CHAPTER II

THE ECONOMIC LIFE

This part of the world was brought under cultivation by the peoples of Timor. In Miomafo, Insana and Beboki these were the Atoni, or, as they call themselves, the Atoni Pah Meto (= people of the dry land). This name implicitly indicates the type of cultural choice made by them, as they avoid the sea and the coast. They do not know any names of fish, and do not go fishing or sailing — contacts with peoples from other islands were not established or maintained by them.

Of the six climatic zones in which they may choose to live — the coastal plain in the north (F and G), the adjoining hill country (E), the extensive central plain and the surrounding low mountain country (D), and the central mountains (C and E) — they occupied almost exclusively the lower mountain country (500 - 1000 m.) in earlier days. Here they lived in small communities (kuan) on the mountain tops or fatu, the inaccessible, easily defendable places, laying out their gardens on the mountain slopes and tending their cattle (buffalo = bidjael) on the rolling lowlands.

1. CRAFTS AND TECHNIQUES

An important factor for the economic life is the degree to which man has learnt to control nature or to master some form of technical development, i.e. the degree to which he is a homo faber.

The level of technical development reached by the Atoni is extremely low. As far as agriculture is concerned, the implements used are a stick for drilling holes in the ground, in which grains of rice or corn are dropped in sowing, and a digging-stick (2 m. in length, and pointed at one end) for turning the soil when reclaiming grasslands. With the aid of such sticks a large number of people can turn the sods simultaneously. The Atoni further uses an axe (fani) and a matchet (benas); the latter he always carries about with him. He furthermore uses a large and a smaller weeding-hook. The surprising thing is that he has
never learnt to fashion these iron tools himself, which are nonetheless indispensable to him. As early as 1518 Duarte Barbosa \(^1\) writes that in exchange for sandalwood "axes, hatchets, knives, swords, Cambaya and Paleate cloths, porcelain, coloured beads, tin, quicksilver, lead and other wares" were imported into Timor. This trade with Malacca, and before that with Kediri and Majapahit and also China, had probably been going on for centuries even at that time.

Because of this trade the Atoni outgrew the stone age at a relatively early stage, but he has never learnt to forge iron objects himself, or even to cast a silver bangle. This is a remarkable phenomenon, for which I am at a loss to find an explanation. A comprehensive comparative study of all the ethnic groups which lived outside the major streams of Hinduism and Islam, and so lived in comparative isolation until the end of the 19th century — or even, as in the case of Timor, till the beginning of the 20th century — apart from the trade contacts which existed all over the area, would be of great importance in throwing some light on the question as to why some of these peoples did adopt a number of skills and techniques while others, like the Atoni, copied virtually none. Could it be that Timor's wealth in sandalwood, as a result of which it was easy to come by any article desired, was a factor in this?

The Atoni's silver ornaments are manufactured chiefly by the Rotinese and Belunese (see photographs 10 and 25). The latter are also their iron-smiths; prior to 1947, at any rate, no Atoni engaged in this kind of work. He is able to do some leather-work, however. The men here wear wide leather belts decorated with silver coins or discs, in which formerly they carried their lead bullets and powder for their rifles, and which nowadays fulfil the same function as trouser pockets in European dress. Ever since the 17th century muzzle-loaders were one of the most important import articles. The rivalry between the Dutch and the Portuguese probably played a part in this. Although a great many breech-loaders were still imported in the 19th century, these imports have been prohibited for the past hundred years in order to avoid increasing the unrest in the island. The old rifles have become precious family heirlooms. Their butts are often covered entirely with silver strips. They were used in tribal warfare (see, for example, chapter V) and in stag-hunting.

The only craft at which the Atoni excels is weaving. In his weaving

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\(^1\) Duarte Barbosa, 1921, p. 195 (1518 ed. Dames).
techniques a marked similarity with those employed in the remainder of the Archipelago can be detected. The Atoni does not have any garments made out of bark, but all garments are woven out of cotton, which in the drier areas is planted amongst the corn in the gardens. In addition, modern yarns are used; these are great time-savers, but detract from the splendour of the colours of the traditional fabrics.

Cotton, which is home-grown, is separated from its seeds with the aid of a mangle, called bninis, and then loosened and cleaned by means of a cord stretched tightly on a kind of bow (see photograph 11). The same bow is also known in Sumbawa, Java, Flores, Roti, Alor and Borneo.²

The spinning-wheel is not known here as in western Indonesia and West Flores. Instead, the peoples of Timor as well as those of the surrounding islands and North Sulawesi use a wooden spindle (ike). This spindle is rounded at the bottom, so that it can easily revolve in a tiny bowl or plate (suti). It tapers towards the top where it also has a number of grooves. The spindle is turned with one hand and the cotton held in the other (see photograph 12). Women often do this work in between other chores, as spinning is a very time-consuming task, the time needed for spinning enough yarn for one large shoulder-cloth (bete) being estimated at about two months. Sometimes women can be seen spinning like this on their way to market, carrying their wares on their heads.

As soon as there is sufficient yarn weaving can commence. In Indonesia various stages of development in weaving-techniques are found, Timor occupying a roughly intermediate position technically speaking. But in Timor itself techniques vary among the Atoni as well. On photograph 13 we see a loom with a warp of different coloured threads. The pattern has already been applied on the warp threads by means of the ikat (= to tie) technique. The latter technique involves tying bundles of yarn together before weaving by wrapping lontar leaves, scraped thin beforehand, around them at certain points, so that they remain white. Then the bundles are dipped first in the darkest of the dyes to be used, such as indigo.³ For the second colour the bundles are wrapped with lontar leaves in the places where they have already

² Loeber, 1921, IV, p. 720. The comparisons with other areas below have also been taken from him.
³ For weaving techniques in Indonesia in general, and the art of ikat dyeing in particular, the reader is referred to the works of Jasper and Pirngadi, 1912, Loeber, 1921, Nevermann, 1938, and Jager Gerlings, 1952.
nekan or warp beam, made of bamboo

nabi (heddle rod to which the strands are tied)

uta or roller

senu or sword for pushing the newly inserted weft into place

atis or breast beam, consisting of two wooden bars

weaver

scale, ± 1:10

niun or leather backstrap

A Timorese loom
been dyed, while the rest remains unwrapped, and so are dipped in dye again. If a third colour is wanted, only part of the bundle is untied after the first dip, while before the third immersion lontar leaves are wrapped around the parts dyed in the first and second, leaving the rest unwrapped. The art of ikat dyeing, in which very intricate patterns have to be applied from memory, is the most difficult part of weaving.

For weaving itself the warp is wound around a piece of bamboo at one end, called the warp-beam (nekan), and around the breast beam (atı), consisting of two pieces of wood — between which the fabric can be firmly secured and rolled up as weaving proceeds —, at the other end. The distance between these, or in other words, the length of the cloth, is 1½ to 2 metres. The nekan is tied by means of a cord to two poles inserted in the ground, or sometimes to a tree, while the beam at the weaver's end is tied with cord to a leather strap (niun) against which she leans back in order to taute the loom. For this purpose she needs something against which to support her feet, such as a pole or a rock (see photograph 13 and diagram no. 1). The weaver in the photograph is holding a flat piece of wood (senu), which is used to push the weft firmly into place. Then follows the puat, a bamboo rod around which the yarn is wound spirally. Together with the roller (uta), consisting of a thicker piece of bamboo, it serves to raise the alternate strands of the warp. Two vertically placed laths (sial) behind these serve to raise the even and the odd threads in turns. The nabi between the two sial is used for tying the strands to in order to prevent them from moving out of place. This way a cloth of about 50 to 60 cm. wide and 1½ to 2 metres long results. For a men's shoulder-cloth or a women's sarong two such cloths are sewn together, shoulder-cloths frequently being sewn together in such a way as to obtain a white band in the centre — into which beautiful patterns are woven, as in Ambenu — and two red bands at the sides.

The main colours are indigo and red. To obtain indigo dye the leaves of the indigo plant are left to draw in water for several days. Chalk is then added to the extract, after which the yarn is immersed in it and then wrung thoroughly. This procedure is repeated for three days in succession, the resulting colour being a deep, dark indigo.

Red dye is manufactured from bakunu leaves (Indon. bengkudu, L. morinda citrifolia) to which the bark of a certain tree is added. Thus the colour terracotta or brown — depending on the quantity of bark — results.

In addition yellow is used, obtained from hukil (Indon. kunit, L. morinda citrifolia), which is added to the indigo extract.
curcuma longa), as well as green, which is obtained from an extract from the leaves of a special plant.

It is remarkable that apart from some wood-carving — e.g. the geometrical designs on the doors of the houses of heads — and the decoration of bamboo cylinders and of horn objects, weaving should be the Atoni's only technical achievement, and that he should show such remarkable skill and artistry at this.

It is also worth mentioning here that every political community or important, more or less independent sub-section of a community, has its own pattern, and that these are often alternately red and indigo. The most important nuclei of the old realm of Sonba'i, namely Molo and Miomafo, have red cloths with a white central band, for instance, although this is only true of part of Miomafo, as Noiltoko has chiefly blues, or at any rate a blue central band; Ambenu and Amfoan both also have red cloths with a white central band, as does Amarasi, although here the red tends more towards terracotta. Amanatun and Amanuban both belong together in a sense, but Amanatun has red and white cloths, while Amanuban has blue ones. The same applies to Tunbaba, while in Beboki terracotta is the main colour.

The question forces itself upon us whether this can have anything to do with the distinction made between the white-toothed people (nis muti), i.e. those who do not file their teeth, and the black-toothed people (nis metan). But not enough is known about this. The question also arises whether there are geographical similarities here. But the extraordinary fact remains that red and dark blue (black) as the main colours of cloths are spread in an extremely irregular pattern across Indonesian Timor. They are at the same time the colours which play an important, though rather vague part in the classificatory system. Black is the colour that belongs with the night, the north and the feminine, while red belongs with the day, probably with the south, and with the masculine. Further research is desirable, though it is open to doubt whether all this can still be traced. This is just as unlikely as in the case of the symbolism of the different designs, which is also intriguing. Is there a similarity with tattoo patterns here?

The art of weaving is of great economic importance for Timor. In times when imports are restricted the Atoni always has his own cotton to fall back on, without this involving far-reaching changes in the pattern of life and habits of dress. It is only as a result of the sandal-
wood trade that formerly precious fabrics were imported into the
country. These were destined exclusively for a small élite of heads. It
was only in the 20th century that yarns as well as women's jackets
were imported on a larger scale. But when, after the Japanese invasion,
imports were stopped altogether for three and a half years, all cloths
were made out of home-grown cotton again. Even in 1969 I saw most
people still wearing their traditional dress, the only big difference being
that the face of the provincial capital Kupang had changed completely.

The cloths have an important function in the social life, constituting
the feminine presents offered by the bride's lineage as counter-gifts
to the bridegroom's lineage, which has to pay bridewealth. In addition,
they are important as winding-sheets at funerals. The finest cloths are
reserved for such occasions, and at funerals of prominent persons scores
of these cloths are used for this purpose.

The chapter on crafts and techniques should also deal with the con­
struction of houses. There is little to be said about this from an economic
point of view. The pillars of the house are of wood, the walls are made
of the ribs of palm-leaves, and the roof of alang-alang grass. Notwith­
standing, for the Atoni his house is a microcosm, and the lopo which
serves as meeting-place a reflection of his political system. For these
reasons it is described in chapter XIII of this book.

2. ANIMAL HUSBANDRY

Of all the domestic animals the buffalo has the greatest social and
religious importance for the Atoni, as it constitutes a considerable part
of the normal bridewealth and is used as a sacrificial animal. Owner­
ship of a large number of buffalo confers high social prestige on a
person. It is generally said to have had little economic significance in
pre-colonial times. But in that case the fact that — as among the
Nuer, for whom the cow has so much social value that killing one
“for no particular reason” is inconceivable — every cow killed for
sacrificial purposes or dying a natural death is ultimately eaten is not
taken into account. The milk of the buffalo is also used.

Ownership of buffaloes is to some extent the key to greater wealth
and more prestige and power. For if an ume (descent group) has
enough buffaloes to be able to spare some for killing, it will be able to
tend larger garden plots. (In order to cultivate a garden sacrificial

5 E.g. Ormelin, 1955, p. 112.
meals have to be prepared for the helpers.\textsuperscript{7} Larger gardens give a greater yield, and, furthermore, that part of the harvest which an ume does not need for its own consumption may be exchanged for other articles, especially in lean years (which are frequent in Timor) for what are considered by the Atoni to be the most important valuables: silver coins, silver and gold jewellery and coral beads (inu leko).\textsuperscript{8} Hence the buffalo is the source of wealth.

Ownership of buffaloes is also necessary for establishing sound affinal alliances, as they constitute the main part of the bridewealth. Together with silver coins, silver and gold jewellery and coral beads they are the "masculine" objects which the bridegroom's lineage (ume)\textsuperscript{9} has to give to that of the bride. At the time of marriage and later, in cases of death, the bride's lineage presents hand-woven cloths to the bridegroom's ume. Sound affinal alliances and such alliances with various lineages, and possibly a second or third wife, increase a man's prestige and that of this descent group. Buffaloes form the basis for this.

Chiefs are always surrounded by a circle of people, such as messengers (hake), guards (abeat) and, in the case of prominent chiefs or the ruler, various functionaries with whom we shall make our acquaintance in the section dealing with the political system. To feed these they need rice and corn, which they obtain from the yield produced by the gardens which they have their subjects lay out for them. In order to have this done they must kill animals regularly for the sacrificial meals with which to reward those who work the gardens. Hence buffaloes and pigs are necessary for them to be able to harvest sufficient rice and corn. Thus the possession of buffaloes is the basis for their power. It is not surprising that in former times cattle-raiding was an important motive for war besides that of headhunting, which was always the chief objective of an expedition. Any political system of any importance and with any form of hierarchy at all is able to survive only if there is a large enough agricultural surplus to feed those in power. Here again the possession of cattle is indispensable.

Besides the buffalo the pig (fafi) is of great importance. It is a small, black animal kept around the house. Buffaloes are owned exclusively by the rich, but anyone may own pigs. It is eaten especially on ceremonial occasions and is seldom killed without a special reason. The

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{7} P. 58 below.
  \item \textsuperscript{8} Cf. Rouffaer, 1899.
  \item \textsuperscript{9} Ume = limited lineage, descent group. P. 92 below.
\end{itemize}
pig partly replaces the buffalo and, moreover, supplements it. At a sacrificial meal usually a buffalo is killed first and then a number of pigs. It is tended by the women (see photograph 15). The goat (bibi), too, has of old been kept as a domestic animal and is found everywhere, but especially in the drier areas of Insana and Beboki.

Perhaps the oldest domestic animal is the dog, its master’s loyal companion when out deer-hunting. The Atoni used to go and beat game armed with spears (this is still done at present). Economically speaking hunting was of some importance for the daily meat supply. Hunting in the form in which it has been known by the Timorese for the past few centuries, however, has only been possible since the introduction of the rifle. It gained in economic importance with the establishment of trade relations with people from other islands, when horn became an export article. The dog has also at all times served as food, and it has an important place in the war ritual.

The hen (manu), too, has of old been an important domestic animal. Every Atoni keeps hens. Egg production is low, so that the egg is not an important item of daily food. Hens, and especially roosters, are raised exclusively for consumption. This finds ritual expression in the rule according to which at every sacrifice a rooster has to be offered first. In many sacrifices only a rooster is killed, such as, for instance when the causes of a disease or the propitious omens for some prospective undertaking are investigated.

The Atoni’s acquaintance with the horse is more recent. This is apparent from the fact that it is not used as a sacrificial animal and that it has no place in any of the rituals. However, when a man dies one of his horses, one he himself has designated prior to his death, is given to his atoni ama\(\text{f}\) (= his wife’s father or eldest brother). This is then called bikase suf muti (= the horse of the white flower).\(^{10}\)

Pigafetta, who sailed along the north coast of Timor in 1522, does not mention the horse, according to Le Roux.\(^{11}\) The latter finds this reason to suppose that horses did not exist in Timor at the time. But even nowadays there are very few horses, if any, to be found on the rocky coast of Atapupu and Batu Gedeh, where he landed, and the same holds true for the dry coastal plain of Amfoan where he touched land for only a very short time. Horses can be seen here only when wax or sandalwood is transported to the coast. And although at the time Pigafetta was there a junk from Luzon was at anchor in Atapupu for the sandalwood trade, this does not necessarily imply that he would have seen the sandalwood

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\(^{10}\) Communication Middelkoop. See Middelkoop, 1949, p. 89, plate no. 2.

\(^{11}\) Le Roux, 1929, pp. 30-39.
10. Man from Besikama, in South Belu, wearing head-dress of the type also typical for the Atoni. The coins originate from different countries, e.g. the one bearing the image of King William III of the Netherlands (ca. 1890) which is clearly visible in the centre. The coin above the left eye is a Mexican dollar (pataca), which was still current in Portuguese Timor in 1947. These coins form part of the bridewealth (cf. p. 115). In his left hand he is holding a sword (sunii) of the kind formerly used in headhunting.
11. Cotton, after separation from its seeds, is fluffed with the aid of a bow (sifo) with a stretched cord and is pressed by means of a small mangle (South Belu).
13. Woman weaving. The *ikat* border is finished; the counterpart of this cloth will have its *ikat* border on the left-hand side. This is a cloth from Belu, where the main colour is indigo.
14. A Belunese on horseback. The Atoni uses the same kind of harness, as well as a cloth for a saddle. The horse is a typical Timor pony, which has an average shoulder height of 1.22-1.25 m.

15. Pigs are looked after by the women.
transports. Ormeling supposes that the horse was introduced into Timor by sandalwood traders. Even so, this supposition leaves a margin of many centuries as regards the time of its introduction. Middelkoop bases his theory on the etymology of the strange Timorese word for a horse — bikase, a derivation, according to the Atoni, from bidjaekase (bidjael = buffalo, kase = strange, from abroad). Hessing lists the following example of folk etymology concerning the origin of the horse: a girl (bijel) was changed into a mare, from which all horses in Timor descend. Hence the name bikase: the bi- of bijel combined with kase (strange, here in the sense of unusual). With reference to Sumba, where the horse is a sacrificial animal, Hoekstra quotes the information given by Onvlee to the effect that the horse does not feature in creation myths, but that it does play a part in myths of origin of special clans coming from other islands such as Bima, Lombok, Bali, western Flores and Savu, all of them linguistically related areas which maintained contacts with Java long ago in the past.

According to De Roo van Alderwerelt, horses' heads are depicted on very old gravestones on Sumba. The Sumbanese word for horse is djara and the Javanese djaran. Hoekstra draws the conclusion that we should look for its place of origin in these areas. This throws no light on the question as to how long the horse has existed in Sumba, however.

It is certain from Duarte Barbosa's description from 1518 that the horse was found in the Lesser Sunda Islands as far back as 1500, for, as he relates, the inhabitants of Oçapa, beyond Cinboaba or Java Minor, i.e. Sumbawa, were good horse-breeders. Oçapa is more than likely the district of Sape in Bima.

Our conclusion concerning the origin of the horse in Timor can only be a tentative one. The horse must have come to the east from the west, probably from Java via the island of Sumbawa. It may have been known on Sumba before the Timorese made their acquaintance with it. It is difficult to conjecture when exactly it actually came to Timor; this may have been during the period of Majapahit's commercial expansion, i.e. in the fourteenth century or earlier.

We can assume, then, that the horse has played a part in the life of the Timorese for many centuries.

The horse has little economic importance for the Atoni's day to day life. Its importance is apparent only in hunting and the social life. Although journeys between villages and from the villages to the political centres usually take place on foot, anyone who is at all prominent practically always travels on horseback (see photograp 14). The horse further has great importance as a beast of burden in the trade with foreigners on the coast, especially because the major export article is the heavy sandalwood which has brought fame to Timor for centuries.

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13 Personal communication.
14 Hessing, 1921, p. 238.
15 Hoekstra, 1948, p. 43.
16 In Hoekstra, 1948, p. 41.
17 Op. cit., p. 44.
18 Le Roux, 1929, p. 41.
3. TRADE

In the case of the Atoni trade is focused first and foremost on the sandalwood which, as was said above, brought fame to Timor long ago. As early as 1436 a Chinese source states "the mountains are covered with sandal-trees and the country produces nothing else". But this says nothing about the possibility that trade might have been going on for many centuries before that. In view of the intensive contacts between China and Java this is even likely. And in 1518 Duarte Barbosa writes of Timor: "there is an abundance of white sandalwood, which the moors in India and Persia value greatly, where much of it is used". How much importance was attached by the Portuguese to the sandalwood trade is apparent from one of the large world maps by Gerolamo da Verrazono from 1529, which are on exhibition in the Borgia Gallery of the Vatican Museum. On the map of South-East Asia only Sumatra is mentioned — while Java is omitted — apart from Timor and the spice isles, or "insule de Meluche".

In addition to sandalwood Duarte Barbosa lists honey, wax and slaves as export commodities transported by ships which came from Malacca and Java. In exchange for these the Atoni received "axes, hatchets, knives, swords, Cambaya and Paleate cloths, porcelain, coloured beads, tin, quicksilver, lead and other wares". Although this refers to the trade with Malacca, there were contacts with Majapahit even before that time, while, moreover, Timor is listed as one of the fifteen dependencies of the realm of Kediri in the 12th century. As a result of these trade activities the Atoni outgrew the stone age at quite an early stage, although, as we have stated above, he has never learnt to forge or work metals himself.

This trade was of little economic importance for the ordinary people, although it may have had an appreciable political influence. This does not have anything important to say about the origin of the political system. If the major share in the profits from exports fell into the hands of the chiefs, these must have already existed. But accepting this as an established fact, it is nonetheless obvious that their power

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20 Duarte Barbosa, 1921, p. 195.
21 Cf. also Monumenta Cartographica Vaticana, vol. I, 1944, map no. 26, and the description on p. 53. This map must have been copied from "da un Padron real iberico", p. 54.
22 See p. 463 below.
23 Krom, 1938, p. 229.
grew as a result of their increasing wealth. Again, this says nothing as to the nature of their power.

Apart from this Timor did not have much to offer for trade. The only other articles listed by Duarte Barbosa were, as we saw above, honey, wax and slaves. This situation prevailed unchanged until well into the 19th century, when there were some exports of hides and horn.

The most coveted article brought to Timor from the West later on was the rifle. The Dutch and the Topasses\textsuperscript{24} first imported it in the 17th century. Although virtually no rifles have been imported for the past hundred years,\textsuperscript{25} silver-mounted rifles continue to constitute the most important family heirlooms.

4. USEFUL TREES AND PLANTS

Apart from the sandal-tree we must mention here the various kinds of palm-tree.\textsuperscript{26} In the first place there is the lontar palm which is of great importance in the lives of the Timorese. It grows in and around the villages which lie at lower altitudes, found mainly on the hills and in the lower areas and on the edge of the plain. Its nourishing, vitamin-rich juice is tapped and fermented until it turns into palm-wine (\textit{tuak}), which in turn can be distilled into the popular drink \textit{sopi} (from Old Dutch \textit{soopje} = draught of strong drink). Considerable skill is required for tapping its juice (see photograph 16), and quite often fatal accidents happen. Palm-wine is relished even more when twice distilled. The trunk of the lontar palm is used in the construction of houses. The aren palm supplies palm sugar, the coconut palm an important item of the Atoni’s diet and the areca palm an indispensable stimulant. The Atoni plants his fruit-trees — banana-, mango- and papaw-trees — in the villages.

Insana and Beboki conform with this pattern, except that the large coastal plain extending to the north is partly covered with dense \textit{gebang} palm forests, especially to the east of Wini. The ribs of its leaves are

\begin{itemize}
\item \textit{Lontar} palm — \textit{Borasani flabellifer} L.; \textit{Tim. tune.}
\item \textit{Coconut} palm — \textit{Cocos nucifera} L.; \textit{Tim. noah.}
\item \textit{Areca} palm — \textit{Polyscias} Forst.; \textit{Tim. puah.}
\item \textit{Gebang} palm — \textit{Corypha gebanga} Bl.; \textit{Tim. gebang.}
\item \textit{Sago} palm — \textit{Arenga pinnata}; \textit{Tim. bone.}
\item \textit{Banana} tree — \textit{Musa paradisiaca} L.; \textit{Tim. uki.}
\item \textit{Mango} tree — \textit{Mangifera} op.; \textit{Tim. upun.}
\item \textit{Tamarind} tree — \textit{Tamarinda indica} L.; \textit{Tim. kiu.}
\end{itemize}
used for the walls of houses. There are also large clusters of sago palms. These are an important source of food for the inhabitants of the coastal plain, one tree supplying enough flour for a family to live on for two or three weeks. The tree is chopped down, and its trunk split into halves and the pith dissolved in water and subsequently dried (see photograph 17). As a result it is very important here, and people are prepared to travel distances of up to 50 km., if necessary, to fetch its pith (*putak*).

The enormous, fire-resistant tamarind is found scattered throughout the lower lying areas of this region. It, too, may serve as a source of food at times when food is scarce. However, it frequently gives rise to gastric upsets. At such times *bataten* and other tubers are also eaten. Cassava, sweet potatoes and other tubers are of great importance, and on the north coast and generally in areas where no rain falls for nine months of the year, cassava is even almost as important as corn and millet, though it is less nutritious, being made up almost entirely of starches.\(^{27}\) Usually, when all the rice and corn has been eaten, *bataten* and other tubers are the Atoni’s staple food. In times of famine it is also necessary to look for tuberous roots in the forests. Then even wild pods (*koto fui, L. datura facticia*), which have to be boiled ten to twelve times to get rid of their cyanide of potassium content, are eaten.

The *matani*,\(^{28}\) too, is economically of great importance, as it supplies the best timber and, like the *anpupu* (eucalyptus), is fire-resistant; hence it and the latter are two survivors of the ancient rain forests.

5. AGRICULTURE AND ITS RELATED RITUAL

Agriculture is of much greater economic importance than either animal husbandry or trade. Moreover, the agricultural cycle determines the rhythm of the Atoni’s entire life, while it is also the basis for the political system. The climax and culminating point of the agricultural ritual is the presentation of the harvest gifts to the sacral ruler, so that a knowledge of this ritual is of importance for understanding the political system.

The chief food crops are *com* and rice, which are cultivated in rotation. Rice is the most valued and is planted on the most fertile land, especially on forest land the first two years after it has been brought under cultivation. In some cases this is suitable only for corn

\(^{27}\) Tahalele, 1950, p. 496.

\(^{28}\) *Pterocarpus indicus* Willd., Indon. *kaju merah.*
in the second, but usually in the third year. The garden is generally abandoned after the third or fourth year. In the drier areas millet is also grown.

The religious cult is intimately bound up with the cultivation of rice and corn. The agricultural cycle and its related ritual described on the following pages were recorded in Maubesi, the centre of the principedom of Insana, in 1946, partly in connection with a plan for the introduction of mechanized agriculture in the Sekon plain near Maubesi.

a. Choosing a Plot

At the beginning of the dry season, sometimes as early as May or June, a suitable site for a garden is sought. Most people till a number of plots at a time, usually three, the oldest of which is abandoned first in order to allow recovery of the soil. Depending on the quality of the soil a fallow period of at least five to seven years is necessary before the same land may be cultivated again. Usually a new garden is laid out each year. Virgin forest land is hardly ever brought under cultivation, and there is less and less of this becoming available. Population growth is even making it difficult to allow the soil of older plots sufficient time to recover.

Usually three or four people decide jointly on the choice to be made. In most cases these are members of the same limited agnatic lineage, so that those who collaborate in tilling a plot are usually brothers, brothers' sons and fathers' brothers' sons and their sons. The project is carried out under the direction of the head of the lineage, or if he is very old his future successor. If there is not sufficient interest in the one ume (= lit. house, i.e. agnatic lineage) its members can without the slightest hesitation ask people from other ume (e.g. affines) to participate in the undertaking. In the case of a large garden having to be prepared, or the reclamation of a patch of forest — hence land which has never been cultivated at all — usually ten to twenty men, sometimes more, join in the work. Preferably the assistance of people of

29 The major custodian of the land (to be naek) of Subun was the most eminent authority on ritual texts. The clerk of Insana assisted with the editing. With their assistance and that of a large number of adat experts in Insana a translation of these ritual texts was made. After my departure Dr. Middelkoop took the text in hand and retranslated it. We later discussed the mutual deviations, and during these discussions his extensive and profound knowledge of Timorese was invaluable in the interpretation of passages which were obscure because of their archaic language or as a result of poetic licence and peculiarities of dialect.
the natal clan (*kanaf*) or village (*kuan*) is sought, although others may also be approached. A *kanaf* is a group of kinsmen who all claim descent from one common ancestor, from whom the lineage also derives its name (*kanaf*). A lineage of a clan is also called *kanaf*.

Members of the one lineage of a *kanaf* used to live together in a residential unit called *kuan*, which formerly generally consisted of not more than five to ten houses. Hence the members of the one *kanaf* but of different *kuan* which were located close to one another used to join forces whenever a large plot had to be tilled. At present these may in some cases be people from different *kanaf* though of the one *kampung*.30

As soon as a suitable patch of land has been found a few branches are lopped off one of the trees growing on it, as a sign that this land has been chosen for cultivation.

Next is determined whether the choice is a good one. In order to do this the cultivators wait until one of them has a dream, which usually occurs not long afterwards. If this dream is propitious there are no further obstacles to overcome before the work on the garden can commence. But if it is unpropitious the medicineman’s (*mnané*) aid is solicited; in order to be able to give this, the *mnané* must first have a dream about the plots in question. On the following day he has to relate this dream. Meanwhile a white rooster has to be sacrificed, white being the colour which belongs with heaven and with the Lord of Heaven, Uis Neno, to whom the sacrifice is offered.

A bamboo stalk is cut down and its top split into four or eight sections. This *sèpè* is inserted in the ground and the *mnané* delivers an invocation (*onen*), in the recitation of which everyone present may join in, the parallel words, especially those following the long-drawn *ma* — (= and —), being repeated by the entire group.

“This day I stand, I present myself,
I bring a feathered one, a furred one 31
To Thee, o Brilliant One and — o Fiery One,
In order to announce unto Thee and — to bear Thee tidings;

30 We shall call the archaic community *kuan* and the modern one, which is much larger, *kampung*.
31 Lit. a hair of the head or body (Middelkoop). This is a common term for a sacrificial animal, whether this be a rooster, pig or goat or a buffalo. The first sacrificial animal during a ritual which requires the killing of a number of animals is always a rooster. Hence the translation “feathered one, furred one” in Insana.
May it bring forth a propitious oracle and — a propitious omen for Thy people and — for Thy children, So that the young plants and — the seedlings of Liurai-Sonba'i May germinate and — give forth shoots, So that there be health and — prosperity For Thy people and — for Thy children. Let no disease descend upon them, no disaster befall them. May it please Thee to remove the clouds, to withdraw the mists. May it please Thee to hold them in Thine hand and — hold them Every day, every morning.”

While delivering this invocation he scatters rice grains which he carries in a small basket of lontar leaves, as is customary throughout a prayer. The cockerel is suspended, dead or alive, depending on the mnane’s instructions, on the split bamboo stalk.

If the mnane’s dream is also unpropitious, another white cockerel has to be sacrificed.

At the end of this ritual the mnané dismisses the men planning to cultivate the garden, instructing them to sacrifice a buffalo before clearing the land.

b. Requesting Permission

It is not necessary to “inform” (mutonan, as the Atoni says) the tobé accordingly if one intends to cultivate a garden in the territory of one’s own tobé, on land one has cultivated before or on land that

32 Lit. “egg”, that is, an egg used in auguring. Lines are drawn across its surface (e.g. one for the Lord of Heaven (Uis Neno), one for the ancestors (nitu), and so on). The line which turns out to be nearest the germ of the egg is then considered to have predictive significance.

33 Liurai-Sonba’i are also substitute words for corn and rice, without either of them appearing to refer to one of these crops in particular. According to a popular myth Liurai-Sonba’i are the origin of corn and rice. P. 271 below.

34 Lit. “coldness and coolness” (mainikin ma oetene); it denotes all that is good and beneficial: the health or well-being of the individual and the community as well as that of the livestock and the crops. Cf. the Nuer word koc, cool, in the supplication “may we be cool”, and the benediction “may you be cool”, which can be freely translated with “peace be with you”; as well as in the evening prayer “may their souls be very cool”. Evans-Pritchard, 1962 (1965), pp. 25, 150. “Coolness” has the same meaning in most Indonesian languages.

35 The Timorese word for disease, menas (= heat, as opposed to mainikin) refers to the heat of fever and disease, as well as to the heat of an excessively dry season which leads to famine. Bunuk = misfortune, taboo sign and the resulting misfortune if it is disobeyed; here it refers to the disaster which will ensue from errors in the performance of the ritual.

36 Mutonan = to inform; it is a euphemism for “to ask permission”. Cf. also the prayer on p. 59.
has been previously cultivated by one's father, although formerly it was customary to do so. Permission has to be asked, however, (even nowadays) if one intends to cultivate a patch of virgin soil. But there are virtually no uncultivated forest lands left which have not been set aside as forest reserves by the Netherlands East Indies or Indonesian government, or which are not part of the holy, inviolable, sacred (le'u) areas. However, sometimes grasslands are cultivated, and in that case the tobó's permission is required; in return for his permission he receives the pak susan (= the flower of the land), which is usually a coral bead or a piece of silver.

If planning to lay out a garden in the territory of a tobó other than one's own — which is possible, as, for instance, when one collaborates with someone who has land in that territory, or when brothers tend a garden in the area in which the family-in-law of one of them resides — it is customary to inform the tobó concerned of one's plans to cultivate a certain patch of land. As is the custom whenever a request is made, a complimentary gift is offered to the tobó. The latter may withhold his permission, but is more likely to grant the request as usually the permission of those who have previously worked the particular patch in question has been obtained beforehand. The tobó is bound to say that a buffalo has to be killed before cultivation can commence. Even if permission has been obtained in this manner one runs the risk of being evicted later on — if the tobó does not receive further gifts to which he is entitled, for instance.

The first people to cultivate a certain patch of land always retain certain rights to it, even if someone else cultivates it after them once or even twice for a period of two or three years at a stretch, and they have neglected it for twenty years or more. If another person occupies it without their permission, this person has to compensate all the animals which the original occupants have sacrificed for this garden, for else the newly sown crop is doomed to failure. Religious sanction is clearly the basis for the maintenance of the legal order, as is often the case. The original occupant, moreover, may at all times, even after planting, demand that the new occupant leave the garden. Naturally in this case the matter develops into a legal dispute, the strong arm or physical power of the head being expected to implement the verdict by force if necessary. This is only a hypothetical case, however, — no-one was able to name an example of anyone ever being actually turned out of a garden. The tobó, lineage heads or, in some cases, the village head usually work out a settlement that is acceptable to both
parties. But this will never at any time have the power to interfere with the rights of the original occupant.

c. Sharpening the Matchet

The next ceremony takes place when the matchet is sharpened, before a start may be made with the felling of trees and shrubs.

In order to avert misfortune and to ensure the success of the crop an invocation is delivered to the ancestors. This is done first beside the ni monef (the masculine pillar) or the hau monef (masculine pole) in front of the lineage shrine in which the sacred objects (le' u) belonging to the lineage are kept. This is always the house of the oldest member of the ume. From this it is evident that the cultivation of a garden is primarily — as it has in all probability been of old — an ume concern. The lineage head or the oldest of the cultivators offers a sacrifice and delivers the following invocation (onen): 37

"O my female ancestors (be'i), my male ancestors (na'i), old and Thou who art far and Thou who art nigh, [young, May it please Thee to come with me, to accompany me. May I this day clear a space and — make room For the young plants and — for the seedlings of Liurai-Sonba'i. May there, until I come back, until I return, Descend no clouds, no mists upon me." 38

He thereupon enters the house and approaches the maternal pillar (ni ainaf) 40 on which are displayed the sacred objects (le' u) and the sirih purses of the ancestors, and says:

"O my female ancestors, my male ancestors, old and young, Thou who art far and Thou who art nigh, Thou who art my origin and — my forebears, May it please Thee to come with me and — to accompany me. This day I wish to make room and — clear a space For the gift bestowed upon me by the clouds, the sprinkling of the mists upon me." 41

37 Onen = invocation; it implies information given as well as prayer and worship.
38 "Old and young" refers to the distance in time, "far and nigh" to social distance or the degree of relationship.
39 The weather has to remain dry until after burning down.
40 P. 430 below.
41 Nope = cloud; habu = mist, vapour, and here means rain or drizzle, that is, the rains of the westerly monsoon and the light drizzle of the easterly monsoon.
May there be health and prosperity.42
This is the case and these the words.
May clouds and mists
Be the cause of many such cases, many such words.
We lay it before Thee,43 the case is Thine.”

d. Felling the Trees

After this the trees are chopped down. First the shrubs and smaller trees are cleared. This is done in order that the number of large trees may be easier to survey. An estimate is made of the number of men necessary to chop down all the trees which need to be felled in one day. Some trees, such as sandal-trees, trees in which bees usually make their nests and those providing timber suitable for the construction of houses and which is fire-resistant (such as matani or red timber) are left standing. Clearing of the undergrowth is commenced preferably as early as August. When this has been done the leader of the group preparing to till the plot approaches other inhabitants of his village, or in some cases anyone who is prepared to help, for assistance; formerly he probably restricted himself to a number of hamlets of his own or related clans. He tries to rally the minimum number of men he considers sufficient to complete the work in one day, as he has to kill animals on every day he has people working for him. This characterizes, and offers a partial explanation for, the Atoni’s general mode of work — he gives preference to carrying out a project in coöperation with as large a number of people in as short a time as possible. The Atoni invariably endeavours to finish the work to be done in a few days’ strenuous toil. This lends the work a very special, and even festive character, especially when we bear in mind the meal at the end of the day. The small group preparing the garden would probably be able to chop down all the large trees in a few weeks’ consistently hard work, but quite understandably the more companionable, festive method of working communally, which acts as a break in the monotony of the daily routine, holds more attraction for the Atoni. Furthermore, there is the religious requirement to offer a sacrifice to Uis Pah, the Lord of the Earth, each day on which trees are felled, which at the same time ensures the provision of meat for eating. This religious necessity also acts as an incentive for working collectively and finishing the work in

42 Mainikin and octene: coldness and coolness; here the words denote fertility and the waxing of the crops.
43 Lit. “upon Thee”.

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one day. It can be posed, besides, that economic motives play a role in determining this method of work, as in order to reward the helpers with a feast animals have to be killed. As a result they work very hard, the young men especially showing off their strength and endurance and their dexterity at felling large trees skillfully and speedily with the aid of no other tools than their matchet (`benas'). It is far from surprising that they like to have a few days' rest to recover before they join forces again to help with the same work in another garden. Nonetheless, this far from inefficient method has met with negative criticism on the part of Europeans who accuse the Atoni of being lazy and unsuitable for regular work.

In the afternoon of the day on which the trees are felled the animals are killed — a buffalo and one or more pigs, depending on the number of people who have participated in the work. Here the head, or usually one of the oldest members of the group laying out the garden, a person well versed in the ritual, expresses the following invocation:

"This day I would express unto Thee and — inform Thee that this is my ground, my land, my soil and my lake.44 I shall make room and — clear a space for the small and the large nono,45 the small and the large trunk.46 Therefore I clasp in my hand and bring (Thee), I hold in my hand and — bring (Thee) this feathered one and — this furred one.

A few men help me clasp it and — help me hold it in my hand. This I ponder deep in my heart and — in my mind, if they help me hold in my hand, help me clasp this sacrifice and — this offering, let there, when this sacrifice has been offered and people go their way, be no talking about me, no gossiping about me.47

44 These are four synonyms for soil: `afu = fine earth, dust; `naijdan = black soil, humus, land, territory (Nai is also one of the ruler's appellations); `pah = earth as opposed to heaven (`neno), but also refers to a territory and its people, and in the latter case even becomes a form of address — `hei `pah = you people, man, lord; `nifu = lake. Cf. Indon. `tanah air, earth and water, native soil, native land.

45 Nono = a forest creeper planted around gardens and attached to the surrounding fence; metaphorically it designates, here too, the fertility of the clan as well as that of the crops.

46 Hau = tree, wood; here it designates the extended and limited lineages of the clan.

47 That is, about this rite or prayer, for if errors have been committed — if, for instance, a line has been omitted — talking about it will result in the disaster which may possibly ensue manifesting itself sooner.
O my female ancestors, my male ancestors, my hidden power, my progenitive power, come here, all of Thee, appear Thee here, keep watch over us and guard us, shelter us and protect us against being wounded, against being struck. Of this I bear Thee tidings, of this I inform Thee.”

Before nightfall, when the work is finished, the workers assemble for the meal. The ornaments and sirih purses which have been placed in three baskets woven out of lontar leaves prior to this are removed and the baskets are filled with rice. One is for Pah Tuaf, the Lord of the Earth, and has to be placed near the hau monef (the masculine pole outside), and one for the be’i na’i, the female and male ancestors, which has to be placed at the ni ainaf (the maternal pillar inside the house).

Before the meal the senior occupant of the garden or one of the elders delivers the following invocation:

“After speaking to the Lord of the Earth, the Lord of the Lake, To my female ancestors, my male ancestors, My hidden power, my progenitive power, I have finished preparing this — cooking it, Accept, then, receive (it). May it bring us health and prosperity.”

After the meal everyone returns homeward and the work is considered finished. In more recent years — according to the Atoni — people have tried to some extent to avoid these obligations imposed by the adat by means of a system of mutual exchange of labour. Anyone planning to lay out a garden plot with his own people, a few brothers or sons or other members of his lineage, will try to come to an agreement with people outside his lineage to take turns at helping each other. In that case there is far less need for killing animals. If the sacrifice is omitted as well, there is no need for killing animals at all. Each worker brings along his own food. “This was never done in

48 Au le’uk - au matau. Le’u may also mean sacred, inviolable. It is often used in combination with nuni, taboo, prohibited, as well as with nono, fertility. Here it occurs in parallelism with matau, which is usually combined with mahonit, e.g. au mahonit, au matauk: my potency, my progenitive power.
49 Lit. to shake. This must be a reference to the circumstance of a person’s being hit by a falling tree.
50 Mone = masculine, outside.
51 Lit. covered, i.e. of the cooking-pot.
olden days”, according to the Atoni. In his culture the past is normative and is considered the ideal situation — it cannot but have been better than the present. Formerly the *adat* was much more rigorously observed, as the Atoni is bound to say, even though he may add that in former times the *adat* was not always observed in every case either; in some cases — if, for example, a large number of beasts had died in a drought — no animals would be killed for the communal meal. Poor people cannot always (and could not always in the past) kill a sufficient number of animals, or in any case not enough buffaloes. This form of exchange of labour must therefore always have existed.

It goes without saying, then, that the wealthier, who wish to live up to the respect accorded them by the rest of the community, cannot and will not come to such agreements and shirk their *adat* duties. It is fitting for a wealthy person to invite the people of his lineage to work for him and to reward them afterwards with a plentiful meal. This boosts his prestige. A lineage head or any other man who owns sufficient numbers of cattle and has thereby built up a reputation for himself, will be able to have a large number of people work for him. He will be able to cultivate a large patch of land and expect a more plentiful harvest, so that the next year he will be able to offer another lavish meal with rice as the main dish. (A host is always expected to serve rice at these feasts, and it is in fact always served for the first course, while corn is served with subsequent courses. Corn is, after all, the staple food, while rice is considered a greater delicacy and is hence more highly valued socially. The corn is ground so as to look like rice.)

If the land to be cultivated is grassland, the heavy work of turning the soil (with the aid of long digging-sticks) is similarly carried out by a large group of people working communally. They stand thirty to forty men in a row and all simultaneously thrust their pointed sticks (*suah*) as deeply into the ground as possible (approximately half a metre) and similarly push them back and down simultaneously in order to lift the heavy sods. They sing songs in accompaniment in order to indicate the rhythm, as during the rowing of a *perahu*. When this work is done they usually have buffaloes tread the larger sods to break them up. A garden laid out in one day in this manner cannot possibly be large. The maximum size of the area worked by each man may be roughly estimating 80 to 100 square metres. As, moreover, wood for the enclosing fence is difficult to procure on the plain, whilst here the fence needs to be especially strong in order to keep out stray cattle, whereas on the mountain slopes trees are so plentiful that most
of them have to be felled anyway, it is not surprising that the Atoni has always avoided the plain.

e. Burning off

When the wood of the trees and shrubs thus felled is thoroughly dry — two or three months later, that is, towards the end of September or in October — it is burnt. This is done by the occupants themselves; if possible, a still night is chosen for this. First firebreaks are made around the trees which have to be spared (such as the sandal-tree) by clearing the undergrowth around them.

When the workers return home from this work they have to be on their guard against practical jokers, as in accordance with the traditional custom everyone is permitted to “cool them down”. Quite unexpectedly and unawares — when, for instance, they are peacefully finishing off their meal — someone will pour water (preferably dirty water) all over them and yell: “have a good harvest”. The atoni amaf and his people (i.e. the bride-giving affines) especially have a right to play practical jokes of this kind. The Atoni is aware of the reasons for this, as the lineage which supplies wives supplies fertility; and the hot soil has to be cooled down after burning down (mainikin = cool, healthy, good, fertile; it is diametrically opposed to menas = hot, feverish, bad). This is the reason for the symbolic act of throwing water and wishing the victim a good harvest. The fact that the water may be dirty and that an element of teasing is involved is a result of the superordinate position of the bride-giving group in respect of the bride-receiving group.

Before burning, thick branches are put aside for the construction of the fence (bahan). Preference is given to bamboo, if a lot of it happens to be growing nearby, because it is easier to handle than the usually hard timbers.

These fences are constructed by the occupants themselves. This is quite a difficult task, for especially in areas where there are a lot of pigs, the palings of a fence have to be fitted close together. Where there is more open country there are fewer pigs, but a larger number of buffaloes, so that the palings have to be driven firmly into the ground (see photograph 18). If the garden is laid out on one of the rocky mountain slopes, on which there is usually a great deal of loose corallite — found particularly in western Timor — there are not normally such

a large number of trees. In that case the surrounding fence is constructed of these rocks. This is an extremely arduous task, but the advantage is that this way most loose rock is removed from the gardens (see photograph 19).

Because of all the work involved in the construction of the fence, the Atoni are frequently late in finishing it. If the rains set in too early they are usually too late altogether, so that they will have to rush to get the job finished after planting.

f. *Sifo Nopo* 53 - “extinguishing the bamboo”

Whereas throwing water at the workers is a mere practical joke, though one with symbolic significance, *sifo nopo* is the solemn rite performed to restore the normal balance in the interplay of cosmic forces. The earth has to be made cool (*mainikin*) again and the forces of heat and fire rendered harmless, while the Lord of Heaven, Uis Neno, has to be implored to grant fertility for the next harvest. At the same time Uis Pah, the Lord of the Earth, has to be given an altar in the new garden plot.

The *tobe*, who is an authority in respect of the cult relating to plant growth, recites the long prayer appropriate at this stage at the gathering-place, the seat (*toko*) of Uis Pah or Pah Tuaf, which is the sacred centre (*le'u*) of the area in which the garden to be cultivated is located.

Everyone who has cultivated a new plot in this area assembles at the same point, bringing fowls, pigs and rice. The sacrificial animals are killed and the *tobe* recites the great invocation, he alone being permitted to do so:

"Here then I stand, I present myself before Thee, O Brilliant One, O Fiery One, in order to sow my seed and — plant my seed 54 in my yard and — in my garden. O, may it please Thee to hold in readiness for me the early and — the late rains, in order that it may germinate and wax, that it may grow stalks and grow roots, that it may be cold and — be cool.

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53 *Sifo* = to extinguish; *nopo* = split bamboo. This *nopo* is symbolic of all the trees which have been burnt down. It gives off an especially intense heat.

54 *Fini* = corn and rice put aside immediately after the harvest and kept for planting the next season. The rice and corn used for the mortuary feast are also called *fini*, as a supply of food must always be kept in reserve in case there are unexpected deaths.
that it may constantly sprout, constantly take root.
In bygone days Liurai and Sonba'i roamed
around their land and — around their lake.
They have sprung from three trunks and — three roots:
the people of Belu, the people of Sabu and — the people of Ti,\[55\]
Oenun, Maubeis, Oebiok, Hau Timu, Dirma and — Lakekun.\[56\]
This is the compound of the great, the garden \[57\] of the great.
There the great Kateri and — the little Kateri \[58\]
raises its peak and — rises to heaven.
There they made a permanent enclosure, a lasting fence.\[59\]
High was the enclosure and — high the fence.\[60\]
They looked up to heaven before them:
to Fautbesi and — Hauna.\[61\]
There they made a permanent enclosure, a lasting fence,
High was the fence and — high the enclosure.
They continued on their way and travelled on,
to the great abode of princes \[62\] and the great garden pavilion;
it was near Mount Lobus and near Mount Tubaku.\[63\]
They looked up to heaven before them:
it was Keun and — it was Mone.\[64\]
There they made a lasting fence, a permanent enclosure.
They looked up to heaven before them:

\[55\] I.e. Belu, Savu and Roti or part of Roti. The Atoni’s international horizons were restricted to these three peoples. To these he opposed himself, but together the four of them constituted the familiar world. Anyone outside these was a “stranger” (kase).

\[56\] Oenun is the mythical place in South Belu at which Liurai-Sonba’i came ashore. Maubeis (a metathetical form of Maubesi) is a bay in South Belu — here it is not the Maubesi in Insana. Oebiok is equivalent to Waiwiku: Oe = wai (water); the b sound lies somewhere in between our b and w, and io before k is a common metathesis. Pigafetta (1522) already refers to Oebich (Le Roux, 1929, p. 31). Oebiok, Hau Timo, Dirma and Lakekon are the four quarters of this realm ruled by the Liurai and his three loro.

\[57\] Etu is the word for the gardens belonging to or laid out for a head. The garden of the ordinary Atoni is called lele.

\[58\] A mountain in South Belu. Kateri = prongs. A holy place of the Melu, according to the myth the original inhabitants of Belu.

\[59\] The Atoni has three kinds of fence, one made of bamboo (biul), one of small tree trunks and branches (bahan) and one of stone (baki). The words used here are biul and bahan. (See photographs 18 and 19.)

\[60\] In other words, while roaming through Timor, Liurai-Sonba’i established permanent, safe settlements.

\[61\] In South Belu.

\[62\] Istana, Skrt.; the usual word for the residence of a ruler is sonaf. In Timorese the word istana refers to a royal bivouac or temporary residence. Hence it is used in parallelism with garden hut, which is also a temporary residence.

\[63\] In South Belu. Tubaki lies a good five kilometres from the bay of Maubesi. Lobus lies on the border of Anas.

\[64\] There is a story about Keun according to which Sonba’i once fled there. Mone supposedly is a mountain in Oilolok.
16. An Atoni from Maubesi, in Insana, climbing a *lontar* palm in order to tap juice at the top of the tree.
is was Namkele and Noemuti.  
There they made a lasting fence, a permanent enclosure.  
They looked up to heaven before them:  
to the sky of Banam.  
There they made a permanent enclosure,  
high was the fence and — high the enclosure.  
They looked up to heaven before them:  
it was Kopan and — Olain.  
that is, whence garlic and — the onion have come.  
There they made a lasting fence and — a permanent enclosure.  
High was the fence, high the enclosure.  
They looked up to heaven before them:  
to Babau and — Panmuti.
There they made a lasting fence, a permanent enclosure,  
high was the fence and — high the enclosure.  
Once more they looked up to heaven before them:  
toward Mutis and — Babnain.  
There they made a permanent enclosure, a lasting fence,  
high was the fence, high the enclosure.  
Again they looked up to heaven before them:  
toward Tulika and — Aenmat.  
There they made a permanent enclosure, a lasting fence,  
high was the enclosure and — high the fence.  
Again they looked up to heaven before them:  
toward Sisalula and — Tamnanu,  
Kolkobi and — Bastian, Numusu and Faunon.  
There they made a permanent enclosure, a lasting fence.  
Again they looked up to heaven before them:  
toward Toa and — Puittlelo.  
There they made a permanent enclosure, a lasting fence.  
Again they looked up to heaven before them:  
toward Faifnesu and — Bokboèk.  
Again they looked up to heaven before them:

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65 Thirty kilometres to the west of Insana in Central Timor.
66 This refers to the central sacrificial place of the realm of Ambenu; cf. Beboki, pp. 243, 246 below.
67 Kupang and the Dutch.
68 In other words, garlic and onions were introduced via Kupang, possibly through the agency of the Dutch.
69 Babau lies thirty kilometres to the east of Kupang; Panmuti is a promontory near the Noimina River, 60 kilometres to the east of Kupang.
70 Mutis: the highest mountain in Central Timor. Babnain the twin of the Mutis.
71 In Portuguese Oikusi. Tulika is the centre of Ambenu.
72 Four villages near the coast of Insana, not far from Mena, the former port of Insana; cf. p. 160 below.
73 These lie further away from the coast. Faifnesu is the northernmost district of Insana, named after Mount Fafi-nesu.
it was Faina, Maubeis, Naike and — Nofanu.

These places are in the centre of the realm, and — in the navel of the realm, the pillar of Liurai and — the pillar of Sonba’i, there are sunrise and sunset, masculine sea and — feminine sea.

There we shall gather and — we shall meet. Let this not take place with empty hands, with empty arms, but with rain-tree (corn) and tail-grass (rice), heap these up and — pile them up for the children of the moon and — the children of the sun. They are as ignorant vessels and — as unknowing platters.

This is the case, this is the word.

The tobe, who has filled his basket (tobe) with rice, scatters rice as he recites the above. The livers of the sacrificial animals are examined in accordance with the custom to see if the omens are favourable. Then some of the blood is poured into a bamboo stalk and sprinkled around the gardens. This may be omitted, however, if, as is frequently done, a sample of earth from the plots in question is taken to the gathering-place (toko) in order to be sprinkled with blood there.

Then a meal is eaten at the toko. Everything is served in separate baskets (kasui) - a separate basket for each kind of meat (buffalo

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74 These are the four places of origin of Maubes, the nucleus of Insana.
75 That is, east and west, south and north. In Amarasi the masculine sea (tasi mone) is the “external sea”, and the feminine sea (tasi feeto) the “internal” one, that is, that part of the ocean that is nearest the coast. Cf. Cunningham, 1964, p. 50. In Insana and Beboki as well as in Portuguese Timor (Forbes 1885, p. 448) this dualism refers exclusively to south and north. Both forms of categorization fit in equally well with the total world view, as exterior and south are both masculine, and interior and north feminine. Pp. 240, 414 below.
76 These two words are interchangeable. Kaidjulan, “rain-tree” (not mentioned by Meijer Drees, 1950) refers to corn. Ik-elo “tail-grass”, elo meaning grass and iko tail; this refers to the ear of the rice, which is not supposed to be mentioned by name. It is the finest variety of rice and is reserved for the heads.
77 Funan ankina ma nenba ankina, i.e. Liurai and Sonba’i. Funan = moon, neno = heaven, sometimes sun, day. Liurai and Sonba’i are also called neno ana, which may then be translated with “son of heaven”.
78 The word used is mon = ignorant, foolish; cf. p. 73. Here it means that they only receive; the usual principle of reciprocity, which requires that all gifts be remembered in connection with the counter-gifts which must be offered later, does not apply to them.
79 Lasi ma tondje or toni, the ritual words. For lasi see p. 424.
80 A tobe, like a kasui, is a small basket woven out of lontar leaves. A kasui is a simple, round basket, whereas a tobe should be more ornamental and is quadrangular or hexagonal in shape.
81 Cf. Middelkoop, 1931, p. 279. I was once a witness (in 1947) to the examination of a pig’s liver at a sacrifice at which a pig was immolated by the raja of Molo, Tobe Sonba’i.
meat, pork and chicken). The rice is placed in the baskets first, then the meat. A portion of each dish is placed in a basket: one for the seat (toko) of Us Pah, one for the ancestors (be'i - na'i), and one for the hidden forces (le'i'). A basket has to be set aside also for unexpected guests, such as the deceased (nitu) of the lineages of the atoni amaf, (the heads of the bride-giving lineages). Before the meal the tobe recites the following invocation:

“This have I prepared and — have I cooked. This I wish to express and — this I wish to announce unto the Brilliant One and — the Fiery One, therefore I heap it up and — pile it up before Thy heavenly countenance and — before Thy divine eyes. Accept it, receive it. Sprinkle it well, give it good black soil.”

Following this the Us Pah is installed in every garden. It consists of a large stone or of a heap of smaller stones with a larger stone on top of them. This stone has to be sought by the medicineman before the ritual. Beside the stone, or if there are more than one, in the midst of them, the “heartwood” (hau tes) is erected and some of the sacrificial foods, such as the corn cobs from the offerings to be sacrificed, and the lower part of a pig’s jaw, or a buffalo skull, are suspended from it. A small quantity of the cooked food and parts of the sacrificial animal (the heart or part of its intestines) are placed on the stone — called bak-bak in Miomafo. At this initial sacrifice money and sirih pinang — seven pieces of each — are placed on the Us Pah. In Beboki this number is not fixed though it should be an odd one, whilst in Miomafo it should always be an even number. As the words: “All of thee, come guard and keep watch over my Liurai-Sonba’i, which I have planted” are said, four times four grains of corn and an equal number of rice grains are quickly planted around the Us Pah. The Us Pah does not necessarily have to be installed in the gardens on the same day — this can be done just as well on the following day — but is always done so as part of the ritual of cooling down the land, or “existinguishing the bamboo” (sifo no’po). Thereupon the tobe recites the following invocation:

“This day I wish to set Thee down and — give Thee a place in the midst of my yard and — my garden.
For now I intend to plant, to sow, Liurai and — Sonba’i.

82 Baki = stone. Hence more than one stone is used.
O my female ancestors, my male ancestors,  
my hidden power, my progenitive power!  
All of Thee, come and behold, appear before us;  
keep watch and — guard  
until I have planted, have sown Sonba'i and — Liurai.  
O, may it please Thee to go thither also, to pay homage to  
the Brilliant One and — the Fiery One;  
sprinkle it well, give it good black soil.  
Allow not the mango to wither, nor the watermelon to parch.  
May they constantly grow shoots, constantly sprout.  
This is the case, this is the word."

All the seed for the garden is placed on the altar-stone; it is removed little by little and immediately sown. If sowing is continued the next day the remaining seed is first placed on the altar-stone again. Once more an animal is killed and prepared and the tobe or an amaf recites:

"This have I prepared and — cooked.  
Therefore I invoke, I summon  
the Lord of the Lake and — the Lord of the Earth,  
my female ancestors, my male ancestors,  
my hidden power, my progenitive power,  
to come nearer and — approach hither,  
to accept and — receive  
what I have placed before Thee, prepared for Thee,  
this heap (of rice), this pile (of meat)."  

During these last words the baskets of rice and meat are placed before the altar.

The ritual of cooling down the ground, sifo nopo, is very important in that it includes an invocation to the ancestors, while the Lord of the Earth, Uis Pah, is assigned a place for the coming season and made the Lord of this garden in a very tangible way.

As soon as the rains begin to fall planting commences — this is usually the same day on which the sifo nopo ritual is performed, or the day after, for this ritual is performed as soon as there is rain under way or even after the first rain has fallen. Frequently the Atoni plants

83 There is no mention here of the seed of Liurai-Sonba'i, for Liurai-Sonba'i are the rice and the corn themselves; their names are substitute words for the crops, the real names of which must not be mentioned in the ritual.

84 The mango (upu - L. mangifera indica) is a fruit which ripens during the westerly monsoon, and the water-melon, timo, is picked during the easterly monsoon. This is a substitute expression for the early and the late rains, therefore.

85 Setel is a reference to rice, asak to meat, neither of which is to be mentioned by name.
too hastily, for the rains do not always persist once they set in. Then the seed dries up and he has to plant a second time.

Planting is women's work, just as felling and burning are exclusively men's tasks. Holes spaced two paces apart are made in the ground with a dibble; in each of these are placed theoretically four grains of corn, or if rice is cultivated, four grains of rice; this is so in theory, but in practice this number is often four to six, because, as the Atoni says, the grains are so small. The holes are closed with the feet.

Before planting the seed is carried to the garden by the women; no-one, neither man nor woman, is allowed to speak during this time. The rice is planted in plots surrounded by rows of corn. At the same time native peas, gourds, cucumbers and watermelons are sown. When the rain has thoroughly soaked the ground cassava, *bataten*, peas, bananas and sugar-cane are planted as well. Banana-trees and sugar-cane, like coconut and *pinang* palms, are usually planted in the village, in the compound surrounding the house.

g. *Eka hoë* - "filling in the ditch"

The aim of this invocation is to prevent the seed from being washed away by heavy downpours. This ritual is performed shortly after planting.

Before the sacrificial animal is killed the *tobe* or the *amaf* recites the following invocation:

"This day I hear Thee tidings and — I announce unto Thee that my younger and my elder brothers, my mother and my father, my distaff-side and spear-side kin, who are seen here and — have appeared here, have come to meet here and — to assemble here before Thy countenance and — before Thine eyes, bearing from Thy land, Thy lake, its yield and — its fruit. They have come not only with the yield and the fruit of the land, but with their hearts and their feelings (of gratitude). Their hands are filled and — their arms are filled, each one holding in his hands a feathered one and a furred one, that it may rise (to Thee) and — ascend (to Thee), o my rock of renown, my source of renown."

86 Lit. tropical pea. Indon. *katjang idjaui.*

87 The name for the place of origin of the clan (*kanaf*) always denotes a high, inaccessible place such as a cliff, which is nevertheless habitable because there is a spring on it. Furthermore, the words "rock" and "source" express the dual unity of earth and water; cf. note 44 above.
May it please Thee to admonish the early and the late rains, do not allow them to escape me and — to elude me. If they should escape me and — elude me Liurai-Sonba'ī will surely not grow good shoots, not wax well. My Lords, aged Uis Taolin, aged Uis Fal, aged Uis Pupu and — aged Uis Tonbesi, who are the heads of the sacrificial basket, the heads of the sacrificial pannier, which comes from the lords of the sacrificial basket, of the sacrificial pannier, namely Hitu, Taboi, Saidjao, Banusu, in order that, when I bear gifts of tribute and pay homage, rain-tree (corn) and — tail-grass (rice), to the Son of the Moon, the Son of the Sun, what lies before them, what is placed before their eyes may not be inferior, so that we may praise Thee and — extol Thee greatly.”

As soon as the sacrificial animal has been prepared and the rice cooked the tobe or amaf speaks the following words before the meal commences:

“This have I prepared and — have I cooked in order that I may pile up (rice) and — heap up (meat) before Thy countenance and — before Thine eyes. Accept it, receive it, in order that there be health for me, prosperity for me, that the sacrificial basket be filled, the sacrificial pannier be filled.”

h. Drought and failure of the crop

If the rains are late this is ascribed to some error in the ritual. If the crop appears to be wilting the tobe or an amaf who is well versed in the tradition is consulted. He spends a whole night in the garden hut, repeating aloud passages from stories (nanuan). In contrast to the invocations made at sacrificing here there is no-one else

88 Uisfini is the plural form of usif (lord); the title of the Lord of Heaven is Uis Neno and that of the Lord of the Earth Uis Pah. The ruler and his representatives are also addressed with usif.

89 Kelili is an oblong basket which is used for offerings and for serving important guests; tobe is also a sacrificial basket. Nakaf = head.

90 Tuansfini is the plural form of tuan = lord, a form of address for all persons of high social rank. In this context it is used with reference to the major custodians of the land, who as such own the sacrificial basket, while the usif are the heads of the basket.

91 I.e., in this case the atupas. See also the chapter on the political structure.
present and there is no-one to join in and repeat in chorus the appropriate parallel words. The contents of this recitation, like those of the great prayer recited when the ground is "cooled down", refer to the group's descent from and relationship to Liurai-Sonba'i, who are also the origin of rice and corn. This myth of origin is often related. Sacrificing takes place by day, recitation of stories by night.

The tobe assembles all his people and investigates the possible causes of the failure. Was the tobe who was in charge of sacrificing at the sifo nopo (cooling down of the earth) ritual a minor one, that is, the tobe of a few small lineages or of a large lineage living by itself, and did he commit an error, so that the ancestors have failed to come? Did he perhaps omit part of the invocation? Or was the Uis Pah — that is, the stone representing Uis Pah — installed incorrectly, or not at all, in a particular garden? Or have the unpropitious omens of the augural egg or of the liver been ignored and has a second animal not been killed?

The cause cannot but lie in an error in the ritual. It cannot possibly be some secret sin, such as murder or incest, as misfortune is bound to strike the person committing such a sin; it would not enter the Atoni's mind in the first instance, however, to associate drought or failure of the crop with the misdemeanour of a member of the group. For this reason the ritual requires great accuracy and people pray that: "when this sacrifice has been offered, let there be no talking and no gossiping about us".

If an error has been committed, mention of it, which would bring it out into the open, can only aggravate its consequences. The question as to whether Uis Neno, Uis Pah and the ancestors would not themselves have noticed such an error was evaded, as was the question as to whether an error in the ritual would not automatically have unpleasant consequences. This is a line of thought which is beyond the Atoni's mental scope. He reasons that an error in the ritual is bound to have adverse consequences, while making such an error public will make the manifestation of these consequences even more inevitable.

Conversely, it can be said that if the ritual has been performed faultlessly a good harvest may be expected. This never follows automatically, but a bad harvest has a closer causal relationship with an error in the ritual than a good harvest with a perfectly faultless ritual.

If the rains are late, a black animal has to be sacrificed. People in Insana said that it had to be black because black clouds were needed here.
When the *tobe* thinks he has discovered the error he utters the following invocation:

"O my rock of renown, my source of renown,
I have transgressed and — have committed an offence.
This transgression, this offence
I shall not suppress and — I shall not conceal;
therefore I approach and — come near (Thee)
bringing Thee a feathered one and — a furred one.
It is thus: my *nono* was immature, my *tani* was unripe.
I confess and I admit (lit.: to split)
that I have committed adultery, that I have been foolish.
I shall be forgetful of Thee no more, shall disregard Thee no more."

This prayer is important in that it throws a great deal of light on the Atoni's way of thinking and his attitude towards the powers of the hidden world.

The sentence "It is thus: my *nono* was immature, my *tani* was unripe" is difficult to translate. *Nono* and *tani* are used in parallelism with each other, the words literally meaning: liana, forest creeper. However, *nono* is also the word for the fertility power of the clan and its related ritual. Each clan has its own *nono*, so that *nono* also denotes the circle of all those who have the same *nono*. As a verb it means "to roam around" — Liurai-Sonba'i's wanderings are *nono*. *Nono* can also be a qualification of *le'u* (= hidden power). *Le'u nono* then is used in parallelism with *le'u musu* (hostility *le'u*), the former being the secret power of fertility and *le'u musu* the secret power by means of which one's enemies may be conquered. Together they make up the two complementary spheres in which the Atoni's life is set, namely fertility and defence, life and death, peace and war, or, in the Atoni's own words: "*mainikin ma menas*" (coolness and heat). *Nono - tani* covers the totality of the concept of fertility power. This was immature (*maté* = green (of fruits and crops), raw (of meat), not quite cooked). The meaning of this sentence appears to be that the fertility power was not able to function properly; the manner in which the *nono* was served or in which the ritual was performed, was "raw", crude, rash. People in Insana said, however, that it meant: "In order that my vital force may remain vigorous, my fertility power remain vigorous" on the analogy of the phrase *tah feu oke, tah mate oke* (= we all eat the new, we all eat the fresh, i.e., the new, fresh corn) in the ritual in which it is announced to the implements that there is new corn. This is not a very like interpretation; it is rather an indication that
people no longer understand the full meaning of their own ritual, partly because the ritual language is archaic and not at all like the spoken language.

The prayer continues in the first person, with the confession that he, i.e. the tobe, “has committed adultery”, which was a “foolish” thing to do. “Foolish” (mon) is frequently used in this connection. Adultery is an offence against the rules of conduct governing life, in accordance with which people are supposed to act; if they do not conform with these something goes amiss with this “life”. That is why adultery is “foolish”, “stupid”. A sensible person would not commit an offence such as this. The same applies to the tobe who has not observed the ritual forms through inadvertence.

After the sacrificial ceremony, before the sacrificial animal is eaten, a prayer is said, as follows:

“A heap (of rice) and a pile (of meat) before Thy countenance and — before Thine eyes have I prepared and — have I cooked. Pray accept it, pray receive it. May Thou accept it in all sincerity, receive it in all sincerity.”

Now the tobe has repaired his former omission. Formerly he would probably have had to pay a fine to the kapitan, the principal tobe of the whole sub-territory.

If it appears by the continued absence of rain that the error still has not been repaired, or that there is another error requiring requital, the kapitan is consulted. The latter then rallies all his tobe, traces the error or offence, and informs the lord (usif) of his sub-territory accordingly. According to my informants in Insana the usif thereupon givers orders to assemble at the kapitan’s tola (the wooden pole erected in the midst of a pile of rocks, hence the centre of the altar and the ritual centre of the community). Then a sacrifice is offered on the spot on which the error was committed or on the kapitan’s sacred cliff (fatu le’u) itself.

The prayer appropriate to this sacrifice is recited by the kapitan as the principal tobe. For the sacred cliff (fatu le’u) is the place of origin of the whole of that particular group: it is “the rock of renown and the

\[92\] Kapitan is a Portuguese title still used with reference to the major custodians of the land, who are at the same time the great fathers. See p. 232 below. Clearly the usif has no actual function here. This is a development which took place specifically in Insana, where the usif became very prominent. Cf. pp. 220 and 374 below.
source of renown" of the great *sifo nopo* prayer. That is why sacrifices are also offered here before the men go to war.

This time a white buffalo has to be sacrificed — white because the group has to be purified and cleansed of the offence which has been committed. The colour of the buffalo previously sacrificed, when the objective was to rectify the error that had been committed, was black; this time the objective is purification — hence the white coloured buffalo, even though the rains have not come. The buffalo has to walk up to the *fatu le'u*, where it is killed. As it is slaughtered the *kapitan* speaks the following words:

"O my bearded rock, bearded tree,\(^93\) at the gathering-place of the tribe and of the people and — at their meeting-place, the sacrificial basket and — the sacrificial pannier was wielded wrongly, treated wrongly. I professed Thee not and — paid not homage unto Thee. I stood not and — did not present myself. Therefore I bring Thee a feathered one and — a furred one. Thou hast admonished me, Thou hast reproved me. Thy grave admonition, Thy stern reproval did not send down disease upon me, nor a curse upon me, but a curse and disease upon Liurai-Sonba'i, upon his crop and his harvest. Therefore the early and the late rains have been delayed and For this reason am I afraid and do I fear, |[detained. so that I come with bowed head and approach Thee most bringing Thee a feathered one and a furred one, |[reverently, because I have committed an offence and have transgressed. Alas, I shall be forgetful of Thee no more, I shall neglect Thee no more. Sprinkle the crop and the harvest of Liurai-Sonba'i, give them pray send the early and the late rain. |[good black earth, May it please Thee to lend this case Thine ear, lend this word Thine ear, in order that the stem be cold, the root be cold (*mainikin*), that it may constantly grow shoots and constantly sprout, so that I may acknowledge (Thee) as lord (*usif*) and not deny Thee as head, not be disloyal. Let the moon know of it and let the sun know of it."

Disease, *menas*, heat, evil, is opposed to *mainikin*, coolness, well-being.

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\(^{93}\) "Bearded" means "covered with long moss" and refers to the cold mountain summit. It is also symbolic of the antiquity of the cliff of origin of the natal clan and hence also of the *kanaf*. 
A curse (bunuk) is the consequence of a transgression of the ritual rules or of a taboo (nuni) or of the desecration of a holy place or a sacred object (le'u). If the individual commits such an offence he is bound to be struck by a curse, which will bring disease upon him or his next of kin. If the ritual is not observed in every detail such a curse will strike the community as a whole, while if the ritual concerned is a fertility rite, as in this case, the curse will strike the crop. When the kapitan has, as he himself confesses, "committed an offence and transgressed" (the words tanhai - laksae both mean "to transgress, to overstep the bounds") he has violated the rules which constitute the norms governing the life of man and overstepped the bounds imposed on man. And this is the essence of the "transgression", as a result of which he has brought down a curse (menas and bunuk) upon himself.

The kapitan does not address Uis Neno, the Lord of Heaven, or Uis Pah, the Lord of the Earth, but the ancient moss-grown rock of origin. There the ancestors of the tribe have emerged from the earth, as many Timorese myths relate. This is almost a form of deification of the origin of the natal group. Not so much so because the Atoni considers his own community to be sacred — this is altogether beyond his mental horizons — but because a person's origin lies in the hidden world, of which his ancestors also are part and to which he will one day himself belong.

If the drought nevertheless persists, bringing with it the threat of failure of the greater part of the crop, and efforts to trace the error which may have been made in the ritual, and likewise the sacrifices to the ancestors and to the rock of origin have been to no avail, the Atoni tries to find a different solution.

During the famine of 1930 the people of Amfoan sought help from Lauf Neno, a woman living by herself in a shack in a river valley. Her only clothing consisted of a ragged loin-cloth, and she had no other belongings than a cooking-pot and a sirih purse. She had been discovered in 1927, when there was also a food shortage, and was reputed to have descended from heaven on to the Mutis, so that she was a neno anan, or celestial child. Others said she came from Kaunik where Sonba'i, the great son of heaven, once lived. She was said to have attended school and to speak many languages. People brought her quantities of sacrificial gifts, such as hens, pigs, cloths, beads and sirih pinang, in order to bring on rain. Her fingers were deformed,
except for the index fingers and thumbs. She had the appearance of an old woman, although she was probably not much older than 30. It was believed that if she opened her right hand the drought would continue for a very long time to come, and if she opened her left hand many people would die. The fetor (district head) decided to send her to Kupang, but when she became aware of his intentions she was literally struck dumb and wept so much, for days on end, that the fetor, prompted by apprehension, released her. But a few months later she was conveyed to Kupang after all, on the orders of the Netherlands East Indies Government. Here people continued to bring sirih pinang to her in jail. She was charged with fraud and died a month later. She had opened the fingers of her left hand before her death and was buried with her hand in that position. And many people indeed died, for the drought continued.

The above is an example of how popular imagination places a lonely and disfigured person in the sphere of the hidden world and how such a person is expected to mediate when people are in distress themselves. The woman herself probably had no part in this at all.

The case of a man from Bekwin, also in Amfoan, was different. This man had a vision in which a man and a woman from heaven, in shimmering garments, revealed themselves as Uis Neno, the Lord of Heaven. The latter gave instructions to “no longer cleave (i.e. till) the earth and the rocks. For we have created thy father and thy mother from dust and their bodies have turned to dust and rocks again”. The meaning of this was that corvée labour for road-work was no longer to be rendered and that anyone who disobeyed this order would die. They did have to pay taxes, so he said. His followers had to pay these to him, either in money or in animals. The government exiled him, but this did not put an end to people’s fear of him.

Neno Sonba’i, too, a descendant of the old Sonba’i dynasty in Fatule’u, wandered around the country organizing sacrificial feasts, as Sonba’i as the son of heaven is associated with the rain from heaven.

These examples will serve to illustrate how people may act deliberately in order to bring on rain and win fame and fortune for themselves. This does not imply that the man from Bekwin did not believe in his own vision. Sonba’i certainly was aware of the position accorded him as mediator between man and the hidden forces of heaven and earth.

i. Paying the tobe

After weeding, and usually before the crops ripen, people assemble
once more to pay the tobe his fees (noin tobe). The sacrificial basket (tobe) is placed on the altar stone (toko) of the tobe, who sits down beside it. Formerly everyone placed rice and corn in it, according to his means, so that a large number of baskets belonging to the tobe were filled with the latter. This rice and corn could be exchanged or sold back in return for cattle, bangles or cloths in times of famine. The cattle would then be tended by the tobe, and the other objects and the rice and corn stored in his tola. Here the meaning of tola, the wooden pole in the centre of the altar, is: central storage house for the territory of the major custodian of the land (tobe naek). Each tobe has two tola or sacred storage houses. These have the same shape as ordinary storage houses (lopo) but because they are tola they are inviolable (le'u). There is a tola molo and a tola metan, which are due west and east of one another respectively (molo means 'yellow' and belongs to the west, metan is 'black' and is often associated, in a different context, with the north).

Obviously the tobe had to be paid after the harvest, as is at present still the case with the kapitan, the usif and the ruler. But people did not agree unanimously that this was so. Some said that the tobe — i.e. the tobe of a smaller territory inhabited by a few clans — had to be paid at the beginning of the wet season so that during the months to follow, when food could be expected to be scarce, (there is a period of food shortage every year, though sometimes it is not serious) he would have corn and rice to sell.

During the colonial period the amount paid him was a guilder or the equivalent of five Chinese coins of 20 dollar cents each, which were officially in circulation in Portuguese Timor up to the second world war.

The old system contained an excellent social institution. The surplus of the harvest of a community was committed to the custodianship of the tobe, so that in times of famine the people of that community could rely on him for food, having an opportunity to purchase it from him, as long as the supplies lasted, at prices that were more or less fixed. The returns also fell under his control, although they never became his own — he could never dispose freely over them or use them for his personal benefit. Just as he is the custodian of the land of a number of clans, he is the trustee of their reserves and of the cattle and objects paid him in exchange for food. The Indonesian term "tuwang tanah" ("lord of the manor", landed proprietor) which is commonly used and is even translated into Timorese with Pah tuaf is definitely incorrect. Pah tuaf or its possessive form Paha in tuan may
be used only with reference to the prince and the *usif* because they represent the political community as a whole, but never applies to the *tobe*, not even to the major custodians of the land or *kapitan*.

A suggestion which was put at great length to the chiefs, the lineage heads, village heads and *tobe* and which involved re-introducing this old *adat* institution in a modern form in order to provide for a reserve to draw on in cases of shortage of food met with little response. The reasons for this were several. The Atoni has little desire to pay the *tobe* a substantial tax, as was formerly the custom, in addition to the taxes he now pays to the government. Another reason, which is closely connected with the first one, is the shift in power which took place during the colonial period. It is no longer the *kapitan*, or *tobe* naek, and under him the *tobe* and the *amaf* (lineage head) who are the chief authorities, but rather the *usif* (who has been created district head) and the village heads. The latter are not always recruited from the ranks of the most prominent lineages and, what is more important, wield authority by virtue of different considerations. The whole of the traditional system has been undermined and it is impossible to reinstate it at this stage.

j. *Guarding the young plants*

After weeding, a constant watch has to be kept against birds and monkeys. This is done by the entire lineage, or all the families which have participated in cultivating the plot. By day usually the old men and women and children keep watch, whilst at night the men do this. They keep an especially sharp lookout for wild boars and buffaloes. They are always armed for this purpose and try to shoot or spear any stray animal which is likely to cause damage. Because all the members of the lineage are engaged in this activity the village (*kuan*) is practically deserted during this time, often only a few old men remaining behind. People at this time live in small garden huts erected on tall wooden pillars high above the garden fence. Sometimes the hut is built against the trunk of a tree, and the floor may be raised more than two metres above the ground. It is a very simple construction and is often quite small because it serves only as temporary dwelling (although sometimes people live in it up to three or four months). The only requirements it must meet are that it be waterproof and that it provide enough room for all its occupants to sleep in, with some room to spare for the hearth stones. It frequently lacks a front wall, and if the hut is sheltered from the wind there may be no walls at all.
From the hut there is a system of wires with leaves or pieces of cloth attached to them strung across the plants. These may be set in motion by pulling them inside the hut — an effective method of keeping birds at bay.

In the mountains, especially on the steep slopes of mountains with limestone cliffs, which are usually riddled with caves and deep fissures, it is an especially difficult task to keep monkeys out of the garden, and they frequently cause a great deal of damage. Buffaloes and pigs may also cause serious damage. It is permissible to spear down any buffalo or pig entering a garden by jumping across the fence, or pushing its way through it, provided this is sufficiently strong and adequate to prevent animals from entering any other way. The following morning this has to be reported immediately to the owner of the beast and to the village head concerned or, as was formerly done, to the lineage head and, if the owner belonged to a different lineage, to the head of the clan or even to the kapitan or usif.

The owner of the wounded or killed animal may come and collect it, but at the same time has to pay compensation for any damage the animal may have caused to the plants. The lineage head (amaf) or the village head (temukung), who is himself usually an amaf as well, then tries to settle the affair by mutual agreement. He may not always be successful in doing so. Often the owner of the garden will exaggerate the extent of the damage, whilst the owner of the animal is likely to assert that the fence was not strong enough. If a pig can push its way through, then it cannot have been adequate. Complications arise if the pig has dug the soil away underneath the fence. If a settlement cannot be reached the case is brought before the kapitan or the usif. If two lords are involved because, for instance, animals from another district are responsible for the damage, these two hold counsel and the kohnel, the masculine counterpart of the central ruling authority, becomes involved in the case as well. At present this may be the district head (fetor) or the raja. If the case concerned cattle from another principedom hostilities might break out, especially if the owners were convinced that their cattle had been speared even before the fence had been damaged.

During the wet season, when people occupy the garden huts to keep watch over the crops, the supply of corn swiftly dwindles. There is probably no rice at all left because most of it will have been consumed at the feasts organized during the dry period. A small quantity of rice is always put aside immediately after the harvest and is reserved for
planting (fini), but what is left of this is never eaten until the rice and the late corn begin to swell. Then it is distributed among all the members of the community, and the water in which it has been boiled is sprinkled over the new plants.\textsuperscript{95} This coincides approximately with the ripening of the young corn, sixty days after planting.

But this surplus may be so small that supplies may run out altogether. Then the time of the mnahat (Indonesian lapar biasa) or annual famine sets in. This may be extremely serious, as during the first months of 1966. The reason then was that in 1964 the wet season set in too early, so that preparatory work on the gardens could not be finished — some plots had not been burnt down. Hence the new gardens could be only partially planted. In addition the rains ceased far too early at the beginning of 1965 — before or at the beginning of April — so that most of the rice crop failed and the late corn bore smaller cobs than usual.

\textit{k. The first corn}

At the end of 60 to 70 days the short variety of corn, the one with small cobs, is sufficiently ripe for eating. In the mountains this is at the end of December or the beginning of January and on the north coast not until February.

In every garden plot the first corn harvested is placed as a sacrifice on the Uis Pah, the altar stone for the Lord of the Earth, and a number of cobs is taken by the tobe to the holy rock (fatu le'u) of the tobe naek or kapitan. He announces that the new harvest is ripe and that there is food for the children and the buffaloes.

Back in the village “the feeding of the buffaloes” (bidjae nah jeu = buffalo, to eat, new) now takes place. The buffaloes are corralled and people with armsful of corn plants (with roots and cobs still attached) walk around the pen, making a complete circle beginning and ending at the gate, and back in the opposite direction. This symbolizes the buffalo walking to its pasture and its return to its corral. The plants are fed to the buffaloes while the following words are said:

"Steal not someone's side-dish,
Rob not someone's side-dish.\textsuperscript{96}
Know Thy enclosure,
Know Thy shelter." \textsuperscript{97}

\textsuperscript{95} Cf. p. 63, note 54, above.
\textsuperscript{96} Another metaphor for corn, which must not be called by its usual name.
\textsuperscript{97} Lit.: shade, i.e. the spot in which they lie in the shade of a clump of trees in the meadow.
18. A sturdy wooden fence (bahan) with gate.

After this the younger children are allowed to roast and eat the corn cobs, this being their exclusive privilege. It is considered a disgrace for an adult to eat of the young corn, as it is reserved for the young life.

Whilst the children are engaged in this a few men take some cucumbers and watermelons and smash them to pieces on the withers of the female buffaloes. The symbolism of this is: bear male offspring (the cucumber symbolizing the masculine because of its phallic shape), and: give birth to female offspring (the cavity of the water-melon symbolizing the womb). Sometimes designs are carved on the skins of these fruits to ensure that calves born will have similar markings; or they are coloured black or red for the same purpose.

After the first corn (pena sain or pena masa 98 = fine corn) has been reaped for the children the other early variety (pen balu, pen molo = the nourishing corn, the yellow corn) which ripens in 90-100 days is harvested for the adults. Again sacrifices are offered on the Uis Pah and at the tola, the kapitan's central altar. Corn stalks with the cobs still on them but with the roots removed are also placed on the boundary stones marking the tobe's territory. The tobe is informed accordingly and the first "white corn, yellow corn" is eaten at his tola. Again a sacrifice is offered and a communal meal is eaten. This is the "new food", the actual ritual harvest feast. During the sacrifice the tobe or a prominent and capable lineage head delivers an invocation in front of the masculine pole (hau manef). It runs as follows:

"O my female ancestors, my male ancestors,
old and young, far and nigh,
my hidden power, my progenitive power.
This day the daughters and sons have come.
They come to announce and — to bear tidings thereby
that Thou hast given us succour and — hast not turned away
from us,
that the early rain has favoured us and — the late rain has
favoured us,
that the sprinkling has been abundant and the soil plentiful
for Liurai-Sonba'i.
His roots grew constantly and — they pushed constantly deeper
into the soil,
the shoots increased constantly and the sprouts waxed large all
the time.
I have kept guard constantly, I have watched continuously.

98 Pena = corn; sain = millet (sorghum vulgare). Here it is used as a synonym for the young corn; pena sain has become the general term for this corn; sain (millet) is also found in Timor, especially in the drier areas.
Now I have received him, now I have gathered him in.
Now let everyone seize and clasp
his feathered one and — his furred one
in order to express it truthfully,
to bear tidings of it truthfully.”

Only hens and pigs are sacrificed on this occasion. Before they are killed a number of corn stalks with cobs still on them are lashed to the masculine pole (hau monef) and the maternal pillar (ni ainaf). After the animals are killed the sacrificial meal is prepared. Corn is boiled in the cob. Then a cob is taken, a grain removed from it between the thumb and finger and rubbed all over the arm, four times up and down between the elbow and the finger tips, once along the upper surface and once along the lower surface of each arm. The word tui⁹⁹ is uttered a few times while this is done, indicating that with the new harvest people gain renewed vigour. This vigour is also communicated to the men’s tools and the women’s implements, which are all placed before the maternal pillar before sacrificing commences. When the food is cooked, boiled corn mixed with rice and meat is scattered over the implements before commencement of the meal. As this is done the names of all the implements are uttered in pairs:

“Axe and matchet (jani, benas),
large and small weeding-hook (tofa, hoka),
spindle and distaff plate (ike, sutĩ),¹⁰⁰
cotton mangle and cotton bow (bninis, sifo),¹⁰¹
weft sword and breast beam (senu, atis),
rods and rollers (sial, uta),
backstrap, warp beam (of the weaving-loom) (niun,¹⁰² nekan),
I express unto Thee, I inform Thee,
We all eat of the new, we all eat of the fresh.”

After this the meal commences, but not until the following prayer has been recited in front of the masculine pole:

⁹⁹ Tui used verbally means “to draw a line”. When a deceased person is carried away for burial the atoni amaf holds a coin in his hand, and with it draws a line along the ground: tui lalan = he draws the path, i.e. he points out the direction in which the deceased has to be carried. Tuis also is the word for the continuous borders on Timorese cloths.

¹⁰⁰ The small plate on which the distaff is spun with the hand in cotton spinning. (See photograph 12.)

¹⁰¹ Bninis, a small mangle used for seeding cotton. Sifo, a bow which is bent by means of a string and with which the cotton is beaten. (See photograph 11.)

¹⁰² The weaver places the niun around her back so that she can taunt the entire loom by leaning back. (See photograph 13.)
"This have I finished preparing and — have I finished cooking, 
This heap (of rice), this pile (of meat); 
I place it before Thy countenance and — before Thine eyes. 
Receive it, accept it, 
that there may be health for us, prosperity for us."

Then the same prayer is recited in front of the maternal pillar.

1. The rice harvest (bonu ane); ripping off the rice

When the rice has ripened the chief occupant of the garden looks around for a small stone which he then places near one of the pillars of the garden hut. Usually the medicine-man (mnane) helps him with this, as this stone may resemble others and only the mnane can distinguish the proper one to which the vital force (smanaf) of the rice, or its "soul", may be "tied".

This ceremony is called ḫut ane smanaf (the tying of the vital force of the rice). A sitting-mat on which the "soul" of the rice is to be placed is spread out. Sirih mixed with certain herbs has to be chewed and spat onto the rice about to be harvested. These herbs are a compound of banyan bark and leaves. Each person does this in his own fashion, acting upon his own knowledge. Then everyone walks in a circle around the garden, spitting the chewed mixture onto the rice in order to prevent its vital force (ane smanaf) from escaping. Thereupon an old woman, usually the wife of the amaf of the lineage to which the occupants of the garden belong, approaches the Uis Pah in the centre of the garden in order to cut four bundles of the rice planted there during the sifo nopo ritual. Because it is she who bundles the blades she may also be called afutu smanaf (she who ties the vital force). Then she spits chewed herbs on them. Steinmetz 103 reports that two rice blades are tied above the altar stone to prevent the "soul" of the rice from escaping. Kruyt 104 also says something to this effect. Then the amaf kills a sacrificial animal, reciting as he does so:

"This day I invoke, I call loudly unto 
my female ancestors, my male ancestors, 
my hidden power (le'u) and — my progenitive power (matauk), 
my source of renown and my rock of renown. 
I shall make room for them and seat them

103 Steinmetz, 1916, p. 31.
104 Kruyt, 1923, p. 483. Kruyt’s report on Timor is not altogether reliable, as he was forced to employ a guide with an inadequate knowledge of the language.
during the weeding of the garden and the tapping of the *lontar* for I have had good fortune and — prosperity, [palm; thus I announce unto Thee, I own that the good fruit,¹⁰⁵ as a result of the early and the late rains, has swelled and has waxed to maturity, its roots reaching deep into the soil, deeply penetrating the soil; it budded forth constantly, sprouted constantly. Therefore we display this feathered one, this furred one. May it please Thee to rise with us, to lay Thee down to rest [with us]."

When the meal is ready to be eaten he says:

"This heap (of rice), this pile (of meat) do I place before Thy countenance and — before Thine eyes. For I have finished preparing it and — finished cooking it. Receive it, accept it, in order that there be health for us, prosperity for us."

After the vital force of the rice has been tied in this manner harvesting may commence. Care still has to be taken to prevent the "soul" from escaping. The senior occupant of the garden erects a stake, often with a red cloth attached to it, on the side of the fence nearest to the path leading to or running alongside the garden. This is a taboo sign (*numi*) by which passers-by know that it is prohibited to talk in its vicinity. If anyone disregards this taboo through inadvertence or for any other reason, one of the men keeping watch will confiscate, without saying a word, some object he is wearing or carrying with him, such as the cloth he is wearing around his shoulders or his matchet. This is later produced as evidence. Then everyone goes on silently harvesting. In the evening the chief tiller of the garden returns this piece of evidence to its owner or to one of the elders of his village, such as the *amaf* of his lineage. It is carried in a large basket made of *lontar* leaves. When the article is handed over to its owner or to the village elder he has to fill the basket (which has a capacity of approximately 30 - 40 kg. of rice) with unhusked rice. This is the penalty imposed for violating the taboo. After all, the offender has chased away the "soul" of the rice with his noise, leaving the ears empty and thus causing the owners to suffer a loss.

Harvesting is women's work. It is carried out by the women belonging to the lineage of the cultivators of the garden — their wives, unmarried sisters, mothers or, as the case may be, daughters. The work

¹⁰⁵ *Fuau mnutu* is a reference to rice, which is not supposed to be mentioned directly.
is carried out in utter silence. As they harvest, the women keep their face turned towards the Uis Pah, the altar stone in the centre, in such a way that all of them circulate in the same direction — what direction is not important. No implements are used, but the ears are stripped of their grains (or the ears are ripped off the stalks) by hand. As this becomes very painful to the hands sometimes a piece of cloth is wrapped around them for protection. Frequently this method is abandoned after the first few days, when a small, usually straight, knife is used for cutting off the blades. The women carry a small basket suspended from their waists, and place the rice in it. When it is full the rice is transferred to a larger basket (ainaf = lit. mother). Some of the grains of the rice harvested in this way are left in the ear, though most of them are separated from the ear. The rice is poured onto a mat in the garden hut and threshed with the feet to separate the remaining grains. During this work also strict silence has to be observed. Prior to this the hut has to be locked; if there are no walls, makeshift walls are quickly improvised with the aid of a few palm-leaves, for instance. Then the “door” is locked and a cloth or some other object fastened to it as a sign that it is taboo to open it from outside. Absolute silence reigns inside. Anyone who absolutely must say something to one of his or her fellow workers will have to leave the hut with him and speak in a whisper even outside. Threshing is done by both men and women, but after threshing the men go outside and leave the women to do the winnowing inside. Formerly threshing also used to be exclusively women’s work. The rice (ane) is placed in a heap and its vital force (ane smanaf), the sheaf of rice stalks, placed on top of it. The woman who has tied the vital force seats herself on top of it and the other women sit down in two groups beside her on a mat on the floor. This mat has to be placed in such a way as to run east-west lengthwise. At the eastern end the leo maka is placed underneath the mat; it is a “loop” made up of the same ingredients used for spitting onto the vital force of the rice, the purpose of which is to keep the rice fastened down. At the other end medicines are also placed beneath the mat: pandan and nikis leaves $^{106}$ which will make the vital force of the rice cool (mainikin). Everyone has to sit on the floor, and no-one is allowed to sit on the bamboo bench (halak, Indon. balé-balé). The old woman then chews some medicine compounded of banyan $^{107}$ leaves and other things “to make abundant the rice”. This she spits onto the outside

$^{106}$ Pandan, Tim. ekam. Nikis, L. Cassia fistula.

$^{107}$ Ficus fulva Reinr.; Tim. hau said.
and inside of each of the winnows. This is the so-called “piling up (nasaiib) and making heavy (hafena) of the rice”. As a result the quantity of rice put in the winnow will increase before it is tipped out again. When the winnows have dried they are filled with rice and returned to their owners — the last one left is for the old woman herself. Then the women begin to winnow, all commencing at the same time. The winnowed rice is tipped into open baskets.108 There are two of these: one to the right and one to the left of the old woman. The group on her right puts its rice into the former and the one on her left in the latter. When the winnow is empty its lid is put back on it and it is returned to the old woman, who refills it and returns it. This is done in the same order as before. This procedure continues until the old woman is finally sitting on the mat. Now the taboo on speaking is no longer in force — “the closing of the mouth” (ek fefan) is over. Everyone rises and speaks aloud again.

Usually the rice is kept in the garden hut for some time, to be carried to the village a few weeks later and stored in the lopo. Young women pounding rice are a regular sight here (see photograph 20).

m. The Corn Harvest - Seke Pena

The last crop to be harvested is the late variety of corn. This is the tall variety, which takes 150 - 170 days to ripen. It matures latest on the higher mountain slopes. It is left to die off completely on the stalk and is gathered in well-ripened and dry. In this case, too, the “tying” of the vital force of the corn (fut pena smanaf) takes place before harvesting. There is no taboo on speaking during the corn harvest.

A few corn plants growing around the Uis Pah are tied to a pillar of the garden hut. This is believed to be the “soul” of the corn (pen smanaf). It is a fairly large sheaf, consisting of approximately eight to twelve stalks (Middelkoop109 and Steinmetz110 report that it consists of only four stalks; in any case, it is a multiple of four). The pen smanaf is placed on the mat in the garden hut and the harvested cobs are later piled up around it. Before harvesting a few black hens or a black pig are sacrificed, the owner of the harvest, or in other

108 Poni in Miomafo and Oilolok (in Insana); in the remainder of Insana and in Beboki this basket is called oko, and in Manamas and Ambenu (Port. Oikusi) bo’o.
109 Personal communication.
words, the chief occupant of the plot, reciting the same invocation
delivered during the sacrifice offered before the rice harvest.

After the meal harvesting commences. The cobs are placed around
the vital force of the corn. As was the case when the rice was harvested,
the work is done by people of the one lineage; but this time the men
do the work. The cobs are broken off the stalks, which remain standing
in the field — they are bent back later, before the plot is abandoned
for the remainder of the year. This keeps the soil fertile. As soon as
harvesting is over a number of outsiders are asked to help with the
binding. Everyone is eager to help and many hands indeed are needed
because the binding has to be finished in one single night if possible,
and may not be commenced till night has fallen. The family head of
the group cultivating the plot seats himself on the pena smanaf. The
cobs are tied in bundles of six,\footnote{In bundles of four in Molo. Communication Middelkoop.} called aisaf. (Ten aisaf (or 60 cobs)
make up a kabutu and three kabutu make up a horse-load.)

In between the work finely pounded roasted com is eaten and
generous quantities of palm-wine (tuak) are drunk. During the work
the men sing the praises of Liurai-Sonba'i, as follows:

"Food \footnote{Maka', boiled rice, the most highly prized food and hence the term used
to designate food in general (Indon. makan = to eat). Liurai-Sonba'i are once
again metaphors for rice and corn.} from Uis Neno is Liurai-Sonba'i,
He beholds us, He tends his children, his people."

and:

"White, strong corn has a profusion (of leaves) hanging down,
If they resemble cloths I shall use them, wear them."

By this is meant that the cobs are so large that the leaves covering
them could be used as cloths.

When all the corn has been tied up in bundles the workers have
another feast on tuak or sopi, and uk, i.e. distilled palm-wine. During
the meal pantun are said, and the two missing, final lines of these
have to be made up before the men return home at dawn. Anyone
unable to supply the missing lines has to remain behind, even if it
means having to stay until the next evening. Stories giving examples
of people racking their brains for hours on end, in some cases until
late in the afternoon in order to complete a pantun — to the great
hilarity of the others, although they do their best to conceal their
mirth — are told with great relish.
This merry harvest feast marks the climax of the entire agricultural cycle.

n. Returning to the Village

After the harvest has been collected the owner has to take it to the village himself. It is usually carried on horseback, a few weeks (in some cases up to two months) after harvesting, depending on the easterly monsoon rains. In the mountains this may not be until July, as the farmers invariably wait until they are certain of dry weather.

The garden is now finally abandoned for the remainder of that particular agricultural year. The pena smanaf is detached from its pillar in the hut. This is referred to as “the closing of the door” (taek eno). On this occasion, too, a sacrifice has to be offered. Afterwards the vital force of the corn is taken to a brook to be made cool — it then becomes ordinary corn again and is lifted out of the sphere of the sacred.

The owner of the harvest, or his amaf, delivers the following invocation:

“"I bear Thee tidings, I announce unto Thee,
O my female ancestors, my male ancestors,
my hidden power, my progenitive power,
my source of renown, my rock of renown,
Liurai-Sonba'i are here this day,
their life, their vigour,
these large, fine fruits,
handsome in appearance, beauteous to the eye;
now I bear Thee, now I carry Thee,
to my house, my granary,
in order that there I may continue to keep watch over them, there
continue to guard them.
I shall have them guarded for
Hitu-Taboi, Saidjao-Banusu,
in order to call unto them and invite them to be there,
together with the lords of the land,113 the lords of the lake.
These are Us Taolin, Us Fal, Us Pupu and Us Tonbesi.
They are as great baskets, great panniers
for rain-tree (corn) and tail-grass (rice),
who are the lords thereof, who are the usif thereof,
Therefore I express unto Thee, I inform Thee,
go back cautiously, go back warily
to Thy seats and to Thy chairs.”

113 Paha tuan: N.B. tuan, not usif. Only Uis Pah, the Lord of the Earth, is called usif.
Before the sacrificial meal is eaten he delivers the following invocation:

“This heap (of rice) and pile (of meat)
Do I set before Thy countenance and — before Thine eyes,
For I have finished preparing and — have finished cooking.
I indicate it unto Thee and — announce it unto Thee.
Receive it, accept it,
that there be health for us, prosperity for us,
for I have preserved, I have kept watch over
the large fruit, the fine fruit
in my house and in my granary.
Lend my case Thine ear, hear my word.”

The ancestors invoked at the *sifo nopo* ceremony before planting now go back, each to his own place. This marks the conclusion of the cycle of the crops. Now the time has come for attending to the numerous social activities which take place in the village during this period. All aspects of life take on a new dimension. There is food in abundance, the harvest and its appropriate sacrificial meals are over, and other feasts are approaching. Now that everyone is back in the village the social life reaches its climax (see photographs 21, 24 and 25). Weddings are celebrated, mortuary feasts are held, relatives exchange visits and, when the time has come for burning down the grass in the lowlands, it is time for stag-hunting as well.

And then the time comes anew to choose a suitable patch of land and to cultivate it. The garden laid out the previous year is usually no longer suitable for rice-growing, but will produce corn, while the soil of the *ladang* that has been cultivated for three consecutive years will most probably be too exhausted to grow anything at all. The plots already under cultivation are fertilized to some extent by burning down branches (usually eucalyptus branches) and weeds, the ashes acting as fertilizer. Cultivation of a patch of which the soil is exhausted may be resumed after a fallow period of seven to ten years.

With the renewed energy which results from having an abundance of food after the recent harvest a new patch of land is reclaimed in its place. The agricultural cycle is also a cycle of waning and waxing vigour.

**CONCLUSION**

From this agricultural cycle, which was to be observed in Insana and, with slight deviations, throughout the entire Atoni area before the war it is evident that culture in the primary meaning of the word — namely “the tilling of the soil” — is intimately bound up with the religious
cult, which is in this case the worship of the Lord of Heaven and the Lord of the Earth, the ancestors and the place in which the clan has its origin, and the entire host of forces of the hidden world.

A salient feature of this culture is that only the cultivation of corn and rice is related to the religious cult — none of the secondary crops are ever mentioned in the rites. The latter are more or less silently understood. To the question as to why these sometimes very important food crops such as cassava and sweet potatoes are not mentioned the reply is invariably: “if the corn and the rice flourish all is well”; although every crop is important the chief food crops are more so than the others and therefore occupy a central position in the Atoni’s thinking. Cassava and bataten, moreover, are more recent imports; their non-mythical origin is well known, like that of the onion and garlic which, according to the Insana ritual, were introduced to the area via Kupang.

Analogous to this the fertility rite in animal husbandry is focused entirely on the buffalo. We have seen how, during the harvest of the first corn, female buffaloes are struck with cucumbers and water-melons. At approximately the same time the pen suf bia (corn, flower, buffalo — bia is probably the original form of bidjael) is held, while a ritual to increase the fertility of the buffaloes takes place when the later variety of corn is ripe. And, according to the Atoni, these cover the other domestic animals as well.

The Bali cow, only introduced during this present century, has no place at all in the religious cult, although its qualities make it a more highly valued animal than the buffalo. But the Atoni would not wish to do without the latter, as it is indispensable as a sacrificial animal and even where sacrificing is no longer in practice people are attached to it by tradition.

Another important feature of this culture is the more or less rigorous division of labour between men and women, which has been fitted into a more general cosmological categorization (formerly it was emphatically prescribed by the adat). The men fell and burn down trees and clear away the undergrowth. The women are responsible for planting. In addition to this there is a further division. While the names of Liurai-Sonba’i, the givers of rice and corn, are used as alternative words for these plants, it is erroneous to say that Liurai or Sonba’i refers either to rice or to corn by itself, as the names denote the dual unity of rice and corn. (They also refer to the two ritual princes at the apex of the political hierarchy in whom heaven and earth
and the male and female principles are united.) But as soon as the harvest of corn and rice commences an extraordinary division of labour occurs: the women harvest and winnow the rice; they perform this work in the daytime under observance of the strictest silence. Furthermore a woman, usually the wife of the lineage head (amaf), but in any case the wife of the oldest member of the agnatically related group engaged in the cultivation of a garden plot is responsible for the “tying of the vital force of the rice”. The bundling of the corn, on the other hand, is the responsibility of the men and the “tying of the vital force of the corn” is the amaf’s task. This work is done by night and the men drink palm wine and ask each other pantun in between. So they may speak as they do this, while there is often even boisterous hilarity.

Now, the word feto (female) also denotes “the interior” — during winnowing only women from within the lineage are present — while another connotation of the word mone (male) is “exterior” — when the corn is bundled men from without the lineage are invited.

Another fact worth noting is that the crops in question, namely corn and rice, are never once referred to directly by their own names throughout the entire ritual. They are referred to as “the young plants”, “the seedlings” of Liurai-Sonba’i. Or Liurai-Sonba’i by itself may be used as a synonym for the words “corn” and “rice”. Metaphors such as kaidjulan (rain-tree) and ik-elo (tail-grass) are also used to describe corn and rice respectively, the latter being a poetical designation for the finest variety of rice. Similarly the rice used for sacrificing is not referred to by name. The passages in which it is mentioned say: “I place this heap (rice), this pile (meat) before Thee”. But the actual word for rice must never be used on these occasions. Perhaps we should put it as follows: pena (corn) and ane (rice) are names used in the sphere of day to day life, and never in the sphere of the sacred. Through the sacrificial ritual everyday matters are lifted above their ordinary plane and transferred to the religious sphere. The ritual act is powerful. Not as much as in the case of the Vedanta, where the priest has absolute control over the forces of the hidden world through his ritual. But it is powerful enough to elevate such objects as corn and rice to the sacred sphere and put them into relation with the hidden world so that man may, as a result, expect the favours of the forces belonging to that world. In fact it is so powerful that when the crops threaten to fail this must surely be attributable to an error in the ritual.