later a boy would be subjected to a long series of

demanding ordeals, including seclusion for at least two and a half years. During his initiation he would have to learn magic and rituals. After death a special ceremony was repeated for three nights: everyone swept the village with staffs, to drive the deceased's soul and evil spirits away. Wailing lasted for three days, and the body was retained for three or nine.[70]

Yet more information is given to us by Grimble about the hero Bue and his father, the Sun. The latter had six children, whose mother gave Bue six things when he set off to see his father: two red coral stones, one fruit of the *non* tree, one coconut, one seed coconut leaf and one coconut tree leaf. Bue, using these, duly caught his father at dawn, on his six 'mounting platforms': three below and three above the sea. Here Grimble notes that the sun is connected with the number six elsewhere in the Austronesian domain. In northern Borneo the Dusum say that there used to be seven suns, but six were killed and then the remaining one retreated from the earth. Elsewhere, in Polynesia, the trickster-hero Maui takes six nooses to catch the sun.[71]

Grimble also tells us about the pandanus harvest ritual, in September or October. A rock was surrounded by stones, which enclosed the skulls of clan elders. The rock was crowned with three red coral blocks, in a pile, and represented the god Auriaria.

It was at this rock that the ritual was observed, at sunset, on the second day of the new moon after the harvest. A ball of sweet was brought, made from coconut toddy and desiccated pandanus. A clan elder presented the food to the Sun, the Moon, Auriaria and other gods and spirits, and his invocation was recited three times. After this he gave a small part of the food to the Sun, the Moon and Auriaria and divided almost all of the rest between those present, the remnant belonging to all the gods, spirits and ghosts.[72]

As regards headhunting and cannibalism Grimble feels that both were common among the Samoans who came to Kiribati about 22–25 generations before. Tradition relates that the previously mentioned Batuku-the-skull, King of Samoa, lived off the heads of people whom his children killed. These children killed men to be rollers for their canoe, and then went on a voyage, on which they killed a hundred people, cutting off their heads to serve as their canoe's crests. It appears that the heads of the 'first-born and bearded and bald' were preferred. Heads were offered to both Batuku and Auriaria (the latter lived in the top of a tree),

at the foot of a mountain (a sacred volcano), while flesh of the dead bodies was ceremonially divded between social groups. We are also told of one Teuribaba, King of the Tree of Samoa, who was always eating human heads, and emigrated to Kiribati. Grimble compares the cult of Rongo, a god who received human sacrifices in almost the whole of Polynesia.[73]

Finally, we must note Grimble's presentation (improved by his friend Harry Maude) of relationships between in-laws. First, there is that of the *tinaba*, the potential concubine, who had to be chosen from one's in-laws in a different generation. Thus a young wife's mother-in-law's brother could, with her husband's permission, have intercourse with her. Maude points out that in most of Kiribati this particular relationship was forbidden, but a man could have intercourse with his daughter-in-law (though this met with extreme disapproval, says Grimble), the wife of his brother's son, his mother-in-law and the latter's sister. Grimble says that the practice was almost universal, like wife-exchange, and the man would give land or goods. In practice it was usually a relationship between a young man's wife and his uncles. The second kind of relationship is that of the *eiriki*, an in-law of one's own generation with whom intercourse is generally permissible. Thus a man can have intercourse with his sisters-in-law and a woman with her brothers-in-law.[74]

The Marshall Islands

The customs and religion of the Marshall Islands have also been described by Frazer, again using nineteenth and early-twentieth-century sources. He notes that the islanders were divided into chiefs and commoners: children took the rank of their mother. Chiefs could have intercourse with their subjects' wives and daughters, and had the right to deflower all virgins. Marriage between cross-cousins (children of a brother and sister) was encouraged, but marriage between other cousins was forbidden. Men were allowed to have intercourse with their brothers' wives and wives' sisters. They had to marry outside their clans, which were designated by totems, usually animals or plants. In some families brother–sister incest was permitted.[75]

The Marshall Islanders believed that after burial the soul stayed with the body for six days. (Six was their holy number, because on the reef round the islands the waves came in groups of six small ones between each pair of three big ones.) Then the soul travelled to the Island of the

Dead, in the form of a canoe: if it was a large canoe it would go on living there, but if it was a small one it would soon die. Surviving souls could appear among the living and do them good or harm, and so were worshipped. Once a woman died in childbirth and was dumped in the sea. Six days later she reappeared, and kept on playing pranks on people.[76]

Above the spirits of the dead there were higher spirits, though also visualized in human form. The most powerful of these was called Wulleb, and lived on an island in the west. This spirit was worshipped at a festival connected with the pandanus fruit. In the course of the festival an old woman screamed unintelligible words six times, and then kicked a pandanus fruit around: this was considered for the moment to be a human. While kicking it she called on people to hit and pelt the 'varlet', and throw him in front of Wulleb's hut, so that the latter would send plenty of fish. The aim of the festival was to ensure general prosperity.[77]

Lessa: Religion on Ulithi

A study of Ulithi Atoll in the north of the Caroline Islands was published in 1966 by the US anthropologist William Lessa, based on fieldwork done from 1947 to 1961. He begins his study of religion there by looking at the worship of ancestral ghosts. These stay near their graves for four days after their deaths and then fly to an island in the west, before ascending to the Sky World. An important ghost is made the principal one for his lineage, and the latter's head has a shrine for him in his house, a bamboo grid with coconut oil, garlands, loincloths and turmeric. A medium, possessed, transmits the ghost's advice on voyages, illnesses and so on. Above such ghosts there are two 'great ghosts', Iongolap, to whom people turn in time of need, and Marespa, who died a few months after being born and quickly started to tell the future.[78]

The people of Ulithi also believe in spirits, some of them demons and some of them gods. Gods are divided into those of the Sky World and those of earth. The Sky World consists of four levels. At the top live the main gods, the highest being Ialulep ('Great Spirit'), the judge of the dead. His grandson, Iolofath, is a trickster, who was born from his mother's head, able to walk and talk. People tried to kill him by making him enter a post hole before they rammed the post down, but he outwitted them by tunnelling to one side. Then he was killed by an outraged husband, but was brought back to life by his father. The latter,

Lugeilang, was himself addicted to amorous adventures on earth: together with his father and son he makes up the triad of the great gods. Gods on earth are numerous, and dominated by those of the sea and navigation. In the same way, the sea dominates magic on Ulithi: it is concerned with typhoons, navigation, fishing and divination with reference to voyages.[79]

As regards the ultimate fate of the dead, Lessa tells us that after Ialulep's decision the wicked are sent to a well, full of snakes and eels, and a sticky gum that keeps them imprisoned. The good are sent to two paradises, one in the north of the next world, one in the south. There they dance, play, marry and have children. They eat leaves and flowers, and are nourished by the latter's fragrance. However, a ghost returns to possess a medium in the family, first momentarily, and then, after four days of preparation of gifts, for an hour or two. As for mourning in the family, it lasts five months, and then the family invites the village to a ritual in which food, cooked and raw, is distributed as a reward to those who helped with the funeral. It is to be noted that in the past the dead were buried beside their houses, the reason given being that by being near they would comfort the bereaved.[80]

North and Central Vanuatu

Speiser: Ritual in Vanuatu

In 1923 the Swiss anthropologist Felix Speiser published his study of Vanuatu, based on fieldwork done in 1910–12 and earlier literature. He reports that cannibalism was widespread: to be a man one had to kill and eat a man. Great feasts, in which pigs were sacrificed, required the eating of a human as well. Human sacrifices were offered to the spirit of the sea after shipwrecks, and were also made in wartime. On the island of Malekula, among the people called the Big Nambas in the north, a number of humans would be hunted for great sacrificial feasts.[81]

The dead were usually buried, often in their houses. Chiefs were given special treatment, sometimes by being placed on a platform in the bush, to decompose. Their skulls were sometimes put beneath the dancing ground or in the clubhouse, in the latter case incorporated in statues. Everywhere 'death meals' were eaten. On occasion the next of kin asked to be killed and buried with the deceased, and sometimes the request was granted. After death the soul went to the land of the dead. On the island of Epi it stayed near the corpse for four days.[82]

People worshipped ghosts and spirits, and on some islands gods. On Ambrym they believed in two great spirits, one of light, who ruled on high, and one of darkness, who ruled on earth. They had created the world and humans, and were respectively benevolent and malevolent. On Efate the supreme god was Takaro (evidently the Polynesian Tangaroa), but he received no particular veneration. Religion in Vanuatu was channelled through societies, originally secret ones. Most islands' societies had masks and bull-roarers. The aim of a society was to enable a man to obtain promotion to higher grades, in this world and the next, by offering pigs, mats and money. Such a man would hold a public festival. In eastern Santo he would impose taboos, for example on the collection of coconuts, and, by way of compensation, permit liberties, such as sexual freedom during the feast. Women would in this case direct their attention to male dancers, and their husbands would be unable to intervene. Thus wives would join the male dancers and go off with them into the bush. In Vanuatu generally such feasts consisted mainly in sacrificing large numbers of pigs to the ancestors.[83]

Finally, we may note the practice of extracting girls' teeth at the age of seven or eight. The two top middle incisors were removed. This was done in only part of Vanuatu: eastern Santo, western Big Bay and Malekula. It was the 'badge of marriage', performed only when the bride purchase payment had been completed. Apparently it was done to make a girl big and strong.[84]

Deacon: Pederasty Among the Big Nambas

1934 saw the posthumous publication of a book about Malekula by the British anthropologist Bernard Deacon (1903–27), based on fieldwork done in 1926 and 1927. Deacon provides important materials covering ritualized pederasty among the Nambas of north-west Malekula, who seem to be very archaic in their culture. Physically they represent a very ancient people, although they speak an Austronesian language. Among the Big Nambas, when a circumcision ritual is imminent, the father of each boy finds him a guardian, who then has sexual rights over him. This is in the context of widespread pederasty: each chief has a number of boys. The guardian can sell his rights to another man. He must not be related to the boy. It is explained by the Big Nambas that pederasty makes the boy's penis become big and strong. After the circumcision ritual the boy obtains a

bark belt, and his bond with his 'husband' is severed: now he is a man, and can himself take a boy as his lover.[85]

Layard: Religion in Malekula

More information about Malekula was provided by another British anthropologist, John Layard, in a book published in 1942 but based on fieldwork done in 1914 and 1915. Layard devotes much attention to the rituals in which a sacrificer honours the ancestral ghosts and rises through the ranks of a graded institution. These rituals involve a dance called Taur, 'to mourn', and this word, when applied to one form of the dance, is combined with another, Na-mbak, which probably means 'sexual licence'. For during this form of the dance the usual rules of exogamy are suspended, and promiscuity is general throughout the night. Layard also points out that Deacon's materials regarding pederasty are paralleled among the aborigines of western Australia: there too it is normal for a man to take a boy as a lover, and there too he must not have intercourse with a boy in a kinship section into which he cannot marry. We are also told by Layard of an 'initiation into sex' rite, in which youths are made to lie in a pit, covered with coconut leaves, before they 'rise from the dead'. They also have to suffer 'every kind of sexual indignity' before simulating intercourse with a sand model of a woman.[86]

Layard provides further evidence concerning human sacrifice. It used to be normal to find a human to kill on the dolmen in front of a clubhouse when the latter was rebuilt. A victim would be bought from a different area, and after being killed would be eaten. Another way of supplying a victim was bringing up an illegitimate son, adopted by a married man.[87]

Lastly, Layard tells us about the importance of the number four in Malekula. The magical number is four, sometimes doubled to eight: four leaves will be used in a magical rite, or something is replicated four times. In mortuary rites four means 'completion': people call out or cry four times, signifying death's ultimate finality. Four also occurs in birth rituals: the child is carried by four women in the naming rite, and is passed over a fire four times.[88]

Allen: Sexual Rituals on Aoba

In 1981 the Sydney-based anthropologist Michael Allen published an important essay on the island of Aoba, based on fieldwork done between

1958 and 1970. Allen devotes particular attention to secret society rites, sponsored by rich men in order to gain prestige. In one of these rites the initiates would dance with bows and arrows aimed at the novices (who were mainly boys but also girls), their movements imitating intercourse, to which they would invite them. After this the initiates danced to the sound of the 'vagina song' and forced the novices' mouths open. Some days later came the act seen as conferring the greatest amount of power: some men, naked, 'held their penises erect, pulled back their foreskins and let red powder, probably turmeric, fall to the ground.' Following this they danced, displaying their red organs to the audience. Others publicly copulated with female relatives, including those classified as the equivalent of their sisters, whom normally they had to avoid completely.[89]

South Vanuatu

Speiser: Cannibalism, Death and Gods in South Vanuatu

Speiser tells us that cannibalism on the island of Tanna appears to have been 'the dominant, overwhelming passion'. Boys were forced to eat human flesh, which was always rotten. Special ceremonies took place when it was consumed. Women's breasts and men's genitals were preferred. The dead were disinterred to be eaten, and the widows of warriors were often throttled for the same purpose. Once a god in the form of a huge, round stone received human sacrifices, eating the victims' flesh and drinking their blood, it was believed. Thus the blood was poured into a depression in the stone.[90]

As regards burial, Speiser says that on the island of Erromanga chiefs were not covered with earth like other people, but just with leaves, so that they could see 'how things were getting on. On Tanna, along the coast and Aneityum corpses were usually thrown into the sea. In inland Tanna they were seated in niches dug into the sides of graves, with the deceased's possessions. On Aneityum chiefs were buried, in the latter case with their heads uncovered: later the skull was removed and venerated on a tree. The Tannese would lacerate themselves, and on Aneityum, when a chief died, all his property was burnt. On Tanna and Aneityum widows were strangled by their sons, to keep their husbands company. Concerning the afterlife, the Tannese believe that it is very similar to this life: after a time the souls turn into owls or other animals, and eventually into holy stones. For the people of Aneityum there is a heaven

and a hell, the latter populated mainly by misers, but also by murderers, thieves and liars.[91]

Ghosts were the principal recipients of worship on Erromanga, Tanna and Aneityum. On Erromanga they were nonetheless seen as evil, but on Tanna they presided over the growth of yams and fruit trees. The main god on Erromanga was the Creator, Nobu, but he did not receive worship. Among the Tannese there was a supreme god, Karapa Namon, who was like a red-skinned man covered in thick hair, with long claw-like nails. On Aneityum there was one chief god, the Creator, Nugerian, whose name could not be spoken and had many children and grandchildren. There is also evidence of worship of the sun and (especially) the moon. On Erromanga the latter was represented by special stone images (of both full and half moons), venerated as prospective deities and exhibited at feasts regulated by the moon. There were altars for the sun and moon (represented by two tall posts) on Aneityum. There they were seen as having the power of life and death, and were seen as husband and wife. In the beginning they lived on earth, in the east, but eventually the sun went up into the sky and told the man to follow.[92]

Bonnemaison: Religion on Tanna

A long study of Tanna was published in 1987 by the French geographer Joël Bonnemaison, based on fieldwork done from 1978 He explains that the Tannese have a creator-spirit, Wuhgin, who lives on Mount Melen. After creating the earth he sent onto it a lot of magic stones (*kapiel*), which are alive and give form to the world. Out of them come malevolent spirits. Some stones, however, have produced benevolent places, thanks to a great spirit called Mwatiktiki, an aspect of Wuhgin. But Mwatiktiki himself has a malevolent aspect, a spirit called Naomus, who enforces the former's laws and prohibitions. The myths relate that at first men did not have cooked food, and then this was brought to them by a woman. Thanks to her they were able to found the institution of the *niel*, a feast in which food is offered to an ally. The myths also explain the division of Tannese society into 'male' clans, with political authority over territory, and 'female' clans, with magical powers over agricultural fertility.[93]

One myth relates how a giant devoured all the humans, except a little girl who grew up and had two sons, fathered by a liana. They killed the

giant, cut him up and distributed the bits to all the humans whom he had swallowed but had remained alive inside him. One son told each person which territory to live in. Thus, as Bonnemaison observes, the primordial *niel* founds the structure of the island's alliances. The myths also tell of how Kasiken, a son of Mwatiktiki (the latter is here seen as the god of the gardens) founded the dancing-ritual cycle called the *nekowiar*. In this one dancing centre invites another: each represents a network of allies. At night men and women dance together and, discreetly, make love. By day the dancing is always linked to agricultural themes and celebrates the gardens' fertility. Bonnemaison thinks that this institution may reflect a recent influence from Polynesia.[94]

As regards the ideology of power on Tanna, Bonnemaison notes that it has a tripartite character, as in the Indo-European domain, and corresponds to the latter's triad of religious sovereignty, war and fertility. At the top there is (1) the ceremonial power of honour, of the 'lords' or aristocrats, whose kingdom is the sky and who are replaced by Kasiken. They control rituals of exchange. In the middle there is (2) political power, that of the 'male clans', whose kingdom is the earth and who are represented by Wuhngin. They are responsible for war. At the bottom there is (3) the magical power of foodstuffs, that of the 'female' clans, whose kingdom consists of the gardens and who are represented by Mwatiktiki. They are responsible for agriculture, pig breeding and medicines. Bonnemaison comments that the ideology does not bring into being castes or social classes, as in the Indo-European field.[95]

New Caledonia

Turner: War, Rainmaking and Spirits

The British missionary George Turner in 1884 published some notes about New Caledonia, taken from a Samoan and a Rarotongan who had spent three years there. He observes the prevalence of war on the island, and the dedicating of a new-born boy to the warrior's life. The dead were buried, apart from the head, which was removed after ten days. Old women's skulls were put on poles in the yam plantation to produce a good crop. The bodies of enemies killed in war were eaten.[96]

Turner relates that the people of New Caledonia had as gods their ancestors, and venerated their relics. Before going to war they prayed to these guardian spirits, enumerated one by one, to give help to their eyes,

ears, feet, heart, body and head respectively. The people had a special class of rainmaking priests, who would blacken themselves, dig up a skeleton and hang it up in a cave over taro leaves. Then they poured water over it, so that the soul of the dead person would take the water to the sky and turn it into rain. To stop the rain they would do the same thing, but as opposed to using water they lit a fire and burnt the skeleton instead.[97]

It was believed that the spirits of the dead went into the bush. The New Caledonians had a 'spirit night' every fifth month, bringing huge amounts of food to the ground outside a cave. This they ate at sunset, and then the spirits in the cave were invited to sing. Singing was duly produced by old men and women, who had hidden themselves there. The people outside danced, and then engaged in 'orgies of a night of unbridled liberty'.[98]

Lambert: Religion in New Caledonia

New Caledonian customs, based on observations going back to 1856 and made on small islands to the north and south of the main one, were the subject of a book published in 1900 by the French missionary Pierre Lambert. He reports that the Land of the Dead there is guarded by an evil spirit, but extremely rich in plants and fruit. It is ruled by an enormous god in human forms. Elsewhere there is a huge goddess in the form of a crab, who gives elephantiasis to those who walk on her tracks. Another god receives the sacrifice of a human heart.[99]

Lambert also notes that in the initiation ceremonies of boys they take part in a mock battle with older males. Such 'little wars' often take place: a few men who have nothing to do give a war cry and others enthusiastically join in with stones and spears. In real war, when an enemy warrior is killed, his heart is burnt and eaten with invocations to the spirits and a prayer for strength. Another mock battle is fought when the reserves of yams are running out and famine is imminent: the men, after praying for a good harvest, go down to the beach holding firebrands, have a mock battle and then, together, throw the brands into the air. Later they visit their ancestors' skulls.[100]

It is further reported by Lambert that after burial the grave diggers have to stay by the grave for four or five days, observing a rigorous fast. When they leave they make four enclosures with little barriers. Afterwards there is yet another mock battle. In the case of a great

chief there is huge death feast, usually years later, and human victims are chosen from the tribe of the chief's mother, and the tribe that acts as host provides more as a counter-gift.[101]

Finally, Lambert mentions the widespread use of holy stones to produce famine or abundance, madness, a good harvest of coconuts, and so on. Above all, stones are used to produce rain. A specialist, in front of the ancestral skulls, rubs the stones, which are round or in the shape of a skull, with the leaves of a designated tree and then puts them in pots containing water. He prays to the ancestors and, holding a branch, climbs a tree. The specialist then spots a distant cloud and waves the branch to make the cloud rise.[102]

Leenhardt: The Dead in New Caledonia

In 1947 the French anthropologist Maurice Leenhardt published a study largely devoted to New Caledonia and based on fieldwork done from 1903. He tells us that in New Caledonia there are festivals in which men and women dance separately and finally together, circling a stake all night long, with a simple, heavy tread, marking their separation from the dead. For the dead dance like this at night, on the wastelands or highlands, and also in the underworld, where they are always tossing an orange to each other. There is another dance, in which dead men are represented by male dancers with wooden snakes in their mouths (as the dead are believed to eat snakes). The dancers advance across three threads, which encourage them to return to the land of the living, and meet someone (evidently a god) covered with dots, representing eyes, who beats them with a fallen banana leaf. Now they can go to the next world.[103]

Leenhardt provides an explanation for the practice, encountered above, of burying the dead in the sides of graves, a practice that has continued in Christian burials in New Caledonia. Here it is done to deceive the evil spirits who thrust spears into the grave in order to poison the corpse. He also points out that the New Caledonians have an unusual way of punishing incest: the villagers abandon the village to the guilty couple, and set up their houses some way away.[104]

Guiart: New Caledonian Gods

The French anthropologist Jean Guiart made a number of contributions to the study of religion in New Caledonia. In a study published in 1966

he noted that some New Caledonians venerate a god called Kapoeroe, who, in a male form, has intercourse with women who allow themselves to be tempted: they die because of the spoilt blood which then fills their bellies. In a female form he offers himself to men, who, if they accept, find afterwards that their mouths are on the sides of their faces. Elsewhere a god called Korimada has a phallus on his neck and takes the form of husbands to have intercourse with their wives: afterwards they vomit blood or suffer from dysentery. Guiart shows that the two gods are really one, and quotes a New Caledonian as saying, 'The god is always the same, but bears a different name in each family.' The same god is identified with the lord of the underworld and is believed to have created the earth.[105]

Later, in 1987, Guiart published a brief overview of new Caledonian religion. He observes that each local group has a totem and responsibility for one aspect of nature, and also a 'master', who is it its ritual expert. Thus there are masters of the yam, the trade winds, the shark and thunder, who ensure prosperity for all the groups. A master also treats illnesses connected with his totem. There are also agricultural deities, for example a god who looks after irrigated taro terraces, and a goddess who makes the rain fall. Moreover, the spirits of the dead can merge with the 'totemic entities' (animals, plants or natural phenomena) of their respective clans, and cause, for example, thunder.[106]

Central Pacific Speakers

Rotuma

Gardiner: Rotuman gods and spirits In 1897 a brief overview of the Rotuman population was published by the British zoologist Stanley Gardiner. He comments that Rotuman religion was based on fear of the spirits, who needed propitiation. The king was appointed for six months, the duration of the Rotuman year. His duties consisted entirely in supervising feasts. The king had to pray to 'the god' (evidently the Polynesian Tangaroa), who protected him, and he received all first fruits. A local god would have a priest and a priestess, and, in case of trouble or war, would receive offerings in a great feast. The priest would come out of his house foaming at the mouth and perhaps tear a pig apart and eat it raw. Then, falling down in convulsions, he would let the god speak through him and give the people its instructions. The priestess treated illness by going into a 'frenzy' and driving an evil spirit away.[107]

Hereniko: Rotuman ghosts and female clowning In 1995 the Rotuman anthropologist Vilsoni Hereniko published a book on female clowns in Rotuma, based on fieldwork done in 1987 and 1989. He explains that the female element has always been dominant in Rotuman institutions. In the nineteenth century the mua, the chief next to the king, was more important than the latter, and was seen as female. Both were central to a ritual performed every six months, in which the names of fruits and vegetables were called out, before rioting and feasting ensued.[108]

The Rotumans, Hereniko observes, thought that a ghost, '*atua*, sometimes possessed an animal and at times a human being, in which latter case the medium was in effect a shaman, *tu'ura*, 'god's messenger to people'. In the case of an animal the ghost became an '*aitu*, 'god or creature regarded as the habitat of the god', and the ghost's family could not eat the animal. Generally, the dead went to an 'unseen region' beneath the sea, but the ghosts of uncircumcised men travelled round Rotuma, as a group called the *sa'aitu*. The Rotumans also had some great gods, such as the famous Polynesian figure Tangaroa. He gave fruits of the earth and directed humans' lives. Tangaroa received prayers for fertility or success in collective enterprises. He also acted 'wickedly', and was the god of the king.[109]

Ghosts were kept away by chaotic noise and by weaving, the two being combined in a *sa'a*, an occasion when women wove mats for a special event. As at weddings, women engaged in ritual clowning. A special female clown would give orders to passing men, who were forced to obey. In 1913 Hocart wrote in his field notes that there were many 'dirty practices' previously connected with the *sa'a* which his informant refused to describe: apparently a woman would rub her bottom upon a man. Usually adultery was severely punished: the man was bound to a canoe, which was then set adrift, and the woman was beaten to death. Hereniko compares the Rotuman female clown with her Samoan male equivalent, whose performances took place in a 'spirit house', after the cry 'The god is coming!' had led to an orgy.[110]

Fiji

Wilkes: Religion in Fiji

In 1840 the US explorer Charles Wilkes visited Fiji and wrote an account of religion there. The Fijians, he says, have a tradition of a great flood, from which eight people escaped on two canoes. They have many gods,

the supreme one being Ndengei, who has the form of a large snake: he purifies or sentences the spirits of the dead. Some spirits never reach him: they are wounded by a giant and have to wander in the mountains. Ndengei has two sons, who mediate between him and lesser spirits, and also innumerable grandchildren, who preside over districts. Distant relatives of Ndengei are consulted by the priests of the tribes. Malevolent gods live in the underworld, which is ruled by a tyrant accompanied by a 'destroyer of souls'. For, it is often believed, the dead die a second death, in which they are completely annihilated.[111]

Wilkes provides information about the Fijian priests, who represent spirits and foretell the future. They have to pass a test, in which they go into convulsions and demonstrate that the spirits have possessed them. The chiefs admit that they use the priests just to govern the people. There are festivals, notably a four-day one in November, when the men eat a sea-worm, which appears at this time. No work is done at this time, until, at dawn after the fourth night, men and boys run around, beating with clubs on the doors of people's houses.[112]

Practices relating to death are also described by Wilkes. Euthanasia is very common, and widows are frequently strangled or buried alive. Human sacrifices are performed often, notably when a new spirit-house is built or a large new canoe is launched. The victim is cooked and the face is painted black: then it is taken to the spirit-house, offered to the gods and eaten. When chiefs die slaves are sometimes killed and put in the grave to support the chief and his wives. When a great chief dies two priests hold four reeds and use them to designate two grave diggers and the place for the grave. For ten days the women of the town whip the men, who fire little balls of clay at them. The taboos affecting those who have had anything to do with the body last ten months, whereas for the death of an ordinary person they last no longer than four days. When a chief dies the coconuts of a whole district are tabooed, and all boys of an appropriate age are circumcised. If an ordinary person dies there is a feast for four days.[113]

Williams: War, Death and Gods in Fiji

Thomas Williams, an Australian missionary who spent 13 years in Fiji, tells us more about religion there in his work published in 1858. He reports that when war is imminent (as is shown by the cackling of hens at night) the Fijians try to have the gods on their side. Spirit-houses are

rebuilt or built anew, and expensive offerings are made to the gods, notably the god of war. Mock fighting takes place at circumcisions, ideally performed after a chief's death: men pretend to fight with coconut branches, or wrestle, or fire pebbles, or simulate a siege.[114]

Regarding death, Williams corroborates Wilkes. On the fourth day after the burial there is the ritual of 'jumping of maggots': friends gather to lament the decomposition of the corpse. Then, on the fifth night, there is that of 'causing to laugh': groups entertain the friends with 'comic games, in which decency is not always regarded.' Such indecency is noted by Williams in the dancing of Fijian women in response to the men's war dance, which greets the bodies of enemies. The latter are offered by a priest to the war-god and eaten. Revenge, says Williams, is certainly the main reason for cannibalism in Fiji.[115]

As concerns religion itself, Williams tells us that the gods are divided into gods strictly so called and deified mortals. Ndengei has no emotions, and lives a monotonous life in a cave. He does not receive much worship. The other gods have base passions. One has eight arms, another eight eyes. Another is an adulterer, yet another a murderer, and so on. The deified mortals are men of superior bearing but limited influence. Some Fijians say that a person has two spirits, one's shadow or 'dark spirit', which goes to the underworld, and one's reflection or 'light spirit', which stays near the place where one dies.[116]

Fison: Fijian Initiation and Orgies

Yet more information about Fijian religion is provided by the British missionary Lorimer Fison, writing in 1884. He describes an institution called the Nanga, which means a society of men, the ceremony of initiation into it and, literally, the stone enclosure where this takes place. The institution is limited to the western half of Viti Levu, Fiji's main western island: in this half 'West Fijian' is spoken, related to Rotuman. When there are sufficient youths available for initiation an enormous quantity of yams and pigs is supplied and eaten for four days. On the fifth day the novices are brought to the enclosure. There they see some apparently dead men, covered in blood, who suddenly return to life: they represent the dead ancestors, who are supposed to be present here, and to whom the novices are presented. Four very old men bring the youths food and water, and they are initiated into the Nanga. On the next morning the women come and crawl through the enclosure. The chief

priest washes his hands and prays to the spirits of the ancestors for the women: this lifts a taboo for them. They crawl back, singing, and come out of the enclosure, whereupon the men rush upon them 'and an indescribable scene ensues.' Fison's sources make it difficult to separate what happens now and what happens in other rituals performed at the same place. However, it is certain that men and women use the crudest language and 'very great licence prevails.' Grossly indecent dances are performed, and two saplings are put up. For days 'an almost unlimited licence between the sexes' continues. The final ceremony is the 'Bath', when the men wash their black paint off.[117]

The stone enclosure is also used for the first fruits of the yam harvest, and for circumcision. This latter rite is performed if an important man is ill. His son (or a son of his brother) and other boys are circumcised (the foreskins being offered to the ancestral spirits), and there is a great feast. Men and women put on unusual costumes, use obscene language to each other and engage in 'unmentionable abominations openly in the square of the town'. The barriers of kinship come down, and incest between 'classificatory' brothers and sisters takes place. When the feast is prepared it is said that there are no 'owners of pigs or women'.[118]

Thomson: The Soul's Journey After Death in Fiji

The information provided by Wilkes, Williams and Fison is clarified by the British administrator Sir Basil Thomson, who published a book on the Fijians in 1908, after spending ten years in Fiji. He reports that the 'indecent' dancing with which women joined in the reception given to enemies' bodies was followed by the loosening of all social restrictions: 'sexual licence had full rein in open day'. Thomson also explains that the Nanga initiation ceremony was performed at the new year, in October–November, the season when yams were planted. He further informs us that the Fijians had a very detailed picture of the soul's journey after death. It had to be ferried across a river in a canoe by a god. Then the soul had to cross a bridge, which consisted of an enormous eel. After this it had its path blocked by an orchid, which moved aside for a kindly person but forced a 'churlish' one to crawl beneath it. Later the souls drank water from a spring, and at once stopped crying, as did their friends in this life, as their sorrow was relieved: the spring was called 'Water-of-Solace'. Now they became mad with joy, catching sight of their destination.[119]

Polynesia

Tonga

Ferdon: Tongan gods, feasts and ceremonies In 1987 the US scholar Erdwin Ferdon published a study of Tonga as seen by early explorers from 1616 to 1810, and in particular by the English sailor William Mariner, who came to Tonga in 1806 and spent four years there. Ferdon explains that the Tongans had a chiefly class, headed by a politico-religious leader, the 'Chief of Tonga'. Beneath the chiefs were hereditary counsellors and their heirs apparent, and under them was the ordinary population. The Tongans had a number of high gods: in the south the supreme god was called Hikule'o, whereas in the north this place was occupied by Aloalo, a deity of wind, rain and agriculture. Similarly, in the south Tangaroa was the great god of the sky, but in the north he was the god of craftsmen. The culture-hero god Maui lay beneath the Tongan islands: when he became agitated he caused earthquakes. Chiefs and counsellors, after death, joined the gods in their paradise in the north-west, while the ordinary population was annihilated. The spirits of the dead chiefs and counsellors punished the living, gave oracles and appeared in dreams and visions. There were also 'mischievous gods', who led travellers astray and caused nightmares.[120]

The Tongans' most important feast was the first fruits ceremony, involving all products, offered to the gods through the 'Chief of Tonga', around the start of October. Just before the ceremony a song was sung, telling the people to do no work. There was also a harvest ceremony, in late December, connected with Aloalo. A girl aged between eight and ten, from a high-ranking chiefly family, served as Aloalo's wife and presided over a feast. Then she lived in a house sacred to the god for 80 days. In the ceremony itself there were two or three hours of boxing or wrestling. Afterwards people charged at the stacked-up food to grab what they could, and arms would be broken. Finally, there was a fight between the men of the two halves of Tonga, and commoners wrestled with chiefs, breaking the taboo on touching the latter. Ferdon observes that this fight was repeated every ten days until the 21 March equinox, the festival having started with the 21 December summer solstice. Similarly, the first fruits ceremony involved yam planting around the 21 June solstice and culminated around the September equinox.[121]

According to Ferdon's sources, illnesses were ascribed to the gods, and often, to propitiate them, the patient or a relative would cut off part of a

little finger. In the case of a high chief's illness human sacrifice by strangling was performed: at the start of the nineteenth century the victims were very young children. After a death men would wound themselves badly. The mourning period after a great chief's burial ended with wrestling and dancing: on one occasion there were extra dances, of a joyful character, including all-women dances in which the dancers 'divested themselves of all clothing.' Cannibalism appears to have been practised originally out of revenge, in warfare.[122]

Thomson: religion on Niue After a visit in 1900, Sir Basil Thomson published an account of life on Niue, which appeared in 1902. He explains that the Niueans sometimes put their dead in canoes and allowed them to drift out to sea. Usually, however, they put the corpse on a stone platform in the bush, and later transferred the bones to a cave. A wake was held on the ninth day, and repeated until the hundredth. The people were afraid of ghosts: a dying man would be told by his friends, 'Grant our request; if go you must, go altogether.' It was believed that the dead person's soul turned into the first insect to crawl on to the body. The Niueans believed that after death the virtuous went into 'everlasting day' and the wicked into 'darkness'. Thomson notes that the virtues included stealing from other tribes and killing enemies. Offerings were made only to the spirits of dead ancestors, not to the gods of the myths.[123]

Niuean mythology, says Thomson, is typically Polynesian. There were two main gods, Tangaroa, the remote creator, and Maui, the mischievous trickster. Each village had its own tutelary deity. In the beginning, we are told, Heaven embraced Earth and they had children, who had to separate their parents to have light and air. The ocean covered Niue until Maui pushed its floor up, creating the island in its present form. In another myth Maui's son stole the gift of fire from him when they were living beneath the earth and brought it to Niue.[124]

Thomson further reports that the Niueans performed a mock circumcision when a boy was a few weeks old. The old men gathered for a feast and one of them, mumbling a few words, approached the boy and simulated a circumcision with his forefinger. No real circumcision ever took place, the Niueans regarding the operation with disgust. Another curious custom was to reject the drinking of kava as a beverage, and use it only to give inspiration to their priests, who would go into a frenzy and become the mouthpieces of their gods.[125]

The Marquesas Islands

The nineteenth-century sources for the study of religion on the Marquesas Islands have been efficiently summarized by Frazer. He begins by noting that the islanders practised polyandry: a woman would have two husbands. This was explained as due to a shortage of women. The main festival was that of the bread fruit harvest, in February and March. Other festivals included one following the death of a chief or priest who had been deified. At these feasts wandering entertainers would sing and dance: they had artificially whitened skins, and were despised for their 'effeminate habits'. The feasts honoured the Marquesans' most famous god, Tiki, into the mouths of whose images food would be thrust. There were many other gods, for the various aspects of nature and life, and many humans were gods, some when dead and some when alive. The latter were entitled to demand human sacrifices to themselves. High priests were deified after their deaths, when at least seven humans were sacrificed, corresponding to parts of the priest's body: the victims were taken in expeditions against neighbouring tribes.[126]

When a man was dying women would dance naked around him, and when he died his widow and three or four girls would perform a 'lascivious' dance before the corpse, to try to tempt it back to life (the widow herself had to dance again, naked, at all feasts for months). At the time of death other women, also naked, would 'execute obscene dances at the door of the house'. If the dead man was a chief dancing went on some days and nights, and those present, under the influence of alcohol, 'abandoned themselves to excesses which transformed the mortuary chamber into a scene of low debauchery'. The ghost of the dead person was driven from the neighbourhood by men armed with spears. As for the corpse, it was exposed on a bier, and then embalmed and eventually placed on a scaffold in a sanctuary. Ten months or a year after the death an enormous mortuary feast was held 'to thank the gods for having permitted the dead person to arrive safely in the other world'.[127]

This other world was divided into a heavenly upper part, for people of higher rank, and a subterranean part, for ordinary people. To reach both a canoe was needed, and if one was killed in war and taken away by the enemy it was necessary to kill a number of the enemy to paddle it. In the case of chiefs and priests humans were sacrificed to accompany them. Dead men would be flayed, apparently to remove their tattoos, which barred their spirits from the next world. Such spirits would eventually be

reincarnated in descendants or animals, and would also return as dangerous ghosts.[128]

One of Frazer's sources, the French explorer Max Radiguet, who lived in the Marquesas for a considerable time from 1842 and wrote in 1858, tells us of a séance in which the chief priestess was possessed by a goddess in an attempt to heal a sick man. At one point the other women present panicked, crying out and trying to run away. It was explained to Radiguet that this was due to the entry of a libertine and lustful god, to whom women could refuse nothing. Radiguet and his companions had every reason to believe that the chief priestess was profiting from prostitution.[129]

Valeri: Religion in Hawaii

In 1985 the Chicago-based anthropologist Valerio Valeri published a book on kingship and sacrifice in Hawaii. He begins by considering the four 'major gods': Kane, Ku, Lono and Kanaloa, and notes that four is the basis of the principal numerical system, which proceeds through 40 to 400 and so on. Kane is associated with the colours white and yellow. (The US anthropologist Martha Beckwith says, 'Yellow seems to be primarily the Kane colour.')[130] He is also associated with the north and the east, summer and sorcery. Ku is associated with the colour red, the east, the season of temple rites that follows the winter new year festival, war and fishing. Lono is associated with the black colour of rain clouds, the leeward direction, the season of the winter new year festival, agriculture, fertility and medicine. (Beckwith adds that he is also the god of sound.)[131] Kanaloa is associated with the colours red and black, the west and the south, winter and death.[132]

The winter new year festival marks the transition from the dry season to the wet one. When it begins people get drunk and sing blasphemous songs. Then, in the middle of the night, nobles and commoners join to bathe in the sea till dawn. During the night there is an orgy, and obscenities are shouted. Then, for four days, people have to enjoy themselves in games and 'play', eating well and doing no work. Everything was sacred to Lono. In this four-day period the chief priest is kept secluded in a sacrosanct place and blindfolded, to prevent him seeing the violation of the usual taboos. Large numbers of men and women dance, and their dances are often erotic: the dancers have to accede to the spectators' advances, whatever their rank. (Valeri insists

that this differs entirely from the scenes that follow a king's death. Then all taboos are removed and violated, with extreme violence. People attack their enemies' persons and property, and also attack themselves, tearing off all their clothes and knocking out their eyes and teeth, while engaging in furious and indiscriminate sexual activity.) After the four-day period first-fruits offerings of taro are made to Lono.[133]

Valeri further reports, concerning first-fruits offerings, that a man is sacrificed when the first of one kind of fish is caught, and his arms and legs are broken before he is stabbed to death. In such human sacrifices the skull is frequently put on a pole, and stays in the temple. Sometimes the head is cut off on a battlefield, and sometimes it is given to a noble. On some occasions victims are obtained by a 'living god', a man who has the right to scoop out and eat their eyes. This man has the title Kahoali'i, meaning 'Royal Companion', and is the king's 'divine double'. He is associated with Ku in the first-fish ritual and elsewhere, and violates normal rules by eating with women, 'possessing them without restraint' and going around naked.[134]

The Society Islands

The eighteenth and nineteenth-century sources for the study of religion in Tahiti and the rest of the Society Islands have been summarized by Frazer. He begins by noting that there were three ranks: the nobility (including the royal family), the landed gentry and the common people (consisting of servants and slaves). The islanders worshipped Tangaroa, Tane and Oro. Of these the last, sometimes seen as the war-god, received human sacrifices and was said to have founded the fraternity of the Areois, licentious entertainers whose dances 'were often of a lascivious character.' Apparently they engaged in 'acts of more than bestial degradation' and the worst possible 'pollutions'. Any children born to them were strangled at birth. The islanders also had large enclosures, containing truncated pyramids, for worship. It was here that human sacrifices took place, in wartime, at festivals, when rulers were ill and when a new temple of this kind was built.[135]

Death, among the Society Islanders, was always seen as caused by the gods (here often the deified souls of the dead). The mourners would cut themselves terribly. If the deceased was an important person they would go round the district beating everyone in sight with clubs. Corpses were usually buried quickly, but in chiefly families they were embalmed and

for a time retained first in temporary houses. (In the distant past the Tahitians had kept corpses in their houses, on a sort of platform.) Skulls were separated from the bones and put in boxes, often hung from the roofs of houses.[136]

Métraux: Religion on Easter Island

Based on fieldwork done in 1934, Alfred Métraux, the French anthropologist, in 1957 published a book on Easter Island. He observed that the great Polynesian gods had long been largely forgotten there. Tangaroa, the god of the sea, survived in myths, while the navigator-god Hiro was the deity of rain. The god of the birds, Makemake, was portrayed in carvings as a skull, and also as a bird-headed man. He was seen as the creator of the universe and humankind, and was honoured in the islanders' main religious festival, which marked the annual discovery of the first egg laid by the sooty tern, at the beginning of September. This egg was believed to be the incarnation of the god, and was found by one of the servants sent by 'war chiefs' who coveted the title and rank of 'bird-man'. The successful servant's master was proclaimed 'bird-man', and human victims were sacrificed to Makemake and eaten. Raids and battles ensued, and then the 'bird-man' went into a one-year retreat, surrounded by strict taboos: he gave his name to the next year. Apparently, the festival involved 'obscene dances' performed by naked women.[137]

The Easter Islanders also venerated the spirits of the dead, represented by little wooden statuettes. These were displayed at festivals, especially that of the first fruits. The island's famous great statues were erected, according to the islanders, to decorate the mausolea. Métraux decided that, as elsewhere in Polynesia, they represented deified chiefs or priests, whose spirits entered them when invoked. Both the living and the dead were honoured in feasts. A young man would give a feast in honour of his father or father-in-law, and a dead father would be honoured in a mortuary feast a few years after his death. The deceased was represented by an effigy, and the organizer made a speech through its mouth, 'extolling his own generosity'.[138]

The Maori

Shortland: death among the Maori In 1854 the British physician Edward Shortland published an account of the 'traditions and superstitions' of

the Maori, after several years' residence among them. He explains that after death the body was buried temporarily until it had decomposed, and then the bones were exhibited in public before being put in secret places, such as caves. Shortland witnessed an exhibition of this kind, the dead being three famous chiefs of the previous generation. There was a great feast, and two old women, their naked breasts marked by recent cuts, accompanied a lively chant with postures that were 'often disgustingly lascivious: one made representations of a phallus'. Shortland also says that the Maori believed that the souls of the dead went to an underworld, called Reinya, reached by a precipice near the North Cape. People were said to have come back from the dead there, notably an aunt of one of Shortland's servants. She had been left in her house when she died, but reappeared on the shore. The aunt related that her spirit had flown to the precipice, which she had then descended. She had found a river, and an old man, paddling a canoe, had ferried her across. After this she had taken a path to the village of her dead relatives. Her father had told her to go back and look after her child, and to eat nothing in the village, as that would stop her returning.[139]

Best and Johansen: numbers and sex among the Maori The New Zealand scholar Elsdon Best (1856–1931) wrote a number of studies of the Maori after living among them as an administrator from 1895 to 1910. He gives us valuable information about Maori attitudes to numbers. They had traditions about a temple in their original homeland, which had four entrances – north, south, east and west – for supernatural beings, spirits of the dead and priests. Opposite these were four fire pits. The number 12 was also extremely important, as in Polynesia generally. In the beginning there were 12 periods of darkness, and the moon was made guardian of this number, as in the lunar year. The 12 heavens were separated and arranged. Odd numbers were unlucky in some situations. Flax roots had to be planted in pairs, and rafters on one side of a roof had to be in an even number. When birds were hunted the final tally also had to be even.[140]

Best also says that the Maori performed ceremonial copulation. Sometimes this was done in the course of a battle, the point being that if it could take place in the midst of great anxiety victory was certain. For the Maori believed that a brave man had an erection during a battle and a

coward did not. Once, before a desperate attack, a chief copulated in front of his whole people, and was duly victorious. Best comments that similar performances have been recorded in Madagascar, South Africa and Tahiti.[141]

In 1958 the Danish scholar J. Prytz Johansen published a book called *Studies in Maori Rites and Myths*. He says that ten was a sacred number, and the original number of the heavens among the Maori. In one myth a god called Tawhaki goes up into the heavens and steals ten kumara (sweet potato) tubers from his blind grandmother, who keeps counting them and finding yet another missing. This is echoed in a ritual in which a priest offers ten kumara tubers to Tawhaki, counting them one by one.[142]

Johansen also provides a picture of the sexual aspects of Maori myth and agriculture. In another myth Rongo goes up to the heavens, steals kumara from his brother and brings it back to earth in his penis (called 'his basket'). Then he impregnates his wife, Pani, who gives birth to kumara. Again, myth is echoed in ritual, here in the planting of kumara. A priest would take a sacred basket containing the kumara, and, while planting it, identify himself with Rongo and the field with Pani: there was a 'sacred wedding'.[143]

Firth: Tikopia Rituals

The rituals on the tiny Polynesian-speaking island of Tikopia, in the Solomon Islands, was the subject of a study published in 1967 by the London anthropologist Sir Raymond Firth, based on fieldwork done from 1928 to 1966. These rituals, he explains, form a cycle, centred on harvest and planting rites for the yam. The cycle, according to the Tikopia, was founded by the principal god of one of their four clans. It includes a rite for the first fruits of fishing, this rite being called 'evil things': in it libations are poured to the gods, and fish is offered to them. The Tikopia explain the term 'evil things' by the fact that if fish are not caught and offered the gods will kill a man.[144]

Firth tells us that the ritual cycle begins with the imposition of taboos: people are forbidden to dance, shout loudly or converse in groups. After the yam harvest and just before the planting these taboos are lifted and dancing begins. One dance festival is held from dusk to dawn, and women join in: late on in the festival the sexual character of the songs is very noteworthy. About a dozen men swing a long bamboo pole in

jerking thrusts, and sing archaic words of erotic significance. Women are not allowed to hear this.[145]

The General Characteristics of Eastern Malayo-Polynesian Religion

In surveying the general characteristics of Eastern Malayo-Polynesian religion we shall again begin with lifecycle rituals, paying particular attention here to initiation ceremonies as well as death. Headhunting will not demand so much consideration as before, but other forms of human sacrifice and cannibalism will. Feasts and numbers will again be prominent, and space will also have to be given to fishing (as opposed to hunting).

Birth does not seem to involve mention of twins in the materials surveyed. Among the Manus mother and baby stay in the hut for 20 days before the mother bathes. When a Tolai child is born its father or grandfather 'roots' it in ancestral land, so that it can never be separated from the community. At *Sa'a* piglets are sacrificed at a birth. In Kiribati mother and baby stay in the house for three days, while relatives dance around a bonfire, to encourage the baby's soul to take up residence in its body. The New Caledonians dedicate a new-born boy to the warrior's life. In the Society Islands the licentious fraternity of the Areois strangles all children at birth.

As regards initiation, when a Biak boy is initiated blood from his foreskin is consumed, and a Biak girl has to be isolated for several months in the forest. For Manus boys initiation requires isolation in a special house for nine and then 20 days, and for Manus girls isolation for six months. Yabem circumcision of youths requires staying for three or four months in a hut in the forest. Wogeo boys are ritually circled when first admitted to the men's common-house, as are girls at their first menstruation. A Tolai boy is initiated into a secret spirit cult from the age of six, and a San Cristoval boy can have different types of initiation: a 'bush-boy' is taught to kill, and a 'coast-boy' is secluded for two years in a canoe-house. In Kiribati a boy is isolated for at least two and a half years in his long and rigorous education in magic and rituals. Among the Big Nambas a guardian has sexual rights over a boy before the latter is circumcised. Elsewhere on Malekula youths take part in an 'initiation into sex' rite, in which they 'rise from the dead'. In New Caledonia boys have a mock battle with older males, whereas in Fiji they see apparently

dead men who return to life, representing the dead ancestors: this is done at the new year.

Marriage, in part of Vanuatu, is preceded by extracting girls' two top middle incisors, to make them strong, once the bride purchase has been completed. In Kiribati and the Marshall Islands intercourse between in-laws is institutionalized, but at *Sa'a* adultery used to be punished by death. A Biak fisherman addresses fish as female cross-cousins, saying that he will 'lie with' them at a feast: that would be incest. Incest itself is seen by the Manus as causing deaths. In one Manus myth a man wickedly commits incest with his mother, who gives birth to the ancestors of humanity. In Kiribati the offenders would be set adrift in the sea, to face the wrath of the sun like a mythical guilty couple. However, in some Marshall Islands families brother–sister incest was permitted. New Caledonian villagers punish it by abandoning the village to the guilty pair.

Death is particularly prominent in the Biaks' wooden images of the dead, which receive offerings and are often consulted, but soon lose their value. The Bush Mekeo see a single death as that of a whole clan, and used to lacerate themselves terribly, as did the Society Islanders, who saw all deaths as caused by the gods. In New Caledonia dances mark the separation of the living from the dead and make the latter briefly return. 'Bad death' is also evidenced. The Wogeo treat it without ceremony, as being unclean and dangerous to others, and the Marshall Islanders dump a woman who dies in childbirth in the sea: she comes back and plays pranks. On Simbo a man who dies of a wasting illness is also dumped in the sea.

Funerals, for the Biaks, involve a huge noise, to make the ghost go away. The dead are buried with appropriate objects. On the island of Ron the body is put in a hut till the head drops off, and is then buried. The bodies of children under two are hung from trees. Elsewhere the widow drinks the liquids from the corpse, as it is dried before being kept in the house, and the family stays indoors. The Manus let the corpse rot and then dispose of most of it before keeping the skull, ribs and forearms. As for the Tami, they maintain an eight-day vigil on the grave, with dancing, to guard the bereaved. The Wogeo have a similar one-night vigil outside the house, before the corpse is buried beneath it and the spirit is driven away. Roro speakers have the 'death chair', and also bury the corpse beneath the house. Similarly, burials in the 'Southern

Massim' area are close to the house. The Trobrianders sing dirges for three days and nights after a death, and afterwards the bereaved spouse is in seclusion for months.

On Simbo, after death, the corpse is seated on the shore and the soul is 'caught'. Women wail and men sing for four nights, while the widow stays in an enclosure. In San Cristoval a man's death is followed by the 'buying' of a child to replace him. The people of Kiribati used to bury the corpse beneath the house's floor. After death wailing lasted for three days, while at night the soul and evil spirits were driven away. On Ulithi the dead used to be buried beside their houses, to comfort their bereaved. In Malekula they were often buried in their houses, while chiefs were sometimes exposed on a platform. On Erromanga chiefs were covered only with leaves, so that they would keep an eye on things, while on Aneityum they were buried with their heads uncovered. In New Caledonia, likewise, the dead were buried without their heads, and the grave diggers stayed behind for four or five days, before a mock battle. The Fijians, after the death of a chief, also used to have mock fighting, while after an ordinary death there would be 'comic games'. In Tonga the mourning after a great chief's burial ended with wrestling and dancing. Among the Marquesans naked women danced outside a dead man's house, and in the case of a chief dancing ended in debauchery. In Hawaii, after a king's death, the lifting of taboos resulted in violence (often self-inflicted) and indiscriminate sex.

The final mortuary feast, among the Windesi, takes place after a year or so, often for several of the dead (as in the Southern Massim area), with singing and dancing. Among the Tami it happens after two or three years, with several nights of dances, ending with comic ones. The corresponding Bush Mekeo feast may again be for several of the dead, and is characterized by joyfulness and dancing with sexual symbolism. Among the Trobrianders, in the case of a chief, the final feast could take place after 15 to 20 years: a huge distribution of yams preceded the placing of the skull on a cliff. On Simbo, in the case of a commoner, it happens after 50 days, and a coconut tree is planted, while in the case of a chief it happens much later, and men sing all night long. The final Marquesan feast happened after ten months or a year, to thank the gods for letting the soul reach the next world. On Easter Island it took place after a few years, with the organizer making a speech through the mouth of an effigy of the deceased. The Maori

held their corresponding feast after many years, with singing and 'lascivious' postures.

Regarding the land of the dead, the Windesi believe it to be beneath the earth: their people live in a huge house there, with no need to work. The Usiai dead go to different places in their own country, for good and evil spirits respectively. For the Yabem the dead go to an island, where there are compartments corresponding to the manner of their deaths. The Tami dead go to a beautiful underworld, where again they do not need to work, but where they die again. At Wagawaga it is believed that the next world, beneath the sea, is like this one, and a 'big-man' presides over it, while on Tubetube it is thought that the dead go to another island and reproduce. The Trobrianders believe that the dead go to an island to the north-west and have to pay the headman of the land of the dead there.

On Simbo it is apparently believed that the land of the dead is in Bougainville, and that there one has to work in a large cave, as when one was alive. The Tolai dead had to bring shell money to the 'Abode of the Spirits' or survive in misery. On Ulithi the wicked go to a well and the good to two paradises, where, again, they reproduce. The Tannese believe that the next life is like this, but after a while the dead turn into animals and then stones. On Aneityum there is a heaven, but a hell for the wicked. In New Caledonia the dead dance in circles in the underworld and keep tossing an orange between themselves. That world is rich in vegetation, and ruled by a huge god in human form. In Fiji, according to Wilkes, there are sinister gods in the underworld, beneath a tyrant, and the dead die again, for ever; Thomson, however, presents the souls of the dead as mad with joy as they catch sight of their destination. In Tonga only chiefs and counsellors join the gods in their paradise (in the north-west): others are annihilated. On Niue, however, the good go into eternal light and the wicked into darkness. The Marquesans say that the next world is in two parts, heavenly for those of high rank and subterranean for the rest. As for the Maori dead, they go to an underworld and join their relatives in the latter's village.

The land of the dead, as we have seen, is often on an island, and is sometimes reached by a canoe. Tami dead have to cross a river, as do Fijian souls, who are ferried across by a god: then they cross a bridge and drink water, which relieves their sorrow. A Maori soul is also taken across a river, by an old man in a canoe, after descending a precipice.

Headhunting is not quite so prominent as in the rest of the Austronesian domain. It is noteworthy that Windesi headhunters make a lot of noise when they return victorious (to be greeted by dancing women), apparently to expel the ghosts of their victims. An Usiai searcher for magic power takes a head to offer it to a spirit. We are told that Simbo chiefs' activities ended with the demise of headhunting, and equality resulted. In the past a chief's final mortuary feast required the obtaining of a head. Many Solomon Islanders used to headhunt on a large scale, notably the Roviana, who amassed them for their men's common-houses. Headhunting appears in Kiribati tradition concerning Samoa: heads were allegedly offered to gods.

Other forms of human sacrifice do, as we have seen, occur. In Wogeo myth there is an attempt to drop a post on to someone in a common-room's post hole, as is often done in the Malayo-Polynesian field. On Simbo slaves used to be killed to honour dead chiefs. The Choiseulese would sometimes kill young children to 'replace' their leaders, and the people of San Cristoval would kill men for the same purpose, or to increase the crops. At *Sa'a* a chief's death would also require a killing. In Vanuatu human sacrifices were made after shipwrecks and in wartime, and when a clubhouse was rebuilt. On Tanna a god in the form of a stone was believed to consume sacrificed humans. In New Caledonia a chief's final death feast required human victims from his mother's tribe. The Fijians would often kill widows, and would also sometimes sacrifice slaves at chief's funerals. New spirit-houses and large canoes were also accompanied by human offerings. The Tongans would strangle little children when a high chief was ill, and the Marquesans would sacrifice humans to living and dead deified people.

Cannibalism sometimes accompanies human sacrifice. The Usiai were cannibals, as was the 'Southern Massim' population: the latter usually practised it in revenge, in a special ritual. Many Solomon Islanders were avid cannibals, but the Roviana headhunters do not seem to have eaten their victims, and the Choiseulese ate only small strips taken from enemies, to acquire their qualities. In San Cristoval a boy would eat a bit of the right arm, as part of his 'instruction', and at a chief's funeral a whole man would be eaten. The Kwaio would, in vengeance, eat enemies and incestuous couples, to demote them to the level of animals. In Vanuatu cannibalism was obligatory for a man, and great feasts required it. On Tanna it was also obligatory for boys, and surrounded by special

ceremonies. In New Caledonia, again, enemies were eaten. Fijian human sacrifices involved the cooking, offering to the gods and eating of the victim, cannibalism yet again being practised mainly in revenge. On Easter Island, in the main festival, when the new 'bird-man' was proclaimed, human victims were sacrificed to the god of the birds and eaten.

Fishing here replaces the hunting of animals. Biak men, as we have repeatedly noted, use magic to catch fish, 'calling' them as female cross-cousins and saying that they will 'lie with' them at a feast. Trobrianders also use magic, addressing the female spirits of the dead. The Mekeo have 'secret knowledge' for calling fish, and rituals and spells for inviting them to a feast. In Hawaii a man is sacrificed in a first fruits fishing ritual. This is evidently linked to the Tikopia 'evil things' rite for the first fruits of fishing: if fish are not caught and offered, we are told, a man will be killed by the gods.

Feasts are generally linked to the harvest or new year and prestige. The Bukawa, like other peoples, offer first fruits to their ancestors, while the Tami ancestral spirits appear in a festival held every ten or 12 years, as dancing masked men, covered in leaves, who pelt others with pebbles or fruit. Among the Wogeo masked dancers represent spirit monsters during a distribution of food. The Trobrianders, after the harvest, abandon work for erotic dancing and 'sexual licence', while the spirits of the dead return and are driven away. On Simbo the new year festival precedes the ripening of the small canary nuts, the first fruits of which are offered to the spirits. The people of San Cristoval, between harvesting and planting, used to feast with 'considerable licence'. Male dancers, wearing black masks and covered in leaves, represented the dead. In Kiribati, after the pandanus harvest, food was offered to the gods and spirits. On Tanna there are feasts in which food is offered to allies and dancing leads to love-making at night and celebrates agricultural fertility by day. The New Caledonians used to have a feast every fifth month, listening to the spirits of the dead and engaging in orgies. In Fiji the Nanga initiation ceremony was part of a new year festival, in the season when yams were planted, and orgies were also included. The Tongans also had ceremonies closely connected with agriculture, notably a holy wedding between a girl and a god at the harvest. In Hawaii the new year feast marked the start of the wet season, and a night of bathing and orgies before abstention from work: the chief priest is secluded during dancing

and promiscuous intercourse before a first fruits offering. On Easter Island the main religious festival, with its 'obscene dances', seems to have been a new year one: the 'bird-man' gave his name to the next year. The Tikopia rituals studied by Firth are centred on the harvest and planting: there is dancing, with songs of a sexual character.

A prestige feast among the Tolai marked the culmination of a man's career and advancement in the secret spirit cult, whose ceremonies he sponsored with extravagant public self-congratulation. In Vanuatu the same happened in secret societies: a rich man reached a higher grade by holding a public festival to honour the ancestors, in which he might permit sexual freedom. Sometimes this freedom meant not only general promiscuity but also what was usually classed as incest.

It is widely believed that a person has two souls or spirits. The Windesi think that in the case of a man one goes to the underworld and the other into a healer. For the Biaks one is the 'soul', the other the 'shadow'. Some of the Yabem, like many peoples, say that one is the shadow, the other reflection. The Tami maintain that the 'long' soul is the shadow, while the 'short' soul goes to the underworld. Some of the Wogeo, like some of the Fijians, say that a ghost in the neighbourhood corresponds to one's reflection, while the soul in the land of the dead corresponds to the shadow, but the Trobrianders say the opposite. The people of San Cristoval believe that the reflection-soul is good, the other bad.

Spirits and gods appear in different patterns. The Biaks, Windesi and Yabem are very afraid of the spirits of the dead. Manus men worship their fathers' spirits, and the Bukawa see their ancestral spirits as likely to help them. The Tami have sinister deities, but a good creator-god, while worshipping the spirits of the recently dead. In Wogeo religion there are creator-spirits, spirits of the dead and 'monsters'. The people of the 'Southern Massim' area seem to have no gods or spirits, but the Trobrianders venerate the spirits of the dead. For the Mekeo there are many spirits, some (of the dead) around houses and others in the river and pools. On Simbo, besides spirits, there are weather-gods and creator-gods 'of the crops'. The Choiseulese used to have gods above their spirits: they were 'followed' by animals. On San Cristoval the main spirits appeared as snakes: the supreme one was the creator. In Kwaio religion the ghosts of the dead are omnipresent. The people of Kiribati used to worship both their ancestors and gods, notably the Sun, the Moon and

Auriaria. Similarly, in the Marshall Islands there were spirits of the dead and higher spirits in human form, notably Wulleb, who provided fish. On Ulithi there are ancestral ghosts and gods of the Sky World and earth, the highest being called 'Great Spirit', a member of a triad.

In Vanuatu, alongside spirits, some islands had gods. Ambrym had two great spirits, one good, one bad, and Efate, Tanna and Aneityum had a supreme deity. Erromanga had just one real god, a creator, along with the veneration of the sun and moon. On Tanna the creator is again a member of a triad. The New Caledonians venerate their ancestors (who merge with 'totemic entities'), but also have gods, who are often identical with one another: a divine adulterer is also the creator of the earth. In Rotuma there used to be some great gods, like Tangaroa, along with spirits, who were feared. The Fijians had many gods, including a supreme one, the father and grandfather of others, who tended to be immoral, and also deified mortals. In Tonga there were various high gods and supreme ones in different areas, while spirits of the dead controlled the living. On Niue there were two main gods, the creator and the trickster, but offerings were made only to ancestral spirits. The Marquesans had one apparently supreme god and many others, for all aspects of life and nature, and many humans were deified. In Hawaii we find the usual Polynesian triad of gods, representing sorcery, war and fertility (as in Indo-European religions), beside the threatening Kanaloa (Tangaroa). On Easter Island these gods had been largely forgotten by 1934, and the god of the birds, seen as the creator, seemed supreme. The spirits of deified chiefs or priests were worshipped in the famous statues there. The Tikopia make offerings to gods, and say that their cycle of yam rituals was founded by the principal god of one of their four clans.

Religious specialists are present to a moderate extent. The Biaks have mediums, and the Windesi have specially qualified healers. Among the Manus there are 'sorcerers', and also 'oracles', who are male diviners or female mediums, while Usiai 'seers' are consulted as well. The Trobrianders have 'sorcerers' too, and on Simbo there are mediums. There is a Tolai secret society of sorcerers, and there are Kwaio diviners, consulted after disasters. On Ulithi mediums transmit ghosts' advice. The New Caledonians have rain-making priests, and also a ritual expert in each local group. On Rotuma there are priests and priestesses, who go into 'frenzies', as do Fijian and Niuean priests. The Marquesans have high priests, who are deified after their deaths, and a chief

priestess, who is a healer. In Hawaii there is a chief priest, who is kept secluded during a festival.

Numbers are usually even. For the Maori odd numbers are sometimes unlucky, and some things have to come in even numbers: rafters on one side of a roof, and the tally of birds killed when hunting. Leenhardt says that in 'Melanesia' duality is prevalent, both in myth (pairs of brothers, etc.) and daily life (relatives are usually found together in pairs). Maori society has also been seen as characterized by dualistic 'complementarity' (though this may just reflect anthropological fashion), as has Maori art. In the Marshall Islands there is social bipartition (chiefs and commoners), and in the Marquesas there is a similar division of the next world, while at *Sa'a* there is a corresponding pair of war ghosts. On Rotuma there is a male–female dualism, the chief next to the king being seen as female, and in Hawaii the king has a 'divine double'.

The number two occurs often. As we have noted, it is frequently said that a person has two souls. Above the Biak forest there are two sinister spirits (one male, one female). The Windesi feast for two nights during the 'festival of the dead'. A San Cristoval 'coast-boy' is secluded for two years. On Ambrym there are two great spirits, and on Aneityum there are two posts to represent the sun and moon. The Fijians escape the flood on two canoes, and their supreme god has two sons. When one of their great chiefs dies two priests designate two grave diggers, and at their new year festival two saplings are put up. The Maori have to plant flax roots in pairs.

Social tripartition is found in the Society Islands (nobility, landed gentry and commoners), and the Tannese have a tripartite ideology of power, corresponding to religious sovereignty, war and fertility (again, as among Indo-European speakers). The number three occurs in various contexts. Wogeo youths circle boys and girls three times in initiation ceremonies. On Simbo the soul is 'caught' on the third day after death, and in Kiribati a death is followed by three days and nights of wailing and ceremonies, and after a birth mother and baby are confined for three days, while in the harvest ritual a rock is crowned with three coral blocks. New Caledonian dancers, representing the dead, advance across three threads into the land of the living.

It is the number four, however, that is most important. Trobriander mourners 'cry' four times a day, and on Simbo four occurs repeatedly in funeral rites, while in the November festival smoked nuts are presented

to the spirits in batches of four portions. On Ulithi ghosts stay near their graves for four days, before gong to the Sky World, which consists of four levels, and then temporarily returning after four more days of preparation. In Vanuatu, on Epi the soul also stays near the corpse for four days. On Malekula four is the magical number, and in mortuary rites means 'completion', while it also occurs in birth rituals. In New Caledonia grave diggers stay behind for four or five days, before making four enclosures. The Fijians have a four-day festival to greet the sea-worm, and the number four occurs in their funeral rites and new year. In Hawaii four is the basis of the main numerical system, and there are four major gods, while in the new year festival, as in Fiji, there is a four-day period of feasting. The Maori have traditions about a temple with four entrances and fire pits, and the Tikopia are divided into four clans.

Five occurs a few times. Mourning on Ulithi lasts for five months, and the New Caledonians have a 'spirit night' every fifth month. The Fijians have 'comic games' on the fifth night after a burial, and initiate novices on the fifth day of their new year festival. Six is sometimes significant. The Manus confine a girl for six months during her initiation. In Kiribati myth the sun is connected with the number six, as in northern Borneo and Polynesia, and for the Marshall Islanders six is the holy number. Seven is the number of fish sacrificed by the Biaks, but otherwise does not seem to occur. Eight appears in Tami mortuary rituals and, repeatedly, in a San Cristoval myth about a female serpent-spirit. On Malekula the magical number four is sometimes doubled to eight, and in Fiji eight people escape the flood, while one god has eight arms and another eight eyes. Nine is the number of days for which a young Manus boy is isolated, and sometimes that for which a corpse is retained in Kiribati. On Niue a wake is held on the ninth day after a death. Ten is the number of days between the Simbo new year and first fruits festivals, between death and the removal of the head in New Caledonia, and between ritual fights in Tonga. For the Maori it is a holy number, that of the original number of the heavens and that of sweet potato tubers in myth and ritual.

Directions are clearly significant. A Wogeo corpse is buried with the head facing the rising sun, and its spirit is driven east. Among Roro speakers the head is positioned in the same direction, as in the 'Southern Massim' area. On Simbo the corpse is seated facing west. In Tonga dead chiefs and counsellors go to the north-west. The four major Hawaiian

gods are associated with the cardinal points, as are the four entrances of the legendary Maori temple.

As we have seen, the number four is most significant among the even numbers that dominate Eastern Malayo-Polynesian religion. Polynesian tripartition, both social and in the grouping of gods, looks like a reflection of Indo-European influences, probably coming from India. Social inequality is linked to headhunting and chief's final mortuary feast. Such feasts are extremely prominent, and require long periods of preparation before their expressions of sexual symbolism. The last death feast may also demand human sacrifices, as may deaths themselves. As for the spirits of the dead, they return for post-harvest festivals, characterized by orgies. Thus social structure, killing human victims, feasting, the spirits of the dead, agricultural fertility and sex are all combined.

This combination is reflected among both the Tami and the people of San Cristoval: masked male dancers, covered in leaves, represent the spirits of the dead at feasts. Fertility is evoked both in these feasts and human sacrifice: men are killed to increase the crops. Sacrifices of this kind were also performed in order to 'replace' dead leaders. The latter would sometimes have special, individual celebrations of their final mortuary feast. This, whether individual or collective, typically involved dancing with sexual symbolism. Accordingly, agricultural fertility, human sacrifice and the final mortuary feast all come together: it is in this last feast that everything culminates, as the spirit joins the dead and the community unites.

CONCLUSIONS

Before reaching our final conclusions regarding Austronesian religions we must first compare the Central and Eastern Malayo-Polynesian materials, in order to try to reach back to the original Central-Eastern heritage. Then we must look back to the Malayo-Polynesian inheritance, and lastly the Austronesian one. Afterwards we shall compare the latter with Indo-European, Afroasiatic, Altaic and Tibeto-Burman religions. Finally, we shall consider headhunting, before ending with some general remarks.

Central and Eastern Malayo-Polynesian Religions Compared

In comparing Central and Eastern Malayo-Polynesian religions we shall again follow the same order of topics, before trying to see if 'Central-Eastern Malayo-Polynesian religion' can be defined. Numbers are evidently very important, as are festivals, mortuary rituals and warfare.

Birth involves even numbers both among the Kedangese (as a transition) and on Malekula. Initiation also involves an even number (four) among the Atoni and the Fijians. The Atoni headtaker is isolated in a hut outside the village, in an inversion of everyday life, before dancing with a maiden dressed as a warrior, and among the Ata Tana 'Ai a young man is dressed as a woman and taken to a pavilion in the forest. Similarly, Biak girls, Manus and San Cristoval boys and Yabem youths are isolated in special huts or houses, sometimes in a forest, and on Malekula boys are treated like women before being initiated: then they simulate intercourse with a model of a woman.

Marriage requires preliminary cutting of women's teeth among the Nage, just as in part of Vanuatu girls' incisors are extracted after the completion of the bride purchase. Adultery could be punished with death by the Rindi, as it was at Sa'a. Incest, in eastern Indonesia, is seen as causing disasters and requiring the expulsion of the 'transgression' of the guilty pair. In the same way the Manus see incest as causing deaths, and in Kiribati and New Caledonia the offenders are expelled from the community.

Death is connected with even numbers by both the Kedangese and the peoples of Malekula, as representing transition or completion. Nage and Biak rituals concentrate on driving the ghost away. Funerals sometimes include burial beneath the house, as on Roti, Wogeo and Malekula, and among Roro speakers and in Kiribati. The corpse is placed with its head facing in the direction of the final journey to the land of the dead, facing west on Roti and Simbo, downstream among the Rindi and east on Wogeo, among Roro speakers and in the Southern Massim area. There is a period of restrictions after the death or burial, four days among the Kedangese and the Rindi and on Simbo, while the soul is thought to stay near the corpse for four days on Ulithi and Epi, and the New Caledonians and Fijians have rituals on the fourth or fifth day. Both the Rindi and Roro speakers seat the corpse in a 'death chair'. The final mortuary feast is connected with the soul's joining the next world among the Rindi and the Marquesans. This land of the dead is on 'the other side of the river' for the Atoni, and a river also has to be crossed by the Ata Tana 'Ai and the Fijians.

Headhunting appears in religious contexts. On Roti it grants 'increase', and in Sumba fertility, being demanded by the spirits. An Usiai searcher for magic power offers a head to a spirit, and in Kiribati tradition heads were offered to gods. In East Sumba heads were taken to provide tokens of conquest: similarly, on Simbo, headhunting bolstered the supremacy of chiefs. Other forms of human sacrifice are paralleled in both language groupings. Humans used to be killed at the funerals of noblemen or chiefs by the Rindi, on Simbo, Choiseul and San Cristoval, at Sa'a and in Fiji. Slaves were sacrificed when a sacred house was rebuilt by the Kodi, the peoples of Vanuatu and the Fijians. As for cannibalism in a magical or religious context, it was sometimes practised by Atoni warriors, to 'absorb' the soul, and in Sumba headhunting flesh was symbolically eaten, while the Choiseulese ate strips taken from enemies

to acquire their qualities, and the Easter Islanders ate human victims in a sacrifice to the god of the birds.

Festivals in both language groups are connected with the harvest and the new year. Thus the Rotinese have a post-harvest festival (before the new year, to 'bring in' the seeds), as do the Ata Tana 'Ai (to reunite the dead with their families); in the same way, the Trobrianders have a post-harvest festival, in which the dead return. The transition between the dry season and the rainy one is most important for the Laboya, with a festival involving men and women swapping jokes about sex, and also for the Hawaiians, with a new year feast and orgies. Similarly, the Kodi, when the crops are planted, have a festival with flirtation and intercourse, and the Fijians, at the new year, when yams are planted, have a festival with orgies. Prestige feasts, however, are rather different in the two language groupings: among the Nage they maintain a man's rights, whereas among the Tolai and in Vanuatu they celebrate his advancement in a secret spirit-cult or society.

As regards spirits, we must note first of all that the widespread Eastern Malayo-Polynesian belief that a person has two souls or spirits is paralleled among the Ata Tana 'Ai, who believe that after death the spirit is extracted from the soul and joins the community of ancestors. Both language groupings have both gods and spirits, with no clear distinction between the two classes, and both have ancestral spirits and ones that are evil. The Atoni, Rindi and Nage have a supreme god, as do the peoples of Ulithi, Efate, Tanna, Aneityum, Erromanga, Fiji, Tonga, the Marquesas and Easter Island. There is a Creator for the Rindi, Kodi, Nage, Tami, the peoples of San Cristoval, Erromanga, Tanna, New Caledonia and Niue and the Easter Islanders. Dualistic representations of the main gods are found among the Atoni (heaven–earth), Savunese (Great Woman of rain–male Sun Ancestor), Kodi (Mother–Father) and the peoples of Ambrym (good–bad) and Niue (creator–trickster). The Wewewa resemble the Manus in believing that the spirits punish sexual misconduct.

Religious specialists are of various kinds in the two language groupings. There are priests among the Rindi, Kedangese and Kodi, as well as among the New Caledonians, Rotumans, Fijians, Niueans, Marquesans and Hawaiians. The 'brooding' of the Kodi Sea Worm Priest before the new year revels differs, however, from the Hawaiian seclusion and blindfolding of the chief priest during the new year orgies:

the former is a symbolic controlling of the calendar, while the second is done to stop the priest from seeing the violation of taboos. There are rainmaking priests among the Nage and the New Caledonians. Shamanic healers are also found among the Kodi and the Windesi, and divination is used to attribute illness or death to incest among the Wewewa and the Manus.

Numbers are all-important in the Central-Eastern Malayo-Polynesian domain. In both parts of this field there is an opposition between the odd and the even. Even numbers represent transition or completion for the Kedangese, Rindi and Nage, and this is paralleled on Malekula, while they are sometimes obligatory among the Maori. Duality is all-pervasive in eastern Indonesia, and has been seen as prevalent in 'Melanesia'. Both Sumbanese and Maori art have been seen as possessing dualistic 'complementarity'. Social bipartition (nobles–commoners) is found in East Sumbanese myth and in the Marshall Islands and the Marquesas. A warrior is called 'female' when one of a pair among the Atoni, just like the chief who forms a pair with a Rotuman king.

Social tripartition occurs among the Rindi and the Society Islanders. The number three, however, is not often in Central-Eastern Malayo-Polynesian religion. Four, however, is most important, notably in death rituals in eastern Indonesia generally, the Trobriand Islands, on Simbo and Malekula, in New Caledonia and in Fiji. It occurs in both Atoni and Maori myth, and in non-mortuary rituals among the Rindi, Fijians and Hawaiians.

This prevalence of even numbers is certainly one of the most striking features of Central-Eastern Malayo-Polynesian religion. Even numbers are superior, so that the use of seven offerings among the Rindi and Nage exists precisely to solicit the completeness of eight and thus 'prosperity and fecundity'. Likewise, among the Maori, sometimes odd numbers are unlucky, and even ones compulsory. The Central Malayo-Polynesian field seems to emphasize the number two, reserving four for funerary rituals, while its Eastern counterpart appears to prefer four, which on Malekula again means 'completion'.

Malayo-Polynesian Religion

In considering Malayo-Polynesian religion we must first isolate elements common to both the Western and the Central-Eastern sub-fields. Here

we shall follow our usual order of topics, paying particular attention to death, mortuary rituals and the land of the dead, headhunting, festivals, spirits, religious specialists and numbers.

As regards lifecycle rituals, we have not found many corresponding phenomena. The birth of twins is unlucky among the Kayan, the Nias and the Ata Tana 'Ai, and only one is retained. Initiation of warriors used to be done straight after a male's first taking of a head among the Berawan and the Atoni. Marriage is preceded by the extraction of women's incisors on Engano and in part of Vanuatu, and the cutting of their teeth by the Nage. We have found some degree of correspondence in punishments for sexual misconduct. Incest is punished by death or public humiliation by the Ngaju, by death in Kiribati and by public humiliation in eastern Indonesia, where pairs of animals are sacrificed, and the 'transgression' is expelled, sometimes by being sent downstream. Similarly, on Nias, adultery was expiated by throwing a pig and a chicken into the river, and previously had been punished by drowning. A Rindi adulterer could also be punished by death.

Death is caused by the ancestors among the Ifugao and by the 'ghosts' among the Manus. The 'death chair' is found among the Ifugao, the Berawan, the Rindi and Roro speakers. 'Bad death' (notably in childbirth) results in the corpse's being taken into the jungle or buried outside consecrated land among the Berawan and the Ngaju, and in its being disposed of quickly in eastern Indonesia and among some Oceanic speakers. After a good death, at night a festive spirit prevails among the Berawan, as songs take the soul to the land of the dead, and among the Ngaju, who play games, as do the Merina, to guard the corpse and mourners, while among the Betsileo there is an orgy and on Nias there used to be dancing and feasting. These Western Malayo-Polynesian practices are paralleled elsewhere. On Roti, at the funeral of a very prominent old priest, men and women dance. The Tami also dance while keeping watch on the grave, to guard the bereaved, and the Wogeo sing outside the house after the death, whereas the Fijians used to have 'comic games'. In Tonga the mourning after a great chief's burial used to end with wrestling and dancing, while among the Marquesans an ordinary death was followed by dancing performed by naked women, and that of a chief by debauchery. As for the period of mourning or restrictions after a death, it is four days on Nias, among the Kedangese and on Simbo, and beliefs and rituals related to death elsewhere in the

Oceanic sub-field also involve four days. We may note that the practice of consuming the liquids from the corpse is found in Borneo, in Madagascar, on Nias and among the Biaks. Burial beneath the house is found among the Ifugao, on Roti and among various Oceanic speakers.

The final mortuary ritual is well evidenced in the Western Malayo-Polynesian, Central Malayo-Polynesian and Eastern Malayo-Polynesian fields. In all three fields it is connected with the soul's joining the ancestors in the next world. It usually takes place some years after a death, and is often for a number of the dead. The bones are collected, sometimes from a temporary resting place, sometimes from their permanent one, and brought to a feast before their being taken to their final destination. There is plenty of singing and dancing (sometimes obscene). The land of the dead is believed to be in all sorts of different locations, even among one and the same people. For the Berawan it is reached after a river journey, and the ancestors live in a longhouse, whereas for the Ngaju it is in the Upperworld's 'Prosperous Village'. The Rindi also believe that it is reached after a river journey. Eastern Malayo-Polynesian speakers tend to believe that the land of the dead is beneath the earth or on an island. The Ngaju say that the soul will have to cross a bridge, and so do the Berawan and the Niasans, who add that it is guarded by a spirit or watchman. Likewise, the Ata Tana 'Ai maintain that one must 'cross over' a bridge like a thread or knife-edge. Fijian souls also cross a bridge, after which they drink water, which relieves their sorrow. In the same way, the Ngaju believe that the soul will be given a fruit, which will make it forget its life.

Headhunting appears to have taken place originally for religious reasons, in all three language groupings. In the Philippines and northern Borneo it was done to obtain the spirits of the victims and thus ensure general prosperity and give the community strength, or for mortuary rites (as among the Ngaju and on Nias). Similarly, heads were taken to promote fertility in eastern Indonesia, and to obtain magic power among the Usiai, or for mortuary rituals (on Simbo). In both 'Klemantan' and East Sumbanese myth headhunting is done to make the rice grow. Both the Ifugao and the Atoni take omens from birds before headhunting expeditions, and both the Ifugao and the Windesi make a lot of noise when they return victorious. The Berawan women, in a re-enactment of a headhunting raid, attack the returning 'hunters', and the two groups throw each other around. (Previously this was followed by a dance, to

honour the heads, and this dance was dominated by the women, with 'lewdness'.) In the same way, Fijian women would greet enemies' bodies with 'indecent' dancing, followed by a public orgy. Among both the Berawan and the Atoni initiation of a warrior immediately followed his taking a head.

Other forms of human sacrifice are found in all three groupings. Killing slaves at chiefly or royal funerals was common in Borneo and Madagascar, and at chiefs' final mortuary feasts on Nias. In the same way, it was done by the Rindi and on various Oceanic islands. It was also done when a building was newly put up or reconstructed in Borneo, Sumba, Vanuatu and Fiji. Magico-religious cannibalism was practised in the Philippines, in Madagascar, by the Atoni and on Sumba (symbolically), Choiseul and Easter Island.

Festivals, in all three groupings, tend to be connected with the harvest, the new year or the intervening period. At the harvest itself there are very different rituals: the Ifugao are concerned to prevent over-eating and violence, while the Tongans have a 'holy wedding' and the Atoni (like some Oceanic speakers) bring the first fruits to a holy house. After the harvest the Ngaju's new year feast ends in a mass orgy (like the Merina Bath's total promiscuity, and the Niasans have four days without work before bathing, while the Rotinese have a pre-new year festival with a ritual battle, and the Ata Tana 'Ai reunite the dead with their family. At this time the Trobrianders are also reunited with their dead while they abandon work for 'sexual licence' (like the people of San Cristoval). The new year festival itself, as we have just noted, involves orgies and bathing in the Western Malayo-Polynesian domain, as in Hawaii (where there is also abstention from work for four days), while there are also orgies in Fiji. In Hawaii the feast marks the start of the wet season and abstention from work. The start of the wet season is also celebrated by the Ata Tana 'Ai, with a 'cooling' ritual, and by the Laboya, with sexual joking between men and women.

Prestige feasts occur in all three groups, but for different reasons. The Ifugao and Niasan hosts aim at 'fertility or 'blessing', whereas the Nage ones aim at maintaining their rights, and the feast-givers among the Tolai and in Vanuatu celebrate their promotion in secret societies.

In all three groupings we find the belief that a person has two souls or spirits. On Nias the shadow-ghost goes to the land of the dead and the reflection-image stays behind, while among the Ata Tana 'Ai the

spirit, separated from the soul, joins the ancestors. Many Eastern Malayo-Polynesian speakers have similar beliefs, one soul corresponding to the shadow, the other to the reflection. Some of the Wogeo, and some of the Fijians, agree with the Niasans as to their respective destinations. Spirits, often ancestral, are blamed for misfortunes in the Philippines, while on Nias they are greedy and thus easily bribed. In the same way, the spirits of the dead inspire great fear among the Biaks, Windesi and Yabem, whereas for the Wewewa and Manus they punish sexual misconduct. On the other hand spirits, again often ancestral, are seen as likely to help one among the Ilongot, Kayan, Ngaju, Rotinese and Bukawa. Gods are found among the Ifugao (in large numbers), the Kayan and the Betsileo (with a supreme one), the Berawan (with a supreme Creator) and the Ngaju (with two supreme deities). As we have seen, the Central-Eastern Malayo-Polynesian field contains many peoples with a supreme god or Creator (the two sometimes being identical), and some peoples with dualistic representations of the main gods.

Religious specialists include priests among the Ifugao, where they become possessed by deities. Here almost all adult males are priests. The Kalinga have 'woman mediums', evidently shamanesses, and the Iban have shamans, the highest class of whom consists of feminized transvestites, like the Ngaju priests, who are paralleled by priestesses. Both of the latter are mediums, possessed by spirits. Shamans practise their healing among the Betsileo, and priests exorcize ghosts and expiate illicit profit among the Niasans. Similarly, Kedangese and Wewewa priests expiate incest, and there are shamanic healers among the Windesi and the Kodi. The latter also have priests, who sometimes have to behave like women. In the Eastern Malayo-Polynesian field there are mediums (male and female), 'sorcerers', priests and priestesses (who go into 'frenzies'), 'oracles', diviners and 'seers'.

Numbers are clearly important in all three fields, but the Western Malayo-Polynesian one seems to lack the Central-Eastern emphasis on the opposition between the odd and the even (with the latter representing transition or completion). In the Western domain Schärer sees duality as all-pervasive among the Ngaju, but we have not encountered the number two often. By contrast, binary oppositions are all-important in the Central field, and pairs and the number two are very common in the Eastern one.

The number three is prominent in the Western group, but less so in the Eastern one, while in the Central one it is not usually prominent at all. Social tripartition, usually chiefly (or noble) – middle (or commoner) – slave, is found in all three, in Borneo and Madagascar and on Nias, among the Rindi and in the Society Islands. In Madagascar three is a propitious number, as it is on Roti, while in Kiribati it occurs repeatedly in rituals.

Four is not common in the Western grouping, but is well attested in the Central one, and in the Eastern one is all-important. The Niasans had mourning and taboos for four days after a death, with an exorcism on the fourth. Similarly, the Kedangese have four days of restrictions after a funeral, and four occurs often in eastern Indonesian rituals, especially funerary ones. The same is true of Eastern Malayo-Polynesian funerary rites: it is sometimes believed that the soul stays near the corpse for four days. As regards festivals, the Niasans used to have a four-day abstention from work after the harvest, as in the Hawaiian new year. In the same way, the Kedangese have four days of restrictions after 'cleaning the village', and the Fijians have four-day sea-worm and new year festivals.

Five is not prominent in the Western field, though it is important in the Ifugao and Ngaju world-views, and we have not encountered it in the Central one. In the Eastern one it occurs a few times: there are two instances of five-month intervals, and in Fiji there are rituals on a fifth day or night. Six we have not found in the Western group, and hardly at all in the Central one, but it is connected with the sun in Oceanic myths and holy in the Marshall Islands. Seven is extremely important in Borneo and Madagascar, not just in funerary rites but also in weddings. In Madagascar it is said to be propitious, but also to represent separation and destruction. It is important in eastern Indonesia, as soliciting the completeness of eight. Other numbers are not, so far as we are aware, paralleled in the Western and Central-Eastern groupings.

Such parallels as we have found have been most striking in punishments for sexual misconduct, funerals, final mortuary rituals, headhunting, festivals and numbers. Incest and adultery are expiated by the sacrificing of pairs of animals. Funerals include dances and orgies, the 'death chair' and burial beneath the house. The final mortuary ritual involves the soul's joining the ancestors. In it the bones are brought to a

feast, and then their final resting place. Headhunting ensures general prosperity or fertility, and is done for mortuary rites. The post-harvest new year feast is accompanied by orgies, abstention from work (in two instances for four days) and bathing. As regards numbers, two and four are most significant in the Central-Eastern field, and three in the Western one.

It is in social tripartition, however, that the number three is most evident in Malayo-Polynesian materials. As explorers, colonists and conquerors the Malayo-Polynesians added to the first two classes of society, nobles and commoners, a third, that of slaves. These were of course used to provide victims in human sacrifices. In Borneo, by contrast, the commoners provide priests and the nobles provide judges and chiefs. Here the classes are also reflected in the higher spirits. In Madagascar the gods join the spirits of the nobles on one of three shelves, while the spirits of commoners and of slaves are on two others. On Tanna, without social classes or castes, there is a 'triad' of 'lords', responsible for rituals, 'male clans', responsible for war and 'female clans', responsible for agriculture. Thus the tripartition does not need an underlying class system.

The General Characteristics of Austronesian Religion

In trying to isolate the characteristics of Austronesian religion we shall compare the Taiwanese and Malayo-Polynesian materials. We shall consider lifecycle rituals, death, headhunting, the hunting of animals, festivals, spirits and gods, religious specialists and numbers.

Birth involves getting rid of twins among the Paiwan, Tsou and Puyuma in Taiwan and the Kayan, Niasans and Ata Tana 'Ai. Among the Tsou, the Manus and the people of Kiribati the mother is secluded after birth. The Paiwan swing babies in cradles, while singing the song of the origins, to make their spirits enter them, and in Kiribati relatives dance to encourage the baby's soul to take up residence in its body.

As regards initiation, the initiation of Tsou youths involved food prohibitions before the ceremony itself, on the day of the skull-offering in the *meesi* festival-cycle. For Puyuma youths it is done during the headhunting ritual, which used to be performed at the end of the harvest. Similarly, among the Berawan the initiation of youths is done during a headhunting ritual, as it is among the Atoni, where cooked food is

prohibited for the candidate and he is formally initiated as a skull is impaled on a pole outside a shrine.

The extraction of teeth has been shown by archaeologists to have been done to children in Taiwan in prehistoric times. Among the Tsou the upper incisors of both boys and girls were removed. Old Chinese sources say that Taiwanese aborigines did this to girls to add to their beauty, and that in one village bride and groom did this together. It is paralleled on Engano in the case of women before marriage. Among the Nage women must have their teeth cut before intercourse, and in part of Vanuatu girls' incisors are extracted after the bride purchase has been completed. Regarding marriage itself, the widespread incidence of matriliny in Taiwan is reflected in the great importance in eastern Indonesia of a man's mother's brother (who is often also his father-in-law) and, among the Manus, of ghosts in matrilineal groupings. Pre-marital sex is generally tolerated in both Taiwan and the rest of the Austronesian domain. Adultery in Taiwan is usually punished by a fine, but can result in death: on Nias it used to be punished by drowning, and it could be punished by death (as at Sa'a) among the Rindi if it involved a wife in another clan, in which case it would certainly involve a fine.

Death in Taiwan used to be followed by different forms of interment, but by the seventeenth century these had become standardised in the form of 'double burial' beneath the house, apparently to protect the deceased from evil spirits elsewhere. Likewise, the Ifugao practise various forms of burial, sometimes placing a coffin under the house. Burial beneath the house was also done on Roti and in various parts of the Oceanic-speaking field, while on Ulithi it was done beside the house, in order to give comfort to the family. In Taiwan there is a period of restrictions after a death or burial, lasting two, five or 12 days, before a local religious specialist makes offerings. In the same way, among the Ngaju, a religious specialist performs a ritual two days after a burial, to exorcize the house, and on Nias the same thing happens on the fourth day after a death. The Kedangese have four days of restrictions and the Nage two: in the latter case the expulsion of the deceased's soul is collective, as among the Biaks and other Eastern Malayo-Polynesian speakers.

In Taiwan 'bad death', such as that of a woman in childbirth, requires prevention of harm from the deceased's spirit, usually by burial far from the house. Similarly, the Berawan and the Ngaju dispose of the 'bad

dead' in the jungle or outside consecrated land. In eastern Indonesia 'bad death' necessitates special rituals, notably on Roti, where, as in Taiwan, it is seen as producing evil spirits 'of the outside'. Among Oceanic speakers it is also seen as dangerous, notably in childbirth, and the corpse is unceremoniously dumped in the sea.

Secondary or tertiary mortuary rites are described in seventeenth-century Taiwan: a corpse is exhumed and reburied three days after the first burial, and when the family moves house. The Puyuma expel the 'pollutions of death' from the houses in mourning once a year, at the end of the headhunting festival. Likewise, among the Windesi, the final mortuary feast is held a year or so after a death, and frequently for several dead people. In eastern Indonesia the feast is held several years later, for all of the deceased, to send them to the next world. The same purpose is made clear in Borneo. Similar 'second funerals' are held in the Philippines and Madagascar, and among Oceanic speakers. As for the location of the next world, we are told that the land of the dead is in the mountains for the Atayal, the Tsou and some of the Nage.

Mortuary rituals involve headhunting among the Taiwanese aborigines of Huang Shujing's southern sector 2: the bereaved sacrifice the head to the deceased. In the same way, in northern Borneo, a head is needed to end a period of mourning, and on Nias headhunting was done for funerary rituals, as on Simbo. In Taiwan we are told that the original reason for headhunting was pleasure, both that of humans and that of the supreme spirit, while another reason was prestige. Prestige is the main reason given by the Kalinga, and young men's desire to emulate their fathers among the Ilongot. The 'Klemantan' cite prosperity, and the Berawan giving strength to the community. In Sumba, where fertility is the main reason, myths resemble Tsou legends: aesthetic pleasure gained from impaling the heads of successive animals is surpassed with a human head, which is also demanded by the spirits. Kiribati tradition also presents heads as being offered to the gods.

Preliminaries to headhunting are, as we have seen, extremely similar among the Tsou and the Ifugao: the Atoni also pay particular attention to bird omens. Taiwanese aborigines would eat the brains, mixed with wine (like the Kalinga), just as everywhere in the north of the Philippines part of the victim was eaten, as also among the Atoni (where the warrior ate part of the brains). The Taiwanese would remove the flesh from enemies' heads, as would the Ifugao: both would then put the heads by

their doors. Both the Taiwanese and the Atoni would welcome the head into the community before impaling it on a pole.

Hunting animals among the Tsou used to be just as much a religious activity as an economic one, involving divination, sacrifice and prayer. The Tsou festival-cycle would contain two ritual hunts, and the Puyuma headhunting festival was also one of hunting animals. Bunun myths about humans and animals reflect economic dependence upon hunting. No such dependence exists among the Ifugao, for whom hunting nonetheless has great religious importance. As we have seen, Tsou and Ifugao hunting rituals are very similar, with bird omens, special fires and hunt-spirits. The Laboya and Nage resemble the Tsou and Puyuma in having ritual hunts in their agricultural festivals, in expectation of the rain.

Taiwanese festival-cycles corresponded to the agricultural cycle, while including aspects of war, hunting and wealth. The main part of the festival-cycle was linked to the harvest, and had a significant headhunting element. For the Tsou the most important day was that of the skull-offering, which was followed by dancing and drinking at night. After this the Paiwan summon the spirits of the dead and send them home to grant prosperity. Likewise, the Ngaju's main feast comes after the harvest, and ends in a mass orgy. The Roti post-harvest festival ends with a 'general ceremony of increase', full of headhunting symbolism, and the Ata Tana 'Ai's post-harvest festival reunites the dead with their families. Among the Trobrianders the corresponding festival involves dancing and promiscuity, and, again, the dead return and are expelled, while on San Cristoval there is also 'licence', along with dancers who represent the dead.

Spirits and gods appear in different patterns, both in Taiwan and in the rest of the Austronesian domain. The Tsou say that after death the bodily soul returns to the mountains, whereas the spirit stays nearby, while the Atayal believe that the spirit goes to a high mountain summit. Usually the Taiwanese have both gods and the worship of the spirits of the dead. As we have seen, the Tsou distinction between the soul and the spirit is reflected on Nias and among the Ata Tana 'Ai and many Eastern Malayo-Polynesian speaking peoples. Gods and ancestral spirits are found together across the Malayo-Polynesian fields. The Tsou supreme spirit has a female creator-spirit alongside him: this sort of male–female pairing of the highest spirits or gods is paralleled in eastern Indonesia.

Similarly, the good–bad pairing of important deities in seventeenth-century Taiwan is echoed on Ambrym.

Religious specialists are also of various kinds, both in Taiwan and elsewhere. In Taiwan there are shamans, sometimes feminized, and shamanesses, while a 'sorcerer' seems to do the same job as a shamaness, exorcizing a house, and a village priest deals with the weather. In the same way, in Borneo there also shamans, sometimes feminized, and 'priestesses', possessed by spirits, while Niasan priests exorcize ghosts. Eastern Indonesia has both priests and shamanic healers, and the Eastern Malayo-Polynesian field has male and female 'mediums', 'sorcerers', priests and priestesses who go into 'frenzies' and rain-makers. Paiwan shamanesses resemble Ngaju priests and priestesses by qualifying in a religious ceremony, through illness or extreme excitement, on a swing in the Paiwan case, through possession in the Ngaju one. (In Borneo swings are also used to bring inspiration from the spirits.)

Duality is not particularly prominent in Taiwanese religion. As we have just noted, there are isolated examples of it in pairs of gods. The Paiwan have social bipartition (chiefs–commoners, as in isolated examples in the Central-Eastern Malayo-Polynesian domain), and among the Tsou the two sexes are strictly separated for education and work, but the number two is not often found (except among the Puyuma, who are anomalous regarding numbers). The same is true for the Western Malayo-Polynesian field (though Schärer and Fox see duality as all-important among the Ngaju and the Javanese respectively). Thus one is led to suspect that duality is neither proto-Austronesian nor proto-Malayo-Polynesian, but rather Central-Eastern Malayo-Polynesian, as reflected in eastern Indonesia's strong predilection for binary oppositions and the Eastern field's emphasis on pairs.

The number three occurs just four times (if we exclude the Puyuma) in the Taiwanese materials that we have surveyed (in ritual, divination, restrictions and altars), and the number four just three times (in tombs, mourning and deities). Thus social tripartition would seem to be not Austronesian but Malayo-Polynesian, perhaps owing to the acquisition of slaves as a third class, while the number three is prominent only in the Western Malayo-Polynesian field. Four, as we have seen, is not common there, but is highly significant among both Central and Eastern Malayo-Polynesian speakers. Five is the most important Taiwanese number, in

rituals, festivals, myths and restrictions. In the Western field it is not common, but the Ifugao have five regions for their gods, and the Ngaju have five 'kings' among their spirits, corresponding to elements that parallel their five social classes. We have not found the number five in eastern Indonesia, but we have found it a few times among Oceanic speakers. The New Caledonians have a 'spirit night' every fifth month for their ancestors, just as the Paiwan have a festival every five years for their ancestral spirits. Likewise, the Fijians have 'comic games' on the fifth night after a burial, and this may correspond to the Tsou beer-drinking on the fifth day after a death, which concludes the restrictions. Other numbers do not seem to yield significant correspondences, though the Puyuma and the Madagascans both attach much importance to seven, as they do to three.

Specific characteristics of Austronesian religion can now, to some degree, be discerned. Getting rid of twins at birth would appear to be proto-Austronesian. Initiation of youths is done in a headhunting ritual. Again, the extraction of teeth in childhood or before marriage seems to be proto-Austronesian. Burial beneath the house is well attested. 'Double burial' leads naturally to the final mortuary feast. Funerary rituals also involve headhunting, often done to 'replace' the dead person and ensure general prosperity and fertility. Pleasure and prestige are also cited as reasons. Headhunting demands bird omens and culminates in the eating of the brains. Bird omens are also required in the hunting of animals, and ritual hunts occur in agricultural festivals. The main festival is linked to the harvest, and includes an important headhunting element and dancing, often with promiscuity.

Austronesian speakers generally believe that a person has both a soul and a spirit. They venerate both gods and ancestral spirits, and have religious specialists of various kinds, some of whom, in Taiwan and Borneo, use swings to obtain the spirits' inspiration. As regards numbers, duality and the number four appear to be restricted to the Central-Eastern Malayo-Polynesian field. Social tripartition is absent in Taiwan, but the number five is most widespread there, and evidenced also in the Philippines and Borneo, as well as in Oceanic rituals. Its significance in Taiwan might be attributed to Chinese influence: the fact that something is to be found among almost all Taiwanese aborigines does not mean that it is proto-Austronesian, given the extent of later changes.

Indo-European and Austronesian Religions

Indo-European religions differ from Austronesian ones (and those of other language groups) by their overwhelming emphasis on order. Thus in the Indo-European field the three main concepts of religious sovereignty, warlike force and fertility are clearly reflected in triads of gods and heroes. The concept of sovereignty is itself divided into the complementary aspects of magic and law, and fertility is often represented by a pair of twins, the one close to war and the other to peace. In the Austronesian sphere no such clarity is to be found: gods do not usually constitute fixed patterns, and are either badly documented or appear in bewildering profusion.[1]

Taiwan, however, has a religion that resembles Indo-European ones in its pantheon: that of the Tsou. Here sovereignty is symbolized by the supreme spirit, Hamo, who has a female creator-spirit beside him. Just beneath them are two war-spirits, and beneath these are fertility figures. Outside Taiwan, in the Malayo-Polynesian field, we find the social tripartition of chiefly families (or nobles), commoners and slaves. This is due to the addition of slaves to the original noble–commoner dualism, as elsewhere in the world (for example among the Buriat Mongols), and is not to be confused with the Indo-European social tripartition of priests, warriors and producers. Nonetheless, there is an obvious parallelism between Malayo-Polynesians and Indo-Europeans in their use of tripartition in expansion and conquest.[2]

In the myths of the Central Malayo-Polynesian sub-field, among the Kodi of West Sumba, we have already noted the widespread Indo-European pattern of the 'three tests of the warrior', preceding the hero's marriage. Thus the hero is tested as regards (1) intelligence and magic (2) the warrior's skill and (3) food. This pattern is also found among the Finns and Central Asian Turks, apparently as a result of diffusion from Indo-European speakers.[3] It is, however, in the Eastern Malayo-Polynesian sub-field that parallels with Indo-European structures are most apparent. In South Vanuatu, on the island of Tanna, Bonnemaison has found that the ideology of power is tripartite. First, the power of honour belongs to the 'lords', who control rituals. Secondly, political power belongs to the 'male clans', who are responsible for war. Thirdly, the power of foodstuffs belongs to the 'female clans', who are responsible for agriculture.

Further parallels are found in Polynesia. Here, as sometimes in the Indo-European field, we find not three but four elements, and four 'major gods'. In Hawaii Kane is associated with white, the north and sorcery (1) Ku is linked to red, the east and war (2) Lono is connected with black, the leeward direction and fertility (3) Kanaloa's associations are with red and black, the west and the south, and death. Thus concepts 1, 2 and 3 are, as often in the Indo-European sphere, represented by the colours white, red and black.[4] The four cardinal points also correspond to the three concepts, along with death: here, as sometimes in the Indo-European domain and elsewhere, there is a 'fourth function', alien and sinister. Kanaloa, who symbolizes this, appears elsewhere in Polynesia as Tangaroa, great but remote. To have four gods representing the four cardinal points is typically Indian, and here, one suspects, may well be the result of the eastward expansion of Indian religions. A similar patterning is found among the Mongols, and there Buddhist missionaries, as often, may have brought Hindu materials with them.[5]

Afroasiatic and Austronesian Religions

There are also resemblances and differences to be found when comparing Austronesian religions with those of the Afroasiatic language family, found in northern Africa and the Middle East. Here one sees an overwhelming emphasis on fertility, combined with 'twoness', especially in the male–female opposition. Thus the contrast between the dry and the wet is echoed by that between light and darkness. A 'holy wedding' symbolizes the union of a moon-god and a sun-goddess, and guarantees the supply of water for agriculture and reproduction.[6] Now in Austronesian religions fertility seems to be accorded less importance than the final mortuary feast and headhunting. A strong emphasis on 'twoness', while found among Central-Eastern Malayo-Polynesian speakers, appears to be generally absent in Taiwan and the Western Malayo-Polynesian sub-field. And the dry-season/wet-season opposition, combined with a 'holy wedding', is also granted strong significance in only some parts of the Austronesian domain (notably in eastern Indonesia).

Further resemblances and differences are found as regards human sacrifice. Girls would be sacrificed to a water-demon in ancient Arabia, in order to obtain rainfall. Likewise, in Algeria, during a drought an old

man would be allowed to die after ritual preparations. Elsewhere, in southern Niger, human sacrifices had been made at the foundation of the town of Maradi, and in 1946, when the town was rebuilt, it was believed that there would be more. In south-western Ethiopia, among the Kafa people, a man would be killed every year for the 'good health of the king', and when a king died a slave would be killed to serve him in the next world. Another people in the same area, the Amarro, have sacrificed a youth at a new king's enthronement. (It must be added that early Indo-European speakers also performed lots of human sacrifices, in foundation sacrifices for cities, sacrifices to the sovereign gods and funerary and military rituals.)[7]

These human sacrifices are well paralleled among Austronesian speakers. In the Western Malayo-Polynesian sub-field slaves are sacrificed to take a chief to the next world. A new building's main post is caused to fall on a victim. Slaves are also sacrificed when people become priests or priestesses. Among Central Malayo-Polynesian speakers we find the Atoni myth that a youth and a girl would be sacrificed to obtain a good harvest. Again, slaves would be killed at the funerals of noblemen and for the rebuilding of a sacred house. East Malayo-Polynesian speakers used to sacrifice humans (sometimes young children) when their chiefs were ill or died, or for the crops, or after shipwrecks, or for special buildings or large canoes.

There are nonetheless differences that put the Austronesian examples apart from the Afroasiatic ones. Afroasiatic sacrifices are made above all to end drought, and a young girl or old man is chosen as victim. Malayo-Polynesians usually just sacrifice slaves, for the crops or the harvest. Afroasiatic speakers sacrifice for a new king, Malayo-Polynesians for new priests or priestesses.

Altaic and Austronesian Religions

Austronesian religions also resemble and differ from the religions of the Altaic language family, so named after the Altai mountains on the frontiers of China and Russia, and including the various Turkic languages and Mongolian. Here the dominant element is the animal: animals turn into humans, become their ancestors, grant them guidance and rescue them. Another highly important element is the shaman, who becomes an animal in order to rescue a stolen soul and heal a patient.

Now in Austronesian religions hunting and fishing have great ritual significance. For the Tsou hunting used to involve divination, sacrifice and prayer, and the Puyuma, Laboya and Nage also have ritual hunts in their agricultural festivals. The Biaks, the Trobrianders and the Mekeo use magic to catch fish, and in Hawaii and Tikopia offerings have been made for this. However, animals are far from having the overwhelmingly dominating position that they occupy in Altaic religions, and are dwarfed by headhunting and the final mortuary feast. To be sure, Altaic religions often join Austronesian ones in presenting triads of the type animal – animal – human, for example mare – she-camel – wife or young bird – young deer – child, but here the emphasis is on parallelism, as opposed to the Austronesian stress on upward progression, from lesser animal to monkey to the finally accepted human.[8]

As regards shamans, again there are many similarities. Isolating these is rendered difficult by the fact that shamans are designated by different terms. Moreover, scholars use the misleading word 'shamanism' to cover both Altaic religions and shamans' practices in many parts of the world. Altaic shamans are primarily healers. However, they also purify the tent of someone who has just died, as a 'sorcerer' does in Taiwan. The Altaic shaman heals by means of a magic drum, journeying with it, just like Kodi shamans in eastern Indonesia, to the upperworld. Altaic shamans are often feminized and transvestites, and thirteenth-century Mongol ones were said to be sodomized by spirits and thus have their powers strengthened. This is reflected in the Ngaju belief that 'priests' are penetrated by spirits through their stomachs. The tendency of 'seers' to be homosexual has been noticed elsewhere in the world, for example in Morocco. What distinguishes Altaic shamans, like Altaic religions in general, is the dominant role of the animal, constantly imitated and invoked: the shaman makes animal noises and enlists animal spirits.[9]

Human sacrifice is also common in Altaic religions, in ways encountered in Austronesian ones. The ancient Hsiung-nu people of Mongolia would kill lots of slaves at an important man's funeral. Here and elsewhere the aim was to provide servants in the next world, or to send a message. A Mongol man could sacrifice himself to save a relative's life. All of this is paralleled in Austronesian examples, but the latter differ by being richer in the variety of objectives: securing a new house's foundations, ending a period of flooding or drought, concluding a

ceremony in which people become priests or priestesses, covering a drum with human skin and increasing the crops.[10]

Tibeto-Burman and Austronesian Speakers

The Tibeto-Burman language family is an extremely important one. It would now appear to include the ancient Chinese language, and thus the various modern Chinese languages, spoken by an enormous number of people. Apart from China, Tibet and Burma, Tibeto-Burman speakers are found in India, Bangladesh and Nepal. At the moment it does not seem possible to identify the main elements of Tibeto-Burman religions. Consequently, we shall just examine contacts between early Tibeto-Burman speakers on the one hand and early Austronesians and other peoples on the other, before proceeding to consider the Naga tribes of north-east India, which have often been compared to Taiwanese aboriginal groups.

In 2001 the Dutch linguist George van Driem produced a book called *Languages of the Himalayas*, in which he analysed the migrations of various language groups. Van Driem looks for contact between early Austronesians and early northern Tibeto-Burmans in the Longshan cultural horizon or 'interaction sphere' in the fourth and third millennia BCE. This interaction sphere connected northern and southern China, and notably involved the Dawenkou culture in the north, where Austronesian-looking elements have been noted. The interaction would have come after northward movement of the early Austronesians from their original homeland in south or south-east China. In any case there must have been contacts between Austronesians and Tibeto-Burmans, as they were so close to each other, before and after the Longshan period.[11]

Van Driem sees the original Tibeto-Burman homeland as having been in what is now the province of Sichuan, in south-west China. First, the Western Tibeto-Burmans migrated to north-east India, perhaps in or before the seventh millennium BCE. Then, in the same period, the northern branch of the Eastern Tibeto-Burmans moved to the Yellow River basin, where they introduced their language, Proto-Chinese. Thus Chinese is a branch of Tibeto-Burman. The southern branch of the Eastern Tibeto-Burmans remained in Sichuan, while also inhabiting what is now the province of Yunnan to the south. They probably produced Bronze Age cultures of the second millennium BCE, like the

Dian culture by Lake Dian. From this time some of them moved into peninsular South-East Asia. One Tibeto-Burman people, the Pyu, had a powerful state in Burma from the fourth to the ninth century CE, related to the Dian culture in Yunnan and the Dongson culture in northern Vietnam.[12]

These relationships have been studied by the Cambridge scholar Janice Stargardt, in a book published in 1990, with reference to the Pyu archaeological evidence. She points to an instance of human sacrifice: a young man was killed and buried in the foundations of a monument. This is reflected in a tableau on top of a Dian bronze drum-shaped container. Here there is a tower of bronzed drums, surrounded by a number of figures, notably a large male roped to a post – apparently a sacrificial victim. Another Dian bronze drum tableau shows a large severed head on a post, surrounded by people with musical instruments and cooking implements. This is reflected in the recent practices, in the same area, of the Wa people, whose language belongs to the Austroasiatic family of South-East Asia: on returning from a headhunting expedition they used to sacrifice in front of a ceremonial hall of drums. We are told that the heads 'signified for them a blessing and a protection for the fertility of the fields'. The Donyon culture in north Vietnam, related to the Dian one, has left severed heads in small-scale bronze drums, placed in graves.[13]

These customs are echoed in those of the Tibeto-Burman speaking Naga people of north-east India and north-west Burma. The various Naga tribes have traditionally lived in villages on hilltops, from which they have raided the plains. Here we shall summarize the descriptions of the Nagas provided by British and Austrian observers from 1922 onwards.

In 1922 the British administrator J. P. Mills published a study of the tribe of the Lhota Nagas, which contains useful information about headhunting. Headtakers, he tells us, wear hornbill tail feathers. Raiders sleep apart from their wives the night before a raid, and then take an omen from a cock. The Lhotas believe that heads taken 'warm the earth', helping the crops to grow and the village to expand. At the start of the agricultural year, before the rice is sown, there is a mock headhunting raid, performed by boys, to promote fertility.[14]

Four years later Mills produced another study, of the Ao Nagas. Among them he finds, here too, that headhunting obtains fertility,

but also a slave (the victim) in the next world (as in northern Borneo). If a head is taken by more than one man it is cut up and shared (again as in northern Borneo). A warrior's wife then feeds his piece of skull and tells it to bring its relatives (here too the parallels with northern Borneo and Taiwan are exact). The Aos also engage in mock headhunting raids, again to obtain good crops. Real headhunting, according to Mills, produces few deaths and actually increases the population by limiting infectious diseases and giving a people 'one of its main interests in life'.[15]

1932 saw the appearance of yet another volume on a Naga tribe, the Lakhers, by another British administrator, N. E. Parry. He says that the Lakhers raided for plunder, heads being secondary but needed when a chief or a member of his family died, to end the period of mourning. A headtaker must remain indoors for five days. Another aspect of Lakher ritual is found in only one clan: it consists of a series of prestige feasts, the last of which lasts nine days and ends with a night-long orgy.[16]

A series of prestige feasts is likewise found among the Rengma Nagas, studied by Mills in a book of 1937. He relates how boys and youths must be naked in a rain-making ceremony, and quotes Candidius on seventeenth-century Taiwanese aborigines, who went naked for three months during the dry season, when they prayed for rain. The Rengmas, again like Taiwanese aborigines, have harvest ceremonies lasting several days and involving the repair of ancestors' graves and the purification of the population. Mills also tells us that the Rengmas put up stone monuments for the dead or themselves. He provides useful information about the importance of the number five among the Rengmas. The taking of a head is celebrated for five days, and the giver of a prestige feast has to eat specified kinds of food for five-day periods. At such a feast a clansman gets five pieces of meat. One purificatory ceremony, performed every seven years, lasts five days. Thus five seems more significant than other numbers for the Rengmas, but for the Nagas in general it is used for women and female animals, as opposed to six, used for males. Finally, Mills compares Naga headhunting with its seventeenth-century Taiwanese equivalent, noting close parallels. In both cases bamboo spikes are planted by the retreating headtaker. In both the headtaker's village is consecrated for feasting for a fixed period. Also in both rice beer (prominent in Naga and Taiwanese ritual) is poured onto the head. Mills further observes that Rengma headtakers could not wash their weapons

or hands: similarly, the Ilongot headtakers could not wash their bodies or limbs.[17]

Similar comparisons are made by the Austrian anthropologist Christoph von Fürer-Haimendorf, in books published in 1969 and 1976 and based on fieldwork done from 1936. He notes that the Konyak Nagas and the Taiwanese aborigines use exactly the same words when pouring rice-beer onto heads and calling for the victims' relatives to come. Previously the Konyaks poured the beer into the mouths. The jaw and the parts of the skull around the eyes were most valued for their beneficial power. If the head had been taken to avenge a man's death the latter's widow would thrust a spear into its eyes. Other Nagas used to decapitate a slave during their prestige feasts, and, when putting up a new house, crush a slave with the main post as it came down into its hole. The prestige feasts involved stone monuments, brought on sledges, to the feast-giver's glory. There are enormous numbers of these monuments, sometimes put up for a man by his heirs.[18]

Headhunting

1996 saw the publication of a volume of essays on headhunting in South-East Asia, edited by Hoskins. Her introduction gives us a good overview. She defines headhunting as 'an organized, coherent form of violence in which the severed head is given a specific ritual meaning and the act of headtaking is consecrated and commemorated in some form'. I should object that here, as elsewhere, the self-evident is neglected: headhunting is a form of hunting and resembles the hunting of animals in its ritual aspects. It is to be distinguished from the removal of heads after pitched battles or single combat (as performed by ancient Indo-European speakers) and the decapitation of slaves in sacrifices.[19]

Hoskins observes that the value attached to heads may have actually limited raiding: a few heads would have been enough. Moreover, presentation of heads to the gods involved expensive festivities. In Sulawesi headhunting was done to protect the crops and people's health, but no large number of heads was needed, and indeed one was sufficient. This is because of the symbolic character of the head in the ritual of sacrifice. Thus Hoskins gives weight to the view that headhunting is sacrificing to the highest of the spirits, a view put forward by the Philippines-based anthropologist Jules De Raedt.[20]

De Raedt, drawing on his fieldwork, done in the 1960s among the Buaya people, who live in the Kalinga province of northern Luzon, explains that they have headhunted for various reasons: producing general welfare against famine and epidemics, developing leadership, taking revenge for adultery and concluding mourning. A 'prophetess' would hurl a sacred spear in the direction of an enemy village (as a priest, when declaring war on behalf of ancient Rome, would hurl a spear into enemy territory).[21] Once a head had been taken she would summon the victim's soul to follow it. One headhunter might plant sharpened sticks for the enemy. The head was kept outside the village before the ensuing feast, which was characterized by 'obscene' dancing and 'erotic licence'. During this the 'prophetess' licked the knife used to take the head, and, possessed, called for the putting-up of a barrier against epidemics. De Raedt concludes that with the government's ban on headhunting the Buaya have difficulty in continuing with their traditional triad of leaders: war leader, rich man and legal expert (which looks Indo-European).[22]

We have found that the older sources present general prosperity as the main objective in headhunting. This prosperity includes health as its chief prerequisite, in fact obtained by keeping infectious diseases at bay. It also includes fertility, that of the crops and that of humans, and good luck of various kinds. Thus it is apt that headhunting, as a form of human sacrifice, should be dedicated to a supreme spirit or god, who grants general prosperity, as opposed to a lesser, 'departmental' god.

To be sure, there are other reasons for headhunting, stressed by more recent writers. One is the taking of heads for mortuary rituals. Here we are often told that the head is taken for 'substitution' or 'replacement'. The community has lost one of its own, and there is the fear that one death in it will lead to others. Thus the gloom of mourning has to be lifted by the incorporation of a victim. Here keeping the community's numbers up evidently belongs to 'general prosperity'. Hoskins, as we have seen, says that Sumbanese headhunting can be done in order to end mourning, but nonetheless grants health and fertility.[23] Accordingly headhunting stands between fertility and mortuary rituals, the latter, as concerned with the afterlife, being supremely religious.

Headhunting is also done for the initiation of the young warrior, preparing and qualifying him for marriage. The latter element, as belonging to fertility, also comes under the heading of general prosperity, and is brought out in headhunting symbolism. 'Headhunting knives' and

maidens' breasts' are carved by the Ilongot on their roof beams. In the Atoni initiation ritual the skull is incorporated into the community's 'fertility' and called the 'harvest of death'. As Cauquelin has shown, among the Puyuma of Taiwan the initiatory headhunting ritual, with its arranging of marriages, is strongly linked to rice, fertility and obtaining a good harvest.[24]

Other explanations for headhunting are given in myths. It is explained as being done for pleasure. Thus one Tsou myth has the familiar progression from killing a lesser animal (a dog) to killing a monkey and then humans: putting the head on a pole or spear grants increasing pleasure and happiness. Another Tsou myth presents the supreme spirit as taking pleasure in humans' severed heads. A 'Klemantan' myth shows a frog teaching an ancestor that headhunting will bring prosperity in all its forms. Elsewhere in northern Borneo a Sarawak myth illustrates the view that headhunting exists to please women and is necessary for marriage: the daughter of an ancestor refused to get married until her fiancé brought her a worthy gift, and so he killed a deer and then a monkey, both being refused before a man's head was accepted.[25]

This tripartite pattern is reflected among the East Sumbanese. In order to make the rice grow a culture hero is told to decorate a woman's grave with the heads of various animals, but the altar that results is not beautiful, and with a monkey's head is only somewhat better. He kills the woman's brother and the latter's head does make the altar beautiful. Kiribati myth speaks of royal Samoan ancestors called 'Kanii and the skull Batuku', who ate the heads of eldest children. Batuku's own children, in addition to killing people to feed their father, killed a hundred more in order to put their heads as crests on their canoe. The heads of the 'bearded and bald' were apparently preferred, and were offered also to the god Auriaria.[26]

Further materials for the study of headhunting have been found among the Jivaro Indians of eastern Ecuador. They were collected by the American anthropologist M. W. Stirling in 1930–1, the results being published in 1938. He says that Jivaro headhunting has not changed since the sixteenth century, when the Spanish began to describe it. Vengeance inspires formalized raids on distant groups. After heads have been taken they are turned into the famous 'shrunken heads' of the Jivaros. According to a late-nineteenth-century observer the glory of these heads lasts only to the end of the Festival of Rejoicing, when the

headhunters come home: afterwards the heads become children's toys and are abandoned. Stirling, however, says that the 'shrunken head' possesses 'magical power', *tsarutama*. One famous headhunter said that it proved that vengeance had been taken and thus would please the ancestral spirits and bring 'good fortune': the spirits of the avenged relatives would bring 'good crops and good luck'. Thus the shrinking of the head and the accompanying rituals grant it importance and give it 'magical power', while insulting the enemy.[27]

More information about Jivaro headhunting is given by another US anthropologist, Michael Harner, whose fieldwork was done from 1956 to 1969 and who published his results in 1972. Harner explains that the Jivaro have three types of soul, 'visionary', 'avenging' and 'ordinary'. When the first of these is obtained by a young male he is inspired to join a 'killing expedition'. During this, the day before the attack itself, the members describe the visions that have granted them their 'visionary souls', and the latter disappear. As for the second type of soul, the 'avenging' one, it is produced when somebody is killed. Head-shrinking is done largely to prevent the 'avenging' soul from exacting vengeance. At the end of the last 'feast of the shrunken head' the latter's 'avenging soul', which has been kept inside it, is sent home to its family. In the course of the headhunting feasts (which are two or three in number) the power of the 'avenging soul' is transmitted. The headtaker holds the head while dancing, and two female relatives hold on to him. They are thereby helped to work harder, notably in producing crops and breeding animals, such work being done mainly by women.[28]

Harner also tells us that inside Jivaro communities feuding has been all-pervading. People have lived in constant fear of being murdered by someone in the same tribe. War, by contrast, has meant attacking alien tribes, in order to obtain as many heads as possible. The headtaker has to provide enormous amounts of food and drink for the headhunting feasts, in order to obtain prestige. Thus the main aim of the feasts, says Harner, is not supernatural, but 'to acquire prestige, friendship and obligations'. The feasts give rise to 'sexual licence', as people meet discreetly in the forest. These feasts are also seen by the Jivaro as the ultimate summits of their lives.[29]

Now Harner's picture of Jivaro headhunting closely parallels Stirling's. Both writers note an emphasis on vengeance as a most significant aspect of headhunting. Both speak of a special power: Stirling's 'magical power'

would seem to be Harner's 'power of the avenging soul'. One of Stirling's sources says that the spirits of avenged relatives bring 'good crops and good luck', while Harner tells us that the 'power of the avenging soul' helps in producing crops and breeding animals.

Thus Jivaro and Austronesian headhunting are both directed towards fertility and 'general prosperity'. The victim's spirit is welcomed into the community for its power to be absorbed. Here the Jivaro evidence is reflected among the Ilongot, for whom the victims' spirits are one aspect of the hearts sought from the Forest Lord by the headhunters, for reasons of prestige.[30] Jivaro headtakers' prestige feasts are echoed in those of the Nagas, where a slave used to be beheaded, and proceedings ended with an orgy.

Final Remarks

We have already enumerated the specific characteristics of Austronesian religion, in so far as they could be discerned. If we briefly recapitulate the main elements alone we find that they hang together. Youths are initiated in a headhunting ritual, and such rituals are included in funerary ones. 'Double burial' leads to the final (and ultimately supreme) mortuary feast. Headhunting itself ensures general prosperity, and is prominent in the harvest festival, with its dancing and promiscuity. A person has both a soul and a spirit, and both gods and ancestral spirits are venerated. In addition, we have seen how the Austronesian heritage differs from others. The Indo-European one differs from it by virtue of its overwhelming emphasis on order. By contrast, the Afroasiatic heritage differs from its Austronesian counterpart through its overpowering stress on fertility and 'twoness'. Finally, Altaic religion distinguishes itself from Austronesian religion by the dominant positions which it accords to the animal and the shaman.

One way of examining the Austronesian religious legacy is to look closely at a brief description of it by a leading scholar. Just such a description was provided by James Fox, in 1987. He enumerated four notions as being part of an Austronesian heritage. The first of these is 'complementary duality'. As we have already observed, this is not particularly noticeable in Taiwan or the Western Malayo-Polynesian field. The latter, as Fox points out, does contain some examples of complementary duality: there are two supreme Ngaju deities, but these

may well result from Indian influences. Pairs like heaven and earth, sun and moon and man and woman are of course universal, and that is true of 'parallelism' in religious literature, which Fox illustrates from a Rotinese mortuary chant:

> Let the coconut grow fruit for her head
> And let the areca nut grow flowerstalks for her feet.[31]

This dual phraseology is found in oral literature throughout the world, and also in the Bible and the Quran.

The second notion adduced by Fox is 'belief in the immanence of life'. Immanence, meaning indwelling or being actually present, had already often been seen as characteristic of traditional religions' perception of God. Its opposite, transcendence, being above everything, had been seen as characteristic of God in Christianity and Islam. But Austronesian religions often have a supreme or transcendent god. Now according to Fox the aim of Austronesian religions is a ritual balance, within which every life form finds its proper place. This place is in a representation of the universe, symbolized by a human body, village, house or ship. We may observe that this looks more like the result of Indian influences than the Austronesian religious heritage itself.[32]

Thirdly, and rightly, Fox lists the rituals of life and death. Life and death are joined in interdependence, and their rituals often speak of planting, growing and ripening. Thus death rituals enhance life as well as helping the dead journey through the next world.[33]

Fourthly, we have the 'celebration of spiritual differentiation', as in the various aspects of nature and social hierarchies, sometimes based on alternative spiritual origins. Here, as with the 'immanence of life', Fox contrasts Austronesian religions with Christianity and Islam, seen as teaching 'spiritual equality'. But both of these religions, just as they teach that God is immanent as well as transcendent, also have 'spiritual differentiation'. Christianity has had its angelic, ecclesiastical and monastic hierarchies, and Islam has had its hierarchies of the 'friends of God', along with social hierarchies of groups claiming descent from religious figures.[34]

Apart from these four 'notions', Fox points to a 'botanic idiom' in the Austronesian heritage: metaphors taken from the world of plants are used to describe elements in lifecycle rituals, as has been noted under his third

heading. Other researchers have also seen this as significant. Elsewhere Fox himself has described its occurrence in Rotinese marriages. A wife-taking group asks a wife-giving one for 'seed', which is duly planted. The wife's brother will call her children his 'plants'. He performs a ritual for the purpose of opening up the womb for its 'eldest sprout and first fruit'. The wife's brother also conducts a 'haircutting ritual', so that the child may 'bear flowers and fruit' and 'send forth roots and leaves'. Such a 'botanic idiom' is obviously important, and not surprising: the early Austronesians were gardeners and fishers. But botanical metaphors have been used by other peoples, notably the ancient Greeks.[35]

In addition to the elements enumerated by Fox we can note another aspect of Austronesian religion: self-congratulation, which is most evident in the prestige feast. Among the Ifugao giving such a feast grants the right to chant a ballad, reserved for the upper class, on the eve of the harvest, in a ritual for rich people. The prestige feast itself ensures fertility. Self-congratulation is also found among Ifugao women, who praise themselves for having given birth to brave warriors. Just as an Ifugao feast is aimed at prestige and fertility, a Niasan one is directed at prestige and 'blessing'. The Niasan host swaggers and struts like a king. Similarly, among the Laboya, in the feast marking the start of the agricultural year, young men and women boast about how attractive they are. In East Sumba an enemy's head would be paraded to increase his conqueror's prestige. Among the Nage the dual objective of prestige and fertility is again found in buffalo sacrificing: this demonstrates social standing and also, by spilling blood on the earth, bringing life out of it. A Tolai man reaches the ultimate summit of social climbing when he sponsors the spirit cult's most important rituals, and indulges in self-congratulation before the crowds, calling out, 'I'm the expert!' In Vanuatu a secret society also offers a man promotion to higher grades, in this world and the next, if he holds a prestige feast, and he imposes taboos and permits liberties like a king. On Easter Island a young man gives feasts to honour his father or father-in-law when still alive, and honours his father again a few years after his death, in a mortuary feast, making a speech 'extolling his own generosity'.

It is in a final mortuary feast of this kind that an Austronesian-speaking community finds the most intense feeling of uniting the living and the dead. Thus, for the Berawan, when the soul of the dead person, accompanied by those of seven bachelors, is entertained by the ancestors,

the community of the living and the dead is joined in a mystical union, so strong that afterwards the return of the souls of the living has to be carefully checked. Similarly, Berawan headhunting gives the whole community more strength as regards health, birth rate and the crops. The Atoni also believe that the entire community is granted fertility by headhunting. Among the Ata Tana 'Ai an individual has a spirit that belongs to the past and future community of ancestors. A second-stage mortuary ceremony reunites the spirits of the dead with their houses, while in the third and last mortuary ceremony the spirits are reunited with the gardens, ensuing success for the crops. Correspondingly, for the Bush Mekeo, the food distributed in the 'final death feast' represents the blood or flesh of the deceased. In the dancing lines of men and women 'weave in and out of one another', in what they see as the ultimate form of happiness.

It is perhaps in this articulation of fertility, headhunting and mortuary ritual that we are to see the driving force behind the Austronesians' spectacular expansion by sea. Likewise, the Indo-Europeans, with their articulation of fertility, force and religious sovereignty, achieved an unparalleled expansion by land. They, however, were pastoralists, aiming to acquire cattle, whereas the Austronesians have been gardeners and fishermen. Thus Austronesian headhunting and mortuary ritual are naturally directed to the crops. A man can have a different aim: promotion to the higher grades of a secret society. Here indigenous religion prefigures Islam's main mystical tradition, Sufism, with its hierarchies of the 'friends of God'. Islam, with its strong emphasis on death and the grave, has also easily adapted to Austronesian concern for the dead. Consequently it is not surprising that Indonesia should be both the most populous of Muslim countries and the one in which Islam and indigenous religion have the most relaxed coexistence.

NOTES

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