

Chapter Four.

ITSUBU AND OTHER GROUPS.

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I

The village is the basic unit in relations with other communities; in inter-village activities such as canoe racing, dancing, teenage guitar parties, and the occasional dispute over land boundaries it acts as a single entity.

For such tasks as the preparation of gardens the sub-clan is the organising unit: once a man has prepared his land he arranges with the other members of his sub-clan to help with the digging. He also requests assistance from his sisters and daughters' husbands. In practice, in a relatively small community such as Nabuapaka, almost all the men combine to carry out garden work irrespective of their relationship to the owner.

It is the sub-clan again which arranges, with the aid of its affines, bride-price payments, mortuary feasts, and guitar parties.

Other activities, such as intra-village holiday sporting events, see the village dividing in a number of different ways: the people at home ("home scholars") may challenge those working in Moresby or elsewhere to a soccer match or basketball game; or alternatively the unmarried boys and girls may challenge the married younger men and women to games, or to see who can stage the best "party." During New Year 1977 the families living at the back of the village, irrespective of sub-clan affiliation, invited the households at the front (beach) to sing and dance aroba, a form of traditional

singing. The following night the beach people returned the invitation. On each night the hosts provided food and drink. The third night everybody danced together, and exchanged pigs and uncooked food the following morning.

Finally, the children split themselves in a variety of ways in rivalry: the young men who are now aged between 20 and 30, assert that as children they separated themselves for fighting and games between the front and the back of the village. The youngsters now aged between about 10 and 20 divide between the right and left sides (see map).

However, the principal purpose of this chapter is to examine in detail the named local units in Nabuapaka. After a preliminary note on the structural relations between the four sub-clans, I shall take each in turn and show precisely how men come to be affiliated to one or other of these units, and conclude with a discussion in which I outline such matters as the inheritance of property, land tenure and affinal obligations.

II

In common with other Austronesian-speakers on the south east coast of Papua (Groves 1963; Oram 1968; Young 1971; Abbi 1975; Powell 1967), Nabuapaka is divided into a number of named units called itsubu, which at first sight appear to be patrilineal exogamous localised land-owning units. According to tradition they are fragments of dispersed clans which originated in the Waima-Kivori area.

The usefulness of such notions as patrilineality in examining local groups in Melanesia and the Pacific generally has been questioned by writers such as Goodenough (1955), Firth (1957), Barnes (1966), de Lepervanche (1967-8), and Strathern (1975). De Lepervanche wrote of the New Guinea Highlands

the criterion of membership of many groups is not confined to genealogical connection alone, and where genealogical connection is invoked this is not necessarily agnatic kinship (1967-8:135)

In a recent comparative review Barth seemed to raise questions about the utility of descent as an anthropological tool. He wrote "we are faced with an increasing number of types of descent system in which the very concept of descent can imply a range of different things" (Barth 1975:4).

I leave further discussion to later in the chapter. What I want to do first is to show the precise origins of two of the sub-clans and the actual make-up of all four within the village. In this I am adding to the detailed material offered by Groves (1963:22) on the Western Motu, Austronesian neighbours of the Roro, although I cannot yet show, as Groves does for the Vahoi Maragi sub-clan, the fluctuations in membership over a period of years.

While my information about Nabuspaka is of course largely inferential, and based on an analysis of genealogies (Firth 1957:222), my informants or their fathers were all alive as two of the Nabua sub-clans were formed. The whole community is little more than a century old, and I believe I can show the process of group formation accurately.

Both Hau'ofa (1971:154) and Groves (1963:16) refer to the wider dispersed unit as a clan in their studies of the Mekeo ikupu and the Motu iduhu respectively. Hau'ofa refers to the localised unit as a sub-clan and Groves to the village section. I shall follow the former and use the term sub-clan.

There are a maximum of five sub-clans in Nabuapaka inter-relating with each other through a whole series of marriage ties, descent ties, ceremonial practices, ritual partnerships, work-groups, seniority and so on.

The five are named Barai Kupuna, Kuro Pokina, Kivori, Hohorupaka, and Iare. I want to dismiss Iare for the time being as it has little significance for the present discussion: it originated two or three generations ago through a Queenslander whose wife was a woman of Barai Kupuna, and a part Solomon Islander who was married to a woman from Rigo. Their descendants continue to live at Iare, fifteen minutes along the beach from Nabuapaka, and are vaguely regarded as belonging to the Iare sub-clan within the Nabuapaka community. They have no chief, but people generally set aside food for them as a courtesy gesture at feasts.

The remaining four sub-clans are split into alliances: Barai Kupuna with Kivori and Kuro Pokina with Hohorupaka. Irrespective of the relative influence of a sub-clan chief at any one time, Barai Kupuna is always regarded as the senior. It holds this place because the three brothers who originally settled Nabua were all members of Barai Kupuna. Its chief is also spoken of as chief of the village (cf: Powell 1967:159 writing of the Trobriand Islands).

So in Nabuapaka, Barai Kupuna is on the right, itsipana, a term synonymous with seniority and the position taken by their chiefs on the right-hand side of the platform during feasts.

Kuro Pokina is second in the heirarchy, and thus on the left, auarina. Their ancestors arrived later than the three brothers, but it was not until the second generation that they made marriage ties with Barai Kupuna.

Kivori and Hohorupaka both emerged as independent, or semi-independent, sub-clans long after Nabua was first settled, and they stand to the left in alliances with Barai Kupuna and Kuro Pokina respectively.

While there is a good deal of inter-marriage between all four sub-clans, senior male members today or in the recent past took wives from the itsubu standing on their right. Thus Kuro Pokina men were married to Barai Kupuna women; the founder of Kivori was married to a Barai Kupuna woman; and the wives of the founders of Hohorupaka came from Kuro Pokina.

Wife-takers stand in a junior relationship to wife-givers. This means in Nabuapaka that while every married man is subordinate to his wife's brothers, whatever his wife's sub-clan, his own as a whole stands in a subordinate relationship to that from which the founders took wives.

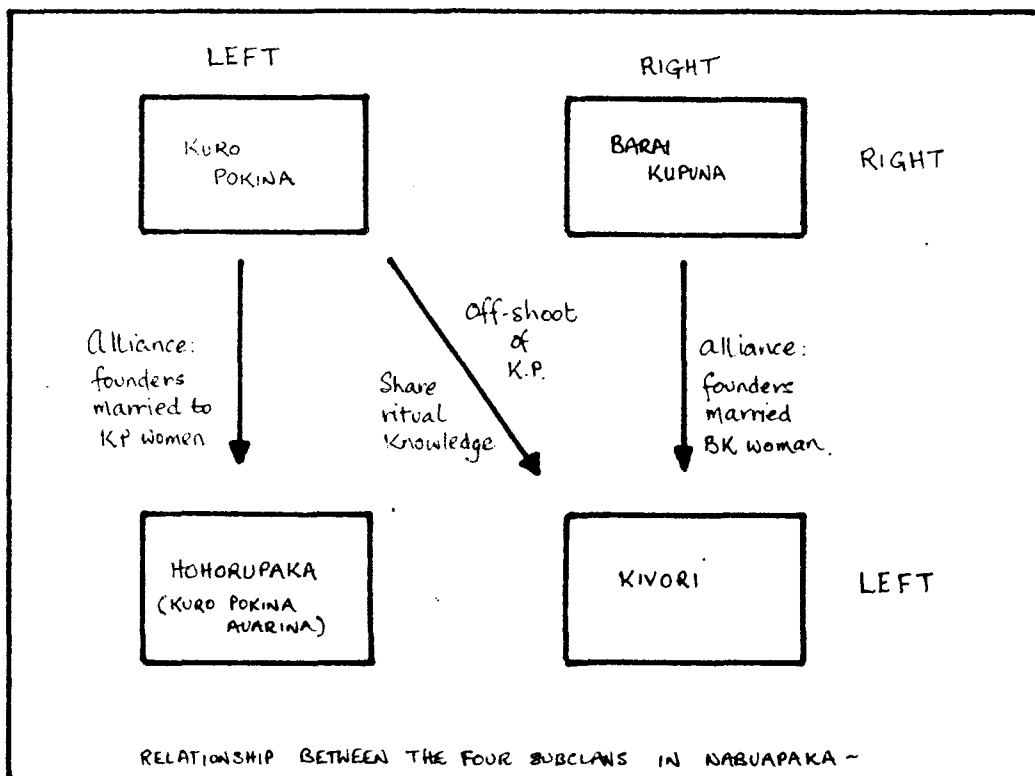
Thus Barai Kupuna is in the senior position and is referred to as standing on the right, not only because it was the founding sub-clan of the village, but because it gave wives to the founders, or sons of founders, of Kuro-pokina and Kivori. However, despite Barai Kupuna's position, its individual male members

are junior to their wife's male relatives irrespective of her natal sub-clan (cf: Meggitt 1970:130 on right-left symbolism in Mae Enga.)

Below I have depicted the relationship between the four sub-clans and in map 6 I show their spatial arrangement. The beach is the "front" and the entrance to the community is at the left of the map. Thus for anyone standing at the front, Barai Kupuna is to the right; Kuro Pokina and Hohorupaka on the left; and Kivori in the middle, but to the left of Barai Kupuna. (I discuss the significance of Kivori being in the middle in the chapter on dispute settlement.)

At the same time, anyone standing at the entrance to the village - the start of the main street in front of the Catholic Church - will observe that Kuro Pokina is on the right and Hohorupaka on the left.

It should also be noted that not every man actually resides in the village territory of the sub-clan of which he is an effective member.



NABUAPAKA VILLAGE (1974)

SPATIAL ARRANGEMENT OF SUBCLANS.

□ RESIDENTIAL HOUSES

□ FAMILY PLATFORMS

Houses where the heads are living outside the territory of their effective sub-clan are marked BK, HP, KP, or K to indicate itsubu of which they are members.

Where two adult men with families living in one household are members of different sub-clans, I have marked the two itsubu with a stroke between - e.g. K/HP.

MANGROVES

causeway to
main road

MUD

MUD

Creek

COPRA

DRYING

PLATFORMS

SANDFLATS

LIMIT

OF

VILLAGE

COCONUT

PALMS

SANDFLATS

HOHORUPAKA
(KURO POKINA
AUARINA)

CATHOLIC CHURCH

BK/HP

'Second Chief's House
(Actual chief living
with Kivori Chief)

KURO POKINA

Chief's House

Chief's House
K/HP

KIVORI

BARAI KUPUNA

Chief's House
(derelict, chief
living in Iare
Village)

HP

UNITED CHURCH

United Church
(derelict)

United
Church

Pastor's
House

Women's
Club (defunct)

Clinic

Rest House

Sandy Beach

to Iare →

Barai Kupuna and Kuro Pokina both originate in the Waima area. The former from the Waima complex of villages, the latter from near the mouth of the Oreke River (which, since it changed course in the 1950s, has also been the mouth of the Angabunga or St. Josephs River). Both acknowledge ties of kinship with sub-clans of the same names at Waima, and both say they are junior to their Waima branches.

Although I have not seen it happen, people told me that at a feast at Waima the Nabua chiefs would have to step down in favour of the Waima chiefs. Alternatively, if both the Nabua and Waima chiefs remain on the chiefs' platform - as a courtesy gesture to the Nabua mens' status - food would still be handed out only once, in the name of the senior chief of each clan. In other words, the Waima chief of Kuro Pokina would receive the food on behalf of his own section of Kuro Pokina and on behalf of the Nabua section.

The community does not yet appear fully to recognise Hohorupaka as an independent sub-clan. Even its own members often refer to themselves as Kuro Pokina Auarina, that is Kuro Pokina Left, and if we examine the ancestry of its principal members, we find that it emerges through the sisters of Kuro Pokina men (see below).

Kivori, on the other hand, has clearly an identity in its own right, even though its founder was married to the daughter of the Barai Kupuna chief. Kivori is allied to Barai Kupuna for small feasts, and at these times people speak of it as being on the "left" of Barai Kupuna, but at no time is it titled "Barai Kupuna Left."

In the next few pages I discuss in detail the four sub-clans in Nabuapaka. The effective adult male members of the itsubu shown on the genealogical tables include the men who have spent a substantial amount of time in the community over the last few years or who live in Port Moresby and return regularly for social or ceremonial events. It does not include those men who live away from the village and rarely visit home.

1. Barai Kupuna:

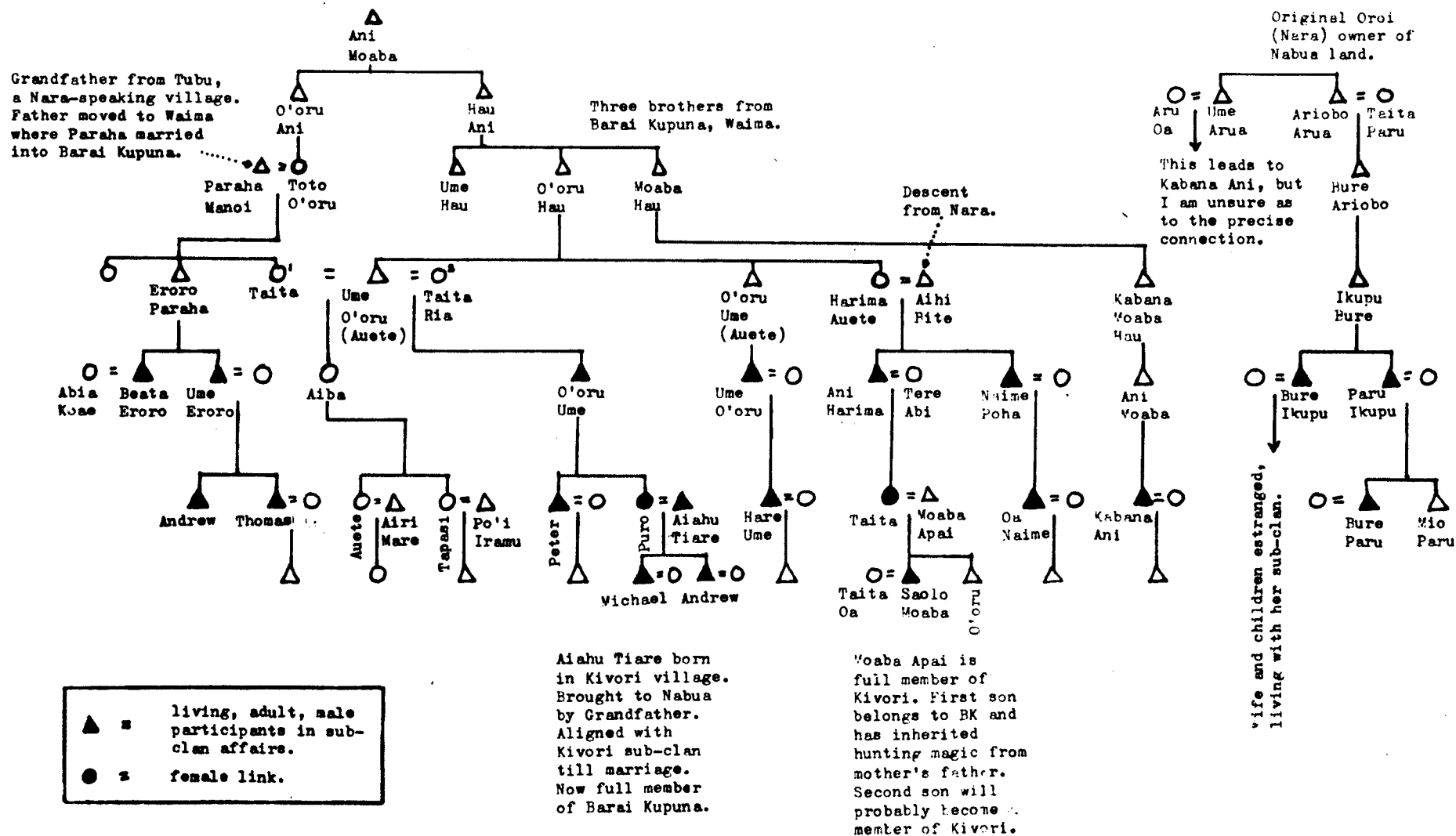
The community dates its foundation from the time the three brothers from Waima, Ume Hau, O'oru Hau and Moaba Hau (upper centre on table 3).

Waima has long had close ties of friendship with the Nara-speaking community of Oroï (see map 1. Seligmann refers to them as Pokao). I have not undertaken any work in Oroï, but there was an ancestral village, also named Oroï, near Bereina (Seligmann 1910:203; Vanderwal 1973). Seligmann recorded that when the original Oroï dispersed the members gave rise to a number of settlements in the Waima area, including Barai Kupuna (Seligmann 1910:203). Kolia (1977 pers. comm.) believes that some people migrated to the present site of Oroï. Thus there may in fact be a putative common ancestry for part of the present population of Oroï, as well as the links between Barai Kupuna in Waima and Nabua. However, people did not tell me of any such common ancestry linking all four communities.

The best wallaby hunting lands are in the vicinity of Oroï and Nabua, and even today, when a Waima sub-clan is to hold a feast, it is common for them to send hunters to Nabua where they stay with cognates or affines and employ the Nabua wallaby magician before going shooting.

BARAI KUPUNA SUB-CLAN
 - effective membership - 1974

Figure 3
 (table 3)



In the latter part of the last century the Nara were concerned in a number of skirmishes with the Mekeo village of Imawabui. They invited friends from Waima to take up residence and in return aid them in resisting their enemies, who some Nabuas assert were Motuans rather than Mekeo. Groves believed that the Western Motu had friendly relations with the Nara peoples but were hostile to Waima (Groves, following Motu practise, calls it Maiva - 1972:8).

The three brothers were the first to take up land, for which they paid three string-bags full of traditional wealth items: bear's tusk necklaces, carved turtle shell, dog's teeth, and so on. Elderly Nabua men assert that the wealth is still held by the Nara - one bag at Oroï, one at Diumana, and one at Vanu'amai - as acknowledgement of the payment.

The actual caretaker of the land was one Ariobo Arua (upper right, table 3). He elected to live with the brothers at Nabuapaka, and his descendants are today identified with Barai Kupuna.

Of the 20 effective adult (married) males of the sub-clan, shown on the table, four count their membership through purely patrilineal lines of descent from the founding brothers, three through ancestral claims to prior ownership of the land; one was adopted and thus may be classified as patrilineally related; ten belong as a result of male forbears (F, FF, or FFF) joining their wives' sub-clans, one is at present living uxorilocally, and one is identified partly with his natal sub-clan and partly with his wife's.

Apart from Ariobo Arua, the four men who joined the sub-clan all did so through marrying women of the sub-clan: Paraha Manoi's (upper left, table 3) grandfather was from Tubu, a Nara-speaking village. A son quarrelled with his siblings and moved to Waima where Paraha grew up and married into the Waima branch of Barai Kupuna. His wife, Toto O'eru, was FBD to the three brothers.

The early colonial administration jailed Paraha Manoi's son as a murderer, and during his imprisonment the Catholic Mission trained him as a catechist and later sent him to Nabua to open a school. As his father had been identified with Barai Kupuna in Waima, Erero Paraha joined Barai Kupuna in Nabua, and his children and grandchildren remain members of the same sub-clan.

Erero Paraha is remembered as having inherited powerful weather magic, but neither of his sons today is credited with such knowledge.

Beata Erero and Ume Erero both use land given to their father by Barai Kupuna leaders, and Beata also uses land from Hohorupaka through his wife Abia Koae.

Aihi Bite (upper centre, table 3) also traced his descent from Nara-speaking peoples, but I do not know how his forbears came to Nabua.

Aiahu Tiare (lower centre, table 3) is grandson of Abikia Aiahu (see Kivori), a London Mission Society pastor from Kivori Kui, who brought him to Nabua as a child. When Aiahu Tiare married, he chose to remain with his wife's people as they had plenty of garden land.

In addition, his wife has no natural brothers, and her father, the present weather magician, encouraged him to remain with them so that the grandsons could inherit his knowledge.

The fourth man, Moaba Apai, joins his natal sub-clan, Kivori, for ceremonial purposes, but uses garden land partly from his own sub-clan and partly through his wife; his eldest son (aged about 24) will remain a full member of Barai Kupuna, and has inherited wallaby-hunting magic from his mother's father. Moaba's second son (9 years old) may be aligned with Kivori when he is older.

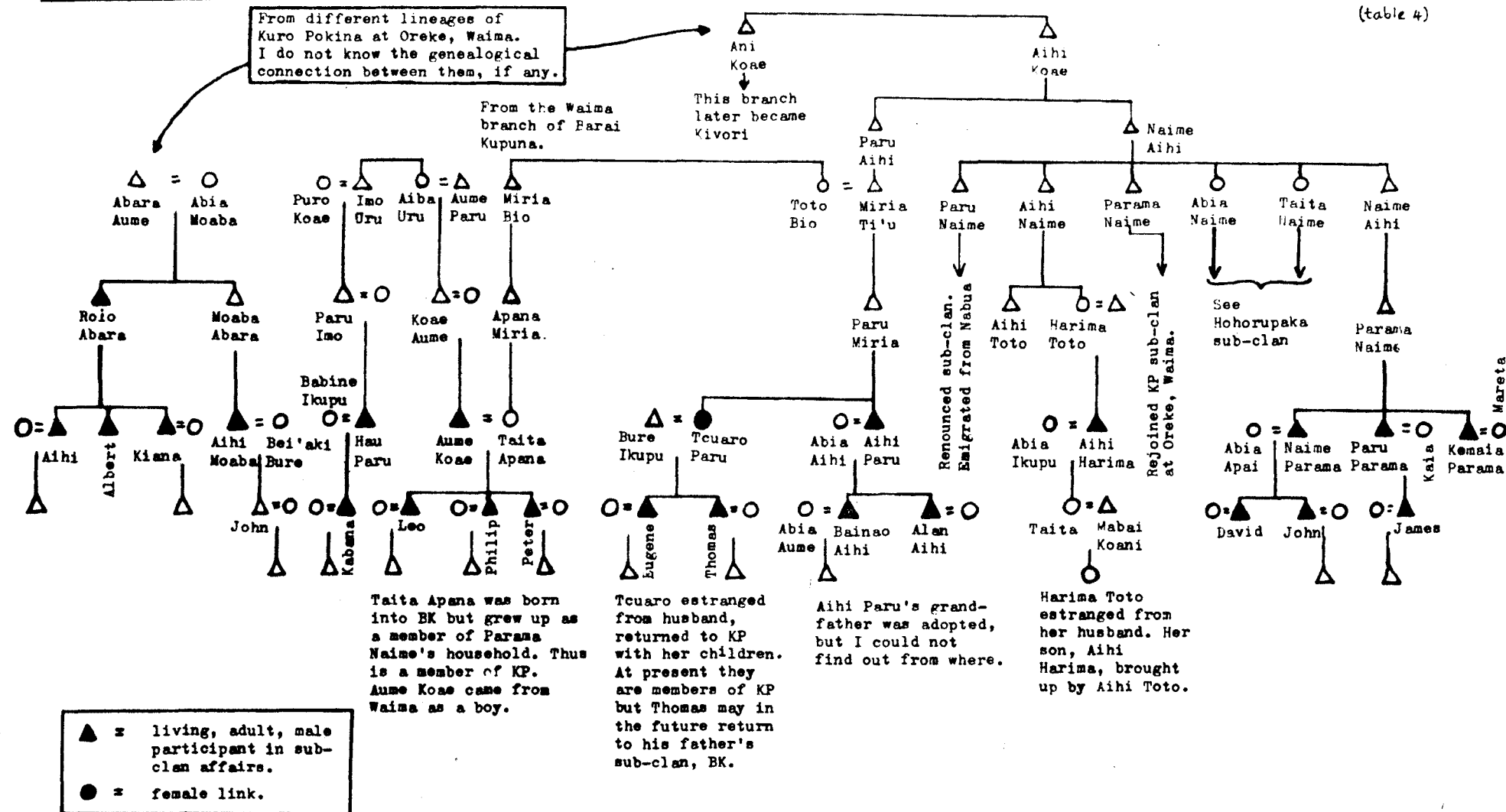
2. Kuro Pokina:

After the initial settlement by Ume Hau, O'oru Hau and Moaba Hau, two brothers from Kuro Pokina, Paru Aihi and Naime Aihi, followed them to Nabuapaka with their wives and children. The owners of the village allocated land to the newcomers who settled there permanently to be joined later by another Kuro Pokina lineage (left-hand side, table 4) from Oreke, Waima.

There are 24 adult males in the sub-clan, of whom fifteen claim membership patrilineally, and nine through women. More specifically, seven trace their descent patrilineally from one lineage; five through another lineage; and three through an adopted man. Six are members through a combination of cognatic and affinal connections through women; and three as a result of their mothers' estrangement from husbands in other sub-clans.

In the case of Thomas and Eugene (table 4, centre), when their mother left her husband, she returned to her

- effective membership - 1974

Figure 4
(table 4)

natal sub-clan and her brother accepted responsibility for her children. Eugene is about 25, Thomas in his 30s and married with several children. The former was very young at the time of the separation and nurtured almost entirely by his mother's brother. Thomas was older and over the succeeding years has spent a good deal of time with his father, who has no children by his second wife, but the relationship has always been somewhat stormy. There seems to be a remote possibility that he might eventually return to his father's sub-clan to inherit his father's role as Chief-of-the-knife for Barai Kupuna. The old man obviously hopes that this will happen: he has a small trade store and has told me he is keeping it for Thomas.

If he does not return, then the title will go to his FBS, who already acts from time to time.

Aume Koae and Hau Paru (table 4, left centre), came to Nabua as boys from Waima, and cultivate land from Kuro Pokina. Hau Paru's wife is from Waima, while Aume Koae's, though descended from the Waima branch of Barai Kupuna, was looked after as a child by Parama Naime's family, thus became a member of Kuro Pokina.

Aume Koae averred before his wife died after a long illness in 1975, that on her death he would pull down his house, take his children, and return to his boyhood home. He apparently felt insecure in that he held land only through his wife and was concerned lest the children lose their rights. In the event he did not leave, and when they are at home his children still cultivate their mother's land. In fact, however, the three eldest live mostly outside (two in Port Moresby)

but often return for weekends and for any parties, feasts, funeral or marriage ceremonies.

3. Hohorupaka:

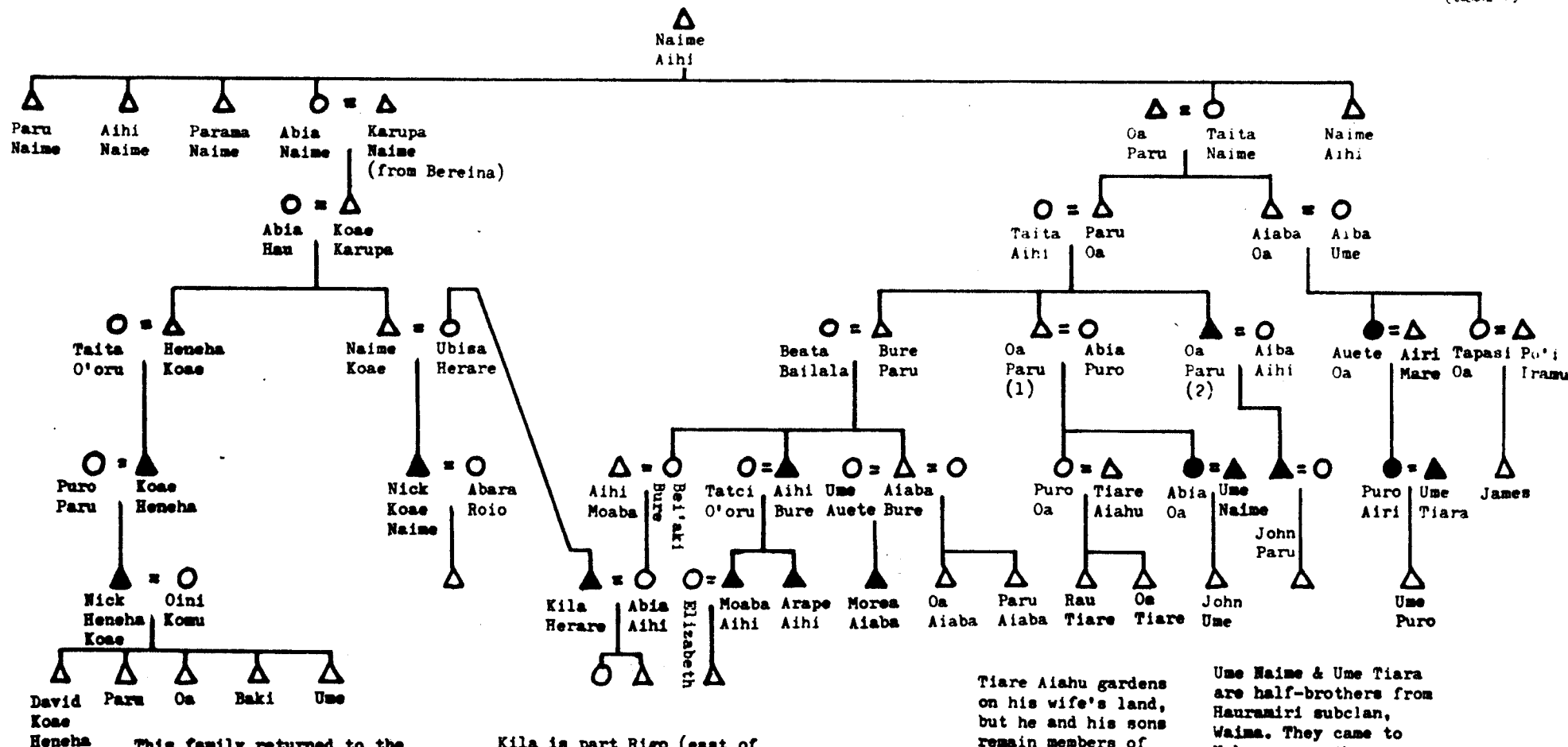
Hohorupaka's emergence as an itsubu in its own right has been a slow process and is perhaps not yet complete, given the number of people who still refer to it as the "left" of Kuro Pokina.

The sub-clan can be divided into two lineages derived from two sisters, Abia Naime and Taita Naime, of the Kuro Pokina sub-clan. The former married a man named Karupa Naime from Bereina village, which he left at a time when Bereina was at war with a Mekeo-speaking community.

Taita Naime's husband, Oa Paru, came from near Oreke, Waima, where his sub-clan lived on a piece of land named Hohorupaka, and were associated with the Oreke branch of Kuro Pokina.

Abia Naime's son, Koae Karupa, was born at Hohorupaka, hence there is another connection between the two lineages.

It seems that at one time the lineages were separate: one man told me that before the second World War, at feasts "Henaha Koae (left, table 5) received a pile of food as 'Bereina', and Bure Paru (centre, table 5) got a pile of food as 'Hohorupaka'". However, with Henaha Koae's death about 25 years ago followed by that of several others in his family, and his son's emigration, the two sides were merged by 1974.



This family returned to the village in 1976 after 20 years away

Kila is part Rigo (east of Port Moresby) and part Moveave (Toaripi, west of Yule) His parents died during the war and he and his sisters were brought to Nabua by a friend of his father. Looked after by Paru and Aiaha Oa, he belongs to Hohorupaka subclan. He farms portions of land through both of his parents-in-law.

Tiare Aiahu gardens on his wife's land, but he and his sons remain members of Kivori subclan.

Ume Naime & Ume Tiara are half-brothers from Hauramiri subclan, Waima. They came to Nabua as youths, married and stayed.

Airi Mare, born into Umebua subclan, Kivori village, came to Nabua as a youth. He identifies with Kivori subclan but gardens his wife's land.

- ▲ = living, adult male participants in sub-clan affairs.
- = female link

In 1976 Koae Heneha and his family returned and at present sit with Hohorupaka, but they will build their house on Kuro Pokina land in the village, where there is space and where Heneha Koae originally built his house.

The sub-clan has 14 adult males, of whom 11 claim membership through patrilineal descent from one or other of the lineages traced from the two Kuro Pokina sisters; two men are living with their wives, and one was, in a sense, adopted.

Ume Naime and Ume Tiara (right, table 5) are half-brothers from the Hauramiri sub-clan, Waina. They came to Nabua as youths and stayed to marry. Neither has paid bride-price, and both cultivate land owned by their wives' people.

Kila Herare (left, table 3) was born at Yule Island where his Elema father was working. The mother came from Rigo. Two of his sisters had married Nabua men, and when his parents died Paru and Aiaba Oa looked after him. Now a member of Hohorupaka, he farms land from Kuro Pokina through his wife's father, and from Hohorupaka through his wife's mother.

In addition two men, Airi Mare and Tiare Aiahu, (right, table 5) who while they use land from their wives' people, are both included for feasting purposes with Kivori sub-clan. Both were born in the Kivori village complex: the former from Umebua sub-clan, Kivori Poe, the latter from Arabu Kupuna sub-clan, Kivori Kui. Tiare Aiahu also gardens on land from Kivori sub-clan.

4. Kivori:

Unlike Hohorupaka, Kivori has a definite beginning and is clearly independent.

It was formed in the 1920s or 30s through an alliance between Abikia Aiahu, a London Mission Society pastor based in Nabuapaka, and Ani Hau, a leading member of Kuro Pokina.

Abikia Aiahu was born into Arabu Kupuna sub-clan, Kivori Kui village. As a youth L.M.S. missionaries took him to Delena where he attended school run by the Rev. H.M. Dauncy, who was resident there from 1894 to 1928 (Williams 1972:56). The L.M.S. later sent Abikia to the L.M.S. training college at Orokolo after which he taught in schools in that area.

His wife died in Orokolo, and he went home to Kivori where he made a feast for his relatives, saying to them (according to Morea Hau, a 50-year old member of Arabu Kupuna sub-clan), that since the death, his life had changed, and he wanted to leave Kivori where everything reminded him of the past. He moved about, staying for a while at Delena, Nabua, and Kabadi, where he married again.

The church then sent him back to Nabua to start a school.

When two of his sons died in Kivori Kui, he sent for their offspring, Tiare Aiahu and Aiahu Tiare, and brought them up in Nabua where they live today. (He had sons by his second marriage, and they also grew up in Nabua, but I do not show them on the Kivori table as one is dead and the other never visits the village: he lives in Port Moresby.)

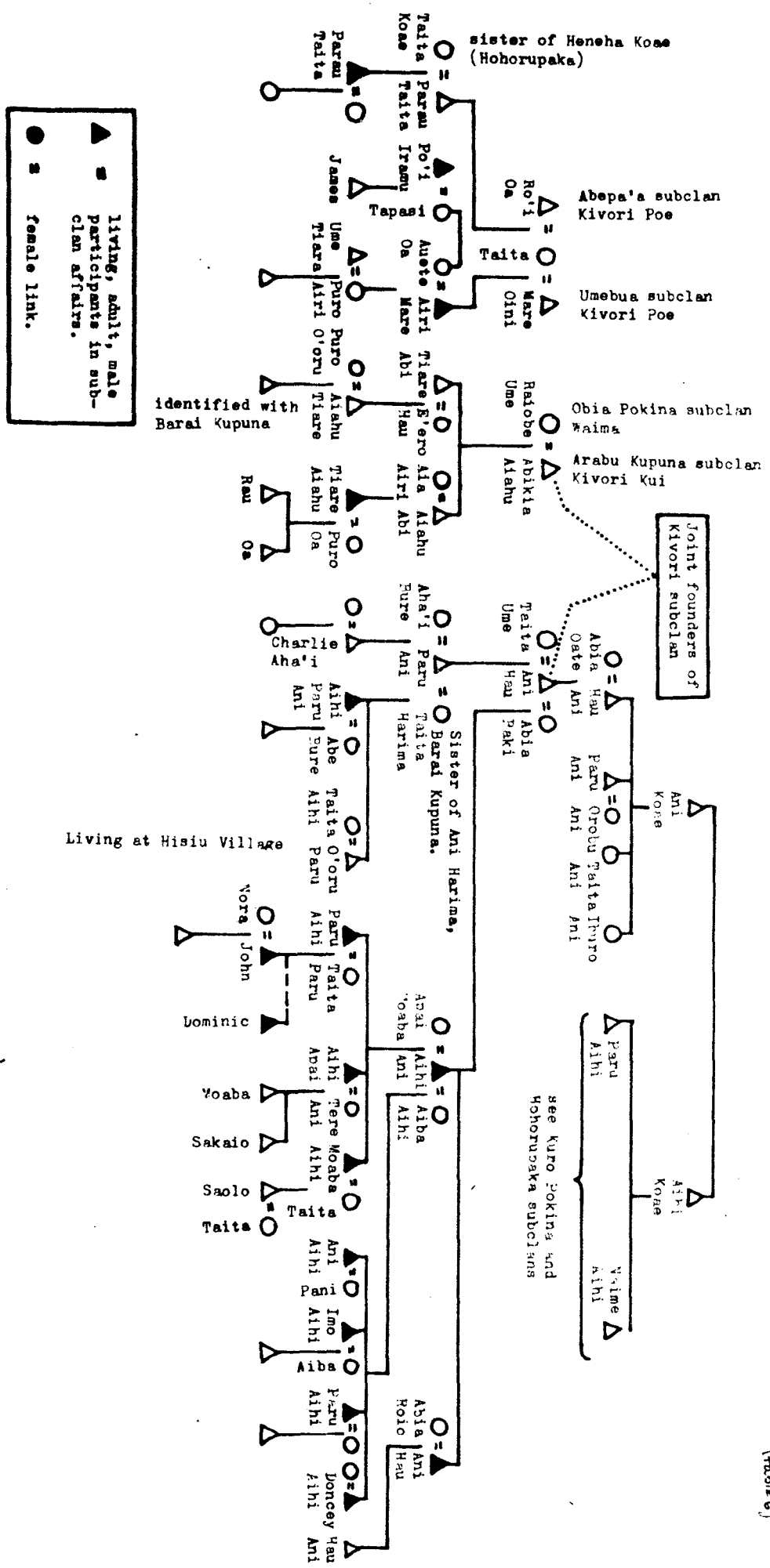


Figure 6
(table)

In Nabuapaka, Abikia Aiahu (who died about 1947) struck up a close friendship with Ani Hau (centre, table 6), who was an influential member of Kuro Pokina sub-clan. He migrated to Nabuapaka from Oreke, following his EFBS, married Taita Ume of Barai Kupuna, and obtained land from his father-in-law, Ume Hau, one of the three founding Barai Kupuna brothers.

Ani is today warmly remembered. His influence seems to have been based firstly on his garden magic and secondly on his status as intermediary between ordinary men and chiefs and sorcerers. He was friendly with two sorcerers in the neighbouring village of Delena. (I discuss the importance of Ani Hau's inheritance of these two roles more fully in the next two chapters on leadership and religion).

Abikia Aiahu is believed to have possessed paiha - the powerful war magic, and a leading member of Arabu Kupuna sub-clan insists that his was the principal warrior clan in Kivori.

If this was so then Abikia Aiahu and Ani Hau must have been a powerful pair. I doubt if we will ever know their full reasoning, but the upshot of their friendship was that between them they created Kivori sub-clan, standing to the left of Barai Kupuna, and including two other men who had left their paternal sub-clans behind in Kivori Poe village.

These two men were Parau Taita of Abepa's sub-clan, and Airi Mare of Umebua. Half-brothers, they came to Nabua as youths and married Nabua women. Both

belonged to the L.M.S. congregation, and it was probably inevitable that through a combination of church affiliation and birth they should align themselves with Kivori in Nabua. Both, however, acquired land through their wives.

Abikia Aiahu had built his church at the Barai Kupuna end of the village and sat with Barai Kupuna during feasts; Ani Hau was married to the daughter of the Barai Kupuna chief. Thus Kivori came to be seen as the 'left' of Barai Kupuna.

Despite questioning, I can find no record of Ani Hau quarrelling with his fellow Kuro Pokinas, and one may well ask why he created a new sub-clan in a move that seems to have had the blessing of the rest of the village, instead of merely forming another independent section of Kuro Pokina within Nabuapaka. Among the Western Motu, for example, Groves has suggested (1963:16) that there can be two independent sections of the same clan within a single village. So far as I know this is not so in any Kore/Waima community, and I am certain it could not happen. The case of the creation of Kivori bears me out.

The reason there can only be one section of a clan in any village is closely tied to leadership structure and feasting. I shall discuss leadership in the next chapter, but briefly, a sub-clan can only have one series of recognised chiefs, and at a feast may only be represented by a single chief. It is solely through a recognised chief that a sub-clan may receive food at a feast, hence the necessity for creating a totally new one if you are dissatisfied with your paternal sub-clan, or find your power plays are blocked within it, and do not wish to join your wife's.

I tried to find out why they named the new sub-clan Kivori, apart from the possible reason that several members originally came from this village complex, and Aihi Ani, now in his late seventies and son of Ani Hau, asserted that his FFFM had been of the Kivori sub-clan, Kivori village, and that a chief from that community had suggested the name.

Discussion:

It is clear from the forgoing that notions of patrilineal or even cognatic descent are of little use in discussing sub-clans in Nabuapaka. Over twenty years ago Firth (1957:215) described what he called an "op_tative" system, where a man may exercise rights through either his father or his mother

such as those of the Maori, Tonga, or Samoa, in which the major emphasis is upon descent in the male line, but allowance is made, in circumstances so frequent in some societies as to be reckoned normal, for entitlement to membership through a female. In such societies there are no purported matrilineal units.

This does not seem adequate to account for husbands living uxorilocally. La Fontaine noted that "idioms of kinship and descent give a cultural unity to fields of action that are analytically distinct" (1975:49-50), and Groves characterised Motu sub-clans as flexible units which include different categories of people according to the context, or, as he put it, an instance

in which scarce rights in the state of a corporate group are conferred primarily upon agnates, while other less scarce rights are conferred upon other cognates as well (1963:29).

In this context he noted that the Western Motu conceive their units (iduhu) as non-unilinear descent groups and insist that all descendants, male and female, of the original cultivator of a block of land have rights of cultivation (1963:26).

Similarly the iduhu is the unit controlling other important assets such as trading vessels, fishing nets and ancestral rites. In contrast with land, however, these assets are inherited by agnatic descent alone. Other male relatives attached to the iduhu (e.g: male affines) do not share the rights and duties associated with these assets unless they have been fully incorporated by identifying completely with their host group and renouncing their natal iduhu (Groves 1963; de Lepervanche 1973:15-16).

Missing from most ethnographies of south-east Papua are detailed accounts of the status of women, both as sisters and as mediators between groups of affines, that might help our understanding of inter-group relationships. Groves stressed, but unfortunately did not develop, the importance of brother-sister links in the process of Motu sub-clan affiliation (1963:28). Weiner, too, emphasised the need to examine the structural position of women in Trobriand local groups (1977:16-17), and Hau'ofa provided a detailed analysis of the importance of affinal relationships among Mekeo (1975:137-166).

In the light of these, and of recent work undertaken elsewhere in the Pacific (e.g. Schoeffel 1979) that emphasises the crucial symbolic position of women, we are in need of detailed studies from the south-east coast of Papua.

100 years ago D'Albertis observed on Yule Island that "the women, although obliged to work hard, are held in respect, and in some villages they exercise much authority and power. ... women in New Guinea act ... like banners of peace" (cited by Mackay 1967:150).

I am conscious that as a male I spent most of my time in the village with other men and therefore missed much of the interaction between women, and their perspective on affairs, perhaps in a sense blinding me to their real status. Late in my field-work we were guests at a celebration in another community. We men sat at one end of a long platform and our women sat at the other end. Our hosts provided areca nut and pepper-fruit and while Aihi Moaba, Chief-of-the-Knife, distributed them to us, I noticed that his wife Bei'aki Bure, distributed them amongst the women. The Chief of Kuro Pokina told me that this was normal practice.

Among the peoples of the Kairuku area (Mekeo, Roro/Waima, Nara) it is possible for a woman without brothers to inherit both the chieftainship of her sub-clan and important magic from her father (see next chapter). Her relatives then draw her husband into the sub-clan, and their sons in due course inherit the title and ritual knowledge.

In three instances of Nabua women inheriting, or being eligible to inherit, crucial roles within their sub-clans, the first became chief of her sub-clan. When she married she renounced her chieftainship in favour of her FBS, as her husband wished to remain a member of his natal sub-clan in another community.

In the second, the weather magician has no male heir, and as his daughter's husband has become a full member of his wife's sub-clan, one of their sons will inherit. In this case the woman is unlikely to inherit the magic herself as her sons are now adult, and her father will probably pass it directly to one of them. All her children are fully incorporated into her sub-clan.

In the third case, the wallaby magician's daughter's husband joins his own sub-clan for ceremonial purposes, but is a member of his wife's for inheritance. He did not pay bride-price and lives uxorilocally. His eldest son is recognised as a member of the mother's sub-clan and has already inherited the magic from his mother's father.

In the last two examples the women did not actually inherit the magic themselves because their sons were already adult by the time their grandfather was ready to pass on his knowledge. But instances occur in other communities where the woman has in fact inherited: Guis asserted that one of the sorcerers in Mou village was a woman (1936:169), and until recently the crayfish magician in Tsiria was a woman. She died recently and I do not know who has inherited from her.

In passing, it is interesting to note Chalmers's comment on "Queen" Koloka Naime of Oroï village: "for the first time in New Guinea I have met a real chieftainess - a perfect Amazon - who rules her husband as well as others. She is about twenty-four years of age" (1885:180).

Sub-clan property:

The dispersed clan holds no corporate property in the sense of material objects such as canoes and nets: these are held by the localised sections of clans in each community that I have been calling sub-clans. However, the dispersed clan does possess in common non-material items such as a clan name; trading canoe names; and the right to name chiefly men's houses after the original clubhouse built by their clan: for example, all sections of Barai Kupuna, wherever they are located, name their marea Ekepa'a; while Kuro Pokina's is Haurama.

In addition the dispersed clan owns exclusive rights to particular dance sequences, designs for grass skirts, headdresses and facial decorations, certain ritual insignia and even to attitudes of mind and behaviour.

These rights and claims are collectively known as itsubu hoahoa (Seligmann 1910, referred to them as ʔaʔa) which can perhaps be translated as "fashion," "style," "attitude," or "behaviour".

For an example of the last, on one occasion when a man was quarrelling with his wife, the chief of another sub-clan intervened and told him "my grandfather was a fighter. He could shout and quarrel because it was our clan custom (emai hoahoa). So can I. Your grandfather (kupumu) was a peaceful man and advice-giver (bairobe hauna), so you must follow his example:" (cf: Young 1971:60 on Goodenough Island dewa, which he translated in its broadest sense as 'custom.')

Clan designs, insignia, decorations and names may be used by all members of the clan. Sons of women of the clan may borrow an item or design for a particular dance, but they have to pay for the privilege. An adopted child, or one brought up and nurtured within the clan, may use the clan items, but only with the permission of other clan members.

A man who has no connection with the clan may not borrow or hire items to which he is not entitled, with the exception that one who has lived with the clan for some time may borrow a design for his farewell feast but not take it elsewhere. Despite these proscriptions, it seems that children born to a couple living uxorilocally inherit their mother's clan privileges. I am not sure to what extent they are also allowed to use their father's clan items. Unauthorised poaching leads to trouble, and in the past gave rise to warfare. Even today such theft may lead to violent quarrelling in some communities, but in Nabuapaka the people do not appear to be quite so possessive.

Land:

A good deal more work needs to be done before we can fully document the Waima-Roro land tenure system. Briefly, however, the first sub-clan to settle is regarded as the 'owner' of the village and its surroundings. This group grants tracts to later arrivals. Subsequently, as with the Motu (Groves 1963), the descendants of the first cultivator of a plot have primary rights to its use. Probably the "owners" of the village would have allocated to newcomers land that had not been cultivated in living memory. In this manner the new arrivals become the original cultivators and thus in practical terms have precedence over the nominal owners.

Again like the Motu, male and female descendants of the original cultivator may assert their right to use portions of the land, but women normally cultivate their husband's plots, and over a period of time claims, if they are not activated in one way or another, become weaker and finally lapse ("genealogical amnesia" - Strathern 1975:28).

One way in which a woman may assert a claim is to name one of her sons after a male agnate: "it is not for nothing that names are chosen" said one man to me. So for example, Imo Aihi (lower right, table 6) is called after his mother's father's father whose land is at Waima. Both he and his younger brother have told me that his mother's agnates have long encouraged him to take his family to Waima. Even his MFFZSS, who is also at Waima, has told me that he hopes Imo will go and cultivate land that he is holding for him. Imo himself is reluctant to leave his natal village.

Similarly, Saolo Moaba (lower right-centre, table 3) asserted that he could claim land at Kivori Kui that was once owned by Abikia Aiahu, his MMF (who came to Nabua and founded Kivori sub-clan with Ani Hau). Saolo suggests that his entitlement is recognised by his relatives, and that his father was in fact cultivating the land during 1970-1974 when he was teaching in Kivori.

I think it unlikely that he would go to Kivori, even though his wife came from there, as he has inherited important wallaby hunting magic from his grandfather (his MF) in Nabua.

Neither Ume Naime nor Ume Tiara (right, table 5) paid bride-price. Both are from Waima and are cultivating land belonging to their wives' sub-clan, to which their children belong. They prefer to stay in Nabua, but could always return to their natal village. The former says his coconut and areca palms are in Waima, and he maintains his claims on them in case his daughters should marry there.

Another man, Naime Poha of Barai Kupuna, has one son and two daughters, all of whom are married. His second daughter's husband, Leo Arua, is from Korina sub-clan, Waima. This man told me that his father-in-law did not want bride-price, but tried instead to persuade him to remain in Nabua. He insisted that he will pay it on the grounds that he wanted freedom to control his wife and children. In any case he did not wish to settle in Nabua.

Van Rijswijck reported that some small Kuni sub-clans (inau) at times refuse bride-price for their women to encourage uxorilocal residence and thus accrue new members (1967:231). However, a man's natal hamlet is likely to exert strong pressure on him to return, particularly after children are born, and in this case his wife's people pay compensation - in a sense a bridegroom price which ensures that the children become full members of their mother's sub-clan.

The children always retain links with their father's sub-clan, and if at any time the compensation is returned and accepted, the children are free to resume membership of their father's group (1967:56).

I did not hear of any form of bridegroom price among Boro, and a few men living uxorilocally do not always feel entirely secure. I have already noted the case of Aume Koae. Another who explicitly expressed insecurity was from Arabu Kupuna sub-clan, Kivori village. He is married to a Nabua woman with whom he lived uxorilocally for about a year between jobs in Port Moresby. He said that if he did not get another job in town, he would probably return to Kivori as he was afraid he could be thrown off his wife's land at any time.

In fact there is a method of overcoming such insecurity - to "buy" the land "on the bones" of a dead person. A number of people said that they or their fathers confirmed ownership of certain parcels in this manner. When a leading member of the owning lineage dies, the cultivator in question places a piece of traditional wealth or some money on the body while the relatives are crying. He or she briefly mentions the matter and then retires. A few weeks later at the feast when the grave-watch is ended, he may also donate a pig, or give a quantity of traditional wealth to the mourners, and makes his or her claim more forcefully. It seems that they cannot refuse him.

The effect is to confirm the status quo, or to reclaim land that another person has illegally appropriated, or whose ownership is in doubt. For example, when Ani Hau's first wife died, Paru Miria, who had been loaned some land by Ani Hau, placed a quantity of armshells, dog's teeth etc, on the dead woman's body and asked for the plots "I've been using the land for some time, and now I want to claim it for ever." They granted his request.

The most recent instance that I know of took place at Easter 1974 when a leading member of Kuro Pokina died. Puro Oa, wife of Tiare Aiahu, donated a pig to the mortuary ceremony and requested that her ownership of a disputed piece of land be confirmed. Evidently the deceased's father had allowed her father, of Hohorupaka, to use it, but over the years another man, of Barai Kupuna, had claimed ownership of the coconuts and mango trees growing thereon. Her request was granted, and she said afterwards "Now so-and-so must leave the coconuts and mangoes: the land and trees are mine."

Another man intends to act likewise, but within his own sub-clan. He says there is a plot which his father first cultivated. His parents died during his absence from the village, and another member of the sub-clan took over the area and planted areca palm. He says that when this person dies he will reclaim it. "I'll say to so-and-so and her children: 'it was my father who first cleared this land. X's plot was to one side, and Y's on the other. When my parents died I was away, and your father planted areca palms. I want to take that land back again now.'" He says he will place some traditional wealth on the body but should not have to do so. Presumably the present cultivator or his children could do exactly the same thing to confirm his position but we did not discuss this.

Lineage strength:

I received the impression that at least one aim of recruiting new members is to increase the strength of particular lineages within sub-clans. Several people pointed to one lineage in the community that about 30 years ago had had seven male members. It was seriously

depleted by death, and 20 years ago there were only three members left - a father, son, and the young man's FFBS. Today the two younger men have seven male children between them, three of them teenagers. The lineage thus has a potential adult membership of ten, including the old man. People say that it is fortunate to have regained its strength.

Members of the principal lineage in Kivori refer with pride to the size of their "family" also - 12 adult male members, with another 12 young men and boys.

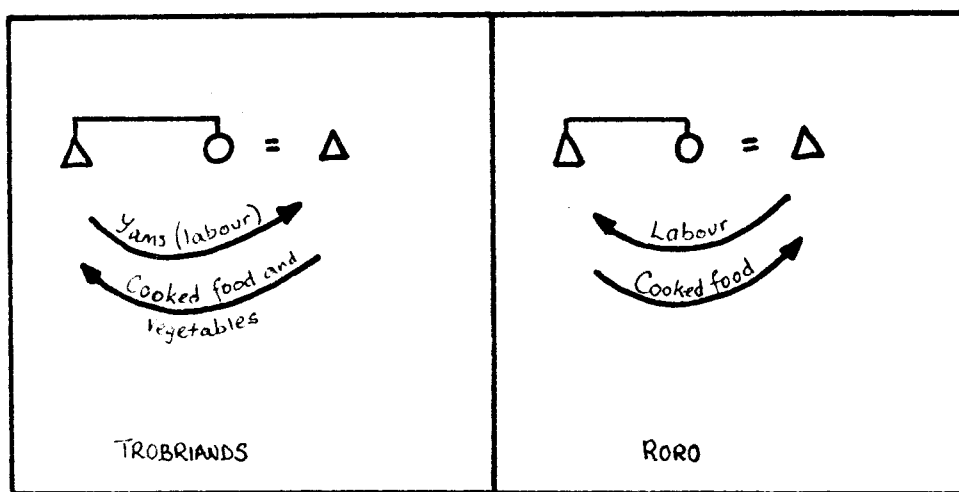
Hau'ofa (1975:119-123) points to the stability of the Mekeo population prior to the second world war, as a result of disease and high childhood mortality, sexual abstinence for long periods prior to warfare and other important activities which included magic, and, in pre-colonial days, inter-village warfare with large numbers of deaths.

The same general conditions applied to the Waima-Roro people. Thus there was a continual need to encourage recruitment through birth, adoption, and, sometimes, uxori-local residence.

Affinal Relationships:

Affinal relationships play an important part in the organisation of labour. In the Trobriand Islands (Malinowski, Powell, Uberoi, Weiner) a woman's brothers have the responsibility for supplying her and her husband with yams. In Mekeo and Roro society it is the woman's husband who is obliged to supply labour on demand for his wife's agnates. The burden is neither entirely one-

sided, nor does the responsibility fall wholly on the one person. In the Trobriands a man makes his urigubu prestations of yams to his sister's husband and also to his parents. Keesing (1976:279) shows that the obligations to make these payments fall on the sub-clan as a corporation, not just on individual households. It is the responsibility of the men of the corporation to muster and assign resources so that proper amounts of urigubu yams go to the households of all of the sub-clan's married females.



In Roro the woman's husband has the primary responsibility to supply labour for his brothers-in-law, and it is normal for his male agnates to assist him. However, as Hau'ofa shows for Mekeo, (1975:150), a brother may not be called upon as a substitute in the event of the woman's husband being away from home.

As Keesing points out, this is a relationship not so much between brothers and sisters as between brothers-in-law, with the sisters/wives as the pivot around which it revolves. In both cases also, some return is made in exchange for the labour: Roro 'pay'

for labour in the form of cooked food and betel mixture at intervals during the work, and afterwards; Trobriand reciprocity is in the form of betel and cooked food, and occasional presentations of valuables by a man to his wife's kin (Keesing 1976:327; Weiner 1977:201-210).

As I noted earlier, the Roro husband is permanently in what Hau'ofa has described as an 'inferior position' (1975:137ff) to his wife's male agnates, who may call on him and his brothers at any time they require for labour for gardening, fishing, house-building, preparations for feasts, etc. He has vividly described the tensions between affines in Mekeo society as a result of the almost contemptuous demands sometimes made by the wife's agnates. Relationships within Nabuapaka lack the stress depicted by Hau'ofa, and partly as a result of this, I did not realise the full nature of affinal ties until late in my fieldwork, thus my data is limited.

I think my examples in the last chapter concerning bridal payments, particularly after elopement, and the manner in which affines 'punish' the surviving spouse after a death, indicates the same scope for tense affinal relationships in Waima-Roro society. In fact, Nabua people often point to other Roro communities and comment that "we are not nearly so strict!"

A man from Nabua married to a woman from one of the inland Roro villages insists that he dislikes visiting her village because her people treat him like a small boy and send him to find a light for their cigarettes. If he does not respond quickly, they may fine him K10.00.

Another, whose wife is from a different inland Roro Community, has his house in Port Moresby continually filled with her people who have come to the market. As soon as one group leaves, another truckload is on the doorstep with demands on his time and pocket - sending him out to buy beer and fresh meat for them to drink and eat. He and his wife never have the house to themselves and he may not complain - though his wife occasionally becomes upset and throws all her relatives out. This man's father said "Why do you think I don't go to Moresby very often? There are always so many of my son's wife's relatives in the house there is no room for me, and my son never has any money to give me because of them."

To conclude this section on a personal note: I was standing in a Port Moresby suburb one day talking to a Bereina woman whom I had known for about ten years, when a man whom I had not previously met came up to me and said "you know my sister. Go and buy me beer!" I refused outright, and he said "hurry up, or I might get cross and hit you!" At this stage I was becoming upset myself! After a further exchange I bought him a sausage roll, and honour was more or less satisfied all round, as I had made him a token gift.

He apparently assumed that my relationship with his 'sister' was more intimate than it in fact was.

Conclusion:

Local groups in Nabuapaka, then, are named flexible units centred on an agnatic core and with a loosely agnatic ideology. As a result of difficulties of depopulation and lack of male heirs, individuals,

lineages, or whole sub-clans may encourage other men to join them either through adoption, or by waiving bride-price to encourage their daughter's/sister's husband to live uxori locally. This ensures that there are heirs (who are thus cognatically rather than agnatically related to the core of the sub-clan) to inherit property and ritual; children to look after the old people; and, we might add, keep the husband ensnared in a form of permanent bride service to his affines.

From the point of view of the male, it is doubtful whether he would choose uxori local residence unless there were some advantage to him or to his children, either in the form of land, or the possibility that they might inherit important magic. (Barth 1975 and Strathern 1975 stress the importance of individual choice in deciding between residential groups).

We might also speculate that from the point of view of the community, the flexibility of local units permits stray individuals to be absorbed into the system by linking them with one or other of the major groups in the village. There are always some men who leave their place of birth on account of quarrels, war, misdeeds, sorcery, or simply because they are wanderers. It can be disruptive to have such people living unclassified as it is hard to apply normal controls, allocate them land, or draw them into community tasks and social activity.

Outsiders and men living uxori locally are always in a more precarious position than agnates. In Nabua, most of the men who were not born in the village were pointed out to me in such terms as "He's really from

Waima. He was not born here." Even men who arrived as young children 40 or 50 years ago are referred to in this manner - but the children of such men are regarded as properly belonging to their sub-clan and the village.

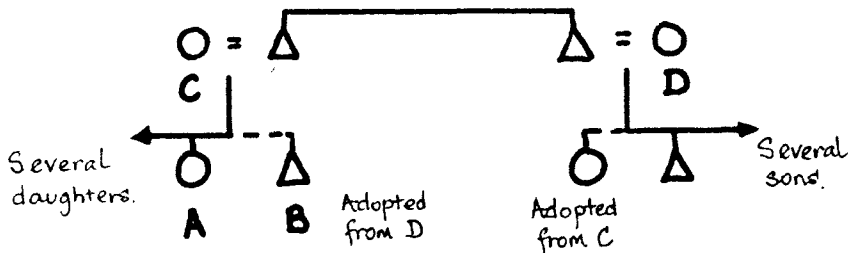
I did not hear anyone reminded that he was a foreigner during a quarrel in Nabuapaka, but I know one man from the village who lives uxorilocally in a neighbouring community: during a disagreement his co-residents quietened him by pointing out his immigrant status.

Williams (1969:98-99) and Abbi (1975:33) both noted the instability of membership of newcomers to the community in Orokolo and Mailu. Even after years, said Williams, newcomers might be remembered as such during a quarrel; and Abbi suggested that the Mailu non-agnate never wholly becomes a member of his residential unit and in a crisis may be reminded that he is a foreigner (cf: Strathern 1979:99).

In the context of the Highlands, Strathern made the interesting suggestion that "food ... is a mediator between locality and kinship" (1975:28) in the sense that like semen and blood, food grown on the clan land is a shared substance impregnated with the spirit of the ancestors. Anyone growing up in the community thus cannot normally be perceived as an alien.

Ideas about food, growth and identity also have some significance among the Roro. A member of the sub-clan to which I was attached remarked with evident satisfaction one day, that I was clearly getting bigger and stronger as a result of eating Nabua food (although in fact I invariably lost weight in the village).

On another occasion a woman, C, (see diagram) intervened in a quarrel between her daughter, A, and her adopted son, B, saying "You, B, are you trying to tell A what to do? Did you suckle her on your breast? Did you grow her up? Did you make gardens to feed her?"



As the dispute widened B's natural mother, D, entered on B's side. C asked her if she had grown B, to which D responded firmly "Yes. You got him when he was already [about 5 years old], but this little girl you gave me was still on the breast, so I grew her also".

While these examples are not about group membership as such, they do indicate the importance of notions about nurture and family identity, hence ultimately sub-clan membership.

Chapter Five.

CHIEFS AND OTHER LEADERS.

Chiefs and other Leaders.¹

I

In 1910 Seligmann described Boro and Mekeo leaders as 'chiefs'. In this he was following the lead of the missionaries and government officials, and it has remained a convention to refer to them in this way, even though his accuracy has been questioned because of the short time he spent in the area.

Until recently, ethnographic studies tended to emphasise the apparent general lack of ascriptive leadership in Papua New Guinea. In particular the strong interest in Highlands big men made many observers reluctant to accept the notion of a relatively institutionalised form of leadership anywhere in the country. Possible exceptions such as the Trobriands and Wogeo were regarded as atypical.

Sahlins (1966) and Langness (1973) appear to best summarise earlier opinion. The former drew a contrast between "developed Polynesian and underdeveloped Melanesian polities" (1966:161) where he pointed to the very real differences in the size of political units in the two areas. Langness (1973:153), discussing forms of Melanesian leadership, wrote

along with the impermanence of viable political units, a relative lack of authority and a virtually universal lack of centralised authority were

1. A shorter version of this chapter appeared in the Journal of Pacific Studies, U.S.P. 1977 Vol.3 pp 69-88 under the title "Inheritance, Magic & Political Power in south-east Papua."

characteristic. Such authority as does exist is most often based on personal ability, not on inheritance, descent or supernatural sanction. Leadership is usually achieved, almost never ascribed.

He points to some possible exceptions, then continues

Leadership is achieved through personal charisma, by accumulating wealth in the form of pigs and other material goods that can be used to aid others, thus placing them under an obligation, sometimes by the possession of specialised knowledge, or through sheer physical power or the ability to direct warfare.

More recently Ryan (nd) and Hau'ofa (1975) have pointed out that a form of ascriptive leadership is in fact found in a large number of Melanesian societies, and they cite authors such as Malinowski, Hogbin (1970), Young (1971), Mead (1947), Salisbury (1970), and Groves (1963). To these we can add not only the works of Ryan and Hau'ofa but Mosko, van Rijswijck (1967), and Wilson (1976) among others.

South-east Papua.

In the first part of this chapter, I examine the leadership structure of some of these communities, in particular the Austronesian-speakers of the south east Papuan coast, before discussing the Roro.

My interpretation of Malinowski, Seligmann (1910), Powell (1967), Uberoi (1962), Young (1971), Groves (1961, 1963, 1972), Oram (1968), Hau'ofa (1975), and Abbi (1964, 1976) leads me to the conclusion that it is the ritual bases of power in the inherited knowledge of certain lineages and individuals that is important in determining leadership.

Far from personal charisma and managerial skills being central to much of S-E Papuan leadership, the structure of inherited offices and ritual knowledge provides the framework of legitimate authority within which the manoeuvring for power can take place. Only within that framework does charisma and skill become important and lead to things like control of wealth. This is not to suggest that skilled outsiders can never achieve importance, but that to do so they must first enter the inner circle of men with ownership of particular ritual powers. There are ways other than inheritance of acquiring such a role - for example theft, or a visit to the present dwelling place of the most revered ancestor figure of the society. In Roro/Mekeo both are highly dangerous undertakings.

Hau'ofa is in general agreement with this, and writes (17.6.73 pers. comm) " ... the crucial factor underlying the traditional leadership system of the Mekeo is the control of the supernatural powers from which other forms of control ...flow."

I propose to outline my understanding of Trobriand Chieftainship, and make some comparisons with a number of other communities along the south east coast before describing Roro leadership.

Malinowski's own writing has confused the issue over the years through his use of the terms 'chief' 'tributary' 'vassal' 'rank' 'subjects' 'paramount chief' and so on (e.g: 1922 pp 63-68), which have tended to imply almost the powers of an African or Polynesian chieftainship, despite his own denial of any such powers.

Powell considers Trobriand leadership to be "a variant of the systems of competitive individual leadership by big men ... modified ... by the system of rank" (1967:155), a view with which Bulmer concurred (1971:8).

The autonomous local unit in the Trobriands is the village, often composed of two or more sub-clans sharing rights of residence and exploitation of local resources. Though the village population is a single unit politically, there is always one sub-clan at least whose members are the recognised 'owners' of the site. The leader of the senior sub-clan acts for the whole village.

Certain sub-clans are accredited a pre-eminence that Malinowski, and following him, Uberoi (1965) and Powell (1967), designated a system of rank. Ranking sub-clans are guyau, while the remainder are tokay - commoners. Powell points out that guyau, though freely translated as 'chief' or 'chiefly' by Malinowski, when "used of the leader of Omarakana or any other village cluster ... must be understood as implying only that the senior sub-clan of that cluster happens to be of guyau rank, not that there is an office of guyau or chief in the cluster organisation." (1967:162)

The highest ranking sub-clan is that of the Tabalu of Omarakana, Kiriwina district, and its leader is accorded an immense amount of respect throughout the island. "His family or sub-clan" said Malinowski, "are acknowledged to have by far the highest rank in all the archipelago. Their fame is spread over the whole Kula district" (1922:66).

Several sub-clans are credited with guyan status. In Kiriwina it is the Tabalu and Bwaydaga sub-clans; in Tilataula, the Kabwaku but Malinowski emphasises that the Kabwaku are of lower rank than the Tabalu and have little prestige outside Tilataula (1922:66). I am not sure whether any Tabalu sub-clans live in Tilataula district, and if so, what their relationship is with the Kabwaku.

Malinowski's writing appears to have been primarily from the standpoint of the Tabalu clan of Omarakana. Thus it is possible he has accorded them an undue pre-eminence. Brunton (1975) pointed out that the branch of the Tabalu in Vakuta district had limited powers, and to evidence for sub-clans altering their status from commoner to guyan and vice-versa. For the purposes of this chapter I am interested in the reasons for the high general prestige of the Tabalu. Their initial advantage is geographical in that their ownership of village sites in the Kiriwina district with its fertile soil imply to others a considerable gardening ability. "It is obvious to everyone" wrote Malinowski, "that the store-houses of Kiriwina are unparalleled, their gardens the biggest and best ..., and the total amount of yams harvested there yearly the greatest" (M. Coral Gardens - cited by Uberoi 1971:126).

Tabalu thus have a long-standing reputation for gardening. Allied to this, they have inherited rights to particular ritual - especially weather control: "the chief of Omarakana is the wielder of the rain and sunshine magic" (Uberoi 1971:46/7). Powell, too, emphasised the importance of magical ritual:

what ultimately distinguishes sub-clans of rank from others is that they are credited with the possession of peculiar powers which makes their members, especially their leaders, dangerous men. ... Thus the Tabalu sub-clan of Omarakana possess the Tourikuna magic of weather and prosperity by which they are believed to be able to bring famine or plenty on the whole island. To other high ranking sub-clans are credited other kinds of powers; the Toliwaga sub-clan of Tilataula district, for instance, are believed to possess very potent war magic and skill as fighters, which underline both their pre-eminence in that district and their traditional role as the military rivals, though the inferiors in rank, of the Tabalu: for the Tabalu magic is considered in the long run more dangerous and more far-reaching than that of the Toliwaga.

There is thus a major distinction between sub-clans which possess such special powers and those which do not. The former are the 'chiefly' (guyau) sub-clans, and the latter are the 'commoners' (tokay) (Powell 1967:168).

The chiefs of guyau clans can use their believed powers to impose their own wishes on the people. Weiner recorded how when one chief of the Tabalu clan died, his successor tried to obtain wives from a number of other clans, as was his chiefly right. Several clans rebuffed him and refused to give him wives. Shortly afterwards there was a serious drought which lasted several months

It was thought that Waibadi had caused the drought because he had magic to control the sun and rain. Waibadi himself made his actions publicly known. At the end of the drought, wives were forthcoming, and it was agreed that the Tabalu of Omarakana were indeed still powerful (Weiner 1977:204).

The believed gardening powers and magic of the Tabalu and other guyau sub-clans, then, give them a pre-eminence that enables them to exploit the concepts of

urigubu and pokala, and it is these concepts, too, that provide at least part of the arena for eligible men to contest for leadership.

Urigubu is the obligation of a man to render gifts and services to his sisters' husbands. These consist mainly of ensuring that her husband's yam houses are filled each year. The guyau leaders' pre-eminence enables them to demand wives from neighbouring villages and sub-clans, thus ensuring urigubu and loyalty. In this connection, Malinowski asserted that "in olden days the chief of Omarakana had up to as many as forty consorts, and received perhaps as much as 30 to 50% of all the garden produce of Kiriwina" (1922:64).

Pokala is the process by which young men make gifts and services to older men (e.g. their fathers or mother's brothers). They eventually receive in return perhaps a piece of land or an item of Kula wealth. A man with many wives can be classificatory father or MB to a number of young men and thus is in a position to receive considerable pokala.

To summarize, Tabalu leaders have an initial economic advantage in fertile soil and proximity to good fishing grounds. Secondly they have a ritual importance in their control of the weather. These factors combine to enable them to manipulate urigubu and pokala to their advantage, thus making them a centre for integrating the local economy.

There is no automatic accession to leadership. An ambitious man has to demonstrate his abilities and vie for selection as heir. A young man with his eye on the leadership makes pokala gifts to as many influential men as his energies allow, and may claim

classificatory relationship to the wife of the incumbent leader in order to present him with urigubu.

In this manner a young man can show his economic abilities and attempt to obtain wives from one or more rival sub-clans. As Powell said "there is a continuous manoeuvring for advantage in local leadership between the leading sub-clans of the various village clusters," and each group endorsed as its leader the man who could enlist the most support from rival sub-clans, especially by obtaining wives from them (Powell 1967:171).

The process of selecting a leader is thus continuous as in many Melanesian societies. There is no formal ceremony for a leader to take power, rather there is a gradual delegation of responsibility so that eventually the heir is in effect the leader as the previous incumbent moves into old age. After the death of the old leader, the new one must consolidate his position and demonstrate his power, wealth and generosity by holding a lavish mortuary feast and ceremonial distribution to the mourners.

The only limitations to competition for leadership are that while tokay may become leaders of ordinary sub-clans or villages, it is only the members of guyau sub-clans who may compete for leadership of village clusters or communities where guyau sub-clans are resident.

Brunton's re-analysis (1975) of the Trobriand material suggested that the high ranking of the Tabalu sub-clan in Kiriwina district was a result of the precarious position of the northern Trobriands in the Kula exchange system.

His argument was that because Kiriwina had no direct access to the areas in which Kula valuables could be found, and because the district had no skills or resources, other than garden produce, of value to other districts, individual men in Kiriwina therefore had nothing to convert into Kula wealth. The possession of such items therefore remained concentrated in a few hands such as the Tabalu of Omarakana, who then consolidated their position by acquiring a monopoly over pigs. Thus a limited number of men were able to control the exchange system and reduce the opportunities for other ambitious men to enter it.

I believe Brunton unjustly played down the importance of religion. One important resource owned by the Tabalu, as I have shown, was the magical control of weather and prosperity. While I do not wish to suggest that this was the sole factor enabling Tabalu members to obtain near-monopoly control of Kula wealth, and thus establish themselves as pre-eminent, I do think it needs to be considered as providing the initial impetus permitting them rather than any other northern Trobriand sub-clan, to acquire control of Kula valuables passing through Kiriwina.

Young (1972) made some interesting observations on Goodenough Island parallelling some of the Trobriand material and relevant to other south east Papuan data.

Kalauna village is composed of a number of hamlets, in each of which is one or more patrilineages (unuma) marked by a pile of flat stones (its atuaha) in front of the unuma group of houses. The lineage is the core of the basic residential and food exchanging unit. The senior male generally acts as leader.

As each Trobriand guyau sub-clan owns particular powers, so each Kalauna lineage inherits rights to particular exclusive dewa which Young defined as the manner of life, habits and ritual property that mark one lineage from all others. The eldest son inherits his father's exchange partners, political status, debtors and creditors. A father also passes on most of his ritual knowledge (garden magic etc) to his eldest son, who is forbidden to divulge the secrets to his brothers. At the same time he may not deny them the benefits of his knowledge.

Young considered one clan in particular to have a type of submerged rank through its ownership of a particular body of myths and ritual knowledge. The myths are central documents of the community's oral history. Luluavile, which was second to emerge from the ancestral cavern, brought with it the major part of the food and artefacts of the people. Because of this Luluavile elders were traditionally the holders of authority in the ancestral village. Today they own the most important body of magic concerned with prosperity-the magic of valeimu'imu and manumanua which can bring about or banish famine. This ability makes the Luluavile leaders guardians whose task it is to look after the food supply.

Each hamlet has its own bos (headman) who is ideally the senior male member of the genealogically senior lineage. His function is to direct and co-ordinate his own hamlet's external food exchanges. Beyond this task his influence is negligible and in matters of land and property refers only to his own lineage.

As in any Melanesian society, the biggest men have reputations in other communities, and the three Luluavile leaders are known over the whole island. Their hereditary claims to special ritual powers concerned with prosperity give them the task of looking after the village, and they possess implied sanctions in their reputed ability to send the food away.

Where Malinowski, Powell and Uberoi suggested that Tabalu sub-clans were pre-eminent wherever they were living, particularly within Kiriwina district, Young did not say whether Luluavile clan members are found throughout Goodenough, and if so, how they are regarded in other communities.

The available literature on the coastal Austronesian speakers living between the Trobriand Islands and the Roro Territory around Yule Island, almost all points similarly to the ownership of hereditary magic as vitally important in determining leadership.

Motu and Hula villages, like those in Goodenough and the Trobriands, and those in Mekeo, Roro and Mailu (a non-austronesian community) are composed of residential units based on dispersed agnatic clans. Ideally each section (Motu: iduhu; Hula: Kwalu) constitutes an independent patrilineage. The Hula kwalu is further divided into kepo. The Motu traditionally organised all economic enterprise within the iduhu, but the village united for warfare, dancing, and in planning the seasonal calendar.

Groves noted that Western Motu possessed no village leadership as such, but that some section headmen stood out over others because of their abilities, the strength of their section, and the number of reciprocal exchange relationships they had established with relatives in other sections. In particular, a man who had made a matagira net for turtle and dugong; conducted a hiri trading expedition; paid a high bride-price; and promoted a turia feast in honour of his ancestors, was almost unassailable in terms of influence and prestige (Groves 1972).

Groves did not indicate any form of ranking lineages, nor that sorcery or magical or ritual knowledge was important in establishing prestige. But in another paper he dropped a tantalising hint that the role of magic has been underplayed in the literature on the Motu, for he said that Western Motu sub-clan members owned in common certain exclusive rights including ritual property, residential rights, allegiance to a hereditary leader, particular fishing nets, trading vessels and garden land, a particular tradition of foundation and continuity, and an exclusive relationship to certain deities (1961: my emphasis).

In another paper he asserted "ritual rules attend every major enterprise at Manumanu [Western Motu] " (1957).

Turning to the Hula, Oram noted the importance of magic in agricultural Vula'a villages, while suggesting that it was unimportant in Hula village itself. He said "the Hula leaders do not appear to have been endowed with the personal power possessed by heads of descent groups in neighbouring agricultural villages, which was based on magical powers" (Oram 1968:247).

In view of the importance of magic among other Austronesian speakers along the south coast of Papua, I find myself reluctant to accept that magic was not crucial to leadership and economic control among the Motu and Hula. In fact, though it does not seem to have been sufficiently emphasised in the literature, Oram has written to me: "leadership in these areas, and especially in the agricultural villages in the Hula-speaking area, support your thesis."

The importance of the point I am trying to make comes out clearly in Weiner's note about Chief Waibadi of the Trobriand Tabalu clan (cited above) and in some remarks of Abbi who noted that among the Mailu a man's success as a gardener, warrior or fisherman, or in exchange was not merely the result of hard work and skill (though these were important) but above all to his ownership of magical powers (1964:75).

He added "those who had inherited material wealth and magical spells were in a better position to attain social influence and leadership than those who had not" (1964:76).

The point is that the Mailu, like the Goodenough and the Trobriand Islanders, pass from generation to generation rights to certain magical powers. As Abbi stressed, any man could make a dugong net, but there was no point unless he owned the right magic. Thus the owner of the magic became the owner of the net and therefore the centre of the economic and ritual behaviour associated with dugong fishing (1964:57, also 1975:47).

Lawson (pers comm) and Wilson (pers comm) have confirmed the importance of ritual knowledge in Marshall Lagoon and Doura respectively. Lawson added "leadership is hereditary. If the person is ineffective, others, of course, may come to wield much power (witness the English monarchy!)"

To the west of the Roro - Mekeo domain live the non-Austronesian Elema, of whom the Toaripi, at the mouth of the Lakekamu River, are a branch. Ryan (nd) explained that in each village were a number of men's houses each associated with a set of myths and ceremonies. Members of a men's house group were considered kin because of their association with a common set of myths.

Within the men's house there were at least two offices: pukari and mai karu. The pukari's position was inherited patrilineally but it is not clear how many pukari there were in one men's house. The pukari had two main sets of duties: he organised and presided over the distribution of food at certain feasts, and he mediated disputes and intervened to stop fights. It is not clear just how he was brought into a dispute, or whether his jurisdiction was limited to certain kinds of dispute. If a fight broke out in the village, a pukari took his badges of office, a string bag and a lime gourd, and went to the scene. If the fighting did not stop, he smashed the gourd and tore the bag. At the same time the mai karu associated with him, who always belonged to a different men's house, sounded the bull-roarer and all fighting had to stop, on pain of undefined supernatural punishment. Later, those who had fought provided a pig for a feast at which the pukari received new badges of office and which marked the resumption of friendly relations among the disputants (Ryan nd:3).

Ryan continued that it is clear that "the pukari's peace-keeping activities had a strong ritual component, and that such authority as he had derived largely from his association with the bull-roarer" (nd:3-4), which is commonly considered to represent the voice of supernatural beings.

Ryan pointed out that Toaripi, like the other societies I have cited, also rely on magical formulae to ensure success in warfare, hunting, fishing, trading voyages and so on. These formulae were handed down from father to son, and only a man with such knowledge could assume leadership of an enterprise. In this manner, positions of authority were spread throughout the society and were tied to specific situations. Ryan concluded by re-iterating the point so important in south east Papuan leadership: "the inheritance of knowledge which sustained positions of authority marked off a catchment of people who competed to exercise actual leadership, but there was no provision for the emergence of a big man of the kind so frequently described in the literature" (nd:4).

Williams also reported hereditary leaders, amua, among the Orokolo. Each men's house, eravo, had two - one on the right and one on the left, who were nominally of equal rank, though one or other tended to dominate. Williams named a third category of leader, the 'village chief' (karigara amua) or 'land man' (kekere haera). He was the descendant of the founder of the eravo - the first settler who owned or controlled the village land and surrounding bush. He was not necessarily amua, and Williams noted the instance of a younger man with the title 'village chief' who took precedence over the two (1969:89).

Williams observed that there was sometimes doubt as to who in fact were the amua (1969:90): there was no ceremony of installation and no insignia of office. As with leaders in other areas, they were always available, ideally hospitable and generous and greeted and fed strangers. They gave the word for the start of feasts and ceremonies and the beginning of the garden cycle, and presented and received food in the name of their clan during feasts.

Williams felt that an informal council of elders to which most elderly men belong wielded the real power. A man could only join the council (avai) by invitation and with the unanimous approval of all members, whose power was backed by sorcery. The council invoked its magical power (avai-ve-ahea) against those who infringed the rights of the old men, and against those who intentionally or unintentionally committed a breach of custom, specially in connection with the sacred cycle of ceremonies, hevehe.

Williams added that there was a number of specialists responsible for various aspects of community life (1969:93-4), but he stressed that none of the positions was clear cut. "There is often some uncertainty among the members of a community as to who their office bearers are at a given time" (1969:95).

Such doubt does not exist among the Roro, who are unanimous as to who are the important office bearers. Any that might arise is more likely to be in the eyes of the observer, as there appears to be a somewhat loose use of the term obia, commonly translated as 'chief.' (cf: Stephen 1974:179 fn 26 on Mekeo chiefs and outsider confusion).

In fact the peoples of the Kairuku area have a strongly defined leadership structure with offices to be filled, normally by patrilineal succession, and major ceremonies of accession. The Kuni (van Rijswijck 1967), Mekeo (Hau'ofa 1975; Stephen 1974), North Mekeo (Mosko: pers comm), Doura (Wilson 1976), Nara or Pokao (Seligmann 1910) and the Roro/Waima appear to have in common a firmly ascribed leadership pattern which would seem to mark them off to some extent from their neighbours.

The difference, however, is largely one of degree, and I shall show that among the Roro as among all the communities I have cited so far, juggling for prestige takes place primarily among those men who have inherited a variety of rights and magical powers. Such rights and knowledge provide the framework for legitimate authority within which the manoeuvring for power can take place.

II

Roro Leadership:

The title Obia is always applied to true chiefs, recognised leaders who are the central figures of their sub-clans, but it is also given to men of special ritual importance (departmental specialists as Seligmann called them), and out of courtesy to other influential men. On occasion people also refer to visitors as obia. Understanding is further complicated because not every sub-clan, nor even each village, owns the full possible complement of ritual experts, and the names and functions occasionally

vary from place to place. An office which in some communities has almost passed into history - arawae obia or 'chief-of-the-spear,' for example, seems to be known in some areas as ahuahu obia, or 'striking chief'. Again, the job of the chief-of-the-knife, akiua obiana, is to divide the pork and food at a feast, but I also have references to a watewate obia, which means 'sharing chief'.

It is clear that leadership falls into three categories: a) the true chiefs without whom a sub-clan is unable to play an independent part in the feasting and ceremonial life of the village, b) the sorcerers, who, while a separate entity, are also inextricably tied to the true chiefs, and c) ritual experts who can come to wield considerable power but always lack the formal authority and ceremonial position of the true chiefs.

Today we can add a fourth category, including those who have authority backed by the central government or missions, as, for example, the local government councillors who do not necessarily belong to any of the other three. In Nabuapaka at least, the local councillor - at present a man without traditional authority - is usually backed by one of the true chiefs during dispute settlement.

I shall discuss each category in turn.

The true chiefs:

As detailed in the last chapter, Roro villages are composed of a number of named sub-clans, each of which contains one or more lineages. These are segments of dispersed clans whose members may be found in several villages. In some communities the sub-clans are autonomous units in all everyday and ceremonial matters, while in others they are independent for routine purposes but must combine with their

sister groups in neighbouring villages for feasts and ritual.

The four sub-clans within Nabuapaka, which is a colony of Waima-Kivori, are fully autonomous in all events that take place in Nabua and its neighbouring communities. But when Nabua sub-clans visit Waima, where the senior sections dwell, they combine with their seniors into single units for ceremonial purposes.

On the other hand, the two Roro villages of Pinupaka and Tsiria (see map) both contain sections of Parama Kupuna sub-clan. For gardening, fishing and housebuilding the sections are independent, but for ceremonial purposes they must combine: the principal chief lives at Pinupaka and the junior chief at Tsiria.

Similarly, members of the Obia Pokina sub-clan at Poukama village asserted that for feasts they would have to request their chief-of-the-knife to come from Tsiria, where there is a large Obia Pokina sub-clan, to divide the food.

A partial explanation of the ceremonial independence of Nabuapaka sub-clans must lie in their geographical separation from the home community of Waima. It is over 40 kilometres by sea between the two, while only six or seven kilometres separates Tsiria from either Pinupaka or Poukama.

From the evidence of Nabua informants, it is evident that the traditional leadership structure of the Waima section of the Roro speaking peoples was

similar to that described by Hau'ofa (1971) for Mekeo and van Rijswijck (1967) for Kuni. But there are some variations. Hau'ofa stated that each sub-clan or alliance in Mekeo had two sets of chiefs, one military and one civilian. The latter was the peace chief and represented the positive virtues of love, hospitality, diplomacy and humility. He was backed by a personal sorcerer, ungaunga, who enforced his authority. The military chiefs were responsible for all matters relating to warfare. They worked with war magicians, fai'a lopia, who used their powers to divine the propitious time for doing battle and to give strength and courage to the warriors.

Van Rijswijck similarly reported that large Kuni sub-clans, inau, had both a peace chief and a warrior chief. The latter was usually the direct descendant of the younger brother of the founding ancestor.

The Uoro too, had two sets of chiefs for each fully functioning sub-clan, the obia itsipana or 'chief-of-the-right', and the obia auarina or 'chief-of-the-left'. However, while the former clearly equates with the peace chief of the Mekeo and Kuni, the latter was not necessarily a warrior chief¹. I consider him and his magician to be particular kinds of specialists. In Nabuapaka there lives the descendant of one war chief (Arawae obia or ahuahu obia) and his war magician (paiha obia). Both are important members of the Barai Kupuna sub-clan, but neither is obia itsipana nor obia auarina.

1. This may in fact reflect changes since pacification.

A fully autonomous sub-clan should also have within its ranks, or within an allied sub-clan, a further chiefly functionary, the akiua obiana, or 'chief-of-the-knife' whose task it is to divide food at a feast and distribute betel mixture on behalf of his chief.

The chiefs-of-the-right were, and in popular belief still are, backed by nepu haukia, a form of sorcerer capable of inflicting terrible illness and death upon those who crossed the chief. They are much feared in present-day Roro-Waima society.

As I have already noted, each sub-clan should have its own chief if it wishes to take part in the feasting and ceremonial of village life. Those eligible to hold the position are normally senior by agnatic primogeniture.

I deliberately retain the English term 'chief', because there is clearly an office to be filled with attendant responsibilities and privileges. The office cannot simply be filled by any ambitious man, however hard-working he might be. Whatever his eligibility, an heir cannot take on his full responsibilities as a chief until he has had an installation feast, bearai, at which he is officially recognised by the chiefs and sorcerers of the neighbouring communities.

A chief's duties centred mainly on his own sub-clan, but through ties of kinship and marriage, through his function in officially recognising other chiefs, and so forth, his influence can be felt for specific purposes throughout the whole Roro speaking area. During Easter 1974, for example, one of the Nabua chiefs was called to Hisiu, over forty kilometres away, to intervene in a dispute which included members of

his own family.

In house-building, canoe construction and in mortuary feasts each man has the right to summon the services of his sisters' and lineage daughters' husbands. He may also expect assistance from women married to brothers and sons of the lineage. This series of affinal relatives is called ibana.

At sub-clan level, the chief-of-the-right may demand the services of all men married to women of the sub-clan, and all women married to men of the sub-clan. The chief may require these people to work at any task of importance. Commonly these are oriented towards a major feast such as rebuilding the chiefly platform, marea.

The chief's influence, then, may extend well beyond the confines of his own clan. It is only the chief of the founding sub-clan, however, who has any degree of formal influence over the whole community, and who may act on behalf of the entire village. In Nabua the chief of Barai Kupuna is in this position and negotiates with neighbouring communities over such matters as land disputes.

Despite his formal position, the actual influence wielded by the chief of Barai Kupuna appears to be limited. In 1890 MacGregor believed that "the principal chief of Keabada [Nabuapaka] is named Laime [Naime], a respectable looking man of about 55-60. ... There is a second chief named Ume" (BNG 1890: The former was undoubtedly from Kuro Pokina sub-clan, and the latter from Barai Kupuna.

From the 1920s to the present the most influential chiefs, as will be seen in this chapter and the next, have been Ani Hau and his grandson from Kivori sub-clan.

A chief's primary function today is to look after his people, and in this he is the focal point of his sub-clan. He must ensure its welfare, see that no one goes hungry, mediate in disputes, and be a buffer against sorcerers. In short, he is a sort of father or elder brother.

Early in 1977, many villagers criticized three of the four chiefs for staying away for some months. There had been several deaths and much sickness, including two cases of hepatitis, over the previous eighteen months, and people stated that it was the chiefs' job to try to find the causes. "If they were here at home" one man said "we would not be having these troubles".

If a fight breaks out the various chiefs may intervene in a manner similar to that which Ryan described for Toaripi (nd:3) and Hau'ofa among Mekeo (1971:160). Taking his lime gourd the chief goes to the scene, and ideally the combatants should cease for it is a breach of etiquette to fight in front of him. If they persist he sprays lime from his gourd over the area, and fighting should end immediately. Anyone who continues is liable to a fine of a pig to each chief present.

During one quarrel a young man who was shouting and threatening had his face slapped by an elderly man, who while not a chief, is accorded the respect

due to one of rank. The young man responded as he retired "you can hit me, but I cannot hit you back as I have no pigs to pay you!"

A chief's function at feasts reinforces his father-figure image, for it is only he who can receive and distribute food. As Hau'ofa said, at a Mokeo feast

everything that is collected for distribution is collected in the name of a particular chief. It is his, and he distributes it, not to sub-clans or alliances as such, but to other chiefs. On the other hand, if he is a guest at other chiefs' ceremonies and feasts, all that is eventually distributed to his people comes under his name. It is his and he takes it to his [own platform] and serves it out to his people (1971:158).

Another important responsibility of the chief in the past was that of custodian of the marea, the special chief's house serving as a club and meeting place for the men of the sub-clan. It was here that all feasts and ceremonies took place, where the unmarried boys and men slept, where strangers and visitors were entertained and fed.

Seligmann (1910) asserted that there may have been as many as four types of marea in the past. He named them as the obia marea, the one I have just described; the arawae or ahuahu marea, a battle marea forbidden to strangers where spears and other weapons were stored; a paiha marea for ceremonies connected with war magic; and an aruaru marea for ceremonies centering on adolescent boys.

Van Rijswijck said that where a Kuni sub-clan possessed both a peace chief and a warrior chief the hamlet was often split in two, with chiefs and their immediate kinsmen living at opposite ends, each with his own men's house (1967:60-67).

I have not been able to obtain any information in Nabua on the various marea described by Seligmann. The only one of relevance today is that owned by the chief-of-the-right of each sub-clan.

The marea of the past were large buildings on stilts with an A-frame construction so that the roof came right to the floor on either side. At the rear was a compartment for bachelors and widowers to sleep. Similar marea are still built in some communities (notably the inland Paitana and the Waima-Kivori villages), but in Nabuapaka and its neighbours the old imposing building has given way to large, roofed platforms near the chiefs' houses. These platforms, itara, are similar to, but much larger than, the ordinary platform built by each house-hold for its everyday use.

The authority of the chiefs was firmly backed by sorcerers, a class of men who are as a rule clearly distinguished from the populace. People often make remarks such as "The chief stands, and at the back of the chief, the sorcerer", or, "The chief is the step of the sorcerer, so we're getting afraid of chiefs."

The alliance gave the chiefs extraordinary power. Anyone who crossed them was liable to a heavy fine in pigs or face death at the hands of the sorcerer. When the chief spoke everyone was silent. People hushed even babies and dogs, for fear of arousing the sorcerers' wrath.

A sorcerer always accompanied his chief on visits, partly as a personal bodyguard, partly to ensure that

ceremonial was carried out strictly in accordance with traditon. Any unfair division of food, any deviation from correct procedure was liable to incur punishment. Even the chiefs were not immune. Aihi Moaba, chief-of-the-knife for the Kuro Pokina sub-clan, once told me that he was always nervous when he had to divide food at a ceremony. He feared that the sorcerers might act against him if he made even a minor error.

Ideally a proper sorcerer never acts arbitrarily. He should only proceed on the instructions of his own chief and allegedly with the permission of the chief of the wrongdoer.

I discuss the role of sorcerers more fully in the next chapter on religion, but I should note that as in Mekeo, even though the powers of sorcerers and specialist magicians "can be used in a negative or positive way, it is their destructive potential which remains uppermost in people's minds" (Stephen 1974:15). The chief's influence thus pervades every aspect of community life. This needs to be borne in mind when reading the final section of this thesis dealing with the attempts of people to develop small-scale entrepreneurial ventures.

Succession:

Succession is normally by primogeniture, though the eldest son may sometimes be passed over in favour of one of his brothers. The incumbent chief makes the selection while the possible heirs are still quite young. In Roro as in Mekeo, where a chief has no true sons an adopted son or a daughter may succeed him, though the preference is for the blood line.

In such a case, some elderly men asserted that the daughter's position is more in the nature of a caretaker, for unless she was an exceptional individual, a woman could not partake fully in the chiefly ceremonial. However, Miss Louise Aitsi of Rapa village disputes this, and assures me that she has seen female chiefs playing the chiefly role to the full at ceremonial feasts.

There is clearly some disagreement as to the extent that a female chief could participate in ceremonies: the neighbouring Nara-speaking peoples still revere the memory of a particularly outstanding woman who was recognised by the incoming colonial powers nearly a century ago. Her name, Koloka, is remembered throughout the area, and her grandson is the present chief. Chalmers said of her

She gave all her orders without any fuss, and in a very quiet manner. We are told by the people that when she travels she is carried in a hammock by the women. She is certainly obeyed, and seems to have great power (Chalmers & Gill 1885:180).

It is not known whether there were any restrictions on her. A man whose father was from Nabuapaka and mother from Nara informed me that a female chief in Nara would undertake all chiefly responsibilities until she is married. She then retains the title, but her husband may take over certain tasks, such as representing her on the marea with other chiefs during feasts (Sam Clunn: pers. comm.)

No doubt the reality varies according to the capacity and forcefulness of the individual woman, the extent to which other chiefs are prepared to waive the proscriptions on women entering the marea (Baupua 1975),

(though presumably a female chief would have a marea in her own right as chief of her sub-clan) and the position her husband is prepared to take. I recorded an instance of a Nabuapaka woman inheriting a chieftainship. When she married, her husband preferred to live with his own natal clan in another community, so she relinquished the office, and in a special ceremony she designated her nearest male relative as successor. In later years people always accorded her the deference due to a chief.

In another case where a woman may inherit important magic, her husband lives with her people, and is an effective member of her sub-clan rather than his own. Their children belong to her sub-clan. I think it likely, however, in this instance that it will be the woman's son who inherits directly from his grandfather, as the boy is already adult.

The actual feast of succession, bearai, takes place after some years of preparation, which includes ensuring an adequate supply of pigs and foodstuffs and a full set of insignia. These last include a special string bag, a boar's tusk necklace, a special lime gourd, and a lime spatula with a serrated edge which makes a distinctive noise when drawn across the mouth of the gourd.

The retiring chief and his sub-clan invite chiefs from all the Waima and Kivori villages, from some Mekeo and Nara communities, and from some, but not all, the Roro-Paitana villages. They come to give the new chief their official recognition. Their personal sorcerers also attend to make sure that every step is carried out according to tradition.

If the old chief dies before properly installing his son, then it is the responsibility of the heir's father's brother or other senior male relatives to take over training the boy and ensuring that he is properly installed in due course.

The Chief-of-the-Left:

I am not entirely clear about the responsibilities of the Chief-of-the-Left. My doubts possibly reflect its diversity, but may also reflect changes resulting from pacification (see Mosko 1973:77). Principally he is a functionary of the chief-of-the-right. He is usually a younger sibling or classificatory brother, and may have one or more of a variety of functions. In some cases it seems he was in fact the war chief, in others he was the sorcerer who backed and lent power to the chief-of-the-right. In Nabuapaka the chief-of-the-left of Barai Kupuna sub-clan also doubles as chief-of-the-knife.

An important job for many chiefs-of-the-left (often referred to by villagers as 'second chief') is to stand in for their senior. Hau'ofa refers to Mekeo chiefs' spokesmen (apaukini) who engage in negotiations with other chiefly representatives while the chiefs themselves sit back, for "it is considered unseemly for chiefs, as men of peace, to involve themselves in 'dirty' political activity" (1971:160).

Van Rijswijck (1967) similarly notes that the Kuni peace chief (abu yobiana - 'chief-of-the-lime-gourd'), is often seconded by a classificatory brother known as 'side chief' (yobia abonai), who acts as master of ceremonies, leaving him free to entertain guests.

In Nabuapaka, several men said that the chief-of-the-left has to "talk for" the chief-of-the-right. My observations in the community show some differences in all four clans. Kuro Pokina sub-clan has a chief-of-the-right, Naime Parama, and a chief-of-the-knife, Aihi Moaba, who belongs to a different lineage within the sub-clan. Aihi Moaba divides food and distributes betel mixture for the Kuro Pokina and Hohorupaka sub-clans at formal and semi-formal gatherings. On one occasion when the men of the village were all assembled to dig a garden for a member of the Barai Kupuna sub-clan, Beata Eroro, the owner, placed a large bunch of areca nuts and pepper fruit on the ground in front of Naime Parama. Naime ignored them, and after a few minutes, for such affairs must not be conducted with undue haste, Aihi Moaba requested Naime Parama's younger brother, Paru, to distribute the nuts, which he did. In a more formal situation on the chiefly platform in the village, Aihi would have distributed the betel mixture himself.

When making speeches, Naime Parama, who is in his late 50s, stands and speaks for himself. Before his father died in 1975, however, it was usually the old man who addressed gatherings such as marriage and mortuary feasts, even though some years had passed since he relinquished the chieftainship to his son, Naime.

Similarly, in Barai Kupuna sub-clan the chief, Hare Ume, is in his 40s and has been through the full installation ceremony. His father, Ume O'oru, the retired chief, is still alive, and he rather than Hare makes formal speeches, although gifts of food are made through Hare as the chief.

In everyday village meetings each man speaks for himself.

The chief-of-the-knife in Barai Kupuna, Bure Ikupu, is also obia auarina. He is direct descendant of the original Nara landowner on whose land Nabuapaka is built. It was Bure's great grandfather, Ariobo Arua, who encouraged the three original Barai Kupuna brothers to settle at a time when the Nara were engaged in skirmishing with the Mekeo. One of the three was a chief in his own right, and, so the story goes, they elevated Ariobo Arua to be chief-of-the-left and chief-of-the-knife in recognition of his original title to the land. He continued to live in Nabuapaka, and his descendants are members of Barai Kupuna.

Neither Hohorupaka nor Kivori has its own chief-of-the-left. They are allied for ceremonial purposes with Kuro Pokina and Barai Kupuna respectively, though their independent status is clearly recognised in that during feasts all four clans receive quantities of food through their chiefs.

A non-chiefly lineage in Kivori apparently once held a minor chieftainship. The incumbent was regarded as the chief-of-the-left. The story is that he was upset at the elevation of the current chief-of-the-right and in effect resigned. His heir has no interest in reviving the title.

The Chief-of-the-Right of Kivori, Camillo Aihi Paru, 55, undertakes all his own negotiations, makes his own speeches, and plays an active part in settling disputes, village 'courts' and other community affairs.

At one stage it appeared to me, and several of the young men agreed, that he was attempting to train a 25-year old classificatory brother (his FBS) to be

his spokesman. At that time (1973/4) the young man was highly respected and on every ceremonial occasion Camillo included him in all planning and discussions, instructed him in the formal distribution of food, and left him to make the appropriate announcements.

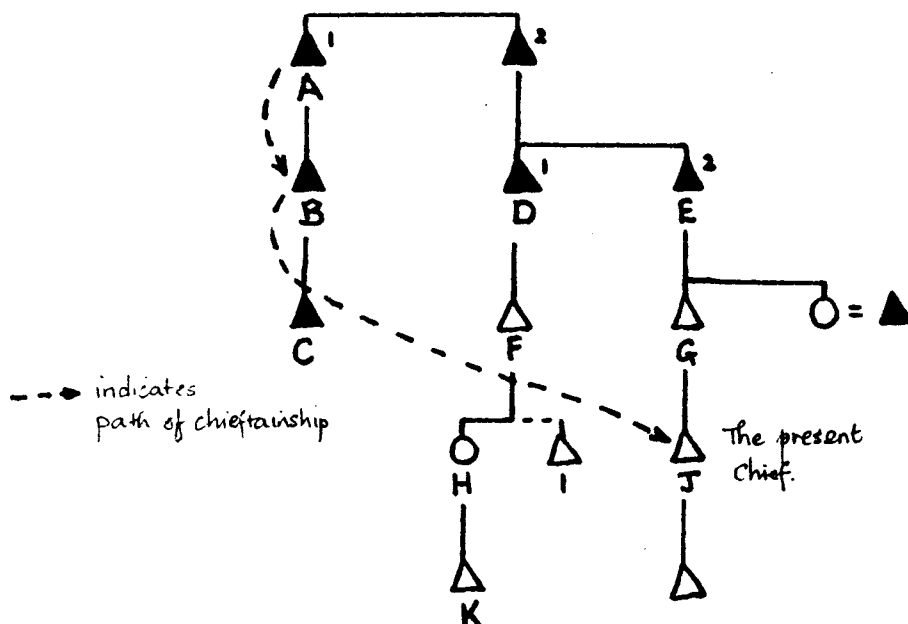
However, the young man became worried over his bride-price. He felt that his brothers had let him down, and he disgraced himself in a series of drunken brawls towards the end of 1974 and during 1975. At present he is active but does not play much part in ceremonies.

The former chief of Hororupaka, Aiaba Bure, died without formally installing his son, Oa Aiaba. The community recognises Oa as the legitimate heir, but his father's younger brother, Aihi Bure, conducts negotiations and makes announcements. It is Aihi also who must eventually sponsor the appropriate ceremony to install Oa officially as chief of the sub-clan.

Cases:

I want to look now at the four chieftainships in Nabuapaka and use them to illustrate four events:

- i) The old chief passing over an apparently reasonable heir in favour of a younger member of the family and possible ways in which the chieftainship could be drawn back to the senior line.
- ii) A case of an heir disinherited on account of misbehaviour, and a dispute between an adopted son and younger branches of the true line.
- iii) An instance where the old chief died without installing his successor.
- iv) The creation of a new chieftainship.

Case 1.

Barai Kupuna itsubu.

One of the founding brothers of Nabua, A, was a legitimate chief. The office passed to his son B, who in turn prepared his son, C, for the succession. However, C was a prison warden at Koki, and during the 1930s he, his wife and daughter were murdered by one of the inmates. B had to think again about a successor, and finally chose J, even though he belonged to the junior branch.

The problem is why did he choose J, thereby implicitly also choosing G (for while the father of a chief is alive he appears to retain informal control, whether he was ever installed or not, even though the installed chief actually performs ceremonial).

As might be expected, there are two stories, one from J's side of the family states that B passed his chieftainship to E's line simply because he did not feel that D was living up in any way to the chieftainship. (At that time, D and E were both still alive.) The other, from a number of different sources, is that as E's daughter was married to an Australian, E was able to indulge B's taste for sugar, flour and tinned fish and as a reward B chose that line.

Another point to consider, but which was not mentioned by any informant, is that at that time H, I, and J were young children. H is female, and although she could have inherited, there was presumably no guarantee that she would find a husband willing to live as a member of her sub-clan rather than his own; I was adopted, and there is a clear preference for the blood line, as I shall show in the next example, thus J would have been the most obvious choice.

In 1973 through 1975, G and his son J lived at another village fifteen minutes' walk from Nabua, and until recently neither was particularly well regarded by members of the Nabua community (even their own sub-clan fellows were concerned that their chief was not living in the village) who distrusted G for a number of reasons: he was not playing his full part in everyday village affairs; men sometimes say he and his son do not know the land boundaries, and, most telling of all, they greatly feared G as a sorcerer, though he emphatically denies such power.

He had a reputation for sorcery even in neighbouring communities, and in early 1973 fled the village after threats to his life following the death of a young bride. His son was already living elsewhere with his wife's people.

By contrast, at that time villagers regarded F far more highly for he clearly knew the boundaries and lived in the village. They saw him as the elder of Barai Kupuna sub-clan. F went to other villages to negotiate land problems on behalf of Nabua (Barai Kupuna are the 'owners' of Nabua) and held others' respect. F, too, owns the rain and the sunshine magic. In spite of this, they listened to G for a variety of reasons including his supposed sorcery; the fact that he has the wedge (ihima) of legitimate chieftainship under him in the form of his son; and villagers did say, reluctantly, "he is the chief of the village." Finally, he was an official in the United Church.

What could be done? Several influential men, including a leading member of Barai Kupuna, told me that it would be perfectly possible to hold a special installation feast and give the chieftainship to K, despite J's official position, on two grounds. Firstly

J was not "looking after the village" and had gone off to live elsewhere, and secondly he was of the junior line.

They said it was up to F to make the first move, as the elder, and then others would give him appropriate support in raising the feast. The principal hinderance, of course, was fear of G's sorcery. I shall show a similar fear in the next case.

Other chiefs can apply a certain amount of pressure. There was an example during Christmas, 1973 when the chief of Kuro Pokina held a feast for his grandchildren. His whole choice of recipients for food was interesting, and part of another story, but one of his recipients was K, and when I asked him why, his response made it clear that his food distribution included an attempt to indicate K as the legitimate heir. In that case the chieftainship would be passing down through the female line - H in fact did find a husband prepared to identify himself with her sub-clan rather than his own.

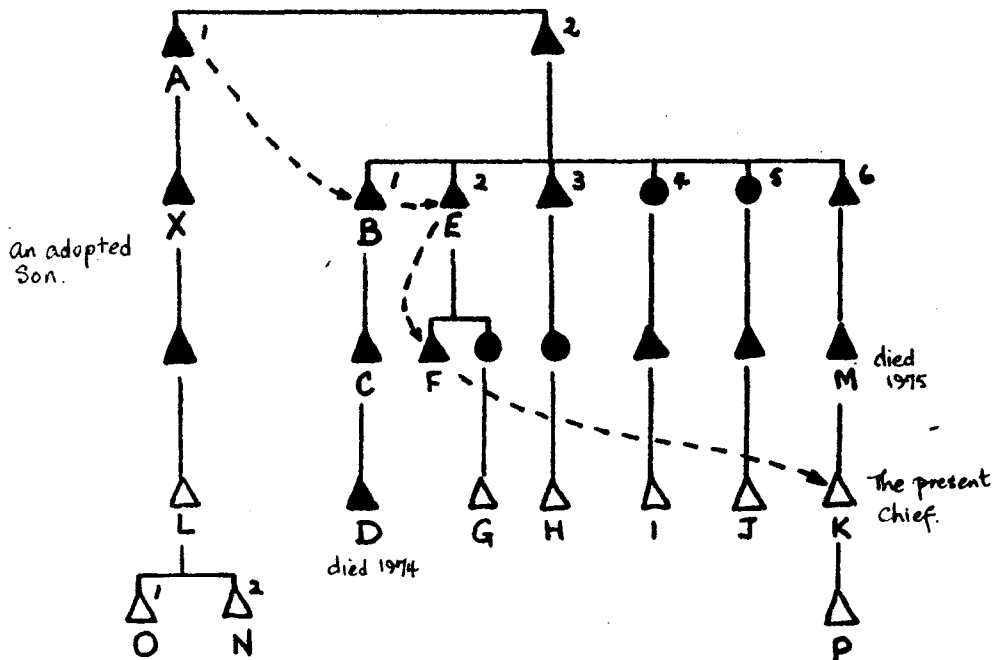
Through the four years since G left the village, he and his son returned for most important functions, both ceremonial and in connection with the United Church, and by early 1977 there had been an interesting change in the attitude of Nabua people. Many villagers were beginning to suggest that G had given up his sorcery (though some were still doubtful - "Mike, I don't know" one man said, "maybe he has thrown away his sorcery, maybe not. We must wait and see."). Instead F, previously respected, had become the object of distrust.

F had always been to some extent branded by his cousin's sorcery, and villagers believed he also possessed such knowledge but did not normally use it. Why the change by 1977? I was not in the village long enough on that occasion to investigate, but it seems that diviners had laid at his door several deaths and illnesses over the previous eighteen months.

When I asked victim's families why they thought that F should practise sorcery against them, their response was almost invariably "jealousy" (wamuru). This seems to be the most commonly cited reason for sorcery attacks, with victims suggesting that the sorcerer was jealous over their ownership of a truck, a trade store, or an outboard motor.

More pragmatically, as an outsider, I might suggest that as F was still living in the village, he was the target for frustrations in the face of sickness and abortive attempts to improve the standard of living through small-scale business ventures. I discuss this further in the last section of this thesis.

The old man, in his early 70s, was forstalled in a suicide attempt after a series of accusations against him during 1976, and he had become a recluse by the end of the year.

Case II: Kuro Pokina

The Kuro Pokina chieftainship is currently held by K who is technically a long way down the inheritance line but regarded as a perfectly legitimate heir.

The chief, A had no children and adopted X. Because of the preference for the blood line, B inherited the office from A. B's son C had a series of quarrels with his father's brothers (I have not been able to find the basis), and eventually moved to the other end of the village to live with Barai Kupuna, his wife's people. He became identified with them, gardened on their land, and appears to have abandoned his own sub-clan.

Discussion by village chiefs and elders led to an agreement that E, B's brother, should inherit. He was in due course succeeded by his son F. F had no children but adopted his sister's son G and began grooming him.

F died before World War II, prior to installing G, and there followed a long period during which the sub-clan had no official chief.

Of the possible claimants D did not come forward - like his father, he continued to live away from Kuro Pokina, even away from Nabuapaka (though when he died at Easter 1974, the whole community mourned and feasted him at the Kuro Pokina end of the village, and buried him at the Barai Kupuna end); H lives at Oreke, near Waima, and is the Obia Itsipana of that branch of the Kuro Pokina clan; I and J's lines both come through the women and belong to the 'left' of Kuro Pokina - Hohorupaka. G, K, and L remained to contest the chieftainship. G did not long press his claim ("getting afraid to die" he told me), and left the field to K and L. There is today a great deal of secrecy about the contest, and almost no one in the village is prepared to talk about it.

What little of the story I could piece together indicates a struggle between L and M to install their sons as chief-of-the-right. Both men worked hard preparing gardens and gathering supporters. M had the backing of a sorcerer from within Nabua (a cognate from Hohorupaka who had acquired his sorcery by devious means from Poukama village), while L was backed by a sorcerer from Waima.

At this point the stories vary. One version has it that L had mustered enough resources for an appropriate ceremony and was on the point of announcing a date when his eldest son, O, died. L then withdrew from the contest, and several years later K was proclaimed chief.

The other version has it that the date for the bearai was actually promulgated, and on the appropriate day both men tried to thrust their sons forward. One elderly man asserted that the chief of Barai Kupuna (and here he named F from our previous case rather than G) then intervened and declared that K was the legitimate heir. O did not die till later.

Both versions agree, however, and K himself confirms, that K was a reluctant contender. Pushed by his father M, he refused to take his proper place on the platform to receive the insignia - he too was "afraid to die" he says. So the position today is that neighbouring communities and other chiefs officially recognise K and food is received and distributed in his name, but because he did not formally accept the insignia, he cannot take his place on the platform during special chiefly feasts. He may lay his lime-pot in the appropriate spot but not sit there himself.

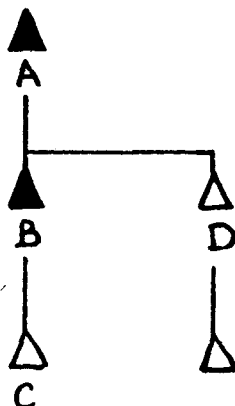
It appears to have been a close contest, for most people refer to L by courtesy as obia. Although he assures me that he recognises K, there is a widespread though covertly held belief that he is biding his time in the hope of proclaiming his second son, N, as chief. K's eldest son P shares his father's reluctance. Both would like to chop down the chiefly platform beside their house and, in their words, "Let those people have it themselves with the obia!"

Although the dispute is quiescent at the moment, it could flare again as K's second son is adamant that the chieftainship be retained in their family.

The general reluctance of villagers to talk about this dispute may reflect the unresolved nature of the struggle, and the passions that were felt at the time.

According to the chronology that I can work out, it must have been soon after K's accession that his father's sorcerer became embroiled in a bitter battle with the chief of Barai Kupuna (G from our previous case) then regarded as dangerous (he also had allegedly acquired his sorcery from Poukama). Several members of each man's family died in quick succession, and when M's sorcerer himself died, the remainder of his family fled the village to live in Lae and Bougainville for nearly two decades. They did not return to the village until Christmas 1976.

Although nobody connected the dispute between the sorcerers and that for the chieftainship, it is possible that the former reflected, or was prompted by the latter. In a similar Mekeo fight between sorcerers Hau'ofa showed how it in fact masked a struggle for power between two chiefs (Hau'ofa 1975).

Case III: Hohorupaka.

B inherited the chieftainship from A, but died before passing it on to his first-born son C. It is now the responsibility of D to muster support and stage the appropriate ceremony for C. My initial impression was that D was quietly usurping the office, for he behaves like a chief and intervenes in disputes while C, about 33, remains quiet.

The truth appears to be that as C has had no bearai he is not officially recognised as chief. Unofficially, within the Nabua community, and among local and neighbouring chiefs, there is no doubt that he is the legitimate heir, but as with the Kuro Pokina chief, he should not sit on the platform during chiefly feasts.

C refers to D as "the second chief," a position he held when his brother was alive, and D says he cannot afford the ceremony for his nephew.

Case IV Kivori:

Kivori is the sub-clan created by Ani Hau and Abikia Aiahu, and which includes several sub-clan-less men who had migrated from Kivori village. Having created it they needed a chief so that they could play their full

ceremonial part in village feasting. So, with the approval of the chiefs of Kuro Pokina and Barai Kupuna, Ani Hau and Abikia worked hard in their gardens to have a surplus of food, then held a feast in about 1926 at which Ani's grandson, Camillo Aihi Paru, was proclaimed chief, and officially recognised throughout the Roro-speaking area.

I refer back to Ani Hau again under the heading of Ritual experts, because his case is an interesting one.

Sorcery:

This is the second of my 'categories of leadership.' In the present context I have already outlined the major relevance of sorcery as a source of leadership, or power, in reference to the sorcerers backing the power of the chiefs (but see chapter 6). There are today no officially recognised sorcerers in Nabua. The villagers assert that there never were official sorcerers in Nabuapaka, and this seems to be true. The only men credited with sorcery in recent years are alleged to have stolen their secrets from Poukama. One of those is dead, and the other emphatically denies anything to do with sorcery - but he is greatly feared and has been the cause of a number of people emigrating.

I should note that by "official" sorcerers I refer to men who are regarded as sorcerers, are recognised by other sorcerers, and who, by their actions and dress at feasts, acknowledge themselves as such. I do not label the alleged sorcerer in Nabua as "official" because he does not publicly admit his sorcery. I do not know his status in the eyes of sorcerers from other communities.

Ritual Experts:

Ritual experts have inherited knowledge connected with specialised aspects of the culture. The Puro'o Hauna for example must be consulted on all matters to do with hunting, especially for wallaby. To ensure success people must take a few areca nuts to the puro'o hauna before they set out, to persuade him to perform the appropriate magic on their behalf.

I cannot list all the specialists throughout Roro. Their activities cover a wide spectrum from fishing to catching crayfish, controlling the weather, divining and cultivating various crops.

Each sub-clan includes only one or two experts. In Nabuapaka Barai Kupuna has the wallaby and rain magicians and Kuro Pokina the magic of coconuts and gardens. Kivori also has an agricultural and a feasting and dancing magician and Hohorupaka a diviner.

Some of these experts are also true chiefs, but others are not chiefly lines. They are usually referred to as obia as a courtesy.

Though these men never take ceremonial precedence over true chiefs, individuals can manipulate their specialty to gain power and influence that in some respects is greater than that of chiefs. The founder of Kivori, Ani Hau, who died in the early 1930s, was such a person. He is remembered today as having been good for the village, and looked after it well. From accounts it seems that he grew to be far more important than even the chief of Barai Kupuna. His power stemmed from his control of ikomaki and taeara. The first refers to agricultural produce, in particular coconuts. His specialist knowledge enabled him, so

people said to draw food into the area from as far away as Samarai. Conversely, of course, he had a powerful sanction in an ability to send the food away, thus bringing famine. His other specialty, taeara or "road", was perhaps more important in giving him power because it meant everything had to pass through him. One man described the process as follows: If your son was sick, you did not go yourself to the sorcerers or diviners but instead took some betel mixture and armshells to Ani Hau, asking him "have you heard anything about my son?" His response would be non-committal, but he would take your offering and later secretly visit Delena to consult with a major sorcerer who lived there. He passed at least some of the wealth to the sorcerer as he asked "have you heard anything about Nabua lately?" General comment and discussion might follow, and then the sorcerer might say, "Oh yes! X has to be punished for such-and-such a delict." There would be more comment, further discussion, indirect negotiation, more wealth exchanged hands and Ani Hau returned home to discreetly pass on the appropriate news.¹

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1. In a neighbouring village, a man with a similar task was titled Itata'e Hauna. He was described to me as the man who protects the village, negotiates between chiefs and sorcerers, uses his contacts with sorcerers in other communities to know who is to be killed in his own. When he learns that someone is marked for death he reports the matter to the chiefs of his village. If they agree to the death he reports back to the sorcerers who carry out the killing. If the chiefs disagree, he and the home sorcerers take protective action to prevent the death.

If the weather was unusually hot and dry, some men might put together a quantity of valuables and taking them to Ani Hau pass unfavourable comment remarking, "Wouldn't it be nice if it rained on our gardens?" After accepting the goods, he would be likely to reply "You're right. It is very dry isn't it". Later he would visit the weather man, kupa hauna, and hand him some of the wealth with the comment that "We could do with a bit of rain soon." (Despite his powers as a bringer of food, he still had to co-operate with the weather controllers.)

Again, if a man wanted to make a feast he whispered it to Ani Hau, who one might stand on his verandah in the middle of the village and cough loudly. People recognised his call and stopped talking or eating to listen. He rattled his lime-pot and coughed again. People hushed their children and chased away their dogs and he began to talk, "My Kuro Pokina brothers, my people of Barai Kupuna! It is a long time since we had a feast. I think it would be good if we had another." Then he would declare a taboo, rauhubu, on some types of garden produce for a certain number of moons and preparations for the feast would get under way.

Ani Hau seems to have chosen every pretext to "preach" to the village - from publicly scolding an offender (though his name was not mentioned, everybody knew his identity), to instructing people how to open coconuts ("They are men. Open the mouth, don't simply crack open the head. Kiss to say thank you before you drink.")

At this point we return to the creation of Kivori sub-clan and the new chieftainship for Kivori in the person of Ani Hau's grandson.

With all his power, why was he interested in creating a sub-clan and chieftainship? The answer seems to come back to legal recognition. Only an officially recognised chief can represent his sub-clan, can sit on the platform with other chiefs, can act as receiver and distributor of food at feasts. Ani Hau wanted this final touch to his power. He wanted the wedge, ihima, under him.

When you draw your canoe up the beach, you put a wedge under it to hold the canoe off the sand so that it dries out properly. As the wood holds the canoe high, so the chieftainship gives legal authority to a big man's power.

He could not simply create a chieftainship for his lineage within Kuro Pokina because there cannot be more than one set of chiefs for each sub-clan. For the same reason he could not form a breakaway branch of Kuro Pokina within Nabua. Neither was there any point in joining his wife's people who already had their own chief. So he had to create his own sub-clan, joining his good friend Abikia Aiahu, and eventually installing his grandson, Camillo Aihi Paru, as the first chief of Kivori.

Conclusion:

In the last two chapters I have not tried to dwell too long on the supposed traditional structure of Roro descent groups and leadership: rather I have tried to show through direct examples how sub-clans and chiefs are not quite the immutable entities that ideology might suggest. In particular I have tried to demonstrate the three major sources of leadership and to illustrate the constant moving and juggling for power, especially that of recognised chieftainship.

Referring to my discussion at the beginning of this chapter, it should be clear that all the manoeuvring remains within the framework of those who claim to have inherited rights to particular roles within the society.

Van Rijswijck reached a similar conclusion about Kuni leadership, which she characterised as "ascribed by rules of descent, but validated by proper character qualifications and residential habits." Despite the rules of descent, pragmatic considerations intervened to allow flexibility and opportunity for manipulation. She concluded, "this manoeuvring, however, was essentially between rival aspirants to power. It was not (as in the case of big men) a contest about power and its sphere of application" (van Rijswijck 1967:259 her emphasis).

In the next chapter, dealing with Roro religion, I refer further to sorcerers and specialist magicians and try to show how the religion lends support to the leadership structure of the community.

Chapter Six.

SPIRITS AND POWER.

Spirits and Power.

Roro religion, in common with that of other Melanesian societies relates to a range of spirits, sprites, and magical objects, all of which may be used or invoked by men in their quest to control events. A Culture Hero or ancestor figure who still lives, Oa Robe, gave the people their artefacts; and there are spirits of the dead, bush spirits who are the guardians of the water holes and a variety of leaves and stones credited with magical powers (cf: Lawrence and Meggitt 1965:8).

I intend in this chapter to relate religion to leadership. I shall begin with a general outline of the world of the spirits, ancestral and those of the bush, and then turn to the manner in which men tap the resources of the spirit world.

Oa Robe:

The central myth of the society tells of Oa Robe, the culture hero who gave the people their knowledge of all forms of magic. His origins are obscure, but he first appeared as a child hiding in an old widow's bundle of firewood. She adopted him as her son, and he lived with her for some years. He had the ability to transform himself into a variety of creatures but was constantly mistreated by the men of the community. Eventually he avenged himself by stealing all the beautiful women. When later he gave hunting, gardening and weather magic to the people he also made them the doubtful gifts of mosquitoes, flies, death and sorcery.

The myth in general is of considerable importance, for the cycle of tales around Oa Robe provides the justification for many institutions of Roro society, his name is always first on the lists of ancestors invoked by magicians of all sorts.

I shall discuss the term 'robe' later, but briefly it can be translated as 'sacred' 'set apart.' I am not sure of the meaning, if any, of Oa, which is a common name among the Roro, and Elema to the West, where it means 'father'. It is distinctly possible that the Roro have taken over the term. Parts of the Oa Robe myth include references to Elema country, and Ryan has told me that most mythical heroes in Elema have Oa prefixed to their names. Whether we can assert that the whole term, Oa Robe, means in some sense 'Sacred Father' I am not sure.

I have not obtained the complete cycle of myths around Oa Robe but recorded one that seems to be embellished with references to the Biblical Noah. This refers to Noa's two children, Oa and Aiba, who contracted an incestuous marriage to produce a son, Papua. Papua gave his children the different types of magic, symbols of office and artefacts; and they in turn fathered the present-day Roro and Mekeo clans and certain types of parrot. In one reference two of his children became the bush spirits which I shall discuss shortly, paipai.

Whether we can equate Oa Robe with Noah's son Oa, or perhaps speculate even that Noah was interpreted as Oa Robe himself (the similarity between the names is obvious) is not clear. I think it probable, however, that a version of the myth should properly belong to the Oa Robe cycle.

Human Spirits

The spirits of the dead have three names: aiha, auba, and birina.

If a person dies by violence or suicide he leaves behind an especially strong and fearsome spirit called aiha, which can take the form of a ball of fire sparking and rolling around the ground, up and down the village. When the death is the result of say, a motor accident, his aiha haunts the spot for some time and people passing by are on their guard lest it show itself and play tricks. There are differences of opinion as to whether it will attempt to overturn vehicles or merely join the passengers and enjoy the journey. The aiha must be recalled to its home in a special ceremony. At Easter 1974, two young men were killed in an accident on the road to Moresby, one a Motuan and the other a Boro. The latter's body was carried through our village, and residents alleged that three days later his aiha, like a ball of fire, passed through on its way home. I did not see it but then was living in another part of the village. The Motuans, so the Nabua assert, no longer know how to recall such spirits, and the Motu aiha hung about on the road for some weeks causing havoc among the traffic. At times it leaped out in front of trucks, causing the driver to panic and swerve. At other times it simply stood headless beside the road and waved its arms. Alternatively it chased the trucks all the way to Port Moresby, and on another occasion it jumped into the truck and sat with the passengers. As a result, traffic was disrupted for several weeks as drivers attempted to pass the accident spot in daylight.

Even after relatives have recalled an aiha it is likely to haunt the grave. When I visited Kivori we passed the grave of a man killed in another accident some months previously. As we returned at night we had to make a long detour via another village. Even as we walked along this path we had to be careful. Spirits can be identified because they do not touch the ground as they walk, and as at one point we saw a man walking towards us, we had to bend down to look at his feet.

Those who die by any other means, generally sorcery, leave behind a biriaua or aubu. The two terms are not synonymous but overlap in their meanings. Biriaua is an impolite term for a person's spirit (you say "I saw your father's aubu last night", never "I saw his biriaua"), and also the name for the old bullroarers, which no longer exist, whose sounds represented the voices of the spirits. It is used when an unidentified ghost is encountered during the night or in dream - "Biriaua grabbed me!"

Auba properly means "likeness". It is used of ancestors who are called upon to assist in any venture and of a recognised dead person whom one meets on the road or in dreams. It also refers to the non-material part (or soul) of a living person.

A living person's auba may be stolen in two ways, by paipai, the bush spirits I discuss below, or by the auba of a person already dead taking that of a favourite child or grandchild. Norah, the daughter-in-law of the family I lived with, came from Rapa and had lost her mother a few years previously. Her second child, a daughter, was continually sick. A diviner (auba'i hauna), who dreams the causes of sicknesses, told us that the grandmother had taken the baby's auba to Rapa village but not to worry because

she had recovered and returned it. The child hardly improved, and it was obvious that the grandmother was still interfering. Norah's 16-year old nephew made magic and called on the dead woman to leave the baby alone - he told her she might come to see the child but that was all.

On another occasion a young man who had had a quarrel with his mother just before her death was concerned lest she might avenge herself by taking the aub of one of his children. By contrast, the same woman's second son was worried that his mother might take the aub of his child, who, he asserted, was the old woman's favourite. Both children in fact became ill, probably with influenza, within weeks of their grandmother's death.

When the dead are not drifting disconsolately around familiar haunts (elderly men returning from the gardens, or a walk along the beach, often assert that they have just seen old so-and-so who died four years previously, and that the spirit was crying) they go to the land of the dead, Ariyo, on a hill-top just to the west of the westernmost Roro-speaking village. It is not the place where Oa Robe is said to be living. At Ariyo life goes on just as if the spirits were still alive - if you happen to be in the vicinity in the evening, you can hear the spirits talking, the women calling their pigs to eat and see the men's lights out on the reef as they fish.

A spirit whose body has just died roams about in confusion for some days, while the relatives keep a grave watch. They wish to keep it company as it wanders in the cold and comes to warm itself on the fire

which they tend near the grave. It may release the secrets of how death came about as an aid towards revenge. They also wish to prevent sorcerers from stealing the skull or other bones to use in their sorcery.

One further human spirit deserves a mention, ibuni, an indefinable part of a living man or woman which manifests itself only in familiar places when the owner is not present. When a regular member of a household is away for a night, either sleeping elsewhere or fishing till the early hours of the morning, the ibuni lingers in the house, and the other occupants are liable to wake feeling ill, lazy, or with a nasty taste in their mouths. A person's ibuni is a negative influence when he or she is not with it. One evening I was not allowed to go out fishing because my family had planted yams which were just starting to grow. If I had gone out, the influence of my ibuni might have caused rats to eat the young shoots. On another occasion a young couple who had lived with us for some weeks moved to another house. That night the rest of the family slept underneath rather than inside. They wanted to plant banana suckers the next day, and the influence of the ibuni would have caused the plants to die. The nephew of the house and I chose to sleep inside, and the next day, while we might have accompanied the family to the garden, we would not have been allowed to plant any bananas. Guis noted ibuni only in the context of death. Describing it as the "absence" of a person he said that widows eat the absence of their dead husbands (1936:122).

Paipai:

These are bush spirits associated with water-holes, creeks, and damp ground. Never found near permanently dry areas, almost always described as female, beautiful, light-skinned, and with long flowing hair. They are capable of turning themselves into various creatures, most commonly python, and villagers consider them to be the true owners of the places where they are found.

Their origins are unknown. Most people say that they are not human in origin, though there is one story of a sister and her brother who turned into paipai, and I have the one reference, mentioned above, to two of Papua's children becoming paipai.

Individual paipai are named, and the land known by that of the occupying paipai. A creek, for example, has a series of names reflecting the different paipai occupying its various deep holes. They are spiteful creatures, inflicting minor sores and sicknesses on trespassers, but they usually develop a warm friendly regard for the humans who work their land and become disturbed if these cease to garden there - even to the point of moving elsewhere. This is why, so villagers asserted, some land becomes impoverished.

Though one rarely hears of male paipai, they do marry and have children. Taiabu is one of the paipai in the Nabua area. One of her daughters supposedly married the son of Orue, at Waima, some hours away by motorised canoe. The old man who gardens Taiabu's land at Nabua told me that he sometimes has a talk with her daughter at Orue when he visits Waima.

Because of paipai's ability to inflict sores, humans are careful to respect them. When we were in the bush I had to refrain from asking the names of places until after we had left in case the paipai overheard and, knowing me for a stranger, 'hit' me with sores or other sicknesses.

People avoid killing or disturbing snakes, particularly python, as they are likely to be paipai (alternatively they are the tools of sorcerers, but I shall come to that later). On one occasion when some friends were driving down from Moresby a large python lay across the road. The car could not pass so the driver stepped out and said "Don't be angry we're not after anything, we're just trying to go to our village", whereupon it moved across the road. By the time the next truck came along, it had returned to its vigil and the truck supposedly was held up for half an hour until it deigned to move. My friends feared that it might have been the paipai of that particular spot. If they had killed it, its spirit would have avenged itself, though it is not clear how.

People usually attribute minor sores and sicknesses to paipai, but take no action unless the problem persists. My host's wife, feeling out of sorts for a couple of weeks, finally consulted a diviner who dreamed for her. The verdict was that she had had her bath in the wrong water hole one day, and the enraged paipai had turned into a turtle and grabbed her heart. The dreamer told her that she had asked the turtle to let go and return home. She recovered.

Paipai keep a careful watch on the gardens of those humans who work their land. If there is trespassing or theft, their guardianship is reinforced by the human owner. He makes a magic calling on the auga of his ancestors to assist in protecting his gardens or areca palms. Auga do not come of their own volition and must be called. They lure the thief into error - stepping in the wrong place, falling from a palm, or in some other way placing himself in a vulnerable position so that the paipai can grab his auga and take it into the water. The victim feels cold from the water and becomes ill, usually with sores as the water snails start to eat his auga. If he fails to make amends by confessing his wrongdoing, so that the owner can remove his magic and ask the paipai to return the auga, then he grows weaker and weaker and finally dies.

At one stage there were sea paipai, but these are not referred to today. Only the old people occasionally mention them - how the noise of the breakers on the reef is the sound of the paipai eating and indicates storms or rough seas on the way; how some years ago a man went diving for crayfish and came up in blisters after swimming near a particular rock. A dreamer told him that he had inadvertently entered an old woman's kitchen, and a spark from her fire had burned him. The dreamer brought the auga back, and the next day he began to improve.

Power objects:

Every man, woman, and teenager can tap the power of the spirits in some degree, but there are certain necessary prerequisites, primarily the knowledge

and ownership of appropriate words and objects.

The commonest forms of magic are for love, headache cures, to chase away unwanted spirits, and calming someone when angry. All entail the use of mea (translated today as 'prayers'), spells, including an invocation to certain ancestors to come and provide assistance.

Almost all magic also requires the use of certain medicines such as a variety of leaves, the chewing of a particular bark or ginger roots, or ownership of ancestral bones or special stones.

As the magic increases in importance, so the spells and ritual become increasingly complex and known to fewer and fewer people, until we reach the most important concerned with different aspects of the economy, war, and sorcery and death. Power objects, while in use at all levels of magic, are of greatest importance at top levels.

Sorcerers may have carried with them the skull, wrist bones, or other portions of the skeleton of long dead ancestors or powerful enemies. Several early writers recorded the existence of such bones among the possessions of known sorcerers, and there is little reason to doubt that acknowledged present-day sorcerers may also carry pieces of bone with them (Dauncey 1913:49; Seligmann 1910: 285).

The other items of importance owned by sorcerers and other specialists are special stones known as manua. I have not seen one, but do not doubt that they exist. A sorcerer gave one to Chalmers and Seligmann (1910:287) recorded them as black basalt or quartz crystal. My informants describe them as

smooth, sometimes with markings like a face, sometimes highly polished. Manua stones have a life of their own Seligmann noted stones that were spoken of as male or female, or father and son (1910:287/8). While I have not heard of them in these terms, one manua that I know of recently became pregnant and gave birth to two. On a dark night you may sometimes see bright lights moving about the village - really manua stones walking about.

Hau'ofa told me that Mekeo assert there is a special site from which they obtain them. The Nabuapaka agree that if a man undergoes a rigorous period of fasting and travels to Oa Robe's dwelling place (in Mekeo country), he may receive a manua. This is a dangerous undertaking. Otherwise a lucky individual after a period of fasting may find one in the bush in the pre-dawn. He must show it to nobody, but secretly carry it home and sleep with it under his pillow. That night the appropriate spirit should come, tell him of the stone's special powers, and instruct him in its use and associated spells.

Like everything else to do with magic and power, the stones must be treated with great respect and care. Owners never flaunt them around but lock them into suitcases and boxes where prying eyes cannot get at them. If they are mishandled, if the wrong person sees them without the necessary period of fasting, they pack up and leave of their own accord, and their owner loses his powers. At the same time, an unprepared person who tampers with a manua is placed in danger. One youth roundly condemned in the community (though not to his face) for his sexual promiscuity, is said to have stolen a stone used for love-making magic. Before it lost its power it punished him by making him lose control of himself.

In a similar vein, Stephen reported that an Inawi (Mekeo) sorcerer believed that Philo, the central figure in the 1941 cult (chapter 2), had made herself mad by touching the sorcery stones and ancestor relics hidden in her parent's house. When she ordered the villagers to bring out all their sorcery items and display them on altars the whole village became affected because, of course, they were not ritually prepared to see the objects (Stephen 1974:166).

Even the legitimate owner must be prepared before looking at his stone. A young Nabua man, Saolo, who inherited wallaby hunting magic from his grandfather, and is already practising, told me that he has not yet seen the magic stone containing the power. His grandfather will retain it until Saolo is willing to undergo the rigorous three-month fast preparatory to taking over.

The most dangerous stones are those of nepu and ba'ari, the two forms of sorcery. See those without fasting and you will die - even the owner himself. About twenty years ago one of the two sorcerers in the village was jailed for practising sorcery. Before the police came for him, he was able to hide two of his manua, and they only confiscated and destroyed some relatively minor magical objects. Of those he hid, one was found and is currently owned by the living sorcerer. The other led to the sorcerer's own death. It was his snake manua, and on one occasion when he was released from jail for the weekend, he went to check that his manua was safe in its hiding place. He made the cardinal mistake of not fasting before approaching. The stone was angry at being neglected. It had grown wild and it failed to recognise its owner, lashed out and bit him. The bite was fatal, and he died some hours

later. Nobody since has had the courage to approach the spot where it is said to be hidden.

Sacred: Set apart:

We can perhaps see the magic spells and the power objects as mediating between the spirit world and the everyday world of men, for no man can deliberately call on the ancestors without using the words and objects. With major magic men need in addition to set themselves apart from others - to become in some way sacred themselves, and at this point I can explain my references to fasting.

Hau'ofa said a Mekeo "man's relationships with his natural environment are intimately connected with his social relationships" (1975:243). This is true also for the Roro. People believe that a person's behaviour affects his daily life, particularly in such fields as fishing, hunting, canoeing and gardening. Any sort of misbehaviour puts a man out of kilter as it were with the benevolent forces of nature.

One day when I went fishing with Aisi, my classificatory brother, we joined our net into a line with those of several other men and boys. He and I were lucky and had a net full of fish, far more than anybody else. The consensus was that we had behaved properly the night before. That evening my companion spent some time with his girlfriend, and the next day we quite literally did not get a single fish in our net.

Another boy came back to the beach after his canoe had lost a race and told me, "I won't go racing for the time being. I'm going with too many girls, so I'm not steering properly ." On another occasion

the same young man said "Last time I went to Iare and made love there. Next day I took Kila's canoe to Delena for racing. I really came last. And everybody knew I made beho¹ in the night!"

While it is necessary to behave properly before performing ordinary tasks, there is a need for special care prior to any serious undertaking. During the garfish season, a man must fast for the whole day before he goes fishing at night.

Ritual, or sacred fasting is called robe, and the man intending to look for garfish must remain all day within the village, refrain from drinking tea or coffee, and eat only lightly of roasted bananas. If he fails to do this he will not only have a poor catch but leaves himself open to being speared by the long snout of the garfish as it leaps out of the water.

As the importance of the task increases, so does the rigour of preparation. Just before I left the village the men were preparing for an important canoe race with neighbouring communities, and those who were to crew the canoes were undergoing fasting.

1. Beho "mistake" - in the sense of an error in sawing wood, or in simple addition, and in the sense of stepping out of line.

One of the young men explained "robe gives power." (Hiabu-literally meaning 'heat', 'smoke') "When we make the magic then the ancestors can come and help us. For racing they'll call the wind down just to our own canoe, not to the others. I'm fasting for four weeks before the Easter race. I'm drinking hot water (tea), but no meat or yams or shellfish. Flying fish are all right, they fly over the water, but crayfish are forbidden because they go backwards when touched; and crabs move sideways." He confirmed that he was sleeping apart from his wife "If you have sex the canoe will smell the woman and fail to go properly."

In the past a part of the education of an adolescent boy included his carving of a hand-drum. He remained in seclusion for a month, refrained from sexual intercourse, drank only hot water or heated coconut juice, and ate only a few roasted bananas each day. Any breaking of the fast meant a drum that would not ring true and whose skin might split.

A coming dance required a month-long fast for participants; and still today, after childbirth, a mother and her new-born child must fast for about six weeks. People believe that the birth fluids and other impurities from the baby are dangerous during the first few weeks, so mother and child must be isolated, and the mother keep herself in a high state of purity to combat the dangers - both to herself and to protect the child. During this time they live in a specially constructed enclosure under the house, and the mother avoids meat, betelnut, coffee, and tea. She also refrains from touching any food with her fingers, lips or teeth - it must be chopped up very small and forked right into the mouth. She scratches herself only with a bamboo scratcher.

A person who is ritually polluted, as a mother after childbirth, must protect other people from her uncleanliness by isolation, and herself by fasting. It is also true that a person in a high state of sacredness, even though ritually clean, is potentially dangerous to others. One should never shake the hand of a sorcerer, for you never know when he is fasting, unless you are in that state yourself, and thus possess the ritual strength to combat his powers.

Specialists may have to fast for quite some time. Groves said of the Motu that the man who sponsored the manufacture of a heavy fishing net (for turtle, dugong, and barramundi) refrained from all intercourse with his wife until the net was complete - a process which might take him several months. "He does not even speak directly to her, but makes his wishes known through a third party. He fasts. He does not bathe. He remains inside his house, in seclusion. In that way, it is said, he acquires a ritual potency which is ultimately transferred to the new net" Groves 1957).

The Motu man sponsoring a trading expedition to the Gulf District might have to fast and avoid his wife for seven months or more (Groves 1973:100-101). A practising Mekeo sorcerer's abstinence was even more rigorous (see Hau'ofa 1975).

Groves concluded, "From what Motu themselves say about their ritual, it appears that the purpose of a rite is to obtain and utilise some special kind of power associated with the ancestors" (1957).

To the Roro, the ordinary man must be in some degree ritually clean to ensure success in many everyday endeavours. Removing pollution may include fasting, sexual abstinence, and an attempt not to anger other people, especially relatives. In reference to this last, I was once upset with my classificatory brother. The next morning he reproached me for my anger, saying he had failed to catch any fish as a result.

The specialist magician is essential to some aspect of the community's economic or social life. He owns more important spells and power objects than ordinary men, and his obligations to fast are correspondingly more rigorous.

The sorcerer, on the other hand, is further removed from ordinary men because he handles death itself. Not only does he call on the ancestors, own spells and the death-dealing stones, he probably also possesses bones of famed sorcerers and must engage in an extremely onerous ritual fast before beginning his practices: touching death, he must, more than any other man, protect himself and other people by setting himself apart.

While a sorcerer is robe, building up his strength, he does no work. He either retreats to a bush hut where no one can see him, or else he feigns illness. In any case a brother or other close relative continues his normal work for him and brings him food. Ordinary work at such a time tends to negate the sorcerer's power and opens a crack in his protective state of being 'set apart' through which rival sorcerers might enter and destroy him.

Robe provides power to combat ills and potential dangers. The word for power in this context is hiabu, which also means heat, warmth, smoke and steam. It follows that cold, amari, is the opposite, and can negate the process of robe: hence a person who is in this state does not drink cold water nor wash in cold water. For a sorcerer who is robe, a sudden plunge into cold water is highly dangerous and could kill him, apart from negating his magic.

Hau'ofa (1975:270-1) said of the Mekeo sorcerer who has completed his fasting (ngope), "It is discernable to other sorcerers by certain physical signs which include: clear white eyes - with a faraway, other worldly look; yellow skin - sallow complexion from lack of exposure to direct sunlight; slim waistline achieved through strict diet and wearing tightly fastened wide belts; a very light manner of movement characterised as 'walking like the wind' and so on." At this stage he begins his practice, using appropriate magic to call on the spirits of past ancestors and powerful sorcerers. When they come to him, he gives them food, talks to them, and gives them their instructions.

Hau'ofa continued, "The sorcerer now lives in a world in which the real and the fantastic have merged. Or, ... the two sides of reality, the visible and the invisible, are now perceived, comprehended and can be dealt with as one. [The sorcerer is now] a semi-supernatural being dealing with supernatural agents and extremely destructive powers. His body is now a direct source of danger to others as well as to himself" (1975:270-1).

Hau'ofa explained, as I have tried to show for Roro, that ngope undertaken by sorcerers is an exaggerated form of the kinds of self-denial and withdrawal that all Mekeo go through when they deal in any type of power (isapu). He concluded, "ngope is a general practice in any kind of magical performance, [and] the more potent the powers a specialist claims to possess the greater is the stringency of his ngope." Since sorcerers possess the most potent powers, their process of ngope must be the most arduous (1975:278).

In summary, the realm of the ancestors, of paipai, and of manua stones is anomalous in that it is an integral part of the everyday world of men, yet one cannot deal with it in everyday terms. Although there is no record of any bloodletting operations among the Roro (apart from the relief of pain), we can argue that the need to fast shows the need to purge impurities from oneself before establishing a working relationship with the other world. As that of the spirits is in some respects robe, 'set apart', so a man too, must become robe before engaging in any task which requires the assistance of the ancestors or other spirits for success. At the same time, they are powerful, and power can be dangerous, so the process of robe builds in a man sufficient strength of his own to combat the dangers inherent in playing with magic.

To robe, then, is a purging of impurities to give a man or woman power - a type of strength enabling them to combat dangers, to dance superbly all night, to make a hand-drum, to deal with the ancestors in major magic, and to resist ritual uncleanness.

Chiefs and sorcerers:

As I showed in the last chapter, the most significant magic is tied closely to the leadership structure of the Roro-Waima peoples. The chief, who may or may not possess magical expertise himself, always has access to it and in the past at least, was always backed by a personal sorcerer.

The alliance of sorcerer and chief gave the latter extraordinary power. Although the chief represents the positive side of affairs, people are afraid of him because of his access to punitive sorcery.

As I noted earlier, a proper sorcerer should not act arbitrarily. He should only proceed against someone on the instructions of his own chief and with the permission of the chief of the wrongdoer. A middle-aged man, well versed in the traditions, described the procedure as follows. Suppose Aisi has a grievance against Morea, Aisi goes to his chief and explains the problem, taking with him gifts of betel mixture and other goods. Aisi's chief consults the chiefs of the other sub-clans in the village, and puts it to them. They may agree that Morea needs to be taught a lesson but not killed, and the reason explained to him. One of the sorcerers, probably that of Aisi's chief, is then approached with appropriate instructions.

Clearly this is an ideal version, and ordinary people do not believe the system in fact works this way. Rather they believe that individuals secretly approach sorcerers to sort out their grievances, and sorcerers, greedy for wealth, are willing to accept almost any commission. (Guis wrote of Roro sorcery, "It is a lucrative trade" 1936: 153).

I think we can see Roro sorcerers in a dual light - as having both official and covert responsibilities: initially they have their properly recognised part as the chiefs' 'policemen' (Hau'ofa 1971:161). In this capacity they are protectors of their chiefs, preservers of tradition and responsible for punishing wrongdoers in the community. The other side of the sorcerer is that of the secret, unacknowledged role common to such individuals in many Melanesian communities, where their magical powers are used in the cause of personal revenge and private gain. A man or woman with a grudge against a neighbour goes to the sorcerer secretly, by night, with areca nuts, tobacco, and money, whispers his anger, and asks the sorcerer to take action. Conversely, the man seeking protection when he fears that others may have invoked sorcery against him, goes equally secretly to request assistance and protective magic.

There are two types of sorcery: ba'ari and nepu. Both can inflict death and have appropriate manua stones. Ba'ari requires the use of personal leavings - areca skin, cigarette butt, and hair clippings. These items plus perhaps a piece of grass the victim has touched or walked over, the sorcerer places with the manua stone in a pouch which he heats slowly over a fire while intoning his spell.

Nepu is different and causes death from snake-bite or through the victim being struck by something - a falling coconut, the branch of a tree, or something he might not even feel.

The brother-in-law of the sorcerer killed by his own nepu told me that the manua had a red spot at one end and a black spot at the other. It is kept in a

sheath of pandanus skin pulled from the roots of the plant. When he uses the nepu the sorcerer turns the sheath over and over and finally pulls half the cover off the stone: the black end means paiha - the magic of fighting, hitting, and the victim will be struck by something. The red end means a snake will bite him.

The sorcerer hides near a path frequented by his intended victim. When the latter comes along the sorcerer pulls the stone from its sheath, and, holding it where the victim will see it, he breaks a twig or makes some other noise to attract the victim's attention. The man turns and falls as if struck by something. The sorcerer then passes the stone over him and instructs him to forget what he has seen. The sorcerer leaves, the victim rises and continues his business as if nothing had happened, but soon the sorcery begins to act, and the victim dies - probably by snake bite.

Throughout these proceedings, the sorcerer takes great care to avoid looking at the stone himself, unless he is sure that he has robe properly.

Early writers asserted that real snakes were used by sorcerers. Dauncey (1913:51) mentioned seeing snakes in the possession of a sorcerer and added, "There is little doubt ... that he has power over real snakes." He recorded hearing of another sorcerer who left behind when fleeing (he did not say from whom) a vessel of earthenware pots fitting over each other containing a skull in which there was a snake. The snake was killed but not examined to see whether it was venomous, or whether the fangs had been drawn. (See Guis 1936:168-9 for the possible origin of this story).

Another missionary, claiming personal experience with sorcerer's snakes, asserted that the sorcerer places a piece of clothing or body waste from the victim into a container with a venomous snake, and shakes it up. He then releases the enraged snake on a path frequented by the victim, and, drawn by the smell, it attacks him (Dupeyrat 1963:18). Finally D'Albertis reported a tame snake owned by a local chief (cited by Mackay 1976:149).

Ritual Specialists

In Nabuapaka there is a wallaby magician responsible for the hunting lands (puro'o hauna), a rainmaker (abara hauna), agricultural experts (ikomaki), a man knowledgeable in feasting magic (ipetabu), and diviners (auba'i hauna). There are also two men connected with war. One is the descendant of the arawae obia, 'chief-of-the-spear,' and the other has inherited the spells and manua of war magic, paiha. While the latter no longer has opportunity to use his skills, he is still accorded the utmost respect. It is true to say that in former times the war magician was as important as the chief and sorcerer. Together the paiha and arawae were a shield for the community against attack. In time of war the magic of the paiha obia served to fill the warriors (led by arawae) with aggressive invincible power, and to call on the community ancestors to join the battle and attack the spirits (auba) of the enemy.

As I have shown, at a feast only the chief could receive food on behalf of his clan. In other words the ritual experts, unless they are also chiefs of their clans, do not have their names called. The one exception is the war magician. At a major feast in Nabuapaka, when the four chiefs or their representatives are called

to accept food on behalf of the four sub-clans, the war magician may also be called, though interestingly, he is not named. The pile of food is indicated, and the speaker announces simply that this pile is "his food", and everyone knows to whom it belongs.

When I asked him why name was not mentioned, he replied that it was because his profession was 'dirty' - his ancestors were killers, even though it was in the honourable cause of war.

The sorcerer and the war magician are both killers - the one in a secret, underhand manner, in the cause of revenge and personal vendetta; the other in the open protective cause of war. The former is feared and avoided, and while the latter is similarly feared, he is also honoured - to the point where he is given a special share of the food at a feast.

I shall outline the functions of several of the specialist magicians in Nabuapaka before concluding this chapter.

A magic of great importance is ikomaki, for garden crops, areca nuts, coconuts, and sago. Every man has a certain amount of garden magic which he uses to ensure that his own crops grow well. The ikomaki magician, who in Nabua is also the chief of Kiveri sub-clan, possesses the most powerful garden magic. He can call on the combined powers of a long line of ancestral ikomaki. He is the garden leader and should be the first to plant every year, about October. When the gardens are prepared, he calls a meeting and tells the people when to plant. (This is in reference to

the main crop, not to the supplementary plantings which can take place at any time.)

Ikomaki's magic is not normally used to benefit the whole community as everybody has his own garden magic, but in times of difficulty, or when special events are coming up, he extends his spells to everybody. Individuals regularly attempt to take some advantage of his superior powers. The ikomaki in Nabua said that he often notices a leaf or two stolen from his banana gardens. The thief believes that by taking a leaf and placing it in his own garden, he is improving his crops by adding the magician's power to his own.

One story goes that some years ago when the then ikomaki's son died, he was really angry, for obviously the boy had been killed by sorcery, and he invoked the punitive aspect of his magic. The gardens ceased to grow properly and there was no meat in the coconuts. People were starving and resorted to stealing from the neighbouring plantation. (Notice the implication - the coconuts still contained flesh, the community's own trees were worthless).

After some time (three or four years, they say) leading men gave pigs to the garden magician, who called a meeting of the old people. They declared a taboo, rauhubu, on certain garden products and coconuts and despatched messengers to Kerema, Kuni, Kabadi, Moresby and other areas to bring back a small amount of soil, a sago leaf, or twigs from young saplings - this was to pull the goodness of the other areas back to Nabuapaka. The ikomaki made his magic,

calling on the ancestors to make the land fertile again, and within months the famine was over, and the villagers were eating again.

The present magician is grandson of the man who caused the food shortage, and while I was in the village the gardens again showed signs of failure. The bananas were not growing as they normally did, and there were an unusual number of rats and other pests in the gardens. The chiefs convened a meeting of the villagers, at which the magician and other men with special gardening magic closely questioned each other and other men. As none of them had any reason to be angry, and as it was known that none of them owned the magic of rats (and here there was a long digression into the ancestry of each man to make sure that none had inherited such specialty), the meeting concluded that the problem lay elsewhere. Some hours of further discussion ended with the consensus that the cause very likely lay with the women (I should add that several attended the meeting and joined the discussion). Obviously some of them had been going to the gardens while they were menstruating.

That night the magician publicly reminded the women that they must be careful to observe the taboos while they were "looking at the moon". I believe he also made magic. The upshot was that there was no further obvious concern about the gardens, and as far as I know they were growing well when I left.

I might add that that time there had been an inordinate amount of rain. The previous year the normal dry season and south-east winds had arrived some months late. At this stage, however, villagers were not concerned to approach the rain man with accusations of fouling things up (cf: Weiner 1977:30 on the Trobriands).

The wallaby magician's role is not nearly so important. I suspect that it has decreased with the introduction of shotguns. It seems that in the past, when nets and spears were used the wallaby magician (puro'o hauna) made his magic calling on his ancestors to draw the wallaby to the hunting lands, and went himself to the area a day earlier than the hunters. He would make his magic and mark the trees to which they should tie their nets. The hunt augured well if the first animal was caught in his net.

Today, when hunters take their shotguns to the bush, they first visit the wallaby man bringing him betelnut and other gifts. He makes the magic in his own home and remains there all day until they return. He does not walk about, nor does he do any work, nor do the women of his household undertake any cleaning up that day. They may cook, but rubbish must lie where it falls until the hunters return.

Work, walking about and clearing up rubbish in some way negates the magic. The wallaby become restless and move away from the hunting area. There is some similarity between this idea, and the notion that sorcerers should do no work while they are ritually fasting and building up their powers.

There are various degrees of ability to control the weather. Some men are "sky men", kupa haukia, and have powers over the very sun itself and the ability to induce major electrical storms and near hurricane winds. Such a one was Eroro Paraha, long since dead, and still spoken of with awe, who conjured up the series of storms that swept the beach away and caused the land to retreat by as much as a mile. It is only now, they say, that he has been long enough gone for

his bones and skull to crumble into dust, that the village is beginning to improve again.

For various reasons Eroro Paraha's children did not inherit the magic, and the only man with any power over the weather in the community today is the abara hauna, or rain man. Although he is not believed to be as strong as Eroro Paraha, it is still absolutely essential, prior to any sort of party, feast, or lengthy journey by canoe, to take a few gifts to him: betel mixture, tobacco, a dollar perhaps, and some Bex powder - the last is a necessity. The areca nuts should be the dark red, hard type, the colour of fire, the sun and heat. He shares them with the aua of his ancestors. No ordinary man may eat areca of this type once they have been dedicated to the magic.

He ensures that the rain stays off and hurries any clouds that appear on to Moresby. Villagers say that he has a bundle of special leaves suspended over a vessel of water. He lowers the leaves into the water when he wishes to bring rain. To stop it he lights a special fire to encourage the sun to emerge; and to chase the clouds he stands in the centre of the village and invokes his ancestors to blow. People say that if you call his name while he is chasing clouds, he will fall down. If there is a big occasion coming up, he pointedly asks the organisers some days prior to the event, when it is to be - a reminder that the weather has to be stilled.

On one occasion it was pouring with rain when we had a party. The weather magician and his grandson were sitting on a platform near their house, and the boy scolded his grandfather, "Here it is raining. The boys and girls are trying to enjoy themselves, and you

just sit there smoking and chewing betelnut. Can't you stop the rain?" The old man sent his grandson off to the party saying "Don't worry, it will finish!" The rain eased and a short time later the host sent four dollars and a dozen areca nut to the old man. The rain ceased soon afterwards.

One of the organisers of the party, a 25-year old heretic, said later, "I was very upset: we wasted those things for nothing. Only fifteen minutes and the rain ended. People send him things and he gets more power. He's not God to control the rain!" Of course there are plenty of others who would argue that the rain would have continued if the gifts had not been presented.

Louise Aitsi of Rapa village has written a short account of the part she had to play as the granddaughter of a rainmaker (L.Aitsi 1973). Some time prior to a feast of succession for a young chief, she was taken into the club house where she had to eat special foods, was given daily warm baths, and her body rubbed with coconut oil and red clay then dressed in new grass-skirts and shell and dog-teeth jewellery.

She was, in other words, robe. She was confined in this manner for a month, when her grandfather became angry at the behaviour of some men and ordered her to be washed with cold water and covered with soot. He then paraded her in public at the front of the men's house, and the villagers grew afraid, knowing that it would rain thus forcing cancellation of the feast.

Two large pigs were quickly brought to him (Ms Aitsi does not say who provided them). He accepted them, explained his anger and then took his granddaughter back inside the clubhouse. Preparations continued.

As I noted earlier, succession to all named offices is normally by primogeniture. During May and June 1974 we had a good deal of unseasonable rain. It would start and stop, and at one stage continued almost unceasingly for eleven days. During this time it was thought that the rain magician's grandson was practising the art preparatory to inheriting. One young man asserted that he unexpectedly came across the grandson at his practice one day, and fled in fear.

Conclusion:

This has not been a complete account of the religion of the Roro. I mentioned nothing of Christianity, followed by all in the community today; nor do I mention parts that are no longer in evidence - such as the great masks, kaivakuku, brought out to police a taboo placed on certain types of food prior to a feast; and I have hardly touched on processes of divination and curing. Rather I have been concerned to show something of the relationship between religion and leadership, how the prominent individuals are those who have inherited the magic and the power objects which enable them to draw on the resources of the spirit world for the benefit, normally, of everybody.

Of the three categories of leaders the chief is politically the most important. Representing his clan at feasts and meetings, responsible for the welfare of his people, he is the pivot of the sub-clan.

It is probable that the chief possesses magical powers in his own right as one of the specialists. Although all chiefs enjoy considerable influence beyond their own sub-clan, ownership of a specialist power provides a boost. His position is further entrenched through the backing of his personal sorcerer, his protector, and thus the most powerful leadership in the community is that of the chief in partnership with the sorcerer - the man most closely in touch with the cosmos.