

RELIGIOUS TEXTS TRANSLATION SERIES

# NISABA

VOLUME EIGHT

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RELIGIOUS TEXTS  
OF THE ORAL TRADITION  
FROM WESTERN NEW-GUINEA

*(Irian Jaya)*

PART B

THE THREAT TO LIFE  
AND ITS DEFENCE AGAINST  
“NATURAL” AND “SUPERNATURAL” PHENOMENA

COLLECTED AND TRANSLATED BY

FREERK C. KAMMA Ph. D.



E. J. BRILL—LEIDEN—1978

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EDITED BY

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NISABA is the name of the Sumerian goddess of vegetation and writing, whose symbol is the calamus (the instrument with which the writing was impressed on the soft clay) on an altar. The Sumerians were the first people to use writing, for keeping accounts and, by extension, inter alia, as a substitute for the oral tradition. For this reason, the goddess has been given pride of place here.

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## PREFACE

1. The title of this second volume of the religious texts from the oral tradition of New-Guinea (Irian Jaya) differs slightly from the one announced in the first volume. During the arranging of the material it became clear that it would be impossible to include all these myths in one volume. Another fact also became obvious: the separation of threat and defence and the distinction between "natural" and "supernatural" could not be drawn strictly. We have therefore placed these terms between inverted commas.

We should also explain, that as far as undifferentiated societies are concerned, all the main aspects of culture—social, religious and economic—are included and play their role in all important occurrences. Therefore a 'religious' happening has its social-economic consequences and economic events and undertakings have their religious and social complements. Nevertheless, one may of course select myths in which natural or supernatural phenomena play a major role. The next volume will therefore deal with the "supernatural" features that have their "natural" threat to and defence of life as their accompanying aspects.

This third volume will emphasize the special role of black and white magic, the belief in and influence of the Supreme Being, ancestor worship and the meaning of secret societies as means of protecting life and promoting welfare and well-being.

2. For help in the preparation of the present volume I owe many thanks to friends already mentioned in the preface of the first volume including Bothoff, Galis, Griffioen and Hoogerbrugge; cf. the sources mentioned in the notes. My now alas late friend and colleague Rev. H. J. Teutscher

provided me with texts about the floods, and the material inherited from the late missionary F. J. F. van Hasselt has also been of use. Furthermore I wish to express my gratitude to Raphael den Haan and, especially, to the Minister of Internal Affairs who gave permission to quote from the unpublished Notes and Memories of Transfer from W. J. H. Kouwenhoven, F. R. J. Eibrink Jansen and W. Zevenbergen (cf. the bibliography in this volume).

Last but not least many thanks to Dr. Siegfried Zöllner, who wrote his thesis about the religion of the Yali-people of the mountain area, and who was so kind as to permit me to publish texts about the tree of life, and the great land-slides and dragon-snakes of the tribe among which he spent about 14 years as a missionary (cf. Section III, 1-4).

My gratitude also to Frank Hubatka, reader in Cultural Anthropology at the Theological High School in Abepura (Irian Jaya) who sent me four different texts relating to the origin of the Yotefa-Bay, the result of research he undertook with a team of his students in that area. Together with the material I collected and that published by Dr. K. W. Galis they form a remarkable collection of different versions from the same people. I have translated them under the title "Paradise lost" (cf. this volume Section II 2 a-g).

3. I have often inserted an explanation or even complete sentences between brackets after a word. The intention is: 1. To give a version in the local language or a translation of the native word used. 2. To explain a situation and give names not explicitly mentioned in the texts. 3. To give information without which the texts would be unclear or hardly comprehensible. These words falling under 2 and 3 do not of course occur in the original texts.

4. The importance of these stories and elaborate narratives is obvious: only the older people remember them now and everyday problems distract the younger generation from undertaking research in this field. Therefore material collected long ago is becoming more and more important.

The problem of the great floods or deluges fascinates many scholars, some of them go so far that they even try to date them. The deluges are supposed to have taken place 6.500 B.C., or 2.104 B.C., but nobody is able as yet to do more than speculate. Whether we may expect more is very doubtful. In the meantime the publication of the texts that are still available is the least we can do. I sincerely hope that the present volume will fill a small gap as far as the former New Guinea (now Irian Jaya) is concerned.

The translation of nearly the whole collection was checked by Miss C. Goor who spent many years in Australia and is now a teacher of English. Mrs. Van Baaren of Groningen undertook the revision of the language except for the myth-cycle of "Paradise lost" in the polishing of which H. J. van der Poll and his wife once again assisted. I am very thankful to all of them. I hope the result will not fall too far short of the expectations aroused by the title of the series.



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## SECTION ONE

### THE DELUGES (FLOODS)

#### I.1. *The God creator destroys mankind*<sup>1</sup> (*endeavour at perfection*)

The God creator Tefafu (in the South) found two human beings and they told him they were born out of the eggs of a lizard. The two of them married and got offspring so in due time many human beings crowded the earth.<sup>2</sup>

But unfortunately they were far from perfect: they had very big ears, their skin was scaly and they had a very big scrotum; they were very disobedient and did not give honour to Tefafu. Tefafu himself saw clearly that these people, the offspring of the marriage between a brother and his own real sister, were not in conformity with his own appearance as they were meant to be.

Therefore he selected two children, a boy and a girl and put the two in a bamboo-tube. After that he caused a huge fire and annihilated the whole of mankind by this fire. After the fire he caused a monstrous flood, a huge deluge of water, which covered the whole earth. The two children in their bamboo tube, however, escaped: they floated on the surface of the big flood and drifted away safely.

When the deluge subsided and the earth became dry again, the two children lived on the earth once more; in the course of time they married and multiplied until there were many people again.

But their appearance and attitude had not yet improved and they annoyed the God Tefafu so badly that once more he destroyed the whole of mankind by a deluge except

two children who escaped in a bamboo tube. After the earth became dry again the same events took place once more: they married and multiplied, but this time the result was as bad as the first and the second time: human beings were still imperfect; they annoyed God Tefafu and he reacted in the same way: He destroyed all human beings by fire and water. For the third time two children were rescued; they escaped the fire and the deluge and became the ancestors of the new people. And lo, after three times of catastrophe the human beings were really changed. Tefafu saw that this kind of people was perfect. Therefore he was satisfied, and he let them grow and multiply until there were very many.

The Jairs and the Kombays are descendants of those perfect people.

I.2. *The God Tefafu as the envious creator  
destroys perfect mankind*<sup>3</sup>

The people created by the God Tefafu were in the beginning very handsome and perfect. They did not know sickness (and death?) nor defectiveness or evil. This situation made Tefafu envious and offended him. Therefore he decided to put an end to this state (of bliss) in which mankind lived thus far. He would destroy them all except two of them. These two were a man and a woman, a brother and sister. He put the two of them in a bamboo tube and after this he brought about an enormous deluge, which covered the whole surface of the earth. Every human being perished in this flood except the man and the woman in the bamboo tube, which floated and stuck at last in the branches of a casuarine tree and the two of them knocked on the inside of the bamboo tube. Tefafu, the God who was swimming along

the surface of the earth perceived the knocking and he opened the tube.

He ordered the man and the woman (to dwell on the drying earth) and to marry and to get as many offspring as possible.

The man objected to this, saying this proposal was impossible, because he and the woman were real brother and sister. Tefafu, however, reassured the man and set his mind at ease by saying that his objection did not matter. And so they married.

All human beings, now living on the surface of the earth are offspring of these two humans: a brother and his (real) sister.<sup>4</sup> Tefafu was now satisfied and went to sleep, because he saw that the human beings were not perfect (any more). They had sickness and diseases, their defects were visible and they were evil.

I.3. *Kamberap, culture-hero:  
the pig celebrations and the flood*<sup>5</sup>

Kamberap was once a human being and married. But his wife deceived him several times, therefore he left her behind and went to stay with his brother-in-law who was married to his two sisters.<sup>6</sup>

Accidentally he discovered the sago tree and taught his sisters how to prepare food out of the pulp of this tree.<sup>7</sup> They did as they were told, but at the evening meal he did not join them in eating, but sneaked away. Several days it happened like this, but his sisters found out that a pig had eaten of the sago tree and their husband put a snare and caught the thief: his brother-in-law. At that time Kamberap disclosed his secret: he was in reality a pig, and he wanted to show them how this happened. He asked for

several ingredients, made a pig of them and metamorphosed himself into a real pig. He was, however, able to speak and so he told his kinsfolk how to prepare the pig celebration, to invite people in order to get "ots" (cawry-shells) from them.<sup>8</sup>

So people shot him with arrows, but his soul lived still in his body. Therefore in succession a man Woktun (lizard), Wa Juri (lory) and Munggu (the red parrot) tried to grasp the soul, but their hands only got dirty with blood; afterwards these animals got a red colour. At last Katinget (a kind of lizard) succeeded in getting hold of the soul of Kumberap, the primal pig.

The guests now cut the body of Kamberap into small pieces and prepared the "jok" (a special Muyu dish, in which the pieces of pig meat were laid between layers of tree bark and in this manner roasted on a fire). Everything being ready, they ate to their hearts' content. But they had forgotten to provide water, indispensable when one eats jok. In the neighbourhood there was no water to be seen, but a man, whose name was Andamop (dog) went in search of water and after he had found it he quenched his thirst and he returned to eat with renewed appetite. After a while he once more went away to drink water while the other had to go on eating the dry foodstuff with great difficulty.

When Andamop went for the third time, however, someone went after him in order to play the spy. This being was named Kerepon (a forest lizard, difficult to catch sight of). Kerepon followed Andamop and he, too, quenched his thirst, but then he returned to the other guests and informed all of them. Immediately they went in order to drink, with Kerepon in the lead as a guide. He showed them a bit of water welling up from under the stem of a plant named

Toromop (a kind of tuber still to be found on the banks of the river Kao. Keladi, Indonesian word, *Colocasia antiquorum*). With their hands all the people now started to pull at the Toromop plants, in order to get more water, and they succeeded and quenched their thirst, but by now the water started to become a stream. As this stream overwhelmed them they tried to lay a dam, but at that time the flood became too strong and that dam burst. After this failure the people retreated, went back to the higher grounds and tried again to cast up a much greater barrage, but this dam, too, was burst by the still-growing power of the flood, so they had to fly and try again.

Together with the current of water, fishes found their way to them. In the beginning only small ones but later on the bigger fishes came too. At last they saw still far away, but clearly to be seen an enormous "ikan baung" (*Bagridae*) coming in their direction. As quickly as possible they prepared a fish spear with a cassowary nail as head. With this big spear the people tried to spear the giant fish, but they only alarmed the fish and he swam swift as an arrow upstream sucking in his wake all the other fishes with him.

And, while the guests started an argument among themselves about the question who must be blamed for this stupidity: to lose the hardly-gained water by chasing away the big fish and all the other smaller ones, they heard a great noise coming from a far distance as if a big rain poured down in torrents. And lo, there it came: the big fish swiftly nearing and swimming back to them, but in his wake an enormous wall of water ...

The guests tried to build a dam against this threat while they were singing their magic song against the water, but in vain and at last everyone present, all buildings and the not

yet finished favoured dish, the jok, were swept away by the catastrophic flood of water. The only ones who were not swept away were the seven who had stayed behind in order to keep watch over the lower quarter of the body of Kamberap. They fled taking with them the meat of the primal pig. Their names are still remembered; they were: Kapekainok, Gowujop, Mindin, Umban, Kaunip, Nember, Kajuwu with his wife Bom and his little son Jambina.

These seven escaped from the terrible deluge and then they remembered the instructions Kamberap had given them and they cut the awon quarter of the sacred Kamberap pig into two parts. These parts multiplied themselves and in this manner awon piglets were born. When these young animals grew to maturity, the seven men arranged a pig celebration exactly as they had witnessed the first one they joined. And this way of pig celebration they taught to their offspring. The place where the second pig celebration was held is on the banks of river Kao also, more exactly: near the village of Mirikpa.

The place of the first pig feast is Djenemutu near the upper reaches of the river Kao, namely Muyu and Mandobo appointed as the original place of the pig celebration.

As a result of the flood just mentioned the people of the Kao-banks, the Muyu and Mandobo, especially the older generation are convinced that river Kao, the first river, is, therefore, the mother of all rivers. All other rivers and the high seas, too, are, according to their point of view only derived waters, which originated after and were caused by the huge flood of the river Kao.

Furthermore, another expectation exists in the area under discussion namely: those swept away by the force of the big flood and who are perhaps still living in a far-away country, will one day return to the area near the river Kao.

The remains of the great dam, or weir the guests of the great pig celebration threw up (raised), trying to stem the flood of the river Kao are still to be seen.

Another very remarkable custom was caused by the legend of the first pig celebration; a custom known to every ship's captain, who ever navigated his vessel on the precarious waters of the river Kao. When the level of the river water is too low and the boat (vessel) is not able to continue her voyage, there is, according to the inhabitants of the said area, only one remedy—regularly put into practice—to raise the water-level namely: the submerging of a pig's skull in the water of the river Kao. This custom originated in the belief that, just as in primeval times the deluge hit the guests joining in the first pig celebration, nowadays the banjir will be attracted by the pig's skull.<sup>9</sup>

#### I.4. *The "sacred" crocodile and the threat of the Deluge in Arso*<sup>10</sup>

##### *The narrative*

In former times the people of Sawiatawi made their meals by kindling a fire, and laying the breadfruits on top of the smouldering embers, and when they returned in the evening the bread-fruits were ready to be consumed.

Once, however, they returned from their labour, found the fire extinguished, while the bread-fruits were still green. Nobody understood how this could happen. The next day the same thing happened and the day after was not any better. Everybody agreed that this could not go on like this, so on a certain day some of the men prepared the fire as usual with the bread-fruits on top of the wood; they went away, but sneaked back and hid themselves behind the

reeds on the bank of the river with their fire and the bread-fruits in clear sight.

And lo, not long thereafter the water in the river Tami started to whirl, caused by a gigantic crocodile, whose body was covered with cassowary — like feathers at his skin and he broke the surface of the river.

He went to the burning fire and extinguished it by urinating on it. Having done this the crocodile returned to the river again.

The two friends hiding in the reeds saw what had happened and when their relatives came back home they told them everything.

According to a common decision every (able) man hid in ambush the next day. The fire was kindled again, bread-fruit was laid on top of it to be roasted. Everybody pretended to go to his garden, but in reality they went into hiding between the reeds of Tami river bank. And lo, the crocodile appeared again, but before he could perform his desire, namely to extinguish the fire, the whole population attacked him and killed him with their arrows.

Thereafter they cut this strange, huge crocodile into pieces and the women-folk built a fire in order to cook the meat of the crocodile. In the meantime (after all this had happened) two men, named Narowo and Woenonbwam returned from a hunting trip in the forest. From far away they saw a big fire and heard the noise in their village. As fast as they could they ran to see what was going on. Arriving in the village they saw their men slaughtering the big crocodile and a great and deep sadness took possession of their hearts, because they saw that the gigantic crocodile was their friend "Watoewa" of the river Tami.

People offered them some parts of the crocodile meat

but they refused, they only wanted to get the kölöb (testicles) of the animal. The two friends namely were the only ones who knew of the existence of Watoewa. And the crocodile already had told them that once upon a time people should kill him and when this happened they had to take his kölöb (testicles) and keep them, because Watoewa told them after he had been killed, the water, a flood, would rise (on the surface of the earth) and everybody would perish. Only his two friends Narowe and Woenonbwam, could be saved on condition that they should succeed in laying hold of the kölöb of Watoewa.

After Narowe and Woenonbwam received the kölöb they made haste in preparing everything for the imminent disaster.

Each of them persuaded his sister to join them. Narowe, however, tried to convince his mother, too, but she refused, saying: it would be much better for him to join the people in the celebration (of their victory) and in the eating of the crocodile meat.

Meanwhile the village people had divided the body of the crocodile into pieces and were preparing to cook the meat in a big cooking pot. But, lo, as soon as they had put the cooking pot on the fire, the pot filled itself with water and nothing of the meat was left. Only the kölöb, saved by Narowe and Woenonbwam, remained intact.

In the meantime the two friends had completed everything the crocodile had advised them to do, i.e. they had woven three voluminous bags from genimoe rope<sup>11</sup> and filled one of them with newly born animals, of each kind a couple. The other one with birds of each species a couple, and the third one with seeds and a cutting from each kind of plants.

Having this ready the two men called their sisters, Narowe his sister named Göbänä, and Kwobaroo the sister of

Woenonbwam, and when they came, the four of them, taking with them the three bags and a quantity of sago flour and meat, climbed a (tall) coconut tree.

Meanwhile the rain started to pour down, accompanied by thunder and lightning and at the same time out of the earth water came in great amounts and this water was very hot and it rose faster and faster. The people on earth started to yell and to cry, and they ran like madmen hither and thither, but there was nothing they were able to do.

The water continued to rise and at last pulled the tree with its roots out of its setting, namely the tree in the top of which Narowe, Woenonbwam, Kwobaroe and Gōbānā were sitting. The tree remained afloat, though the water still rose and it was burning hot, but it did not harm them: de kölōb (testicles) of Watoewa, which Narowe had in a small bag around his neck, protected them. And the water still rose and it was whirling (in outbursts of waves), so vehemently that nobody could escape. Everything living on the surface of the earth thus far: human beings, animals, trees and plants were scorched and destroyed.

The coconut tree with Narowe and Woenonbwam and the two women just floated on the surface and landed at last on the top of the mountain Sangkaria where the tree remained quiet.<sup>12</sup>

The people in the top of the tree now descended and landed with everything they brought with them. Narowe planted his cane in the ground and took everything out of the tree. The cane of gaba-gaba (made from the stem of a sago-palm leaf) took root and grew into a sagopalm tree. Narowe never cut that tree and now (1947) a colossal sagopalm tree is still growing in Sangkaria, as the people told the writer (Kouwenhoven). When the tree has blossomed a new sprout grows

out of the old one, and becomes a real sagopalm tree. The coconut tree, the "vessel" for the four still living people for so many days took root once more and is still growing on. It must still be there on the same spot, only its leaves have changed.

On the mountain top Narowe and Woenonbwam met three persons, they were men; their names, however, they could not get from them, and the same holds true for their place of origin. They (only) said they were friends of Watoewa, the crocodile.

Meanwhile the earth was not yet quiet again. Earthquake after earthquake made the mountain Sangkaria shake and shudder the whole day. Only at sunset did the earth quieten down.

The seven persons on the mountain kindled a big fire that first night and in the blaze they threw lumps of clay, which became red-hot.<sup>13</sup> These blazing pieces they threw into the water during the whole night. When dawn came they saw the water had subsided and nearly gone. The three strangers on the mountain Sangkaria prepared themselves in order to leave. They told Narowe and Woenonbwam that the two of them and their offspring in the future, could own the land that lay at their feet. Furthermore, they gave three (sacred) bamboo flutes i.e. the Gör, Koraij and the Muve as a farewell present (too). Whereupon the three men flew away in the direction they mentioned. Which direction and what aim they had in mind nobody knows. (Later on the narrators, whilst telling this story, did not neglect to complain about this fact. They said: "If the three men who could fly had not left our ancestors, possibly all human beings would have been able to fly instead of stumbling along the rough surface of the earth").

Who stayed behind were as we saw Narowe, Woenonbwam and the two women along with the three bamboo flutes, the gift of the three men. On that same day Narowe let loose a bird Naojo (the lory) in order to investigate what had happened to (the other parts of) the world and what was left of it. The lory flew around, surveying the world. The bird came back and told Narowe the earth was a disconsolate place to behold, there was nothing but a mud plain: bare and flat. Everything: mountains, forests, woods, human beings and animals had disappeared.

Hereupon Narowe took a piece of iron-wood and threw this as far as he could into the (barren) plain at his feet. After that he descended from the mountain in order to feel with his feet how dry the earth had become. She was muddy though. Narowe now took out of one of his bags a pair of pigs, a male and a female and two bush kangaroos, a male and a female, too, and let them loose. They were able to live in the mud.

On the same day Narowe and his friend Woenonbwam agreed about the question of their own marriage: they would marry each other's sister. Thus Narowe got Woenonbwam's sister Kwobaroe and Woenonbwam married Narowe's sister Göbänä.

Narowe now went on and planted a sago tree sprout and a coconut, which he had in one of his bags. He planted them at the foot of the mountain in the mud so that in the course of time the four of them would have something to eat.

The next day the bird Naojo flew away once more and this time she returned with a leaf of the iron-wood tree (tiom). The piece of iron-wood Narowe had thrown away the day before, had taken root and had already grown into a mature

iron-wood tree. Now Narowe was able to let all the birds fly away.

First the black and white feathered morningbird (k**ö**b), the first one awake, flew away. He had the voice of a chicken. The second one was the real morning bird naojo; his voice is flute-like with beautiful intervals (Naojo, k**ö**b and noewe are the most important birds in this area). That day the earth became already much drier than the day before; therefore Narowe set more animals free. Some, usually living in trees, were still kept awhile.

He sowed all the seeds and planted the sprouts he had taken with him in the plain-ground.

When he saw that everything started to grow well he turned all the animals he had brought with him loose: the birds, the tree kangaroos and all the others.

Meanwhile the wives of Narowe and Woenonbwam bore each one of them a son. They gained in weight, became mature and then Narowe taught them how to dance. They had to adorn themselves with the plumes of the cassowary bird on their heads and to paint their bodies with patterns. These patterns, diamond-form, imitated the scales of Watoewa, and so were the cassowary plumes an imitation of the skin of the Watoewa crocodile. Furthermore the dancers had to decorate themselves with feathers and young palm leaves.

After the two women gave birth to two children called the "Jejonguwai", they brought forth each of them again a son: the "Aofrai", furthermore each one had once more a son: the "Janggos". These new sons had to learn how to dance and to wear their decorations and "imitation skin". Narowe was the one who taught them. However, Narowe

and Woenonbwam were not able to perform in this manner, as every time they tried to use the plumes of the cassowary bird the plumes started to grow until they reached the high heaven. That was the reason why they only watched the performances of the youngsters which they enjoyed.

In the meantime the earth had improved so much that it could be called good, except that it lacked human beings. Therefore Narowe collected wild banana-shrubs and laid them down next to each other, but he took care of his disposition; a big one had to be placed next to a smaller one. He said that these trees had to become human beings and lo, when the sun set and it became dark an evermore stronger noise of voices arose. The banana-trees had changed themselves into humans. The big ones were now men and the smaller ones women.<sup>14</sup>

The next morning Narowe invited them to come together in couples, and to each couple he gave seeds and saplings of all plants and trees (they needed to survive) and he sent them away, each couple to a different place, in order to settle down there, to be fruitful and to multiply. The seeds and saplings they had were to be planted in order to get gardens and arable land.

And so they did, they went away each couple to the appointed place. The couple walking to Koewini lost their sago sprouts on their way but they discovered the loss at the time they arrived. This is the reason why until this day there is no sago at Koewini, and the people of Arso have to help them to get some sago.

After all the foregoing happened and was arranged, Narowe finished his activities and decided together with Woenonbwam and the two women to withdraw themselves from the scene. In order to accomplish this end they disappeared into a

hole in the mountain Sangkaria. His sons, they were already married at that time, stayed and lived in the neighbourhood of the mountain and from them the tribe Tafoer originated. The oldest son of Narowe, one of the two Jejonguwai, got from his father the small bag with the testicles of the crocodile, which he kept in his house.

Life on earth was now good and happy. There was no need for the men to work very hard and yet they lived in abundance. They had only to go to the river and on their way they met several pigs, which they could catch easily. Work in the garden was not necessary, because (everything) grew easily all by itself, they only had to reap the harvest.

Only the women-folk complained because they had to do hard work: harvesting, cooking and roasting the pig meat etc. They suspected a secret, and thought it must be in the small bag already mentioned. On a certain day the women opened the bag and saw what they thought must be some small stones. But these stones started to grow. When the men came home they discovered that their secret was violated by the women. The guilty women confessed and got a spanking with a piece of firewood, but the worst thing had already happened, and with it the easy time came to an end. From that time on the men had to work very hard to get their daily food. They had to roam in the forest, stumbling over tree roots, entangled in the rattan with its sharp thorns and the lianas, in order to catch a pig (on wearisome hunting-trips).

Meanwhile the testicles grew more and more; the men had placed them in a water bucket, and from rattan they made strings to hang them in the sacred men's-house, where they were at least guarded by the single youngsters who lived there. From then on it was forbidden even for the

grown-up men to open the package, because, as they said, if this should take place, the waterflood, the deluge would come again and would destroy the earth for the second time. It is for this reason that the rattan wound around the package has never been taken away. Instead of changing the old for new ones, they just added the new rattan around the old, and used a new bag, too.

When the Tafoer moved further on to Arso, they took the package with the testicles along with them, too.

In the course of time the package became bigger and bigger and had now a width of 1.20 m. They ended with building a special house for the bag and hid this house behind the other buildings in the village. They were afraid lest a stranger should get the idea of opening the bag and the second deluge would inevitably happen and threaten their lives. Some strangers, however, saw the bag and Japanese too, but none of them revealed the secret and so the secret bag is still in the possession of the Arso-people, and with this secret they guard the fate of the world.<sup>15</sup>

(About the meaning of the testicles as a source of life and well-being and prosperity cf. the notes).<sup>16</sup>

I.5. *The limits of a revenge neglected,  
resulting in a Deluge*<sup>17</sup>

(Kungu, the culture hero of Senggi had lost the moon he once possessed through the carelessness of his brother-in-law. His two wives tried to kill him by putting poison in his food).

Kungu refused to take revenge and, moreover, his two wives each bore him a child. The older woman bore him Kelébi, the younger bore him a daughter, called Noad.

Just in front of his house grew a huge iron-wood tree with an extra-ordinary big top, called Manda.

At one side of the house was a river, the Masa, which at the opposite bank formed a lake, Por by name. In the middle of this lake a great sago tree had grown, called Bata.

It happened that the sister of Kungu had two sons, living in another village; the two boys were already grown up, and these two youngsters were invited by Kungu to cut the iron-wood tree in front of Kungu's house. After their arrival the boys got a meal first, and then they started to erect a scaffolding around the tree and began to chip the tree. Meanwhile Kungu went to the forest (as usual for a hunting-trip).

In the afternoon (when the sun had nearly reached the tree-tops) about four o'clock, the giant tree fell to the ground with a thunderous noise, scattering its fruits here and there around it. One of these fruits even fell just before the feet of (the hunting) Kungu, who picked up the fruit and put it in his carryier bag; then he went home.

At his home, however, the two youngsters, having finished their task, killed the two wives of their uncle (mabr) by bowshot, being the revenge for the attempted murder of their uncle with the poisoned food they had served him.

They were already far away (on their home-journey) when Kungu arrived home where he was met by his two weeping children. He then saw what had happened, and although from their point of view he could approve the revenge of his sisters sons,<sup>18</sup> he decided in this case they had overdone the whole matter and this had to be punished.

He told his two children to seek for a high mountain and on that mountain the highest tree they could find, in the top of which they had to build a cabin. For himself he started

to hollow out the trunk of the collapsed iron-wood tree. When he had finished the job and had made a hole (big enough) he crawled inside it and then he beseeched the sago palm Bata to let the water of the lake rise. This happened: the water rose and rose until at last all the trees and mountains were covered by the flood and everything and everybody drowned. After forty days the deluge subsided and Kungu, with his tree (boat), landed in Wombe again. His children had survived the deluge, too.

Thereafter Kungu stayed and lived in his tree. His son Kelébi was sent to a place called Senggi, where he became the ancestor of one of the tribes, and his daughter Noad he ordered to go to the Molof people.

The fruit of his iron-wood tree, he had still kept with him, he now planted on the same spot where once the huge tree in front of his former house stood, and this fruit grew into a iron-wood tree, which is still to be seen in that place.

§ 1.6. *Cohabitation punished by a rain of ashes  
and a torrent of water*<sup>19</sup>

In former times only two human beings lived on the earth, namely: Kasuitemu, a male and Bawa his wife. Further there were no people at all, only animals: pigs, dogs, cassowaries and the like. It was forbidden for the man and the woman to cohabit and therefore they did not multiply. Kasuitemu saw from his dogs and his domesticated pigs that they mated and got offspring. So in his heart the desire grew to cohabit with his wife, too. At last he told his wife Bawa of his longing, but only her indignation was roused and she refused flatly. She knew that if the two of them

should agree to their desire, the world with everything living on it would perish and he knew it too, did he not? But at last, after an argument and a severe quarrel with her husband, she yielded and the two of them cohabited. The next day, however, suddenly the sky became cloudy and dark, and it became darker more and more, notwithstanding the sun was still in the sky. A torrent (rain) of ashes descended on the earth and covered everything. The sky became even more dark and the rain of ashes increased vehemently.

There was no thunderstorm or lightning. Then suddenly water started bubbling out of the ground (earth). It spread itself more and more and started to rise.

Kasutemu and Bawa hastily prepared the platform of their house with sago tree leaves and branches of wild brushwood. They brought food and valuables upstairs to protect it from the rising flood; at last they, too, ascended while the water rose and rose. But the surface of the water rose even more until it reached the attic on which the two people were sitting.

Being at their wit's end they demolished the roof of the house and by doing this the ceiling beams freed themselves from the walls of the house and could float on the surface of the water. During a considerable time they floated around, the surface of the water still rising until it covered the trees and at last the mountains, demolishing and destroying everything on earth.

It became evening and night fell and the married couple spent that night still on their raft. The next morning the raft was still afloat, but the surface of the water appeared to have subsided while the raft suddenly stuck somewhere. The two people supposed they had landed, but they had

not yet the courage to debark from their raft, because around them there was only water to be seen. When at last the water fell, more clearly Kasuitemu perceived they had landed on a hilltop. The water dropped more and more, but even now there was not yet any land in sight. The sky became clear meanwhile and the hill on which they had landed seemed to be a mountain.

At nightfall the situation was still the same so the couple decided to spend another night on their raft. The mountain appeared to be the Kruabah (now) westward of the village Benjom.

In that same night Kasuitemu had a dream. In that dream he saw a group of human beings descending from heaven on the top of the Kruabah mountain, and all of them were wearing clothes of fire, like unto the light of the sun and in their midst there was a person much taller than the other ones. This person started to talk to Kasuitemu. He told him that his name was Warikerang and that he was the chief of all these other "spirits", who originally came from the sun.<sup>20</sup>

Kasuitemu should listen carefully to him and obey his orders exactly. He then told him that the deluge would subside more and more and at last disappear completely. Then Kasuitemu and his wife were to leave the mountain and to settle in a place appointed by Warikerang. Kasuitemu would have power over all those areas of land.

He should cohabit again with his wife and she would bear him 8 children: four boys and four girls. These 8 children then had to marry each other, and settle in different places appointed by Warikerang, and they in their turn would get 8 children and so on. To each of them a plot of land would be appointed.

After he had given these instructions Warikerang and his spirits disappeared. The following day Kasuitemu told his dream to Bawa.

It took two more days and nights before the deluge disappeared completely and on the third day, this time in broad daylight, Warikerang with his other persons (spirits) appeared again; not in a dream any more but in reality; they were dressed in garments of fire. They gave instructions to Kasuitemu and Bawa to collect their possessions and lo, before they were really aware of it, they were already standing at the foot of the mountain. The surface of the earth appeared to be waste and nothing but mud. The deluge had swept away all trees, plants and animals.

Warikerang then appointed to them the area on which they were to live and gave the place the name of Singgi, then he presented some sago flour and tobacco to them.

The sago they were to eat in part and the rest they must scatter around, the tobacco was to be smoked.

Warikerang repeated his predictions and then disappeared together with his ghosts (spirits).<sup>21</sup>

Kasuitemu and Bawa started to eat, and scatter the sago flour and lo, there where they had thrown the flour suddenly sago trees started to grow and so fast, that in no time they became mature trees. The stubs of tobacco which they smoked they threw away and these stumps suddenly changed into cassowary birds. The faeces of the man and woman, which they had thrown down in a hole had changed into pigs the next morning and in this way Kasuitemu and Bawa got plenty of food and had nothing to worry about. The next day the spirits appeared again and they gave to Kasuitemu the seeds from which nowadays all the plants are flourishing, and they were told to sow them to the effect

that the earth should become overgrown. They provided animals, of every kind one pair, to multiply and to inhabit the earth.

Bawa then bore 8 children: 4 boys and 4 girls. And because there were not yet other people around, they intermarried, and each couple got an area appointed to them where they were to settle themselves.

The oldest son and his wife were ordered to a place Warikerang assigned and named Séno (name of a tree blossoming with flowers). The second (son) to Genyèm (ganemu), the third to Imènè (a mountain) and the fourth to Dekening (meaning: the first, they were the first to settle really). Each of these four couples again had 8 children, four sons and four daughters. This time these descendants did not intermarry with their own brothers and real sisters but there were now marriages between cousins and these couples again had 8 children each. This went on and on until the earth was crowded enough; thereafter marriage and bearing of children took place in the same manner as it still happens today.

As long as Kasuitemu and Bawa were alive Warikerang and his spirits descended regularly to the earth. They bestowed valuables,<sup>23</sup> they made life easy for the humans.

Later on however, when the two primeval ancestors died, they did not visit the people on earth anymore, and the people in their turn did not care any more and lived regardless of the commandments of the sun god and his good spirits. They framed their own laws, and at last they did not know any more what they ought to do and what was forbidden. The situation on earth grew worse. Whereas once the people had many pigs and cassowary-birds and other food in abundancy, whilst they could get everything without much

trouble, nowadays life became very hard for them. They had to labour and many things went wrong and they failed. Only by trial and much error could they earn enough food.<sup>23</sup>

I.7. *The "Unknown Father",  
the violated taboo and the Deluge in Nimbora (Nimblong)*<sup>24</sup>

According to the explanations of the older generation the Deluge occurred and started in a village named Burumsman. In this village the inhabitants were merely living happily: they ate and drank, tended their gardens, pounded and rinsed the pith of the sago palm and they hunted. Only one month (every year or: period of time) people sanctified themselves (by a strict taboo) in homage to the "Unknown Father" (of mankind?).

When the time for this month drew near the parents usually admonished their children of the fact that nobody should be excluded on the occasion of the (big) meeting. This assembly should not take place at random places, but had to be organized in the house of the ERAM (the chief). As soon as all (the inhabitants) were assembled the ERAM started to speak and voiced the following message: "On this day all of us have to take care of ourselves together. Nobody is allowed to come close to a female. And the same holds true for the wives and their husbands. We (have to) sanctify ourselves before Our Unknown Father. If (at this time) a husband should cohabit with his wife, certainly all of us will die".

In that period the old folks and parents carefully watched the behaviour of the younger ones, below the age of 35 years. This guarding was exercised by using bow and arrows, and daggers made of the bone of the cassowary bird; even every

man who was found talking to and with a woman was killed that same day. These rules were practiced for many years, they were strictly kept by our ancestors.

But on a certain day it occurred that there was a young girl, who was newly wedded (i.e. the ceremonies were performed) but her marriage was not yet consummated. Each day she sat down and was thinking about the possibility of meeting her husband while she was always watched by her parents-in-law. And thus it happened: she deceived her parents-in-law the next day saying: "Mother, I am sick and I only want to stay at home and sleep, but you two may go to the garden".

At that time her husband was working on a different patch of garden from her parents-in-law. Not long after (after her parents-in-law had left the house) the young woman went away and took the path leading to her husband's garden. She saw that he was busy building a fence; suddenly she appeared in the open and went to her husband, thereupon she embraced him saying: "How can this be between the two of us, we have not yet cohabited, because all the time we are guarded by our fathers and mothers. Now it is the time for the two of us to try the consummation". But her husband was afraid of his wife's proposal and said: "Did not you hear the words the ERAM spoke some days ago? If we two do the wicked act,<sup>25</sup> certainly all of us will suffer the punishment of The Unknown Father". The woman answered: "But not for many times, I want to experience it now, just for one time only". Not long after, the woman persisting in her wish, the husband could no longer resist the suggestions of his wife, and so the two of them cohabited.

At the same time, however, a storm broke loose; rain, lightning and thunder and the day grew dark. Suddenly

water from the bowels of the earth started to well in great torrents out of the holes of the rocks and from the sky, rain fell like buckets of water being emptied, and through these occurrences the small children were drowned by the flood. Then and in the following moments all human beings were drowned and so were the animals. Only two children escaped and lived. These two children, a boy and a girl were brother and sister, (older and younger) they had the same father and mother.<sup>26</sup> The two of them lived in a house without windows and, there was only one door. They had plenty of food, the more because the house was very large indeed (so they could float safely on the surface of the rising waters).

When the water subsided and the earth became dry again, the two of them left the big house and they built a small cabin. Every day the girl ordered her brother to find her another man, but his search was in vain. So the boy told his sister: "Only the two of us have escaped, there are no other people left, only the two of us". Furthermore the woman said to her brother: "Now only the two of us exist, and that's what I suggest, if it is possible, let the two of us marry". But while the woman was saying these words the two of them started to weep as if their hearts would break. And lo, the big house changed into a big rock and there it still stands today. Inside this "stone-house" one could hear a different kind of music: there was a blowing on flutes, others struck gongs, and others sang and all this can be heard even today.<sup>27</sup>

The mountain is about 200 m. high, and on top of it a coconut tree grows, and people are able to climb the top, but if they should do this, certainly all of a sudden the storm would break out, thunder and lightning would be experienced

(once again), and that is why people are afraid to climb that mountain and they refrain from it.

The mountain is (nearly always) covered with white clouds.<sup>2\*</sup>

### I.8. *The Deluge in the Waropen area* <sup>2\*</sup>

According to the myths there existed in primeval times an enormously large village named Risei Sayati. But through the power and terrible anger of the Supreme Being against his creation on the face of the earth, this village split into two sections. The destruction meant here was certainly no other than the deluge of the time of Noah of the biblical history.

In the beginning, before the deluge took place, there were some people who made plans to cut down some big rizophora trees, and they made two rafts, just in time, because as soon as the two rafts were completed, the flood started. At that time the owners of the rafts were able to embark and anchored on the spot. (Not everybody could get a place). But caused by the strength and the force of the waves and the surf the ropes of one of the rafts were torn apart, and the raft was driven here and there, until the tide ebbed again and the passengers found themselves in quite another place. And then and there they debarked and built a village, i.e. Ambumi, (far from Waropen) in the bay of Wondama (Wandammen).

The other raft, however, because its anchorage rope was much stronger, remained on the spot. The raft stayed during the tempest and the flood in the same spot, and as soon as the deluge-waters receded the passengers debarked and built their village Risei-Sayati again, which village nowadays is still in existence.

According to the myth, in that place nowadays the rizophora

wood is to be found but in former times there was a very extensive sago wood. But caused by the deluge all the sago trees were destroyed. Nowadays the whole area consists of swamp all over where only the lolaro trees (tidal forest) grow in the muddy earth. But in spite of the fact that the destructive forces (of nature) had their way, the bakau trees (rhizophora) were used to build the rafts, and there they have remained until this day. From the time of the flood until today the bakau tree is greatly feared. Even the surroundings of the trees are feared and leaves and branches are never touched. The bakau trees referred to are about  $1\frac{1}{4}$  km distant from the village Risei.

Only the other day some labourers, originally coming from Ambumi and now working in Sorong, heard the tale just told about the flood from their parents. When they met inhabitants of Risei among their fellow workmen, they asked for information about "their village of origin" and about the bakau tree. The name of the former village is Faiserabo. According to tradition, human beings who touch the trees will get swellings but no open wounds, only they last long and the whole body deteriorates. The spots of the swellings one gets in the first place are the arm joints and ankles or the fingers will swell. This belief is once more emphasized and (the tree) frightens the people because of the event with two women, (a short while ago). The two of them touched the trees, trying the reality of the fear of the people about the bakau tree, but both became ill; one of them got a swelling of her fingers and the other one got swollen ankles and the joints of her arms swelled up.

Personally I don't fear the tree and I often cut branches of it, but nothing has happened thus far.

I.9. *The retaliation of the ashamed girl:  
a whale caused the Deluge on Japen Island*<sup>30</sup>

In the village, called Serui today, grew in times immemorial a remarkable tree with only two boughs. One of these had one fruit (or became the fruit) namely a stone axe. The other branch, however, bore quite different fruit: a bead of glass having a blue colour.

Under this tree two persons once dwelled whose names we forgot. These two people, a husband and his wife got two children named Andori and Imbajomi. This brother and sister married and to this family a child was born, a daughter to whom they gave the name of Korewui.

On a certain day this girl was put to shame by the Sangé-river people.<sup>31</sup> She grew mad with anger and she called (her friend) the crab fish to the effect that he should give a message to the three sea animals together in power over the whole sea, namely: Arbui, Renai and Sendori<sup>32</sup> to suggest they should order a big whale (sperm-whale, cachalot) to come to the shore. He was to suck up as much seawater as possible and then to swim to the upper course of the river Sangé. There he was to spout the contents of his stomach. And so it happened. When the whale started to spout the seawater it was not long before the whole area was flooded and the torrent overflowed the whole earth.

Only four persons were saved by embarking in their canoe as fast as they could. One of the passengers was Dimaleitafi, and he gave the canoe the name of "Yasi".

The canoe floated for a long time; they drifted hither and thither until the surface of the earth became dry again, "and this happened exactly on the spot where now your house is built".

Thus an informant telling the deluge-story because of the fact last mentioned. The informant of missionary D. C. A. Bout showed a glass-bead (blue): "In former times we believed in the power of this bead. I inherited it from my father, it came into existence on the tree with its two branches".

I.10. *The beneficial King, the Deluge and the origin of the Geelvink-bay and the Island of Biak* <sup>33</sup>

*About the origin of the island of Biak:* 3,000 years ago on the island of Biak a great King named Manyowa ruled the country. His dominion and power were so great that it extended over the whole island of New Guinea. But because of the wickedness of his subjects he brought about a huge torrent; a spate of deluge-like size washed away all the land around Biak the place where Manyowa dwelled, inundating the whole plain (formerly dry level land but by the huge torrent covered with the sea) until it became the great bay nowadays named the Geelvinkbay. In this manner the once-dry land became the (wellknown) sea. The island of Biak itself also sank into the sea, only the hill (former mountain) Sombunem seemed to float on the surface (of the sea). Nearly the whole creation was drowned. At the peak (top) of the Sombunem mountain (Som = worship; bunem = a little bit, a trifle) Manyowa dwelled. Of the total creation drowned and washed away (to every corner of the world) only two people were still alive: a man and a woman. The two of them knew nothing of the existence of the other, but the same thought crossed their minds, i.e.: "I will go and worship a moment". The reason of this idea was: Before the flood everybody believed in his own strength and (life-)power because they were far away from Sombunem,

but in the end all of these human beings were drowned. The two people still alive came safely on dry earth and they went and worshipped Manyova, thereupon they were fostered by Manyova. The "hill" Sombunem grew every day larger and larger, and at last Manyova created an isle and this was named Warmambo by the two human beings. (war = water; mam = look; bo = above) Manyova arranged that the two people stayed together on the hill named Bomandowen. On that hill they lived as husband and wife and they multiplied; at first the (new born) people could be counted in tens but at last there were hundreds of them. The people in that time lived under the protection of Manyova. On the hill of Mandowen they remained for centuries and lived prosperously and peacefully. During that time everything the people got was bestowed upon them by means of prayer. For instance at the time they usually took their meals they sat down at their tables (or: eating-mats) with empty dinner plates and covered them completely. Having done this they prayed for food, fish and vegetables. After the prayer they lifted the covering, and what did they see? Every plate (and bowl) was filled (to the brim), and then they ate this food together. (And thus it went on and on.) And this held good for everything people needed.

On a certain day an important event took place i.e. the big village was divided into two sections according to the river, which forked into two branches near the village of origin. The latter was divided according to the patri-clan which they split into two, and the clan was so large and still contained so many people, that the separated division became a great clan too. The original clan, the Mandowen, remained just where they dwelled from the beginning, and the separated division settled in another place, each clan

was thus settled on the banks of a different river. To the newly-formed clan they gave the name of Burdam.

In the new situation the marriages were arranged openly (and not in a secret manner). When for instance a girl of the clan Burdam wanted to marry a young man of the clan Mandowen, she had to go to the river of the Mandowens and draw water at the appropriate drawing place, which she gave to her parents to drink. What her parents only had to do then was to ask the name of the young man their daughter wanted. The same custom was followed concerning young men. And this went on and on (in a satisfactory way).

On a certain day a youngster of the clan Mandowen wanted to marry a girl from the Burdam clan; this was arranged and the first step was the betrothal. The young man stayed with his parents and the girl likewise remained with her parents.

At a certain time the quiet monsoon came. People paddled their canoes out on the high seas in order to catch fish in the area between the villages Wardo and Kanindi. The young man of Mandowen then asked permission of the parents of his fiancée to let her go and join him on a fishing excursion. The parents agreed. The two of them came back home with a great many fishes. Just on the fringes of the village the accident happened when the two of them would enter the village. The girl said something which aroused the anger of the young man (tired by the paddling), whereupon he drew his chopping knife and killed the girl in one stroke. He placed the corpse against the base of a tree-trunk near the entrance of the village. Furthermore, he went into the village at once and told his mother-in-law to be: "The load (of the fishes) is rather heavy for your daughter, therefore she sits (rests) under the tree near the village entrance".

The mother-in-law believed this lie and she went to see her daughter. "Good gracious" the girl was dead. The next morning the two clans organized a meeting and they sent the greybeards, the ones who use a cane.<sup>34</sup> The governing of the Manyova people was annihilated by bloodshed.

To achieve an agreement between the two opposite partners the Burdam clan sent an old woman using a cane<sup>35</sup> to the Mandowen clan but the Mandowens broke the cane and cut the old woman to death. After that the Mandowen clan sent an old man as an envoy to the people of Burdam, but the Burdam cut his cane and the old man too. Thus it went on and on for 10 times. After this had happened (the great king) Manyova disappeared, nobody knows the place where he went.

After the two groups concerned had sent their envoys 10 times in vain, war was declared. The Mandowen clan promised the Burdam clan: "Tomorrow we will attack". The Burdam clan agreed and the next day war was waged one against the other. After the first day two victims had lost their lives, one on each side. They (all) proclaimed: "tomorrow we will fight again". On that day there fell 10 victims on each side. But the belligerents promised: "Tomorrow we will continue". And so they did. This time there were 100 victims. The two parties said: "Tomorrow we are going to continue". The next day they did and then the number of victims rose to the amount of 1,000 on each side. Then the parties said to each other: "Tomorrow we don't fight any more but disperse, each of us to another area". And the next morning they went indeed, each clan in the direction they wanted. Some of them said: "We want to travel as far as possible so that we can't see the island of Warmambo any more (until the island "sinks" = disappears

from the horizon, the sky-line)". But when they paddled far away and climbed a mountain somewhere they always saw the island of Warmambo emerging (Biak). They said to each other: "Lo, it (the island) is still emerging", or "Biak". That is the reason why people named the island of Warmambo "Biak" (The emerging). But some of the people travelled so far, climbing mountains, row after row on the main land (of New Guinea, Irian) they attained the effect: not to be able to see Biak anymore.<sup>36</sup> Some of them travelled to the West, the East, to the South and the North. They did not want to see their former homeland anymore.

At Bo-Mandowen the place was filled with corpses, but afterwards (later on) one clan lived and remained on the island namely the clan of Mandowen until this day. When strangers come to the island Warmam, they say: "We are going to the island of Biak". And thus the former island Warmambo is always called Biak until this day.

I.11. *The story about the tidal wave,  
which hit the land of Biak*<sup>37</sup>

On a certain day (it happened) the wobjewa (as) fish came (in shoals and swam) into the mouth of (river) Napdori, therefore the people killed (caught) them and they ate of the catch day after day for a long time. When the wobjewas were all eaten and finished the inhabitants poisoned the river Napdori (mofer) and the people ate fish (once more). But the mofer killed the fish again and again and for weeks and months the people ate fish and neglected their gardens (completely). Therefore on a certain day a widower and his orphaned son understood the trouble to be expected (in the future) so the old man spoke to his son and he said: "Go and

bring some of the fish hither and you must smoke them. After that you better follow me and prick in (the seeds) helping me. Yes, we will plant and sow in order to avoid starvation". And thus they did, and not long after that time the starvation "hit" the village (near Napdori).

On a certain day the man concerned saw the sea (like a high) wall forming a tidal wave and it drew near already. Therefore the father said to his son: "Have a look at the wave, it becomes as high as the sea can be". And so it was and before long the "mountain of water" came from the sea and the man knew for sure this was a huge tidal wave, therefore he said to his son: "Much better for the two of us to leave to the high mountain Sombunem". They went and when they were already near they saw a broad depression between them and the mountain landwards and the waves already coming into it. Therefore they cut a big tree to serve them as a bridge, but the stretch of water was already too wide and therefore their bridge (aboruk) appeared to be too short and could not reach the other bank. Therefore the name of that place is still called Armbroi (the bridge could not reach) until this day. At the time the two people (left the coast) went away and they took with them bunches of sprouts (they could get). A cassava sprout, one of the sugar cane and the upper part of every (important) tuber and fruit (such as pine apple), and the seed of the bakdi, and aisawa. All these things they took carefully and tended them as well as they could.<sup>38</sup>

When the tidal wave had already taken all the land, they fled to the Sombunem mountain, but (this mountain too) was engulfed and drowned, therefore they fled to the peak named Doubori. All the big trees however apparently drowned, only one big tree, the kamomes, was left. But the flood still rose hence climbed up to the highest top. But after a

while the kamomes tree too was drowned and the two people in order not to drown or be swept away, took firm hold of the highest branches, already submerged therefore their legs pointed upwards and only their feet reached the surface of the water. At first the two of them saw tree-trunks and snakes floating (in their direction) but then trees and korben (huge snakes) turned around and around, however away from them. At last they saw the flood did not increase any more and had reached its highest mark (gauge) and not long after that happened it dropped (fell). First to the trunk of the tree then to the base (foot). Then the two concerned descended to the middle of the tree. Starting with the mountain top the earth became dry again; thereafter all the land became dry and the tidal wave had subsided completely.

When the two of them descended from the tree after the tidal wave had disappeared they saw in the valley (at the foot of the mountain) the great fishes (robesror); they had all died and lay (everywhere), therefore the two drilled fire (swir) and they smoked the fishes. The plants they brought with them as we saw, now they started to plant them and the saplings grew amazingly fast. In no time the two could eat cassava and pumpkin (legenaria leucantha) as they did in former times.

On a certain day the man walked to a place called Insawaruser and there he met another man who had married two wives. The first wife had a girl-child. During the tidal wave this man had made a big raft and the three of them embarked on it and they remained (in good condition) until the land became dry again. The man who had married the two wives was a cousin (mobrso) of the widower. At the time they met, the three of them saw the girl eating the stem of an orchid, therefore the man (the widower) took

it from her and threw it away; after that he replaced the stem by giving her a cassava peeled and roasted, but the girl did not yet know the manioc. Therefore she threw it away and she wanted to eat the peeled orchid stem because she was used to it. Then the man (with the two wives) said to his cousin: "Much better if all of you come hither and we will be able to dwell in one place. Then all of us can remain at Kmurbori and we will cultivate gardens".

Now all of them gathered together: the man with his two wives and the girl and the widower with his son. And so they lived in one place. The man married to the two wives liked his cousin the widower, therefore he said to one of his two wives, i.e. his first wife who had the girl-child: "Presently when the two of you are going to steam pumpkins, the second wife must stay behind and while she is still eating of the pumpkins, you return home first". Therefore when the two wives had finished their steam-pit the first wife concerned went home as fast as she could manage, returning to her husband. The second wife on the contrary worked slowly at the steam-pit. When at last the second wife returned home, too, her husband, annoyed as he (pretended) to be, said to her: "Stay where you are, don't enter". The widower hearing these words of his napirem to his wife said: "Napirem (cousin) why do you behave like this to your wife, as if there were many people around (who could give offence) you accuse her like this"?<sup>39</sup> At that moment his cousin said (answered): "The Lord Manseren he loves the two of us, and concerning me, well I married two wives, and you not (have nothing). But in order to take away your trouble, now I give you my second wife, the one who does not (yet) possess a child, and I will stay with my first wife and her child". And in this manner the man and his cousin (the

widower), both of them, were married and had a family.

In due time the orphan-boy grew into maturity and he in his turn married the girl of the cousin of his father. And so in this way we got at that time three families.

(It happened) at that time that on several other spots there were some people who had not lost their life by the tidal wave. They were 5 orphaned girls living on Bonbakdi and 5 boys at Bonoru. The boys and girls were not aware of the existence of each other. In former times before the tidal wave came their relatives had made rather extensive gardens. But they did not support the orphans at all. These orphans had to live in precarious conditions and had to seek their own food and take care of themselves. During the tidal wave it just happened to occur that the spot on which they lived remained dry land. There was a kind of sloping rock that protected them, for this reason they were still alive when the tidal wave subsided.

Day after day the five girls ate their food raw. On a certain day they saw fire billowing its smoke on a place Bonoru, because two branches of the oru-tree grew cross-wise and moved by the wind they rubbed against each other. The wood-dust fell to the ground where it was set alight by the fire-sparks falling from the rubbing branches. The five orphan-boys took this fire and made a fireplace (on 3 pieces of rock). And this caused the smoke seen by the five girls on the Bonbakdi (pumpkin-hill) and they went (to have a look). Initially the elder girls sent their youngest sister, but the oldest one said: "It is much better that I go, if some talking appears to be needed I will negotiate (in order to achieve something)". That's why the oldest and the youngest sister went and they begged for (some) fire, but the youngest of the five brothers said: "Why should you take fire?".

His oldest brother however said: "Don't talk like that".

At that moment the oldest girl said: "Just because of words like these ones you uttered, I said (to my sisters). Much better I go too. I want to say: If you don't give fire (to us) we are bound to die and leave you behind alone".

On that account they (the boys) handed over some fire (i.e. smouldering logs) and the two girls concerned went home and they roasted and steamed (in a steam-pit, an earthenoven with really hot stones in it, on which tubers etc. were laid and covered with leaves). Later on the five orphan-boys married the five orphan-girls, from the first to the last one.

And in this way they lived happily on their land.

But there were, at that time not many people at all, while there were only eight families: i.e. the three already mentioned and the last mentioned five couples.

That's why some animals came to the fore to support the people by giving birth to human beings, such as the rambab (iguana) the korben (the big snake or dragon) the báb (the thornback fish or ray) and the inarbur (female ghost; spirit).

I.12. *The pumpkin-floater in the Deluge  
on the islands of Biak-Supiori* <sup>40</sup>

The myth of the Flood occurring in a certain village in the interior in primeval times.

According to the stories of the oldest man among us, it happened that a big flood hit the island (of Biak). (And the sun did not shine anymore.)

Nearly everybody was drowned and lost his life in a huge deluge, except only one man who got hold of a pumpkin (of a big size) and drifted with it (on the surface). Day by

day (for a long time) he drifted here and there until at last the deluge (after coming to its highest peak) started to decrease. Before long the man drifted and washed ashore on the top of a mountain (probably the Sombunem mountain, K.). The water receded more and more and all the land became dry again and the sun started to shine anew as it always had done before the deluge. The sun-heat became very strong on that mountain-top, and on a certain day the man met a woman, who had reached (was washed ashore) the mountain-top in safety. The two of them were still single, had not yet been given in to marriage so they were both still young.

They had however nothing to eat, therefore they tried to eat the pumpkin raw in every way they could think of, but this appeared to be impossible. Lucky for them (not far away) an Oru-tree <sup>41</sup> having two boughs (branches) which grew cross-wise, and as the wind was always blowing (strongly), the two boughs rubbed against each other pulverizing the bark, and this powder caught fire through the friction and these smouldering sparks fell to the ground (earth). Using this fire the two people were able to grill (roast) the pumpkin-fruit and this being done they could eat it. The seeds of the pumpkin they planted (sow) on the slope of the mountain, and they succeeded in growing the pumpkins whose seeds just grew luxuriantly, and gave fruits in great amounts.

And (then) the young man and the girl married and they had offspring.

### I.13. *Worlds in collision and the Deluge at Amberbaken* <sup>42</sup>

#### a. *Introduction, situation, elaborated on in the text*

Amberbaken area is located West of Manokwari, nearly

in the middle of the coast way down to Sorong. In this area various tribes of related groups are dwelling. E.g.: Mansibaber, Manimbu, Arfu Rumbiak etc. But the name of this area is not derived from the names of those tribes, because the Amberbaken-people have their own original tribe and the area is called after this name. In former, primeval, times some of the people and their culture-hero (head) left and the body (baken) stayed behind (c.q. most of the people). The name however is derived from the Numfor language (Amber = stranger; baken = body).

The Amberbaken people have their locations Westward of Saukorem, the capital. The village is located between two rivers: Weturi and Wasajomi. Weturi river is named like that because this river washed away a man named Weturi, and the same holds true of Wasajomi river. It must be borne in mind that every tribe has its own tale concerning their origin; from the ancestors to their grandchildren this story is told every generation anew. Amberbaken too has its own history and tales about the occurrences. This is the tale of the Amberbaken people :

b. *Amberbaken-people and their origin (the great darkness, and the earthquakes)*

According to the stories of the older men, once upon a time in the primeval days i.e. during which the ancestors lived, the earth, their dwelling-place was covered with darkness during seven days, or in other words as was related the heavens collided with the earth during seven days.

At that time caused by a terrible fear the people fled and were scattered to the mountains hither and thither, each one of them trying to find protection to escape from the dangers threatening their very lives. Among them there was

also a family i.e. a husband named Sasui with his wife and their two children. The name of the boy was Foranggornari and his sister, and the two of them were still small. During their flight they arrived at the slopes of a mountain, named Bonepai. There they met (saw) a huge boulder named Batu Penju (Keru Wau).<sup>49</sup> This boulder became a good hidingplace for this family, during the time the darkness lasted. Although the boulder (in the shape of a turtle) remained a cool and comfortable rescue-place, fate found them nevertheless, because after a day or two the wife of Sasui became ill and died, she had to leave behind her husband and two small children. With great trouble Sasui took care of his two children amidst the still lasting murky darkness.

After the day of the death of his wife Sasui said to his two children: "Don't you walk around, hither or thither in different directions leaving this spot. If we die it is much better that all of us die together with your mother, probably it may be that some day it will be light as it used to be".

After 6 days had passed, during the time they experienced the monstrous danger, the seventh day came in which their situation became so precarious as could nearly not be imagined, and their trouble became nearly unbearable, suddenly Sasui heard a sound as if the bumble-bees started to buzz as usual. Therefore he spoke to his two children saying: "Be quiet you two, listen to the buzz of bumble-bees, it may be the day will come again and the sun will shine as before". While he was talking like this the disk of the rising sun became visible and increased gradually until it became light once more as usual before the earthquake and the deluge. Sasui now called his two children: "Come both of you and let the three of us walk to the (possible) other hiding-places: it may be there are other survivors".

After Sasui spoke in this manner the three of them left for the forests. They ascended mountains and descended into valleys, they went hither and thither, here and there whilst calling and shouting continuously, but all their efforts were in vain. There were no other people anymore alive to be able to answer the calling and shouting, because they all had died in the pitch dark (and the earthquakes). And therefore the three of them returned to their hiding- and dwelling-place they had left.

So they stayed under their rock as has been told in the story, but they had no meat to eat anymore. Therefore on a certain day Sasui spoke to his two children saying: "You just remain here, don't walk around here and there, because father has in mind to go hunting, you just stay behind on this spot until I come back ; it may be this day I get something to eat for the three of us".

Whilst saying these words he took his bow (and arrows) and his dog and he entered the forest, then left it again, he ascended mountains and descended to the valleys, crossed through shrubs and brushwood enduring hunger and thirst, while he tried to the utmost of his strength and cunning as a matter of life and death to be succesful "and bring home the fruit of his hands" to his two children. But this day it seemed in vain as if it was his fate to go homewards with empty hands, because he did not come across and did not see an animal on his long trip. Notwithstanding this fact the father held on and continued his search and he said in his heart: "One more part of the forest I am going to enter though I am dead-tired and after that I return. But may be I'll get at last some result, a bird for instance, then I will go home to my children". Whilst he was walking and tottering along his path he saw that the sun was rather

far on her way to the West, and then he arrived at the foot of a mountain.

Suddenly he heard his dog barking furiously and hope rose anew in his heart. He started to run because he knew this meant a good chance and profit: a bird to bring back to his two children. Being glad and filled with expectation he hurried to the scene where the dog was barking, and still running he took an arrow and laid it on his bow, drawing the string. But when he was so near that he should have shot the arrow his joy changed into anger because what did he see? There was no pig or wild boar, nor a bird at which the dog barked, on the contrary: nothing more nor less than a white pumpkin. And because of his anger the man said to his dog: "I thought you were barking at a pig or a bird, but wherefore are you tiring yourself by barking at this rotten pumpkin"?

While the man was talking in this manner the pumpkin started to roll and entered a hole in the earth, and the dog followed and went inside together with the pumpkin to catch up with the fruit. When Sasui saw what happened and how his dog was acting he felt sorrow in his heart about his dog who had entered the hole, because he feared that he would never see his beloved dog again. And the man stood there and he doubted whether he could get his dog again. What was to be done? Just while he was thinking like this his doubt and sorrow changed because ducking down and holding his ear near the ground he could hear the voice of his dog still barking and pursuing the pumpkin and Sasui did the same. He in his turn followed the voice of the dog whose voice went nearer and nearer to the coast, because the long narrow grotto in which the pumpkin and the dog ran ended near the beach in a kind of channel

apparently dry. This shallow place or semi-cave is named Marsau <sup>44</sup> and still exists. With great joy Sasui ran to that place, but the very moment he saw his dog his anger rose again, when he saw that his dog was still barking at the pumpkin which now lay on a big (antique, ancient) plate.<sup>45</sup> And because he was furious he said again to his dog: "What is the use of your uninterrupted barking at the pumpkin?". And while he was saying this he descended into the channel and took his dog. Meanwhile the pumpkin on its plate floated in the direction of the sea, and then drifted westward. There in the far West is the living-place of the strangers (Amber) with a white skin colour just like the pumpkin had. Because while the pumpkin was well on her way and drifting to the West a voice was heard saying: "Because you did not like me and chased me away, I leave this place and I am on my way to the land Amber".<sup>46</sup>

And while the fruit was washed away and drifted to the land Amber, its trunk (baken) stayed behind, therefore this place (area) is named Amberbaken until this day.

Amber was the name the pumpkin used. Baken means "tree" (trunk, body) which remained behind.

c. *The intermarriages (primary incest) and the new inhabitants after the cataclysm*

After all this had happened Sasui went back home where he met his two children and he sat down and told them everything that had happened on his trip that day, then the three of them just stayed where they were living in peace together as in the beginning, because day after day Sasui could take care of his two children.

Time went on and on a certain day, at the time the children became adults whilst they were already talking and

discussed as mature people used to do, Sasui talked to them and said: "It seems to me much better that the two of you get married because your age is sufficient and you are mature".

But the two children did not agree with the suggestion their father used to propose their marriage and they replied: "Are you crazy, our father? How should the two of us get married? We are real brother and sister, the elder and the younger one of you. It is impossible, father that we should marry each other". But Sasui said to them again: "Hi, my children. Try to look to the North and the South, the East and the West, there are no other people around who are still alive, and you can marry in order to provide us with offspring for the future. If this appears to be impossible from where will we get offspring able to inherit our extensive land?". After the two had heard these words of their father, they sat down contemplating (thinking) and reflecting about the words their father said and considering the consequences of his words.

According to their thoughts their father was right, so willy-nilly the two of them were bound to marry, and so they did. After the realisation of the marriage in due time children were born to the first couple after the cataclysm, namely four <sup>47</sup> sons and a few girls.

Among the male offspring there was one who inherited Bondopi, and his descendants dwelled in the village Samfarmun, the second son owned Bonepai whilst his descendants got the village Rabon. The third one owned Pidjawi. The fourth one owned the most Southern part in the interior, named Kwairum. And all these descendants had made an ordination in which was fixed that each one ought to help each other and foremost their relatives living along the

coast, because according to the arrangements made by the ancestors in case of difficulties that might arise among the three brothers in the coastal areas then the Kwairumlah had to come to rescue them. In the beginning they were bound to intermarry (inside the nuclear family) until they multiplied and became the genuine and original people of Amberbaken (after the catastrophe) until today.

After that commencement while they had already multiplied and got (giving birth to) girls, the girls last mentioned were able to marry members outside their own clans, and they too multiplied and their offspring were named Amberbaken Pja.

They were named like that because they married outside their own clan (exogamy). The Amberbaken Pja built and inhabited the village Wefiani, whilst the village Saukorem became inhabited by the clan Wabia, this is namely a clan after the creation and existence of Amberbaken and Amberbaken Pja descended from a woman who married a male from the interior. But this is a story which demands a special explanation. The story runs as follows:

d. *The encounter of a maiden with an unfinished (incomplete) male: a new species* <sup>43</sup>

It happened that a young maiden left her home amongst the Amberbaken Pja people, leaving behind her village and home, the house of her parents, roaming and following the "desire of her feet" in search of something she wanted. She aimed to the East, and not long after that she arrived at the banks of the river Wepai. There she stood on the bank and was utterly amazed because she saw in the current of the river many species of the products of a garden floating on the current and washed away in the direction of the sea.

In her heart she considered the question whence these products came and where the origin of these products might be. One could take it for certain that a human being had made his garden (on the banks) in the direction of the source of the river and whence the products of the garden were washed away (by the current) to the sea. In her heart joy and happiness arose and courage to walk following the river on the banks in order to have a look at the "tree" the source of the garden products. Because the evening drew near she returned to the house of her parents first, but her thoughts were occupied all the same with the garden products because her heart was longing for the origin and to know all about it, i.e. to meet what she wanted.<sup>49</sup>

After the day became night she went to sleep, but in her sleep it was as if she was constantly dreaming about her trip and the events of the past day. Every now and then she woke for a few moments but then fell asleep again, but she was thinking in her heart: "Tomorrow I will try again and follow the banks of the river to its source, in order to receive according to my hearts desire".

The next day the young woman woke up very early and she took with her the net-bag, then taking the direction and choosing the way she had taken the day before, while following the banks of the river she met with on the previous day. It was exactly midday when she was "lifting her eyes" and beheld a garden-plot (loaded with) planted with many kinds of (eatable) plants, tubers and the like. She was amazed seeing this garden with its many products and in her amazement she said: "This is the garden I was searching for". After that she went and entered the garden to have a look around and there she saw a man in a small shed made of leaves. And his skin was covered (coated) with

long hair like a pelt all over his body; only round his mouth and at his privat parts it was short like the fur of a tree kangaroo, this being the reason why they named him (afterwards, later on): Keresunnon (kangaroo-man?).

“My goodness” (the girl thought) and utterly astonished she focused her eyes on the man, because never before in all her life had she laid eyes on a human being like the one she now beheld.

But she did not hesitate and asked the man something, but no word came over his lips, because he was not able to speak at all. He only made gestures and showed his garden to her, and the products ready to be eaten. And because the maiden was very happy with the (great amount of) food, she decided to stay with him. During the time she was living with the man in her heart rose the desire to marry him, but how could she make clear her wishes to the man who was not able to talk. She tried many times to make him talk a word or two, but all her efforts were in vain, he only made gestures instead of words. And as the situation seemed hopeless the girl became very angry with the man saying: “What kind of a man is this? He is stupid”. After she said this she considered in her heart and she said to herself: “I have to find a solution to this problem until the man is able to talk”. And then suddenly she discovered a possibility. She went away and collected in the garden a great many of green coloured caterpillars and put them in a package which she made of leaves binding the whole thing neatly and strongly together.

Then she returned to the shed, the place were the two of them lived. As she arrived at their lean-to she saw the man and threw the package in his direction and because the man thought this must be a good and valuable thing which the woman gave him, he just started to open it.

When he discovered that the contents of the package existed of green caterpillars only (now crawling all over his body) fright struck him and with all his strength he opened his mouth and yelled at the top of his voice: opened was his mouth and so was his vent, it tore open at his bottom.<sup>50</sup> Now he could talk. The girl was extremely happy now she saw the result of her effort.

And now the young woman was able to fulfil her other wishes too. Not long thereafter the two of them copulated and became a married couple. In their marriage several boys and girls were born to them. And from this (starting-point) by and by the Wabia tribe (clan) grew. They were named Wabia, because the offspring (descendants) of Keresunnon had a hairy body (the males) and their centre became Wepai in the area of the village Saukorem.

And by intermarriage, they multiplied and they formed a crowd dispersed all over the area. Some of them live in their place of origin, others remained and dwell in the interior, and some of them can be found in the village of Imbuan and from there onwards they settled themselves to the border with the Karon-land.

I.14. *The narrative of the Rumbiak-people  
and the Deluge at Amberbaken*<sup>51</sup>

The Rumbiak-people (group),<sup>52</sup> having their area of origin from the river Wesorpi, tell their story of origin as follows: (Once upon a time) there grew a huge iron-wood tree on a certain mountain named Pipaki. In former times there was a female named Dwani, she lived on the mountain Pipaki together with her children.

On a certain day while Dwani was sitting in her house

she heard a great noise like the rumbling of thunder. She felt as if the sky and the earth were going to collapse and to shatter. This was nothing else but an earthquake. And this did not happen one time, but many times.

The woman Dwani had two children, a boy and a girl. Because Dwani heard the rumbling of the earthquake and felt the shocks and shakes going on uninterruptedly, she called her two children in order to try to ascend the mountain Pipaki, the mountain on whose top the iron-wood tree grew. She said: "Children come and let us run away and ascend the mountain Pipaki (to the top) and let us build a house over there just on top of the mountain, because day after day the earthquake makes the earth tremble and shake. If this is going on and on certainly a deluge will follow in their wake". And they did as the mother had said. And, when Dwani and her two children had finished the building of a house, they gathered as many animals as they could catch: the crow bird, pigs and other animals bringing them into the house on the top of mountain Pipaki. And while they were occupied with all this work, they gave a message to their relatives to invite them to join each other on Pipaki, but the answer was: "Our mountains are, (are safe) the deluge will not rise that high".

Not long thereafter the flood came (as a tidal wave?) after the earthquakes had had their effect, and the water rose and rose until most of the mountains were covered and the sun did not shine anymore. At the time the water rose, all the people hidden on their mountaintops started to beat their drums, as a sign that they were still alive and not yet swallowed up and drowned in the deluge. But in the end the sound of the drums stopped altogether, a (sure) sign that the other people were already drowned, only the

would merely marry him, were he a mouse I would just marry him". She blamed her two sisters : "This snake, the two of you are afraid of him, but I merely marry him".

Inuri really married her. In the night-time when they slept he changed into a human being. His skin he laid aside. As soon as the daylight came he donned the snake-skin and he became a snake, but during the night he left his (snake-skin) and was a human male.

(At daybreak) his two brothers-in-law paddled to the sea, they took shell-fish. They brought them to the shore and there they roasted their meal. Inuri tasted the shell-fish and they tasted good. Then Inuri said : "These shell-fish are very good indeed. Are there many of them to be found?" His brothers-in-law said : "There are many. To-morrow morning we (will row our canoe again) take some others". Inuri said : "I will join you and paddle".

Then, the next morning, the three of them paddled to the sea and they made Inuri lie in the bow (of the canoe, near the ornamented bow-piece) and coil himself there until the bow-part (of the canoe [sneber]) was filled, laying his head on the edge of the carved bow-piece.

The two brothers-in-law had taken two hatchets, hiding them in the sail. And so the three of them paddled (rowed), and Inuri watching (the sea-bottom) saw a small shell-fish and said : "There is a shell-fish, do we take it?" The brothers-in-law said : "That one is not big, we go on, let it remain". They paddled further and Inuri saw another small shell-fish and said : "Don't we take that one?" The brothers-in-law said : "That one is not big, we go on let that one remain".

They paddled further on and then he (Inuri) saw a giant shell-fish (*tridacna* or *chamagigas*) and said to his brothers-

in-law : "This big one, don't we take him?" The brothers-in-law said : "Yes, that one we'll take". He asked : "In what way do we take that one?" Then the brothers-in-law sent him, saying : "You just dive".

And they instructed him : "Dive to the bottom, bite in the diagonal closing muscle". When Inuri did as he was told : dived and bit into the diagonal closing muscle, the shell pinched the head of Inuri.

Then two brothers-in-law unrolled the sail to get the hatchet, One of them jumped fast to the bow and started to hew Inuri into fillets. One fillet became a surf wave, one fillet became wind, one fillet became rain, one fillet became thunder, one fillet became lightning, one fillet became a spout, one fillet became a crocodile, one fillet became a porpoise.

All of these (new created phenomena and animals) chased the two brothers to the shore. The two of them escaped by fleeing into the interior of the island. The fillet which became a surf-wave shaved the island Jeninbere. That cape is called "Inuri-dis-i" (Inuri shaved her).<sup>25</sup>

Note from the writer : "In 1886 traveling along the Northcape of Jeninbere, my crew, all of them from the island of Roon, told me Inuri himself had grated the rock bare and smooth with his tail, when his head was pinched in the shell".

#### A8. *Sentani*<sup>26</sup>

##### *Introduction*

In primeval times earth and human beings did not yet exist.

There was only darkness, utter darkness.

The only existing object was an egg.

Then the Northern wind blew (from heaven), touched the egg and broke the shell and out of the egg came a female being named Kani (earth).

In the beginning heaven (the sky) hovered over the earth at a very close range. The first human beings could easily climb and descend to and from heaven by way of a huge banyan tree (yowake) with rattan and a rope made of the clouds.

a) *Warowo and Mahowé, fathers of mankind*<sup>27</sup>

Inside the earth lives the spirit (uarofo)<sup>28</sup> named Warowo. He was not alone there, because another uarofo joined him.

On a certain day this uarofo, Mahowe was his name, dug a way upwards to the surface. He used for this job a stone axe which he had made. He reached the surface of the earth just on the island of Ajau. The hole he made is still visible.

Mahowe built for himself a house and made a drum. After having done this he blew on a conch-shell and beat his drum.

A female spirit named Tariaka living in the village of Tabati (on the seashore) heard the blowing and the boom of the drum and decided to have a look. Thus she went (in South-Western direction) and arrived at Ajau. She had brought some presents with her namely a grilled sea-fish, some pork and parcels of sago-porridge.

The parents of Tariaka found their way to Ajau, and they found a dwelling-place on the cape (opposite Ajau, in a place now named Ifar-ketjil (the small[kendin]-Ifar).

After the arrival of the parents, Mahowe gave them a small blue bracelet made of stone as dowry. And that was the way in which Mahowe got Tariaka as his wife.

of the culture. As a more common culture-hero the famous Merne appeared to have travelled the whole western part of the area and is recognized as the originator of many culture-traits and complexes. He performed creative deeds, provided the people with fire, but has sometimes the character of the trickster, a unusual trait as to the culture-heroes in this area.

Van der Hoeven (1952) gives remarkable examples of the narrative about the cannibal woman Jaimé; she has a dualistic character though, sometimes she is like a culture-hero. An important role the "white" culture-mother Ema plays in this area too.

Connected with the initiation is the treatment with snake grease. The blood-giving or --licking (fesbizie') of patients is common and the nabarsof ceremony (cf. the list of words) is remarkable. The whole area under discussion is strewn with rocks: petrified remnants of the rafts used to escape the deluges. Mostly it must have been a partial submersion. The people who escaped assembled and formed various small tribes.

b. *The sky-stormers punished: Sawar and the deluge*

Sawar was in former times an island and one of its shores was rocky with only a small beach. The inhabitants were only a few, namely Iroti, Sinis and Biri.

From time immemorial, after the world was shaped and good to live on for human beings, they lived on the island which at that time stretched from the river Oran in the West to the place where now the village Bagaiserwar is located. The island of Sawar was rocky in general. On the dry part of the island Iroti and Sinis had their dwelling-place, whilst Biri stayed on the beach-side sometimes in the sea,

but sometimes on the shore also. He was a human being but he was able to change himself into a fish. In these metamorphoses he was a bobara, or a tarusi-fish.<sup>55</sup>

The two brothers stayed always together, day and night.

They remained there until other people arrived, some of them from the west, others from the mainland and the interior. When they came Iroti heard their voices, but he remained on his high place, he sent however his brother Sinis down in order to meet them and to invite them to come to the top of the island. And so Sinis did. After he met the strangers he went back to his brother saying: "They have arrived indeed, but what are we going to do now?". His elder brother answered: "We have to give them a place to live". And thus it happened and from then on the strangers lived on Sawar too.

(The descendants of the "strangers" now told their story, and the informant was an old man of the clan Manipora).

Our ancestors once lived in the forest, but they wanted to go in the direction of the sea, and so they did. They were with a great many people and the place where they once dwelled is named Suguram, behind the village of Bagaiserwar (deep into the forest).

When they started to move in the direction of the sea they brought with them a small bow named Tabaké, made from bamboo. The second object they brought was the moon.

Manipora, this was the name of our ancestor, came singing because the sun had risen and he had in mind to find the way to the place where the sun arose every day. There was no calamity which caused them to leave Suguram (they just wanted to see something more of this world). The way they took has the name of Bebofu. (They used the moon to light their houses in the nights).

When they came hither and arrived at the beach, they first gathered their people (and that was the reason why Manipora became their leader and chief).

As there was no river or brook they started to dig a well and they drank of its water. It tasted very good, they decided to remain in that place.

It was there they met Sinis who came because he heard the voices of many people. Sinis guided Manipora to his elder brother, Iroti, the Lord of the land.<sup>56</sup> Iroti received his guest in a friendly manner and gave them a plot of land to build their houses on.

After they finished building their houses they had to solve another problem, namely: where to give a proper place to the moon. Therefore they started to cut (a great many) bamboos.

Their plan was to construct a ladder in order to climb it and to reach the sky. The sky was in that (primeval) time very low. The aim of Manipora was to lift the sky much higher. Therefore he climbed the ladder as soon as it was ready and reached the sky. His people following him brought the moon up and attached (the shining body) to the sky, then they descended. (But after having accomplished their plans they felt themselves ill at ease. Had they transgressed the boundary of human beings)?

That was the reason why they, after their return from the sky, started to build a huge outrigger canoe. Whilst they were occupied with the construction they saw the surface of the sea starting to rise extraordinarily fast. Therefore they speeded up the canoe-building and took care that nothing of the wastewood (the chips) remained behind. They collected every piece in a baerom (bag) and stored it away in the canoe. They were in a hurry so they took only four

kinds of birds with them and then everybody embarked in the canoe. Then the great flood came: a huge tidal wave lifted the surface of the sea and then the canoe started to float. The tidal wave submerged all the land, but Sukubai the chief and the Manipora clan were safe.

When at last the power of the tidal wave had exhausted himself, the water-level subsided and when the mountains merged nobody in the canoe had lost his life.

As soon as the passengers saw dry land they released the four different birds, in the following sequence:

1. The manipora (crow). The bird flew away, turned everywhere, but came back after a while: there was still water everywhere. When the manipora was released for the second time, he flew until he reached the mountaintops and there was a tree, the oranti, already having some leaves. The manipora picked one of these leaves and brought it back to the canoe. Released for the third time he did not return anymore.

2. The second bird turned loose was a white cockatoo: she flew away at once and did not return.

3. The third one flying away was a lory bird, she did not come back either.

4. The fourth one which flew was a pigeon, (maïna), she too did not return.

The four birds just mentioned were declared rifut (taboo) and were never touched since that time.

After the birds flew away and did not come back it was clear that the earth had dried, and gradually the land became habitable once more. All the passengers of the canoe debarked at a suitable place and it was here in this place that they built their houses and dwelled up to this day.

When in later times our ancestors saw big sailing vessels

passing by on the skyline they said: "Ajo, ajah the big boat is already there, shut your doors". They said this because our people were afraid of them and named them "the sickness canoes". They had the idea that ancestors made this new type of sea-going vessels and that the big one they once made was badly constructed. At that time the ancestors did not yet know the whites, when they met the Europeans in later years they were afraid of these too. Initially they did not know that these vessels on the horizon were manned with a crew, they were dangerous ghostships, so they thought.

The huge outrigger canoe used during the tidal wave and the deluge, petrified and is now located at the foot of the rocky cape of Sawar.

I.16. *The deck-garden, the tidal-wave  
and repopulation in Bagaiserwar* <sup>57</sup>

In primeval times the Sobé tribe did not yet exist. There were only various small clans scattered all over the interior and the coastal areas. One of these lived behind the place where we now find the village of Bagaiserwar in the interior of the mainland. This location has the name of Buarnia and is a kind of marsh. The first human being living there was named Sinef and the second one Mensembrais. Furthermore there was a woman Fiayer and a man named Sigum. This Sigum possessed a magic power stronger than one can imagine.

It was said that Sinèf and Mensembrais were able to forge iron and they made their tools and weapons.<sup>58</sup>

Having finished this job they started to build an outrigger canoe of a huge size. Having constructed this craft they

took a great quantity of earth and used it as a deck on top of the (usual only low) board. The earth-covered deck was to be used as a garden. It happened that the woman Fiayer became pregnant and in due time she gave birth to various treefruits and -nuts, such as a coconut, a woka-nut (the fantree) and a tiwé-nut (another species of the fan palm (*Oncosperma filamentosum*, cf. the list of indigenous words). This last nut was of a tree with leaves nearly as large as the leaves of a coconut tree.

The woman Fiayer took the tiwé-nut and planted it on the deckgarden of the canoe, then she took the woka-nut and gave that one a place near the stern of the canoe, the coconut she planted just in the centre. Then she caught two birds: a manipora (crow) and a lory bird.

Sinef then took the rest of the iron still left over and he forged a cup which he named ferafu. He gave the cup to Mensembrais to guard it closely.

After having done this Sinef gave the order to Sigum: start the turning and stirring of the water. Sigum obeyed and he started to stir the water at the appointed spot. At once the surface of the water rose, the daylight disappeared and it was not long before the canoe started to float. Sigum then said to Mensembrais: "I intend to ascend to the sky, and you are the one in command over the canoe or boat". Among the crew there two men: Amber and Terkai were their names and Sigum said to them: "Travel with our canoe to the end of the world, and having reached it you've got to return. When you arrive here again certainly the world will be dry once more and the daylight will have come back".

Now the water rose fast, reached the treetops and the peaks of the mountains and it became a real deluge and

people tried to escape. Some made rafts and were washed away in all directions. Meanwhile the canoe set off and sailed to the end of the world <sup>59</sup> (The crew and passengers were able to reap the harvest of their deckgarden). The trees grew overnight, therefore in no time they could eat the coconuts, whereas the trunks of the tiwé-tree could be used to construct a shelter and the leaves as roofs thatched into shape, and the planted root crops (taro, yams etc.) as their staple food.

After having reached the end of the world the crew returned the canoe to their place of origin. Arriving here they discovered that the land had not yet dried completely, only some mountaintops, among them the Nambairam chain, were visible. On the slope of one of them, mount Montorda (Monera), they ran ashore.

Now the high tide slowly dropped until the land was dry and the sun had started to shine again.

Their leader and chief Mensembrais took the lead of the people who had debarked and started to walk in the direction of the former beach. When they arrived here it was obvious that the strong current of the flood, in the shape of a whirlpool, had washed away many people and driven some of them to this place. Most of them floated on rafts, others had tried to walk. Obviously the events which took place during their voyage had compelled them to metamorphose themselves into animals; fishes, octopusses, squids and the like.

Mensembrais went on in order to get information about the situation of these newcomers (strangers).

The first man he met was the ancestor of the Bakai, he dwelt in a hole in the Noesoe tree and was a locust. Then he went further and met the ancestors of Siboi, living in

a house made of rattan, he was an octopus. The next one he saw, Dangko Joke, was an animal and dwelt in a cave in the rocks. The following ancestor was Aweman, he lived in a cave too, but he was a human being.

To him Mensembrais gave the cup made of iron or copper, on condition that if the ferafu cup should become rusty Aweman had to chew pinang (areca nut) in order to rub the cup with the red areca juice, then the object would shine again. (The Awemans kept it as their secret magic object).<sup>60</sup>

The ancestor of the Joke named Dangko came originally from Subu and Maseb in the West, near the river Mamberamo. Some of them walked along the beach, then the tidal wave overtook them and those who got tired of the wearisome walking metamorphosed themselves into fishes (bobara) and swam. Afterwards they made a drawing under the bottom of a basket which they hung in one of their houses. They arrived in Sarmi, one of them remained there, the younger brother went to Sawar and Dangke Joke came to Bagaiserwar. He brought tobacco and had the power of a spirit (tuan tanah), (cf. note 56).

(According to the informant Obed Sawen the "strangers", ancestors of the different clans (tapuntesese) which formed the latter Sobé Temto (Sobé people), came in the following sequence): The newcomers arrived here and were met by the first ancestor Sawen.

1. Dangko Joke, mentioned before. They came here and one of their leaders was Tiorem, he was the one who was in command over the party walking along the shore (beach).

2. The Nefreser group. They came and met the Satemto (tuan tanah) Dangko, who said to them: "I have no people, come and live here". A site was assigned to them and they remained here. The raft on which they came petrified and

was named Fowai. Nefrese and his people brought a head-decoration named Sepambre. It was a beautifully constructed attire and became later on the source of much trouble, because it was stolen. The owner of the Sepambre was Waeso (cf. Merne and the flood).

3. The Ama clan. The ancestors came and they too used a raft on which they escaped from the flood. The raft petrified and was since then named Adei. Ama became in those primal times a ray-fish.

4. After them the Ja'as arrived and remained here. They brought:

- a. A bow with fixed to one end the cassowary plumes (decoration)
- b. A leaf Ma'arau (Sobé language)
- c. An Adinao leaf of the millet plant. From the stems a broom could be made
- d. Warejafu (fire; yafu = fire)
- e. Wanea, a sprout of the smooth sago-tree, already growing on the island of Sawar. Some of the sprouts were taken later on by the Sobé-temto from Sarmi village.

5. Sosomar and Kotowar, these two ancestors met Sawen. Sosomar came from the West, he had followed the shore, drifting on the current and in this manner he arrived and landed at the foot of the Fofomai hill. He saw a moor, but he climbed the hill and found a spot where clear water trickled out of the slope. He tasted it and found it good indeed. Descending from the hill he met Araimarane, that was as he meant the name, but it appeared to have the meaning of "My goodness" in the old language, the whole sentence was: "Araimarane rani mibai" meaning: "My goodness! this water is good indeed". From there Sosomar

went to the beach again and there he met the ancestor Sinis (Seni) from Sawar. "Have you seen Kotowar?", asked Sawen. "No", was the answer, "I only heard the news that he has arrived, but my eyes did not yet see him".

Sawen went further and met the ancestor of the Bakai-temto, he lived in the hole of a tree. Bakai however said to Sawan: "I have only a few people, I will take these ones too, so we have many".

6. The ancestor Kotowar, a younger brother of Sosomar. After the two brothers had parted Kotowar followed on his raft made of gaba gaba (the stems of the sago-palmtree) the river Waské. On the raft he loaded his most precious possessions e.g. a small bow (which had magic power) and one arrow of the sago-leaf (fondowere rauma). The third object was his Sa'abik, a bull-roarer made of the bark of the Sana Marna tree. From the fibres of the smaller branches he had twisted the cord to bind to the two ends of the Sa'abik, which had a long shape and a hole at each end.

After having loaded this "cargo" Kotowar let his raft float on the current. When he was hindred in his voyage by a great barrier of trees, blocking the stream, he took his bow and with his arrow shot the obstacle to pieces. Now he was able to let his raft drift with the current until he arrived and emerged on the beach area. After having reached the coast, he walked along the beach heading for the place where the (latter) Sobé people lived. He wanted to arrive at Bagaiserwar but he had to cross the small Narewar river (the later Oran) and in due times he arrived at the Sobé. There the ancestor Bakai escorted him to the centre of the place and for the time being he stayed with the people already gathered there before.

Sawén agreed to the proposal that Kotowar could remain

if he wanted to and thus he was united with those people.

a. *The real and decisive encounter with the Satemto Sawen* <sup>61</sup>

After Sawen had assembled all the clan-ancestors they arranged a great meeting in order to confront them with their Satemto (chief) of the future. But the moment they came into his presence some of them fainted, because they could not stand or endure the power radiating from him, their tuan tanah (Satemto). Seeing what happened Sawen came to their rescue and asked: "Who among you brought some areca-nuts?". Saberi of the Ama clan answered: "I have brought a nut, but only one piece". Sawen took the nut and said: "This is not an areca-nut". Ama replied: "This is my Suré". Sawen however said: "This is my Sibinafyo" (health-maker?).

Then Sawen chewed the areca-nut combined with siri (piper betle) and lime producing a red juice and said: "Santu, wanetu", (health to you?), than he spat on the unconscious men, spraying them with the red areca-fluid. Then he spat in the direction of the sky and after that on the ground, and sung the incantation: "Santu, Wanetu; Santu has compassion with all of us. Let no sickness (or evil) harm you".<sup>62</sup>

After this Sawen assigned to each ancestor his own site, they decided to take the name Sobé-tento (Sobé-people) and this happened.

When the unconscious men had regained their strength again, Sawen assembled all the people once more and led them to the cape Rabosiwo (now located at the east side of the village Bagaiserwar).

b. *The animals in the forest, the birds in the trees*

Assembled on cape Rabosiwo Sawen now set free (created?)

all kinds of different animals. The people said: they were once human beings, so he released them and appointed which kind of animals they should become.

Beren e.g. had to stay in the wood as a crow, but before he released them he ordered all the people and the animals to sing. The human beings started their song, then the cassowary-bird, the mouse, the turtle and so on, the dog was the last one to be released. The dog could only laugh, and the pigs, cassowary-birds and the like made him a laughing-stock: "Hi, dog, you, you can only laugh". The dog grew very angry and bit a pig, the dog's name was Abau, and his master was Bakai. After the dog had bitten the pig, everybody became frightened and they fled. When everybody had ran away Kotowar took his (magic) bow and arrow and "shot" the pig dead. Kotowar said to Sawen: "Here, eat this pork".

When the cassowary-bird jumped away he hit one of the eyes of a turtle, and the turtle died, remained on his spot and petrified. He became a boulder on the cape and is named Bemdafati. After this had happened Sawen released five kinds of birds and finished his task. He said to the animals: "You all have to stay and remain here, I am going back to the village. When you see human beings coming give a message to me, and if you have trouble let me know, I will come and meet them".

Sawen than ordered other people and assigned to them the islands located before the coast, such as Wakde and the like. He promised them saying: "Brothers, when you leave for your island and if afterwards you run into trouble don't hesitate but call on me, remember my words and come hither. I will let you have everything you need: sago, tobacco, bananas and the like".

After they heard these words they left and sailed to the islands.

Satemto Sawen went back to his village and he (and his offspring) have lived and dwelled in the village of Bagaiserwar ever since.

c. *Daber the immortal (spirit and culture-hero) and the flood* <sup>63</sup>

The most outstanding tapuntese (clan) of Bagaiserwar is the one of the offspring of Daber.

The primal ancestor was Daber, a spirit in the shape of a human being. He had his dwellingplace in a hole now named Deramowar. When the tidal wave threatened the human beings, Daber took hiding in a big clam-shell (*tridacna* or *chama-gigas*), and in that way he could survive the deluge. He made himself at home in the course of time, and until he was discovered he did not know anything more about existence and how life was like on the surface of the earth. He did not know anybody, except himself.

On a certain day a man named Awéte from the clan bearing the same name came this way from the island of Sawar and he carried a house-pole made of iron-wood (on his shoulder). He had in mind to build a house on this site, Deramowar. Awéte took the pole and in order to make a post-hole he thrust the iron-wood post into the ground. He nearly hit the head of Daber, who had taken the shape of a human being and who cried out: "Don't, the iron-wood post nearly hit me, I am here". Then Awéte asked: "Are you there inside the earth?" and Daber replied: "Yes this is my place, please climb into the hole and come here, this is a good place to live". But Awéte said: "That is possible, of course, but only when we die, then we will remain together in your place in the ground". They continued their conversa-

tion and Daber said: "No this is my place and it is beautiful. I see many colours such as red, blue, white, yellow, yes every kind of colour in my place here in this hole underground". Daber dwelled on his place in the giant clam and tried to persuade Awéte saying: "Come down and stay with me" and he insisted for a long time. But Awéte in his turn tried to convince Daber to climb out of his hole on to the surface. At last he succeeded and Daber came out of his hole and they continued their conversation and Awéte told Daber everything that had happened. He told him about another clan ancestor Sawen, and he called Sawen to come and meet Daber.

Now there were already three clans, but when Sawen and Awéte met Daber he asked: "What are we going to do now"? they beheld Daber's face and because of the power radiating from his face and personality (appearance), they fell to the ground.

At once Daber asked: "Who has some areca nuts?". And a certain man from the clan Ama came forward and said: "I have some and piper betle too. I will run home and fetch it". Ama then went, but arriving home he saw his wife and cohabited with her, therefore he forgot to go back to the three Satemto and let them wait in vain.

Then Daber himself gave an areca-nut to Sawen and Sawen prepared medicine: he chewed the areca-nut and spat on the "victims" whilst he sung an incantation, and they recovered at once. After this had happened the three of them remained there and made the village Bagaiserwar as their abode to live in.

Daber however became their real leader and chief (satemto). He arranged that Awéte got as his special task to assemble the people from far and near and some of them he had to

lead from the big forest in the interior of the mainland. Sawen was appointed to become the chief of the village and had to take care of the welfare of the inhabitants. Should sickness harm them, it was Sawen's task to administer medicine. To each newly arrived clan Daber assigned their special task. For instance the clan Bakai had to practise the art of weaving.<sup>64</sup>

Awéte accomplished his task seriously; he assembled people from the banks of the rivers Waske, Tor and from every direction: the West, the South and the East. Daber knew that his future tribe lived scattered and dispersed in all directions in the forests. When the newcomers arrived Daber always asked them what objects they brought and what kind of skill they were able to practise. Everything useful he received: foodstuff and skills and made use of it. Only the art of black magic to kill and harm their fellow-people he took away from them. He dug a hole and threw everything dangerous into this pit and covered it with earth saying: "This is a place, a site of peace, no quarreling or fighting will be allowed: in our place here we will have peace".

When all the people were assembled he brought them to the eastside of the village on to a hill. He gathered the animals too. Daber knew every kind of language, not only of the human beings but of the animals, too, such as the language of the birds, even the flies, he could understand everything they said.

On that certain day he assigned to the people their places where they were to dwell, and gave each of the groups their own language: Djamma, Podena, Wakdé and the tribes in the West also, he divided them and sent them to the four corners of the world.

Daber himself chose the Sobé language as his own and

that of his people. Most of the groups had to learn this language and that is why (according to the informant) everybody knows the Sobé-temto language. The Sobé-temto are concentrated in three villages and they came into existence gradually. The three are Sawar, Bagaiserwar and Sarmi.

Daber introduced the custom concerning a wife's children and inheritance too. Each man should marry one wife, but if she should not bear children, or if she had no son, her husband was obliged to take a second wife in order to secure at least one male offspring. The golden rule in this respect is: "Only ones own son is able to bear the burden of the clansecrets, this is impossible for an adopted son".

On a certain day Daber started to measure the world. First he measured the sky and the boundaries of it. Then he took his measuring rod to measure the height of the heaven and after that the distance to the West, the East, the North and the South. Having accomplished this task he folded up his measuring-rod and handed it to his clan-mates saying: "Look here, keep it until the world shall perish". And therefore it was kept by the members of the Daber-clan. But in c. 1911 they gave it to missionary Van Hasselt. And he took it with him.

As Daber was married in the course of time his wife bore him two sons and one daughter. The three of them lived here in our village. Daber said to them, on a certain occasion: "Take care of your sister, let nothing happen to her, don't get her into trouble". But the younger brother seduced his sister and in due time she proved to be pregnant. Daber, her father, saw this and asked. "What does this mean? I forbade you (in clear words) How could this happen?". He grew very angry, yes he got in a dreadful temper and said to his elder son: "I am going to leave you and let all of you remain behind".

Then he cleared away everything in his house, took some packing-case and filled them with all of his belongings: books, bars of iron, tools. The things too heavy to take with him he left them behind. Having prepared himself and everything he said to his oldest son: "These books I am going to take along, later on you will get them back with all the arrangements and explanations described in them. I am going to leave you at once and will debark at the village of Ternate.<sup>65</sup> I'll take with me all tools, iron etc. But one day I will come back, and when I return (at that time) you shall understand everything".

His belongings too heavy to carry away he let them sink in the ground. After that he left (his children and tribe).

d. *An alternative reading (variant) of Daber's history (concerning the culture-hero Mensembrais and his discovery of Daber)*

When the sea was released and the tidal-wave covered the sites of the human beings, the tribes- and clan-members of Mensembrais escaped into the double-deck canoe. Mensembrais however remained behind.

Mensembrais's attention was drawn on a certain day to the sea, the source of the deluge. But this time he saw a great clear light shining. It came out of the sea. Mensembrais then took the remnant of the iron and started to construct a bridge in that direction, namely to "the shining light".

Having finished the construction Mensembrais walked on the bridge and at the end he met the ancestor Daber. Daber dwelt in a giant clam (tridacna or chama-gigas). When the shell opened its mouth it became light, when it shut its mouth darkness fell. Mensembrais came nearer and when he discovered the giant clam-shell he started trying to turn

the shell upside down, which was just open. When Mensembrais continued his effort, the voice of the ancestor Daber was audible saying: "Don't try to turn me over because I am here". (But apparently Mensembrais had already succeeded). The clam-shell now lay upside down, but no light but fire burst out of its mouth (into the bottom of the sea) and the vulcano on the island of Ternate erupted and fire spouted high into the air. In the middle of the village of Sawar however another "tongue" of fire burst out.<sup>66</sup>

This happened near the site on which in later days they erected the ceremonial house.

Apparently Mensembrais walked back to the beach; of Daber it was known only that he became the ancestor of one of the clans of the village of Bagaiserwar.

Thus far about the variant of one of the episodes about Daber. The descendants of Daber were selected as Satemto (Ondowafo) "ceremonial chief"—and the Government recognized the choice of the people. One of the male offspring of Daber confirmed this and said: "In reality I am the only one in power in this whole area. Of course people have to obey their raja (king) and as they are obeying me, I am the real Raja in power".

(Note: He was not the only one claiming this right, these narrative often served the interests of the clan concerned, and so did the particulars of much "historic" information. The same holds good for the claimed relationship with the famous culture-hero Merne. F.C.K.<sup>67</sup>)

e. *Black magic and leadership and its support by supernatural powers*

Anticipating upon our topic about the threat to life by supernatural powers, we have here an illustration at hand connected

with the appointment of our informant Frits Daber, as korano (Government village-chief). He was Sateyto, but as heir of the supernatural powers of his forefathers, he was feared. Some of the villagers did not agree with the appointment just mentioned. As Government's-chief he had to be the "mouth-piece" of the strangers. "What will happen if we do not directly obey his orders? Is he not able to 'strike' us then with illness, even death?". So they asked, and this question gives us the key to the understanding of the basis of authority, often claimed and seldom contested or openly opposed. For the people concerned this would certainly mean a real threat to their very lives.

I.17. *The life-saving raft from the madi  
(ceremonial house) of Sawar*

Wejasu and Sefa escaped together out of the dangerous flood, and they followed the stream of the river Verkami. This current led them to the coast. The narrative of Wejasu starts with the occurrences connected with the crocodile (yarmé). It runs as follows:

About 3 miles upstream the river Verkami a pair of humans lived; the name of the man was Wejasu, the woman we forget, but near their dwelling-place there was a well. Inside the well a spirit had his abode. On a certain day the woman was fooled by the spirit, while her husband was absent (maybe the spirit transformed himself into the shape of her husband) and he made her pregnant. In due time she gave birth to a boy and a crocodile egg.

The human child grew bigger all the time, the crocodile egg however the mother placed in the foam of water (from the well?) and not long after that the egg hatched out and

the crocodile child was born. The human boy and the crocodile child became mature and both of them supported their father.

The crocodile by hunting in the forest, and each time he went he came back with his catch. He went hunting during the night-time, therefore each morning he climbed into the house and showed him his catch, mostly pigs.

On a certain day the Satemto Matadadon, Tuan tanah from Sarmi came to the river Verkami for the purpose of begging help from Wejasu. When he met him he said: "I beg your aid because a monstrous tara (saw-fish) enters the bay of Sarmi and kills and devours all our children while they are bathing in the sea".

Wejasu and Matadadon agreed about the assistance Wejasu should render. Wejasu promised he would come and aid wherever he could. Wejasu then brought his crocodile-child and entered into the bay of Sarmi. There they took a good position in order to be able to watch what should happen. The crocodile (yarmé) then laid in wait to see the coming of the tara.

He waited for a long time, but the tara did not arrive so soon. Therefore Wejasu made a raft and yarmé took his position on top of it, in between he let the raft float with the flood-current. He had in mind to attack the tara and that moment came very soon. The tara swam into the bay and near the small isle of Vandumuwar, just in front of the village Sarmi; the fight was started at once. Yarmé jumped from the raft and the tara thus assaulted fought back fiercely. They fought vehemently for a long long time until both of them grew tired, but they fought nevertheless as fiercely as was in their power. The yarmé became very tired and so did the tara. Being totally exhausted yarmé

swam to his father Wejasu and Wejasu brought the yarmé home to the river Verkami, because he was utterly exhausted and could not stand the fight anymore.

On the Verkamibeach the yarmé laid himself down and expired there. The father Wejasu wept and mourned over his dead "son", then he went to his home upstream the river Verkami and announced his death to his relatives.

Hearing this sad news all the people left their place, they constructed a kind of stretcher on which they laid the corpse of the yarmé and so they all went to their village. Arriving at the village the Awit (holy flute <sup>es</sup>) sounded: the sign of mourning, because the crocodile had caught many pigs by his hunting, which pigs were consumed in the ceremonial house. His mother was the one who cried, wept and complained even more bitterly. After the mourning the people continued their work for the dead yarmé, and built a high platform of branches in order to place the corps of yarmé on it.

When they had laid the corpse in his place his mother began to twist a long cord. Having made sufficient rope, she went to the sago-trees and took a bunch of the stalks of the sago-tree-palms, and these stalks she bound together in the shape of a yarmé. This imitation-crocodile she bound very strongly with the long cord she had made, and in this way the imitation looked exactly like a real yarmé. Then she went to the well where the real father lived as a spirit (as we have told) and she threw the imitation yarmé into the well, with all the rope neatly bound around the body.

After she had done this the calamity commenced at once. In the twinkling of an eye darkness, thunder, lightning and rain in torrents came all at once. Yarmé had told everything that had befallen him and hearing all this his father

became outraged indeed. The disaster in the form of rain-torrents, thunder-storms and darkness became worse and increased in such dimensions that the water rose. The released flood made the water surface rise within a short time. In the houses people began to cry out from fear and when their houses were overflowed they all fled to the great ceremonial house, the Rumah Karriwari (Madi).<sup>99</sup> But the torrent and flood increased their powerful attack on mankind therefore within a short time, the ceremonial house was overflowed, too. In a hurry the people made a life-raft, a giant one, from the gaba-gaba stalks of which the ceremonial house was built, to climb on it and to save their lives.

The mother and her human child fled from the well, and tried to escape by following the river Verkami, but the two of them got lost.

The life-raft with all the people was swept away by the flood and drifted along the valley of the river Verkami. When they floated to the beach of the great ocean, they saw many people gathered on that spot. Among them was an ancestor named Sefa. Together with the assembled people they wanted to build a village there at a place called Werewar, but they did not succeed: the site became a marsh, therefore they left and went east and arrived in the village Sarmi. There their raft drifted into the bay. They were washed ashore where many rocks are still to be seen. Some of the women were pregnant, others carried a child on their back. They tried to build a new village, but some of them petrified on the cape of Sarmi.

Others then walked further and met Matadadon the Tuan Tanah from Sarmi. But they stayed only one single day, because a quarrel arose about a woman, and therefore they left again, only one male stayed behind. They went away

in the direction of the village Bagaiserwar, by-passing the island of Sawar.

In Bagaiserwar they met Iroti, Satemto of the village and when Wejasu with his people had their first encounter, they argued about the relation-term they should use for each other. About the fact who of the two was the eldest (meaning: had the power over the site) and who should become the youngest giving the credit to each other. Of course Iroti was the eldest, he came first to the Bagaiserwar-site. Thereafter they made an agreement and assigned to the different families their dwelling-place. Wejasu said he wanted to live near the coast. "When you are in need of something", so he said to Iroti, "just let me know and I will surely assist you and render our service".

Other people came in the same way. Among them Wesi and Sasèf. Wejasu with his people commenced to build their houses, lived there and later on intermarried and became close relatives. A certain man named Foja was the first: he married a girl from the Beres (Biri) clan.

Wejasu, one of their descendants is still Satemto, stayed here on the site where we now are. His descendants have been here ever since.

The objects and foodstuff Wejasu and his people brought with them were:

1. Fishing-gear.
2. Coconut-shell.
3. Teeth of a crocodile (as tools to cut and scrape wood and do carvings).
4. The poisonous snake (seimaro).
5. Tobacco.
6. Shell-fish of river-water.
7. Vegetable (sajur gedi).
8. A shoot of the thorny sago-tree.

They planted everything which had to grow. And this was the contribution of the Wejasu people.

I.18. *The revenge of a mother: the second deluge in Sawar* <sup>70</sup>

When Sefa from Sawar became an important man in his village he built a Madi, a sacred dance house, where the holy flutes were kept.

To celebrate the establishment of this important centre, he gave order to the women of the village to collect a great amount of food. Furthermore they had to prepare everything possible for this important event. His own wife was diligent and went into the forest to prepare what could be expected of her. Her little son remained at home and his father was to take care of him. The child played with his pet animal, a young couscous.

Tired by his running and playing Syapor climbed on his father's knees and he dozed off.

His father however grew impatient, he felt tired of waiting for the arrival of his wife, and he lost his temper, but as his wife was not yet within his reach he released his malicious mood on their child, the small Syapor.

With the tusk of a swine he cut deep into the face of the sleeping child, just at the root of the nose: the boy died immediately.

Seeing that his boy was dead he covered the small corpse with tree-bark and laid it down pretending he had put the child to sleep. When the mother of the child came home, she did not ask anything but prepared the usual meal for her family. The child was still lying under his covering. The mother thought her child was sleeping, but when they had finished their meal she went downstairs to have a close look at her child: It appeared to be dead and with the bad wound on his face she became suspicious and considered

how to take revenge. The child was already black. That same night the celebration of the consecration of the Madi took place and the village-people started to dance and to sing. The mother however did not take part. She collected dry leaves and dressed the corpse of her child. After this she brought the corpse to the village well and lowered it into the water.

Suddenly the first thunder burst exploded, lightning struck and the whole wide sky was in turmoil. Then the rains came and gradually it became an uninterrupted torrent. The people started yelling and crying and they ran in every possible direction. Some of them fled into the forest, others ran from the dancing-site into the Madi, but all in vain. The flood covered everything and everybody, only some of the people were able to build rafts and escaped. They tried to reach the beach following the torrent of the flood in the river valleys. But halfway to the coast Sefa, their ancestor died. Before he died he promised to help them in their daily needs, whenever they should run into trouble with their food supply. "Just cry out to me and I will give you fish, swine and other food".<sup>71</sup> "Whenever you are hungry, let me know".

After the death of Sefa another ancestor, named Maris, became his successor. He led his people to the site named Werewar and when the land became dry once more, the people started to build their village and a sacral centre, Madi. It was there that Maris met the ancestor Wejaso. Werewar appeared to be the site where their first village was located, too, but this first village was totally damaged by the flood, the name of that first village had been Yepyeporo.

Having built some houses they went in search of their

lost people and they arranged a search-team to investigate. But as soon as they came into the forests, it came about that all the people who had fled to the forest were changed into quadruped animals, therefore the search-team went back to the village and arrived at the beach in the village of Bagaiserwar. There they met Wejasu again and he promised them help in times of need: "If you like to stay in the forest, that is up to you, but come out of the bush when you need me".

Maris however got a big canoe named Babajof and when he sailed with this seacraft he saw several rafts in the surroundings of the village of Sarmi. There were grown-ups, but children, too. Arriving at the beach in Sarmi they debarked from their rafts and these rafts petrified and are still there.

Arriving at Sarmi-beach the piglet brought in the canoe of Maris escaped from the crew and the little animal ran into the bushes. In hot pursuit some men followed it and found it again on the highest hill on Cape Sarmi, called Naramason. From that high place one got a good look at the landscape around and it was there that the people after the withdrawal of the flood came together. There they met Wési from Sawar and he became one of their chiefs. The people started singing when Wési came in sight, and the song was: "Wési, Wési did you come in the open, too", and the people loved the song and repeated it every time some new people escaped from the flood arrived.<sup>72</sup> This song became a kind of incantation used to draw the attention of the people still lost and at the same time as a magic means to draw them in the direction of the coast.

More than one canoe now arrived. The first one was, as we saw, Maris and his people. The second one however sailed at once to Sawar, by-passing Sarmi. The crew met

Beres there and he invited them to stay in his place. The name of the people in this second canoe was Yapo. They stayed for a while in Sawar, but the wife of Betfa seduced a man, this resulted in fighting and that was the reason why this canoe left for the far away place of Takar.

I.19. *The arrival of Merne and the cause of the third flood* <sup>73</sup>

Merne our famous ancestor came to us from the interior. He once lived in the forest on the site of the Amsira and Tessa mountain. Between the two mountains just mentioned there was a high mountain-peak and from that high place Merne saw the island of Sawar and he desired to make a visit and to be on that island, the place where our forbears lived.

He said to himself: "I will surely find my way". But everywhere he looked there was only water to be seen, because of the big flood submerging everything except the highest mountains.

Therefore Merne ascended and climbed up the slope of one of the mountains and took some earth and rocks, and threw it all on the surface of the water. But he could not yet make solid ground, and therefore he waited and later on he started walking in the direction of Arbais and there he reached the beach, now dry already. There he looked around, and it was very lonesome. Caused by the flood the village and the beach were empty, the people had fled the destructive force of the water. But walking along the beach he saw many traces of footsteps, of men, women and children. Being on the beach Merne drank water from the sea and found that it tasted good. Then he went eastward to Masib. There he found human beings at last and among them the Tuan-Tanah from Masib, and when the two of them met Merne told of the many traces of footsteps he had seen and

he said: "All the people are on their way". Merne continued his journey and passed by the village of Materwar and between that village and the river Verkami (West of Sarmi) he met the ancestor Wejasu and his people. They had fled, trying to escape the flood. Merne had compassion for them but he went further and reached the village of Sarmi and there he found Metatadoa, the clan-chief.

Far off they could see the island of Sawar and Metatadoa said to Merne: "I see fire and hear the singing and dancing of the people". Merne replied: "I am going there at once". Then he made a raft and reached Sawar and found many people there. One of them was Wejasu who had arrived there before. Some people from the Serwar village were also on the island of Sawar.

Merne greeted Wejasu and asked him: "So, you have already arrived?". "Yes", Wejasu replied "I walked earlier and came here".

But Wejasu had something special that drew the attention of Merne. Wejasu was beautifully adorned with a head-attire made from the feathers and plumes of the birds of paradise. Merne admired this attire, named Sepambri and wanted it badly.

He tried to persuade Wejasu to give it to him, but Wejasu refused. Therefore Merne said to Wejasu: "Let us take a bath in the sea". "All right", Wejasu said and off they went to the beach. They jumped into the waves and played in the surf.

They dived into the deep sea behind the surf, and lo, Wejasu discovered that he could transform himself into the shape of a bonito fish. Merne had to emerge very quickly but he waited on the surface in vain. For more than an hour he floated and from the crest of the waves he watched

Wejasu, then at last Wejasu broke the surface. Merne asked him how he could endure to remain as long as he had done below the surface without being drowned. "Well" said Wejasu "just dive as deep as possible". Merne said: "That is impossible, in that case I would drown and die". It became clear that Merne knew nothing about the power of Wejasu to metamorphose himself into a fish. They tried again but now Merne came to the surface as soon as he could to watch Wejasu at close range. He saw a bonito-fish jumping and breaking the surface and saw that this fish transformed himself into a human being: it was Wejasu. Merne was greatly astonished, but did not say anything nor show his surprise. He only said: "Next time we will have a diving contest", and so they did. Wejasu stayed for a long time under water, but Merne came to the surface very soon, and hurried to the house of Wejasu and took away the wonderful Sepambri attire and fled. When at last Wejasu broke the surface of the sea, Merne had already disappeared. Wejasu ran to his house located here amongst our village houses and met Senis. Senis told Wejasu what had happened and Wejasu saw that his house was empty indeed. Senis and one of his friends said: "Let Wejasu come and chase the fugitive with a flood". And so Wejasu did. He closed the door of his house (so that it could float), and than Wejasu released the flood and the water gradually rose.

Merne tried to escape the flood and climbed up a tree, but the water still rose until it covered most of the trees and halfway the mountains too.

Merne, seeing that he was trapped, cried out to Wejasu and pleaded for forgiveness. But when the two met again Merne pleaded to remain in possession of the Sepambri-attire. Wejasu agreed and from that moment on the water

receded. Wejasu and Merne now met each other and they came to terms and in this way peace was restored. Merne (and Wejasu?) were from now on to organize and arrange the celebrations and the dancing feasts.

After this agreement they told this to Sinis and Iroti and then Merne took the road to the east along the beach, and this was the end of the second flood.

I.20. *The deluge and Mamawiso,  
the culture-hero, from Mararene* 74

(Mararene, a small village, located about a mile East of Sarni, owns a site imbedded between the three Sobe-villages. They have their own culture and language. The village consists of two parts namely: Mararene and Nambairau nowadays strongly interwoven by intermarriage, but originally each had their own ancestor and myths. They came together after the great flood, the text of this "history" is closely connected with the flood and the aftermath of it).

In primordial times the ancestors of the Mararene-people lived in the interior in the surroundings of the mountain Atiwaufu (also named Pamenu, v. d. Hoeven, p. 248).

The people were notorious for their evil behaviour. They must have led a disorderly life resulting in many killings. This was at least the conclusion the old folks considered the right one, taking into account the behaviour and ideal of their culture-hero. He tried to avoid another catastrophe. This is his narrative: "The Lord almighty punished mankind and the earth with a deluge lasting 40 days and 40 nights". Only two people, a married couple, could escape the disaster (on a raft) their names were Burunam (or Purnem) the man and Sotijo being the wife's name.

They got children namely Mamawiso, a boy, and Uamanfò a girl. The first name had the meaning: I came out of the earth (or: my origin is the earth).

The brother and sister had to marry, and they got many children.

When the children became adults Mamawiso decided to move in the direction of the coast, because he wanted to know whether other people had escaped the deluge. But he only discovered the footprints of a child and Mamawiso hid himself lest he should scare away the little one. But he did not see a trace of the child, therefore in the meantime he cultivated a site, made his garden there and did his work during a month. This site on the slope of a mountain afterwards had the name of Armati.

On a certain day the weather was rainy during the daytime, but in the afternoon the sun shone again. Then the "child" came out of his dwelling-place in a pig's-hole and laid herself on the tree-trunk of a tapesana-tree (canari) to let the sun dry her wet body. Mamawiso saw the child, crept from behind the tree and caught the little Kim, that was the child's name. The child shocked by the intrusion of a stranger cried out: "aka" (elder brother). But Mamawiso said: "Don't call me aka, because you are the owner of the plot here and it is your land". But the child Kim said: "Yes, but I am still so small, I am younger than you". But Mamawiso insisted and so it remained: Kim and her offspring were owners of the place. Mamawiso then brought the child home and fostered her until she became an adult and could marry. He let her become the wife of his son Yatiwene and the couple got three children: a boy Ameri, and a second boy named Tjawer. The third child was a girl, her name we forget, but she married Isew a young man from the small group called Nambairau. A part of the village Mararene is still named after them. They also had escaped the deluge and cooperated closely together.

After the first marriage between Yatiwene and Kim the two clans made an appointment about marriages in the future. As the two clans claimed the same origin: the earth, the ground it seemed to them not proper to intermarry. They all agreed and therefore the exogamy-rule was strictly kept ever since.<sup>73</sup>

But in between there happened something that the original Mamawiso regretted in the future:

Mamawiso was namely a man of peace, wherever he could he made peace between enemies, he made long trips to bring people together to form a real tribe. He appointed them their sites and arranged the borders of their plot where they could live in peace.

In this way he brought Aifori but also Taiwor, originally coming from the Joke-clan from Bagaiserwar. People said that Taiwor was really an offspring from the Tidore (Molucca's, near the island of Halmaheira). He brought with him many valuable objects and plants, e.g. the plaited sleepingmat, the sea-going canoe, the paddle, fire, the forna (form baked from clay) to bake sago-flour into cakes, the arrows (smaller ones) and last but not least the big bamboo, in use as a trumpet which should be sounded when an enemy was killed. Mamawiso became suspicious about the latter and he was right, because Taiwor started at once to teach the people how to wage a war and how to kill people. Mamawiso tried to stop this current of events saying: "Don't kill, in that way all the people will die in the future". But these words were said in vain. The killing started indeed.

Taiwor married Mamawiso's sister and his place assigned by Mamawiso was in the mountains. There he could build a village. In the new village they built a sacral men's house, the Amari, as it was named here. In the Amari the men

kept the sacred flutes, the long ones made of one joint. When the men blew these flutes it was meant to announce: "I have killed a human being".

When Mamawiso grew old he did not die, his task was finished and he returned to the primeval village in the mountains namely Mahaseremi. From that location he ascended into the sky, or as is usually said: "Mahaseremi was the sky-village". When Mamawiso left he bestowed on his people a huge ladder made of iron-wood. In the original village his offspring kept it ever since.

On earth Mamawiso was transformed into a small image, like a doll. The left foot of this doll was small, the right one big. Mamawiso's offspring kept it and stored it away in the Armati. When in former times the people led a war-party against their enemies, they took the "doll" of Mamawiso with them. The "doll" made it impossible for the enemy to gain the victory.

When the time came for Kim and Aifori, they were not buried after their death, they just petrified and as well-known rocks they remain amidst their people.

## SECTION TWO

### PARTIAL SUBMERGING BY A FLOOD: THE ORIGIN OF A LAKE, A BAY etc.

#### II.1. *The origin of lake Sentani* (Bu-Yakala = clear water) <sup>76</sup>

The ancestor Habai dwelt on the Yomoko. The Ondofolo was Wali. It was dark and the sky was black and closed. They decided to lift the sky and to let the earth down a little bit in order to make light on the earth. (Having accomplished this) they saw the people on earth had neither water nor fire.

Haboi and Wali then took with them a ring made of glass (èbá) and three beads (coloured glass) hawa, hay and naro and went to Dobonai, the man (or: mountain god) of Mount Dobonsoro (the highest peak of the Cyclops range) where he had his abode. He was in power of the water. Haboi went in front, Wali remained behind. Dobonai, though, had already got the message about the imminent coming of two guests from the small èmeem bird. Therefore, he ordered Haboi to go back and bring Wali with him. A few moments later the two of them made their appearance in the presence of Dobonai.

They told him they were coming with the request to buy water. Dobonai answered this would be certainly possible on condition that they had to pay first to two other persons, namely Dukumbuluh and Roboniwai (probably the two wives of Dobonai, according to Hoogerbrugge, cf. p. 35). Therefore Haboi and Wali went on in order to meet and pay these two. They committed however a mistake in giving the most

beautiful bead to Roboniwai, the younger of the two wives, whereas Dukumbuluh got a much cheaper one. At this Dukumbuluh's indignation rose and she said: "When I become outraged with thunder and lightning, people will surely get a horrible time, because I am going to let the water rise very high".

The four of them returned to Dobonai. Haboi and Wali took with them a bucket made of folded leaves (habu).

At first Dobonai guided them to a waterhole used as a bathing-place by many people. There the water was dirty, and they did not accept it. After that Dobonai brought them to his own bathing-pool, but they did not like this water either.

Then Dobonai opened for them the place where he was used to take his drinking-water. This water they accepted, because it was beautiful and clear and on the bottom of it was a fish (jowi).

Here they drew their bucket to the brim and they got a fish too. Dobonai himself tied up the bucket, so that the water could not leak out of it and he forbade the two to go hunting while they were on their way. Bow and arrows he tied up, to prevent hunting. Haboi and Wali then left. Arriving half-way they saw a great wild swine and they put the bucket down, untied the bow and arrows and made some bowshots at the pig. Then the bucket tore and the water started to flow. In a short while it became a wild roaring river dragging Haboi and Wali away, until Haboi put a stop to the spate by stabbing with his (bone-)dagger in the ground just in front of it. There, at once the "river" went into the ground, but emerged further below and it filled the valley below forming an extensive lake just in front of them.

Haboi and Wali had no way to walk back to Yomoko anymore. They chopped down a tree, made a canoe and just paddled back to their place. They saw however that the water of this (new) lake was very dirty and muddy indeed and they saw also that this lake had no outlet whatsoever. Then Haboi ordered the eldest son of Wali to enter into the water of the lake. The boy however drowned. His corpse driven by the current in the lake, floated to Jakonde-village, and further on to Pué and still further to the rivers Taufili and the Tami (this river emerges into the sea). After having arrived there the corpse floated back to Pué (the Southern point of the lake). Haboi who, in company with the father and mother, went in search of the corpse arrived at Pué and there they saw the corpse floating in the lake. Haboi then ordered the mother to enter the lake and go to her son. When she came near the body Haboi let her die, too. In this way she could remain near her son.

Haboi and Wali went back to Yomoko.<sup>77</sup>

## II.2. *"Paradise" lost: the destruction of Iria (Yotéfa), land of the living*

### *Commentary*

The Yotéfa-area, nowadays a bay, is the most southern part of the Humboldt-Bay. This inner part is separated from the main bay by a long-stretched beachwall (tongue), running from east to west, thus forming an inner-bay having a rather small entrance (the Pirjei strait). Near this strait the two biggest villages Tabati and Enggros are located near to each other and the other dwellingplaces are within the range of visibility.

Nevertheless the variants of the myth concerning the fate of Iria (Ria, Lia) are strongly contradictory. This fact is

important because it gives a clear insight in the controversial powers within the borders of a rather small group (about 1,000 souls). The texts themselves are giving a good impression of the tensions and their causes even between closely related people. (Cf. for more facts and explanations: n. 93, K. W. Galis 1955, *passim*).

a. *The matter of status at stake: Iria became Yotefa-Bay* <sup>73</sup>

Iria was the first place where human beings were created. The sun-God Tab formed the first human male out of clay and called him Ria (Lia, Iria) and gave him as wives two ghost princesses. The first-born son was named Nish, but he was the first of the many people born in the place of the living: Iria.

When the people multiplied and their numbers ran into thousands an outstanding male named Srèm felt not satisfied with the way of daily life. The worst happened with the family-life and the marriages. The marriages were performed at random as Srèm himself experienced, because he had many wives in his polygamous house-hold.

While organizing the dwellingplaces of the people, their sites and plots many had to leave and thus the first emigration took place from Iria to the Humboldt-Bay and surroundings, in order to make room for the newly formed organisation.

This organisation was composed of three social classes. The first three, formed by Srèm he named:

1. Hamadi (Chamadi) from which clan the first charsori (feodal chief) was nominated. This clan was formed by Srèm and he became probably their first charsori. All his descendants in the patrilineal line had or claimed the same rights as once Srèm had.

2. Chachten Hai (Chai). The ancestors of the Chai or

Hai-clan. This clan had the duty to be the most outstanding assistant of the Hamadi-clan. Their duty became: leaders and war-chiefs.

3. Chabakuk: They had to serve the needs of the people, taking care of their welfare and well-being. Chabakuk got the right to make contact with the supernatural powers, by way of white- and black-magic. After a war had been fought it was the Chabakuks too to reconcile the belligerent parties and to establish a peace-agreement.

Srèm with his Chamadi-clan chose for himself and his clan the site lateron known as Tabati, and he built the houses on the eastern-part of the site (Tabati-sea) and the Daiwirs built their houses on the western-part of the site (Tabati-land).

In the course of time these three clan-groups (main- and subclans) became entitled to enforce prerogatives from the other clans, and this resulted at last in a kind of semi-feodal system. Here not only inferior clans were involved but even the relation between the younger and the older brother in the same family.

The tension within the main-clan Chamadi became obvious from a series of misunderstandings, in or after the second generation.

In the third generation after Srèm the two eldest brothers in the Chamadi-clan were Metechib and his younger brother Maäch. Because their father grew old the sons meddled more and more with matters of politics. It soon became clear that the oldest son, the Charsori to be, had his own way in arranging daily life, and his younger brothers got the worst of it.

On a certain occasion the oldest son had to distribute the harvest of the sago-trees of the sago-swamp on the foot of the western mountain. He took the best part out

of the middle of the tree for himself and shared the end of the tree, with hardly some sago-flour left in it, to his younger brothers. He added some unrinsed pieces of the tree too. Maäch did not say anything but was furious and felt insulted and gave order to the Chai and Chabakuk to inform his younger brothers about this deed of disloyalty of his elder brother Metechib. But at the same time Maäch himself violated the rules by giving orders to Chai and Chabakuk, being the prerogative of the Charsori to be.

Then their father, the old Charsori died and from far and near the relatives and friends came to mourn the dead and perform the prescribed ceremonies. (Cf. Galis 1955, pp. 34 etc.)

Usually the guests who had taken part stayed for some time and then they got a small gift and returned home. Maäch knew this custom as did his brother, but the latter, now the new Charsori was slow in performing this duty and therefore Maäch reminded him whispering: "Let them go home, give them something in their hands, they have already waited too long". This saying annoyed Metechib and he did not answer. But Maäch embarrassed his older brother again by asking: "What has to be done now?". This was the limit. The young Charsori annoyed and embarrassed as he was became very angry, but took no action against his brother Maäch as yet.

Then their uncle (mobr.) of the clan Runyo in Enggros came to visit the newly nominated charsori and his relatives and brought as a gift a big saw-fish, but he made a mistake by delivering the fish at the house of the younger brother of the Charsori, Maäch.

Maäch went at once to his older brother and told him about the fish. But this time too this brother, the Charsori, did not answer him. Maäch feeling that things went wrong,

went home and ordered others to go to the charsori and tell him. Then the charsori spoke ironically and said to the messengers of his younger brother: "You, the younger brother are the real charsori, is n't it?". Maäch repeated the sending of messengers several times, but the answer remained the same. All of this "dispute" ended in a fierce quarrel and the charsori took already his bow and arrows. This meant a real threat and Maäch acted in his own way i.e. he distributed the fish among his relatives. Because this was an outright violation of the prerogatives of the charsori, now the real fight started between the brothers. They shot at each other continuously until their wrists showed blisters (from the bow-string who sprang taut again after each pull of the string when the arrow is released). To protect there wrists the two brothers dressed their wrists with ribbons of bark-cloth.

After this the two brothers divided their forces and split the clan-members into two divisions, who fiercely fought each other. They fought from dawn to sunset and decided: "Tomorrow we will continue the fight". In this way many brave warriors were injured and at last they lost courage. It was the younger brother who decided: "Better to move away from the elder brother's place then this useless fight".

On the western-site of the village Tabati the sub-clan Dawir (Daiwir) dwelled and to them the younger brother Maäch Chamadi sent a messenger from the Chabakuk-clan, informing them that Maäch wanted to move and live amongst them. Wajach Daiwir agreed but said: "How is it possible that some of our noble-clan want to live in the mud at the foot of the mountain, they have to live among many people. If everybody agrees you may come". Maäch said: "This is the straight answer I want, I don't like to ask three

times the same question, but only when my elder brother agrees we will go”.

The negotiations with the elder brother, the Charsori in charge now, must have succeeded, at least after some time the partners of Maäch started to prepare the site and built their houses. They built a cult house (Mau) too and made a huge and high construction which annoyed the elder brother again. When he saw it he shouted: “Build the roof much higher, much higher”. This was ironically meant, but the partners of Maäch did as he said and they made the peak and the ridge of the pyramide-like roof very high. (Cf. Galis p. 33, photo no. 13).

At the same time Chabakuk and Maäch made an agreement about the ultimate destruction of Metechib, the Charsori and elder brother of Maäch. They should perform this deed by way of black magic, after the removal to the new site had been accomplished.

Then, when this was accomplished, Maäch hearing that Chabakuk had made his preparation for the applying of black magic, announced that he had in mind to go to the village Deromena (Tanah-Merah-Bay) and to seek there a woman he could marry. In order to make a good impression he used the regalia of the charsori, and said to Chabakuk: “If after three days I am still on my way perform the magic”. Chabakuk made everything ready for this combined plan, but Maäch was still on his way to Deromena, when Chabakuk (losing patience) started. He went out of the village, took some pieces of the trunk of the feather-palm (*Oncosperma filamentosum*), made two laths of it, applied his magic power to them and then embarked in his canoe. He held the magic laths in his hands and paddled with his feet.

Arriving at the opposite site, near the houses, Chabakuk

sneaked under the house (built on stilts) of the Charsori Chamadi, and he started at once with striking the stilts with his magic laths. Whilst he hit the stilts the house started to shake and all the houses joined-in as if a huge earthquake took place and had his way. Everybody started to flee, they fled to the mountains in the West, some embarked in canoes. In the coming night nobody stayed in Tabati and Iria (Ria, Lia). Some reached the shore-line and walked in the direction of Sentani, and settled themselves in the villages of Asé and Ifar (small-Ifar); these were people from Tabati, and others went to places now called Jabuai-Dondai, Sosiri and Yakonde as well as Doyo. They fled as far as Sabrong to the West and far beyond the border of Papuanewguinea in Vanimo, Aitape, Waropu and Kariru. This was the result of the second emigration from the land of origin: Ria, the land of the living.

One of the former inhabitants of Ria, named Aya had settled in Yabuai, and shortly after the disaster he went back to have a look at the situation in Ria. He saw the destroyed houses, the totally destructed gardens and it was repulsive to behold. He thought: "better nothing at all than this sight". And then he took a bamboo-tube with water and hurled it to the plain. The water spilled from the tube, flowed continuously and at last overflowed the whole plain of Ria: Yotefa. The plain became a bay and only one small hill remained visible from the former Ria i.e. the small island Injemoch, the only remnant of Ria. This is the spot where we dispose of our dead.

Through the clear water now covering Ria we still can see the place were the ancestors had their gardenplots (the sea-gardens) of the reefs.

The opening of Ria to the sea became the strait of Pirjeu.

(Others told, that whilst Chabakuk started to strike and to hit the stilts of the Charsori-house, the flood commenced to rise and eventually overflowed the whole plain, causing the existence of the Yotefa-Bay.)

When Maäch came back from Deromena he arrived at the village of Kajubatu, near the entrance of the Humboldt-Bay. There he asked the whereabouts of Ria, and then the people told him of the total destruction of the whole plain. Hypocritically he shed some tears but afterwards he embarked in a canoe and paddled to the Yotefa-Bay, and to the site of Tabati. He took with him the regalia of the charsori and in due course he became the new Chamadi Charsori of Tabati, they built on stilts above the water of the bay by now.

(Still another informant told that since the Yotéfa-Bay came into being the Charsori of Enggros was accused to have caused a tidal-wave swallowing Ria by black magic.)

b. *The pond Fei, its secrets and the fatal sisters* <sup>79</sup> (abridged)

In former times, when the plain Yotefa still existed a married couple Charo Sanyi dwelled there. Their place was located on the western side of a place named Tiachnuch, a hill. (At the foot of the hill) they had a pond named Fei in which several kinds of (deep-sea) fishes lived. This was Charo's secret, because fish was still unknown at that time. He and his wife watched the pond and the fishes carefully lest other people should know them and want to eat of the delicious creatures. The bottom of the pond was of special material and Charo had to be very careful when he speared the fishes. From the village Ria, located at the foot of the hill Injemoch, two Srèm-men came to pay a visit to the Sanyi's. They did not understand the language of the Sanyi's therefore they could only make gestures in order to make clear the purpose of their visit. They told that from Ria

they saw smoke billowing each day out of Sanyi's place and therefore they came to see the whereabouts of the people living there. Sanyi gave his guests some fish to eat, which they never had tasted as was the case with tobacco, they did not yet know. Charo made clear that the Srèm's had to be very carefully with the fish he gave them as a farewell gift. "Do not throw away the bones but hide them carefully, lest other people get to know my secret". The fishes were neatly wrapped up and then the two Srèm-men went away.

On a certain day two sisters, Yamonje and Lèrmonje (alias Nau and Tau) came from the direction of Sentani to pay a visit to their uncle (:mobr) Charo and his wife. They stayed during some days. On a certain occasion Charo and his wife went to their sago-groves in order to rinse sago-flour, the two sisters remained at home. Usually the two sisters took a bath during noon and this time too they went to take a bath. The place where they found the water to bath, was located near the pond with the fishes. After they had finished their bath the elder sister went to have a look at the pond with the fishes. The younger sister gave her a warning saying: "do'n't do something wrong" and she reminded her of the fact that in the Sentani-area she caused a great disaster to the people. (Galis 1955, p. 263, mentions the fact that the older sister was evil; the younger had a good character. The elder one caused several disasters: in Sentani, Ria, Yotefa Skow by destroying the reef which once protected the beach from the surf and chasing away the snake-human with the precious coral-bead tree; about the ultimate fate of the sisters, cf. note 82). But Yamonje (alias Nau) did not listen. She pretended to have forgotten her loincloth at the bank of the pond, but she tried to spear

a fish with the suan fishspear, but she destroyed the bottom of the pond, and the pond overflowed. The fishes escaped and the whole plain of Yotefa inundated. The escaping fishes were the sword-fish, the saw-fish, the hammer-shark etc. But before they could reach the deep-sea Charo came back home, because he felt in his heart something went wrong at home, and he called back the fishes. To each of them he gave instructions about the manner with which they ought to be caught by humans in the future.<sup>80</sup> Then he set them free and they swam to the Ocean and became deep-sea fishes. Charo gave names to the several parts of the new bay. After the disaster a man from the promontory Injeros (Enggros) named Drunyi, came and he led the two fatal sisters away to Congwei (Inwei) near the cape Juar. Charo and his wife had to escape the flood and with the assistance of Drunyi they moved to a new place Injeros (= the second place) as it was named by Charo. Drunyi went back to his place but Charo gave him some of the fish secrets. Not long after that time many people, who were on the move settled near Charo Sanyi and he was nominated by them as "the guard of the fishes" because Charo knew the secret of the fishes and knew their magic. In the course of time he became famous and was named "the lord of the fishes".

c. *Theft, inhospitality, indignation: revenge, catastrophe*<sup>81</sup>

In former times (when the plain Yotefa still existed) the Merauje group dwelled near the site where the village Nafri is now located. When some goods of Merauje were stolen by people from the Coi (Choi) group this resulted in a fierce fighting. The Merauje group decided to move further on and they went to live in the village Ria, near the hill Injemoch.

There they gave their possessions in the care of their relatives.

The house-wife of one of the families made that many objections that the Merauje's felt indignant to such an extent that they went to the forest and cut a great many bamboo watercontainers. They performed this during night-time. Having prepared these bamboo-vessels they filled them with salt water (from the sea?). When they returned and reached the middle of the gardens the oldest Merauje, named Ya emptied the vessels. The water started to flow and did not stop until the whole plain Yotefa was flooded and in this way the Yotefa-Bay came into existence. The next morning the Merauje's went to the place named Pimě, and they took with them a drum and a bracelet. Then they decided to split the whole group.

Two small stones Wamang and Wachoi (female names) they gave to the fat persons and the drum and bracelet to the thin ones. The first mentioned ones stayed, and moved later on to Tabati, and the other ones went and moved to Sentani to live in the village Yabuai. At Yobi descendants of Aisya (Ya) are still living and some Merauje's in the village of Nafri.<sup>82</sup>

d. *The eruption of an island* <sup>83</sup>

In primeval times an old man dwelled on the beach of Skou-Mambo (the beach east of the Humboldt-Bay). On a certain day this old man sat on that beach and looked in the direction of the sea. In those days the inhabitants of the Skou (Skow)-area used to visit some small islands laying offshore the promontory Suaja. The rocky cape and the beach west of it is nowadays named Base G, the name the Americans gave to this site during World War II in the Pacific. As remnants of those small islands several rocks

are still visible. Those rocks are parts of the small islands.

The old man saw that one of those islands belched forth clouds of smoke billowing high in the air. On that particular day the old man heard a terrible strong noise as a thunderclap in high heavens and meanwhile the whole island erupted like a real vulcano. This eruption caused a tidalwave and the surface of the ocean rose in such a manner that the waves swept away the islands and covered the coastal areas, from the place where nowadays the capital Jayapura is located, to the beaches of Skou and the valley of the Yotéfa-area. The eruption of the small island caused a permanent rise of the sea-level and the result was, that the Yotéfa-valley was flooded and became together with the islands in this area the bay until now. The level of the ocean never receded to its original situation. When after what was thought to be a high tide, the low-tide, the ebb and flow remained so high that the Yotéfa-Bay remained a bay and never became the flat country (with gardens and islets or hills) again till this day.

We may draw the conclusion, that the eruption of the islet near the Suaja promontory caused the flood and brought the Yotéfa-Bay into existence and the same fate hit the low coastal area's. (This is told as a historical fact, but cf. about vulcano's, n. 66.)

e. *The old man and the impudent children* (variant 1)

In former times, long ago a very old greybeard dwelled on the coastal area of the village Skou-Yambe. On a certain day he set down in the heat of the sun, it may be because he just took a bath and wanted to be dry again. While he was sitting there a group of small children played together not far away. Being worried by flies and mosquito's who

were stinging his body and sucking his blood, the old man asked the help of the children to chase away those pestering vermins. Obviously the old man was too old and had not the strength to do this himself any more: he became too slow in his movements to be successful against this enduring nuisance.

But his request was not met in a satisfactory manner, on the contrary: the children did not only flatly refuse but they even mocked him and laughed scornfully.

By now the old man became very angry at those children, but as his body was not strong anymore, he was not able to punish them in an ordinary way. He however had another possibility he could put into practise against the impudent children in order to destroy them i.e. black magic (the power of universe); anyhow according to the narrative he requested that a huge wave should arise and sweep away the children who were mocking him.

And lo, from the surface of the ocean a tremendous wave as high as a mountain arose and covered the whole area of Jayapura (Humboldt-Bay) the Skou-Yambe coast included.

After the huge tidal-wave receded again it became evident that the low Yotéfa plain remained covered by the sea and to this day the just mentioned plain became a bay (the inward bay of the great Humboldt-Bay named Yotéfa-Bay).

f. *The result of the disagreement between two clans in Yotéfa*  
(variant 2)

In former times two clans were dwelling in the Yotéfa plain, namely the clan Hanasbey and the clan (Chamadi) of Tabati.

In a certain time there rose a terrible disagreement between those two clans about the issue of the strength- and the importancy question. Status was obviously at stake.

This issue caused a continuous quarrel between those two clan-groups—on every possible occasion—and in the mind of the Tabati an evil possibility arose foremost among their magicians. Not before long tension arose once more and then the Tabati-people put into practice what they had in mind: Assisted by the power of universe they stirred the ocean, thus forming a tremendous tidal-wave which washed away and swept over the dwellingplace of the Hanasbey-clan. All the inhabitants and their entire possessions were drowned in the huge wave.

After the tidal-wave receded the whole area formerly existing of a plain and forest became a part of the ocean (the Yotéfa-Bay). This was the result of the spate caused by the tidal wave (of hatred) and ocean water.

*g. The fatal fishing of two girls (abridged) (variant 3)*

In primeval times the Yotéfa-Bay of today formed a very extended plain. In the middle of this plain a lake was formed by a river having its mouth in between the promontory Kasuari and cape Tobati (Tabati). (Nowadays it is the sea-strait Pirjeu between these two locations.) At those times long ago a married couple, husband and wife of the Sanyi-clan dwelled in the midst of the plain and their names were Harak and Ayakoi (Aroi). They lived there in good health and peace. Bordering their home-yard a pond was located with several kinds of fish in it. When they were short of fish they just went to the pond with a fish-spear and speared a fish or two according to their need.

On a certain day Harak and Ayakoi went to their garden-plot on the plain and whilst they were away two visitors (girls) came from the direction of the West from the Mount Cyclops area.

(These two girls paid their first visit to their relatives in Yotefa, therefore) it took some time to find their house. Seeing that the house was empty they understood that Horak and Ayakoi were tending their garden, therefore the two girls just waited their home-coming.

But they had to wait very long and therefore they grew hungry and decided to prepare a meal, notwithstanding the absence of the inhabitants. They cooked several yam-tubers and stirred sago-porridge. This being done they had nothing to eat along with their prepared food, therefore they went to the pond, because they had already discovered the fishes swimming in it. One of the two girls took a fish-spear in order to spear some fishes. The bottom of the pond however was shining bright as if it was made of glass, but the two girls did not know the bottom existed of glass indeed and one had to be very carefully if trying to spear fish lest the glass would be broken.

The girl handling the fish-spear started in trying to spear a fish but missed the fish and hit the bottom instead and thus piercing a hole in the glass.

Out of this hole the water spouted and in no time became a spate. The pierced bottom spouted so much water that it overflowed the whole area: the plain Yotéfa.

The whole plain along with the forest became a part of the (Pacific) Ocean as the result of the carelessness of the two girls. This was the way or manner in which the Yotéfa-Bay as we know it to day came into being.

II.3. *Mandomaka, the snake and the flood in Wandamen-bay* <sup>84</sup>  
(disrespect causing the flood, deluge)

The Wandamen people lived in peace and prosperity

together along the east coast of the bay. A peaceful small river flowed quietly to the beach. In ancient times however an old man, Mandomaka, dwelt near the source of the river. At the same place stood the Anio Sara, the original sacred centre of the men's secret society. Tied to the stilts of this building was the snake Nawusoi (Ina-Wuso). The inhabitants of the villages in the neighbourhood of the river, Sobei and Wasior, knew the old man must be treated in the most respectful manner, because he kept and he was guarding the secret of life and welfare. Everybody observed the proper rules lest the big snake with all the mysterious powers of nature should break away.

Around the Anio Sara some fibre-trees grew, the ganemon, with their long-life-giving power leaves. Every now and then Mandomaka went to the coast taking with him a small bundle of the ganemon leaves in order to exchange them for some smoked fishes.

Once it happened two naughty boys went into hiding in the branch of a tree alongside the narrow little path Mandomaka usually took when he returned from the beach. Coming near the tree the old man had to stoop to be able to go underneath the low-hanging branch and just at that moment the two boys stealthily took his fishes. When Mandomaka continued his way, after a few steps he discovered he had been robbed and, he got into a dreadful temper. He retraced his steps and discovered the boys in the tree. He said to them: "You must return home and a horrible curse will strike all of you unless you bring me your sister as my wife to the Anio Sara. Otherwise I will bring a dense darkness and a cloudburst over all of you".

The boys went back home but they were so frightened that they said nothing to their parents. And at the predicted

time Mandomaka fulfilled his threat. It was after three days and it remained dark and the rains came. Before long a torrent of rainfall swept over the country. Then the people became frightened. "Has somebody perhaps spoken with Mandomaka"? they asked. Now the boys could not keep their secret any longer. They told what they had done and the demand Mandomaka had made. But it was already too late. The old man cursed the country, left in anger and never came back and the rains continued to fall uninterrupted! The sun did not rise anymore and it remained pitch dark. The small river changed into a wild turmoil of thundering water, it became a real banjir (spate). The river was in reality the snake, who had broken loose and transformed himself into a wild spate dragging the Anio Sara with him.

("In this way that first time of security and wellbeing came to an end. Chaos and evil broke loose, caused by the snake Nawusoi, no longer kept in check by its partner". I. S. Kijne.)

On the spate and the flood the small temple Anio Sara was swept away and out to the sea. The whole village was destroyed. The Anio Sara however ran aground on a big rock, but the building got afloat again when two brothers appeared. One of them pierced the rock on which it was stuck. From the hole a deluge emerged. The other brother jumped on to the roof of the Anio Sara. And while the small temple bobbed up and down on the waves the young man stood on the roof and danced and sang a war-song, and like a real hero he displayed his spear in hand (his skill). Meanwhile the building floated on the big flood past all the Wandamen villages. At intervals during the voyage of the Anio Sara a number of beams have apparently come loose, so many that at each village in Wandamen-bay one was washed ashore. These became in the future the main poles (stilts) of their various Anio Sara.

Nowhere, however is his song understood, except in Dusner, where he was washed ashore. Here the building was dragged on to the shore and put upright again. "In this way a new security arose, a new time of well-being" (Kijne).

The young hero became for the inhabitants of Dusner the guardian of the secret of well-being and the Anio Sara became the centre of their newly established culthouse for the men's society.

Until this century all the inhabitants of the Wandamen villages had a profound respect concerning the Anio Sara of Dusner and thus the men initiated kept on knowing the secrets in that building as well.

*Modern conclusion and addition to the ancient narrative*

In the village Dusner itself one is able to get information about the end of the myth in quite another version. It states: "The flood, deluge, rose higher and higher until it covered the houses and even the highest trees were submerged. The new ancestor however of the people in Dusner was saved and escaped the deluge in a high tree. This tree grew on the peak of the holy mountain Urbuon, and it was there that the Anio Sara ran aground and stuck (in the tree). Later on it was lowered down and built anew in the forest". The new informants never forget to mention their opinion that their narrative of the deluge is in reality the same story as the one mentioned about the flood (in the Bible) and their escaped ancestor was no one else but Noah himself.

II.4. *The narrative of two brothers,  
the flood and Manyabitbay* <sup>26</sup>

In ancient times there were two brothers of the Rumbiak-

clan. Their village was Soweik, on the island of Supiori (Biak-group).

These two men went on a certain day into the forest to make a fence around their new garden. After having finished this job they proceeded into the primal forest to select a big tree in order to make a sea-going canoo. Among the many tree-giants they found a suitable one and cut their owner-mark in the bark. Being thus very busy they paid no attention to the gathering clouds, which became more and more dark. Then the rains came, gradually increasing until it became a real torrent.

They had no hiding-place to shelter them but they remembered a giant old tree partly mouldered inside, which part had become a hole. The men ran, found back the old tree and crawled into it. There was room enough so they took with them their shoulder-bags. The rain came down increasingly and meanwhile the surface of the sea rose so high it looked like a tidal wave. The two men however were very tired and dozed off, only awakened by a terrible noise when their tree was overturned by the flood and swept away with the spate, which drove the trees out into the sea. The men could feel the undulating movements of the waves on which their tree drifted away to the west.

Land was nowhere in sight, therefore they only waited and could feed themselves with the foodstuffs which they took with them in their shoulder-bags. Uneasy about their fate and future they nevertheless fell asleep again. When they woke up while it was still dark, it was caused by the shock their tree made when it ran aground at the entrance of a bay. Rocks were left and right, probably the tidal wave had broken through the gorge between the high rocks and the flood-stream rushed mightily strong into this newly

formed deep gorge. In due time the tree was afloat again and through whirlpools at the sharp bends of this "flood-canal" the tree was swept away further and further until it came into a great bay not unlike a widely-extended lake. Here the currents lessened and after some time the tree ran aground on the northern coast of this bay. The two brothers crawled out of their hiding-place. There were no houses nor people to be seen, but many sagotree-groves. As they had run out of food the two brothers started at once with the preparation of sago-flour. The first days they slept in the treehole, but then on a certain day they made a shelter of the dry leaves of the sagopalm. Not long after that they saw a dog coming to the beach searching for food. They lured the animal with some baked sago and it came near. They were able to catch the dog and they thought: "Where you find a dog certainly its master must be near". They took a fishbone and a piece of rattan with three knots in it (gòn) and tied this round the neck of the dog, and then they turned the animal loose. As is always the case, this time also. In three days some men appeared and the first encounter took place. The men gave their names, they were of the Siam-people and the two Biak-brothers told their story and the long voyage they had made (about 250 miles, K.). They became friends there and they made an agreement. The Siam-men would bring their people out of the hills where they dwelled, because the Biak-brothers told the Siam-men of the abundancy of food namely the sago-palms. The people came indeed. They built their houses and the Biak-men instructed them how to make sago-flour and the way to build houses from the stems of the sago-palmtrees and the thatched roofs they could make of the dried leaves of these trees.

Because the two Biak-men had no wives each of them got a girl from the Siam people and they decided not to try to find their way back to their homeland Biak and their village Soweik.

But the beach on which their tree ran aground they named after their birthplace Yènsoweik (in the Siam language Lajensoweik and abridged: Linsok). The Siam people proposed to incorporate the Biak-men in their small tribe, and the Biak-men agreed on condition their original clan-name Rumbiak should be used in the future, too. And thus it happened. In later years even the most outstanding chiefs were selected out of the Rumbiak-clan.

The Siam had their ancestor worship, too, but they made their images in their own way: standing with their arms outstretched and the open palms turned upwards. (Cf. van Baaren 1968, opposite p. 80.<sup>86</sup>)

Obviously the Biak-men had no difficulty in the changing of their culture and religion. The informant concludes his narrative with the remark: "Our ancestors came, they just united with the Siam-people. We never heard of any problem in this respect. The flood swept them away far from home, but they found another dwelling-place, another kind of people, their manners and habits and their language as well and their worship of the ancestors too". In the course of time the clan Rumbiak of the Siam-people had their dead too, and when in the time of mourning they had to make an image of the first Biak ancestor who died, they made it and carved a skull-karwar, later on they imitated the Siam way of carving.<sup>87</sup>

The flood had separated and united.

II.5. *The dangerous blood* <sup>88</sup>

In the Geelvink-bay area and in the peninsula called Bird's-Head in certain circumstances blood was and is still dangerous and a real threat to life. On a certain occasion the violation of the taboo-rules usually observed resulted in a catastrophe among the Moire-Fak people. In order to understand what was at stake we explain some rules and attitudes of these taboos. About the positive effect of blood we will explain more elaborately in the part on the Defending of Life.

a. *Biak-Numfor*

Among these various clans and culture-provinces it is a common feature that bloodshed, menstruation and birth have a dangerous meaning. For instance when a person is killed, the spot where this happened is tabooed. It is strictly forbidden for a member of the keret to step on this spot and even the whole site or area is included in these taboo rules.

A person who has been killed is named: aipyokem (ai = wood; pokem = rotted, y, j, i is the pronoun of the third person singular). The whole word is as a matter of fact: ai-baken (tree) bepokem: being decayed. Not only the direct next of kin, but even all the in-laws have to keep this avoidance taboo. These next of kin and those related by marriage, together with all their kin are not allowed to enter the place or the site of bloodshed, until the victim is revenged by the killing of the enemy (or one of his kin) who caused the death. It is not prescribed to shed the blood of the enemy to be slain on the same spot nor to bring the head or some blood of the victim there. It is sufficient to

kill the murderer of one's kin, even a tribesman, or woman or child, and bring the head into the village where the victory wor (circular dance) is held. In the songs, dirges on such an occasion, the name of the victim, their clan-mate is mentioned and the hero(oes) who took revenge and who did the actual killing in retaliation. Also, at that very moment the taboo is removed and life goes on as usual. Violation of this blood-shed taboo causes sickness, accidents, disaster and even death. The menstruating woman or girl has to live for the time being in a shed or lean-to in the garden, the parents' house is taboo for her. Birth however occurs within the family-house, only the men are not allowed to stay or to enter the house as long as the mother still has a loss of blood. Violating this taboo-rule would make the men weak, unlucky in their hunting and fishing and the like.

b. *The Fak-tribes (Arfak)* <sup>89</sup>

The substance most feared and strongly tabooed by the Moire-people is certainly blood and even more the placenta and the "dirt" discharged by a woman during and after childbirth. The same holds good for the blood of menstruating females.

Furthermore they are afraid of the ghost of dead persons, ambober (a kind of bamboo, cf. list of words) and faknik (spirit-abodes) mountains e.d. the Mount Tyegau (the highest peak of the Arfak-ridge) and many more objects and persons that form a real threat in their lives.

But I want to elaborate here about the important events of childbirth and menstruation. People are afraid in the following manner which explains why they fear these occurrences.

When a woman is pregnant and she knows the day of

her delivery is drawing near she is not allowed to stay and live in the family-house. It is not permitted for her to sit or to sleep together in one house with her people. In this case her people (relatives) or her husband have to build a small cabin or lean-to along the edge of the yard or compound. The same dwellingplace has to be used by the menstruating females to isolate themselves for the time being. Among the Arfak people (Faksya) it is customary that an expecting mother has to live quite alone in her cabin as soon as she feels her labour pains. She has to remain all alone during the whole delivery. She does not get any assistance from other women. And as soon as the child is born, the people who are in the main house jump out of their house and they run to another place. This hasty running is caused by the belief that unless they take to flight, the placenta (and the blood) of the newborn baby will "strike or hit" them and they will get the cough-sickness or become asthmatic, and not be able to climb mountains any more. Their physical strength will be endangered. On the day the birth takes place nobody is allowed to go into his garden-plot, lest the "foulness" might be brought into the garden and contaminate the whole plot and does wither all the plants, tubers etc. Until this day this belief is still held and the taboo-rules are strictly kept.

*c. The violation of the avoidance-taboo and the disaster among the Moiré* <sup>90</sup>

In primeval times the Moiré erected a big house and named it Beeyuti. On a certain day a woman got her menstruation period. Her people being afraid of the blood built a small cabin along the edge of the house-yard where the woman concerned could remain isolated. The small lean-to they

gave the name of Makuty. On a certain day the inhabitants of the great house Beeyuti went to their gardens, some of them walked accompanied by their dogs, hunting wild pigs (swine) in the forest. A married couple went together to their garden, but their adult son stayed behind in the house Beeyuti. As the boy felt lonely he took a look around the house. Therefore he focused his eyes on the small cabin, because he saw a hand moving. The woman sitting in her small cabin plaited a kwap (carrying-bag) and therefore she moved her hand regularly. The boy, who saw the moving hand, misled by her moving hand thought that she beckoned him with an amorous desire. Tempted, as he imagined, the boy left the big house Beeyuti and he walked to the small house Makuty. Arriving near the woman he took his genital and exhibited it to the woman. She however became furious and in a fit of anger hit the genital of the young man so hard it broke and, the genital became a bleeding mess. The boy ran away to the big house Beeyuti, opened his sleepingmat, laid himself down and fell asleep at last.

The day became evening and the people of the house Beeyuti returned home. The married couple went home too. Arriving in the house they saw their son was lying on his mat and his broken genital was still bleeding. The father thought he understood what had happened, therefore he went to the small cabin Makuty and he asked the woman about it. The woman told him: "This day I was sitting in my cabin plaiting and netting a bag (mangkwap) and therefore I moved my hand hither and thither. The boy however had the idea I beckoned him with desire. That was the reason why he came to me and exhibited his genital, therefore I hit him very hard and his genital broke".

The father of the young man lost his temper. He ran

to the big building, took the plume of a bird of paradise and tied it to the tail of a white-coloured dog.<sup>91</sup> The panic stricken animal took to flight, provoking rain- and thunder-storm, that burst out and struck the area. This went on and on and the rain-torrent became so strong that the slope of the high mountain named Rwegbey slid down in an enormous land-slide. Masses of clay came down and covered the two houses concerned completely. The whole site became a sago-tree swamp (sau, seu or sér). The humans too were transformed, they became sago-palms.

At that time two sago-swamps were formed from the two houses involved: the great house Beeyuti and the small cabin Makuty. Until this day the two sago-swamps still exist. The Moire use the leaves of the trees to build their houses and thatched roofs, but the content of the trees, the sago-flour, they don't eat. They are still "for" (taboo) for them ever since.

II.6. *The Yéli-tree, creator of the world,  
destroyer of primeval humans*<sup>92</sup>

*Introduction*

According to the opinion of the Yali people the firmament is a mighty, solid arch, originally vaulted so near to the surface of the earth that the highest peaks of the big trees touched it.

When in primeval times the Yéli-tree was cut down the sky was lifted to its present altitude. Therefore the conclusion seems obvious that the primeval altitude of the sky was held up and fixated by the Yéli-tree. Moreover the Yéli-tree and the primeval-tree mythology was closely linked with the creation and at the same time destruction of the world

and humans who lived in previous times before the present species of humans, i.e. the Yalis came into existence through the killing of the primeval swine. The primeval human male, in some versions of the myth assisted by one or two tree-kangaroos, who uprooted the Yéli-tree terminated by this act the earth-quake catastrophe caused by the tree.

The texts of the myth concerning those important events and the poetic version of the ritualized form of expression follow here, but of the elaborate chant we only took the first part: the introduction in which the main themes are mentioned in recital form whereupon the chant is started by the participants. This part gives us a clear example of the great poetic ability of the Yalis, elaborated in full detail by Dr. Siegfried Zöllner in his book.

#### *The Lim-Lim-people*

“When he came and formed everything a terrible earthquake occurred. All the mountains here (at Angguruk) in our vicinity raised themselves and through the quivering of the mountains the following events befell the human beings: The name of their tribe was Lim-Lim, and all of them were smashed up. They, the Lim-Lim, all died under the toppling rocks, at the time the Spirit (mungguwat) was on his way. He had not yet arrived here, but during his arrival the mountains were shaken”.

Because of the coming of the Yéli they said (to each other): “What are we going to do now, what can we undertake now?”.

They were young and wellgrown men, adorned with bird's feathers, neck-shells and a head ornament of tree-kangaroo-fur. But when Yéli came they thought: “What must we do now?”. And they took hiding under the trees and in the

rock-caves, and hidden away in this manner they perished, so that only their bones are still to be found.

They were once the Lim-Lim people.

*Commentary by Zöllner*

“Before the present human generation came into existence other people lived, according to the opinion of the Yali, in their surroundings. These were named Lim-Lim.

The destruction of these people however was caused by such a terrible earthquake, the quivering and shifting of the mountains, that nobody of the Lim-Lim people survived this atrocious event. They all perished in that horrible landslide which covered them up and burried them alive. Their bones however can still be found here and there. The size of these bones is so different from that of the bones of the recent inhabitants (much bigger and longer), that the conclusion of the people who find them is: they must have been quite different people, in no way related to them.

Their way of life though must have been the same as the economic enterprises of the Yali. They had their gardens on the mountain-slopes, wore attires of the same patterns and carrying-nets. Even their fire-places (hearths) are found in various places but deep in the earth. Not only in the neighbourhood of Angguruk do the inhabitants know about that primeval-generation, but in the Heluk- and Seng-valleys to the south and in the Habilik- and Landi-valleys in the west too. In all these areas mentioned one finds as silent witnesses these earth-covered bones”. (Zöllner, p. 57.)

These facts lift the curtain of history recorded in the myths. It sheds light on the great disaster which occurred at the end of June, 1976: rain, earthquakes, landslides, took about 1,000 lives and made about 15,000 people home- and

garden-less. It happened before, exactly as told in the oral tradition, interwoven with mythical elements and recalled also in ritual and medical treatment.

“Ritual realisation concerning the primeval tree (the Yéli and the termination of the earthquake) is realized by the performances of the medicine-men, whose special task is the treatment of sick people. Sickness namely is understood as the representation of the primeval earthquake and only the treatment of the medicine-man is capable of overpowering it”. (Zöllner 1977, p. 10.)

#### II.7. *A Yéli-song* (Yéli = Yéli-tree) <sup>93</sup>

Recital:

At the Pasin-Pass and at the Fula-Pass,  
 up there he threw it on a pile,  
 he felled the Yéli, he felled the To,  
 he felled the Kerime, he felled the Meleme,  
 up there he flung cracking down,  
 he took the Hul-Tree-kangaroo  
 and hewed the notch in the frontside, then he left the tree,  
 he took the Hisali-tree-rat  
 and hewed the notch in the backside and left the tree.  
 Then the foliage rustled, the leaves trembled,  
 the tree trembled, he toppled and reared, jumped up again.  
 At the Pasin-Pass, at the Fula-Pass  
 at the Ilihim-Pass and at the Jangno-Pass  
 up there he piled it up, threw it on a heap,  
 he felled Yéli, he felled Ando, he felled Kerime.  
 The man Putpalungi, the woman Kilalungi,  
 up there he flung cracking down,  
 the trunk broke, the boughs broke into shivers.

the foliage rustled the leaves trembled,  
 the tree trembled and toppled, he trembled up there,  
 he threw it all in a heap, piled it up.  
 He felled Yéli, he felled Yéli up there  
 thus he was squeezed together,  
 his arms were squeezed together,  
 his legs were squeezed together,  
 they flew to the East, they flew to the West,  
 they flew forwards and backwards,  
 he threw them upward and let them fall.

Chant:

My Yéli is felled and he went far away,  
 Ando is felled and he went far away,  
 My Yéli has toppled down and went far away,  
 They have hurt Yéli, then he went away,  
 They have hurt To, then he went away,  
 Yéli has toppled down and went far away.  
 From the stump of my Yéli lianas were torn off,  
 From the trunk of the Ando Kilal-lianas were fetched down,  
 My Yéli toppled, lianas were torn off,  
 Kilal-lianas fell down.  
 on the stump of my Yéli the Holi-bird settles and flutes,  
 Around the stump of the Ando the Nemsá-bird flutters.

(Zöllner 1977, p. 549-50)

II.8. *The threat to Life from the dwarfs  
 from their sky-abode*<sup>24</sup>

When in those primeval times the Yéli-tree had been felled, the arch of the firmament rose to the place where it now vaults high above the earth. According to the Yali-people this vault is solid and as hard as a rock. But this

rock is in reality petrified ashes or cinders. Old folks told a story from their ancestors: in a time long ago somebody must have cut and beaten several holes in the solid arch of heaven, because the dust of ashes drizzled from the sky covering the leaves of the sweet-potato plants. Before the people could cook the leaves (in their earth-ovens) they had to rinse them first. According to the Yali the dwarfs living above the arch of the sky are to be blamed for this fact. They are responsible (because they have their dwelling-place up there). They have a way of life just like the humans on our earth (kinang). Frequently they vent their pent-up emotions in shouting. They start quarrels among themselves and abuse one another and call each other names. This shouting the humans on earth are able to hear: It is the rumbling of the thunder-storm. (And thunder-storms followed by heavy down-pour of rain are much feared by the Yali-people (p. 51).

Lightning and thunder are not correlated phenomena. Often they perceive lightning not accompanied by thunder. According to the Yali lightning is caused by the spirits living in the mountains surrounding them, when they strike fire (with flint, tinder and a piece of bamboo).

#### II.9. *The threat to life from below: the inhabitants of the underworld*<sup>95</sup>

In the same way as we human beings on this world look up to the sky-blanket, where the ulawajeg (spirits and dwarfs) have their abode, in the same way according to the Yali, the creatures or beings living under and below us, look up to our earth (kinang). For they have our earth as their sky. These beings are just like human beings, except for their

small blinking nearly shut eyes. Just like the humans they live in villages and tend their gardens (and arable land). At a given time in the future however, as the Yali-people tell each other, these beings will appear through the holes (and caves) climbing to our "kinang". At that time they will demand crops and products of the fields, first of all the yellow-ripe cucumbers and bananas. They will force the humans to work for them until the perspiration "flows" from the human bodies. In this manner these expectations and threats are always told by the fathers to their children: "When we are already dead, all these things are going to happen" (p. 52).

### SECTION THREE

## GIANT-SNAKES AND DRAGONS AND THEIR ROLE CONCERNING THE FATE OF MANKIND

### *Introduction and commentary*

It is not the purpose of these series of texts to analyse and explain these myths, but some remarks have to be made in order to understand descriptions of occurrences and the cultural background. The giant snake and its forerunner the dragon play an important role in the myths and the history of myths all over the world. Our area under discussion is no exception in this case. To give an impression of occurrences in which the snake (dragon) is involved alone would take many pages. In our introduction to Nisaba III (cf. p. 17) we made some remarks about the role of the animals in the myths. In the same volume, in connection with the creation and the introduction of death, some of the myths have reference to this role. (Cf. A. 10 "The woman from the East and the snake of heaven", p. 69.) In "the secret of eternal life and the origin of death" (p. 86) the myth explains how the primeval man failed to put the secret of eternal life into words his children could understand, only the animals: snakes, lizards and the like were able to understand the message. Therefore only they are in possession of the secret of eternal life.

It appeared to be impossible to separate the snake-stories from the role these animals played in the complicated plot of some myths. The same holds good with those parts in the myths depicting the origin of death (Nisaba III, p. 38).

The first impression is the dreadful, abhorrent appearance

and as such the heroes of men have fought them (St. George and the dragon, the Chinese dragon trying to devour the sun depicted on pottery and brass-ware, Barong of the island of Bali (Indonesia) and of course the role of the snake in the creation-story of the Bible and the horrifying appearance of the snake-dragon in Revelation or Apocalypse, the last book of the Bible). New Guinea (Irian Jaya) forms no exception: the dragon or snake is fought and conquered, because the dragon stands on guard, he is protecting a castle, a secret or he represents somebody. In our area it is not uncommon that the dragon or snake represents the ancestors. We will presently see this in the Geelvinkbay.

For the dragon-snake is not only the symbol of chaos, the primeval chaos, but also the source of the cosmos and, if conquered by men, of culture. In an excellent study G. W. Locher (1932) explains clearly how this symbol permeates the whole culture of Kwakiutle Indians. The serpent is named there Sisiul and is often depicted as a double-headed creature (*ibid.* p. 6).

In the interior of the main Island of New-Guinea (Irian Jaya) where among others the Dani and the Yali-tribe are living, the snake is very important. The failing snake, in the race or match between the bird and the snake, causes death. The snake who failed was the same which later on caused the disaster of the landslides.

We start with the just mentioned and well-known myth of the life and death determining match.

### III.1. *The fatal running-match: bird and snake* <sup>96</sup>

(In primeval times) death was still unknown, it came as a fate to mankind. The possibility of a continuous rejuvenation was at hand. All the inhabitants of the mountains know about the fatal match between the Sibine-bird (hornbill)

and the snake Kalije. These two kinds of animals were appointed to deliver their special message to the human being(s). The message of the bird in the Yali language was: "Fong, fong" (meaning: mourning-time, mourning-time). The snake's errand was to say: "Nahamut, hahamut" (my skin, your skin): my skin will be the example for your skin. (According to Peters, 1965, in the Dani language the message of the bird was "hesi ju" = rub your body with clay: the mourning decoration, and the message of the snake: naputal-haputal = my skin, your skin.<sup>97</sup>)

The message first called out and brought to men was to be valid and operative. The message of the snake meant: "My skin will be a simile for your skin". Just like the snakes shed their old skins from time to time, in the same manner the human beings would be able to cast off their old skin and rejuvenate.

The message of the bird was the dirge of lamentation (hesi ju, in the Dani language), of mourning. Because the feathers of the hornbill are striped black and white and in imitation of this the humans had to coat (smear) their bodies as a token of bereavement.

*Text:*

The result of the match was by no means certain from the start (as it seemed to be), because the Wese-snake, which was still living on a tree (had wings) and was able to fly, and she was the one appointed to take part in the match to deliver the message. But then the Kalije-snake (a gigantic creature) interfered: he had as the biggest snake at hand the best chance to reach the goal as number one. Obviously he did not know anything about the special ability of the Wese-snake, therefore he said to her: "You? You are still

a small child, what could you have already to tell? I am much bigger, therefore I will go and deliver the message".<sup>98</sup> And at that very moment he started.

He wound himself around trees and over rocks, crossed gorges and crawled up (and down) the slopes of the mountain-ridges. While he was still on his way the hornbill-bird Sibine came. And because it was a bird, flew high (in the air) above all the obstacles, arrived as the first and uttered loudly its lamentation-cry "Fong, fong" (Yali). During this time the snake Kalije arrived too. The bird Sibine said to him: "I have already delivered my message and talked, what is it that you have to say anymore?". Thereupon the snake crawled away and returned and the Sibine-bird left the scene too. Should the Wese-snake have gone instead of the Kalije-snake, then she would have cried out: "My skin, your skin", because she could fly. In that case we would not have to die, but could have changed our skin. But because the bird Sibine talked first we have to die. During the mourning-time we smear our bodies with white clay, just like the hornbill-bird, which has white specks (spots). (Zöllner p. 506.) Since that day the Wese-Snake does not live in the trees anymore, but crawls over the earth just as other snakes do. (Ib. 75.)

*Comment:*

The importance of the snake Kalije is stressed too in the belief of the Yalis concerning the cause and termination of the south-eastern gales which ruin garden-plots and fruit-tree groves. This becomes clear in the following text.

The Snake Manu is sometimes the same as the Kalije-snake.

III.2. *The Manu-snake and the destroying Föhn-gale* 99

If the heavy Föhn-storm is released the humans take their measures and they "shut the door" (ritually), just as if it concerned a house. When they have shut the door on the road (the gale takes), the storm will lessen his violent attack and gradually cease.

If the storm leaves off, then this Föhn-gale himself remains up there in the mountains, in a rock-cave or hole near Nusumik and Ahabareg. During the time he sits inside his cave-hole, he flashes his tongue and coils himself just like a snake. His eyes are leaking out and his nose too. There where he snorts only very poor shrubs grow, everything is bare; he spews out of his rock-hole, hissing he crawls to the mountaintop, coils himself and at that moment the Föhn-gale is released. And when the gale arrives people are saying: "Now he is coming and takes our bananas, takes our pandanus-palms, takes the fruits of our trees, our sago, our palms: everything which is below there in the lower areas, he takes".

All this the people are saying: "And when he arrives he strips the spires of our houses, snaps our bananas, cracks the suggar-cane, snatches off the boughs from the trees; then the people shut the door on the way (of the gale)". (They perform the ritual).

Then the gale lessens his power and ceases. People are going to repair their houses, and they abuse the storm because of the damage he brought about: "Why do you spit on our sweet-potato-fields, our sweet-potato beds are trampled down". They abuse and call him names just as if other people had stolen something. "All these facts he committed just now. Bananas, pandanus, sugar-cane, sweet-potatoes he

destroyed up there, branches of the trees he tore them off, but now many clouds appear. The storm has ceased and returns to his home following the stream of the rivers and we will not see him any more. Only very weak and mild will he blow and if he went stream upwards, we will not see him anymore. Yes it is the snake Manu. He remains up there on the mountains, he did it, and then the Föhn-gale came. He wanted to be cooked by the humans. Therefore he came down to the valleys, to the lower more warm domains he came. There he became the Snake-Kalije, the people kill and cook him. His head is as big as a ball, or as the spadix of a blossoming banana. He is killed and eaten by the people”.

### III.3. *The original contact between men and snake*<sup>100</sup>

A man of Homboki went in the moon-light to the forest Fung-Fung. He discovered the remains of the Yuhum plant, and thought that a tree-kangaroo had eaten on this spot. In order to catch the animal the man constructed a hide-out; then he went home. The next night he went into hiding at the time the moon arose and lay in wait. Suddenly he saw the head of a giant serpent hover about the Yuhum-plants to eat them. The man took fright at this sight and feared an attack. He left his hide-out and tried to escape. But soon he perceived that the snake pursued him and shouted: “Wait for me, wait for me”. But the man fled and made a trap from a piece of liana, in order to kill the snake. Then he hurried homewards. In that night a violent thunderstorm burst: thunder, lightning, landslide and storm. The man knew for sure that this had something to do with the snake. The next morning he went as fast as he could to the trap he had made the previous day. There he beheld a great

waterfall, the Homme-river Fall that the snake had caused by beating with his tail. He was still alive, hanging in the snare of the trap. The serpent said: "Take me with you, cook me, eat me". Therefore the man brought the snake home and laid him in a tree-bark vessel. Then he called to his friends: "Take grass and leaves, sweet-potatoes and vegetables". The man himself heated the small boulders, washed the entrails of the serpent and cooked all of it between the hot stones. Then he opened the earth-oven, stretched the snake-body and cut it into pieces. He alone ate a big piece out of the middle-part, his friends did not eat anything. All the rest of the pieces he laid in a tree-bark vessel and went to sleep (in the attic, the usual sleeping quarter). Below (in the living quarter) the vessel stood, containing the slices of the snake. Suddenly these slices of the serpent started to move, they joined one another until the snake was complete again. Only the middle slice was missing. Then the snake crawled to the attic, enclosed the man into the spot where the slice was missing and left the house. The next morning the man was not there anymore. His friends went in search of him and they discovered that the snake was not there either. At last they saw the snake coiled in a pangee-tree. They wanted to fell the tree, and hacked on both sides into the trunk, but every time again and again the notch was restored. But the men hacked the whole day long. At last, when the evening drew near, the tree toppled down and he fell into the Homme-river.

The snake then followed the course of the river and arrived at the far side of the Yahuli valley. Up there he shaped and formed the mountain Fendehik. From there he went up to the high mountains and into the Polu- and Hahu-pond. There he lives in the water. Therefore the man (enclosed in the snake) remains there in the water too.

If somebody should drink (this) water, he runs the risk that the serpent enters into his body and causes a swelling of his belly. "The name of this giant snake was *Manu*" (Zöllner p. 55).

III.4. *The dangerous giant-snake:  
Manu and the landslides* <sup>101</sup>

*Introduction: Earthquakes and their causes*

Landslides are mostly caused by earthquakes, Dr. Zöllner makes the following remarks about them. "The most horrid and for the Yalis the most disturbing natural phenomenon is certainly the earthquake (*mèk*). It makes the very existence of the earth itself problematic and reminds the people of the primeval time in which they succeeded in calming down the trembling earth by the performance of their most important rituals. Should one neglect these rites and destroy the sacral objects (*usasan*), then a most vehement earthquake would turn the earth upside down, the mountains would collapse and life itself would be extinguished". (Zöllner, p. 57.)

*Text: About the snake Manu* <sup>102</sup>

"Now we want to speak about the snake. The serpent named *Manu* remains aloft on the mountains. There he stays for a long time, until on a certain day he thinks: "They have to cook (and to eat) me". Thereupon he uncoils himself, and the rain takes place and thunderstorms, cloud-bursts and landslides. A landslide drags the snake along and throws him into the river. The current (flood) of the swollen river sweeps him with her into the areas far below. There he becomes the *Kalije*-snake, people kill and cook him. In this way or manner *Manu* becomes *Kalije*". (ibid. 506)

III.5. *Snakes and dragons in the Geelvinkbay area**Introduction:*

In the Biak-Numforese language these two words are used alternatively. *Ikak* = snake; *korben* = dragon, but in the daily language one never hears the word *korben*, this indication appears mainly in the myths and the wood-carving art. When we try to give an explanation we have to mention the facts first.

In daily life and myth the dreadful character is the most striking feature. When somebody discovers a snake and cries out: "Ikako ikak" every able man hurries to the spot with his chopper or hatchet and assists in the killing. Naughty children are often frightened, (mostly when they are not willing to go home during nightfall) by the parents shouting: "A snake, a snake", and this always has results.

A snake is a sneaker: he crawls silently and the bite of a venomous kind is nearly always deadly. Most horrible is the fact that the python-snake is able to swallow entirely a pig of a rather big size. In the narratives, myths and fairy-tales it is often described how a snake swallowed a child, a man or even a pregnant woman. In the myths therefore the devouring dragon-snake is, in this area, a repeatedly told occurrence.

But the most remarkable and most important feature is that the snake/dragon is dreaded and admired at the same time, but not always under the same circumstances. One finds the admiration of the serpent only in the basic principle of the social organisation, in ritual where the primeval occurrences are repeated and brought to life again and in the art of wood-carving.

Firstly: the serpent/dragon is the prototype of the primeval

chaos. He has everlasting life, because he rejuvenates himself repeatedly. This process of rejuvenation comes to the fore in the Biak Koreri-movements. The utopian time as indicated by this word is composed around the basic word *rer* = cast of the old skin (Biak) = rebirth, and the meaning in the Numforese language is: standing in a row, i.e. "everything will be (is) all right". (Van Hasselt 1947, s.v.) In Biak it means: fall in line, or: draw up (cf. B. Mofu w.y.) too. The chaos however had to be conquered and is conquered in fact, and in explaining this we start already with the topic of our following Volume of Nisaba. But as a matter of fact: every time the threat to life occurs the defending of it is undertaken as we saw and are going to see.

The overpowering of chaos leads to cosmos, in our case: social organisation, cooperation between two opposite partners. In the snake/dragon narratives the dualistic (cosmic dualism) and the dialectic character of the Geelvinkbay culture is clearly shown.

According to Held (1940) in this culture district the snake is at the same time "initiandus" (Numfor-Doré, and Roon) and the "initiator" (ibid., p. 142-43).

This explanation seems contradictory, but we have to bear in mind that the people involved consist of two groups i.e. the living and the dead (the ancestors) and though these two worlds are separated, the land of the souls c.q. the ancestors influence the lives of their off-spring. But this aspect of the myth we plan to explain in the next volume. Only one remark we will make in order not to obscure the myths and the texts about the snake/dragon.

#### *The dragon/snake in art*

Remarkably: the feared animal is used in an abundant manner: on kitchen utensils, paddles, canoe ornaments,

korwar-shields, etc. This has much to do with the magic performances and belongs to the so called "white magic". We have to explain these features in our next volume, and only give a quotation from Th. P. van Baaren, 1968, as an indication which we have already mentioned in our own explanation, but that is given here in brief:

"The snake symbolizes on the one hand the underworld and death and the dangers of the dark, which must be overcome (many myths tell of a primordial victory over a large and dangerous snake) by the powers of light of the heavens, symbolized by a bird (in this area usually the sea-eagle). On the other hand the snake represents the power of rejuvenation and regeneration, the power of *koreri*, which is such a central idea in the Geelvinkbay religions". (Van Baaren 1968 p. 81.) The texts give the illustration of these words.

It is not the purpose of this Nisaba series to analyse the myths but the texts as such have to be clear enough for the reader to understand what the people concerned meant to say in these texts. Therefore we give the background-information in the notes. The texts are translated as closely as possible to the original texts.

One last remark: Sometimes we find in our texts elements which remind us strongly of the main myth of the messianic figure (the text of this myth will be given in our next Volume of Nisaba); the main figure in disguise and as such rejected and mocked, as the scabrous old man or snake, but after his rejuvenation or metamorphosis the superb young man, or the friendly grandfather. Cf. our narrative from the Windèsi-people and note 120, and also Kamma 1972, *Koreri*, *passim*.)

One of our texts (cf. III, 13) mentions the fact that the korben has two heads. Held (1940, p. 143) (cf. our first text)

states that the snake of Roon had a double name: Wokui-Wosei. "Wokui namely shows some features, also known from other mythologies, of a double character". He prints one of the figures I collected in *The Raja Empat* (Sorong) of a dragon having two heads, one on each end (cf. *ibid.*, p. 138). Van Baaren (1968) shows several double dragon/snakes in the Korwar-shields( no. 1, 4, 13, 16, 23, 24, 44), and A. F. C. A. van Heyst 1941, fig. 1 + 2). In our next Nisaba volume we have to explain the relevance between dragon/snakes and the ancestor-images, the Korwar. The functional connection between them is namely obvious.

### III.6. *Wakui-Wosei, the serpent of Roon* <sup>103</sup>

In times long, very long ago at the village Yauer (in the Geelvinkbay, South of the island of Roon) arrived a serpent of a huge size. This snake had, long ago, been a man, who called himself Wakui or Wosei. And while he was taller than the highest and thicker than the thick-trunked tree his voracity was extraordinarily great. In the village Yauer he feasted upon the meat of humans until all of them left and fled from their village-site. After that the serpent crawled to the promontory of Jopengar to the river Woisimi and there he caused the inland living people of Tandia and the seashore dwelling Waropen-people to betake themselves to flight. After having followed the coast as far as Dusner, he crossed the river and arrived in the Wandamen area. The inhabitants of that area too saved their life by fleeing. Angry, the serpent shot the fleeing inhabitants with small sharp arrows made from the stem of sago-trees, but these arrows missed the people and stuck into the ground, and they started to grow, and they became the forerunners of

the later famous sago-groves in that area. On the island of Roon some of these arrows landed too, but they were damaged, one half of the "tail-leaves" missing, therefore the sago grows in Roon less abundantly than in Wandamen.

Meanwhile the snake crawled along the coast of Yopengar and arrived at that part of the beach from where he could cross the small strait to the island of Roon. The sea-strait between Roon and the promontory opposite to Roon is very small indeed. First he attacked the people of the village War where he started his bloodthirsty job, but the people prepared their canoes as fast as they could in order to flee. A woman who was busy in her garden in the forest fled to the beach. She waded through the shallow bar which separated the islet Arifuru from Roon expecting that the fleeing people would take her along in their canoes. But the canoes passed by, one after the other, but the crew of the canoes were so panic-struck that nobody paid attention to the shouting and the alarm-cry of the pregnant woman. When the last canoe passed by without taking her along, the woman remained alone in her despair. The woman Imbakeriëwi feeling hopeless got a fit of anger and despair. From fear she shouted and stamped her feet, until a land crab-fish climbed out of his cavity alarmed by the unusual noise, in order to look what that was all about. When the crab saw the woman he asked her what the reason was of her despair. Then the woman told the crab-fish everything, and the crab invited her to share his cavity. When the woman doubted if the crab-fish had enough to eat, he showed her a great amount of tubers and tree-fruits he had collected. Reassured Imbakeriëwi followed the crab into his cavity and there she made ready a place for herself as comfortable as the circumstances allowed.

In this hole she gave birth to a twin, two boys whom she gave the names of Semiri and Mandoi. The two boys grew up thrivingly, but when they grew older and were able to go fishing on their own account, they felt the necessity to have a bow and fish-arrows (pisan) to shoot fish. Their mother could not provide them with these utensils, but the crab took care of that and gave each of them a strong bow. One of the bows he gave the name of Sunbabi (they bring a pig) and the other Wanaanbabi (you eat pork).

When the boys grew to maturity they were no longer satisfied with their place of living in their crab cavity or hole, and they proposed to their mother to go into the interior of the island of Roon.

At the outset the mother refused flatly, but when the boys revealed to her their plan to kill the snake Wakui, she overcame her initial fear and the three of them left the crab-hole carefully and silently. It was not long before they arrived at the mountain near Syabes-village, which site they had selected to carry out their plan. As soon as they could manage they built a small house on stilts, but they did not kindle a fire lest the smoke should betray their hiding-place.

When at last they had finished they constructed a huge fireplace, collected a great amount of small boulders and many bamboo-tubes (the usual water containers) which they placed near the entrance of the house. After they had collected the quantity of firewood required, they kindled the fire and placed the boulders on top of it. Scarcely had Wakui smelled and seen the smoke, when he crawled nearer on his way to see if there was something to eat.

Not long before Mandoi and Semiri saw the trembling of the big trees and the toppling over of the smaller ones: a sure sign that the monster was on his way. When the snake

saw the two boys standing near the entrance of the house he started to sing: "I am Wakui, I am Wosei", supposing he would have them very soon in his power. The two boys however shouted out, that they had very good palm-wine (swan) and better he tasted it and became drunk first. Therefore they invited the snake to crawl nearer. Greedy to drink the palm-wine the snake approached the house. Meanwhile he opened wide his jaws, whereupon Semiri and Mandoi poured out their bamboo-tubes with water exactly in the mouth of the monster. Before the snake could shut his jaws the boys took the "white-hot" boulders out of the fire (using fire-tongs of bamboo) and threw them in the mouth of the monster. Wakui swallowed the hot boulders, and lo!: furious with pain the animal turned and twisted his body and in his agony he uprooted some big trees, but he died on that very spot.

Hearing the news of the victory over the snake, the inhabitants of Roon who fled from their place because of the snake, now returned to their island where they live in peace ever since.

On the occasion of the performances of the "kajob" (bereavement-ceremony) however this great historical fact is recalled (and reperformed) to the effect that their offspring may take notice of (the famous occurrence in the past).

### III.7. *The origin of the devouring snake* *Roponggai of Waropen*<sup>104</sup>

Indarami Painusi gave birth to the snake Roponggai and he floated in a (big) plate, named Mafiri. When she brought him forth into the world, her son, the snake Roponggai, asked his mother: "Why are you weeping. And what is the

reason why you stay in the house of Ghoa?". (The mother did not answer, went on with her work.)

The mother prepared coconuts (i.e. she rasped or grated pulp in order to get the coco-nut oil) and rubbed the body of Roponggai (with the oil) and she smeared and painted his face, one side she made black, using soot and the opposite part she coloured red with ochre-coloured earth <sup>106</sup> and then his mother left him. He remained seated in the house until noon-time, then he left the house and went away. The snake Roponggai took his bows (and arrows) and encountered some fishermen, whom he wanted to kill. They said: "Who is this that fighting (creature) one? This hero is a snake". And as he always fought people disliked (and hated) him. Woman picking shell-fish at the Worumi (near Woisimi) he wanted to kill, therefore they took a dislike to the snake Roponggai. The ones seeking shell-fish he fought and therefore they disliked him. Females in their women's-canoe he killed, all of them. Men in their men's-canoe he killed, all of them.

His mother wept for him as he was her suckling, because the people despised him (her son) (and hated him).

### III.8. *Kirisi, Roponggai (Ponggai)* *and the ritual for the dead* <sup>106</sup>

The snake Ponggai killed the Waropen people and therefore they fled and settled in Makorawawiso. But one child remained with his mother in the (old) village to keep watch over the corps of a dead person. (But) Aimeri outwitted the snake Ponggai and he fought him by using boiling water, until the snake got burned. Then Aimeri made his canoe sea-worthy and he left the place with his mother and the corpse of the dead human. They entered (the harbour

or anchorage of) Weinami. And Aimeri went into the village and begged Makui Makutisisari, whether he would take the dead person into his house and mummify the corpse. Makutisisari refused, though. Then Aimeri took the corpse again and travelled further now entering at Manieghasi (at Nubuai).

There he debarked and asked a certain man: "Do you permit that we take this dead person and mummify the corpse in your house?". The man said: "Yes, I agree, let them mummify him in my house". (They did as they intended) and the people here have watched how it was done and they did the same with their dead ever since.

### III.9. *The giant snake Ropokai and the hero Ambonai*<sup>107</sup>

The snake Ropokai dwelling in the village Jeripoi, on the bank of the small river Yerumi, went continuously out of the village lying on the look-out for the Waropen people.<sup>108</sup> When they paddled up the river to pound sago, the snake lay in wait for them and swallowed all of them, nobody survived.

The next morning again the snake went on the look out, some people paddled up again and he swallowed all of them, their canoe included. Then the snake left the place, blowing the war-trumpet, i.e. the triton's shell. His wives hearing this said to each other: "Ropokai killed". The next morning Ropokai repeated what he did and swallowed some Waropen people and their canoe too. Again Ropokai blew his war-trumpet. The day after that he went from Jeripoi lying himself in wait at the Jerumi-river and there he attacked in the same manner a canoe with many Waropen people and this time again nobody could escape. Then Ropokai went home.

This happened every day until the Waropen people could stand it no longer. And then on a certain day a man named Ambonai, from the sources of the river Woisimi, came and he asked the Waropen people: "Who is killing all the time, according to what I have heard?. They answered: "It is Ropokai. Each day he comes out of his dwelling-place and swallows all of us till we are finished".

Then Ambonai remarked: "Give me a woman to marry her, and then I will go and lie in wait for Ropokai and I am going to kill him. And I give medicine (airawi) too".<sup>109</sup>

And the Waropen gave him a good wife and Ambonai married her. Ambonai then said to the Waropen: "If you stay here it is impossible to accomplish (what I have in mind) therefore, just leave, I want to stay alone and you? Well you leave me and go to the island of Numfor yonder in the ocean". Upon these words they left, only Ambonai and his wife remained behind.

But the woman, his wife, hated him and she said: "Ambonai's body is in bad shape. He has scabies all over his body and his body (skin) is in rags". But Ambonai said: "Let us just stay behind until we die, but my wish is that we are going to live. Therefore let us only remain together".

Thereupon Ambonai applied his medicine to his wife and himself, in order that Ropokai should fear the two of them; after that he did the same with their house. Next, the following morning Ambonai went to the forest and chopped big pieces of tree-trunks. He took a great many stones and chopped the wood of the rizophora-trees and stored all this in his house until it was rather filled with this material. He ordered his wife to collect long tubes of bamboo, usually containing drinking water. And they took water, heated it over the fire, next they scorched the many stones until they became very

hot, after that (having finished this preparation) the two of them lay in wait for the arrival of Ropokai the snake. And Ropokai came indeed: he pushed (in his crawling) the trees of the forest and they came tumbling down, he pushed the sago-trees too and the roar and rush was terrifying. Ambonai and his wife heard the noise and Ambonai's wife started to cry and said: "What will happen to both of us?". Her husband said: "We will remain, don't be afraid; hurry, heat the water, scorch the stones till they are very hot".

And then Ropokai arrived at their house, he coiled himself near the staircase of the house, opened his muzzle intending to gorge down the house with the two people included. But then Ambonai ran fast carrying the glowing pieces of rock and threw them into the open jaws of Ropokai, who swallowed them. Then he opened his jaws again and now Ambonai threw the pieces of burning logs into the devouring mouth, followed by a mass of hot water. Next he threw hot stones again into the jaws until the snake collapsed and fell. Ambonai gave the snake so much until he twisted and turned (with pain) and died. Ambonai then took his axe and hatchet, descended from the house and cut the head off, which he laid separately from the body; the body he cut into slices. These fillets he brought landwards and spread them until it was sufficient to build a canoe. To his wife he said: "These will become a vessel we will use to go seaward to your mother and her relatives on the isle of Numfor".

Ambonai went on but the next thing he did was the applying of his magic-medicine to his own body. He transformed his appearance and annihilated his old scabious skin and "made himself good again" by his medicine. His wife discovering this said: "Because of your ugly appearance I hated (i.e. was disgusted with) your former body, but now I see you are

handsome again". Thereupon the two of them slept together until the next morning. At that time the wife looked around her: their room was beautiful, because there were a great many possessions (wealth, Windèsi: *piğangènam*<sup>110</sup>) all of them wonderful things: pillows, cushions, blankets, beautiful sleeping-mats, dishes, cups, golden earrings, decorations and ornaments. The man gave everything to his wife and he decked her out with the finest ornaments.

Therefore the wife loved her husband saying once more: "Well, when you were so ugly I did not come near you, but after that and now I see you are much handsomer". And she praised her husband. Thereupon the man said to his wife: "Stay here, I am going landwards". And so he did. Ambonai, coming near the place where he had laid out the fillets of the snake-body, thumped (stamped) with his foot saying: "Hi, you! become a ship, that I may be able to sail to the relatives of this woman, her father and everybody at Numfor".

Upon these words the snake-body became a ship and it went to the beach and then floated into the sea. Ambonai said again: "Let there be much food, much pork", and he said: "Tea, sugar, let there be everything we need in the ship". Thereupon he said: "Let the ship go on her way to the isle of Numfor". And the two of them embarked in the ship and it went directly to Numfor.

Arriving at the beach the two of them went landwards to the parents-in-law of the man, and the father of the wife recognized his daughter and he said: "Who has brought you seawards?". After that the daughter told everything that had happened to her father. And the father (and her other relatives) said: "Hi, you, you hated him and you said: 'yes, but he is so ugly'. But, lo, you have had good luck,

you own everything". And the daughter replied: "I loved all of you, therefore I submitted and spoke".

After that Ambonai brought his parents-in-law and their relatives back to Waropen again. He guided them inside the old village and then he took the bones of the dead snake and distributed them according to the empty houses. Thereupon he shouted: "Hi, inhabitants of the village, are you sleeping? Do you want to pound sago?". Then the whole village (coming to life again) called out: "We want to go and pound sago". And lo, all of them lived again, the bones of the snake were transformed into human beings.

Ambonai now ordered and said: "Let a new sago-plot come up: sago with plenty, let the old sago-plots perish and disappear".

After all this had happened the Waropen people tabooed some animals which had the likeness of a snake such as: octopuses, cuttle-fish and sea-eels, saying: "We do not eat them, because they are snakes". They believe if they were to eat them they would get eczema on their skin, they will not touch or even smell them. All of them are scared to do this.

Ambonai let the Waropen-people from the river Woisimi keep the Numfor-habits they adopted while on that island: they put shell-rings on the legs of the children and when they dance for their children (part of the initiation-ceremony, K.) they imitate ships with the stem of sago-leaves which they decorate and they dance with them while they are guiding the children. These habits they learned from the Numforese.

Ambonai took Ropokai's bat or stick with him. With this bat Ropokai had threatened the people, e.g. Ambonai and his wife in order to kill them but Ambonai killed the

snake instead; he died and left his bat behind. Ambonai, a Waropen man, not the one who killed Ropokai, and his descendants kept this bat. They keep the bat as an arm of wood, which threatens the attackers who come to hurt them. Therefore they brandish the bat in order to hurt the enemy, and they remain unhurt.

III.10. *The giant snake according to the Samber  
of Biak island*<sup>111</sup>

In our primeval time our village was located (in the southern part of the Geelvinkbay) on the banks of the river Yerumi.

There lived on the same spot a giant snake named Roponggai and this snake was the source of great trouble and disaster for the inhabitants. He attacked everybody he could reach and devoured them. This went so far that the people could no longer stand it and had to flee, and in this way most of the islands of the Geelvinkbay got their inhabitants. The narrative of these emigrants runs as follows:

When the people went to their daily work, pounding sago from the sago-groves upstream on the Yerumi, the snake heard the noise they made and then he came at once and attacked them.

When the snake crawled to the forest it was just terrible to behold and hear it. It was as if a big storm-wind was blowing, moving and swaying the tree-tops and the branches. He even uprooted every tree that was in his way and in this manner ordinary trees and even sago-groves were destroyed. The path the snake made to reach his prey, the human beings, looked like a new-built highway just opened. Nobody if attacked could escape the devouring jaws of the monster, therefore the survivors had to leave their primeval

village and emigrated to the islands of Biak, Numfor and Japen (Arwa).

Nobody remained behind only an old grandmother and her grandchild. They tried to leave too but they found no means and no canoe.

The two of them found no refuge, so they stayed where they were and waited: life or death.

The grandson (become an adult) said to his grandmother: "I think I have found a trick in order to try to kill the monster-snake". The trick was: to scorch pieces of rock, boil water and make spears from the trunk of the areca-tree. The two of them did just as the story runs in other parts, and waited. The snake heard the noises the two left-over humans made, he came, tried to attack and devour the two, but failed because of the hot stones, boiling water and the sharp spears the grandson of the old woman threw into his big mouth.

But before the snake attacked he talked and said: "Now I am in great trouble, because I will have to withstand the trick of my prey".

At the time the two humans put their trick into practice, the result was terrible and alarming: the snake in trying to escape his fate crawled away, he twisted and turned his tail in such a way that the whole forest was quaking as if a big storm had broken loose, but at last the silence came. This meant the death of the snake.

Next morning the grandmother and her grandson went to make sure and lo, they found the dead body of the giant snake.

They cut off the tail of the snake and brought this piece home. There the grandson started to imitate a canoe from the stems of sago-leaves and at the stern of this canoe he

attached the tail of the snake, while inside the canoe he laid some valuable beads. This imitation-canoe was set afloat and the grandson ordered: "Sail to the island of Biak", and there the canoe sailed in the right direction.

The canoe arrived at Biak early in the morning. The people on the beach could see the vessel coming, vague in the beginning. Floating nearer the people were amazed because no crew was to be seen. Arriving at the beach, rumour about this arrival caused the inhabitants of the village Samber to have a look. A great many people witnessed it and they saw the rudder of the canoe and recognized this piece as the tail of the giant snake Roponggai, then they beheld the valuable beads inside the vessel. At once they knew and said: "This is no other but the tail of Roponggai and the sure sign of his death". The news spread like wild-fire among the villagers. And they said to each other: "Well, let us stick together and decide to return to our village of origin, because the giant monster-snake is dead".

Some of the inhabitants consented and they returned to the banks of the river Yerumi, but others refused. They had made their gardens out of the arable land, because they had been there for a long time, and they could harvest the crops of their well-cultivated garden-plots. (In their old village, by the Yerumi, they had sago as their main subsistence-crop only). Therefore the ones who remained behind had built their houses and the new village, named Samber, in the southern part of the island of Biak. There they lived on and remain till this day.

III.11. *A dragon-snake  
devouring humans at Japen (Seréwin)* <sup>112</sup>

The village Seréw (Seréwin) is a dwelling-place located

on the beach (shore) on the north-west coast of the island of Japen. The inhabitants are all members of one clan only. The days, weeks, months and years followed each other and in due time, maybe a century had passed, and the once small clan had produced many descendants, and the population grew rather dense and thriving. But concerning the history and the fate which once upon a time occurred the narrative runs as follows:

At the eastern side of this village a cove named Hohar is found there. And at that location a giant dragon-snake had his abode. This snake lived there on the cape just mentioned, but his daily food were human corpses only. All people passing by his dwelling-place in their canoes or walking he devoured; all of them. (But his attacks were not at random.) He owned several maid-servants who kept watch and were on the look-out, and they sat on the promontory, lousing each other (a favourite pastime). But in reality they warned the snake when somebody with a canoe drew near. Alarmed by these maid-servants he came and devoured the humans. The people of Seréwin though had an advantage over other people, because the maid-servants (got the message and they) did not do their duty when their fellow-villagers went on their way moving past the promontory. So the Seréwin-people were safe.

After the inhabitants of the villages in the neighbourhood were all killed by the snake, then he became hungry. He started to search for food everywhere. He doubted whether he should follow the path along the beach to the west or to the east, but he chose the beachpath to the west and he went on his way. It was not long before he reached the village of Seréwin. At the moment of his arrival night had already fallen. But because he was very hungry by now he started to devour the people of the first house within reach and after

that he went on and attacked the second house and so it went on and on. After he had killed the humans of ten households he quit for the moment. But the next morning he devoured the inhabitants once more without getting disgusted. Thus he went on during twelve days and twelve nights, until he had finished and devoured all the inhabitants of the village Seréwin except a mother (a widow) and her son. These two escaped their fate and it was they who would kill the giant snake.

This is the history of the death of the monster-snake:

At the time the dragon-snake was devouring their fellow-villagers the two of them were in the sago-groves, inland, busy with the pounding and rinsing of sago-flour out of the sago-pulp. As it was rather far from the village, nearly  $\frac{3}{4}$  of an hour walking, they just stayed in a lean-to in the sago grove, and they did not return to the village in the evening-time as was usually done. After some days and nights they got a longing for eating fish. Therefore the next morning, it was still early, they returned to the village in order to catch some fish at the beach and the sea. When the tide came again (and flooded the reefs), they went back to the houses of the village. Arriving at their house they started to roast some of the fish they had caught. The smell of these roasted fish drifted in the air and this scent was observed by the snake. At once he started to crawl in the direction of the house from which the smell came. The child looking around him and hearing a remarkable sound beheld the monster-snake coming in their direction and he warned his mother at once. He shouted for fear saying to her: "Mother look there, the giant-snake is crawling hither (this way). How can we escape this danger?". His mother answered: "Let us only die just as our relatives and fellow-villagers

did. Trying to escape has no sense, moreover he has already devoured our whole village". But the boy did not agree with his mother and said: "I know a trick and maybe it fails, but let us give this ruse a try. Let us kindle a huge fire and heat and scorch big pieces of rock so that they become white-hot. When the snake is coming and tries to swallow us, we throw the hot stones and cold water into his mouth". The mother agreed with this ruse of her son and did as fast as she could what he had told her. And thus it happened: Everything was ready when the snake opened his jaws. Stones and water they threw as fast as they were able into the big mouth, until the throat of the snake got burned. In the beginning it felt pleasant (and it smelled good too) therefore the snake begged some more hot stones. And mother and son did their utmost, the mother with her stones, the son in pouring cold water and this went on and on until the snake died. The convulsions and twitching of the dying dragon-snake were so enormous that with his tail he demolished the huge rock of the promontory and the rocky cape fell apart in three pieces which became three small islets, with a deep gorge in between. These gorges were gradually filled up with mud and became in the course of time sago-groves. The two people lived alone, but from every direction hungry people arrived and settled down in our village: from Biak, Southern Japen and Wandamen. Our people came from Biak.

III.12. *The narrative of the dragon-snake  
who killed Korem-village (Biak)* <sup>113</sup>

(Korem village is located on the north-east coast of the island of Biak, at the bay Koremwé, a wide gulf and the

Korem-river is the longest one on Biak. F.C.K.) (The name Korem means, according to Sp. Krar: "devoured".)

The great and wide river Korem is nowadays about 20 metres wide and at the mouth a good 100 metres wide, but in primeval times the river Koremdori was very small indeed. The branches of the trees on one bank could reach the ones of the opposite bank. At that time a couple of humans came out of the forest in the interior. The two of them then arrived at the spot where later on Korem-village was located. The name of the man was Mankapjop and his wife had the name of Jenbewir. They had a look at river Koremdori, but the river was not that beautiful inviting them to remain on the banks, therefore they left for a place called Jopdi, from Korem to the west. They looked at the place but did not like it either, therefore they continued and walked to the place Wari. There the anchorage was beautiful and there were plenty of turtles on the beach. They said to each other: "This place is just wonderful, let us remain here". Then they walked and inspected the whereabouts of the place by circling the whole surroundings. Beholding the environment they saw a bamboo, an amen dui (vegetables from bamboo-sprout), cut with a knife and they concluded: somebody has been here before us and owns the place already, therefore it was not permissible for them to remain in Wari. Therefore they went back to Korem and made it their dwelling-place.

The couple had already many children and they married among themselves and got much offspring and in due time Korem became a big village. The inhabitants lived at their own places, which they named Koremdori (along the banks of the river of that name) up to Samberi and Ampnir. The

multitudes went usually to the beach to catch fish in the bay they named Koremwé.

On a certain day some went to do some fishing and they caught the infar-fish (in Indonesian: ikan bobara, maybe, or in any case a fish of that shape, a delicious kind of fish of prey nearly without tiny bones in it). They brought the fishes home and roasted them. The delicious scent rose in the air and was smelled by a huge dragon-snake (korben) in his cave. He scented the fish and crawled out of his hole and he wriggled his body over the houses and the inhabitants and he devoured the humans living in the big house. Adults, children, young men and girls he swallowed up, just everybody coming out of his room he gobbled up. And this went on and on including all the houses in one of the parts of the widely dispersed village. Only one female escaped, she was pregnant and had taken a hiding-place in a ditch covering herself there.

### *Variant*

("The korben scented the roasted fish too and came out of his cave. He crawled through the forest to the river Koremdori and started to swim in the direction of the village. While he swam he caused waves as high as in the sea. And the "bow-wave" in front of his giant head had the size of a surf-wave on the reefs, and this wave destroyed the houses on the banks of the river and washed away everything, furniture and people. The dragon opened his jaws and gorged down humans and their possessions. And this went on day after day until many people were killed").<sup>114</sup>

After the korben had devoured the inhabitants of the big house, who roasted the infar-fish, the people of the other quarters of the village heard the victory-song shouted out loudly by the dragon; they understood that the inhabitants of one of their biggest houses were killed. They became

very scared, because they knew for certain that their own lives were in danger too. Therefore they took to flight and embarked in their canoes. Some of them went to Opiaref, others moved still further to Samber and even Wardo and other places along the coast of South Biak.

At the time they embarked and departed the pregnant woman, named Insundi, begged for a place in one of the canoes. But the crew of the first canoe refused saying "You are too heavy to take along and our canoe is too small, better ask other people". And so she did. She called for help to the next canoe which came along, but the result was the same. They refused to take her and said: "Wait till another canoe will take you along with them". And thus it happened with all the canoes. All of them refused to take her and they departed leaving her all alone. She remained on the bank of the river and wept.

#### *Variant*

("Left behind, the woman wept and called for help from her own brother who was in the last canoe. He felt pity for her and his heart went out to her, so he jumped overboard and swam to the bank of the river. Her husband had left her alone because he was too scared to remain with her. Now she and her brother were together and they were afraid and in distress knowing what would be the fate in store for them. They left the village and walked into the forest looking for a place to live. They found a good spot on the bank of the river Baburwèsi and there they built a house. After three days Insundi gave birth to a son and they named him Sèkpum (left-behind)" Sp. Krar.).

The woman Insundi was left behind and being all alone she cried and sobbed her heart out. But before long a great eagle (manggangan) flew over her head and seeing her he let himself down near the woman and he spoke to her. Insundi told the eagle everything that had happened to

her people and her, but the eagle said to her: "Don't be afraid, I am going to take you (with me)". But the woman said: "I am certainly too weighty for you and then I shall fall down and die". But the eagle answered: "If you do not believe me I will show you something first". Then the bird flew away to a place named Ampuir and he took a big boulder from there and with this boulder he flew up very high, from there he dropped the boulder and then the eagle swooped down and took hold of the boulder once more and flew away with it. The woman having seen what the eagle could accomplish she believed him. Then the eagle took a strong branch of a tree in his claws, each claw one end, and the woman seated herself on the bough, taking hold of the legs of the eagle with her left and right hand. Thus seated, the eagle flew upwards with her to a promontory named Nubei (between Korem and Wari). On this cape the eagle flew Insundi to the end of a big branch of a huge iron-wood tree, amidst great orchid-flowers, and there he placed Insundi.

Comfortable and safe she stayed there among the orchids.<sup>115</sup> The bird flew away and brought some planks, rattan, os (folded sago leaf-stalks to thatch a roof), pieces of wood, in short material to build a house. And this the eagle did in the top of the thick trunked iron-wood tree (ai-kabu) and the woman lived content in the tree-top cabin high in the air. She remained there and in due time gave birth to a child. She bore a son and named him Sèkfamneri (despised and left behind). The bird flew hither and thither collecting food and mamfnai (meat or fish) for the two humans in the tree-top. When the women in one of the villages cooked tubers in the earth-oven and put the result of their labour that day in their carrying-nets, the eagle swooped down and got hold of the tubers, the vegetables and mamfnai

they laid on top of their nets, and he brought all of it to the tree-top for the two in the tree-cabin. In this way the eagle fed the two with the food he could lay his claws on: fruits, mamfnai, water and the like, until Sèkfammeri grew and became a youngster. By now the bird sat on the look-out when women took a bath. The sarongs they laid aside on the banks of the river he took away and brought them to Insundi and Sèkfammeri, who used the sarongs and the waistbands.

When the boy became an adult, his mother brought him back to the village Korem and in the neighbourhood, at the place Ampnir-bo the two of them built their house. Every time they walked the eagle used to accompany them always. When they started to build their house, the eagle gave the advice to build it very high with three floors underneath, the lowest as high as usual, the second one much higher than a ceiling, and the third one near the real house. And on each of them they had to construct a fireplace (hearth) and next to the fire a heap of stones, usually kept in the Biak-houses to heat food, boil water and stew vegetables by throwing the hot pieces of rock with fire-tongs into vessels folded from leaves and filled with water. In short they made every utensil ready and cut a great many bamboo-containers and filled them with water to the brims.

At the time everything was completed the eagle flew out to the sea and caught an infar-fish with his claws and coming home again he ordered the woman Insundi to roast it. The delicious smell filled the air and the korben was not slow in perceiving the scent of the roasted fish and at once he started to crawl through the forest and then swam in the river Koremdori. He imitated a big canoe: he raised his head as the bow and lifted his tail as the stern and there

he came. Meanwhile he sang an armis-song<sup>116</sup> as follows:

“This canoe is carrying (something) yes he carries,  
he carries wealth, the man, owner of wealth (arrives).

The moref-wood canoe, this vessel he carries,  
yes he carries, the owner of wealth is arriving”.

The two humans understood this song clearly and (they saw) the korben crawling up the promontory Ampnir and then to their house. He climbed the ladder ascending up to them. But the two humans were not alone: on the ridge of the roof of their house the eagle was seated. The korben crawled tail first (to have a firm grip with his winding body) and neared the first floor. Sèkfamneri descended, jumped upon that floor and cut (the ropes) of the hearth on the first floor, so that the hot stones fell down into the wide open jaws of the korben. The dragon swallowed up the stones, the fire and the fire-wood and then Sèkfamneri poured out the water of the bamboo containers. Having devoured everything of the first floor the dragon crawled upwards to the second floor, and he did the same there again: he swallowed up the hot stones, the fire and the fire-wood, but he did not yet die. Therefore he vigorously climbed to the third floor, having in mind to reach the humans. But the two of them jumped on the third floor, threw the hot stones and the whole hearth and water into the mouth of the monster and having finished the hearth of the third floor he yet did not die. The korben said to them: “If the two of you want to kill me with every kind of object it will all be in vain, but if you spear me with the arari-pjoi (the sharp sprout of a kind of bamboo) then I will surely die”. The eagle flew at once and took an arari-pjoi of the male kind, and gave it to Sèkfamneri. The adult took the pjoi and speared the dragon-snake and hit him in his anus and then the korben fell.

The different version of Krar states: After the boy became mature he asked his mother and uncle (mother's-brother) about the situations in previous times. His mother told him everything and having heard about the dragon-snake, the giant killer, he got very angry. He went away to meet his uncle and urged him to construct a bow and arrows and make a spear. With his bow and arrows and his fish-spear Sèkpum was diligently busy, and trained himself. Meanwhile his uncle stayed at home and forged hatchets and spears and built a house as high as possible and having three platforms on different levels. On the planned day Sèkpum, the youngster, went fishing and he caught the fish with the delicious smell. (The same preparation was made, the dragon-snake came). The snake swam in the direction of the house and kept asking "Who are you"? and Sèkpum answered: "I am the new hero they left behind at Moruidi." When the snake was already at the foot of the ladder of the house the uncle cut the first floor and everything prepared fell into the jaws of the snake. And in the same way they did with the second and third floor. At that moment the monster was very near the house on top of the three floors, but then the uncle took his adze and hacked repeatedly on the head of the snake, until he fell to the earth far below. Caused by the heavy body of the dragon-snake an earthquake occurred and it was so strong that even the people who once fled from that area and lived in a far-a-way place could perceive it. (Sp. R. Krar.)

When the korben had fallen he said to the mother and child: "I am leaving, but watch the fourth day, because my belly will explode and smoke will arise as from a big fire. When you see the smoke that will be the sign for you that I have died". Thus the mother and son waited during three days and the fourth day they saw smoke billowing upwards as from a big fire. The snake was dead indeed, his belly had exploded and the fire he had swallowed down burned. The snake died at the place named Opiarèf-dori, and the two humans made their way in the direction of the smoke. They found the dragon-snake and out of his paunch they took: chests, plates, shell-bracelets, textile and valuables of many kinds. The two of them took as much as they could,

and the rest petrified and is to be seen on the same spot: Opiaref-dori. The two humans said to each other: "We are out of trouble, the cause of our distress and fear went away, is taken from us now. Much better we build a canoe and go in search of the people who fled from this place and call them to return to our village". Thus they paddled to the east and first to the village of Opiaref. There they told what had happened since the people left the place, and about the killing of the giant snake. During their voyage the eagle flew in the air over their heads and he followed them everywhere. They suggested to the people of Opiaref to return to their former village. Meanwhile the eagle was seated on the ridge of the roof. The children playing on the court-yard thought the eagle was just a common bird and one of the boys had a bow and arrow and shot an arrow, hitting the bird so badly that he fell and died at once. The mother Insundi and her son Sëkfamneri became very angry and said: "Don't you know that this very bird assisted us in every manner possible and he even killed the dragon-snake you fled from?". In a fit of anger the two left Opiaref and they went to all the other villages on the island of Biak, and after that they returned to Korem-village.

The two of them, mother and son, got married and their offspring became as many as lived before in the village Korem and were added to the people who returned to their former places in the village.

Until this day the inhabitants of Korem do not eat big snakes, they tabooed all of them and they named the big snake: "Korem-san-ba-i" (The (animal) Korem people do not eat it).

When the inhabitants of Korem see the eagles flying over their heads, high in the air, they say or think: "This is the

bird who gave us great help in times of distress", and just now he will assist them with their enterprises: during their fishing, during their voyages. The bird is a token of good luck anyway.

The contrary is felt concerning the sea-snakes (*samjos*)<sup>117</sup>, when one of them is swimming near a canoe they know this means a bad omen and they or their people will get into trouble, even the ones they left at home.

It is told in the tradition that the people of Samber, Opiaref, Wadibu, Mamoribo and Wardo came originally out of the Korem-village whence they fled because of the dragon-snake, the *korben*.<sup>118</sup>

(The version of Spener Krar states, that after the snake was killed the uncle and *Sèkpum* just cut the belly of the *korben* and took many valuables they found inside there. Krar only tells that the people of the villages in the neighbourhood of Korem could live in peace once more.)

### III.13. *Karubukawi, grandfather-snake and wealth-exchange (Windèsi)*<sup>119</sup>

Karubukawi was a snake, dwelling in a cave near the origin (the source) of the Wanduni river. His body had a huge size, as thick as the trunk of a mango-tree and he had two heads on one neck.

A wife of Windèsi with her daughter, whose body had a light-coloured complexion, and who was pregnant, went together to the forest to take pandanus-leaves (to plait sleeping-mats from them).

The daughter cut the leaves of which Karubukawi was the owner, and they were coloured red on one side and yellow on the other. But the pandanus-leaves she cut cried out saying: "Hi, why are you hacking me?". She did not

listen and cut more and more. The leaves continued and voiced their protest. The daughter said to her mother: "Mum, my pandanus-leaves are pretty indeed". She bundled them and tied them with lianas, but they came unfastened time and again. It was Karubukawi who fooled the mother with the lianas. She wanted to return and to go home, but Karubukawi cheated the mother, prevented the daughter from following her, but took her with him into his cave instead. There she stayed with the snake's wife, and Karubukawi and his wife reckoned her as their (own) daughter.

The (real) mother of the young woman went to the beach and waited there for the coming of her child, but when she did not come she went back into the forest and called her again. But Karubukawi cheated her by imitating the voice of her daughter (shouting: "I am coming, wait for me"). But the twilight appeared, darkness fell and then the mother returned. In that night the young woman's husband asked his mother-in-law about his wife, but she replied: "The snake Karubukawi is hiding her, I have been seeking her until nightfall". The next morning many people went paddling their canoes all in search of her; they blew the triton's shell because they heard her voice imitated by Karubukawi: "I am here". But the people did not find her and went back home.

After the snake took the young woman, who was pregnant, she bore a child in the cave.

Her husband at home went in search of food. Coming back home, and seeing that his wife had not yet returned home, they went into mourning and put on the appropriate attire.

Meanwhile the boy in the cave increased in strength and matured and grew into a young man. Then his mother expressed her eagerness to get some other food, meat or

fish to eat. Karubukawi went and caught shrimps. Next morning he did the same. The boy—he had grown into a youngster by now—, said to his grandfather (he called the snake Karubukawi his grandfather): “Grandfather please, cut a bow and some fish-arrows for me, then we are going to the beach and I am going to shoot fish”. The grandfather met this request: cut a bow, sharpened some fish-arrows<sup>120</sup> and thus provided the two of them went to the beach. Arriving there the grandfather coiled himself and lying down on the sand he kept watch, whilst the boy went into the sea (and on the reefs) trying to “shoot” fish.

In the meantime the people of Windèsi sang (held a ceremony) and they had the Jop-men as guests.<sup>121</sup> The last mentioned people paddled there and saw landwards a boy fishing. They saw his hair had a reddish complexion, and they said to each other: “Who is the one fishing landward, there is no village nearby?”. Paddling and passing by Windèsi they asked who the fishing boy was they had seen. But the Windèsi people said: “No one of us, because all of us are here”. Next morning, having finished the (ceremonial) singing they left. Coming near the spot of the fishing boy they made a raid (Wind.: rait, Biak: rak).<sup>122</sup>

When the tide was low (i.e. the reefs became visible above the surface) the grandfather and the boy went to the beach again. The boy went to catch fish. At that time the raid (rait) of Jopners attacked him, but the grandfather (snake) chased them away, and the two of them returned to their home (the cave). The Jop-people paddled away to their houses.

(Repeatedly the same sequence of events is now mentioned, we only give the names of the villages and people involved in a more or less classical way, in such manner as a narrative

is often sung): The Jopners called the Dusner, and combined they attacked, but: the grandfather-snake chased them away, he was too brave for them. The Jopners then assisted by the Wandamen attacked, but the grandfather chased them away.

The Jopners called the Wasior, and combined they attacked, but they were chased away by the grandfather.

The Jopners combined with the Roon-people attacked, but in vain. Then at last the Jopners came to the Windèsi-people calling for assistance. The father of the boy hearing the grandfather snake had gained the victory every time they were attacked, boasted <sup>123</sup>: "to morrow-morning I will surely catch the boy".

In that night they paddled upstream (to the south) and in the morning the snake-grandfather and his grandson went to sea; then he (the boy) started to fish. Thereupon the rait of Jopner and Windèsi-people attacked, and the grandfather shouted: "Withdraw hither". And then the boy started to run, but collided with his own father who took a firm hold on him, and Karubukawi tried to prevent this, but he was not fast enough, the Windèsi-father had already caught his boy. The rait came to an end in this way, and then they all paddled back to Windèsi. The Jopners said, the boy was theirs, but the father said: "The place of my wife is here, therefore I am the owner of the boy".<sup>124</sup> The Jopners returned, angry in their hearts with the Windèsi-people (because they gained nothing but much trouble).

Thereupon Karubukawi went landward, back home. Returned there his "daughter" asked him: "Where is the boy?". Karubukawi said: "I don't know which of the raits (hong) took the boy, when we were fighting on the beach". The mother hearing this bad news got a crying-fit in their cave-house, meanwhile putting the blame on him and she reproached him terribly.

Then Karubukawi (insulted, but silent) made his body into a canoe. His back he made the hold of the canoe, his belly the keel of the vessel. After having done this, he loaded food into his "hold", went seawards and set out to sea. He swam at first to Roon, weeping, searching for his grandchild asking: "Which village are you? Have you fought with my grandchild and me with your rait?". Alas (those of Roon cheated him) they said: "Concerning us here, we did not fight the two of you". "Much better: you swim to the island of Numfor, cry there and search for him". In the evening he approached the island of Numfor, and put the same question. But the answer was the same too. And the Numfor people suggested to him to swim to the island of Gebe (about 300 miles to the West), "across the sea-currents and search over-there". The snake-grandfather swam until he nearly sank, but approached the island of Gebe during the night. In the morning people went to see him, asking questions. He told who he was and whom he was searching for. But they answered: "We are here too far away from you, and never fought the two of you, better ask the other villages". He swam further, asked the same question and got the same denying answer. Thus he swam back (eastward) and arrived at the Island of Salwati, there he put his important question, but got the same denying answer. After that he turned back to the far east along the coast (of the Bird's-head peninsula, K.). He swam and swam until his body became covered with seaweed growing on his skin. He swam and reached Menukwari, put the same question and got the same answer. He left and swam to the village Wariab, where he put his question and got the same negative answer. The same happened in Sjari and then he swam to Wairur (all villages along the coastal area

of the Eastern Bird's Head, K.). And in Wairur the people denied their participation, but they knew that the Windèsi-people were the ones who fought the grandfather-snake and they told him about this fight. When Karubukawi heard this news he swam further and arrived at Windèsi. There he swam around the tidal forest on cape Sorèwunè. At that moment his grandson went to the front of their house (on the seaside) and he stood there and heard his grandfather swimming around the corner (of the cape) crying and weeping. Then he turned to the house behind him, where his father was, saying: "Father, this is grandfather, he is swimming this way, in search of me". When the grandfather neared the beach the boy said: "I am here".

Then he swam to the house of the boy's father. After that the boy said to his father: "Father, don't be frightened of grandfather. Come this way and let us pull him aloft (into the house built on stilts above the sea, K.). Don't be afraid of grandfather, you take this side of his head, I will take the other, the two of us will pull him this way! Don't be frightened of him, this body of his is only a disguise, his real body is still there, he showed it to my mother and me in the cave". Then the two of them dragged the snake (into the house) and there they coiled him.

The boy shaved the sea-weed off his body and laid him in the heat of the sun to become dry again. The grandfather then said to the boy: "Bring me into the sunshine and let me dry up during this day; to morrow-morning let your father and you prepare the canoes and let the two of you bring me upwards (up the tide-stream: to the South).

Thereupon the father of the boy gave a slave to Karubukawi; he added a canoe too, and many valuables: pieces of cotton-textile, plates, silver bracelets and ones made from shell; all this he donated.<sup>125</sup>

Later in the (next) morning, they decorated the canoe: two flags on the right and two on the left side (starboard and port-side), another at the prow (the stem) and yet another at the stern. Then they embarked (descending from the house into the canoe) and then they helped Karubukawi down, because he had cast off his snake-skin; after that he was a real human being, and the father of the boy girded him up with a loincloth. After that the father adorned himself beautifully: he bound up his hair and the boy too decked himself (with decorations). Then they descended and embarked in the canoe.

Karubukawi stood in the midst of the canoe, the father of the boy at the starboard side of the cargo-platform and the boy on the portside. They beat the standing-drum and the gong and while they went upriver into the Wanduni-river, they sang.

Hearing all this the mother of the boy said: "It is father, he is coming and he has already found the boy, that's why they are singing". Hereupon the mother took off the mourning-attire she had used, and Karubukawi's wife said to her: "Now you are able to adorn yourself and to deck yourself (with flowers)". And the mother did as was suggested. After having done this, she went seawards and looked for the coming canoe, and she recognized her father, the boy himself and his father and then she went out and embarked in the canoe too. When Karubukawi debarked, his wife came out of the (cave-house), and she carried with her the old discarded skin of Karubukawi and all his possessions.

Karubukawi then led all the people with him landward and said: "House, appear!" and the people could live in it, the youngsters-house (where the unmarried or bachelors live) stood on the landward side of the main house, on a

marshy stretch without trees. Karubukawi then said: "Much food" and "much drinking-water" and added "many fishes" and he said "many bananas" and he said: "Many tubers and garden products". And (all of them) they were seated and consumed it.<sup>126</sup>

Thereupon the father of the boy took his wife and the boy and they left for Windèsi, where they ascended (climbed) into their house. The narrative is finished.

III.14. *The snake Mansaserworindi and the cause of the hostility between snakes and human beings* <sup>127</sup>

On the island of Numfor there was a snake named Mansaserworindi (the man who took hold of the ritual song, i.e. the war-song).

In primeval times the snake did not kill humans, he slept near the man who was his owner. (The snakes were domesticated.)

Once upon a time there were two brothers. The older was named Bawé and the younger was called Mamboki (husband of the princess).

Bawé had (married) twelve women. On a certain day Bawé went away paddling (with his canoe in search of food) and Mamboki refused to join him, he remained at home.

Thereupon Bawé said to (his) snake, Mansaserworindi: "Mamboki refuses to join me, watch him carefully; if he performs a perkara (= seduces one of my wives), i.e. if he talks "with" her, bind the two of them."<sup>128</sup>

(After Bawé had left the other remained at home.)

Thereupon Mamboki performed a perkara, he talked with one of Bawé's wives. (The snake Mansaserworindi then did what he was told to do: he bound Mamboki and the wife.)

When Bawé returned home he was received by eleven of his wives; they offered him a refreshment: kakes, i.e. they gave him arecanuts. Bawé saw only eleven copper plates, one refreshment was lacking.<sup>129</sup>

What was the matter? Had one of his wives died (but nobody lamented her) or it might be that one of them could have made a perkara.

Bawé ordered his son to take the hatchet out of the canoe and the grind-stone too. Then he whetted the knife so that it became very sharp indeed. He shaved his beard with it and after that his body-hair and the hair of his legs, and he had proved the knife was sharp indeed.

Thereupon he went to the room of the wife who had made the perkara.<sup>130</sup> There he saw Mamboki with one of his wives tightly tied together by the body of the snake who had encoiled them.

When Bawé saw this he hacked furiously and first he hacked the snake into pieces; the man died, the woman died too; but the head of the snake came to life again (revived). This head went away and fell into the sea. He swam along the front of the house; and swimming he blew the triton's shell (kubur)<sup>131</sup> shouting: "You have hit me first, now I will always lie in wait for you and I will always kill you (human beings)".

That's why the snake always wages war against the humans. In previous days it was not like this.

### III.15. *Grandfather Wōriboi and the devouring eagle of Windèsi*<sup>132</sup>

In olden times there was an eagle of a huge size, dwelling on the island of Wapupi, and he remained on the sea-shore below.

Every day he came to catch humans. He kidnapped them and devoured them all, therefore all the people died and this went on and on in such a way that in the course of time nobody was left alive, except an old woman only with her grandchild.

The two of them were the only ones left alive, and they hid themselves in a room. During the nights they prepared their meals and kindled a fire, but as soon as dawn approached they dispersed (i.e. extinguished) the fire to prevent smoke billowing into the air (which would have attracted the eagle.)

But on a certain day the old woman said to her grandchild: "Go to your grandfather, the old man Wòriboi and tell him everything". The boy then went to his grandfather and said: "Alas! an eagle massacred the village yonder (nobody is left alive)".

The old Wòriboi hearing this message, took his head off (lifted his head) from his body and kept it in his hand. Then he took both of his eyes and replaced them into his chest: one on the left and the other on the right side. Then he took his spear and followed the boy. When the two of them arrived at the house Wòriboi said to the old woman: "Light a fire, you two, and look to it that much smoke billows from it". Then the old man himself climbed on to the roof of the house, opened the ridge of the roof and seated himself on top of the ridge, on the look-out for the coming eagle. And lo, the eagle who had seen the smoke billowing in the air, came near the old man (he could not recognize him as a human being without his head). The old man made use of this opportunity and speared the eagle in the chest with his spear; and the eagle died.

The old woman and her grandson hurried to the scene and they beheaded the eagle and chopped his body to pieces

according to the houses, which pieces they distributed in the empty houses in the village. This being done the old Wòriboi called to the dead: "We go! we will pound sago"!

But the dead did not answer, they kept quiet. But he called them again, this time he shouted: "We take to the sea, we are going to paddle our canoes and will bring sago!"

And lo, at once they all resurrected, they jubilated and they all prepared their canoes. They continued their jubilation, embarked in their canoes and paddled to get hold of their sago (in the south).

And until this day it is still the same in the village of Windèsi: they do not have sago-groves, but they only want to paddle, to take to the sea and have to get their sago far from their village, because they did not listen to the words of the old man. Wòriboi took the eagle's head, mounted it on the peak of his lance, and departed to his place, Saserkatu, nearby.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Source: D. Griffioen, South Ir. Jaya (W. Nw. Guinea). Cf. Nisaba IIIA.

<sup>2</sup> (The first myth, of Kutawakairemi:) Some sentences from that narrative had to be repeated here, in order to avoid the rupture in the story of the creation of which the myth of the three-fold deluge forms a part.

<sup>3</sup> A very remarkable variant of the first deluge-myth. While the first myth was an effort to create perfect people, this second version shows just the opposite. Bear in mind that this version originates from the same people, not from the same group.

<sup>4</sup> The primal incest, marriage between a brother and his real sister is in ordinary life strictly avoided, as appears in the first narrative. The second however is wilfully arranged, and this may be the reason why people were qualified as imperfect and became evil. In other areas, we saw this happen in the myth of Nisaba IIIa, it is taken for granted, sometimes not without objection from the parties involved however.

<sup>5</sup> Sources: R. den Haan 1955, pp. 97-101 and J. W. Schoorl 1957 pp. 96-100. The myth of the deluge is a part of the origin of the sacred pig and the profane (common) ones. The first author stresses the importance of the economic-social implications of the pig-celebration, but he makes mention of the practice of magic, too. Schoorl in his thesis about the Muju-area draws our attention to the connection between Kamberap and the Supreme Being. Cf. sub. 9.

<sup>6</sup> The meaning of the so called avunculate, the relation between a brother and his sister's sons, is the background of this part of the myth.

<sup>7</sup> Schoorl tells us that the discovery or "creation" of the sago-tree was an act of Kamberap and not of his brother-in-law *Bunga* (the bird of dawn). In other parts this happens in the same manner but there the arrow is made of the sago-leaf. (Wandamen)

<sup>8</sup> This is a culture-hero trait: bride-price in cowry-shells. Pig-woman-cowryshells are the main features of the culture, being the basis of the social-economic life of the people involved.

<sup>9</sup> Den Haan explains the difference between the sacred-pig and the common one. Schoorl writes about Kamberap in a chapter entitled: "Kamberap, the origin of the sacred-pig, the yawarawon", and directly after this title: "a. The myth of Kamberap and connection between this narrative and the myths about the Supreme Being". (Schoorl 1957, p. 96.) He explains

the effort to try to incorporate the Kamberap story in the myths about the Supreme Being. He says: "Of Kamberap it can be said that he is strictly speaking not a kind of Supreme Being, but his place and meaning is more than an ordinary human being. His narrative takes place in the primeval times. In that time the separation between man and animal was not strictly drawn. All persons in the myths are at the same time animals". Schoorl does not mention the symbolic meaning consciously used by the people involved. Cf. Introduction about "animals in the myths", of Nisaba, volume III.

<sup>10</sup> Sources: Arso, Deluge, 1947; Kouwenhoven, *Memorie van Overgave Hollandia*, 1947, p. 117 a.f.; Gouv. Ned. Nw. Guinea. Typescript. Jan van Eechoud, *Met kapmes en kompas*, Amsterdam 1953, p. 309 a.f.

<sup>11</sup> Genimu-rope. A kind of fibre from a palmtree; waterproof.

<sup>12</sup> Mount Sangkaria on the upper course of the river Isobo, about 6 hours walking distant from Arso (near the border Irian Jaya and Papuaniguni). The mountain is about 200 feet high.

<sup>13</sup> Clay. The kind of clay found here is still used by the Nafri people from the Humboldt bay.

<sup>14</sup> Wild bananas are forbidden (taboo) to be eaten. Kouwenhoven 1947, p. 122.

<sup>15</sup> The persons who really have seen the bag with the testicles, of course only the outside of the package, were J. van Eechoud and the Japanese.

<sup>16</sup> Testicles, a symbol of life, cf. also the use of the phallus in many cultures. But, notwithstanding that the crocodile is the biggest wild animal on the island of Nw. Guinea, the private parts are seldom used in this sense.

<sup>17</sup> Source: K. W. Galis, 1956. *Ethnografische Notities over het Senggi-gebied*. Gouvernement van Ned. Nw. Guinea, Hollandia. Stencil, p. 22.

<sup>18</sup> The connection and relation between the sister's-sons and her brother, usually formulated as avunculate, does not only allow but sometimes requires deeds as are described here. Should the wives of their mother's-brother have succeeded and really poisoned him then the killing of the culprits was their duty, but now? Kungu condemns the retaliation of his sister's sons, perhaps because his two wives bore him children.

<sup>19</sup> The torrent, rain of ashes. Source: Kouwenhoven 1947, p. 93.

<sup>20</sup> Warikerang and his "spirits". Source: Kouwenhoven 1947, cf. also: Kouwenhoven 1956, Kabel 1953 and Elmberg 1949. The names of the dramatis personae are given in different spelling and the plots themselves show great variety in the texts. Nevertheless the sun plays an important

part in the narratives and so does the moon. Sometimes it seems as if the ancestors are deliberately metamorphosed into the heavenly bodies. Warikerang for instance, also written as Warikereng (Kouwenhoven 1956) or Wali Klang (Kabel 1953, p. 152) is a human being, but born without regular marriage while his mother was very old. Wari Klang was apparently a dwarf with an ugly skin. Metamorphosed he became the ideal man and in his wake abundance and richness were realised. After he went away this time of abundance ceased (a motive ever recurring in the different versions of the myth). About the cultural background, myth and religion, compare the literature mentioned. It has never been completed however. So we still lack a picture of the whole of the Nimboran (Nimblong) culture and what was investigated resulted in fragments, apparently. Conclusion: Warikreng was a mythical being, at first small and ugly and ridiculed by all, even (?) by the unmarried girls. Kouwenhoven 1956, p. 33, etc. Waliklang left his people. Everything good he took with him, but all things utterly bad he left behind on the earth. Until now this is still thus (nothing has changed since then).

<sup>21</sup> Warikerang and his "spirits". Spirits or ghosts but heavenly beings, while in other versions these "spirits" seemed to be "spirits of the ancestors". In Elmberg's version of the tale of Bawaklong "calling back the spirits of the dead..." (Elmberg 1949, p. 67).

<sup>22</sup> Valuables, Indonesian word *harta*, meaning "ceremonial exchange goods".

<sup>23</sup> The varieties in Nimboran (Nimblong) appear to be extraordinary, and the contradictions are not only caused by the different sources and versions of different groups (a common phenomenon in myths), but sometimes originate from the same informant. Elmberg wrote: "the narratives are often told in a very confused state and two or more alternatives of a situation are offered in one breath without the story-teller noticing their contradictionary sense" (Elmberg 1949, p. 1).

<sup>24</sup> Informant Lambert Bemei of Dekening (Nimboran) collected by H. J. Teutscher.

<sup>25</sup> "performing the wicked thing" is a translation of the Indonesian (in which language this myth was written) "membuat djahat" (doing evil), thus a circumscription and disguising of the real fact while at the same time a normative treatment is introduced. Many Indonesian terms are clouding the real meaning of the words.

<sup>26</sup> "real brother and sister" contrary to the usual terms which have the

meaning of "classificatory relatives", hence this elaboration on these terms every time they are used.

<sup>27</sup> "Ancestors inside the mountain" is a common theme in the Nimboran narratives. Cf. the story of KiManing. The sound of the drum from inside the mountain DU'UM = The Cyclops near the capital of Irian Jaya (Jayapura, formerly: Hollandia). Cf. Kabel, p. 157, "and Waliklang is in this version the one who takes away all good things taking them Westward, whence he promised to come back" (id. p. 163), whites, were probably identified with Walikelang, whose skin (after his metamorphosis) was of a light complexion (id. p. 164).

<sup>28</sup> The forbidden mountain of which no name is mentioned may be the Du'um (Cyclops). The fear about the recurrence of the ashrain and the deluge is understandable. Elmberg said: "in a scene from the myth calling the dead" "..., he Wailingklem got angry, he went with his men into the hole in the stoneheap. That occurred while thunder and a heavy rain broke out and clouds hovered over the place and all the people felt ashes fall from the clouds and their eyes could not see any more" (Elmberg p. 34).

As far as is known volcanoes are only at a great distance, near Madang the volcano Karkar about 500 km distance away; so "ash-rain" is in reality improbable, earthquakes however occur very often. Of the Cyclops mountain it was never said or supposed that this could be a "sleeping" volcano.

<sup>29</sup> Deluge in Waropen, informant writer Sem Kandai from the village Risei-Sajati. Collection H. J. Teutscher 1953. Cf. also Held 1956, p. 28-44, where the texts are given of 8 different Deluge stories from Waropen alone. Ours is not mentioned in the form Kandai gave. Held sums up the causes of the coming of the Deluge. They are given here in order to make clear that in nearly all the cases they concern human indignation caused by mistreatment: making someone ashamed in public, which is one of the greatest insults. Held mentioned: 1. An old woman laughed at by children. 2. In order to revenge the murder of her brother a woman called forth the deluge. 3. Deluge caused by the eating of eel by the people. 4. Through clumsy behaviour in the world of the dead. 5. Grandmother eating a tree-kangaroo swept away by the flood. 6. After the deluge crows are eating the flesh of the drowned corpses. 7. After the deluge only two brothers stayed alive and escaped (the origin of the Woisimi village). This is a variant of the text of Kandai. 8. Two brothers escaped the deluge. No. 7 is totally different from our text, comes near the conclusion though, which is mentioned by Held in the title of his last deluge text.

<sup>30</sup> Informant unknown, writer D. C. A. Bout in a personal letter to me, c. 1953-54. Bout was a missionary on the Island of Japen from 1924-1930.

<sup>31</sup> Ashamed: probably somebody has mentioned the fact of the marriage of a brother with his sister. This is of course true, but means incest. Mentioning the fact is a mortal insult, just because it is true and impossible to redress, like a birth out of such a wedlock.

<sup>32</sup> The exact meaning of these names are not given but compare the forces in power over the ocean, Nisaba Vol. III, p. 24 etc.

<sup>33</sup> The informant is here Gaspar Mandowen from the village of Jenburwo on the Island of Numfor, they were immigrants and settled on Numfor (collection Bothoff, Serui).

<sup>34</sup> Old men using a cane: meaning always "peace-talk", they did not carry arms could not do anymore, and were harmless.

<sup>35</sup> In addition can be said: the canes, often with an ancestor image carved on the top end, were the legitimate representatives.

<sup>36</sup> This sentence: "travel until the land of origin is out of sight" is used many times. This was the alternative of one who lost in battle or was made ashamed in public. This custom was one of the reasons why the inhabitants of the islands with high mountains had to travel very far in order to lose sight of the mountains.

<sup>37</sup> The "fabrub" (tidal-wave) on the Island of Biak. Informant one of the chiefs (mananir) of the village Mamoribo (Sopenbaken), put into writing by the late Rev. F. J. S. Rumainum during our trip along the coast together in 1952 and later on.

<sup>38</sup> Usually the tops of field-fruits, such as pine-apple and others, are planted by taking the top of the fruit with some sproutings; they are placed in a shallow hole and will grow.

<sup>39</sup> The man pretended to be angry, but usually when one of two women stayed behind, in a case like this roused suspicion and led nearly always to accusation and scolding. To prevent this the woman or girl concerned has to explain in a clear voice the reason why she came later before she enters the house.

<sup>40</sup> The pumpkin life-buoy. Informant writer F. Rumsowek, collection Bothoff no. 9. This narrative seems fragmentary, it left out some important feature, as is often the case.

<sup>41</sup> Oru-tree. Not mentioned in the Indonesian dictionary, but Van Hasselt (1947) gave the following explanation: Oru, a kind of tree which gives a strong smell when it is burned and keeps away the mosquitoes.

<sup>42</sup> *Worlds in collision.* Source probably a teacher of Biak, name not mentioned in the manuscript. Amberbaken is the only area where rice is grown on the slopes of the mountains and in the valleys the so-called "ladang rice" (dry-ground rice). Rice came originally from Halmahera and Tidore. Travellers brought it back from there.

<sup>43</sup> *Keru Wau* (Boulder Turtle), probable the name is given because of the shape of this boulder which gave protection underneath its edges.

<sup>44</sup> *Marsau*, usually: swamp, but originally: anchorage of small size. Through the earthquakes the shore became high and a pool came into existence, and the water became sweet in the course of time.

<sup>45</sup> *Plate.* Here is meant a big antique china or earthenware plate, always part of the "wealth" and possessions of the normal member of society. These kind of plates came here as the loot of the raids the war fleets of the Biak and Numforese people made in the Moluccas (Ceram, Halmahera) etc. Furthermore these "valuables" came into circulation by way of trade, exchange and permanent relations with Numfor-clans.

<sup>46</sup> *Amber.* General word indicating "strangers" non-indigenous, not only the Indonesians were meant by this word, but the white Europeans as well. Some of the Biakkers say the real meaning is: "d'amberi", let it (the hatchet) eat at once, i.e. when the strangers were encountered this always meant war, therefore "When you meet them let the hatchet eat at once". This seems a popular etymology in the Biak language.

<sup>47</sup> *Four*, often mentioned, means the symbolic number of completeness (cf. the four main quarters of the wind) 8 symbolizes abundance.

<sup>48</sup> *Unfinished male.* A well-known appearance in the Bird's Head myths. Cf. Zevenbergen and Pouwer. The theme is always the same: in the current a girl, standing on a river bank sees some garden products. In search of their origin she finds the male. In our text the informant presents his story in abundant detail. He enjoys telling it and does it in his own way. Variants and some features make clear that he is at home and familiar with the scene and the events he describes.

<sup>49</sup> *Desire in disguise:* her heart was longing for a male and to make love. This is not mentioned outright, but is implicitly the stimulating factor.

<sup>50</sup> *Caterpillars.* In other versions belonging to the people of the interior. Cf. Pouwer 1960, the girl puts a small snake between the bundle of vegetables.

<sup>51</sup> *Rumbiak and the deluge.* Informant/writer teacher S. Rumbrawer (1955). The connection between the Rumbiaks of Numfor and Biak is the reason why their manibobs "trade-friends" took over the name Rumbiak. There

were several monopoly-relations between the original inhabitants of this area and some clans from Biak-Numfor. "Rumsajoreclan from Mansinam with Saukorem; Rumbobjar, Mansinam and Wefiani, Rumbiak from Numfor-Biak with Mubrani and Warsnembri". Cf. Eibrink-Jansen 1953. The same author mentioned the deluge, but his informants were not really informed about the real situations and the myths. Only the dating is remarkable.

We quote here the remarks about the Amberbaken people "— the Creator, High God, Supreme Being of the Amberbaken people is Buamiti. And he was unmarried. He created a man and a woman (Sukuti and Sembabini), and this couple became the ancestors of the Amberbaken people. The story about their marriage is still a living tradition among the people, but is crossed by the story about the origin of a smaller group; The tracing of their origin is based upon the great flood which took place in the previous century, by this event (all the people drowned) except one member of the group, who survived (the disaster)". Eibrink Jansen 1953, p. 17. This remark about the time in which the deluge, tidal wave or flood took place is in accordance with the fact that the inhabitants of the Eastern Bird's Head Area have no regular clan-system, which would compell them to remember the names of the leading man in the succeeding generations. That is the reason why the informants sometimes dive into the mythical explanation after four generations. Cf. Pouwer and Zevenbergen.

<sup>52</sup> Rumbiak. This Amberbakenclan was probably named by their manibiob (trade-friend) of Biak and Numfor, marking their monopoly in order to scare away competitors. (Rumbiak means: House of Biak.) We mentioned already other connections, cf. note 51.

<sup>53</sup> Source: fieldwork research of the present writer in 1955.

<sup>54</sup> Publications about the Sarmi Area. Cf. the literature-list sub. J. van der Hoeven, A. C. van der Leeden, G. Oosterwal.

<sup>55</sup> Several kinds of fish of prey: tjekaleng = tunny tarusi, bobara: Indonesian words.

<sup>56</sup> Tuan Tanah = Lord of the land, landowner, but it has in the context in Indonesian always a dualistic meaning. The second one, and more important is: the Lord of the Land, with supernatural power from the ancestors. Mostly the ceremonial chiefs east of the Mamberamo-river, such as: Ondowafi, Ondoforo, Satemto, Charsori a.s.o. claim(ed) to have this power. Sometimes the Tuan Tanah is the invisible spirit of the land, plot, site or centre. Sometimes small sacrifices are obligatory for the whole or at least a part of the community, depending on the practical use of the soil

or the spot, the building of a house, the clearing of a plot of forest or bush. The Indonesian custom in this respect is called: *slamatan* = religious meal. The Tuan Tanah in Irian (Western New Guinea) are feared too, because some of them were and are black magicians.

<sup>57</sup> Informant Obed Sawen, Satemto, of middle age. He kept the clan-secrets strictly in the presence of members of another clan. Knowing the secrets of the clan gives one the power to perform black magic: sickness even death, could be the result.

<sup>58</sup> Forging of iron the people of Sarmi have probably taken over from the Biak blacksmiths. They came as far as the Humboldt Bay.

<sup>59</sup> The end of the world: here meaning the skyline, where the horizon presumably meets the sky.

<sup>60</sup> The 'ferafu' became a ceremonial object, radiating magical power.

<sup>61</sup> The Sobé title Satemto probably meant "the outstanding man".

<sup>62</sup> This incantation is put into primeval words, the informants said, therefore nobody could give a literal translation. The text sounds like: Sabiraisa, mabiraisa; sarero fyori-fyori manifyori-fyori. Probably the informants wanted to keep the real meaning a secret from everyone.

<sup>63</sup> Informant Frits Daber, middle aged. Had the title Satemto.

<sup>64</sup> In the whole Sarmi area the textile art was only known to the Sobé. Only one old woman was, at the time of the research, able to handle the weaving-loom. Nobody knows whence this art was introduced.

<sup>65</sup> Ternate, known from the traders' schooners. Ternate meant to the inhabitants really "the whole distant world".

<sup>66</sup> Volcano. Only on the Island of Halmahera and the islet Ternate can be found the nearest volcanoes. On the main land the volcano on the islet of Karkar, near Madang, about 1000 km to the east, is the nearest.

<sup>67</sup> About Merne in the part about "The defending of life" we will have to explain in more detail his position and creative contributions to the Sarmi-area culture.

<sup>68</sup> Awit: the sacred flute. More about this object will be explained later on. (In: The defending of life.)

<sup>69</sup> The names given to the secret cult-houses of the men are varied. Strangers called these buildings always Rumah Karriwari, they thought that this had something to do with the image, a sculpture of a human being, on top of it, but this is not always the case. More likely this name came from the Tanah Merah area. There the name of the cult-house was Kai-wari (Kai = tree, pole; wari = life).

<sup>70</sup> Informants: the people concerned. Result of our own research in 1955 (Nov-December).

<sup>71</sup> This detail makes it clear and explains that the ancestors and the living Satemto cooperate closely when the well-being of their people is at stake.

<sup>72</sup> The song of Wési: Kwinsimar, Wési sambe ma apore. Old language?

<sup>73</sup> Source: Own fieldwork in 1955.

<sup>74</sup> Kim (Keem), a carved image in human form. They called it doll. v. d. Hoeven p. 249-50 mentioned the doll-like image, too, then still in the possession of the clan he calls Satidjo (cf. our Sotidjo) which must be the same as the primeval mother. According to v. d. Hoeven's version she was doll-or dwarflike, but was able to transform herself into a child-bearing mother, and she bore in a single day twenty children, boys and girls. Some of them were black, others however had a white skin. The clan Satidjo exists, as we saw. This means that the material descent determined the clanname and is applied in this case.

<sup>75</sup> Exogamy-rules applied in the mythical origin. But it is the common birthground which is decisive, not only the consanguinity. Among the Moi-tribe (Sorong area) birth in the same house, sometimes in the same village, determines the exogamy-rules and should be kept between the children born in the same spot. Remarkable in this respect is that the "blood and soil" (ground) theory is taken into account. The soil, plot or site has apparently a deeper meaning. It is the dwelling-place of the ancestors and the rules laid down or appointed by them are of great importance as they see to it that these rules are not infringed.

<sup>76</sup> Source: Jac. Hoogerbrugge (1967, p. 34, 35) cf. Nisaba III, p. 52 etc. too.

<sup>77</sup> At the cost of the life of his son, he got the clear water he so badly wanted. The corpse of his son cleared the way to the sea by creating the river Jafari. The Jafari becomes one of the 5 tributaries forming the main river Tami which flows into the sea. In mythical language, and because of the lack of knowledge about the real situation, the Sentani-people could name the Taufili (Jafari) the mother and the Tami the son. *Father* or *Mother* of the water could have the same mythical meaning.

<sup>78</sup> Source: Research from the present writer in 1960. Informants: a group older men from the villages Tabati and Enggros, among them members of the Chamadi- and Irew-clan and Hanasbey on board of a motorboat, on our way to a meeting.

<sup>79</sup> Source: K. W. Galis 1955, pp. 254 etc. Informant Frans Sanyi.

<sup>80</sup> Source: Galis 1955, p. 263 about the prescription concerning the manner in which these fishes ought to be caught: Charo gave the fishes the following instructions: to the wálu-fish, probably a kind of pike-like shape. "You are going to live in the deep-ocean. When somebody tries to catch you before he has cohabited with his wife, he will succeed, but when he has committed the act with his wife, he will fail". To the flying fishes was said: "You are a kind of fish that has to be killed with a fish-spear", etc. Cf. about more prescriptions and fishing ceremonial Galis 1955, pp. 104 etc. 124-125, 129, 131, 138. (Ceremonial: pp. 105-109) Galis, *ibid.*, p. 255.

<sup>81</sup> Source: Galis 1955, pp. 251 etc., informant Willem Merauje.

<sup>82</sup> About the ultimate fate of the two "fatal" sisters, who brought disaster where they went, Galis informs us: "The two sisters were members of the Sibi-clan. In search for their brother, they went to the place where the sun set, but there they did not find him. Then they turned to the East and reached Vanimo, but they saw that the sun rose from a spot much more to the East and they stayed in Vanimo. They washed their hair with a mixture of oil and red-coloured earth. After this they washed their hands and on that same spot one can find red-coloured earth. After this the two sisters were transformed into two big rocks and so petrified the rocks were named Nácháchároti (the two sisters). After the journey of the two sisters it became a custom to give the females in marriage from West to East. The reverse is prohibited". (Abridged from Galis, pp. 262-63.)

<sup>83</sup> Source of II, 2d; II, 2e; II, 2f and II, 2g: writers, students of the Theological High-School of Abe-pura (Irian Jaya) during an investigation in the Yotéfa-Bay villages, in the first place the village of Enggros (Injeros), 8-10 oct. 1976. Leader of the team o.a. Frank Hubatka, cultural anthropologist and reader in the just mentioned institute.

These four rather different versions about the same event (and the three we presented before) are not yet the total number circulating in the area under discussion. These differences and deviations may be characteristic and in accordance with the secret knowledge each clan or clan-group claims to possess. In former times it would have been impossible to collect these informations. Having their own version contributes to the prestige and status of the group concerned. There was no need to go in search for a scientific explanation about the real history of a situation. That should provide them with a general knowledge accessible to everybody and should have meant to loose a possibility to intimidate their inimical partners. By lack of interest in reality they resort to supernatural and miraculous

explanations. And these secret narratives were at the same time terror- or awe-inspiring if black magic is interwoven in the story, which is nearly always the case. The results are visible, the causes were open to questions and doubt. But some events may occur again, you never can tell. Nobody though will ever mock openly these narrated causes.

Tidal waves occur every now and then. In 1960 while we lived in the area a tidal wave undulated all over the Pacific Ocean, caused as was said, by an earth- or sea-quake near South America. It swept away the smaller houses in the Yotefa area, and some big houses were lifted from their stilts and floated on the ebbtide out of the bay. The stronger dwellings were pushed lopsided badly.

No doubt these myths have a religious character, but at the same time socio-political features play an important-if not the most important role.

<sup>84</sup> Source: I. S. Kijne, who in a later publication gave the modern addition. The original version is mentioned in Kamma 1954 and 1972, p. 88, a.s.o. Disrespect caused the flood. "The dangerous snake tied to the Anio Sara (the secret men's house), means probably: through the strictly kept rules of the men's society ordinances, the power of nature was kept in check by its partner: the culture represented by the men, who initiated the boys and disclosed to them the secret of the balance between man and nature. The naughty boys showing disrespect could in this case represent the uninitiated who are dangerous in their manner: they mean a real risk and sometimes a threat to life itself".

<sup>85</sup> Source: own research c. 1936. Informant Chief Rumbiak of the village Linsok (Layensowek).

<sup>86</sup> The ancestor korwar of the Rumbiak was given to me by the chief (cf. sub 79) and taken from a cave by 2 young men. (now in the Museum of Ethnology in Leyden. In Kamma 1976 printed on page 11f, list of photos). Cf. Van Baaren 1968, photo no. 66. The chief above mentioned gave the image after his baptism before that time I was not aware of the existence of this korwar. Lamster 1930, p. 456 opposite page 456, shows us two categories of images, i.e. I, the Raja Empat (Sorong area) ones, and II: those influenced by the Indonesian culture and image styles.

But these Raja Empat images with their outstretched arms and palms turned upwards, are exactly showing the manner in which the Biak Fan Nangi ritual is held as the images I just have mentioned. But more remarkable is the fact, that on this picture one Biak Korwar is shown (a skull korwar) of which Lamsters tells us, that this is meant to be the adopted son of the

High God image and his sons, portrayed in the biggest korwar. I never saw an image of the high God. What they portray is always the Korano Wamurmi (the King of the Eastern wind) along with his family, wives and children. I doubt whether the image given to me is really the korwar of the Biak ancestor, I am more inclined to suppose that the two boys gave the wrong korwar to me and that the real Biak, i.e. Rumbiak ancestor was carved and his skull put inside the hollowed-out korwar. Then the photograph shows us the Rumbiak korwar, and the two sons must in reality show the Siam ancestors.

<sup>87</sup> The Biak people, under influence of the culture in the Raja Empat, sometimes made the image of a shaman ("mon" in their language) in the shape usual in that area. Cf. Kamma 1976, photopage no. 19. e. Cf. in the part "The defending of life" the explanation about the shaman's and shamanism. The shaman (medicine-man) performs the ritual of the Fan Nangi as one of his main tasks. (Cf. Defending of Life.)

<sup>88</sup> The dangerous blood. Among the inhabitants of the Bird's Head as well as for the coastal areas and the islands of the Biak and Numfor people blood is taboo. I.e. where bloodshed took place of a blood-relation the whole site must be avoided. No relative is allowed to intrude or to reap the harvest of their garden on the tabooed "for" (spot), lest their people should fall ill and die. The saying is "one has an atpyokem (decayed tree) there". For humans are compared to a tree: standing and living and growing. Menstruating females have to live, for the time being, in a lean-to in the garden. The Arfak-tribes as we saw avoid the gardens, and even the father of a new-born child does not go into his garden. In Biak etc. a birth takes place in the living house. During the labour of the woman concerned the men have to abstain from entering the house. The taboo ("for") caused by a kinsman being slain can only be removed by killing an enemy in retaliation. As soon as the victory-dance is held around the slain enemy's "head" the taboo is terminated. The Arfak-people honour the killer of an enemy: the "hero" is entitled to marry the widow of the relative killed. In such a case no dowry is obliged for the widow concerned.

M. W. Kaisyepo gave some additional remarks: "The taboo ('for') for a slain kinsman does not include the unrelated village people. Only it is forbidden for relatives to eat or use anything coming from the tabooed spot. Usually the neighbours reap or harvest the crops of a friend's garden. In such cases one relies on exchanging one's own crop for the harvest from one's friend's tabooed site".

<sup>89</sup> Writer P. J. E. Baransano, teacher among the Moiré-Arfak.

<sup>90</sup> Informant A. Borai from Mabur.

<sup>91</sup> The bird-of-paradise plume on the tail of a white dog. Probably because the bird's name on the coastal areas is: Manbefor (The fire-bird) but "for" = taboo, too. Therefore: taboo is released, the curse takes its way, is broken loose?.

<sup>92</sup> Informant about the Lim-Lim-people: Dr. Siegfried Zöllner in his thesis "Lebensbaum und Schweinekult", Die Religion der Yali im Bergland von Irian-Jaya, Wuppertal 1977. In the texts we used the photocopy of 1975 and cited the passages accordingly. The printed edition however has the same pagination.

Introduction. The Yali-people, known partly by the publications of the anthropologist Koch, about the cannibalism still occurring among them and some other publications (cf. de literature in Zöllner's book). They live rather isolated in the interior of Irian Jaya (Nw. Guinea), east of the Baliem-valley north east of the snow-mountains, behind the former Wilhelmina-peak.

The social organisation is the moiety system i.e. two exogamous and complementary halves of the tribe. There are about 20-25000 people living on c. 100 square km in precipitous areas. The staple crop, sweet potatoes is grown on mountain-slopes of sometimes 40-60°. Their daily life is precarious: ever threatening rains often followed by landslides resulting in destruction of villages. Next to the staplecrop pigs play an important role.

The threat to life is held in check by elaborate rituals, recorded in detail by Zöllner. The use of a taperecorder during the 14 years he spent amongst the Yalis made it possible to note the language exactly. As Zöllner is well versed in the Yali language, he was able to translate even the tricky texts of their songs and rituals and the secret language of a men's society. Without exaggeration one can state that the elaborate rituals accompanying the daily life dominate the culture of the Yalis more than elsewhere in the interior of West Nw. Guinea (Irian Jaya) at least as far as we know.

The primeval time represented in the myth, closely related to the primeval swine and the Yeli-tree, is held in check by the multicoloured rituals: secret men's house societies (the Muruwal) and salam rituals, in which the whole culture comes to the fore. By means of rituals the society comes to terms with the sacred irrational facts which dominate the world-view and thoughts of the Yali. To quote a short passage from Francis Huxley (1974) which holds true for the Yali's as well:

"... the ways by which man crosses the boundary between ordinary life and what is set apart from it (objects, places, people) and the experiences he holds in awe and wonder because of the dangerous and intoxicating power they represent to him". (Inside cover.) The informants of Dr. Zöllner themselves stressed the main points and gave advice about the foremost issues at stake in their rituals, and what they considered as the focus of their life- and world-view. The moiety-system is represented by East and West. Informant about the Limlim: an old man from Angguruk. Myth 3a, 467.

<sup>93</sup> The Yeli-song (chant and recite). Informant: Uggulsung, Muhumu 1975, p. 549-550.

<sup>94</sup> Zöllner, p. 51, 52.

<sup>95</sup> Zöllner, p. 52.

<sup>96</sup> Zöllner, pp. 505-506.

<sup>97</sup> Hitt 1962 reads: natelan-katelan; Peters 1965, 111, 166-67; naputal-haputal; Heider 1970, p. 144: nabutal-habutal. Koreri: The utopian state of the Biak-people also means: rer: changing (of skin). Cf. Kamma 1972.

<sup>98</sup> Zöllner, p. 505 and informant Pindelu in his addition.

<sup>99</sup> Zöllner, p. 75.

<sup>100</sup> Cf. Zöllner, pp. 503-504 abridged.

<sup>101</sup> Cf. Zöllner, pp. 506-507. Landslides. Often occurred during the time Dr. Zöllner was living among the Yali's. He writes: "A mighty erosion took place in the night from 25th-26th, 12, 1966, caused by a heavy rainfall, and this erosion in the newly tended garden-area of Sijohi dragged c. 100 garden-beds into the depths of the valleys". (Zöllner, p. 142). But a much fatal earthquake followed by the most vehement landslide took place in the early morning of the 26th of June 1976. In the autumn edition of the Mission Aviation one finds the following impression: "Convulsing and reeling, the mountains shed their cover. The soil that had been the mountains cloak, broke loose and in a mighty, deafening roar, billions of tons of rock and dirt plumped down upon the people asleep in their homes. Dust billowed into clouds as entire villages were crushed and smothered under the avalanche". "The mountains had indeed fallen on them" (page 3). "Initial estimates indicated 426 known dead. (later figures speak about 1000) and 5000 missing. Perhaps an equally great tragedy was the loss of crops for the 16.000 or more survivors" (page 3).

<sup>102</sup> Source: Collection Zöllner of 1972. Informant Arnod Waneyok.

<sup>103</sup> Source: van Balen 1886, p. 572 etc.

<sup>104</sup> Informant Winggai, Nubuai. Cf. Held 1956, p. 63. The birth of Roponggai.

<sup>105</sup> Ochre-coloured earth. Everywhere to be found, but the quality as paint is not the same. It is in use as body-paint but in art-products as well. Some places are famous for the excellent quality and there the red earth is used as a trade product. Lime and soot are in use as white and black, therefore these three colours dominate in body and art-painting. White clay is the colour of bereavement.

<sup>106</sup> Source: Held 1956, p. 65. Informant Sireghi, village Nubuai.

<sup>107</sup> Source: Van Balen 1915, p. 501. From the Windèsi-language. Windèsi is located on the east coast of the Bird's-Head Peninsula just opposite the island of Roon.

<sup>108</sup> Waropen. The best known tribe in literature through the outstanding publications of G. J. Held. But, "his" Waropen is located in the Mangrove-forests on the south coast of the Geelvinkbay, opposite the Island of Japen. But the Waropen in the southern part of the Wandamenbay are well-known too. According to the flood-stories, they are parts of the main tribe, but during the flood their canoe was washed away. Cf. the narrative of Waropen. Held 1956, texts no. 33, 34 and 35 page 61, etc.

<sup>109</sup> Medicine, Indonesian: obat. Is used for every kind of white and even black magic. The Windèsi language uses the word "airawi" the equivalent of the Numforese "aryawen or aryaun". Van Balen in his vocabulary translates the word as: medicine, charm. Ambonai uses it as a charm to make himself and his wife, even the house invulnerable. Many times incantations and charms are used "to paralyse" the enemy. Ambonai applied his charm too and rejuvenated himself.

<sup>110</sup> Wealth, Windèsi language: pigangenam. Biak: robena(i) possessions, always meaning valuable exchange articles and material mostly of foreign origin. Without these valuables (Indonesia: harta), no marriages could be arranged, social communication would be impossible. A man who owns valuables is an outstanding man, he is recognized as a full member of his group.

<sup>111</sup> Source: A. Sambere, B.S. no. 64. Collection Bothoff. This is a variant, this time from the point of view of the fleeting people dispersed over many islands. A kind of migration within the boundaries of the Geelvinkbay-area. Cf. also Held 1956, p. 61.

<sup>112</sup> Source: A. Bebari, B.S. no. 7. Collection Bothoff.

<sup>113</sup> Source: writer F. J. S. Romainum, informant Sangaji Willem Dimara, aged c. 60 and written down in Korem-village. This is the most elaborate narrative in which the Biak mythology shows itself clearly. This translation is from the Biak language. From yet another Biak source I inserted some

elements, namely those which deviate from the Korem text, and give important variations. These elements are placed between brackets and printed in smaller characters. Informant for this version. Spener R. Krar, B.S. no. 8. Collection Bothoff. The same holds good for the source mentioned in note 114.

<sup>114</sup> Source, anonymous, B.S. no. 26. Collection Bothoff. The writer is from Biak Island.

<sup>115</sup> "Orchids". On or near the orchid. They grow mostly on the stump of a snapped-off bough of big trees. From such places one has a good view of the environment, appropriate to build a cabin.

<sup>116</sup> Armis-song. The victory or encouraging song of the Biak-Numforese, meant to be sung during a voyage

<sup>117</sup> The snake Samyas, once worshipped on the island of Meosbefondi, west of the island of Supiori on Biak. The snake was carved spirally and rested on his tail. In other areas, such as the island of Ajawi, north of Waigeo the eagle was venerated and carved rather naturally in shape. The dragon is mostly carved on the kariren, the bow-decoration of a canoe. The one without legs is said to be female, and the ones having four legs imitate the male snake-dragon. Mostly the Biak-people name the dragon-snake *korben*, while the name in use to indicate a snake is *ikak*. *Ikak beba*; the great snake is often a synonym of *korben*, the names are alternatively used.

<sup>118</sup> In some versions of this myth Biak is said to have got her population from Korem-village. The narrative then indicates in what manner this occurred.

<sup>119</sup> Source: Van Balen 1915, p. 479 etc. This seems to give the aetiological explanation of the origin of the bride-wealth and ceremonial exchange of valuables, wealth and foodstuff.

<sup>120</sup> A fish-spear has no blade but is supplied with at least two, three, but often with more barbed hooks. The fish-arrows have sometimes a bunch of small prongs with barbed hooks.

<sup>121</sup> Singing. Often mentioned in myth without exact information about the kind of songs. Thus mentioned however it means nearly always: ceremonial chanting, dirging or accompanying one of the rituals on the occasion of one of the 3-7 ritual-songs from the initiation performances. But in such a case many people have to take part in it namely from both sides: the mothers' and fathers' participants.

<sup>122</sup> Raid, Windësi: *rait*. Biak: *rak*. Indicates the capturing or killing of one of the enemies, of a hostile tribe. Famous and feared at the same time.

The attackers may as easily lose their lives as the group or individuals attacked by surprise. In this area there was seldom an open fight by daylight, the surprise attack near dawn was the appropriate time for this kind of raid.

<sup>123</sup> The person who boasted about a brave deed he had in mind to accomplish had to gain the victory or die. To return as a loser meant always: losing his face. When a drunken man boasted this was not taken seriously: "the palm-wine is speaking", was the comment in such a case.

<sup>124</sup> "This is the place of my wife" was the argument of the father in order to be able to claim the ownership of his son. One would expect him to have mentioned his own place, but: the matrilineal heritage was strong indeed, and the narrator stresses this point because the father had not yet paid the bride-wealth to her foster-father the snake. This kind of admonition one often finds in the narrative: rules not proclaimed but told in story-form.

<sup>125</sup> Bride wealth, Biak: ararem, Indonesian: mas-kawin (mas = gold; kawin = to marry). Of great importance and consequence, because without this being paid, the father is not entitled to own his son, i.e. give him the name of his clan.

<sup>126</sup> The exchange of valuables and food is here clearly shown. Only by this performance is the dreaded snake, chaos, conquered, and does it become a cooperative human being.

This myth is one of the finest specimens to show the implications of the social organization and of culture in general.

<sup>127</sup> Source: Van Hasselt 1908, no. 20.

<sup>128</sup> Adultery is named: frur wos = frur: make; wos: word(s). Therefore the sentence: i dawos kuker bin: he speaks to a woman, means he commits adultery with her.

<sup>129</sup> Refreshment: sán kakès: throw refreshments, is very important as a token of friendship, but every wife has to meet her husband in this manner. The meaning is directly: "I am prepared to have sexual intercourse with you". This is obligatory for the house wife. Only her own husband is entitled to receive this from his wife(s). When the husband is at home it is his duty to give it to a guest(male), the husband offers the refreshments, and the guest in his turn offers his lime-gourd to his host, he in his turn may give it to his wives, the guest is not allowed to perform this act or token of friendship. When a man meets a woman alone, this always means: intercourse; therefore this meeting has to be avoided, or: women never walk on their own. The rules were very strict in this respect.

<sup>130</sup> In a polygamous household (family) each wife has her own room where she lives with her children and is able to cook. She receives her husband, and her own brother and father in her room, all other males are forbidden to enter her room. It means always: adultery, or an intention to commit this. According to the Numforese culture a man and woman caught in the act of adultery have to be killed by the cheated husband. The more so when the male is a brother of the husband. For this means incest.

<sup>131</sup> Kubur, triton's shell, the conch-shell on which the sign of war or victory is given.

<sup>132</sup> Source: Van Balen 1915, no. VI, p. 459.

## LIST OF IRIANESE (PAPUAN) WORDS

- (So) after a word means Sobé language  
(W) after a word means Windèsi language  
(S) after a word means Sentani language  
(Y) after a word means Yali language (interior east of Balim)  
(Yo) after a word means Yotefa-bay language  
(In) after a word means Indonesian language, sometimes of the Maluccas variant

All other words, without indication, are Biak-Numforesé ones.

Pronunciation: a = the a in ask; u = u in full; i = e in he; o = in home;  
j = y in you.

aboruk: temporary bridge, a fallen or felled tree

adinao (So): adinao-leaf = millet

Ababareg (Y): 1. mountain with caves where the Manu-snake lives; 2. the Föhn-gale

ai: wood; aiknam: tree

aibaken: tree-trunk

aikabu: ironwood tree, ironwood

aipyokem: corpse, dead body

airawa (W): medicine, charm, cf. note 109

aisawa or asawa: papaya (In) *Carica papaya* (papaw.): probably introduced by the Sawa(i)-People of Patania, i.e. the south-east peninsula of the island of Halmahera

aka (So): elder, brother

Amber: stranger, from western origin: Indonesians, Chinese etc.

Amberbaken: area west of Manokwari

Amberbaken Pja: the ones who married outside their own clan, the exogamous ones

Ambonai: culture-hero and performer of magic, the killer of the snake Ropokai

amen-dui: vegetables from the bamboo-sprout

Ampnirbo: the hights of Ampnir, located near Korem village

Amsira and Tessa: the primeval site where the famous culture-hero Merne came from (Sarmi area)

Andamop: name of dog (Mnyu)

Ando (Y): primeval tree along with the Yeli and Kerime-trees

- Anio Sara (W): sacred centre in the Wandamen area  
 Arfak tribes: the north-east area in the Birds-Head peninsula, i.e. **Mansibaber**,  
 Manimbu, Arfu (near Amberbaken)  
 araimarene (So): good gracious  
 ararem: bride price. Indon.: mas kawin, cf. note 125  
 arari-pjoi: male variant of the sharp sprout of a bamboo-kind  
 Arifuru: islet offshore of the island of Roon-Geelviak Bay  
 Armbroi: the bridge could not reach. Name of a site on Biak  
 Armis-song: encouraging song, voyage melody or tune sung by the voyagers  
 and their relatives during the voyage  
 Arso: area along the border of Irian and Papuanugini, northern part  
 as: swim. people living in the Sorong area, originally coming from Patania  
 aryaen, aryaun: medicine, charm, cf. note 109  
 Atiwanfo: original site of the Mararene-people (Sarmi area)  
 awit (So): sacred flute in the Sarmi area  
 awon: pig (common ones) born out of pieces of the lower quarter of Kamberap,  
 out of the upper part the sacred pigs (javarawon)
- bab: ray, thornback fish  
 baerom (So): bag  
 bakau-trees: rhizophora trees  
 bakdi: pumpkin, *legenaria leucantha*  
 baken: body, trunk; aibaken: tree-trunk  
 banjir (In): spate  
 barapen: steaming-pit, to steam in a pit  
 bata: mythical sago-tree at Senggi  
 Bebofu (So): the way the primeval ancestor took to the coast  
 Beeyuti: dwelling-house, metamorphosed into a sago-grove or swamp  
 (Moiré, one of the Arfak-tribes)  
 Biak: emerging (out of the sea, on the horizon)  
 Biapi: one of the high mountains in Amberbaken  
 bo: above, on top, mountaintop or hill-ridge  
 hobara (In): fish of prey  
 (bon)-oru: a tree when burned, its smoke is used as a repellence against  
 mosquito's, cf. Van Hasselts dictionary of the Numforese language,  
 sub verbum  
 Bonbakdi: pumpkin hill or-mountain. Bon means fruit too, but Bakdi-  
 fruit = Bakdi-bon

- bori: the top of it, the ridge or mountain. Cf. bo; used as suffix: Manswarbori:  
on the hilltop of the cassowary-bird
- Bom: wife of Kumberap
- Buamiti: Supreme Being in Amberbaken, cf. note 51
- Bunga: bird of dawn (muyu)
- Buarnia (So): marsh, near the original dwellingplace of the Sobé
- bunem: a trifle, a little bit
- Burdam: the second clan(kèrèt) of Biak island
- Burumsman: village where the deluge in Nimboran started
- Bu-Yakala (S): clear water. Sentani name for the lake Sentani
- Chabakuk (Yo): sorcerer, medicine-man, peace-maker
- chai (Yo): divider, cf. chamadi
- chamadi (Yo): the divider, splitter, pole dividing the village in two parts
- Char(o) (Yo): human, man
- Charsori (Yo): outstanding ceremonial chief in the Humboldt-Bay (cf. Satemto  
among the Sarmi-people)
- Choi (Yo): corner, name of a clan of Yotéfa
- Daber (So): spirit in the shape of a man; he knew every language, even  
those of birds and flies
- dawes kuker bin: he talks with a woman, i.e. commits adultery
- Dekening: the first (in Nimboran)
- Dobonai (S): mountain-God; of the Mount Dob(v)onsoro (The Cyclops)
- Du'um (S): mount Cyclops, near the capital of Irian Jaya (Jayapura)
- Dwani (S): primeval mother after the deluge
- eba (S): bracelet of green coloured glass
- Ema (S): the white culture-mother of the Sobé
- emcem (S): small bird
- Enggros (Injeros) (Yo): the second place
- Eram: ceremonial, mythical chief in Nimboran
- fabrub: tidal wave on Biak
- Faiserabo: name of the original villages, later on named Riséi-Sayati, in  
Waropen before the deluge.
- Faksya: the Arfak-tribes, called by this name through the coastal and  
offshore inhabitants
- forno (na) (In): form baked of clay to bake sago-flour into sago-cakes
- Fendehik (Y): mountain created by the giant snake (Manu?)
- ferafu (So): magic cup of metal, forged by Mensembrais

- Fiayer (So): primeval mother who bore tree-fruit and kernels, nuts e before the deluge in Bagaiserwar
- fondowere rauma (So): small bow with magic power
- fong-fong (Y): mourning time, mourning time
- for: taboo; fire, cf. note 91
- Fowai (So): raft, petrified after the flood (of the Nefreser clan)
- frur woe: literally: make words, i.e. commit adultery or having **sexual** contact, cf. note 128
- ganemom-leaves (W): long-life giving leaves. Wamdamen
- genimu (In): fibre of the leaf-sheat, used to twine rope of it
- Geuyem: *genemu*, *genimu*
- gon: agreement, by tying knots in a rope of rattan = fès rob: to tie nights. One counts the nights when an appointment to meet each other is made. After a night has passed each of the parties concerned who take such a gon, cut a knot of the rope.
- gör: sacred flute in Arso area
- Gowuyup: one of the ancestors of the Muyu-tribe
- habu (S): bucket folded of leaf-sheets of a kind of palm-tree
- hamamut (Y): your skin
- hay (S): bead, pearl of coloured glass
- haputal (Dani-): your skin
- harta (In): treasure, valuables. Biak: robena(nei) arsa Windesi: pigangenam: Ceremonial exchange articles
- hawa (S): bead, pearl of coloured glass
- hesi yu (Dani): rub your body with white clay (mourning decoration)
- Hohar: cape, promontory, dwellingplace of the dragon-snake at Serewin, on the island of Japen
- Homne-Fall (Y): caused by the twisting tail of the trapped giant serpent
- ikak: snake, cf. note 117
- ikan baung: bagridae (muyu)
- Imene: a mountain in Nimboran
- inabur: malignant female spirit or ghost
- Inbakeriëwi: woman left behind on Roon, at the time the people fled of fear for the devouring serpent
- Indarami Painusi: mother of the snake Roponggai of Waropen

- Infar-fish or: imburnos (?) Indon.: ikan bobara, fish of prey  
 Insawaruser: the woman who grips continuously; in=bin=woman, girl.  
 sawar=grip, to grip; user=prolonged, used as suffix  
 Inswaruser: the always loving woman, or: the always thinking woman  
 Iroti, Sinis + Biri: the three oldest clans of the Sobé  
 Jaime (So): primeval cannibal mother  
 Jambina: son of Kumberap, cf. contents of this volume  
 Jenbewir: beach, sand in the shape of a pothole; wir=pot-hole name of  
 the primeval wife on the island of Biak  
 Jèpjeporo (Yepyeporo) (So): primeval village of the Sefa-clan  
 Jok, Yok: pigmeat (pork) roasted between treebark; favoured Muyu-dish
- kajob: 1. lamentation-song; 2. bereavement-ceremony; 3. Tune, melody of  
 the dead  
 kakès: refreshment, i.e. areca-nut, tobacco etc. cf. note 129  
 Kalijé (Y): the snake Manu, who lost the competition-run, determining  
 death or eternal life for the human beings  
 Kamberap see Kumberap  
 Kamomes: enormous tree  
 Kao: river in the south of Nw. Guinea (Irian)  
 Karay: sacred flute of the Arso-area  
 Karkar: vulcano near Madang (east Nw. Guinea)  
 Karon: tribe bordering on the east to the Amberbaken area  
 Karubukawi (W): grandfather-giant snake, having two heads on one neck  
 Katinget (So): kind of lizard  
 Kaumip, Kajuwu, Kapekainok, Mindin, Umban, Nember, Gowujop. The  
 seven men who escaped the flood and continued the Muyu culture  
 and pig-celebration (1, 3)  
 Kerepon: forest lizard  
 Kerimé (Y): primeval tree  
 Kariren: stem, figure-head, bow ornament carved in wood, cf. note 117  
 keru: boulder, stone  
 keru-wau: boulder turtle, cf. note 43  
 Kilalungu (Y): primeval woman  
 Kimaning: the ancestors inside the mountain, Nimboran, cf. note 27  
 kinang (Y): the earth, where humans live  
 knam: tree; origin, source  
 kôb: bird in Arso

- kölöb: testicles of the crocodile (Arso)  
 Korano. kolano: originally meaning: man in power, king; **by the Government** used as the title for village chief in eastern Nw. G.  
 Korben: dragon, giant snake, serpent (mythical)  
 Korem: devoured village on north-east Biak; Korem-wé: **Korem-bay**;  
 Korem-dori: Korem-river  
 Koreri: utopian state of wellbeing, millenium  
 Kraubah: mountain west from the village Benjom (Nimboran)  
 kubur: triton's shell; blow-horn, alarm- and victory trumpet cf. note 131  
 Kumberap: culture-hero (metamorphosed from a pig into a human being) in the Muyu-area. Sometimes mentioned: the Supreme Being cf. note 5  
 Kungu: culture-hero of Senggi  
 kowok: bird of dawn, coloured black and white
- Lajensowèk, Linsok: village founded by the two Biak ancestors, cf. notes and s.v. Yensaowek, in this list.  
 Lim-Lim (Y): primeval humans in the Yali-area, annihilated by land-slides  
 Lermonje (Tau) (Yo): the second one of the fatal sisters  
 lolaro-tree (In): tidal forest  
 Madi (So): sacred centre dance house; secret men's society building  
 Mafiri (Waropen): big earthenware plate in which the serpent Roponggai floated  
 Maina (So): a pigeon released after the deluge decreased  
 Mahasaremi: sky abode, primeval village of the Mararene-people  
 Makuty (Moiré): lean-to, wind shield for women during menstruation and childbirth  
 mam: look, see, to look or to see  
 Mamawiso (So): "I came out of the earth" culture-hero of the Mararene; growing old Mamawiso ascended into the sky-village Mahasaremi  
 Mamboki: the man or husband of the princess  
 mamfnai: meat or fish  
 mananir: village chief  
 manbefor: the fire bird, i.e. bird of paradise  
 manda: top of the iron-wood tree in Senggi  
 Mandowen: original clan at Biak, the first one organized  
 manibob: trade-friend, leading to monopolies in trade affairs, cf. note 51;  
 man = man, i = particle, bob = to sell. The Numforese clans and some of Biak were allied with specific groups in Amberbaken.

- manganggan: eagle, fish-eagle with a white coloured head and brown feathers
- mangkwap or kwap: carrying-bag. (Moire, one of the Arfak triblets)
- Manipora (So): crow, primeval ancestor
- mankappop: man of the kappop(es): womans girdle. It may be that this person leaned against the tree from which bark the girdles are made; or: he is given birth and laid on a girdle
- Manu (Y): giant snake, mythical serpent causing landslides, cf. the narrative of Manu (III, 4)
- marsau: swamp, anchorage of a small size
- Masa: river at Senggi
- Manyowa: the famous first king of the island of Bisk
- mèk (Y): earthquake
- Mensembrais (So): the second human being, having magic power; culture hero of Bagaiserwar
- Merne (So): famous culture-hero of the coastal areas of the Sarmi-district
- mibai (So): good, delicious
- Mindin: one of the seven ancestors of the Muju (Muyu) area. Cf. Kaumip, where the others are mentioned
- mofer: to poison a stretch of a river, a bend or "cut of meander", or: caves under the surface in coral reefs
- Moi-tribe: near Sorong, cf. note 75
- Moiré: one of the several small Arfak-tribes
- Molof: tribe in the Senggi-area
- Mon: shaman; 3 poles forming the symbol for the mon. The three poles are constructed like the mast of a canoe, cf. note 81
- Montorda (So): the mountain where the deck-garden canoe ran ashore, after the deluge receded
- Muju, (Muyu): one of the outstanding tribes in southern Irian (Nw. Guinea)
- Munggu: red parrot (Muyu)
- mungguwat (Y): spirit
- Mure: sacred flute in Arso
- Na(a)eh (Yo): strong, hard, mean
- Nachacharoti (Yo): two sisters. The petrified fatal sisters, cf. note 82
- Nabarsof (So and river Tor): 1. ceremony with snake-grease; 2. Men's society (secret); 3. initiation (part of), strictly kept secret and tabooed for the uninitiated and women
- Nahamut (Y): my skin. Part of the message the snake had to deliver

- Naojo: lory-bird, Arso  
 napirem: cousin, mothers-brothers-son, or: napir = the children of brother and sister, speaking about or to each other. (V. Hasselts dictionary s.v.)  
 naputal-haputal (Dani): my skin = your skin. Message of the snake who came too late, cf. III, 1. The fatal match.  
 Naramason (So): the highest hill in Sarmi village; religious and social centre  
 Naro (S): bead of coloured glass  
 Nawusoi (W): Ina-Wuso, primeval snake guarding the harmony and the balance of the world  
 Nember: one of the seven ancestors of the Muju, cf. Kaumip  
 noesoe (So): tree in which the ancestor of the Bakai dwelled as a locust  
 noeroe: bird in Arso  
 Nubei: cape, promontory, near Korem-village  
 Nusumik (Y): mountain-tops with caves in which the Manu-snake dwells
- obat (In): medicine; white and black magic; charm, cf. note 109  
 Omerau: one of the highest mountains in Amberbaken, near mount Pipaki  
 Ondoforo: ceremonial Chief; magician in the Tanah Merah area, near the capital Jayapura, cf. note 56  
 Ondowafi (S): ceremonial-chief possessing magic power; magician.  
 Ondowafo (S): the same as Ondowafi  
 Opjaref-dori: river of Opjaref  
 Oranti: giant tree, the first one which emerged after the flood  
 Oru-tree: Smelling strongly when burning, cf. note 41  
 ote: cowry-shell in South Nw. Guinea (Irian)
- Putpalungi (Y): primeval man  
 pigangènam (W): wealth, treasure, valuables, cf. note 110  
 Pipaki: highest mountain and the place of origin of the **Rumbiak** people of Amberbaken  
 pokem: rotten, decayed; millet: Pennisetum italicum  
 Polu + Haku (Y): pond, dwellingplace of the giant Manu-snake  
 Por: a lake at Senggi (cf. I, 5)
- rait (W): raid, the Biak-Numforese: rak, cf. note 122  
 rak: raid, cf. note 122  
 rambab: iguana, the symbol of the women and ancestors. The skin of the rambab is used to cover the "mouth" of the hour-glass shaped drum. The sound of the drums = the voice of the ancestors

- rani (So): water  
 ré: discarding the old skin as snakes usually do  
 rifut (So): taboo  
 Rja (Lia, Iria) (Yo): land of the living  
 Ropokai (W): name of the giant snake in Wandamen and Waropen  
 Roponggai (W): giant snake in Waropen  
 Rumah Karriwari (In): sacred centre. Probably the "strangers" compared the carved human figure at the roof of the "ghost- or spirit-houses" (sacred-centres) with the karwar, korwar of the Geelvinkbay-people. To be exact the name is used by the inhabitants of the Tanah-Merah area also but as kaiwari. Kai = tree, pole; wari = life, cf. also note 69  
 rumbia: a kind of sago-tree  
 Rumbiak: rum = house; Biak the island of that name. Rumbiak a well-known Biak clan. They bestowed their name as a title and clanname to their trade-friends (manibob) in Amberbaken, securing their monopoly in matters of trade.  
 Rwegbey (Moire): mountain slid down during a landslide  
 sa'abik (So): bull-roarer. A ritual object held on a string and turned and swayed round and this causes whirring and a frightening, howling sound  
 sajur gedi (In): vegetable of the young leaves of the gedi-tree  
 Salam-rituals (Y): men's performances, cf. note 92  
 Samyas, Samyos: snake worshipped in Biak (Supiori), white and black striped sea-serpent, cf. note 117  
 Sangkaria: holy mountain at Arso  
 sarong (In): sarong; Biak: sré  
 Sasui: ancestor of one of the Amberbaken groups  
 Satemto (So): traditional, ceremonial chief having magic power, cf. note 56  
 Satidjo (Satiyo): primeval mother of the Kém-clan in Sarimi area, cf. note 74  
 sau: roadstead, anchorage  
 Sawen (So): strangers, arriving at the Sobé-site after the flood, today one of the main-clans  
 Sawiatawi: people of the Arso area  
 seinaro (So): venomous snake  
 Sekfamneri: left behind, despised, cf. Sèkpum. sèk: embark, to climb, i.e. go on board; famneri: despised, left-over which is thrown away  
 Sèkpum: left behind.; pum = push away, name of the left-behind pregnant woman's son at Korem, cf. Sèkfamneri  
 Semiri and Mandoi: the twins born in a crab's hole on Roon

- seno: a blossoming kind of tree in Genjem (Genyèm)  
 sepambre (So): head attire, stolen by Merne  
 sér: sago-swamp or -grove  
 sibinafio (So): "health to you" greeting-formula  
 Sibine (Y): hornbill-bird, who won the match causing **death by his victory**,  
 i.e. death for mankind ever since.  
 Sinef (So): the first human being in Bagaiserwar  
 Singgi (So): living site after the flood, cf. note 19  
 Skou (Skow): area between the Humboldt-Bay and the eastern border of  
 Irian Jaya  
 elamatan (In): religious, ceremonial meal, promoting welfare and wellbeing  
 Sobé (So): a small tribe consisting of the three villages: Sarmi, Sawar and  
 Bagaiserwar  
 Sobéi-temto: the Sobé-people  
 Som: worship, bringing or paying tribute (to Tidore)  
 Sor(i): friend, group  
 Sugaram (So): original village before the deluge at Bagaiserwar  
 Sukubai (So): chief of the Manipora-group  
 Sukuti + Sembabini: first human beings in Amberbaken, cf. note 51  
 Sunbabi: they take or bring a pig. Name of the bow of the twins **Semiri and**  
 Mandoi of Roon  
 Suré: areca-nut  
 swan: palmwine, mostly tapped from the blossoming coconut palm
- Tab (Yo): sun  
 Tabaké (So): name of the first magical bow taken from the interior  
 Tabati (Yo): village of the sun(?)  
 Tafoer (Tafur): tribe in the Arso area  
 Tami: river near the border between Irian and Papuanewguinea  
 tapesana-tree (So): kanari-tree  
 tapuntese (So): clan  
 tara (So): saw-fish  
 tarusi (In): fish of prey; a long shaped smooth skinned fish without scales  
 Taufili (S): a tributary of the river Yafuri: the mother of the rivers, cf. note 77  
 Tefafu: The God-Creator of the Jair and Kombay people (South-Irian)  
 Tiwé (So): fan-tree: *oncosperma filamentosum* growing on the deck-garden  
 of the canoe, prepared to escape the deluge  
 tjekaleng (cekaleng) (In): tunny, fish of prey

- toromop: kind of tuber (South Irian)
- Tyegau (mount): Highest mountainpeak of the Arfak-chain
- Tuan Tanah (In): term used in the whole island, meaning "Lord of the land", but it is always used in the sense: The God, or Spirit of the land, mostly however as a title of the traditional chiefs, and they possess magic power and as such they are magicians.—Spirit of the ancestors, cf. note 56
- Ulawajeg (Y): spirits and dwarfs
- Umban: one of the seven ancestors of the Muyu-people, cf. Kaumip
- Urbuon (W): holy mountain where the washed away Anio-Sara ran ashore near the village Dusner
- Ur-tree: breadfruit-tree
- usasun (Y): sacred objects, often named fetishes by the strangers
- Vandamumar (So): islet offshore from Sarmi-village
- Wabia: hairy body, name of the unfinished male in Amberbaken, later on a clan-name
- Warikerang (Walikereng, Wali-Klang): A metamorphosed dwarf, chief of the spirits (Cf. note 19) Nimboran.
- Wa Juri: lorys bird (South Irian)
- Waku-Wosei (W): the classical giant snake in the Wandamen-bay. Double name and sometimes depicted as a serpent having two heads on one neck.
- Wananbabi (W): you eat pork; name of the bow of Roon. Eat means here: to hit, to strike
- war: water
- Warmam: original name of the island of Biak. Mam: see, look
- Watoewa (Arso): friend, the crocodile of Arso
- wau: turtle
- Wese-snake (Y): the snake appointed to deliver the message "your skin, my skin"; this snake had once wings, lived on trees
- wobjewa: kind of small fish, having the shape of a herring
- woka (So): fan-tree
- Woktun: lizard (Muyu)
- wor: song, circular dance, songs during canoe-voyages
- Yafu (So): fire
- Yafuri: river; one of the tributaries of the river Tami

- Yamonje (nau) (Yo): one of the two fatal sisters  
Yarmé (So): crocodile, born by a woman  
Yasi: name of the canoe used to escape the flood on the island of Japan  
Yawarawon: sacred pig (South Irian)  
Yeli (Y): the Yeli-tree, origin and source of life  
Yeli-tree (Y): Creator of the world and human beings in the Yali area  
(interior: East of Wamena)  
Yensowek: beach, sand, of the Soweck people, village in the Manyalibit-bay  
on the island of Waigeo  
Yerumi: river in Waropen (Wandamen-bay) on whose banks the giant snake  
lived  
Yotefa (Yo): low village; yo = village, tefa = low, flat, meek  
Yowi (S): small sweet water fish

## RELIGIOUS TEXTS TRANSLATION SERIES

# NISABA

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