Lessons of the Ancestors
Ritual, Education and the Ecology of Mind in an Indonesian Community

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Abstract

This thesis is an ethnography of the indigenous religion, education system and social organization of the community living in the central mountains of Sikka Regency on the island of Flores in Indonesia. The question that has motivated my research is 'how are the ideas and practices of this community’s indigenous cosmology taught and learned so to persist with continuity through generations?' In answer I explore the ways in which cosmological ideas and practices are taught to be valued as truth as they are embodied during the practical activity of ritual. This study advances a performative theory of ritual education through a combination of Gregory Bateson’s theory of the ecology of mind and Roy Rappaport’s theory of ritual and sanctification.

I begin with a critical examination of the representations of the community in question that have been made by scholars and neighboring populations. I argue that these representations wrongly imply a static and bounded community. Instead, I contend that the community is constituted by dynamic village and clan relationships anchored on sentimental and structural forms of individual belonging to particular villages and clans. This belonging is principally developed through individuals’ adherence to the indigenous cosmology, locally called Adat. I continue by discussing the educational methods by which this cosmology is perpetuated. Ritual language lessons concerning education insist that from an early age community members participate fully in daily religious life (particularly in the practice of ritual) under the guidance of close family. I then describe the learning environments found in childhood, marriage and mortuary rites. Following Bateson, I argue that during ritual contexts participants ‘deutero-learn’ embodied skills that are patterned by previous experiences, and generate the future conditions, of these same ritual contexts.

In addition to traditional educational settings, the Adat cosmology is now taught in Indonesian primary and high schools in ‘local content curriculum’ classes. I compare Adat education based on participation in ritual with that of modern schools, and I argue that in the classroom the indigenous cosmology is abstracted from its performative underpinnings. Adat is embodied differently in ritual and school contexts, and the tensions caused by these differences lead to transformations in Adat knowledge. I end this thesis by contextualizing my findings with national discourses of indigeneity and intercultural education.
Declaration

This is to certify that

(i) the thesis comprises only my original work towards the PhD,
(ii) due acknowledgement has been made in the text to all other material used,
(iii) the thesis is less than 100,000 words in length, exclusive of tables, maps, bibliographies and appendices.

David J. Butterworth
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1

A Lost Tradition?

1. Introduction

In the central mountains of Sikka Regency in the Indonesian province of Nusa Tenggara Timur people are concerned for the future of the indigenous religious ideas and practices they call Adat.¹ Many in the community are worried the Adat way of life will soon be lost forever because the younger generation are not learning the lessons of their ancestors. In response to this apprehension I ask what system of education teaches Adat so that its value and application persists through generations? I contend that rituals are the ‘classrooms’ of Adat, for it is during these sacred occasions that participants learn most about this rare cosmology.

In the ritual form of the Sikkanese language, the couplet *himo tio 'li’ar sina, dea bela rang jawa*² (take truly the valuable voice, receive rightly the precious accent) expresses the twofold role played by students of Adat. First, learners must actively seek and engage with the wisdom and institutions of Adat; they must ‘take’ the knowledge. Second, learners must be willing to be humble before the wisdom and institutions of Adat, and thereby ‘receive’ the knowledge. In the education of Adat all people are students, and the Adat religion itself, with its constituent deity and ancestor spirits, liturgy and canon, is master. Adat requires its disciples to be motivated and enthusiastic learners who are eager to

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¹ ‘Adat’ is an Indonesian word of Arabic origin used throughout the archipelago in reference to traditional and customary cosmologies and practices (see Chapter 10). The communities of Sikka Regency also use the term to refer *specifically* to their own indigenous cosmology. To avoid confusion I capitalize the specific Sikkanese usage (thus, ‘Adat’), and use italics for the general Indonesian usage (thus, ‘adat’).

² There is only a slight difference in the everyday meaning of *himo* and *dea*, but in ritual language this difference is amplified. *Himo* means to receive something by extending one’s arms and grasping it in hand. *Dea* is to receive something placed directly on the palm of the hand, without reaching or grasping. Both terms emphasize acceptance, however *himo* is a more active designation, whilst *dea* is more passive.
participate in religious activities. This is a difficult task for disciples who also count among their masters a myriad of other ideologies (and their representatives), such as Christianity, Islam and Indonesian nationalism. According to the leaders of the Adat community, the problem faced by Adat today is an instance of what Steiner (2003: 5) has called “Zarathrustra’s tragedy.” That is, they assert that there are few people today in the central mountains of Sikka willing and able to make a concerted effort to deepen their knowledge of Adat.

In February of 2005 on a cool morning I traveled along the narrow roads winding up the north-western slopes of Mt Méat looking for the village of Romanduru, where I would eventually settle for the length of my fieldwork. Lost, I stopped at the small Ohe marketplace and was fortunate to meet Mo’an³ Rafael Bewat, a traditional healer and resident of Romanduru. Rafael guided me along a path to the village and immediately took me to the house of Mo’an Nikolaus Roja, who at that time held the important position of *tana pu’an* (source of the domain).⁴ Mo’an Roja, already old and ailing, invited me into his home and spoke of the importance of Adat to his community.

Roja was a famous figure because of his deep knowledge of Adat and willingness to strictly enforce its law. On many evenings I sat among the stone ritual altars and natural rock formations in the village centre and people would speak to me of occasions when seemingly irreconcilable disputes were settled and criminals brought to justice by the untiring work of the *tana pu’an* of Romanduru. Nikolaus Roja died during my fieldwork and the position of *tana pu’an*, as is usually – though not always – the case, was passed to his eldest son, Mo’an Firminus Lawé. At this critical time of transition, the new *tana pu’an* and his younger brother, Mo’an Fernandes Don Dalo, regularly expressed to me their misgivings for not having learnt more from their father about Adat, and, equally, for their father not having been a more determined teacher.

A short distance to the south of Romanduru stands the village of Wolomotong. Here, Mo’an Klemens Hago, a renowned Adat expert, spoke the following words to a group of young siblings who had grown up on the neighboring island of Sulawesi and had returned to their ancestral home for a ceremonial occasion:

³ *Mo’an* is properly an honorific title for men of a clan for whom there is a *wu’a mahé* (clan ritual altar). For women this title is *Du’a*. In practice these titles are used on formal occasions for men and women of high status, and can be considered as equivalent to the Indonesian *Bapak* and *Ibu*.

⁴ *Tana pu’an* is a position that has equivalents throughout Indonesia. It is often translated as ‘lord of the earth’, or in Indonesian as ‘*tuan tanah*’. I translate *tana pu’an* as ‘source of the domain’ to reflect its specific Adat cosmological underpinnings (see Chapter 2).
I still know Adat. There may only be one or two others who also know. Why is it like this? Because I want to know the truth of Adat. I am searching. Why be ignorant? Local people here don’t know Adat anymore, but we still have Adat, because every one of us lives from the earth (20/07/06).

Located to the west of Wolomotong and Romanduru, completing a triangle of three traditional ‘origin’ villages, stands the village of Baomekot (see Map 2). Here, Mo’an Pasiusius Pasing, also a prominent Adat expert, spoke these words to me as we discussed the relationship between Adat and formal schooling:

Over time the lessons of Adat are being lost because many families no longer use these lessons as rules, or directions, to educate children in their homes. Our children are no doubt smart, but in their responsibility as honest citizens they are failing, these are people with intelligence but not enough morality. Because of this the government has decided that the lessons of Adat should be taught in schools (14/03/06).

These statements are typical of the opinions and experiences of many people, both ritual experts and lay-people, both old and young, with whom I established a relationship whilst doing fieldwork. This treatise is inspired by the assertion that there is currently a crisis in the tradition of Adat. In this light, I undertake to investigate how the ideal and practice of education aims at perpetuating this indigenous religion. The problem of cultural survival is also a problem of education. Or, to use the terminology of the ecological psychologist James Gibson (1979), it is a problem of how and to what people’s attention is educated. During my field research I was compelled to ask: Are the challenges raised by Hago and Pasing a symptom of a decline in the power of Adat to educate people to attend to Adat rather than to other competing ideologies such as Catholicism? Were the actions of tana pu’an Mo’an Roja and his children an example of missed opportunity and personal idiosyncrasy, or were they in fact consistent with normal teaching and learning behavior in this society? If their actions were consistent with normal practice, then what can account for the current perception that there is a loss of Adat in this family and, indeed, in the wider community?

The beginning of an answer to these questions lies in an ethnography of education that is mindful of the inherent tension between education and cultural transformation. First, education is an agent of convention and tradition that works to ensure the same truths are shared by successive generations. Second, education is an agent of change and advocate of innovation. The ethnography I present is aimed at understanding how Adat works as an
educational institution for preserving tradition, and, further, how Adat engages with and is transformed by a competing educational institution, namely modern Indonesian schools.

Education, be it traditional or modern, local or global, is about the valorization of ideas and practices and the production of environments in which they are taught and learnt. As an ethos and world-view Adat exists in close, and sometimes antagonistic, company with Roman Catholicism, Islam, Indonesian democratic and capitalist nationalism, and secular science. And yet, for Adat there is no Sunday school or seminary, nor are there primary and high schools or universities. There are no training modules and workshops, no seminars and conferences, and no textbooks and resource centres. As is the case for most, if not all, documented small-scale indigenous religions, Adat education is fundamentally integrated into many aspects of social life. There are no specific ‘for-education-only’ settings. However, education is there, for despite the apprehensions of many in the community there is a continuity (though, as will become clear, not a perfect continuity) between the Adat of parents and that of their children.

2. Theoretical Orientation

The argument I make in this treatise begins with the premise that education is ever-present in the practice of Adat. In this respect, I closely follow Jean Lave’s social practice theory in supporting a broad sociological definition of education as “an aspect of participation in socially situated practices” (1996: 150). From this perspective the phenomena of learning and teaching are understood in terms of the contexts in which individuals and knowledge coalesce, and not through essentialist theories that exclusively reify either brains or environments. The ‘socially situated practices’ in which Adat is educated include story and myth telling, artistic performances such as dance and music, and collaborative activities such as weaving and farming. These are all occasions during which elders can lead by example and impart their knowledge and skills to the young. However, I argue that Adat education is most powerfully expressed in the formal and regulated group activity of religious ritual.

I also support Ingold’s (2003: 51) proposal that learning a tradition, such as Adat, is a process of “guided rediscovery.” A tradition is characterized by a more or less stable valorization of particular propositions as truth and practices as correct action, and the teaching of these verities occurs in contexts (many artificially constructed, such as ritual)

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5 Except for the inclusion of Adat as an academic subject in Local Content Curriculum classes of primary and junior high schools (see Chapter 9).
A Lost Tradition?

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in which the learners attention is directed towards their discovery. Importantly, I assert that rather than investing the ultimate authority of teacher or master in individuals, Adat entrusts this position to the agency of spiritual beings and the performative contexts of ritual. That is, elders of the community are ‘teachers’ in the conventional sense only insofar as they initiate ritual environments in which they and others can then learn directly from the deity and ancestor spirits. This educational environment is characterized by what Lave and Wenger (1991: 94) have called “a decentred view of master-apprentice relations,” in which “mastery resides not in the master but in the organization of the community of practice of which the master is a part.”

The theory of ritual education that I am proposing is part of a tradition of ritual studies that aims to understand the place, or function, of knowledge in ritual. I give emphasis to the ways ritual facilitates the guided rediscovery of particular knowledge and I view ritual, like Barth (1975, 1987), as a ‘mode of communication’. Barth (1975: 11) nicely summarizes this theoretical perspective on ritual when he states in his Baktaman study that he was seeking “the features or aspects of ritual acts and objects which make them capable of serving as vehicles for concepts, understandings and emotions.” Further, knowledge in ritual can be seen to operate in two spheres. First, there is the knowledge of ritual procedure and code which guides people in how they carry out rituals. Second, there is the knowledge that is gained through subjective experience during which the meaning of ritual is unfolded. Gilbert Lewis (1980: 38) has framed this issue as a relationship between the doing (or ruling) of ritual and ‘being in’ ritual, and he explains:

in ritual as in art, he who devises or creates or performs is also spectator of what he does; and he who beholds it is also active in the sense that he interprets the performance.

This relationship remains a central problem in ritual studies and Whitehouse (2000, 2004) has recently drawn attention to what he sees as a difference between ‘doctrinal’ and ‘imagistic’ modes of ritual and religiosity. In Chapter 4 I consider this problem in detail in terms of a tension between codification and performance and between the informational and emotionally affective parts of ritual. I draw primarily on Rappaport’s (1999) theory of ritual and attempt to break down the dichotomy that separates code or doctrine from the performative and emotive aspects of ritual. In this respect I consider the unique ritual mode of knowledge communication as a product of the connection between code and practice. Key to my argument is that this connection is both formulated and experienced by ritual participants through embodiment.
Lessons of the Ancestors

In its sociological definition the concept of embodiment operates in two ways. First, knowledge is embodied as people manifest this knowledge in their physical movements. For example, the performance of a marriage ritual enacts through various stylized actions the doctrinal, or canonical, ideas of what a marriage is and how it should be conducted. Second, knowledge is embodied when it enters deeply into the unconscious (or, subconscious) being of an individual so that this knowledge need not be consciously thought about to be effective. For example, the canonical ideas and routines ordering a marriage ritual can be learnt so efficiently that the ritual performance becomes an ‘automatic’ or ‘natural’ event that does not require overt mental reflection or prompting.

Both understandings are intertwined, and I argue that the first definition of embodiment (an enactment of ideas) is a precondition for the second definition (unconscious knowledge). Although both definitions are independently well established, the relationship between the two is still problematic for anthropology today, and I devote much of the theoretical writing of this treatise to an attempt to clarify this relationship.

The relationship between ideas and ‘embodiment as unconscious knowledge’ can be characterized by the development of skill. That is, the more skillful an individual is at perceiving, understanding, and implementing ideas, the more embodied these ideas are in the individual. Pálsson (1994: 919) explains that skippers of Icelandic fishing craft become ‘enskilled’ in the wisdom of their trade to the extent that this wisdom is said by fishers to be “carried in the blood” and is described as “unexplainable bodily judgment”. With regard to physical skills akin to sporting prowess or manual dexterity this concept of embodiment is easily grasped. However, when it comes to ideational skill the water is deeper, and muddier, for anthropologists. Do we consider the skillful embodiment of ideas a matter of a powerful memory, or a highly abstract intelligence, or a cleverness and creativity with language? Undoubtedly these factors help explain different expressions of embodied ideas in different individuals, but they do not explain the phenomenon of embodiment itself. The concept of embodiment invites us to take a step back from language, consciousness, and intellectual facility. Thus, instead of asking ‘how can a sign

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6 This definition of embodiment has a long tradition in anthropology. For example, Mauss (1979) wrote of ‘body techniques’ in which certain behaviors physically enact social relationships (such as gender or power relationships) from which the anthropologist can abstract ideational structures.

7 For anthropologists, physical skill is an important category of analysis when it relates to the articulation of social relations. This is a complex field of analysis that primarily seeks to understand how disparate roles in working environments affect sentimental and hierarchical relationships. This topic has recently been of special interest to maritime anthropologists (e.g., Blair 2006; King 2006).
(i.e., the symbolic quality of an idea) become part of an individual’s embodied skill?’, we are better off asking ‘how do referents of signs become part of an individual’s embodied skill?’

This bias emphasizes part of a complex system that involves human organisms and symbolic and physical environments. Analyses of embodiment need not relegate language to a back seat in preference to physicality. Instead, as we investigate the ontological category of ‘embodied ideational skill’ we must focus on the substantiation of ideas (that are also described by signs) as a performative reality. That is, ideas become embodied in an individual’s unconscious in a way that is, in Ingold’s (2000: 164) words, “refractory to codification in propositional form” (and take on a quality similar to purely physical skill) when the actions described or prescribed by signifiers of ideas are enacted.8

Two of the twentieth-century’s most imposing social scientists, Pierre Bourdieu and Gregory Bateson, endeavored to solve the problem of the relationship between ideas, the body, self-consciousness, and unconscious embodiment. Although their respective theories bear great similarity, the development of their ideas can be traced through different intellectual traditions, and are accordingly expressed with different terminology. Bourdieu’s ‘logic of practice’ rests on the concept of ‘habitus’, which he defines as a system of “durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures” (1990: 53). Habitus describes an individual’s internal state (his or her disposition) that is constituted in a reflexive relationship with external conditions, or ‘fields’. Bourdieu (ibid.: 68) writes that habitus becomes “attuned” to the field in which an individual operates, and the self-validating reflexivity of the system produces “taken for granted” structural orders, or ‘doxa’.

The logic of practice is often criticized for this self-validating quality. Such a system would seem to inevitably lead to invariance and stagnation. However, Lizardo emphasizes that recognition of the influence of Piaget’s developmental cognitive psychology on Bourdieu’s thinking makes it apparent that

...habitus is itself a generative dynamic structure that adapts and accommodates itself to another dynamic mesolevel structure composed

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8 This model shows a way forward from Needham’s (1972) important, but often forgotten, critique of ‘belief’ as a valid sociological category. Embodiment theory defines the production of internal states (such as religious knowledge and belief) as a social and practical event. Thus, anthropological knowledge of personal religious conviction can concentrate on external religious expressions, without resorting to the ambiguous and unknowable (to anthropological analysis at least) notion of belief.
primarily of other actors, situated practices and durable institutions (fields) (2004: 376, original emphasis).

The mutual generation of the individual and his social and symbolic environment is a core aspect of Piaget’s theory of knowledge. For Piaget (1970), human cognition is inseparable from practical activity, such that actions in the world and mental actions share the same structure. Together these actions are known as ‘cognitive operations’, which are produced in a repeating feedback cycle of perception, processing, action, and generation. In this respect, although an individual’s habitus develops in a mostly stable, homeostatic process, it is nevertheless not a passive copy of external reality. Rather, habitus continually develops through time as a responsive and creative quality of personhood.

Here, in the interdependent growth of individuals and their fields, and in the tension between stability and change, Bourdieu’s logic of practice and Bateson’s ecology of mind become immediately comparable. In Bateson’s early application of complex systems theory to social relations, the human mind is defined as emergent in the practice of the “organism-in-its-environment” (2000: 457). The mind is not contained only within the brain, but also extends through the perceptual organs and out into the physical and social world. In this system, Bateson writes, there is a

...hierarchy of somatic adjustment dealing with particular and immediate demands at the superficial (most concrete) level and dealing with more general adjustment at deeper (more abstract) levels. The matter is exactly parallel to the hierarchy of learning in which proto-learning deals with narrow fact or action and deutero-learning deals with contexts and classes of contexts (ibid.: 169, my emphasis).

Deutero-learning (also called ‘Learning II’) occurs when a mindful organism9 learns to classify its perceived environment into a context and, furthermore, becomes skillful at changing “the manner in which the stream of action and experience is segmented or punctuated into contexts” (ibid.: 293). Over time and through repeated experiences of similar environmental conditions individuals develop an ability to recognize, invoke, and exploit these conditions. Thus, an individual’s deutero-learning is both formed by and produces a context in a self-validating developmental relationship. According to Bateson:

What we term ‘context’ includes the subject’s behavior as well as the external events. But this behaviour is controlled by former Learning II

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9 Bateson argues that deutero-learning occurs in many higher mammals (most famously dolphins) as well as in humans (e.g., 2000: 364).
It is evident that ‘deutero-learning’ and ‘context’, at the least, are analogous to Bourdieu’s ‘habitus’ and ‘field’. Both sets of terms refer to a recursive relationship between people and their environments, including symbolic and behavioral aspects, in which an unconscious personal character or disposition (deutero-learning or habitus) are generalized from and feed back into the structured environmental conditions (context or field) in which people act.\footnote{There are similarities between this anthropological theory and the neurobiological Adaptive Resonance Theory. Grossberg argues that learned ‘top down’ (i.e., deutero-learning) expectations are matched with the raw data of ‘bottom up’ (i.e., proto-learning) experience. Such matching “can lead to the focusing of attention upon the expected clusters of information, which are called critical feature patterns” (Grossberg 2007: 1040). ‘Critical feature patterns’ can be read as either Bateson’s ‘context’ or Bourdieu’s ‘field’.}

Although deutero-learning, or habitus, is developed in recursive feed-back loops with environmental conditions, it nonetheless demands creativity from individuals. Deutero-learning has been inferred from experiments in which a subject’s rate of proto-learning (such as rote learning, and classical and operant conditioning) consistently accelerates, or improves, during repeated exposure to a series of similar learning contexts (Bateson 2000: 294; Visser 2003: 271). This process of ‘learning to learn’ requires imaginative insight from the subject to recognize the patterns that organize the context of proto-learning and, furthermore, to adapt his or her thoughts and behavior to benefit from this insight. Not all people will see the same ‘pattern that connects’ in a given environment, and some will develop deutero-learning, and benefit (or suffer) from it, more effectively than others (variables include disparities in attention, cognitive function, and previous deutero-learning). However, I also contend that certain conditions of religious ritual promote in participants a strongly developed and shared, or standardized, form of deutero-learning. First, the redundancy of ritual, in its formality and frequency of performance, provides regular opportunities for all participants to understand the ritual context to the best of their ability. Second, the profundity of ritual, in its unquestionable social and spiritual efficacy, motivates (or sometimes even compels) the participants to direct their full attention to the ritual context. Further, the redundant and profound actions of different participants are drawn together in tightly regulated ritual performances, and individuals’ embodied experiences (in terms of both their enactment and deutero-learning) become closely aligned with their fellows.

In this treatise I develop the model of embodiment described above by outlining a
distinctly religious type of context and deutero-learning.\textsuperscript{11} I do this by synthesizing the aforementioned model with Roy Rappaport’s theory of ritual sanctification. Although Rappaport (1999: 304) distances his concept of sanctity from deutero-learning on the grounds that deutero-learning is generalized only from ordinary – and not ritual – experience, I think this is a mistake. Instead, I suggest that while ritual is indeed a special environment, it is special because it is an event during which deutero-learning is quickened, not excluded. In ritual, context and deutero-learning conform in a highly formal and redundant experience that is exceptionally self-validating. Sanctity can thus be defined as a symbolic quality of the ritual context and an embodied quality of the deutero-learning that occurs recursively with the ritual context.

According to Rappaport, sanctity is the truth ascribed to ideas, objects, and events by virtue of their connection with the performance in ritual of a religion’s most fundamental propositions, it’s ‘Ultimate Sacred Postulates’. Sanctity is a self-validating truth because it’s truth is contingent upon it being known and accepted.\textsuperscript{12} In this respect, Rappaport (ibid.: 295) states that Ultimate Sacred Postulates and the things sanctified by them

\begin{quote}
…are taken to be unquestionable, or true, because they are \textit{represented as certain and accepted as beyond question.} Both the acceptance and the certainty are entailments of liturgical form; thus their truth is not discovered, proven or confirmed through explorations of their conformity to fact but \textit{is established in the mode or manner of their expression.}
\end{quote}

Ritual is the fundamental social activity that creates and amplifies the acceptance and truth value of ideas and actions in individuals’ lives. It is the matrix from which sanctity radiates, informing any associated symbolic and physical objects, concepts and landscapes with truth. Ritual is the context \textit{par excellence} in which the non-conscious assumptions, dispositions, intuitions, and skills of deutero-learning are built and validated as embodied truths. Thus, I contend that sanctity is synonymous with both ‘religious contexts’ and ‘religious deutero-learning’. For this reason, throughout this treatise I refer to the

\textsuperscript{11} From this point forward I will use Bateson’s jargon of ‘deutero-learning’ and ‘context’, and refer to the logic of the recursive relationship between the two as the ‘ecology of mind’. This preference reflects my wish to raise awareness of Bateson’s contribution to practice and embodiment theory that is otherwise largely overshadowed by Bourdieu’s work. Bateson’s term deutero-learning also reflects more overtly than habitus the processual and educative aspects of embodiment.

\textsuperscript{12} Compare this definition of sanctity of Rappaport’s to Bateson’s definition of deutero-learning as ‘“assumptions” [which] are considered ‘truths’ because they are self-validating; they are a class of truth because the subject accepts them unquestioningly” (Bateson 2000: 301).
embodiment of Adat ideas and practices as being developed in an ecology of sanctified contexts and sanctified deutero-learning.

The model of embodiment I employ also involves an economy of rigidity and flexibility which is a continuing theme throughout this thesis. This economy explains the potential for innovation, novelty and change in recursive relationships between deutero-learning and context in the ecology of mind. Importantly, Bateson states that deutero-learning enables organisms to conserve energy in regularly experienced contexts and thus react efficiently to new and unexpected contexts. The economics of the ecology of mind

...pushes organisms toward sinking into the unconscious [deutero-learning] those generalities of relationship which remain permanently true and toward keeping within the conscious the pragmatics of particular instances (Bateson 2000: 142).

Deutero-learning is a semi-rigid (but always developing), unconscious skill in a particular pattern of perception and agency that buys for the organism a greater capacity for superficial flexibility with which to make rapid responses to non-regular situations. I will show that this economy is also apparent in the dynamic of conservation (rigidity) and change (flexibility) in education, and in the dynamic of canonical rules (rigidity) and innovative usage (flexibility) in Adat ritual procedure and ritual language. Flexibility in both the environment and organism is the potential to be changed and to make change, and upon flexibility depends the success of individuals, institutions, and traditions in their relations with the ever-changing wider system. Thus, with regard to education, a perfect continuity of particular ideas and practices through generations (i.e., complete rigidity) is not sustainable, nor indeed desirable.

Deutero-learning is ‘semi-rigid’ because it is developed by initial environmental flexibilities that persist, become redundant, and are ‘sunk’ into the unconscious, but is thereafter continually subject to reinforcement or challenge. The cost of too rigid deutero-learning is paid when novel flexibilities that continue to persist conflict with already established deutero-learning. For example, for over a decade now Adat has been taught in formal Indonesian primary and junior high schools as part of the ‘local content’ (BI: muatan lokal) classes. In the classroom Adat is incorporated into a system of education that is very different to its traditional ritual-based performative learning methods. The

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13 In bracketed translations I use ‘BI’ to denote Bahasa Indonesia, ‘D’ to denote Dutch, ‘L’ to denote Latin, and ‘S’ to denote Sara Sikka (the indigenous language of the people of Sikka Regency). I use the convention whereby the denotation for the first bracketed translation is not repeated for immediately subsequent translations of the same language.
Lessons of the Ancestors

...expectations of how Adat should be taught are radically transformed by the epistemological context of schools, and my analysis of the use and translations of ritual language in these classes will highlight the disjuncture that exists between the Adat pedagogy and that of schools which, in the converse of Adat, is premised on the separation of language and action. In the parlance of the theory of the ecology of mind, the sanctified deutero-learning of Adat that occurs in ritual is challenged by the school-based deutero-learning of Adat that occurs in the different school-based context.

In the course of describing the Adat indigenous religion and educational system in this treatise I range through several subjects. I discuss community identity (Chapter 2), local theories of education (Chapter 3), rites of passage (including birth, marriage, and mortuary rituals), bridewealth and counterprestations, ritual participation and duties (Chapters 4, 5 & 6), learning ritual language and procedure (Chapter 7), landscape classification and cosmogony (Chapter 8), the history of Florenese schooling and contemporary ‘local content’ school classes (Chapter 9), and the politicization of Adat and intercultural education (Chapter 10). These topics are drawn together with the objective of understanding the embodiment of Adat’s cosmological and moral ideas in ritual. I see education as immanent in all social practices, especially ritual, and embodiment as a fundamental educative process of such practices. I argue that the embodiment of Adat ideas is achieved in the relationship between the enactment of these ideas in ritual contexts and individuals’ subsequent deutero-learning of these ideas as deeply rooted, unconscious cognitive patterns that organize future perception and behavior.

3. Benefits and Limits of the Study

In addition to the theoretical contribution outlined above, this study also contributes to the ethnology of the world’s societies and cultures. It is the first ethnography of the social organization, indigenous religion, and indigenous educational system of the people of Sikka Regency’s central highlands. More generally, the study adds to our knowledge of religion, particularly in terms of understanding the possibilities for the persistence of marginal indigenous traditions in the modern world. Furthermore, the study benefits our understanding of indigenous education, particularly through examination of the issues that arise when such education is brought into contact with national schooling.

As I stated in Section 1, the local community describe the present situation regarding Adat as dire, yet it is still the case that most Adat rituals are routinely practiced and a considerable amount of time and wealth is spent on ensuring rectitude and success.
loss of tradition that the elders speak of is a judgment best viewed in context to two significant components of the ethos of the community who practice Adat, namely; the superior knowledge of their ancestors, and the overarching power of the Indonesian state. The people view themselves as both historically and politically marginal, whereby the present state of Adat knowledge is measured against both a high opinion of their forebears’ Adat expertise and an appreciation of the inevitable cultural changes effected and promised by Catholic and Indonesian nation-state institutions and ideology. In this sense Adat today is a marginalized religion, and even seemingly small degradations in skilled Adat practice are considered portents of a significant decline.

This situation warrants attention because it is a social event that reveals much about the valorization of religious ideas and practices. One of the core issues for the anthropology of religion today is to understand the processes involved in the establishment and maintenance of religious values. The question is twofold; why do communities value religion as an important part of life, and why do communities value a particular form of religion? In this treatise I investigate the means by which the relatively small indigenous religion of Adat remains valuable in the eyes of its followers. I show that the educational methodology of Adat is based on participation in religious events, especially ritual, and that the religion will only be valued, therefore, so long as it is practiced. Rituals must be continually enacted for the religion to endure, and any erosion of opportunities to carry out rituals will be detrimental to the continuity of the tradition’s cosmological ideas and morality. With this knowledge in hand, social scientists are better able to chart social transformations, development workers are better able to respond sensitively to local demands pertaining to religion, and local communities are better able to protect their traditions, if they so choose.

The relevance of this research for those working in the policy and development of formal education in Indonesia is a function of the relationship between indigenous knowledge systems and state education institutions. P.E. de Josselin de Jong’s (1987: 32, original emphasis) statement that “one has to know and take into account the views, opinions, and norms of the inhabitants of a development region” is now axiomatic in anthropology and development studies. In Indonesia cultural forms have long been recognized as important to the development work of NGO’s and government (e.g., Dove 1988), and yet thus far work in the field of indigenous education has been minimal.

See Schefold (1988) for an analysis of an Indonesian ethnic minority’s marginalization from Javanese centered Indonesian state values.
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(Schiller 1989 is an exception). Instead, progress in this field has largely been centered in the Americas (McCarty et al. 2005: 1). The study of formal education in Indonesia dealing with the curricula, student, and administrative aspects of schools is much more advanced (e.g., Bjork 2005; Eileenberg 2005; Leigh 1991, 1999; Nilan 2003; Parker 1992, 1997, 2003; Schaeffer 1990; Wahyudi 2004). The role of Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) in the educational and wider social sphere of Indonesian life has also been given attention (e.g., Abdullah 1987; Dhofier 1999; Luckens-Bull 1997, 2001; Muhaimin 2006; Steenbrink 1974; Turmudi 2006). However, the overall picture suggests that education in Indonesia has not yet received wide-spread academic consideration, and this applies even more-so to the non-school, indigenous or folk education that is embedded in traditional practices and cosmologies.

The accommodation of indigenous knowledge systems in the classroom can positively influence the educational outcomes of indigenous communities. According to Barnhardt and Kawagley (2005: 10) many educators have recently begun to recognize the limitations of a monocultural education system, and new approaches have begun to emerge that are contributing to our understanding of the relationship between Indigenous ways of knowing and those associated with Western society and formal education. Indigenous educational systems are typically based on an intimate understanding of localized observable processes, both natural and social, and expressed by myths, stories and songs, and incorporate a strong ethic of practical learning. Schools incorporating indigenous education methods in their pedagogy find benefits not only from the development of students who grew up with an indigenous method of education, but also in the new possibilities for knowledge given to non-indigenous students (Cajete 2000; Kawagley 1995).

The definition of a population as ‘capital I’ Indigenous, in the sense of an inclusive pan-cultural identity, can be problematic because it must account for a variety of political, racial and colonial discourses specific to different communities. However, the people among whom I worked in Sikka share many of the characteristics ascribed to Indigenous communities. They speak a language and exhibit many cultural ideas and practices different to that of the Indonesian nation-state and the majority of its citizens. It is a relatively economically poor and geographically isolated area, but also an area where traditional customs are still widely practiced and differences between local varieties of

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15 Similarly, many of the educational difficulties and inequalities they face can be mapped onto the broader issue of ‘minority education’ (Jacob & Jordan 1993; King 2001).
education and the formal schooling system are significant. In these situations, the inclusion of native learning methods complement the state sanctioned methods and enhance the potential for indigenous students academic success (Aikman 1999; Battiste 2002; Kawagley et al. 1998; Spindler & Spindler 2000 [1989]).

However, a depth of ethnography about indigenous education systems is oftentimes too quickly abandoned in favor of describing and critiquing programs to improve schools. Without a solid foundation in the detail of an indigenous education system, its incorporation into schools is fraught with difficulty. For this reason Smith (2005: 95) argues the following:

It is extremely important to build rich ethnographic accounts of Indigenous education because these accounts document innovative solutions, telling the stories of Indigenous engagement with education and highlighting issues to be debated or further researched.

This thesis is a step in the direction that Smith advocates, and in this way will be of practical benefit to projects relating to educational development, particularly in Sikka Regency and the Province of Nusa Tenggara Timur, which is consistently a poor performer in measures of Indonesia’s education outcomes.

That being said, there are several delimitations to this treatise of which readers must be aware. First, it is a study of the educative aspect of a society’s religion, whereas religion and society encompass a vast array of phenomena. The lives of the community with whom I worked are cosmopolitan and modern. Adat stands beside Catholicism and secular world-views, agricultural practices are adapted to international markets, access to media technology is advancing, and opportunities for higher education are increasing – to mention only a few examples. Although I do not concentrate on the totality of this variety, the reality of the complexity of cultural transformation, modernity, and hybridity is nonetheless implicit in this thesis. In this respect, education must be recognized as a significant factor in the mediation of different ideas and practices, and in schools many people are introduced for the first time to ideas challenging local norms.

Second, while indigenous education covers a wide variety of subjects other than religion, this treatise is focused specifically on religious indigenous education. Traditional – or folk – agricultural practices, biology, mathematics, art, and medicine and healing are some of the diverse phenomena that are taught and learnt by the Sikkanese community.

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16 In the villages in which I worked radios are common, televisions are few (I counted three sets in Romanduru) but increasing, mobile phones are becoming more popular, and internet – although now accessible in the town of Maumere – is still unfamiliar.
My decision to concentrate on religious matters was in part guided by the people with whom I worked. The moral significance and elemental value of the Adat canon and liturgy was foremost in people’s minds, and therefore foremost to this project. In sociological terms this focus is also sound. Adat is the fundamental ideological source of the relationship between individuals, the community, and their world. A study of the educational methods and theories found in the education of Adat is an appropriate starting point from which future studies of other educational phenomena can flow.

Third, the methodological orientation of this thesis is ethnographic and the theoretical orientation is primarily influenced by social practice theory and embodiment theory. Studies of education can also draw from statistical, historical, psychological, sociological, cognitive and neurophysiological disciplines. Indeed, education is a model for interdisciplinary study. As ethnography, this thesis is aimed towards describing an education system that is articulated in religious ritual, and in this way the theory of ritual and education I expound is a small, but clearly defined, advance. Treating ritual as a system of education imposes tight boundaries on the analysis because one must always be mindful of participants’ learning experience. I have chosen to view rituals as practices in which the cosmology of Adat – even its most abstract concepts – is enacted and embodied, and I do not, following Dennett, see ritual as only “memory-enhancement processes, designed by cultural evolution (and not by any conscious designers!) to improve the copying fidelity of the very process of meme transmission they ensure” (2007: 142). This cognitive hypothesis way very well be correct, and my findings do not contradict and falsify it. However, an ethnography of ritual education must be attentive to the development of individual lives, and to their perception of the world and their place in it. In this thesis, therefore, I concentrate on providing a description, made as accurately as possible, of the ritual environments that facilitate learning, and of the particulars of what is learnt in these environments.

Fourth, the very subject matter of Indonesian indigenous cosmologies, which throughout the archipelago are generically called adat, invokes a complex discourse of politics, tradition and indigeneity. The recent volume edited by Davidson and Henley (2007) underscores the manifold ways that regional expressions of adat and a universal form – what van Vollenhoven called the “Ur adat” (Bourchier 2007: 115) – are deployed for political and financial gain in post-New Order Indonesia. Adat throughout Indonesia is

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17 See also Turner (2007). Contrary arguments have also been put forward. For example, Boyer and Lienard (2007) argue that ritual ‘swamps’ working memory.
defined and redefined in both positive and negative ways in aid of controlling natural resources, attracting tourists, supporting political power plays, and affirming individuality and independence. The position of the Sikkanese adat I researched in relation to this national, and international, discourse is, as I see it, at this time quite marginal. I have no doubt that local Adat experts are cognizant of its possible deployment in these spheres, and to a small extent it is already being applied, but Adat remains for the most part a very localized phenomenon.

Interestingly, the public ‘display’ (Acciaioli 1985) aspects of Adat are now almost totally absent from what is regarded locally as authentic spiritual practice. Whereas in the past dance, music, and appropriate costume were important components of many rituals, now they are not. Nowadays these displays are mostly found at Church events, inter-local competitions, and school presentations. Instead, the source of Adat’s sanctity remains in fundamental aspects of ritual activity that enable direct communication between the human and spirit worlds. Through rituals, Adat continues to be a lived tradition in which its cosmology – complete with ancestor spirits, deity, cosmogony, ideology and morality – is not only relevant, but necessary, powerful and capable of affecting life and death changes. It is these locally valued ‘authentic’ spiritual practices that concern me most in this thesis, for it is these practices that ultimately confer the sanctity that motivates and legitimates the rights of adat political movements.

4. Location and Methodology

I conducted field research for seventeen months during the years 2005-07 primarily in the Indonesian administrative divisions of dusun Romanduru in desa Rubit (which has an area of 214 hectares) and I also carried out research in the neighboring desa Wolomotong and desa Baomekot. Romanduru, Wolomotong and Baomekot are also the names of the traditional villages (S: natar gun) around which the more recent administrative divisions were formed. During this period I lived in the central clan house (lepo woga ‘wisung

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18 The ‘bliran sina’ workshop from Watublapi is one example of the ‘globalization’ of Adat. This group performs for groups of tourists organized through a local hotel and have produced a CD recorded in Bali. They are also active in producing woven cloth for export.

19 That is not to say that the same form of politicking that is attributed to the deployment of adat nationally does not also occur within the local Adat.

20 Desa are village administrative units. Each desa in the area I worked contained several discrete ‘traditional villages’. Dusun is the sub-village unit and in fact better marks the boundaries of small Sikkanese villages as they are constituted in a traditional sense.

21 While these three villages were the primary locales of my fieldwork, I also regularly visited and researched in other nearby villages, including Ohe, Watuwitir and Woloklereng.
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wangar) of clan Buang Baling in the village of Romanduru. These villages are located in the central mountains of Sikka Regency (BI: kabupaten) on the island of Flores in the eastern Indonesian Province Nusa Tenggara Timur (NTT) (see Maps 1 & 2).

For the first six months of fieldwork I focused primarily on local language acquisition under the tutelage of Mo’an Hendrikus Rotan, a local high school teacher from Romanduru. Throughout my fieldwork many members of the community contributed with stories, reminiscences, histories, words of advice and innumerable bits of information. In particular, I learnt much about the intricacies of Adat from conversations and semi-structured interviews with Klemens Baleng, Servas K. Belo, Rafael Bewat, Fernandes Don Dalo, Romanus Dalo, Gregorius Goris, Klemens Hago, Herman Hedung, Firminus Lawé, Maria Mathilde, Falens Pale, Pasiusius Pasing, Nikolaus Roja, Teresia Tupat and William Wio. At every opportunity I participated in rituals, made voice recordings and took photographs. I witnessed most of the rituals discussed herein, excepting some of the less regularly performed birth and supplicatory rituals. I was also able to frequent several local schools, from primary to high schools, and witness and discuss the teaching of Adat in local content classes.

Written material, published and otherwise, about the people of Sikka Regency is relatively scarce. The only academic works that focus in any depth on the society and culture of the central highlands are those of Metzner (1982) and Orinbao (1992). Metzner writes about agriculture and population pressure in the region and includes some information and analysis relating to indigenous agricultural practices and land tenure. Orinbao, a local priest and educator, has written variously about custom and mythology throughout Flores, some of it relating to the area of my fieldwork. I have also benefited from reading several bachelor theses (skripsi) from former students of the Ledalero St Paul’s High Seminary that, under Orinbao’s supervision, treat many aspects of the central highland culture and society. Notable among these are those by Mo’a Gregorius (1986), Servasius (1986) and Yohanes Baber (1989). With regard to the neighboring lowland Ata Sikka community and the people of Tana ‘Ai to the east of the Regency, the work of Arndt (1932, 1933) and Lewis (e.g., 1988a, 1988b, 1989, 1996, 1998a, 1998b, 1999, 2003, 2006a, 2006b) provides important comparative material. Lewis’s (forthcoming) translation

22 Although most of my primary informants were male, I also regularly conversed with females about Adat topics, especially with school students and with the women of the house in which I lived. The bias towards male informants reflects both the prevalence of male Adat experts who conduct rituals and the gendered division of social interaction to which I was a part (e.g., groups of men and women usually eat separately).

23 P. Sareng Orinbao, a Catholic Priest (SVD), was also called Piet Petu.
A Lost Tradition?

and analysis of the notebooks of Dominicus Dionitius Parera Kondi and Alexius Boer Pareira24 in collaboration with Oscar Mandalangi is of particular interest for comparisons between the mythology and ritual practice of the lowland and highland Sikkanese.

As I mentioned above, this project is an ethnography and, as such, the fundamental objective is to provide a description made as accurately as possible of the educational system of the indigenous religion of the Adat community. One method I used for obtaining data from which to write such a description is a learning process usually termed participant observation. It is a concept that emphasizes long-term presence and first-hand experience in a particular community. It is a method that largely defines anthropology, yet is also particularly suited to other academic disciplines, such as education studies, seeking insight into the embodied nature of knowledge (e.g., Powell 2006). It is a physical endeavor complete with all the sights, sounds and smells of humanity. It requires a deeply personal involvement with the research subjects, to the extent that the objective validity of the descriptions produced has been questioned (see Rosaldo 1989). However, the method also demands an uncommon discipline on the part of the researcher, what Bourdieu (2003) has called ‘participant objectification’. By this account, anthropologists are intentionally made different from those among whom they work by virtue of the theories and methods they learn at university. This is especially important for those working close to home where subtle social facts are often imperceptible. A field of comparison is established in which the fine line between participating in and being one of is managed. This negotiation of difference enables anthropologists to dig into tacit and implicit meanings, otherwise invisible yet so fundamental to a society (Spindler & Spindler 1992). Most importantly, it makes use of the elementary objectivity of comparison.

During fieldwork, when my fluency in the local language, let alone the ritual language, was limited, trying to gather information from a ritual seemed next to impossible. The complicated orders of ceremony, the numerous objects exchanged and used, and the prayers incanted would go by so quickly that there was little chance to take adequate notes. Ritual activity was full of frantic bursts of seemingly chaotic activity that exploded without warning. To describe and understand in full such a complex activity in a matter of months is impossible, and after hours and sometimes days of exhausting ritual my progress was uncertain: Only incomprehensible scribbles, recordings of the last few

24 Boer (1888-1980) and Kondi (1886-1962) were Sikkanese intellectuals who each wrote unpublished histories of the Kingdom of Sikka (Hikayat Kerajaan Sikka) through their own interest and, in part, under the auspices of the penultimate king, Ratu Don Josephus Thomas (life 1895-1954, reign 1920-1954).
sentences of ritual chanting, and photographs of backsides. Of course, over time and mostly outside of ritual during lengthy conversations and numerous questions things gradually began to make sense. Why send neophytes to such strange places? I suggest that this particular (or peculiar) movement from ignorance to understanding, incompetence to skill, is not a ‘normal’ learning process. An anthropologist learning culture is not like a local child growing into maturity. It is, rather, a truncated learning process premised on difference.

My knowledge of Adat is partial (as all knowledge is) and in many ways different from local experts and laypeople. Mo’an Klemens Hugo made the point (only half-jokingly) that the education of Adat progresses in thirty year blocks: It takes thirty years to become a reasonably competent ritual performer and only in sixty years does one become truly knowledgeable. A year and a half of fieldwork pales by this comparison. My own expectations about what information I wanted in the limited time available, the learning skills I possess, and the participant objectification I assumed, meant I could not (and did not need to) know Adat as locals know Adat. Adat experts, aware of my background and reacting to my own learning biases, would often engage with me very differently than they would with locals, taking on a role more reminiscent of a university lecturer than ritual priest. Perhaps the most significant of these differences was the use of written language. Adat is an oral tradition and rarely is it written, yet my teachers would frequently write down passages of ritual language or mythic histories independently or in my presence, suggesting it would be quicker and easier for me to learn this way – and they were right. At the same time I was inevitably drawn into practicing local ways of learning, such as participating in rituals and living in the rich symbolic landscape, from which I discovered a great deal.

My fieldwork exemplified a meeting and accommodation of different educational methods, brought to my attention by the very focus of the project. It highlighted the similarities and differences between the indigenous way of learning and the participant observation technique as I practiced it. Insofar as there can be a general form of participant observation as an anthropological method – and I am of the opinion that it is only one of the many learning techniques employed during ethnographic fieldwork – it is that the practitioner understands, and himself experiences to some extent, the way in which the research subjects learn about their world.
5. Summary of Chapters

Chapter 2: I show that the community in which I researched has been labeled by outsiders as the *Ata 'Iwang* or *Ata Krowé* and that this name is the product of external historical forces, particularly the empire building project of the royal house from Sikka Natar, and does not reflect indigenous community identification. I proceed to argue that local community identification is formed by networks of relationships between villages and clans that are based on Adat cosmology. I therefore define the community in which I researched as the ‘Adat community’. This chapter contextualizes Adat education to the social organization in which it is practiced.

Chapter 3: The reader is introduced to Adat’s education system. First, I discuss previous descriptions and models of indigenous education in eastern Indonesia. I then explain the language ideology of the Adat community, in which genres of ritual language are contrasted to everyday language. With examples drawn from passages of ritual language I then illustrate the inseparability of language and action in the Adat epistemology. From this basis we see that people learn Adat through participation in the religion, particularly as they are guided by close family in ritual. In conclusion I discuss expert practitioners, for whom initiation rituals, visions and dreams are also an important part of their education.

Chapter 4: Over the course of this and the two following chapters I develop a theory of ritual education on three fronts, and employ it to describe the educational qualities of Adat life-cycle rituals. First, in Chapter 4 I argue that ritual transforms the essential uncertainty of cosmological propositions into unquestionable statements of truth through the self-referentiality of ritual performance. The education of ritual participants is thereby wholly focused towards their perception and recognition of the truth of the canonical ideas that inform the sanctified context of ritual. I outline the birth and childhood rituals of the Adat community, and in a detailed analysis of the *tung puhe oha* and *lodong me* rites I explore the canonical truths they communicate to participants. Although in each case the newborn is the nominal subject of the ritual, all its participants, from the mother and father to other members of the extended family, learn from their experience of these occasions.

Chapter 5: In this chapter I argue that, in addition to the production of sanctified contexts, ritual invokes an environment in which the combination of religious signs, material objects, and physical activity teaches participants abstract ideas through their enactment of the referents of these ideas. Through repeated and profound enactment the truths of Adat are embodied as sanctified deutero-learning. I describe the bridewealth
exchanges that are an essential part of *wain plan* marriage rites and concluded that the complementarity of husband and wife (and their descent groups) espoused by Adat canon is enacted by these exchanges. Participants deutero-learn the meaning and importance of complementarity in that they learn to recognize complementarity as a ‘true’ or ‘natural’ state of husband and wife relations, and, importantly, they learn to thereafter initiate contexts structured by complementarity.

**Chapter 6:** I define the boundaries of the ritual learning environment and explore the differences and similarities in the learning experiences of ritual participants. Cognitive scientists argue that the stereotypy of ritual breaks down the distinction between self and other, and produces unique learning experiences characterised by ecstatic states and gestalt awareness. In my analysis of the final stage Adat mortuary rites collectively called *lodo hu’er*, I argue that although ecstatic or gestalt experience can be inferred in the performances of Adat experts, the majority of participants perform much more commonplace activities. These participants, however, are not excluded from ritual education. All participants contribute in different ways to the production of ritual, and all learn of certain canonical ideas specific to their contribution. At the same time I contend that in ritual all participants uniformly engage with a base-line symbolic and practical learning environment. In this way, although different ritual roles create certain biases in the degree of embodiment of particular ideas, participants’ individual deutero-learning and perceptions of context are also aligned to a high degree by the tight integration of all these different roles.

**Chapter 7:** In this chapter I explore how people learn ritual language prayers and ritual procedure. The flexibility of ritual language and procedure includes the freedom for elaboration, innovation and cooperative discussions beyond the canonical core. This flexibility enables individuals who are tasked with ritual leadership to learn many of their skills during ritual performance. This learning process indicates that the canonical cosmology and liturgy of Adat are not scripted as an inviolate liturgy. The canon and liturgy of Adat reside only in the ‘embodied minds’ of the Adat community members and in the moments of ritual activity. Thus, ritual performance, including its flexibilities, brings into being more than any other medium of Adat (such as myth) a notion of a whole and stable entity called Adat.

**Chapter 8:** This chapter discusses the flow-on effect of ritual education to non-ritual contexts through the process of sanctification. I describe the Adat landscape and introduce
the myths of the origin of the world and the logic of the relationship between the human and spirit domain that these myths express. This logic entails a debt of responsibility for the gift of life given by the deity, and sacrificial rituals are made in fulfillment of this responsibility. During ritual the unity of the deity and the physical earth, as well as Adat landscape categories, are valorized as truthful and important to the well-being of the community. In terms of the ecology of mind, the sanctified deutero-learning in ritual of Adat’s cosmological ideas contributes to the structured contexts perceived by ritual participants outside of ritual.

Chapter 9: I chart the recent introduction of Local Content Curriculum (LCC) in schools and discuss the history of education in Sikka Regency over the long term. I then analyze passages of ritual language used for teaching Adat in a local junior secondary school. The epistemology of the formal school system is overlaid onto Adat in such a way that some meanings this ritual language communicates in its traditional setting cannot be communicated in the classroom and, moreover, new meanings are also added. I argue that the school context contains an authoritative epistemology and pedagogy that challenges the deutero-learning of students developed in Adat ritual practice. However, the inclusion of Adat in LCC classes also provides a window of opportunity through which Adat sanctified deutero-learning gains a measure of relevance in schools.

Chapter 10: In the conclusion to this treatise I reflect on the future of the Adat community’s ecology of mind. I locate Adat in the broader national discourse of indigeneity and highlight current political movements that impact upon the advocacy of intercultural education in Indonesia. I end with recommendations for further research.
The Adat Community

1. Introduction

People of the community in which I conducted fieldwork immediately identify with their own villages and clans. They will usually only generalize further with reference to either clusters of clans living within a single village, clusters of origin villages throughout which clans are spread, or with other clans with whom affinal relationships have been established. These distinctive local groupings, however, have been merged by others into a larger single identity, glossed as either Ata ‘Iwang or Ata Krowé.\(^1\) The community’s position at the margins of a powerful neighboring polity to the west (the Ata Sikka) and a community with a distinctly different social organization to the east (the Ata Tana ‘Ai) has both encouraged collective definitions and ensured that they are very difficult to make accurately. At the same time, the people of the various villages and clans in my fieldwork area exhibit and profess a shared identity (without using the aforementioned ethnonyms) that is primarily made in contradistinction to the Ata Sikka and Ata Tana ‘Ai.\(^2\) In this chapter I explore the causes and implications of the external representations that conjure a neatly bounded and homogeneous community. I then describe the alliance networks and sentiments of community identity that, while being fluid and contingent, are locally more meaningful.

Determining a single definition for a particular community is fraught with difficulty. Geography, language, government, religion, and kinship are only a few of the measures of group membership and identification. And yet, finding the right name for the people studied is traditionally an important classificatory step in writing ethnography. As I

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\(^1\) In the indigenous language of Sikka, *ata* means ‘people’ or ‘the people of’. Thus, Ata Krowé means ‘the people of Krowé’.

\(^2\) In this way the community is, at least in part, defined in opposition to other communities through processes of political contestation (cf. Bohlin 1998).
discussed this with my informants they suggested, to a person, that I refer to their broader community by listing the names of all the villages and clans lying within about a three kilometre radius of the place where we were sitting at that time. The stylistic problem this situation creates is offset by the window it opens onto the diverse ways in which people position themselves vis-à-vis community affiliation. For example, it was always interesting to note when people chose, or were compelled, to identify themselves with governmental administrative units (such as desa or kabupaten) rather than with their traditional villages. Individuals engaged one identity from a hierarchy of identities, usually conditional upon necessity (they were following the rules) or creativity (they saw some good in intentionally making this association). In this chapter I argue that the most highly valued identity and the deepest bond and commitment to other individuals is made under the appellation of villages and clans as they are defined by the Adat cosmology.

The incongruity between local community identity and the boundaries imposed somewhat arbitrarily by the Sikkanese Rajadom, the Dutch colonial administration, and the modern Indonesian nation-state is instructive in emphasizing the contingency of personhood and community. The persistence of a ‘traditional’ Adat-centred community in response to these external pressures is indicative of the importance of the Adat ideology and practices in the current day. Whereas the divisions emplaced by political machinations produce artificially strict boundaries that conceal much of the fluidity of group membership, the community that is built around the importance of Adat, both as a spiritual and social blueprint for living, provides a much more nuanced view of the region’s cultural boundaries.

I define the collective identity of the people of Sikka’s central mountains, including those from the villages of Baomekot, Romanduru, and Wolomotong, as the ‘Adat community’. I reach this definition through an analysis that recognizes community identity as emergent in the relationship between symbolic categories and participatory engagement with these categories (e.g., Kohn 2002). That is, structural relationships, such as clan membership, marriage, and orders of precedence (see Fox & Sather eds. 1996), establish a ‘symbolic community’ (Barth 1969) that is informed by embodied practice that enacts these relationships and builds sentimental bonds between community members.

3 I am cautious using the term ‘Adat community’ because the Indonesian equivalent, ‘masyarakat adat’, has taken on a contested and national political meaning (see Chapter 10). Throughout this treatise, unless otherwise stated, I use the term ‘Adat community’ exclusive of any connotations of wider discourses of indigenous cosmologies and practices represented by the term masyarakat adat.
The Adat Community

I don’t explicitly frame this analysis in terms of the ecology of mind, instead I provide descriptions of locally meaningful categories of identity (including houses, clans, and villages) and explain the relationships between them (by marriage, multi-local clans, and structures of precedence) that both reinforce these categories and create wider community affiliation. Thus, with this chapter I establish a base from which to explore indigenous education and ritual using the theory of the ecology of mind. Ritual and education undoubtedly influence community identity, and I will discuss this further in the following chapters, however, the basic categories and relationships of identity treated here are foundational to all of the Adat community’s ideas and practices, and thus must be described in detail.

2. Place and People

Sikka Regency in the eastern Indonesian Province Nusa Tenggara Timur (NTT) is constituted by 11 kecamatan (sub-districts). The villages of Baomekot, Romanduru, and Wolomotong (the places of my field research) are located on the border area between sub-districts Kewapante and Bola. The 2006 figures put the population of the Regency of Sikka at 282,795, of whom at least three quarters speak the Sikkanese language and its dialects. Other groups who reside in the Regency are those from the outlying island of Palue, the Lionese speaking people who mainly occupy the western edge of the regency, the Lamaholot speaking people at the eastern border regions, Muslim fishers (most of whom originated from Sulawesi) who inhabit the northern coastal fringes, and the various ethnic Chinese and intra-Indonesian business people and government officials who have made Sikka their home. The populations of sub-districts Kewapante and Bola are 35,618 and 28,641 respectively, and the former has a population density of 444.39 people per square kilometre, which is one of the highest densities for a rural area in the province. The population of desa Rubit (in which Romanduru village is located) in 2005 was 1752, made up of 403 households, and the dusun of Romanduru was populated by 224 people in 53 households. The other desa in which I worked show similar figures.

The indigenous language spoken in these villages is a dialect of Sikkanese, a language that Wurm and Hattori (1983) classify as part of the Flores-Lembata (Lomblen) Subgroup in the Timor Area Group in the Central Malayo-Polynesian Subgroup of the non-oceanic

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4 These people are often referred to as the ‘Ata Muhang’.
5 The average population density for the Sikka Regency is 159.65 p/km².
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Austronesian languages. Locally, this language is called ‘Sara Sikka’ and three dialects are conventionally discerned, but a formal dialectological study has yet to be undertaken. For this reason, and in lieu of my argument for an anti-essentialist definition of the Adat community, I cannot identify absolutely the dialect of the people with whom I worked. Whilst being mindful of dissimilarities with other localities within the Regency, in this thesis I will simply use Sara Sikka (S) to denote the language indigenous to my fieldwork site. Most people also speak the national language Bahasa Indonesia, which is used in schools, on official occasions such as governmental meetings, and when trading or otherwise engaging with non-Sikkanese speaking people. However, the indigenous language is most frequently spoken, albeit now with a considerable mixture of Indonesian words and phrases (the local language is often revealingly called bahasa itan, which is a mixture of Indonesian and Sara Sikka meaning ‘our language’). In houses, villages and gardens, when discussing all manner of topics from sport to politics and, most importantly for the present work, during discussions and performances of Adat, the local language is used. This language is also formed into a formulaic register of ‘ritual language’ involving semantically parallel couplets and quatrains used for prayer, advice, speeches and histories.

The majority of the people with whom I worked are small landholding farmers. Even those who work as schoolteachers, government officials or middle-man traders (such as people who buy fish on the coast to bring back and sell in the villages) usually own and work small gardens (S: uma). The area is mountainous (Romanduru is approximately 550 metres above sea level) and studded with narrow ridges (wolon) and steep valleys (napun). Most plots of farmland are located on the steep slopes running from the edge of habitable land on the ridges down to the small streams at the bottom of the valleys. Nowadays cash crops are mostly grown and sold to merchants in the coastal trading centre of Geliting.

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6 Sara means ‘way’ or ‘method’ and is cognate with the Indonesian term ‘cara’.
7 Conventional designation of the three dialects are: First, a dialect also called Sara Sikka is spoken along the south coast of the Regency from the villages of Bola to Sikka Natar and Lela and northwards into the vicinity of Nita, Koting and Maumere. Second, the people of Tana ‘Ai from the eastern region of the Regency use a dialect called Sara Tana ‘Ai which has approximately 6000 speakers. Third, located geographically between these groups, where I conducted fieldwork, is the yet imperfectly defined group of people who speak a dialect conventionally called Sara ‘Iwang-Krowé (see Fox & Lewis 1993: 20).
8 Dissimilarities include the dropping of ‘g’ from many words. Thus, in lowland Sikka the term of address for men is ‘mo’ang’, whilst at my fieldwork site, and in Tana ‘Ai, it is ‘mo’an’.
9 Although I have no access to reliable data on average sizes of landholdings, from my observations it is apparent that most farmers own between one quarter and one half of a hectare, and the largest landowners rarely have more than two hectares of arable land.
Cocoa was introduced and subsidized as part of the Flores Timor Plan in the 1950’s and has become the primary cash crop year in and year out. Vanilla, coconut, and cloves are also cultivated. Various fruits and vegetables such as banana, corn and cassava, which are generally used for personal consumption, supplement these commodities. Domesticated animals include pigs, dogs, cats, chickens, goats and horses. Estimations of average income are problematic because yields are highly variable and prices liable to fluctuation. In times of low yields families may have only an income of 40 USD per month, and in better times it is possible for the larger landholders to earn hundreds of US dollars per month.10

The pace of life is set by the changing seasons and agricultural timetables. During the rainy season (December – March) days or even weeks can go by when even leaving the house is a difficult proposition such is the volume of rainfall and strength of the winds. In the dry months leisurely days tending the garden are broken by frantic activity when crops are ripe for harvest. Farmers and laborers will work from sunrise to sunset, climbing trees to pick the coconuts, cloves or cocoa. Every available clear space in the village is used to spread out and dry the crops, which are then parcelled up and sold to agents. Although rituals are conducted throughout the year, the rate increases during these dry periods, especially for large events such as marriage. Women primarily prepare and cook food, sew and weave cloth, look after children and tend to the myriad of jobs required to keep a house together, as well as helping the men with agricultural duties. Observance of Roman Catholicism is extensive, and Sunday Mass is well attended and local choir groups practicing hymns often provide a gentle soundtrack for weekday evenings. Community projects are frequent and certain days are reserved for the construction or maintenance of public roads and buildings. Some men have traveled throughout Indonesia to places including Sulawesi, Papua, Sumatra and Kalimantan as part of the government sponsored transmigration scheme. After a number of years farming or laboring many returned home with enough money to build houses and establish their families. There are also numerous women from these places who have married and returned with their husbands. Ujung Pandang (Makassar), the provincial capital of South Sulawesi, is a popular destination for work and higher education, rather than the smaller provincial capital of NTT, Kupang.

10 These figures are derived from informal conversations with several community members and are not intended to be representative of wider statistical trends.
3. The Invented Community

Of the Sara Sikka speaking peoples five separate societies have been defined by scholars. They are the Ata Sikka, the Ata Tana ‘Ai, the Ata Krowé, the Ata ‘Iwang and the Ata ‘Iwang Geté. The latter three are often conflated into one cultural/dialectical group called the Ata ‘Iwang-Krowé. In this section I will discuss the historicity of the category Ata ‘Iwang-Krowé as it is applied to the community in which I worked. These terms are used almost exclusively by the lowland Ata Sikka, and are considered pejorative by many of the people to whom they refer. I contend that the use of ethnonyms that connote a bounded and homogeneous society that, in effect, does not exist is the product of a monumental development of the region’s political landscape as the Sikkanese Kingdom (BI: Kerajaan Sikka) took shape. Lewis (2006a: 205) has argued that the foundation of this petty state

…involved a shift from a social world made up of many centres of local, ritual power to that of a polity in which the raja bore a singular power that, while delegated through new institutions of government, overrode the powers of the old local centres. In those centuries, the Sikkanese brought about a profound shift from a polycentric and polycosmic to a monocentric and monocosmic culture.

I contend further that the reconceptualization of culture from something ‘poly’ to ‘mono’ that took effect among the lowland Ata Sikka did not take full effect in the villages and clans of the central mountains. The ethnonyms Krowé and ‘Iwang are employed by the Ata Sikka because, having defined themselves in a homogeneous fashion under a single polity, they then did so for others. That these others were not subsumed under the name Ata Sikka is a testament to the fact that, whilst certainly at times allied with the Ata Sikka, the people of the central mountains were never fully incorporated into the Rajadom.

It is apparent from previous studies that the ethnonyms Krowé and ‘Iwang are problematic categories, corresponding neither to well-defined centres nor boundaries. In his 1982 study of agriculture and population pressure in Sikka Regency Metzner provides a brief survey of early European classifications of the people living in the region. He writes:

In Sikka the physical anthropologist Keers (1948: 47) distinguished a strongly mixed, enterprising, well-educated people living along the coast [i.e., the Ata Sikka] and a dolichocephalic group which he found in an almost pure state in the mountains of Maumere…This group which Bijlmer (1929: 18) called kroënese and Wichmann (1891: 151) ‘ata kroë
and which is known today as krowe or ‘ata krowe is likely to be of Melanesian origin (Keers 1948: 47, 75, 145) (Metzner 1982: 64f).

In footnotes to this passage Metzner continues that the Ata Krowé are labeled locally as Ata Gerong in the area of Ili/Kangae, Ata ‘Iwang around the villages of Klo’angpopot, Hale and Hebing, and Ata ‘Iwang Geté around the villages of Hewotklo’ang, Baomekot and Ohe.

Lewis (1994: 6) has written of a similar division between groups called Krowé and ‘Iwang Geté that is constructed both geographically and politically:

In referring to the other peoples of the district, the Ata Sikka distinguish the peoples of Krowé and those of the area they call ‘Iwang Geté. Krowé is the region of the central saddle of the district which includes the villages of Nita, Koting, Nelé, Tilang, Ribang, Dokot, ‘Ili, and Kéwapanété, and which extends to Bola on the south coast. ‘Iwang Geté…includes the villages of Watublapi, Héwoklo’ang, Klo’angpopot, Halé, and Hébing. Embedded in the distinction between Krowé and ‘Iwang Geté is a significant classification: the peoples of Krowé were ruled by the Raja of Nita (a rajadom under the Raja of Sikka created by the Dutch), whereas the people of ‘Iwang Geté were not part of an indigenous polity.

We see that, although Metzner makes a distinction between ‘Iwang Geté, ‘Iwang and Gerong, and Lewis is more specific about the positioning of the Krowé population, there is general agreement between both authors concerning the distinction of these communities from the Ata Sikka (see Map 3). Importantly, Lewis (2006a: 194) later notes that these classifications are made only by the Ata Sikka, and not by those to whom the ethnonyms refer.

Attempts to delineate the location of Krowé and ‘Iwang have struggled with the seemingly nonexistent centre and vague boundaries. We rely instead on a grab-bag of villages which, whilst admittedly important, are by no means the totality or even the largest or most famous of the traditional villages in the central mountains. For example, although Ohe has long been a place of traditional significance, it is only recently that a human habitation of any size has been present. Equally, Watublapi was only a small satellite of Hewotklo’ang until the Catholic mission built a church there in 1936 and encouraged greater settlement. Arguably larger and more traditionally significant villages such as Romanduru, Wolomotong, Klo’ang Rotat, Watuwitir and Maget Legar, to name but a few, are not included in the definitions.

The conventionally applied ethnonyms for the societies of Sikka Regency are, for want of a better phrase, Ata Sikka-centric (the name of the modern Regency reveals the
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domination of the Ata Sikka). The term ‘Ata ’Iwang’ in Sara Sikka means people from the rural interior or highlands, and in its most pejorative sense can mean something equivalent to ‘hillbilly’. Yet, whatever the choice of ethnonym and difficulties in defining centres and boundaries, these names, written in scholarly and political documents, do nonetheless lend an air of legitimacy to the representation of discrete and homogeneous communities. It is clear from my fieldwork, however, that the people from the villages of Romanduru, Wolomotong and Baomekot do not use a single ethnonym above the level of village and clan. If pushed on the issue people are more likely to step from these small, traditional categories to the modern kecamatan (sub-district) classification. As I stated at the beginning of the chapter, this does not mean that they don’t endeavor to distinguish themselves from the Ata Tana ‘Ai and Ata Sikka at every available opportunity, it is simply that this unit of differentiation is hard to pin down.

If, for a moment, we unify the Ata Sikka with those they call the Ata ‘Iwang-Krowé, there are patent discontinuities in many aspects of social organization between these people and the Ata Tana ‘Ai. The Ata Tana ‘Ai at the eastern end of the regency, whilst linguistically and cosmologically very similar to their western cousins, show considerable disparity in terms of their structure of social organization and ritual activity (see Lewis 1988a). There are numerous other points of dissimilarity, but perhaps the most important is that rights to membership, land ownership, ceremonial wealth and ritual responsibility in Tana ‘Ai are shared by and remain within the matrilineally defined descent groups called lepo (house). For the Ata Sikka/’Iwang-Krowé these are aspects of patrilineal descent groups.

The discontinuity between the Ata Sikka and those they call the Ata ‘Iwang-Krowé, however, is not manifested in such sociologically sharp contrast. From published sources pertaining to the Ata Sikka including Lewis (1996, 1998a, 1998b, 2006a, 2006b) and Arndt (1932, 1933), and from my own research, it is evident that in terms of social organization and Adat religious practice there are only minor structural variations between the lowland Ata Sikka and central highland community. For example, the system of descent and affinal alliance, bridewealth and counterprestations, and ritual performance are all very similar. There is a pressing need for more ethnographic data, particularly in the interstitial zones between my research site and Sikka and Tana ‘Ai, but it is still

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11 This raises its own problems, because Romanduru and Baomekot are in a different sub-district than Wolomotong.
12 The Ata Tana ‘Ai are considered by some Ata Sikka to possess a culture that reflects an earlier stage in the evolution of the Ata Sikka and Ata ‘Iwang-Krowé cultures (see Lewis 2006a:193).
ethnologically conservative to state that the social structural differences between the Ata Sikka and the Ata Tana ‘Ai are much more pronounced than those between the Ata Sikka and those they call the Ata ‘Iwang-Krowé. We must ask, therefore, for what reason did the Ata Sikka create the Ata ‘Iwang-Krowé ‘supra-village and clan’ category when they are socially very similar?

The answer, I suggest, lies in the history of the Ata Sikka and their royal ambitions. According to Boer’s and Kondi’s ‘Annals of the Kingdom of Sikka’ (*Hikayat Kerajaan Sikka*), the Sikkanese Kingdom began with Don Alésu da Silva’s return to the coastal village of Sikka from Malacca where he had met with Raja Worilla in the mid to late 16th century. Don Alésu was the sixteenth in a line of Sikkanese rulers, beginning with Raé Raja, who are said to have originally come from Bengal. In Malacca Alésu had obtained both a political education and regalia, including a number of elephant tusks figuratively named ‘mast and sail’ (*S: mangung lajar*). Also accompanying him upon return was the son of Raja Worilla, Augustinyu da Gama, who was tasked with evangelizing Catholicism. With his ivory in hand, training from Worilla, and Christianity, Alésu set out to expand the dominion of Sikka. The true extent of the kingdom’s influence in these early days is very difficult to ascertain, and its fractious relationships with neighboring kingdoms (such as Nita, Kangae, and Larantuka) in the colonial era has added to the complexity. However, the Kingdom’s close working relationship with both the Roman Catholic Church and the Dutch colonial administration (regulated by self-rule [D: *zelfbestuur*] treaties, begun in 1859 when Portugal ceded Flores to the Dutch) ensured its statehood was marked by economic prosperity and political authority, making it one of the largest and most successful kingdoms on Flores. The Kingdom of Sikka ended in 1959 with Don Paulo Sentis da Silva (reign: 1954-59), the 16th King and the younger brother of perhaps the most influential modern King of Sikka, Ratu Don Josephus Thomas Ximenes da Silva (reign: 1920-1954), who had represented Flores in the short lived Nation of Eastern Indonesia (BI: *Negara Indonesia Timur*).

How much influence, then, did the Kingdom of Sikka have over the people living in the central mountains? The little that we can know of this story begins with Don Alésu’s forebears, Mo’ang Bata Jawa and Mo’ang Baga Nang, who are the first Sikkanese rulers to have traveled (*S: lako napung bar wolong*) to the area around Romanduru, Wolomotong and Baomekot. Boer and Kondi date these travels at the mid sixteenth century and attribute to them the establishment of trade ties between the inland inhabitants and the

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13 The exact year of Alésu’s journey to Malacca is unknown.
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Bugis from Makassar. During these trading expeditions Bata Jawa and Baga Nang are claimed to have drawn the people into villages (who were previously living scattered throughout the forest) and inaugurated the offices of source of the domain (*tana pu’an*), earning them the position *ina geté ama gahar* (the great mother and high father). These claims, however, were met with amusement from my informants who deemed it an unrealistic attempt to usurp a sacred tradition to gain political power. Lewis (2006a: 197) states also that the institution of *tana pu’an* must have existed before these events.  

Stronger evidence of Sikka’s relationship with the villages and clans of the central mountains comes from the alliances established by the first Raja of Sikka, Don Alésu. It is noteworthy that Alésu’s brother, Mo’ang Kéu, was a resident of Baomekot, where his descendents live to this day. We are able to ascertain the alliances that were established throughout the central mountains from Boer’s description of the Ten Sitting Lords. These were positions in the Rajadom’s hierarchy (below that of the *Raja* [taken from the *Lepo Geté* clan of Sikka Natar] and the *Kapitan* [drawn from the other clans of Sikka Natar]) that represented clusters of villages with which the kingdom had an alliance. Lewis (2006a: 189) has plotted the locations of these villages and two clusters fall in the vicinity of my research site, namely; Maget, Baomekot, and Tadat (whose ‘lord’ was a member of clan Keupung), and Watuwaitir, Kokor, Pogong and ‘Ai Bura (under clan Wodon). Furthermore, one position was held by a member of clan Buang Baling (the *tana pu’an* of Romanduru) whose area of influence was in the village of Dobo and surrounds. Boer enigmatically dates this arrangement in ‘ancient times’ and no further evidence is given of either political alliance or, indeed, complete subjugation. Very little is then said of the central mountain people in the *Hikayat* until the modern period, beginning with the reign of Raja Andreas Jati in 1874, and even here they are cast as marginal players. This silence is perhaps a measure of the import these ‘Ata ‘Iwang’ held for the Sikkanese.

During the Netherlands Colonial Administration (1859-1942), the Japanese occupation during World War Two, and the subsequent move towards Indonesian independence in the mid-twentieth century, the position of the central mountain villages in the political landscape was fashioned by the emergence of the kingdom of Kangae and clashes

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14 It is curious, furthermore, in light of the idea that an expansion of sovereignty corresponded to a reduction in the significance of the office of *tana pu’an*, that an assertion for sovereignty would include a claim for the introduction of the office.

15 Alésu and Kéu had the same father, Baga Ngang, but Kéu’s mother was Du’a Plu’e from Wolomotong. Alésu’s mother was Du’a Hengar da Cunha (born in Lifao, Timor).

16 The Kangae kingdom was formed under Dutch auspices in December 1902 after a series of rebellions against the Sikka kingdom came to a head with the violent actions of Mo’an Tek and
between the kingdoms of Sikka and Larantuka. The villages were only ever partially annexed by Sikka, Larantuka or Kangae and were constantly divided and re-divided among these Rajadoms and their corresponding colonial administrative units. For example; in the 1911 division of hamente\textsuperscript{17} the villages were split on the border regions of hamente Hewoklo’ang, Wolokoli, and Wairgete, in 1930 they were split on the borders of hamente Wolokoli and ‘Iwang Geté, and in 1954 they were split on the borders of hamente Hewotklo’ang, Wolokoli, Doreng and Wairgeté (see Map 5). Drawing on van Eerde (1923: 95-100) and Hens (1916 II: 150), Metzner (1982: 77) notes that tribute from the hinterland villages to the Rajadoms were usually only paid under armed pressure, and in 1902 the King of Larantuka himself led 1000 men into the villages of Heo and Hewoklo’ang to extract overdue taxes. Metzner goes so far as to state that “\textit{de facto} neither Sikka nor Larantuka ever succeeded in bringing this densely populated dissected hill and ravine area (\textit{wolong-napung}) under firm control” (1982: 78). The present-day Indonesian administrative divisions reflect these complexities entailed from trying to ‘fit’ the villages into a single unit, and the villages are now split between the sub-districts of Kéwapanté and Bola.

In summary, the people of the central mountains of Sikka Regency have historically occupied a position marginal to the great political entities of the region, and continue to do so under the Indonesian state. The existence of a bounded and homogeneous populace called ‘Krowé’ or ‘Iwang’ is a politically motivated fiction. Defining a more immediate, experiential, and emotionally relevant community identification for the people of the central mountains is a matter of both recognizing the importance of their villages and clans, and defining the networks that connect them. And it is to these matters I now turn.

4. The Lived Community

There are several matrices from which a sense of community grows among the people of the central mountains. For a visitor who arrives in time for the Indonesian independence day celebrations on the seventeenth of August the passionate nationalism is remarkable. Equally, local schools, both government and private, impress with their strict use of the national language, formal portraits of the President and Vice-President, and curriculum designed to inspire national pride in the students and teachers alike. The Roman Catholic

\textsuperscript{17} Hamente (also gemeente) was the Dutch colonial administrative division below that of Onderafdeling (Subdivision), and is approximate to today’s kecamatan (sub-district).
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Church is also a major factor in reckoning community. Allegiance to parish and diocese and the religion’s central figures is significant for its contrast to the majority Muslim nation. The community of villages and clans I emphasize in this section, therefore, is only one of many ways group identities are articulated. I argue, however, that it is still the most salient in terms of grassroots application and practice. To invoke the indigeneity of these relational structures, in that they existed prior to Indonesian or Catholic influence, would be an unsatisfactory a priori explanation. The villages and clans have their roots in Boer’s ‘ancient times’, but they continue to be made meaningful only by the continued relevance of Adat, especially as they are manifested through contemporary social relations.

First, it is important to note that the region’s origin villages (natar gun) and clans (suku or kuat wungun) are inseparable because villages are constituted by clan wards (‘wisung wangar). Clans, moreover, extend their field of influence outside their origin clan wards because clan lineages (lepo woga) are also located in other villages, either having established ‘wisung wangar in other origin villages in the distant past or settled in the new villages that have sprung up as the population has increased. Only origin villages are constituted by ‘wisung wangar and possess the central clan sacrificial ritual altars called wu’a mahé. These wards and altars, of which each of the origin village’s clans has one, are the nexus of village and clan identification. That is, through these plots of land and assemblies of stones different clans join as one village.

Like all places of religious importance in the region origin villages have ritual names, usually consisting of a three or four word elaboration of the common village name. For example, Romanduru (see Figure 1, overleaf) is also called duru puhun glisik meten (the duru blossom gives a glimpse of hope), Wolomotong is motong wuan wau menik (the motong fruit gives a sweet scent), and Baomekot is sika liman bao mekot (shoo away the banyan tree scorpions). In one striking example the ritual names of the villages of Romanduru and Wolomotong are connected in ritual language quatrain verse. Thus:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{duru ripa gera puhun} & \quad \text{over at the duru trees stands the blossom} \\
\text{motong lala gera wuan} & \quad \text{up towards the motong trees stands the fruit} \\
\text{duru puhun glisik meten} & \quad \text{the duru blossom gives a glimpse of hope}
\end{align*}
\]

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18 Large, recently constituted non-origin villages are called ‘natar werun’ (new village). Small settlements that are located within a tana as overflow from the ‘natar gun’ (origin village) are called ‘klo’ang’ (hamlet). These settlements are not located on ‘wisung wangar. However, some natar tana (such as Klo’ang Popot and Hewotklo’ang) take the name klo’ang. It is possible that in the distant past these villages developed from klo’ang into independent tana.

19 In Sara Sikka the banyan (L: ficus benjamina) is called bao.
In a botanical idiom this verse tells of the emotional and sexual attraction of young women from Romanduru to the young men from Wolomotong. The verse not only speaks of a relationship between the villages, it articulates a specific type of relationship in which the two villages are joined through the binary opposition of female and male. This implicates the villages in a value-laden relational structure that is shared by many other aspects of Adat life, most notably marriage. However, this was the only combination of village names I was able to discover, and the specific inter-village relationship it expresses is not a relevant manifestation of alliance today.

All origin villages are located in their own domain called a *tana*, each of which has a source, or founder, called the *tana pu'an* (source of the domain). In fact, the village and domain are essentially the same entity, and are unified in the phrase *natar tana* (village domain). Domains in this area of Sikka are relatively small adjoining parcels of land demarcated by borders (*duen geté hoat mosang*) signposted by certain physical landmarks such as trees and valleys, in ritual activity located at the borders, and in the memories of
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community members (see Figure 2 and Map 4). The *tana pu’an* is the clan (manifested specifically in the head-person of that clan) that was the first to settle in the area, establish a ‘*wisung wangar*’ ward and erect a *wu’a mahé* altar. The villages are formed around this source clan by the subsequent inclusion of other clans who also establish ‘*wisung wangar*’ and erect *wu’a mahé*. There are two types of *tana pu’an*; the *tana pu’an hoak héwér* (the source of the domain who has pinned his headdress to the tree) is the foremost source of the domain, and he may delegate authority over segments of his land to the *tana pu’an luli hodan* (the source of the domain poured out from the bowl). With the position of *tana pu’an* comes the responsibility for the well-being of the land and success of harvests in the domain. In return for this responsibility the source clan receives tribute called *wawi peping ara piong* (the pig’s jaw and rice offering) from the other clans. The *tana pu’an* is primarily a spiritual position based on a close relationship, via the particular *tana*, with the deity *ina nian tana wawa, ama lero wulan reta* (mother of the earth and land below, father of the sun and moon above) who is, in effect, the *tana* itself (see Chapter 8).

Figure 2: Mo’an Gregorius Goris conducts a ritual (*lodong uru tada*) at the borders (*duen geté hoat mosang*) of the Romanduru domain.
The number of clans residing in a village varies.20 The village of Romanduru, for instance, has the highest density of clans of the villages in which I worked, they being clans Buang Baling (tana pu’an), Mana, Klukut Mude La’u, Wodon, Lio Lepo Gai, Lio Watu Bao, Keitimu (or Keytimu) Lamen, Keitimu Wain, Wewe Niur, and Ili Newa. I have counted thirty-five clans in the region, however most people were not concerned with establishing an accurate count, perhaps another indication of the region’s fluid cultural boundaries. In ritual language the phrase kuat wungung21 is used to designate a clan, whereas in everyday language it is called a suku. The phrase ata kuat is also frequently used, meaning ‘people of the clan’; thus ata kuat buang baling means ‘people of the clan buang baling’. Otherwise simply ata, as in ata buang baling (the people buang baling), is employed. These clans are patrilineal descent groups engaged in exogamous and asymmetric affinal relationships (indirect exchange) with other clans. Women must always marry outside of their father’s named descent group, and in doing so enter into the descent group of their husband. Members of the same clan are called ue lu’ur livun, wari lodar lélên, or simply ue wari. Ue (or wue) means elder sibling and wari means younger sibling. The terms lu’ur and lodar literally mean ‘successive’, ‘lined up in row’, or ‘straight’, whilst livun and lélên mean ‘together’ or ‘in union’. The close lu’ur relationship, denoting people of the same clan, can be contrasted with dolor relationships which denotes people who are related but of different clans (see Lewis 1988a: 191 for the Tana ‘Ai form of lu’ur dolor relationships).

There are only four occasions in which a male is able to change clans. The first three of these are made under the umbrella term woter lo’en (buy the spirit stone) and in each case a male child is returned to his mother’s clan of birth (as instances of direct exchange). First, in pu lepo laban (nephew knocks at the house) a man asks for the return of his sister’s child. Upon the completion of the ritual and exchange of goods the biological father of the boy creates the ritual barrier mapa duen dolor daman (barrier lies twice in a row). This ensures the boy has no further rights within his father’s clan and has in totality

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20 According to Keesing’s (1975) usage, these descent groups are properly called a ‘clan’, rather than a patrilineage, because whilst members share primordial ancestors they are not reckoned by a continuous known line.

21 Arndt (2002 [1933]: 101) defines the kuat wungung of Sikka and Nita in terms of totemism, he states that kuat wungung are “a group of people who have a special relationship with a particular species of animal or plant and because of this relationship they are unified with each other.” My data supports this definition only insofar as each clan has specific taboo plants or animals which cannot be consumed. However, nowadays such totemic taboos have little practical relevance to the majority of the community, and membership to a descent group is measured more so through descent and marriage.
entered the clan of his mother’s brother (pu lamé). Second, in mé deri lepo (child sits with the house) a man asks for the return of his daughter’s child. This is conceptually similar to the first type, the only difference is in the agent who ask for the child (i.e. the mother’s brother or father, rather than the brother). Thirdly, with wihi ta’in temo dulak (fill the stomach, load the womb) a man asks for his wife’s brother’s child. This case is quite different to the others as it involves obtaining a child from a wife-giver clan rather than a wife-taker clan. All are extremely rare events and it was explained to me that they occur only when clans have an excess or shortage of males. Although my data is insufficient to draw precise conclusions, it is probable, however, that the former two cases have a socio-cosmological significance relating to the ‘return of the blood’. This process is common throughout eastern Indonesia and is manifested as ama ‘lo’én exchanges in Tana ‘Ai (Fox ed. 1980; Graham 1991; Lewis 2003). The final instance of a male changing clan is with a marriage of the type lébo kuat (cook the rice to enter the clan). When a man and his clan are unable to fulfill the bridewealth demands of his prospective wife’s family, but desire the marriage to proceed, he enters into (and the couple’s children remain in) her natal clan.

Within a clan, which are large corporations, social and ritual life revolves around the smaller nuclear family units, known locally as an orin or lepo woga (both of which mean house). This arrangement is typical of the Levi-Straussian ‘house’ communities found in eastern Indonesia, in which houses double as physical edifices and units of kinship, linked via the cosmological principles embedded in the house’s construction and pattern of social relations (see Cunningham 1964; Fox 1993). A house essentially consists of an ina (mother), ama (father), and mé (children) who are nara (brother) and winé (sister). ‘Social’ houses are created through marriage, dissolved when the couple dies, and remain unnamed except insofar as the names of the family members are used. The house of a clan’s head-person, however, is always called the lepo geté. In distinction to the broader clan, people of the same house often refer to themselves as ue wari lepo woga (brothers of the house). In ritual language lepo woga is always used in preference to orin, and my informants stated that lepo woga connotes a slightly wider family circle than orin, and includes

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22 Fox (1980a: 12) writes: “the ‘life’ that a brother and a sister share can be restored only by the marriage of their children or the descendents of their children; in other words, the life, or blood, that a sister takes with her when she marries may be returned to her brother’s group through her daughters.”

23 In Tana ‘Ai, however, it is a female who is returned.

24 Lewis notes that among the Ata Sikka this type of marriage is called léma lepo (to climb up into the house) and the children of the marriage remain in the house and group of their mother and are called mé deri lepo (child remains in the house).
paternal aunts (‘a’an) and uncles (ama geté/doi), and their parents and children. There is no little confusion about the exact nature of orin and lepo woga (as well as kuat wungun) because definitions vary widely. For example, in the villages of Hewotklo’ang and Nitung Kangae lepo refers to the descent group operating at the same level as kuat wungun (clan) does in Romanduru. And in Tana ‘Ai lepo, whilst subsumed within the clan, functions itself as an independent exogamous descent group.

5. Networks of Alliance

For the people of Romanduru, Wolomotong, Baomekot and surrounds, community identity is founded in the houses and clans to which individuals belong and in the villages where these groups are located. This primary level of identification, moreover, entails a secondary level, in which relationships are formed between clans via marriage, and between villages via the multi-locality of clans. When conceptualized in this way the community does not possess strictly marked boundaries. Instead it is made of paths or channels of association extending individual identities into larger networks of association.

The following passage of ritual language is taken from the Adat marriage ritual (wain plan). It juxtaposes the house, clan and village social units by configuring all as products of the union between man and woman. Thus:

\[
\begin{align*}
&du’a naha gi’it deri lepo & \text{the woman must powerfully create the home} \\
&mo’at naha mangan plamang woga & \text{the man must strongly care for the house} \\
&ma hu’u beli sai ata wungun & \text{go bearing giving people a descent group} \\
&ma kobor beli sai ata kuat & \text{go carrying giving people a clan} \\
&ma moni beli sai ata ‘wisung & \text{go sweeping giving people a dwelling place} \\
&ma orok beli sai ata wangar & \text{go clearing giving people a village ward} \\
\end{align*}
\]

Marriage is the source of social segmentation and the clan wards (‘wisung wangar) represent the unification of the diverse multi-local clans (as they are manifested as lepo woga houses) within a single village. I will come to the ‘wisung wangar momentarily. First, it is important to note that the segmented descent groups produce the means for alliance.

Exogamy ensures the interdependency of descent groups because the groups are reliant upon each other for their reproduction. This is expressed in the somewhat cryptic, yet popular, local expression wait ata lodo ‘a’an (wives give birth to [lit. drop] aunts). Wives move from their natal descent group into their husbands’ clan, and produce children for that clan. Of those children, the females will marry into a third clan, and so also allowing
this clan the means for reproduction. 'A’an (also ’a’a) are classificatory father’s sister, and generally signify any female who must marry out of the ego’s clan. Thus, from the women who marry into the ego clan (wives), come the women who marry out of the ego clan (aunts). The system reproduces itself through the transfer of reproductive potential (i.e., women) between ‘wife-giver’ clans called ina ama and ‘wife-taker’ clans called mé pu. These exchanges are contracted with bridewealth and counter-prestations. The movement of both women and valuable goods culminates in the marriage ritual, and in Chapter 5 I explain how this physical and material connection is transformed into moral, or sentimental, alliances between the different groups.

Marriage alliances in eastern Indonesia are not necessarily political alliances, particularly when marriages are organized by ‘houses’ and do not require the involvement of all the clan members. Fox has emphasized this point, writing “clans are not political corporations and hence their involvement in alliance is not exploited for political ends” (1980a: 8).25 Instead, marriage alliances are recognized sui generis. As such, marriage alliances accord an intrinsic status imbalance in which wife-givers (who are in effect ‘life-givers’) are superior to wife-takers. The type of marriage also shapes the alliance. For example, an alliance between clans related through a normal wain plan marriage is different to that of a lébo kuat (cook the rice to enter the clan) marriage mentioned above, in which no bridewealth is exchanged and the husband enters his wife’s clan. The politicization of marriage is also obviated by the fact that any single clan could potentially have dozens of wife-givers and wife-takers, and these days many marry people from different societies altogether.26 As Gordon (1980: 65) has pointed out among the Manggarai of western Flores,

…exclusive relationships between wife-giving and wife-taking groups are not maintained to such an extent that any one group always gives wives to and always takes wives from the same other groups.

The alliance of marriage is one that is personal, material and, in context to the spiritual and social significance of marriage, religious. Of course, community politics cannot be totally divorced from the alliance, but it is not an essential, or even prominent, aspect of the marriage alliance.

Political alliances are more readily expressed through relationships between clans within a natar tana (village and domain) and, by extension, between villages which share

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25 Barnes (1974) has argued this case in reference to the Kédang.
26 In Romanduru there are several women from Java and Sulawesi who have married local men.
the same member clans. In other words, alliances between villages are crystallized by the alliances of multi-local clans within villages. The clan wards (‘wisung wangar), and the ritual altars (wu’a mahé) that stand upon them, are the physical representation of the integration of disparate descent groups into a single village. The closely aligned wards make neighbors of the clans. Houses are built within metres of each other, water is gathered from the same spring, and men, women and children of different clans share their lives. The ritual altars stand side-by-side in the middle of the village, and on special occasions (such as the lodo hu’er ritual discussed in Chapter 6) all are jointly offered sacrifices. The structure of the political alliance within villages, however, is shaped more by the social manifestation of this integration than the physical. This type of alliance is a mode of precedence, in which the relationships between clans are mediated by their unique origins. The structure of precedence alliances is founded on the position of the ‘source of the domain’ clan which, as I mentioned earlier, is attributed with the first discovery and settlement of the village and domain.

The position of ‘source of the domain’ is part of the wider traditional Adat political system, which is constituted by the men and women of a village who are members of a clan with a wu’a mahé ritual altar.\(^{27}\) They and the ritual altar share a single identity as wu’a du’a mahé mo’an (the lying stone women and the standing stone men). Through this relationship these men and women are also engaged in a special relationship with the deity. The female element ina nian tana wawa is represented by the flat wu’a du’a stone of the altar complex, and the male element of the deity ama lero wulan reta is represented by the erect mahé mo’an stone. The people who take these positions are collectively called du’a mo’an watu pitu (women and men of the seven stones) or, alternatively, du’a litin pitu mo’an ler walu (women of the seven bases, men of the eight supports). From the point of view of the general populace (ata riwun ngasun) the responsibility of this council is expressed as follows:

\[
\begin{align*}
&bake wi’in sai nora ata du’a litin pitu & \text{lift yourself with the women of the seven bases} \\
&tena lahi weli miu dagir wawa wa’in & \text{freeing you from the vines tangling your feet} \\
&ore wi’in sai nora ata mo’an ler walu & \text{raise yourself with the men of the eight supports} \\
&tena lahi weli miu bolet karang kaét reta alan & \text{freeing you from the branches scratching your head}
\end{align*}
\]

\(^{27}\) A village may include individuals or families for whom there is no mahé or ‘wisung. In the past I suspect this group consisted primarily of refugees or slaves (ata maha). Although villages are still very exclusive, nowadays many village populations include some free-settlers with no previous attachment to the domain.
In the past specific duties were required of the members of this Adat council. Not all of the positions are still valid today, nor, indeed, is there general agreement on their composition. Metzner (1982: 111), from the 1940 *Memorie van overgave* of Maumere *Controleur* Rusconi, relates council positions that are slightly different to my data, as are Arndt’s (2002 [1933]: 173) observations from Sikka and Nita. Some of my informants equated the traditional council positions are to current Indonesian governmental posts. For example, the *mo’an ‘wara wolon* (also called *mo’an gai*) is thought to resemble the current position of *Kepala Desa* and the *mo’an kokokek* is thought to resemble the *Kepala Dusun*. Today the council operates in an informal capacity as a loose group of clan heads and other influential and interested elders who discuss and review local government policy, implement village based projects, and organize the village’s ritual obligations. The only council position still of formal relevance today is that of the source of the domain (*tana pu’an*). It is significant, given the upcoming discussion of sanctification, that this position is the most spiritually potent, intimately connected to the land, and the wellspring of the hierarchical relationship between clans.

The institution of the *tana pu’an* is established in the clan histories. These mythic histories are formally related in chanted ritual language oral histories called *ngeng ngerang* and tell of the journeys of the earliest ancestors as they traveled great distances to eventually arrive and settle in the origin villages. As such, clan histories are examples of what Fox (1997) has called a ‘topogeny’. In reference to the Meto of Timor, McWilliam (1997: 103) explains that a topogeny is an...ideology of affiliation through fathers to sons [which] tends not to be expressed genealogically in the record of particular generations of named ancestors, but rather spatially across the landscape by associating the group’s name with specific places and named localities. This holds true for the community with whom I worked. Membership to clans is immediately reckoned through patrilineal descent, however the historical corporate

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28 My data suggests the positions were: 1. *Mo’an tana pu’an* (source of the domain). 2. *Mo’an ‘wara wolon* (the man who carries the hill) also called *mo’an gai* (man of the rattan) who was the nominal political head, protector of borders. 3. *Mo’an urun blon damar gahar* (the man of the long torch and high resin lamp) who was the judge, police and war leader. 4. *Mo’an mangun lajar* (the man of the mast and sail) who was judge and diplomat (note that *mangun lajar* is a representation of the ivory distributed by the raja of Sikka Don Alésu). 5. *Mo’an kokokek* (the man of the crowing and bleating) who was the distributor of news. 6. *Mo’an uran dara* (man of rain and sun) who ensured the balance of the wet and dry seasons. 7. *Mo’an buwun gajon* (man of the ridgepole and water ladle) who organized the food requirements for large rituals.

stability of clans is not reckoned by unbroken genealogies stretching back into the distant past. Clans are defined both contemporarily by the lives of one’s grandfathers, grandsons and those in between, and historically by the journeys of one’s earliest ancestors. An ego’s clan, for instance, is defined as *tana pu’an* because his known agnatic ascendants held the positions of *tana pu’an*. And these people were *tana pu’an* not because the ego clan can unfalteringly trace their lineage back to the first ancestor, but because the clan has a chanted history that identifies this ancestor as the first to journey to and settle in the domain. In effect, a sleight of hand is effected whereby topogenic clan affiliation is underpinned by genealogical affiliation at a contemporary level, and genealogical affiliation is underpinned by topogenies at a longer-term historical level.

The social manifestation of the *tana pu’an* institution is an inter-village alliance between clans based on a structure of precedence. For example, the *tana pu’an* of Romanduru is clan Buang Baling whose earliest ancestors Du’a Wio Bota and Mo’an Supung Balen Sina traveled from the island of Bali and were the first to settle in Romanduru. The following excerpt of the Buang Baling history begins at Klo’ang Gunit, a temporary settlement near Romanduru where Du’a Wio Bota pause in search of water:

```plaintext
a’u Wio a’u Bota
I am Wio I am Bota
580 teri puput ling kiok
sitting to fan the flames
ora dota degang kletak
swinging my hammer and striking
ulit eh ra’i wair
my skin is dirty, needing water
boir sa mara wair
my throat is dry and thirsty
po ita wair noru pu’an
we look for a water spring
a’u huk du uku aka
I think and deliberate
nera du pokang peker
I meditate and consider
a’u huk poi e uwung
I think deep in my heart
nera poi e nain
I consider with my life’s breath
ana tupat kokor
a basket made from plaited coconut leaves
590 sisi ora awu luk
filled with fine ash
pete e abu i’ur
 tied to the dog’s tail
ahu Jawa abu Mola
the dogs named Jawa and Mola
ahu ia bano dete
the dog leads the way
```

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30 Du’a Wio Bota are two women and Mo’an Supung Balen are two men whose names are combined as one, as is stylistically often the case in *ngeng ngerang*. Male partners of early ancestors are often left out of the narrative after an introduction.
Wio and Bota then follow the trail of the ash as the dogs run in search of water. The narrative takes the listener (or in this case the reader) on a tour of the streams and spring waters that surround the village of Romanduru:

- **awu ia luk lurus** the ash is fine

The discovery of a viable waterhole confirms the wisdom of Wio and Bota. They then excavate the spring so that the water ‘flows free and pure’ and walk up to survey the site of their future settlement:

- **wae e ripa ba’u** heading down to the right
- **ripa wair puat rano dadin** to the spring waters forming a pond
- **wair ia meting poi marat poi** the water there has dried up
- **ahu ia bano dete** the dogs lead the way
- **ripa lawang ba’it henan blanun** to Lawang Ba’it Henan Blanun

- **loret loret ripa ba’u** descending further down to the right
- **ripa wair herit bere seng** to the spring of Herit Bere Seng
- **ia du meting poi marak poi** there it is also dry
- **ledu leder lau ang** in single file down they go
- **era ni’a era kliat** standing looking, standing considering
- **ahu ia poa wi’in poma wi’in** the dogs splash and play in the water
- **a’u ata higi mitan** I am a wise person with colored teeth

The discovery of a viable waterhole confirms the wisdom of Wio and Bota. They then excavate the spring so that the water ‘flows free and pure’ and walk up to survey the site of their future settlement:

- **di ni’a lau a ita** now I look down, seeing
- **teking ora kebung rebu** carrying a branch of sugar palm wood
- **‘o’i wawa wa’u ali** shoveling and digging downwards
- **ali ‘ata golo wair** digging and finding lots of water
- **lema reta loki klasar** ascending to the rocky outcrop
- **ahu gitu beli wair** the dog sees and gives water
- **wair wulut liro linok** at wair wulut liro linok

---

31 **Ripa** is a directional adverb that refers to the right of the speaker when facing down slope. **Ba’u** is a directional verb that means to descend.

32 **Ata higi mitan** literally means ‘people with black teeth’. Its extended form **ata higi mitan here meran** means ‘people with black, yellow and red teeth’. These phrases refer to the idea that people are creatures who smoke tobacco and chew betel and areca quids. By doing this smoking and chewing people are separated from lesser creatures, and are thus ‘wise’.

33 **Sugar palm** (BI: **enau**) (L: **arenga pinnata/saccharifera**).

34 This rocky outcrop is located at the centre of Romanduru village.

35 **Wair wulut** is the name of the Romanduru drinking water spring.
ahu i’ur jewa jaong the dogs tails wag and splash the water
wai dahi rawong the water flows free and pure
a’u Wio a’u Bota I am Wio I am Bota
hu’i ripa wa’un ta’u bathe and collect water there
popo ripa wa’un te wash and dry there
ban buno ripa napun blatan the cool water flows through the valley

Having found a spring around which to establish a village the two women are joined by Du’a Saru and Du’a Watu, ancestors of two other clans. Du’a Watu married Mo’an Blua to form clan Klukut Mudé La’u, and Du’a Saru married Mo’an Bela to form clan Mana. In the following installment the structure of precedence is introduced. As the pair from clan Buang Baling meet the newcomers they invite (pahar) them to stay and build a village together (line 664, 665, 670). Thus:

a’u Saru a’u Watu I am Saru I am Watu
a’u hu’i wali ang ta’u I bathe and collect water there
popo wali ang te I wash and dry there
a’u lair ra’intan golo ue I know who my elder siblings are
wuen36 Wio wuen bota Elder Wio elder Bota
wuen lau nian ngeng they came down inhabiting the land
a’u tangar regang golo I meet and respect them
wuen lau tana ngerang elders who came down dispersed on the land
wuen lau tana ngeng elders who came down with their descendents
wuen Wio wuen Bota elder Wio elder Bota
‘au pahar wi meti pita eagerly you invite us to stay
pahar Saru wai Watu inviting the wives Saru and Watu
idet wi dóë mala pulled in and held in hand
nane Laju du’a Plu’e with Du’a Laju Plu’e
warin lau tana ngerang younger siblings dispersed on the land
uen Wio wuen Bota elder Wio elder Bota
pahar wi meti pita an invitation made eagerly
libu wi’it liar livun together our voices are one
kula wi’it ganu wulan conferring with each other like the moonlight

36 Wuen is cognate with ue (elder).
Lessons of the Ancestors

ita ro’a le’u duru e  
we clear the duru trees

tena song sugo tion  
making the correct measurements of our houses

kara wi’it ganu lero  
deliberating with each other like the sunlight

ita sapi le’u klukut  
we clean away the rubbish

oh tena kadang hereng belan  
oh we ensure the foundations are properly set

song na’in sugon tion  
placing the correct measurements

sugon tion dadi lepo  
correct measurements become a house

680  
a’u Wio a’u Bota  
I am Wio I am Bota

turu welli norawisung  
pointing out a dwelling place

wisung wae lau ba’u  
a dwelling place facing from down there

lau likong tana klasar  
from down at Likong Tana Klasar

lau saru lau watu  
from Saru and Watu

a’u tutur welli ‘au  
I speak and give you

nora wangar  
a place to live

wangar wae wali main  
a dwelling place facing the southern winds

hi’ung wali na glikung  
others glance jealously out the side of their eyes

du’a pli’at ba’a ganu liat  
our women have already built hearths

690  
leta wi’it let wi’it  
inviting and encouraging each other

ta lako dueng geté  
going to visit the great borders

692  
pani wi’it gaging wi’it  
of one mind and direction

bar tana hoat mosan  
calling upon the principal boundaries

tana a’u ler mangan  
the land upon which I lean with strength

dadi ami ruga ba’a ubut tobong  
so we have trimmed off the tips of the trees

nian ami liting gi’it  
the earth upon which we rest with surety

ami paket tadan ba’a olan lahin  
we have raised tadan and marked our place

dena tana ler mangan  
making this land our strong support

In this passage an ‘elder/younger’ (ue wari) relationship is formed between Buang Baling (as elder) and clans Klukut Mudé La’u and Mana (as younger). Thus, the terminology of wue wari, normally used for members of the same agnatic clan, is applied within the village for members of different clans. There is great clarity and forcefulness in the

37 This is the ‘wisung wangar of clan Klukut Mudé La’u, located at the bottom of Romanduru village.

38 This is the ‘wisung wangar of clan Mana, located on the northen side of the village.

39 This sentence refers to the fact that the settlers they have found their place and will go no further. In effect, their freedom has become limited by responsibility.

40 A tadan (or tada) is a spiritual barrier erected around a village with ritual to protect it from harm.
The Adat Community

assertion of the brotherhood of the clans – they are, as is stated in line 692, ‘of one mind and direction’.

The histories of the arrival of other clans reflect the same origin structures. For example, the ngeng ngerang of the clans Wéwe Niur and Ili Newa from Romanduru recounts their origins from a single ancestor, Mo’ang Hila, originally from the village of Nita. At the time of the Ata Sikka proto-raja Mo’ang Baga Nang lived Mo’ang Sisa and his younger brother Mo’ang Hila from Nita’s royal house Lepo Ratu da Silva Nita of the clan Orin Bao Nata Ulun. A long simmering disagreement between Nita and Sikka led to open warfare and Hila headed eastwards intending to gather a mercenary force from the Ata Muhang (of Solor and Alor) to combat the forces from Nggela mustered by Baga Nang. Hila, however, somewhat unconcerned by the threat to Nita made it only as far as Romanduru where he decided to marry and settle, and his descendents formed clans Wewe Niur and Ili Newa. He was henceforth called Mo’an Hila Bura Romanduru, whilst his brother who remained in Nita was called Mo’ang Sisa Mitang Niang Nita. Upon his initial arrival in Romanduru Hila brings with him ‘rebo’ and ‘rama’ rice seeds, which were as yet unknown in the village. Thus, Hila offers to the people of Romanduru something of value:

\[
\begin{align*}
toteng weli miu nora wula nilo tio & \quad [\text{Hila} \ \text{extends to you} \ \text{people of Romanduru}] \ \text{a brightly shining moon} \\
toteng weli nora dala lete wolong & \quad \text{extends to you stars resting above the hills} \\
teto sai rebo inang & \quad \text{spreading the mother rebo seeds} \\
tubuk plulu nete wu’ung & \quad \text{all the shoots growing in line} \\
nona sai rama amang & \quad \text{planting the father rama seeds} \\
tawa gata nete matang & \quad \text{seeing the growth of all the shoots} \\
ia ita ea menu ta’ing & \quad \text{then we eat until our stomachs are full} \\
tena tinu blatang kokong & \quad \text{and drink cooling our throats}
\end{align*}
\]

That the newcomers bring with them a skill or resource lacking in the existing community, in this case the knowledge to plant and cultivate rice, is a common theme in clan histories. In this way, the temporal superiority of the tana pu’an is tempered by the necessity and advantage of co-operation with other clans. In fact, each clan is characterized by ‘essential’ strengths and weakness. These stereotypes are formalized in

\[41\] Note Mo’ang Sisa Hila are said to have introduced rice in the Sikka region from Lio (see also Orinbao 1992).
ngeng ngerang and used jokingly to tease and provoke. Once Hila has shown himself resourceful and a worthy member of the village, the tana pu’an clan, Buang Baling, invite him to stay:

55 ata Buang pahar the people Buang invite us to stay
   a’u Wio a’u Bota I am Wio and Bota
   pahar wi eti pita asking you to stay now
   ita tena wue livung we become siblings together

The clans are thus joined in the village as though elder and younger brothers:

71 dena waring lodang leleng making us brothers together
72 ita wue bua lu’ur livung we are as blood brothers

And the domain of Romanduru and Buang Baling becomes Hila’s home, the place where he and his descendants in the clans Wéwe Niur and Ili Newa find their ‘strength and might’. Thus:

88 niang a’u liting gi’it this earth is my strength to lean on
   toteng weli a’u nora tana you extend to give me this land
90 tana dena blatan kokon land to make my throat cool
   lala klo’ang Kaha Wolo Wirang here at Klo’ang Kaha Wolo Wirang
   mage mitang dalo merang with the black acidic and red nest-ridden earth
93 pu’an to’a nata waing the trunk drum at the village foot
94 klereng bala nata ulung the elephant tusk at the village head
95 tana a’u ler mangang this land is my might to rest on

Hila’s treasure (ngawun gun) of a ceremonial moko drum (pu’an toa) and an elephant tusk (klereng bala) (lines 93 & 94) and were brought from Nita to the natar tana Romanduru/Buang Baling are still found today in the hamlet of Eha (see Figure 3 & 4 overleaf).

The passages of clan histories presented above establish a hierarchy that is archetypal for all clans and domains in the region. A domain is first discovered and settled by a particular clan, and subsequent arrivals are incorporated into the settlement under the

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42 For example, clan Keitimu is famous for its cunning. It is said in the distant past when clans Buang Baling and Keitimu met on their journey to their respective tana, the people of Buang Baling were having difficulty finding food. Keitimu told them they should take the cassava they have and plant it, so that later they are able to enjoy the harvest. But, opined Keitimu, they must be sure to cook it first! Later that day Keitimu snuck around and collected the planted cooked cassava for their own enjoyment.
Figure 3: The *pu’an to’a* (moko drum) of clan Wéwe Niur. From left to right: Mo’an Romanus Dalo, Mo’an Simon Nogor, Du’a Dolfina Nurak, and Mo’an Nikolaus Noang.

Figure 4: The *klereng bala* (elephant tusk) of clan Ili Newa seen with the individual next in line to protect it (*mo’an jaga*), Mo’a Lorensius Laka.
Lessons of the Ancestors

protection and responsibility of the first clan. This form of social organization is a variation of a structure, or order, of ‘precedence’, which is an analytical concept primarily developed by the Comparative Austronesian Project (e.g., Fox 1996; Lewis 1996; Vischer 1996). In Romanduru, the clan mythic histories represent the distinction between first clan and subsequent clans in terms of a distinction between elder and younger. The asymmetric relationship between the clans of a domain are therefore valorized in a way that in part duplicates the relationships of elder and younger siblings which constitute individual clans (e.g., *ue wari lepo woga* are the ‘elder and younger brothers of the clan house). The Romanduru structure of precedence burdens the source, or elder, clan (*tana pu’an*) with the honor and responsibility of mediating the relationship between the deity (as the deity *is* the domain – see Chapter 8) and the people who live upon her. The position is by no means dictatorial. By virtue of their co-residence on the same *tana* all the clans are united in a fraternal bond: ‘we are as blood brothers’ (line 72) and ‘this earth is my strength to lean on’ (line 88) exhorts the clans Wéwe Niur and Ili Newa towards clans Buang Baling, Mana and Klukut Mudé La’u as they come to live in *natar tana* Romanduru.

However, this structure of precedence only operates within *tana*, not between *tana*, and a clan who is ‘younger brother’ to the *tana pu’an* of one territory can be its ‘elder brother’ in another. Whereas the social stratification evident *within* domains and villages is based on the different origins of clans, the relationship *between* domains and villages is a function of the multi-locality of clans. That is, precedence relationships within villages bond clans together, and the multi-locality of clans bond villages together. Overlaid on this politically oriented alliance are the sentimental connections, ritual obligations and material exchanges consequent upon exogamous marriage. In this way, individuals, clans and villages are linked together in a series of networks that are not bounded and limited, but fluid and potential. Community identification is not made with discrete cultural blocks, but is constituted by membership to particular paths of relationships mediated by clanship.

5. Conclusion

I collected the clan histories presented above jotted in the notebooks of Mo’ang Elias Esi, a native of Koting who in the late 1960’s traveled as a young man throughout the region recording clan histories and other Adat knowledge. The Buang Baling history was

43 It is common throughout eastern Indonesia for structures of precedence to be organized or represented by the trope of ‘elder//younger’ (see for example, Fox 1989; Lewis 1988; McWilliam 2002: 19).
recorded from a chanter from this clan named Mo’an Raga Dobo Piring from the village of Dobo. The Wéwe Niur/Ili Newa history was recorded from Du’a Plagan, a descendent of the royal house of Nita. During my fieldwork I did not witness clan histories recounted with the depth and breadth of description, or the remarkable poetics, of these examples. Nonetheless, the fundamentals of clan histories are still widely known and spoken by members of the community in various situations. For example, they are chanted immediately before or upon death to ease the transition of the soul to the afterlife (see Chapter 6). Simple mytho-historical narratives are even written down (mostly in prose) for school homework assignments as part of the local content curriculum (see Chapter 9).

Moreover, the precedence of the tana pu’an clan is still enacted on formal ritual occasions. Whereas in the past the tribute wawi peping ara piong (the pig’s jaw and rice offering) to the source of the domain would occur regularly with harvest, nowadays it mostly occurs when public village land is put to use. I have witnessed three instances of this tribute, all components of rituals that consecrate construction (laba lepo sorong woga). Two were in Romanduru and involved the building of a school (SMA Santa Maria) and an improvement to a footpath, and the other was for the building of a Catholic chapel in the village of Woloklereng (where the tana pu’an clan is Lio Watu Bao). The tribute on each occasions was a token amount of money which signified that the tana pu’an had given permission for construction on these parcels of land. Besides ritual, the responsibility of the tana pu’an is regularly manifested in almost every discussion or action relating to major developments on the domain. For instance, the suggestion to grade a road through the centre of Romanduru to ease access problems for those living at the bottom of the village was vetoed by the tana pu’an. The road would have required the destruction of some natural rock formations and possibly the replacement of a wu’a mahé. Both consequences were deemed unacceptable by the tana pu’an, and an alternative route was used.

Van Wouden’s (1968: 9) seminal assessment of eastern Indonesian societies argued that there is an “essential unity of social organisation, myth and ritual”. It follows that if the Adat cosmology is still vital, its attendant forms of social organization will also be vital (and vice-versa). The formality and synchronicity of van Wouden’s model is now outmoded, and more recent methods for the analysis and comparison of eastern Indonesian societies take as their focus ‘metaphors for living’ (Fox 1980b), whereby the dynamic interplay of local dualistic categories is emphasized. The most recent studies have

44 SMA is an acronym of the Indonesian ‘Sekolah Menengah Atas’ (Senior High School).
transformed the field even further with a due recognition of the influence of embodied knowledge and inter-subjective relations in the creation and maintenance of social relations (Allerton 2004; Keane 1997; Reuter 2002; Tsintjilonis 2004). However, the essential point remains the same throughout. A pattern of social relations, and the communities it invokes, is beholden to a feedback relationship with the ideas and practices with which its members answer the question; What is existence? In this regard, Adat’s answers are still very relevant.

Metzner has written of the decline of Adat among the people of the central mountains. Twenty-five years ago he asserted:

Most Adat institutions have lost much of their power since the beginning of this century when evangelization was increased and Pax Neerlandica came to Sikka...Likewise the institution of the tana pu’ang and the council of elders dealing with land issues (du'a mo'ang watu pitu) have also disappeared in most of Central Sikka (1982: 86).

In lowland Sikka this may be correct, but in the central mountains it is not. Whilst in Sikka “the tana as a territorial institution did not survive the transition to the modern government in the regency” (Lewis 2006a: 195), in the central mountains the tana (domains) and tana pu’an institution are undoubtedly still important. Tana may not be encoded in Indonesian law, but – as the clan histories and incidents of tana pu’an influence detailed above illustrate – they are encoded in Adat.

I have shown in this chapter, and will continue to do so throughout this thesis, that in central Sikka Regency the practice and efficacy of Adat is held in high regard. At the household altar (ulu higun watu mahang) and the two clan altars ('ai tali and wu’a mahé) ritual offerings of rice, egg, tobacco, betel and areca nut, fish tail and sacrifices of chicken, dog and pig accompanied by chanted prayers are regular events. Large public rituals are held on occasions of marriages, funerals, the implementation protection charms, and the building of new houses, roads, and public buildings. Other occasions for ritual include return from or commencement of travel, study or work, times of illness and recovery, and requests for good fortune in any number of endeavors. Adat spiritual healers (S: du’ a mo’an rawin, BI: dukun) are often consulted before or after conventional western medicine has been sought. Adat is a spiritual and ethical code, and it is a political system with an order of precedence between clans that link villages in a network of egalitarian associations. It contains artistic elements, including weaving of cloths, dances, songs, instrumental music, and the poetry of ritual language. And it also involves, as I will be highlighting in the next chapter, an educational system.
In the Sikkanese language there is no umbrella term for people who practice Adat, just as there is no locally meaningful traditional term for a supra-village or supra-clan social entity. The entirety of the world is conceived of as the deity, *ina nian tana wawa ama lero wulan reta*. The most inclusive social units of this world are *tana* (domain), *natar* (village) and *kuat wungun* (clan). Individuals from differing villages and clans identify themselves and their allegiances in relation to the Adat cosmology. This identity is, of course, part of a larger system in which Indonesian nationality, Roman Catholicism, and innumerable other loci of identity formation play a part. However, the indigenous cosmology and social organization of Adat is a major, if not the major, ideational and practical source of community identification. The community I have defined in this chapter, then, can be fittingly described as the ‘Adat community’.
Participation, Family and Adat Education

1. Introduction

Adat is a system of ideas and practices that are representations and enactments of a professed truth. The wisdom, laws, and rituals of Adat enable and assist people to realize this truth and live responsibly in accordance with their position in the cosmos. To this end, Adat provides the community with explicit messages about what Adat is, how it can be learned, and how it should be valued. The educational ideology expressed by the ideas and practices of Adat is the subject of this chapter.

As background to this analysis it is necessary to take into consideration two issues of comparative and linguistic importance. First, I will survey ethnographic reports on indigenous education that are specifically related to religious practice in nearby communities. A common educational theme throughout eastern Indonesia is the efficacy of ineffable and spiritual learning. This is especially the case in the education of religious experts. With the exception of Kuipers (1998), little has been written about the more ordinary learning processes at work in these societies. Second, I provide an account of the language ideology of the Adat community. The advice, myths, prayers, and histories that compose the educational messages of Adat are invariably spoken in the ritual language. This poetic form of the local language carries formal qualities so that its use, in and of itself, is a ritual act that confers upon the content a sacred quality and sociological importance.

From this foundation I will describe the definition, limits and use of knowledge in Adat. The epistemology of Adat is centered on the indivisibility of speech and action. The ritual language, in particular, is deemed a powerful activity that shapes reality with potentially advantageous or, indeed, devastating consequences. Adat rituals must be accompanied by ritual speech, for without it the ancestor spirits cannot be expected to
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attain and participate. In this way, Adat is not only expressed by speech and action, but is also sustained by the unification of the two. This epistemology forms the basis of an educational system in which participation in Adat events is paramount.

Participatory learning has been given considerable attention in studies of indigenous education. Aikman (1999: 122) has emphasized that in participatory systems interaction between teachers and learners is embedded in social relations, and does not proceed in the normal sense of a discrete and separate study time located in classrooms and utilizing written texts. The type of learning that occurs in these ‘informal’ contexts has been defined by Lave (1988) as ‘knowledge-in-practice’ or ‘situated learning’ (Lave and Wenger 1991) and by Heath and McLaughlin (1994) as ‘participatory appropriation’. These umbrella terms capture the essence of the educational method that I introduce in this chapter and describe throughout this thesis. However, it is also important to keep in mind that the imperative of participation means that the educational system is expressed in the contexts of participation and, therefore, must be described by an ethnography focused on local and experiential conditions.

Participatory education in the Adat community is organized around the extended family unit. Under the guidance of parents, grandparents, uncles, aunts, siblings, and cousins a young learner is introduced into a world that includes rituals, sacred sites, ancestor spirits, and the supreme deity. An ethic of discretion is integrated into this education that discourages loose talk as much as it encourages familial co-operation. At the same time, it is necessary to emphasize that while families are the source of a youth’s education, Adat is also a responsibility of the wider community. That is, Adat is constituted by a cosmology and institutions that cross-cut family, clan, and village interests, and all these aspects of community play a part in Adat’s system of education. Finally, I examine the stratification of Adat knowledge and the special education of Adat experts. Through heredity, charisma, or will, fledgling experts are given frequent opportunities to be involved in ritual, and this exposure is augmented by divine sanction in the form of initiation, dreams, and visions. Adat participatory education is a system akin to

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1 In studies of education the category ‘informal’ is generally used to specify non-school educational settings. However, in sociological terms many of these non-school settings (e.g., ritual) are in fact very formal. I therefore try to avoid the terminology of ‘formal/informal’, and instead favor more specific definitions of learning environments.

2 In the ethnographic literature on eastern Indonesian societies the people whose job it is to lead rituals, advise on religious matters, and act as guardians of knowledge are at times called ‘ritual specialists’, ‘ritual priests’ and ‘ritual leaders’. In the present work I call these people ‘Adat experts’ in order to highlight their expert skill and knowledge and to emphasize that their role in the community extends beyond ritual.
apprenticeship. However, the guidance learners receive from family, clan, and village elders is not construed or enacted as formal master and pupil relationships. Rather, the guidance introduces learners into an environment that exposes them directly to the lessons of the Adat deity and ancestor spirits.

While the overt aim of this chapter is to explain local definitions of Adat education, in doing so I am also setting a foundation on which to describe the sanctified contexts and deutero-learning of Adat in the coming chapters. According to the theory of embodiment outlined in Chapter 1, deutero-learning is a process in which individuals learn to organize the primary phenomena of their world into particular contexts. In this sense, deutero-learning is in part an embodied epistemology. The Adat ritual language statements that define knowledge and the ways in which knowledge can be taught and learnt are external representations of patterns of Adat deutero-learning. That is, in the recursive relationship between deutero-learning and context, representations of how the world can be known are produced in, and in turn generate, the practical contexts in which people do undertake to know the world.

2. Indigenous Religious Education in Eastern Indonesia

The few accounts of educational practices of indigenous religions in eastern Indonesia focus primarily on revelatory knowledge through divine inspiration and heredity. In doing so, the learning experiences of experts are given more attention than the experiences of ordinary people. In the majority of these accounts skilled practitioners explain that ancestral spirits or gods give to them through visions and dreams, and often in moments of great need, their deep knowledge of the religion and ability to speak fluent ritual language.

Local exegeses equate the spiritual quality of religious knowledge with the spiritual quality of this divine education. Knowledge about the spiritual domain, particularly knowledge that is able to affect this domain, requires sanction from the supernatural beings within it. In eastern Indonesian indigenous religions the work of experts, such as conducting rituals and using the ritual language, is very much about the ability to communicate with and understand the needs of these beings. The capacity to communicate in this way, therefore, is dependent upon the willingness of the spiritual beings to engage with and support the expert.

Keane (1997) writes that the ritual speakers (wunang) of the Anakalang in Sumba declare that the knowledge of ritual language, and the skill to speak it fluently, is a gift that doesn’t require diligent study. The wunang Ubu Laiya is reported by Keane as saying that
he never learnt his expertise from his father, a fact supported by his long absence from the community during his adolescent years. Instead, according to Ubu Laiya:

You get it from dreams and visions. Like one night you’ll dream the whole path of the dead [a long list of place-names in couplet form recited in mortuary rites], maybe next week you’ll dream marriage negotiations (ibid.: 155).

A similar learning philosophy is held by the Ata Tana ‘Ai of Sikka Regency, of whom Lewis (1988: 256) writes:

While there are many talented chanters in Tana Wai Brama, their abilities are not thought to reflect individual intelligence, talent, or creative ability, but are thought to be gifts of the ancestors…Young chanters acquire their knowledge of ritual language not by study or by memorizing chants but by receiving their knowledge of the language of the histories and the histories themselves in a single flash of insight and understanding.

From ethnographic reports we can distinguish two models of indigenous religious education in eastern Indonesia. First, upon taking up a ritually senior and onerous position, such as clan headship, the neophyte will immediately learn the requisite knowledge. Indeed, it is expected that the ancestor spirits or deity itself will impart this knowledge willingly as they, after all, have a stake in the competence of the expert. The expert will then elaborate on this knowledge by regular dreams and inspirations throughout his or her career. Second, a person may enter into positions of ritual seniority after having been chosen by spiritual beings to receive the requisite knowledge. Although many positions in a ritual hierarchy are hereditary, opportunities for skilled persons to conduct rituals, whatever their initial social position, are also common.

The local confidence in this kind of divine education means that ethnographers are, in most cases, unlikely to encounter any alternate explanations for the education of religious experts. However, education in indigenous religions is not only confined to experts, and can involve more than divine intervention. For example, there are several layers of ritual knowledge to which many members of the community must attend. Small household ceremonies can be conducted by people who are otherwise not regarded community-wide as expert practitioners. Even large rituals call for various skill sets, such as special cooking methods, that require knowledge and input from ‘non-expert’ people. Moreover, religion is not confined to the doing of ritual per se. Some knowledge of songs and dances, histories, genealogies, ethics, and laws is not only important but also expected of the majority of the population, even though it may never be used in ritual. Understanding
these mundane learning processes can lead us to a more complete sociological explanation of expert abilities and divine learning.

Kuipers (1998) provides the most thorough account thus far of indigenous religious education in an eastern Indonesian society. For the Weyewa of Sumba, the method for learning ritual language works to obscure its own systematicity (ibid.: 125). Emphasis on individual charisma and miraculous inspiration means that the more procedural aspects of learning are rarely consciously expressed. Whereas every-day language is considered an automatic part of a child’s development, learning (Weyewa: nunga) ritual language is an adult and responsible choice that must be made intentionally. Becoming fluent in ritual speech (tenda) is described as an act of boldness, requiring the learner to expose himself to much ridicule and even corporal punishment if his public performances are imperfect. And yet, the successful learner is said to draw on his innate cunning (pánde) and his confidence in the imperative of circumstance in order to become a skilled ritual speaker. The learner, whilst purposefully taking on a risky task, still profits from learning techniques that are essentially out of his or her control.

Kuipers contends that the learning of ritual language is not limited by these local explanations. He identifies two other significant methods called “echo and elaboration” and “pragmatic erasure” that suggest a lengthy and pragmatic learning process (ibid: 130). During informal situations when ritual language is used in practice, such as in preparation for an upcoming ceremony, youngsters sometimes contribute to the dialogue with repetition, ‘echoes’, of their elders’ statements. Furthermore, they may elaborate on these repetitions with statements contiguous with the previous couplets and relevant to the discussion. This echo and elaboration technique is only permitted (in the normally sensitive and ordered use of ritual speech) because these less formal situations allow for pragmatic erasure. The statements made by learners are marked with gestures such as lowered eyes and a motionless body position to signify that their input is peripheral to the official discourse. This experience of ritual speaking is invaluable practice for the young learners. It also allows them the opportunity to exhibit their growing skills in front of elders without being subject to strict procedural codes and pressures.

Among the Adat community, the spiritual realm is said to make important contributions to the education of the religions experts. Dreaming (S: mipin) and ‘out of body’ visits to the village of the ancestor spirits (nitu natar noan klo’ang) enable experts to deepen their knowledge and ensure rectitude in religious practice. And although the specific learning contexts identified by Kuipers are not apparent, some of the techniques
are very similar. This, I suggest, is related to different conventions for the use of ritual language compared to Weyewa. Nowadays Adat ritual language is primarily used as prayer during sacrificial rituals and this context is heavily restricted. Prayers are spoken during ritual to communicate with the ancestors and deity, and only very rarely are they employed outside of these occasions. Less sanctified ritual speech forms, able to be used in informal forums and for which ‘echo and elaboration’ and ‘pragmatic erasure’ would be appropriate, have fallen into disuse.3

In Chapter 7 I will discuss learning techniques that occur implicitly within the restricted context of ritual. These techniques include a variation on Kuiper’s ‘elaboration’. At this time, however, I will concentrate on the explicit instructions and advice that compose a charter for the education of Adat. These are lessons addressed specifically to the question of how Adat should be taught and learned. These lessons are found in passages of ritual language said to have been composed in the distant past. They describe a system of education that is not only spiritual in nature, but also very pragmatic in approach. In Sections 4, 5 and 6 I present a number of these texts which illustrate Adat’s pedagogy and the epistemology on which it is built.

3. Words of the Ancestors

Before moving on directly to these texts, it is necessary to first appreciate the language in which the texts are expressed. The language of Adat is significantly different from the everyday usage of Sara Sikka. It is a poetic form that is characterized by ‘canonical dualism’ or ‘semantic parallelism’ (see Fox 1971). This ritual language is highly formal in construction and it employs a rich lexicon of polysemous terms and metaphorical expressions. The very use of it evokes sacred contexts and, most importantly for an analysis of education, to speak ritual language is to speak the truth. It is the language of creation, of the earth, and of the deity and ancestor spirits. It is regarded as ancient and fundamental, it was all composed by beings (be they the deity or the earliest ancestors) not subject to modern frailty.

Like all eastern Indonesian ritual languages, that of the Adat community is used for prayer and can be employed variously for expressions of advice, reprimand, hopes, fears and grievances - particularly for statements so sensitive that they are otherwise unable to be said (Fox 1988: 13). The language is dense with metaphor and challenging to

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3 For example, in the Adat community the chanting of clan histories for entertainment and the use of ritual language couplets in political oratory is nowadays rarely practiced.
understand, sometimes even for veteran speakers. It is also extraordinarily powerful and incorrect use can be dangerous to the speaker and the community. In Indonesian it is called ‘bahasa Adat’ (the language of Adat), however, there is no umbrella term in Sara Sikka, or indeed in the ritual language register, that exactly covers all the various genres. Instead, if not using the Indonesian collective term, people refer to particular types of ritual language that are appropriate to certain situations.

These types correspond with Fox’s (ibid.: 20; also Lewis 1988b: 253) division of ritual languages into two classes; invocations and recitations. Invocations are addressed to spiritual beings as prayers that request certain things from, or provide certain things to, these beings. Recitations, on the other hand, are usually directed towards a human audience and can often be used in a political fashion. These categories are not mutually exclusive. For example, the recitation of clan histories can, by the very use of the ritual language, invoke the attendance of spirits to observe and participate. And invocations often involve recitations of ancestral names and places. However, Fox’s definition is a convenient way to broadly distinguish a speech that involves ‘communication between humans and spirits’ from a speech that involves ‘communication between only humans’. Recitation has more of a political element, and often involves negotiation or dispute between rival factions aimed at asserting social status, obtaining favorable outcomes in bridewealth settlements, or expressing contrition or disapproval. Invocation may also exhibit this political element, but usually in a much subtler form, relating more to the fact it is done rather than to the way it is done. That being said, the flexibility of Adat ritual language does allow room for politically motivated statements to be made during invocatory prayers (see Chapter 7).

Adat community ritual language invocations are much more relevant today than recitations. I mentioned in the previous chapter that the clan histories (ngeng ngerang) are nowadays rarely performed with the depth of the examples I presented. The same is true for the recitations of the educational charter I present later in this chapter. I obtained these recitations mostly through directed discussions with Adat experts. Only occasionally did I hear any spoken in a flow of conversation, and then they were in truncated form as a few lines of ritual speech punctuating common Sara Sikka or Indonesian speech. On the other hand, invocation persists with great frequency and variety. In the next chapter I will argue that this situation is, in part, due to the fact that invocation is integral to ritual activity,
Disentangling the exact definitions of the Adat community ritual language genres proved a difficult task. Although great attention was given to ensuring correct speech, the Indonesian term ‘bahasa Adat’ has become so ubiquitous that most people are not concerned with finding more specific native definitions. More research is needed to clarify the typology of ritual language and the following descriptions are, therefore, preliminary.

The most commonly used invocations are of the type *neni plawi* and *neni not*. *Neni plawi* (request and entreat) is chanted during sacrificial rituals to ask for blessings from the deity and ancestor spirits, specifically in relation to good fortune, wealth, and happiness. For example, the couplet *neni ihin geté, plawi dolo mosang* (request great abundance, entreat much wealth) is a necessary component of agricultural rites (*u’a uma karé tua*). Variations thereof can be found in several rituals pertaining to development and well-being, such as those for the construction of houses and other buildings (*laba lepo sorong woga*) and marriage (*wain plan*). Similarly, *neni not* (request and invite) is spoken during sacrificial rituals, but is directed towards requests for safety and protection from evil.

*Pué sera* (depart and relinquish) invocations are chanted at the time of a person’s death as gentle words helping the spirit to move between the realms of life and death. This genre is also used in other situations when one must enforce a separation between people and spirits. In particular, it is chanted to release oneself from evil when that evil is a consequence of one’s own or one’s ancestors wrong doing. Similarly, *wae heleng* (the cursed face) is a prayer that releases people from evil, although in this case the evil is not brought about by one’s own mistakes. For example, if evil spirits happen upon one’s house at night without reason *wae heleng* chants are used to ward off the unwanted presence.

Recitation types include *nao tonen*, *du’an mo’an* and *kleteng latar*. *Nao tonen*⁵ (stories of advice) imparts advice encouraging the audience to lead a good life and offers guidance for correcting misbehavior. It is in this genre that most explicit educational codes for Adat are to be found. These pieces of advice are for the most part constructed from the combination of elements from other speech genres (usually *neni plawi*).⁶ *Du’an mo’an* (woman and man) is used to express and clarify statements of governmental policy and, as

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⁴ As an indication of the challenges Adat faces from competing ideologies the immanent loss of recitation speech forms is telling.
⁵ Also called *tutur tonen* (speak and direct).
⁶ It must be remembered that according to local exegesis this process of combining was done by the ancestors, and is not thought to be a creative process on the part of the present-day speaker.
such, it is the formal speech of the village and domain traditional governmental apparatus. The title makes reference the women and men of the community who have high religious, political and economic status, that is, their *du'a litin pitu mo’an ler walu* (women of the seven bases, men of the eight supports). Finally, *kleteng latar* (bridging speech) is perhaps the term that comes closest to encompassing all genres, and sometimes it is used as such in preference to *bahasa Adat*. Literally, *kleteng* refers to a bridge made of wood and vine ropes spanning a creek or river. This metaphor evokes the primary function of ritual language as a method for enabling clear and effectively communication, be it between the human and spirit realms, or simply between humans. More specifically, *kleteng latar* defines ritual language that explicates ethics, law or history. In the later case, it is used interchangeably with *ngeng ngerang* clan histories and is used in an argumentative and entertaining manner in which two people recite their clan histories in tandem while testing each other’s knowledge. When clan histories are told to a person who is near death it is to encourage and excite his or her spirit to depart this world and begin its journey to meet its ancestors. Used in this context the histories are called *nuru nang* (persistently urge).  

The salient question for the current analysis is: how does the formality of ritual language affect indigenous education? Local conceptions of ritual language in eastern Indonesia define it as *true* and complete representations of the cosmos in its purest form (e.g., Forth 1988: 134; Kuipers 1998: 11). Anthropological conceptions of the same language, made without reference to an underlying religious truth or falsehood, can also make this claim. For example, Du Bois (1986: 326) contends that the formal structure of ritual speech (i.e., complementarity, parallelism, mediation, and constraints) confers on the speaker the authority of truth by excising the vulnerability that attends personal creativity.

In terms of local practice, the educational worth of truthfulness is clear. There is a greater imperative to teach and learn truth than speculation. By definition the truth is a valuable commodity, and it must be known (though not always by all people). In terms of the ecology of mind, the educational worth of truth is a function of the ways in which truth becomes valued as truth. In Chapter 4 I argue that the invariance, generality, and performative context of ritual sanctify the ideas expressed in ritual language and attributes to these ideas the quality of a ‘truth of acceptance’. Importantly, the acceptance of certain

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7 I have heard another explanation for the genre *nuru nang*. That is, it is a type of prayer used when asking for forgiveness from the deity to repent a great transgression, particularly an incestuous marriage. The prayer is sung in a keen voice and is punctuated by shouts from the gathered ritual participants. In the past *nuru nang* was always led by the *tana pu’an*, but now can be conducted by any capable person.
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ideas as truth is not a matter of the particular meanings of the ideas, rather it is a matter of
individuals learning to recognize their world as being ordered by these ideas. That is,
through the performative context of ritual, the ideas expressed in ritual language become
embodied as truth in a process of deutero-learning.

4. Language and Action

At the very core of Adat is a connection between language and action. This connection is
indissoluble because language is anchored in action, and action is anchored in language.
Ritual language invocations have real effects on the world but, equally, can only be valid
when accompanied by the appropriate ritual activity (cf Tambiah 1985; Du Bois 1986). In
this section I describe the interconnection of language and action as it constitutes the Adat
definition of knowledge. I demonstrate that Adat epistemology is the source of an
educational methodology that is premised on performance. I then compare this
epistemology with speech-act theory, particularly as it is formulated by Austin (1962).

Among the Adat community a person with great wisdom is said to be or have bisa
ngasiang. When combined these two words evoke the skill, compassion, intellect and
modesty that is highly prized and only attributed to eminent people and their
achievements. When defined individually these words provide us with an interesting
insight into the indigenous philosophy of language and action introduced above. Bisa
(sometimes also said as blisa) is an adjective commonly used to describe an ability to do
something successfully. It is thus cognate with clever and smart, but also means able and
adept. Ngasiang, on the other hand, is used to designate the quality of thoughtfulness, a
mental agility that invariably leads one to compassion. The former is about the ability to
act, the latter is about the quality of thought, and individually they can be used to describe
people and behaviour. However, only when used in conjunction do they imply perfection.

Other instructive terms are the verbs plender (to study), gu’a (to work, to do), and tutur
(to speak). Early in my fieldwork when I was studying Sara Sikka people would often call
to me as I passed their houses on the way to meet my teacher Mo’an Hendrikus Rotan.
They would ask “mo’a bura ga’i plender ko (are you going to study)?” However, when
engaged in learning about Adat directly from rituals, or when directly using and discussing
the meanings of ritual language, people would employ the terms gu’a or tutur when
describing my actions. Thus, “’au ga’i bano tutur Adat mora Mo’an Klemens ko (so
you’re off to talk Adat with Mo’an Klemens)?” Or, “kesa doi ita gu’a Adat e we (in a few
minutes we’ll work this Adat).” It became evident to me that one does not study Adat in
Participation, Family and the Education of Adat

The following ritual language passage encapsulates the Adat definition of knowledge. Over only eight lines this passage describes the unity of speech and action and prescribes behavior appropriate for members of the Adat community. It is a nao tonen titled ‘naruk bura lalan delor ganu inan no neing’ (the pure way and the straight path as our ancestor mothers prescribe):

1. wini epan ganu klepa  seeds as fine as the klepa
2. nean go’it ganu kolı  seeds as potent as the kolı
3. pu’at wali tutur blutuk  from the source words emerge
4. tawa wali tena ekak  from the origin actions grow
5. tutur naha repe wa  when speaking the mouth must be checked
6. harang naha eder li’ar  when talking the voice held back
7. gu’a naha pa’ot liman  when working the hands must be controlled
8. dena naha pahar wa’in  when doing the feet must be restrained

Like much of the nao tonen corpus I have recorded, this piece ends (lines 5 – 8) with a practical expression of what people must (naha) do to live within the rules of Adat. In this case the advice promotes restraint and forethought when talking and acting. The passage begins with both a redolently multi-layered botanic metaphor and an abstract explanation of the meaning of words and actions. In the first couplet (lines 1 & 2) we find seeds (almost certainly rice seeds) compared to the klepa and kolı. Klepa is a fine cord spun from the husk of a coconut and is used, among other things, to tie up chickens. Cord made in this way is renowned for its flexibility and ease of use. Kolı means lontar palm and in ritual language also pertains to the alcoholic spirit distilled from the palms juice (which is also called tuak). Kolı is go’it (potent), not because of the significant kick of the beverage, but because of its potentially dangerous spiritual power, manifested most momentously in the ritual kolı wetan. The wini seeds are those seeds gathered from the fields to be stored and used for the next cycle of planting (wini li’in). Nean seeds are those carefully selected from the initial wini stockpile and deemed worthy for planting (nean belan). In the context

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8 The Palmyra palm (borassus flabellifera).
9 If a person is accused of doing a wrong to which they will not admit, or if a person desires to swear a binding oath, they undergo the ritual kolı wetan. For this ‘trial’ a lontar leaf (kolı) and some millet (wetan) is put into a glass of lontar palm gin. Some of the mixture is given to the earth, and the participants drink the remainder. If the subject is lying or breaks his oath he or she will soon suffer disaster.
of this passage, these seeds refer to humans, all of whom are young (cosmologically speaking) and require guidance in their development. Whilst the couplet expresses the quality or potentiality of humanity to be fine and potent, it also articulates tensions between variety and suitability (wini and nean), and between strength and disaster (koli).

The second couplet (lines 3 & 4), which I have translated as ‘from the source words emerge, from the origin actions arise’, is a clear expression of the connectedness of language and action in Adat. Pu’at (also pu’an) is one of the core concepts of Adat. It means tree trunk or the base or stem of any object, but it also refers to anything that is a ‘source’, especially in relation to sacred beginnings. Similarly, tawa means ‘to grow’, but in a more abstract sense refers to the origin point from which something grows. The couplet’s message is twofold; first, it conveys the idea that words and deeds originate in the same place, that is, from the sacred beginnings of the world, and, second, it suggests that words and deeds are the source or origin of all things that subsequently came to this earth. Thus, the first two couplets of this passage of ritual language carry a powerful message about the relationship between people, language and action. It tells us that, according to Adat, the well-being of the community is dependent on words and deeds, both of which were the first to originate from the source of all existence.

This indigenous epistemology corresponds to speech-act theory from the western philosophical tradition. ‘Speech acts’ (Searle 1969) or ‘performative utterances’, as J. F. Austin (1962) has called them, are sentences that cause new states of affairs to be brought into being. Austin initially distinguished these ‘performatives’ from ‘constatives’,10 but in trying to make this distinction it became apparent that all utterances are to some extent performative. He went on to define three classes of performatives, the most significant of which, at least to anthropology, is the class of ‘illocutionary’ utterances.11 Anthropologists (e.g., Bloch 1974: 67; Rappaport 1999: 114) have employed this concept to describe social changes brought about by speech. For example, ritualized utterances are often all that is needed to change a person’s status from unmarried to married.

Although ritual language is an example par excellence of illocutionary force, normal language can also be effective. In fact, entire language ideologies can be marked by the performative quality of speech in what Rumsey (1990) has called ‘enactive’ ideologies. The Western referential and propositional ideology presupposes a partition of words from referents. Enactive ideologies, on the other hand, presuppose the immanence of words in

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10 Constantives are straightforward assertions or statements of things past.
11 The others classes are ‘locutionary’ and ‘perlocutionary’.
actions and, equally, the patterning of actions by these words. Needham (2003) makes use of this concept in her study of Cambodian language lessons in the USA. Thus:

Those born and raised in Cambodia speak of language in terms of performance, and of social contexts and social relationships as being dependent on proper use of linguistic forms (ibid.: 30).

An interdependent relationship between speech and action, like that of the Cambodians, is the bedrock of the Adat community’s language ideology, implicating ritual and ordinary forms of Sara Sikka. However, ritual language holds far more performative (illocutionary) efficacy than ordinary language – from the perspective of both anthropology and native epistemology. For example, ritual language, among other things, facilitates communication with the spirit realm, consecrates marriages, protects, heals, punishes, and eases the transition of death. In fact, it is deserving of the title ‘ritual action’ as much as ‘ritual language’.

The essential unity between word and deed is, for the Adat community, the very basis of all existence. In fact, according to this native epistemology, knowledge and existence are one and the same thing; they are categorically identical. Adat’s abstract ideas are meaningless unless they are substantiated by life’s movement and accomplishment. And activity is meaningless unless it, in turn, is accompanied by symbolic expression of the Adat cosmology. In terms of ritual and the ecology of mind, we can see that the statement of epistemology ‘language and action are inseparable’ is produced in the performance of ritual. This is because a ritual without chanted prayers is insignificant, and chanted prayers without a ritual are equally so. The same statement also functions as a canonical prescription for behavior (be it ritual or otherwise) that is guided by the principle of the unity of word and deed. Thus, the ritual language representation of epistemology discussed in this section is a window into the patterns of deuto-learning of the Adat community. The representation expresses ideas that both generate and are generated by the practical contexts of ritual (which will be discussed in the upcoming chapters) in which individuals then embody, and deuto-learn, these very ideas.

5. Adat Pedagogy and Family Responsibility

Educational methods are decided by definitions of knowledge and conceptions of how that knowledge is assimilated into human life. The use of methods such as memorization, association, practice and repetition, to name but a few, is contingent upon the perceived relevance of these methods to the properties of knowledge and learner alike. Pedagogy, therefore, is a microcosm of the fundamentals of a community’s epistemology and
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ontology. Adat, as I have described it above, entails a definition of knowledge in which language and action are unified and, moreover, can only be properly known by individuals as a unity. This means that learning Adat, even the abstract concepts contained within language, cannot be separated from the doing of Adat. This entails a pedagogy that has a participatory mode of learning at its core. In this section I describe how family (*ue wari*) is the first and closest encounter a child has with Adat, and as such is the cornerstone of this participatory education.

The clearest expression of this pedagogy is made in passages of *nao tonen* ritual language that are built around the couplet *buta ganu wunga wair, hori ganu lado gega* (gather it like the moringa leaf holds water, arrange it like the feathers in a bold crest). There are numerous variations on this theme and they have multiple applications, from introductions or conclusions to public speeches to more personal statements of advice and encouragement. The following passage, from Mo’an Pasisius Pasing of Baomekot, is an exemplary version:

1. *nian waut lero wawa* when the earth is shaded and the sun sets
2. *mai plipin wali inan pirin* come and be embraced at your mother’s side
3. *gon wali aman korok* shelter closely at your father’s flank
4. *dena diri inan mutu kiring* listen to your mother’s soft words
5. *prina aman mutu harang* hear your father’s firm speech
6. *inan kiring wiri wana* mother speaks to the left and right
7. *aman harang papa rua* father speaks on two sides
8. *hino tio h’ar Sina* receive the true voice of China
9. *dea bela rang jawa* accept the fair voice of Java
10. *Buta ganu wunga wair* gather it like the Moringa leaf holds water
11. *Hori ganu lado gega* arrange it like the feathers in a bold crest
12. *gegun gi’it nadar mangan* clutch it strongly and grasp it powerfully
13. *e’o pio e’o loat* don’t pick it off [as corn kernels] or spill it over
14. *lala gete lopa pla’ar* the road is wide so don’t cast it about
15. *wolo blo lopa lebun* the hills are long so don’t be loose with it
16. *dena unen kirek waten kelan* it colors your soul and patterns your heart
17. *kelan naga sawaria* patterned like the *naga sawaria*
18. *iana* thus

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12 *Waten* literally means liver (BI: *hati*). Liver is used in the same way as ‘heart’ is figuratively used in English speaking communities. That is, as the seat of emotion.

13 A *naga sawaria* is a reticulated python, but also describes snakes that are spiritually powerful.
The first few couplets (lines 2 – 7) of the passage are explicit recommendations that family, represented here by the mother and father (but implying other close relatives), are the primary party responsible for a child’s upbringing and education. An infant’s first experience of Adat is during the various birth rituals of which he or she is the subject (see Chapter 4). As they grow older children are expected to participate in family religious life, at first simply attending household rituals and later on helping with the innumerable small duties necessary for the successful completion of major rituals such as marriage and funerals. In these contexts children gain their first understanding of Adat as they watch and help their parents and other close family go about their routines.

The following couplet (lines 8 & 9) instruct learners to treat the knowledge they are exposed to with great respect and precision. China and Java 14 refer not to the actual locations themselves, but to the quality of trade goods and the high standard of material, intellectual and spiritual life perceived to originate there. In other words, these terms are synonymous with excellence. In the context of this passage they refer to the words and speech of Adat itself. The pivotal couplet follows (lines 10 & 11). It utilizes the water catching quality of the *wunga* (moringa) leaf as a metaphor for the care and diligence necessary to learn Adat. *Lado gega* is a type of headwear denoting high status and, though they have not been in use for a long time now, are a well known historical artifact. *Ledo gega* were made from a wooden brow piece dotted with small holes into which feathers were stuck, a process requiring great concentration and precision. These evocative metaphors communicate a simple, but important, message: all knowledge, and Adat in particular, can only be learned through hard work. 

Later couplets (lines 12 – 15) reveal an ethos of discretion and modesty that is highly thought of in the Adat community, as it is throughout Indonesia. Discretion reinforces the importance of the family unit in the education process and, of equal significance, the discrete resolution of problems. In the densely settled villages, where houses stand within metres of each other, familial privacy is a jealously guarded privilege. The passage then ends (lines 16 – 23) with a description of the rewards for learning and upholding the value

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14 In Sara Sikka, ‘Java’ also sometimes refers to the far-eastern Florenese town of Larantuka.
of Adat in these ways. These couplets contain several very interesting metaphors that express the beauty, happiness, skill and social standing of the well educated member of the Adat community.

In sum, the passages of ritual language based on the ‘buta ganu wunga wair, hori ganu lado gega’ theme express a mode of education that is centred on the family. This is chiefly among the ue warì within the lepo woga (see Chapter 2), but also includes close family from other clans. For example, central figures in any child’s life and education are his or her maternal uncle (pu lamë) and aunt (ina doi/getë), and maternal grandparents (ina du’a ama mo’a). The equal use of terms such as ‘embrace’, ‘shelter’, ‘gather’ and ‘arrange’, on the one hand, and ‘words’, ‘speech’, ‘listen’ and ‘hear’, on the other, reinforce the epistemological unity of word and deed I described above. Although ritual is not directly mentioned, according to my informants there is a clear implication that they are at the forefront of this passage’s emphasis on familial responsibility (see Figures 5 & 6, overleaf). This family orientation also highlights the variety of Adat practice underpinned by the independence of clans. Each clan, and often the houses within clans, have individual histories and, in many cases, have unique variations in ritual language and procedure.

There is, however, a common core that runs through the ideas and practices of the Adat community, and variations are never great. Slightly different names for the elements and materials of ritual, slightly different choice of or elaboration on ritual language couplets, and, it must not be forgotten, different locales of worship. Differences also cease to be an issue when Adat is enacted at the domain and inter-domain level – at least for the most part. This core similarity is most clearly represented in the law and ethics of Adat.

Adat is said to keep people within the borders (duen hoat) of correct behavior and, as such, constitutes a legal system based on moral codes. For example, as Adat institutes marriage it also enables separation and punishes infidelity. Adat law has now for a long time had to accommodate Dutch colonial laws and modern Indonesian civil laws. Many

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15 There is no single name denoting Adat rituals, each type is named individually. The terms ‘kula kara’ from the title of Adat experts (du’a kula mo’an kara) is perhaps the closest approximation to a general name, although this is rarely used in speech. Sacrificial rituals, which are included as elements of all rituals, are called either tung piong or piong tewok is sometimes used to refer to a general category of ritual (see Chapter 4). Otherwise, using bahasa Indonesia people refer to ritual collectively as ‘upacara adat’ (Adat ritual). This terminology further exemplifies the local aversion to collective pronouns.

16 One exception is that Romanduru does not partake in the domain-wide ‘tada’ ritual, which creates a protective barrier. Romanduru employs the ‘uru’ instead, which is normally a personal protection charm. Romanduru’s uru, however, functions in the same way as the normal tada. The reason for this is historical, but I am as yet unaware of the exact circumstances.
Figure 5: Mo’an Klemens Hago (left) explains matters of Adat during a *toma ’ai tali* ritual of clan Keitimu aur pu’an to a group of siblings.

Figure 6: A diverse crowd of an extended family including children, young men, and young women witness a *tung piong* ritual.
times during my fieldwork people would lament the lack attention paid to Adat law, and in one case blamed this for a spate of unpunished robberies in late 2005. The laws are based on principles of identity and preservation. They relate the qualities (both good and bad) of humans to the requirements for a balanced and peaceful cosmos. The following passage titled ‘tora ata higi mitan here meran’ (for the people with mouths stained black, yellow and red)\textsuperscript{17} highlights this point:

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textit{higi mitan here meran} \quad you humans are exceptional creatures
  \item \textit{mein bait etan belar} \quad whose blood is bitter and flesh astringent
  \item \textit{lopa hido nora wain ta’i} \quad don’t tread with filthy feet
  \item \textit{gawi le’u duen geté} \quad and crash into the principal border lines
  \item \textit{lopa pelat nora liman miak} \quad don’t touch with dirty hands
  \item \textit{poar le’u hoat mosan} \quad and dive upon the foremost boundary walls
  \item \textit{odi mein sina ba pla} \quad then your valuable blood flows
  \item \textit{etan jawa gogo galek} \quad your precious flesh drops off
  \item \textit{te duen gete gogo bepi} \quad the borders will fall and flatten you
  \item \textit{bepi le’u ta’in biha} \quad flattened until your stomach splits
  \item \textit{hoat mosan batu plaban} \quad the boundaries will strike you from above
  \item \textit{plaban le’u alan bitak} \quad struck until your head cracks
\end{itemize}

As guidelines for keeping a potentially dangerous and unruly human population in check these laws are required knowledge for the community so that they may live in safety and prosperity. The devilish retribution to which people are subject is ample motivation for good behavior. The monopoly of families on education, therefore, is somewhat tempered by society-wide pressures, incentives and institutions that are educative in their own right. In other words, although the education of Adat is ultimately fostered by families, it is nonetheless a community wide responsibility to ensure children learn and obey rules of behavior.

\textbf{6. Expert Practice}

The indigenous pedagogy I have just described is applicable to people from all walks of life. There is, however, a special education for experts. This type of education, while underpinned by the ethic of family and hard work outlined above, requires added sanction from the spiritual realm. Experts are educated and prepared for their special duties by

\textsuperscript{17} As I explained in Chapter 2 this phrase indicates the uniquely human use of betel and areca nut and tobacco that stains the teeth. I have chosen to translate this phrase in the ritual language passage as ‘you humans are exceptional creatures’ to capture its figurative meaning.
initiation rituals and by direct intervention from the ancestor spirits in the form of dreams and visions.\(^{18}\)

The titles of Adat council members that I mentioned in the previous chapter, *du’a wu’a pitu, mo’an watu walu* (women of the seven stones, men of the eight rocks) and *du’a litin pitu, mo’an ler walu* (women of the seven foundations, men of the eight supports), are also applied generally to Adat experts. However, within this class of person there are those whose expertise in the theology and liturgy of Adat is exceptional. To these people the designation *du’a kula, mo’an kara* (measuring women, conferring men) is given. They are skilled in ritual language and procedure, and are considered masterful in many other aspects of Adat, such as history, ethics and law. They are the ‘women and men who protect the village’ (*du’an mo’an jaga natar*) because their correct knowledge and practice of Adat contributes to the safety and well-being of the entire community.

Another class of expert is that of healers. The *du’an mo’an rawin* (women and men who heal) are skilled at both physical and spiritual healing. They treat a wide range of maladies and each *rawin* has quite specific abilities, including midwifery, healing of broken bones and fevers, and the healing of the assorted unidentifiable illnesses caused by curses and malevolent beings. Techniques range from remedies easily recognizable by any western medico (such as massage and bone-setting) to the use of breath, spittle, touch, plant and vegetable medicinal concoctions, and direct contact with ancestor spirits.

All Adat experts incur a great responsibility for the health and happiness of the community, and they must exercise both prudence and enthusiasm. They are asked to lead rituals and offer assistance to a great many people who are primarily, but not only, members of their own clan and village. Their numbers are relatively few\(^{19}\) and, consequently, their work load is considerable. It is notable that during my time of fieldwork men clearly outnumbered women in the public role of ritual leadership.\(^{20}\) However, women were regularly mined for information on correct Adat procedure and were otherwise always active in ritual life.

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\(^{18}\) This is quite a secretive and elusive topic and my data is at this stage incomplete with regard to many of the specific details and interpretations of dreams and visions.

\(^{19}\) I did not have the opportunity to carry out a quantitative survey of the numbers of Adat experts in each village. From my observations there were *apparently* only two or three stand-out experts in each village. The problem here is that the measure of an expert is not standardized, and skill sets vary between different subjects.

\(^{20}\) Although men most commonly chant, there is no institutional prohibition of female chanters. The bias towards male chanters is perhaps explained by the local ethos of male as ‘outside’ and female as ‘inside’. That is, males are encouraged towards public display whereas females are not.
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All families must regularly perform rituals at their household altar (ulu higun). The Adat responsibilities and ritual duties within families do not require the assistance of an expert and are usually carried out by the senior capable male figure. When a change of a family’s ritual specialist is necessary, consequent upon death, illness or travel, a simple ritual called pasen wae gelor awak (substitution of the representative) is carried out. After the ancestors have been called and informed of the procedure at the household altar, the outgoing representative holds and blows on the crown of the substitute’s head. This action transfers the family’s ritual responsibility to the initiate. For the more specialized positions of the du’a mo’an rawin and the du’a kula mo’an kara a further ritual of initiation called himo ilur tea e’er (take saliva and receive phlegm) must be performed.

The himo ilur tea e’er ritual is an important stage in the making of experts because it is said to augment a persons uhek manar (inside power). The uhek manar is that part of a person unique to each individual, and refers not to their soul (maen) but to their physical and mental characteristics and talents. The himo ilur tea e’er is an ‘Adat oath’ that confers both a social and spiritual transformation. It involves (usually, though not always) a hereditary transfer of a particular skill and responsibility between the uhek manar of two people. There are no strict rules regarding the relationship between whom the skill must pass, although it is most commonly passed from a father to son or mother to daughter.

In this ritual saliva is always the medium of transfer, but the form of the transfer varies. One version related to me involved the making of the mo’an jaga natar. Mo’an Pasisius Pasing from Baomekot. In this case at least seven distinguished Adat figures (du’a litin pitu, mo’an ler walu), most importantly including the tana pu’an, were required to spit into a glass of tuak (lontar palm gin). The initiate then drank the tuak and swore:

tutur lopa blout blower when speaking don’t be effusive
ganu togan hebon e’on like the water jar carried with no lid
harang lopa deba dak when exhorting don’t overwhelm
ganu ta’a ongen e’on like the unkept betel vine
odi nian rudu jung or the earth will accuse all
rusik da’a ilur metin hounded until their saliva dries
odi tana tura golot and the land will blame everybody
reweng sape man marak prosecuted until their tongues are parched

Through these actions and words the initiate received a spiritual quality and a social mandate making him responsible for a village’s Adat, a responsibility to which he is held accountable by the deity nian tana lero wulan.
Another version recounted to me was that experienced by the rawin Mo’an Rafael Bewat. When young, Rafael would follow his father at every opportunity, showing keen interest in the art of healing broken bones. Rafael is not the eldest son, but he was the child most curious and adept at this form of healing. His father had received the ability to heal from his mother, who was from the nearby village of Watublapi. In this case, although the skill is hereditary, it is passed to the most suitable heir, be they male or female, elder or younger. Alongside the technical and spiritual skills required of a rawin, he or she must always be ready to treat patients at any time and anywhere if they are asked. On one occasion I accompanied Rafael to visit a young patient at a small village in the west of the regency called Wolowiro. This trip which entailed a seven hour round trip by motorcycle.

When his father was old and did not want to continue practicing as a rawin he passed on the special ability to Rafael through a variant of the ritual himo ilur te’a e’er. This ritual was more private than the one mentioned above and involved mixing the father’s saliva into a preparation of other material, including the flesh of a sacrificed animal. This was then eaten by Rafael and the transfer of the uhek manar was complete. Prior to this ritual Rafael was a capable healer, but he says he lacked total proficiency. The saliva carried a special quality that added to Rafael’s uhek manar, enabling him then to fulfill entirely and expertly the role of rawin.

In addition to the initiation rituals just described, visions and dreams are also a means for the education of experts and a tool for ensuring rectitude and safety in Adat matters. These phenomena are essentially occasions when communication between the human and spirit worlds is particularly sensitive and lucid. There is only one occasion in which dreaming is an institutionalized part of a major ritual. That is during the gai glengan stage of the marriage rites when the parents of the engaged couple diri mipin (listen to their dreams) in order to gauge the propriety of the match (see Chapter 5). However, visions and dreams are a commonly used compass for measuring or gaining insight into events, be it to sniff out danger or confirm rectitude. They are, therefore, an important part of the practice of an Adat expert. With regard to education, dreams and visions can impart new knowledge to the subject, helping him or her to discover and develop their expertise.

Travel to the spirit world (nitu natar noan klo’ang) can be facilitated by ingestion of a special concoction of plants, concentrated thought, or it can arise quite unexpectedly. As an example of the latter case, an Adat expert from Romanduru, Mo’an Goris Gregorius, has been known on occasion to simply stop what he is doing (whether tending his garden
or at home) and fall unconscious for minutes at a time. The former *tana pu’an*, Mo’an Nikolaus Roja, was a frequent traveler to the spirit realm, so much so that during long excursions his family feared he would not return to consciousness. During these times of unconsciousness it is said an individual’s *maen* (soul) is transported to the spirit world and able to converse with the ancestor spirits. By such means Adat experts seek advice and aid pertaining to a wide variety of issues from resolving disputes to determining future plans. Additionally, visions are common practice for some traditional healers, especially those dealing with illness caused by spiritual intervention. In these cases the healer will visit the spirit world seeking solutions to the animosity motivating the spirit or spirits to cause suffering.

Everybody experiences meaningful dreams while sleeping, dreams that can be interpreted as foretelling fortune or adversity. However, few dream in a way that bestows new knowledge about Adat ritual language and procedure. Mo’an Klemens Hago is one such dreamer. In the early 1990’s he experienced seven consecutive nights of dreams that left him with a fluency in ritual language and a comprehension of Adat law and history he had not had previously. The dreams, as he recounted them to me, ranged over a wide variety of events and characters but were thematically related to Catholicism. Traditional Adat motifs were mixed with the appearance of Catholic priests, angels, demons, liturgy, crucifixes and other elements of Catholic symbology. Mo’an Klemens’ reaction at the time was fear, both for his sanity and for the dangerous portents contained within the dreams. Since that time, however, he has worked throughout the community as an Adat expert conducting rituals, and has determinedly used his skills as a ritualist to promote dialogue between Adat and Christianity and develop a synchronistic theology combining the two.

Dreams are also integral to the practice of healers. Primarily they signpost the potential success or failure of the treatment, and sometimes may even point to causes of illness and appropriate medicines. It is common that after an initial consultation with a patient a healer will dream that night about the patient and illness. The dreams are not always literal and the healer’s ability to interpret accurately the dream world is part of the healer’s skill set. I have heard of cases in which treatment has been refused because the healer dreams of failure. This is not a comment on the incurability of the sickness, but reflects the readiness of the patient, his family and the ancestor spirits to accept the cure. Inhibitors

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21 *Note*: the *tana pu’an* does not necessarily need to be a fluent ritual chanter or expert on other Adat affairs, although it is perhaps desirable that he be so.

22 *There are great dangers in traveling to the spirit world, and a certain code of behaviour must be observed while there.*
such as these must be resolved by the patient and his family (often in consultation with a healer specializing in spirit intervention) before physical healing can occur.

Visions and dreams have an important educational value in the Adat community. They are extremely powerful methods to obtain knowledge because they are, in effect, direct communication with and sanction from the ancestor spirits. Visions and dreams are both catalysts for life changing learning events and an everyday tool for expert Adat practitioners. It is also notable that dreams can point to new directions in Adat thought and practice. Mo’an Klemens Hago’s experience shows us that innovations in the way Adat is conceived relative to Catholicism can be influenced by dreaming.

7. Conclusion

In this chapter I have identified two educational techniques of Adat. First, Adat canon endorses a pedagogy oriented towards family-based participation in ritual life. Second, the education of expert practitioners entails initiation rituals and direct communication with the spirit world via visions and dreams. How, then, do we account for the relationship between very practical and democratic methods of learning and the kind of divine inspiration, spiritual communication and hereditary rights characteristic of expert learning?

Anthropological explanations of the phenomenon of occult learning usually emphasize the use of initiation rituals to mediate initiates’ exposure to the occult, and thereby invest them with special authority. Thus, initiation creates a causal link between initiates and the divine source of his or her societies cosmological truth (e.g., spirits or deity). The authority won by initiation is a function of this link. Barth (1975) has argued that initiation merely manipulates ‘normal’ knowledge, such that claims to special knowledge are manifestly empty. The ritual itself imparts little in the way of special knowledge, and often involves scenes of degradation and humiliation that are seemingly counter-productive.23 Similarly, Boyer (1990) states that whereas local explanations suggest that ‘privileged speakers’ (i.e., experts) do indeed gain more knowledge and competence than others during initiation rituals, in fact,

…although initiations do have important cognitive effects, it does not seem that initiates ever know anything more than others (Boyer 1990: 95).

23 Compare this with Kuipers’ (1998) description of humiliation in the Weyewa learning of ritual language.
Indeed, the Adat initiation rituals for experts described above are notable for their minimal content. They are simple and short, containing little ritual language and focused on a physical, rather than conceptual, transfer of the *uhek manar*.

Boyer (ibid.: 99) comments further:

What makes initiates more ‘truthful’ than ordinary speakers is a series of events, in which they are put in direct contact with hidden agencies or entities.

In this view, much of the knowledge supposedly imparted during initiation is actually known, or even practiced, before the initiation. Initiation, then, sanctifies the experts, so that in their own and their community’s eyes their position, skills and responsibilities are authorized by higher powers. This is all the more important when the position itself requires frequent contact and negotiation with these powers. We also see this in eastern Indonesia, where “an individual’s performance as a poet is seen not so much as a personally creative act but as an inner receptivity to inspiration” (Fox 1988: 14). This divine inspiration, or ‘taking of the voice’, means that the expert has a mandate to act as a conduit for the ancestor spirits or deity.

In a similar fashion, dreams and visions can be measured in terms of social import rather than content. Dreams and visions are intensely personal occasions, experienced in non-waking or altered states of consciousness, and the content, veracity, and psychological effects are not, in themselves, subject to anthropological analysis. Instead, analysis is possible when these dreams enter the realm of social relations as they are told or performed. Graham, writing about the Xavante of Central Brazil, emphasizes the ‘expressive practices’ through which dreams are shared to establish relationships of trust between individuals. She writes that this approach signifies

…a shift away from the focus on content – the result of the dominant Freudian perspective – towards a perspective that views dreams as communicative process (Graham 1995: 5).

In the Adat community, as dreaming and vision experiences are shared and become public knowledge they contribute to changes in the structure of social relationships. An individual who authoritatively tells of dreaming experiences, or who publicly attributes patent skill developments to dreams, obtains or strengthens his legitimacy as an Adat expert in much the same way as is achieved in initiation rituals.

By bracketing the question of the informational content of initiation rituals and dreams,

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24 The authority of dream experiences, or interpretations, is established by certain conventions in the Adat community that constitute a typology of Adat dreams.
the functionality of these occult learning practices is delimited by the bestowal to experts of a spiritual (and consequently social) mandate. The issue of the education of experts in the substantive knowledge and skills required of their position then refers back to a process similar to that experienced by the non-expert population, namely participation.

The difference between the expert and ordinary practice of Adat, I suggest, is manifest in the variety and frequency of participatory contexts in which people find themselves. The skill of experts is built up through long-term exposure to the very activities they are mandated to practice. The prevalence of heredity in the reckoning of expert positions establishes familial learning relationships that are articulated on an almost constant basis as experts are called upon by others to lead rituals. In terms of the ‘decentred’ master and apprentice model I outlined in Chapter 1, experts guide their apprentices (e.g., sons and daughters) into Adat learning environments with great regularity.

In this chapter I have presented an introduction to the core elements of the indigenous pedagogy of the Adat community as it is underpinned by Adat epistemology. I have shown that language and action are inseparable in the production of Adat knowledge, and thus both teaching and learning are aspects of participation in the performance of Adat. Furthermore, the participation of young learners is facilitated by close family, and novice experts are frequently exposed to learning environments as they are guided by their experienced ‘masters’. I have claimed that the primary Adat learning environment is ritual, and in the following six chapters I present data and theories that support this claim. In particular, I explore various ritual contexts in which deuto-learning is quickened and participants add substantially to their discursive and, most importantly, to their embodied knowledge of Adat.
True Messages in Childhood Rituals

1. Introduction

The educational system I outlined in the previous chapter stresses the indivisibility of language and action. A true and proper conception of the world, as it is reckoned by Adat, is learnt only by doing those activities it prescribes and by which it is constituted. According to this system, ritual is one of the most important occasions to learn cosmological principles, moral strictures, and expert vocations. In this and the following two chapters I explain the educational value of Adat rituals, particularly in their capacity to create powerful connections between ideas, objects and actions.

These chapters provide both an ethnographic account of the major rites of passage of the Adat community and a critical account of how these rituals serve to educate the participants. Although there are a great variety of Adat rituals, the life-cycle rituals directly address what I see as the three most important existential questions of Adat; What is life? How are lives best lived? And what is death? The ideas that answer these questions are at the heart of Adat canon, and it is in the education of these ideas, and their associated practices, that I am most interested.

The present chapter is both an elaboration on the previous chapter and a preparation for the next two. I argue that a theory of ritual education must reconcile the tension between elements of ritual that are ‘informational’ and elements that are ‘non-informational’. By the combination of these opposites in ritual performance intangible and abstract concepts are communicated as truths of sanctity. The Adat cosmological propositions that are cast as truths in ritual constitute part of the environmental conditions of the Adat community’s ecology of mind. Thus, in terms of the recursive and embodied relationship between context and deutero-learning that is generated in ritual, this chapter is centered on an analysis of ritual as a sanctified context. From this foundation I show that the ‘true’ messages communicated in Adat
rituals on occasions of birth and during childhood reinforce the idea that rituals are necessary for education. Indeed, the educational system I identified in Chapter 3 using the lessons of *nato nen* ritual language is complemented by the rituals that accompany (and define) the growth of children into adults. Considering the system’s emphasis on participation and ritual, it is fitting that lessons about the value of ritual are themselves found within ritual.

In Chapters 5 and 6 I develop my theory of ritual education by focusing more closely on ritual’s performative learning environment and types of ritual participation during Adat marriages and funerals. In Chapter 5 I discuss the indexical character of the relationship between ideas and actions during occasions of bridewealth exchanges. Not only does ritual communicate true messages, but the indexical relationships crafted in ritual also transform the abstract ideas of Adat into a sensory experience which significantly contributes to individuals’ deuto-learning. In Chapter 6 I discuss the extent and variety of participation in Adat mortuary rites. This is a critical step needed to determine the uniformity of learning experiences during ritual. I conclude that the diversity of roles required for Adat rituals entails a diversity of subjective learning environments, each a unique performance that is, nonetheless, connected to a central narrative.

2. Sanctified Contexts and Information in Religious Ritual

Although the communication of ideas and the regulation of behavior has long been regarded as an essential feature of religious ritual, traditionally these processes are rarely explicitly framed in terms of the personal development of participants through learning. Leach (1954: 13, my emphasis) speaks of the communicative efficacy of ritual when he states that ritual “is a symbolic statement which ‘says’ something *about* the individuals involved in the action.” I would like to emphasize that ritual also says something *to* the individuals involved in the action.¹ In this respect, the key theoretical issues are to explain how rituals transmit messages and to determine what form these messages take. In this section I argue that ritual participants discover messages that are finely composed using both the informational and non-informational qualities of ritual. I primarily draw on Rappaport’s (1999) theory of ritual and conclude that participants’ self-referential (or self-validating) performance engenders their acceptance of the propositions communicated in ritual. This acceptance imputes on Adat’s canonical propositions a class of truth defined as ‘sanctity’.

In his survey of anthropological treatments of Melanesian initiation rites, Wagner (1984)

¹ This emphasis also represents a development in Leach’s thinking, who more than twenty years after the quoted statement wrote that “we engage in rituals in order to transmit collective messages to ourselves” (1976: 45).
True Messages in Childhood Rituals

states that the most enduring general characterization of ritual is that put forward by Douglas, who defines ritual as a “restricted code” that is used as a system of control and communication (Douglas 1973: 77, 79). Rituals are occasions during which both social categories and social solidarity are expressed and reinforced. Of equal significance, but coming from a different theoretical angle, have been studies focusing on the transformative, rather than the normative, qualities of ritual. For example, works by Turner (1974), Bloch (1974) and Tambiah (1985) have analyzed ritual’s performative aspects in view of the changes it makes to participants lives. Of course, the particular interpretations made by anthropologists to both decipher the codes and identify the transformations of rituals are various. Yet, the questions remain the same. What are the codes and regulations that are expressed in particular rituals, and how are they produced? Furthermore, how do rituals transform individuals and the community? For example, are these transformations conceptual (changes in participants knowledge or perceptions) or categorical (changes in participants social status)? Importantly, any answer to these questions must give consideration to the tension between the regulatory function of ritual and the possibility for ritual to transform individuals and society.

This duality is crucial for a theory of ritual education because it relates to how information is used within ritual. The problem is in the determination of when and how ritual communicates information to participants, and when and how ritual withholds or deconstructs this information. Rituals can be regarded quite simply, as Lucero (2003: 523) has stated succinctly, as “habitual, ceremonial, and physical manifestations of a worldview”. However, there is also a contrary quality to ritual that, according to Myerhoff (1984: 237), is ‘not of the everyday world’ and by which

...the order of things is dislocated and everything becomes full of emotion, allusive, symbolic and representational.

This is characteristic of ritual’s liminal periods, during which participants’ experience of anti-structure breaks down normal codes of thought and behavior. As ritual deconstructs knowledge and social categories it is able to affect changes in participants’ perceptions and sentiments. For example, Turner (1974: 55) has argued that liminal occasions inject an emotional salience into the dismantled normal codes. This salience then asserts itself outside of ritual and contributes to the relevance and stability of the reconstituted codes.

Here arises a confusion in ritual studies that must be resolved. The normative (canonical) statements encoded in ritual seem to be informational expressions of the worldviews about

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2 Here I write of the liminality that is internal to ritual and characteristic of only particular moments in the full sweep of ritual activity. A more general liminality can also be identified that is applied to ritual as a whole. By this definition ritual is liminal in terms of its contrast to normal, non-ritual life.
which Lucero writes. Yet, the invariance of the use of these codes in ritual reduces their informational content, as the high degree of formalization and redundancy removes the propositional force of ritual’s messages. The difficulties do not end here. The individual and social transformations produced by ritual are entailed by the manipulation of normative codes into anti-structure. That is, alterations in consciousness and amplifications of emotions are made possible, in part, by a repudiation and dismantling of ritual’s canonical content. The liminality of ritual ostensibly exchanges informational substance for affective potency. These liminal moments are concerned with the re-organization of existing content of minds, and not with the informing of minds with new content. Yet, at the same time, the type of transformation made by ritual is a classic case of a Batesonian “difference which makes a difference” (Bateson 2000: 315), and thus transformations are, by their very nature, informational (see Figure 7).

The differences between ritual’s informational and non-informational qualities are not logical contradictions. Conservation, change, information and affectivity are all implicated in a complex analogue event, in which their expression is a matter of degree and momentum, not mutual exclusivity. Confusion about the extent that each element defines ritual warns against making absolute definitions. Wallace’s (1966: 233) claim that ritual is “communication without information” and, as I raised in the previous chapter, Boyer’s (1990: 95) proclamation that initiates do not add to their knowledge in ritual are examples of such absolutism. Instead of drawing battle lines, the theory of ritual education I present here involves the resolution of these divisions, and this entails determining how these elements relate to each other in the
subjective experience of ritual participants.

Rappaport (1999) understands the relationship between codification and transformation, and information and non-information, in terms of the connection between ritual’s ‘canonical’ and ‘self-referential’ messages. The cornerstone of Rappaport’s theory is the idea that ritual is a means, arguably the original means, of redressing the social uncertainty resulting from our unique ability (entailed by language) to imagine alternatives and, thus, lie or be misled.³ Ritual restores confidence between individual community members by bringing the participants into agreement as to what is truth and what is falsehood. It does this by demanding that all who participate accept the ideas communicated by the ritual. The very fact of performing the ritual is a statement made by the participants, to themselves and to others, asserting their willingness to conform to the ritual and its codes. Acceptance⁴ is the primary self-referential message of ritual, and the performative demonstration of acceptance extends to include the canonical ideas expressed by the ritual. In Rappaport’s (1999: 119) words:

For performers to reject liturgical orders being realized by their own participation in them as they are participating in them is self-contradictory, and thus impossible. Therefore, by performing a liturgical order the participants accept, and indicate to themselves and to others that they accept whatever is encoded in the canon of that order.

In this model, ritual produces a public agreement, rather than a private belief,⁵ in religious codes by virtue of the performance of those codes in ritual. Steadman and Palmer (1995) have made a similar argument, emphasizing that the performance of ritual makes the cosmological propositions of religion, which are difficult (or impossible) to establish empirically, appear unquestionable.

Self-referential messages naturally flow from performance and are concerned with the transformation of participants. These messages indicate changes in the current states of participants. Such transformations include, for example, change from the state of non-participation to that of participation, or from unmarried to married, or from uninitiated to initiated. Performance is transformative because it involves the movement and energy of bodies and minds through time. Performance is always diachronic, and even when it is aimed

³ The reliability of ritual’s messages is also explained by ‘Costly Signaling Theory’. Although ritual displays may be costly in terms of time, energy, and somatic expenditures, they provide information to participants that can impact positively on individual fitness. Ritual assures honest signals of commitment between community members and enhances intra-group cooperation (Sosis & Bressler 2003; Sosis & Ruffle 2003).

⁴ Here we must make the assumption that ritual participants freely enter into the ritual performance.

⁵ Refer to Footnote 8 in Chapter 1 for a discussion of the difficulties with a sociological category of ‘belief’.
Lessons of the Ancestors

at maintaining norms, as is often the case, it does so by forcing change, as the drag of entropy is corrected by re-growth and reformation. Thus, the canon (codes and regulations) of ritual rely on these self-referential messages (performance and transformation) to invest the canon, via its unreserved acceptance, with the value of truth.6

To put this argument in more explicitly educational terms, we see that for a ritual to be educational it must be able to communicate information from which the participants can learn something new. At first this appears quite natural, after all ritual is an experience dense with religious symbolism, complex physical movements and challenging mental activities from which people can seemingly learn many things. However, as I discussed above, many have argued against this notion. Central to Rappaport’s argument is the need for a bridge to connect the acceptance of a general canonical order, engendered by the very fact of performance, with the acceptance of the specific propositions of that order. This bridge is constructed from the ‘unquestionableness’ of the most pivotal religious statements communicated in ritual, what Rappaport calls Ultimate Sacred Postulates. These postulates then sanctify (i.e., make true by acceptance) the more detailed ideas of the canon. However, the unquestionableness of these postulates is a direct function of the impossibility for them to be either verified or falsified, and this is because the postulates are essentially devoid of information (Rappaport 1999: 281).

Ultimate Sacred Postulates are the most fundamental symbolic expressions of a religion, and are usually related to the quality of a god figure. Examples of such postulates include the Muslim Kalimat al Shahada “I testify that there is no god but One God, and I testify that Mohammed is his prophet” and Shema of the Jews “Hear O Israel, the lord our god, the lord is one” (ibid.: 277). According to Rappaport, the symbolic expressions of these postulates are made without clear reference to a material reality, and consequently they can only be substantiated by ritual performance. That is, so long as Ultimate Sacred Postulates are performed they maintain a concrete reality that cannot be falsified. Furthermore, the invariance of ritual reinforces the truth of these key postulates by locating them in an unchanging and seemingly eternal context. Thus, the combination of the unfalsifiable quality of the postulates and the consistency of their context of use confers upon them the quality of truthfulness.

Importantly, the depth of spiritual meaning that ritual participants find in Ultimate Sacred Postulates is inversely related to the amount of information they convey. In Rappaport’s (ibid.: 71) hierarchy of meaning, Ultimate Sacred Postulates are able to produce “high-order

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6 This type of truth is a ‘truth of acceptance’. That is, the proposition is ‘true’ because it is accepted as such by individuals. This type of truth differs from standard measures of truth based on a correspondence or coherence theory of truth (see Rappaport 1999: 293).
meaning" in those who apprehend them. This level of meaning involves the integration of subjective and objective realities, and can be characterized as a noumenal, mystical, or gestalt experience. This is a process facilitated by the particular combination of physical performance, symbolic ambiguity and ritual invariance described above. Thus, the most meaningful symbolic element of ritual, the element from which the public acceptance of the religious canon flows, is made possible only by its essential lack of information.

Here we come to the critical juncture in my attempt to configure Rappaport’s theory to emphasize ritual’s educational value. I have noted that whilst social regulations are codified and expressed in ritual, certitude and meaningfulness are generated at the expense of informational content and, therefore, at the expense of the potential for learning. However, this apparent contradiction - that ritual is both informational and non-informational – is able to be resolved through consideration of participants’ experiences as they encounter these different facets of ritual.

Ritual is not always an homogeneous experience and, in fact, need not be in order to arrive at the certitude Rappaport describes. Adat rituals are neither completely invariant or numinous. Although these rituals are bounded and defined as a non-ordinary ‘hot’ time (see Chapter 6), within the ritual context much of ordinary life still continues and strictly organized proceedings don’t always go to plan. Invariance, Rappaport states, is important only insofar as ritual appears that way to the participants. Thus:

If we are concerned with the significance of invariance it is apparent invariance that finally counts (ibid.: 342).

During the period of time I observed Adat rituals, even those rituals which should have been formally identical, often contained (to my eyes at least) differences in procedure and content. Indeed, a lot of energy and creativity can go into maintaining the illusion of invariance in ritual if things go a little off course. Perfect invariance is not necessary (if it is possible at all) to produce the appearance of invariance. Variations, accidental or otherwise, can be covered-up or rationalized within a broader framework of key unchangeable and necessary procedures. Of course, these too are subject to unseen variation, for as performance endows ideas with certitude, deviations in performance can lead to a re-understanding of these ideas, lest the ritual be a failure. Additionally, each participant’s experience of ritual is not invariant. For

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7 Rappaport (1999: 70) identifies three levels of meaning. Low-order meaning is based on distinction, and is comparable to a bit of information, or, “a difference which makes a difference” (Bateson 2000: 315). Middle-order meaning is based on metaphor and “discovering similarities among apparently different phenomena” (Rappaport 1999: 71). High-order meaning is based on “the radical identification or unification of self with other” (ibid.: 71).
example, the same person can experience a marriage in several different ways, as bride or groom, as mother or father, as ritual chanter, and so on.

Furthermore, noumenal experience is not maintained by every participant throughout the duration of the ritual. Adat ritual requires contributions from participants that can involve quite commonplace supportive tasks. Even those subject to transformation, such as neophytes in initiation rituals or the bride and groom in marriage rituals, experience a great deal outside of the intense peak moments which induce affective transformations (see Chapter 6).

To put this issue in semiotic terms, while the most mystical of symbolic representations – Ultimate Sacred Postulates – are essentially non-informational and invariant, the more specific statements that accompany them during ritual, such as elaborate myths and prayers, are informational and various. These specific propositions (or sentences) are able to be informative and partake in the certainty established in ritual through a process of ‘sanctification’ that begins with the performance of Ultimate Sacred Postulates (see also Chapter 8). In Rappaport’s (ibid.: 314) words:

Sanctified sentences are not in and of themselves unquestionable, but are contingent upon Ultimate Sacred Postulates from which they derive whatever degree of sanctity they possess.

The truth of sanctity flows from the unquestionable Ultimate Sacred Postulates into the more concrete and specific cosmological ideas that are also communicated in ritual. This process transforms potentially ordinary ideas and practices into things of extraordinary value. It is, after all, possible to view some of the activities and ideas that constitute the Adat religion as initially quite mundane. For example, learning and enacting ritual language – the dense container of many of Adat’s central religious propositions – could be as ordinary as rote learning and presenting fictive verse for an English exam. However, these actions, and the ideas they express, are anything but ordinary and fictive. Instead, through the performance of ritual Adat’s propositions are sanctified, they are made into consequential and necessary facts of life as truths accepted by the Adat community.

In this section I have built the foundation for a theory of ritual education by resolving some of the ambiguities concerning the flow of information during occasions of ritual. Ritual can neither be defined as entirely ‘informational’ nor ‘non-informational’. Rather, ritual communicates religious information in a context that also includes invariant and ambiguous content. Yet, it is only by virtue of this curious and seemingly paradoxical mix that the often highly abstract information contained within ritual is sanctified and accepted as truthful, tangible certainty. In ritual, codified and normative (canonical) ideas are invested with
certainty and valued as truth through the workings of transformative qualities. Rappaport identifies the experiential unity of both the propositional and noumenal aspects of ritual as the ‘holy’. I understand this unity to be a quality of an individual’s mind emergent in the recursive relationship between sanctified contexts and sanctified deutero-learning (which I will discuss further in Chapter 5). I have shown here that the symbolic and performative environment of ritual is a context in which individual’s perceive and express religious truths. In the following section I describe the sanctified context of Adat ritual and explore the ritual communication of ‘true’ canonical messages through the use of Adat’s Ultimate Sacred Postulates.

3. Adat Ritual and Ultimate Sacred Postulates

The canonical messages of Adat are propositions about the cosmology, ethics and laws of Adat. They are sanctified during ritual by their use in close connection with the Adat Ultimate Sacred Postulates. These messages are most clearly expressed in the ritual language prayers that are a necessary ingredient of all ritual activity. Additional media including actions, fetishes, and sacrificial paraphernalia are also containers of Adat’s canon insofar as they are symbolic representations of the Adat cosmology.

Adat canon is not a single corpus of unswervingly consistent representations. Adat is an oral tradition, and, although claims of immutable authenticity are made in reference to sacred origins, individual creativity is an important part of its operation. The use and content of ritual language varies between clan and village, and even within these groupings it can vary according to individual interpretations. Ritual practice is equally various. For example, in the liturgy of protection rituals (uru tada and liko) different villages will often have different ways of implementing village-wide uru tada prohibitions, clans often use different concoctions of objects and plants in their hoban charms for liko rituals, and individuals often have unique personal protection chants passed down within the nuclear family.

As I also stated in the previous chapter with regard to ritual language, a common core of Adat canon lies under this variety. Throughout this thesis the majority of the ritual language speeches and the liturgical procedure I present attempt to capture this core. I have endeavored to present the ritual language couplets and activities that are necessary to most, if not all, the variations of the Adat community’s rich ritual life. These data were arrived at chiefly through recordings of ritual language performances and consultation with ritual experts from different villages and clans to interpret and edit the material. Adat experts, and in fact most other people, are aware of the variation in Adat practice and with careful thought and cross-checking uncovering a commonality that fairly represents different villages and clans is possible. The
danger of this method is that the canonical core that is captured can obscure the reality of variation, flexibility and creativity that characterizes the practice of Adat. Chapter 7, therefore, is devoted to describing this variety and, indeed, recognizing the important role it has to play in the education of Adat.

The most basic aspect of all Adat rituals (in which canonical messages are communicated) is a request made by humans to the deity or ancestor spirits for either assistance with, or the blessing of, some kind of activity, be it building a house, getting married, or healing an illness. This request can only be made with sacrificial offerings and the chanted prayers in rituals called *piong tewok* and *tung piong*. Without the blessing and assistance of these supernatural beings human efforts will not be successful. When making a ritual people must first ask for attention from either the deity or the ancestor spirits. These invocations are moments during which Adat Ultimate Sacred Postulates are performed and substantiated. The most fundamental Adat Ultimate Sacred Postulate is the postulation of the existence of the deity, which is expressed as *ina nian tanana wawa, ama lero wulan reta* (mother of the earth and land below, father of the sun and moon above). A further example is the postulation of the existence of ancestor spirits, which are expressed as *ina nitu pitu, ama noan walu* (mother of the seven ancestor spirits, father of the eight ancestor spirits) or *inan lau nitu natar, amam lau noan klo’ang* (mothers from the spirit village, fathers from the ancestor hamlet). The deity and ancestor spirits are viewed as the source of life and the source of Adat. They have a certain amount of control over human lives and the natural world, and they are able to grant fortune or contrive misfortune. Rituals start with their attendance and end with their departure, and all things in between are subject to their power.

The ancestor spirits, but not the deity, are invoked during *piong tewok* (offer and pour) sacrificial rituals (see Figure 8). These rituals are only carried out at the household altar (*ulu higun watu mahang*), which is located in a room called the *higun gahu* (hot corner) or *reta une ulu higun* (up inside at the head and corner). This room is positioned on the right-hand side of the house, when facing inwards from the front door, and usually doubles as the bedroom for the husband and wife of the house (the altar is located at the back right-hand corner of this room). During the *piong tewok* sacrificial rituals the participants ‘offer food and pour drink’ (*ea piong tinu tewok*) for the ancestors of the house (*lepo woga*). Those ancestors for whom the ritual *loodo hu’er* (see Chapter 6) has not been carried out are called by name, all others are either called as *inan lau nitu natar, amam lau noan klo’ang* (mothers from the spirit village, fathers from the ancestors hamlet) or *ina nitu pitu wali ulu, ama noan walu wali higun* (mothers of the seven spirits at the head, father of the eight ancestors at the corners).
Figure 8: Mo’an Tugu performs a piong tewok ritual at the household altar (*ulu higun*). Note his wife’s *legen ala* hairstyle.

Figure 9: The author and members of Romanduru clan Mana feast with the deity and ancestor spirits at a *tung piong* ritual. Note the sacrificial offering on the flat stone of the altar between the two young boys’ heads in the foreground.
A common variation of the invocation using neni plawi ritual language is as follows:

\begin{align*}
\textit{ina nitu pitu} & \quad \text{mother of the seven ancestors} \\
\textit{nitu pitu wali ulu} & \quad \text{the seven spirits at the head} \\
\textit{ama noan walu} & \quad \text{father of the eight spirits} \\
\textit{noan walu wali higun} & \quad \text{the eight spirits at the corners} \\
\textit{a‘u diat nora hoban bura} & \quad \text{I offer to you these white offerings} \\
\textit{dokang nora kekor mitan} & \quad \text{I give to you these black tails} \\
\textit{dadi a‘u neni ora} & \quad \text{so I ask of you} \\
\textit{nitu pitu mole noan walu} & \quad \text{seven ancestors and eight spirits} \\
\textit{miu mogam naha} & \quad \text{together you must} \\
\textit{leta let gaging pani wi‘in} & \quad \text{always invite and fetch yourselves} \\
\textit{mole mogam sawen naha geke guer} & \quad \text{and each and every one of you gather around}
\end{align*}

Before and after these words are spoken small offerings are made. These vary in composition, depending on the occasion. All of these sacrifices begin with an offering of betel and areca nut (\textit{wu’a ta’aa}) and tobacco. From this basis some offerings are constituted of rice, \textit{tuak} (lontar palm gin) and the liver and meat of pig or chicken. Another type of offering is made with rice, dried fish and \textit{tuak}. And another with rice, boiled egg and \textit{tuak}. The rice and meat in all these sacrifices must be cooked. With these offerings and the accompanying invocation the ancestor spirits attend the ritual and are able to themselves offer support in whatever is asked of them. These sacrifices are performed regularly as part of the daily routine\(^8\) and must precede and conclude all major rituals that also have other sacrificial obligations.

The deity can only be called during \textit{tung piong} (convey the offering) sacrificial rituals (see Figure 9). These are performed outside the house at the central clan altars (\textit{wu’a mahé})\(^9\), the clan ‘forest’ or ‘wild’ altars (\textit{ai tali}), at altars with specific purposes (such as altars for controlling the weather), and at temporary altars (\textit{watu tung piong} or \textit{watu mahang}) erected for specific uses and later discarded. The materials of sacrifice are the same as those for \textit{piong tewok} with the addition of uncooked elements including an unboiled egg, uncooked meat (skewered on two sticks of seven and eight strips of flesh apiece), and the uncooked liver and heart of the pig or chicken.

The ritual language accompanying the offerings at \textit{tung piong} rituals always begins with

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\(^8\) For example, these sacrifices are common practice whenever any chicken or pig is slaughtered for consumption (i.e., the slaughter is not expressly made as a sacrifice), or when any personal requests are asked of the ancestors.

\(^9\) The \textit{wu’a mahé} and ‘\textit{ai tali} ritual alters consist of flat and standing stones. The flat stone (called the \textit{wu’a du’aa}) represents the female identity of the deity (thus, \textit{ina nian tana wawa}), and the standing stones (called the \textit{mahé mo’an}) represent the male identity of the deity (thus, \textit{ama lero wulan reta}).
the invocation of the deity *ina nian tana wawa, ama lero wulan reta*. There are various formations of the opening invocation, again used according to the occasion. It is a testament to the sanctity of this deity and its invocation that I am unable to present here any of the several versions I have recorded. They are properly *only spoken* during the ritual. These chants employ the names of very early ancestors and qualities of the earth and sky such as redness, sourness, clarity and cloudiness. As chanters speak of the female *ina nian tana* the narrative moves downwards in stages through the layers of earth (*wawa ia wawa ba’u*) and the male *ama lero wulan reta* is said to move upwards into the heavens (*reta ia reta bawo*). The performance of these invocations is characterized by quick but precise speech, and by these words the chanter is transported into direct communication with the deity.

Sacrifices, either *tung piong* or *piong tewok*, are often collectively called ‘to play with black and try the red’ (*pisa mitan soba meran*). The materials used for sacrificial offerings are spoken of in ritual language as follows:

1. *wuat naha nodin hoit* areca must invite first
2. *mole bako bajak papak* and tobacco serve politely
3. *meti sai niu bura wa wauk* carry the white teeth and odorous breath
4. *kumak plikang waten lor* the cloven hooves and hanging liver
5. *higi mitan here meran naha era reta* black, yellow and red teeth must stand atop

The first two lines refer to the initial offerings of tobacco, areca and betel. Lines 3 and 4 are synecdoches by which the most valuable sacrificial animal, the pig, is identified by some of its physical characteristics. Notably, pigs teeth are white because, unlike humans and the ancestor spirits of humans, pigs do not imbibe tobacco, areca and betel. Thus the passage ends with the recognition of the excellence and unification of humans and their ancestors. The offerings of these materials are very stylized (see Figure 10, overleaf). Eggs are balanced on edge supported by rice, the offerings of tobacco, betel and areca, as well as the morsels of flesh, are positioned around the rice and egg in groups of seven and eight, and animals are sacrificed held above the altar to ensure a liberal splattering of blood.

Both the *tung piong* and *piong tewok* sacrificial rituals are the key elements of all larger rituals. The *piong tewok* is performed inside the house before any ritual activity occurs outside of the house. This ensures that the immediate ancestors of the house that is conducting the ritual are invoked before the more distant ancestors of the clan and the deity are invoked in the

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10 Although betel (*ta’a*) is not directly mentioned in this ritual language, it’s presence is assumed because in ritual betel cannot be separated from areca (*wuua*). In other words, ‘*wuua*’ alone is sufficient to represent *wuua ta’a* in this context.
outside *tung piong* rituals. In this way, the ancestors of the house – who are the closest spiritual beings related to those responsible for the ritual\(^{11}\) – provide a bridge to the more distant spiritual beings. Rituals that require sacrifices include the childhood rituals, marriages, and funerals discussed in this and the upcoming chapters, and also harvest rituals (*ua uma karé tua*), construction rituals (*laba lepo sorong woga*), healing rituals (*gahu nair napa nawar*), and the various protective blessings for trade (*te’a to’o dagang balik*), travel (*wehe tahi pano lalan*), and the welfare of livestock (*wihin wawi penu manu*).

![Figure 10: A sacrificial offering made at a temporary ritual altar (*watu mahang/watu tung piong*). Note, this kind of altar does not include an upright stone.](image)

The prayers spoken during these rituals that invite the ancestor spirits and deity to join with and support humanity are the Ultimate Sacred Postulates of Adat. They are meaningful only in their performance, they contain ineffable concepts, and they encapsulate the source of Adat and all existence. They begin and end all rituals, and from these unquestionable pillars all Adat canon obtains its veracity. The enactment of the Adat sacrificial rituals and the invocations of the deity and ancestor spirits is a performative substantiation of the Adat Ultimate Sacred Postulates. In other words, with these rituals the fundamental canonical idea of Adat – the

\(^{11}\) Any given ritual is the responsibility of one family (*ue wari lepo woga*), but is often attended by people from other houses and clans.
existence of the deity and ancestor spirits – is accepted by the participants. Rappaport (1999: 315) describes Ultimate Sacred Postulates as the “fonts from which sanctity flows”. That is, ideas and practices contained within the ritual, or associated in any other way with the Ultimate Sacred Postulates, partake in the truth that is established by these postulates (see also Chapter 8).

4. Growing up with Adat

In preparation for the analysis of the sanctified Adat truths discovered in rituals of birth and childhood I outline in this section the liturgy of birth and childhood rites and provide a description of Adat categories of stages of maturity. There are nine separate rituals and several age group categories that youngsters must traditionally pass through as they grow into adulthood.

For the Adat community, humans were born of the congress between the female *ina nian tana wawa* (mother of the land and earth below) and the male *ama lero wulan reta* (father of the sun and moon above), which together constitute Adat’s supreme being. It is said that as the rays of light from the sun and moon and the rains from the sky nourish the land from which all life’s necessities are drawn, so does male semen impregnate the female womb, giving birth to new life. According to Adat, humanity in general and every new birth in particular is a consequence of this union of the complementary halves of the deity.

A pregnant woman is said to be ‘a person of great aroma’ (*ata menik geté*), but she also lives in danger for her life and is called ‘a person sitting on the edge of a dug grave’ (*ata teri e kewo wiwir*). During labor traditionally only the midwife (*du’a rawin*) and close female relatives are allowed in the birthing room. However, if the birth is proceeding slowly or with difficulty, the husband may enter and blow softly on his wife’s brow and say ‘your journey through the womb is finished, come to us, with all of your life’s necessities’ (*wulan lalan ‘aun sawe ba’a, mai sai, mora golo nora ruking rawin ‘aun sawen*). Normally the term *rukung rawin* refers to those material things which enable one to live well, such as a farmers tools or weavers loom. In this case, however, it refers to the most important resource of all, that is, the deity. It is said that all people are born accompanied by the deity as ‘that which sits upon the crown of one’s head’ (*noran ha deri e ala uwung*).

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12 Many births are nowadays given in one of the Regency’s hospitals. With the advent of accessible hospitals home births are becoming increasingly rare, as is the demand for the services of traditional midwives (*du’a rawin*).

13 He then exits immediately and opens up and shakes his sarong, hoping that the baby will be delivered with the freedom his sarong now enjoys.
The first ritual task after birth is the *tung puhe oha* (escorting of the placenta), in which the placenta is cut, wrapped and placed in a position where it can observe the world and communicate with the newborn. Soon afterwards the midwife is given appreciation for her services with *rawin pu’u liman* (washing of the midwife’s hands). This takes the form of payment with cash and other items of value such as cloth and animals. Within a few days of the birth the ritual *plewo werun* (greet the new) is conducted, during which a sacrifice is made at the household altar to welcome the newborn into the family and introduce him or her to the ancestor spirits. Soon after in the *weli naran* (give the name) ceremony the baby is named, usually using an ancestral name as well as a Catholic name. Approximately one month after birth the child is taken out of the house and introduced to the tools and equipment and techniques of use which are desired to be mastered later in life in the ritual *lodong me* (lowering of the child). The sixth ritual is called *roit ala* (shaving of the hair). The hair from birth, which is called *ala ta’in une* (hair from inside the stomach), is said to obstruct the healthy growth of the child and is traditionally continually shaved off until the child reaches puberty, although I have not heard of it being done for this long nowadays.\(^{14}\) The first shaving of the eldest child is celebrated with a ritual in which the child is passed from the arms of the aunts and sisters (*’a’a winé*) of the mother to the aunts and sisters of the father. The father then gives a shaving knife and other exchange goods to the child’s *pu lamé*. This exchange is called *kudu beta lamin gema*, which means literally ‘cut locks and fresh coconut water’, denoting freshness and health that the shaving brings to the child.

When the shaving period is completed boys and girls then begin *’abo ala* (combing of the hair), during which the hair is allowed to grow freely, with the exception that boys hair is still shaved around the neck and sides. When a female enters adulthood she begins *legen ala* (coiling of the hair), which is also called *poto ala* (carrying of the hair). During the *’abo ala* stage girls hair is kept hanging downwards in braided tails. The *legen ala* involves the hair being twisted and styled in a coil on the back of the head. The hair is held in place with a pin called a *hegin* or *soking*. This is the style of hairdress for all adult women, most especially on formal occasions (see Figure 8).

For boys entering adulthood I have been informed that the ritual *gareng ‘lamen* (ordering of the young men) was once required. There is, however, some disagreement as to whether or not it was practiced and certainly no living memory of it occurring. One of my informants explained that his father was one of the last to experience it during the early 1920’s. It is said

\(^{14}\) The hair is said to obstruct a child’s healthy growth because, as it covers the crown of the head, it obstructs clear thinking and, as it dangles down covering the eyes and ears, it obstructs clear sight and hearing.
the ritual was finally lost because the last lineage of *mo’an rawin* who were tasked with the circumcisions needed in this ceremony died out. According to this report, during the last *gareng ‘lamen* two of the participants died and shortly afterwards the *mo’an rawin* himself passed away, leaving no children. From the little I could glean, the ritual bears many similarities with the *gareng ‘lamen* practiced in Tana ‘Ai (see Lewis 1988: 260). Suitable boys were gathered and lived together in a specially constructed house, barred from communication with females, and circumcised. In contrast to Tana ‘Ai, I was told there was no ritual transvestism and the rites lasted for a full month (rather than a few days).

As children progress through these rituals and develop physically they are said to also progress through classifications of maturity. These classifications are traditionally measured in terms of vocational competence, for which skill in weaving and cooking are assigned to females, whilst skill in construction, agriculture and trading is assigned to males. In the present day these classifications are aligned more closely to physical development and the progression of children through school, and include more modern notions of competence and skill.

The first stage of childhood for both males and females aged up to six or seven years, or before entering primary school, is called *sisi watu sea tana* (play with rocks play with dirt). Both *sisi* and *sea* refer more commonly to the process of manually separating rice grain from the husk, and are used here to signify children’s playful imitation of their elders. For girls, the next stage in development is called *‘wae sea neper* (girl plays with skill) during which they are expected to begin developing their play into more skillful application of the domestic tasks known as *utan blai wair gahu* (spin the thread and heat the water). At puberty girls become *‘wae buan baret* (young womb woman) and, in the past, *roit ala* (hair shaving) would be ceased and *abo ala* (hair combing) would commence. During this time the girl is expected to develop mastery in her cooking and weaving skills and on formal occasions wear a sarong of the type *utan hawatan* (made from one piece of cloth, rather than two separate pieces sewn together) and a short-sleeved blouse (*labu liman tengge*). As the young woman enters adulthood and becomes eligible for marriage, these days usually reckoned at approximately twenty years old, she becomes *‘wae buan geté* (mature womb woman). Again, besides physical maturity, the suitability for this classification is traditionally measured by domestic skill. The *‘wae buan geté* is expected to be fully competent in all weaving techniques, from spinning cotton, tying off the patterns, dying, weaving to sewing the cloth into a wearable sarong. Moreover, she is expected to be able to cook the dishes required for ritual occasions, such as *tu’ir, etan segon* and *ea wawi lekun*.

After the stage *sisi watu sea tana* males are classified as *ata doé poron menong* (he who
holds the machete strongly). From the age of six or seven until the onset of puberty boys are expected to begin learning the masculine tasks collectively called *orin uma* (house and garden). The machete, as the tool most commonly used by men for almost any conceivable chore, represents the male’s responsibility to provide shelter, food and income for his family. Boys traditionally begin their education to fulfill this responsibility by learning how to correctly use and sharpen the machete, cut firewood, make bamboo water containers, make baskets from coconut leaves, cut grass and look after livestock. As boys mature into puberty they become *tibo ‘laman baret* (young masculine men). As with girls, at this time *roat ala* (hair shaving) is stopped. When the young man is able to competently carry out the masculine tasks, again, like females, expected at twenty years of age, he becomes *tibo ‘laman geté* (mature masculine man). Having entered this classification the man is able to *wehen tahi pano lalan* (cross seas and explore paths), which indicates that he has both the independence and responsibility to seek to his own livelihood and establish his own family.

5. Lessons about Childhood Development in Two Rituals

The theory of ritual education I introduced in Section 2 proposes that ritual communicates ‘truths’ to its participants. The canonical ideas expressed in ritual, especially those which prescribe actions necessary for health and happiness, can no more be ignored than a failed harvest or an approaching thunderstorm. In this section I discuss the content of chanted prayers and the management of objects and behavior in the *tung puhe oha* (placing the placenta) and *lodong me* (lowering the child) rituals. From the analysis of these two rituals it is evident that the Adat educational principle that ‘ritual participation is crucial to learning Adat’ (which is an example of an Adat canonical truth) is expressed in the very definition of human development contained within the prayers and actions of these rituals.

Whether a baby is born in hospital, at a health clinic, or in the home, the treatment of the placenta is always of vital importance. If a *du’a rawin* (midwife) is present she must cut the placenta free using a knife made from sharpened bamboo. The placenta should only be cut with a bamboo instrument because using a hard material (such as steel or stone) would cause the baby to grow up with a difficult and stubborn disposition. The placenta is then carefully cut, and if a child is born at home Adat prescribes that the father noisily breaks and snaps wood at the front of his house. This action serves to notify neighbors of the birth, but perhaps more importantly the noise is thought to excite the voice and hearing of the newborn. This ensures that when the baby grows he or she will be easily addressed and a keen listener. The wood is then used to heat the water with which the mother is washed. It is also used to light fires at the front and back of the house, called *retun*, to protect against evil incursions (*retun* are also lit on other occasions of great change or uncertainty, such as following the death of a family member).
wrapped in a cloth, for a female child an ‘utan is used and for a male a lipa is used, and placed in a lilin (a container made from bamboo or lontar palm leaves). According to Adat, the placenta is the twin of the baby, and yet they must be separated immediately otherwise the baby’s growth would be hindered. For this reason the placenta, which is normally called the puhe oha, can also be referred to by using the everyday word for rubbish, klu’ut klaut, because it is something that must be placed apart from the newborn.

There are two methods for separating the placenta from the baby using the ritual tung puhe oha (placing the placenta). The first is by burying it at the front of the house. The second method is considered to be of greatest benefit to the baby and involves placing the placenta at the top of a tree in a quiet place. Although the former method is nowadays more common, I will discuss the latter method here because this ritual communicates very clear ideas regarding the educational relationship between the newborn and the world.

After the performance of the requisite piong tewok rites at the household altar to inform the ancestors of the birth and immanent placement of the placenta the midwife hands the already wrapped and contained placenta to the father and chants:

na’i nimu e napun blinet place him (or her) in a quiet valley
leda e ‘ai geté reta wutu leave him at the top of a large tree
‘ai moret nanen a tree that lives long
roun jana jeong with leaves that shade and protect
mole bliran blatan with freshness and coolness

The father then takes the lilin containing the placenta wrapped in cloth into the forest and, having found a suitable tree, climbs it and secures the bundle with cordage. He then speaks:

ba’u sai stay well!
‘au deri a’u pano you sit here and I go
kamang ‘au lopa diri ata hopefully you will not listen to people
tutur keki kelik bleriing (who) talk as though tickling your armpits
harang karā wa’i gatar speak as though scratching your itchy feet
‘au gita dunia mulum you will see the world before (the baby)

16 In everyday wear an ‘utan cloth is worn exclusively by women, and a lipa cloth is worn exclusively by men. The cloths are distinguished by different length, pattern, color, and weaving and sewing techniques.
17 Thus, the advice to the placenta is to not listen to those (specifically evil spirits) who insist it acts against its will. This presents an interesting juxtaposition between the affectionate ‘tickling’ and ‘scratching’ of infants by their parents and the aggravating ‘tickling’ and ‘scratching’ of the placenta by evil spirits.
Lessons of the Ancestors

The father returns home, asks permission to enter the house from his wife, and then enjoys betel and areca nut (\textit{wua ta'a}) and tobacco (\textit{bako}) together with the ancestors at the household altar to conclude the \textit{tung puhe oha} ritual.

In terms of the Adat worldview, several connections between this ritual activity and the well-being of the child are immediately apparent. The father, on return from placing the placenta, asks for permission to enter the house so that the baby will learn to be kind and polite. The placenta is wrapped in either a male or female sarong so that the baby will grow to use and respect those things deemed appropriate to his or her gender. The placenta is taken to a place that is quiet and far from human habitation, and put in a long lived and shady tree, so that the baby also has a long life, always healthy and lucky. The placenta is placed high in the tree so that the baby sees all that this world has to offer, both fair and peaceful, and cruel and harmful. A constant communication between baby and placenta is assumed, so that through its own experiences the placenta introduces the baby to the world. When the baby cries, it can mean the placenta has seen something bad, and when the baby smiles and laughs, the placenta has seen something good. In fact, all the moods of the baby can be related to some feature of life that the placenta itself has experienced. These concepts predicate a causal relationship between the welfare of the baby and the behaviour of the family in carrying out the appropriate rituals. That is, the actions of the family at this time set the tone for the child’s future education and development.

Approximately one month to forty days after birth and the placenta placement, the baby is brought out of the house for the first time in the ritual \textit{lodong me} (lowering the child). Although the baby may have already seen the outside world, as would certainly be the case if the birth was in a hospital, this ritual is considered to be the first officially Adat sanctioned entrance of the baby into public life.

\textit{Lodong me} encapsulates the responsibility that parents have towards their children to provide them with a strong foundation from which to face and anticipate the life’s challenges. This responsibility is spoken of in ritual language using the phrase \textit{bua naha bur awu, ga'e naha sedon teren}, which translates as ‘with birth ashes must be spread, the cradled bamboo

\footnote{The terms \textit{tena} and \textit{jong} refer to ocean going craft. \textit{Tena} is a small craft, and \textit{jong} is a large craft (nowadays \textit{jong} refers to craft with engines). The terms \textit{tuke} and \textit{tuba} refer to methods for supporting saplings. \textit{Tuke} is to lay up a supporting pole directly against the side of the tree from trunk to tip. \textit{Tuba} is to lay a pole diagonally based away from the tree and angling into the trunk.}
must be struck’. Upon the birth and with the subsequent care and attention given to the child, the parents assume a duty to provide a safe path for their children, represented by the spreading of ashes, and to give words of peaceful and respectful advice, represented by the striking of the bamboo.

The ritual begins as the family gathers, including most importantly the ‘a’a winé (sisters and aunts) from both the father’s and mother’s side. At the household altar the head of the child’s descent group makes an offering to the ancestors and asks for their attendance and support. The baby is then introduced to the various tools and equipment that he or she will be expected to master in later life. For male infants, a machete is placed and held in his hand. As instructions for its use are whispered quietly in his ear, his hand is moved up and down in a cutting motion. For females, a piece of weaving equipment is placed in the baby’s hand whilst instructions are spoken and the motions of weaving enacted. Nowadays, sometimes pens and paper are used instead of the more traditional equipment in the hope that the baby will grow to be a diligent student suitable for white-collar employment as a teacher or civil servant.

The baby is then escorted out the front door of the house (wa geté). In everyday terms the inside of a house is called the wali une and the outside wina mai, but in ritual these are spoken of as reta une and wawa tana respectively. Reta une literally means ‘up to the inside’ and wawa tana means ‘down to the ground’, harking back to the days when all houses were built on stilts. Thus, as the baby is taken through the front door he or she is descending from the house, or being ‘lowered’. At the wa geté the ritual leader casts out into the front yard another offering of rice, tobacco and betel and areca nut (one of the only occasions on which an offering is not directly placed on a stone altar). While doing so he chants a neniplawi prayer asking for the protection and safety of the child. Bearing in mind the variations in ritual language usage, the following extract serves as an exemplar:

ami nenigi ruhu mahun
mora ina nian tana wawa
plawi ga glekon glarek
mora ama lero wulan reta
kamang himo me amin buan
himo ga tio mate
da pu amin lu’ur
da ga bela molo

we ask as chicks sheltering under a hen
of the mother of the earth and land below
appeal with respect and humility
of the father of the sun and moon above
we hope you receive the child of our womb
take in [the child] sincerely and eternally
receive our blood nephew/niece
receive him/her truly

19 This bamboo is cut in half and partially split and used as a musical instrument as part of the ensemble of gongs (S: gong waning).
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After this prayer the baby is handed from the ‘a’a winé of the mother’s original clan to the ‘a’a winé of the father’s clan. At the precise moment the baby is handed over a bamboo instrument (teren) is beaten and ashes collected from the hearth fire are scattered at the front of the house. The baby is then brought out with his or her feet touching the ash covered ground.

The party proceeds from the house towards a chosen destination that, again, reflects the hopes of the parents for the future of their child. Commonly, a female is taken to the house of a member of her father’s clan and a male is taken to the father’s garden. In Romanduru both male and female infants are almost always taken to the spring waters called wair wulut, located a short distance down the northern valley from the village centre. Less traditional destinations are also visited. For example, it is increasingly popular for the infant to be escorted to the nearest school. In all cases the mother walks in front of the procession scattering ashes, as the baby is aided to walk along behind by the aunts and sisters of the

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20 In this context the term *ama* refers to the innermost skin of a rice seed. It represents the innermost physical organs of humans, such as the heart, liver, and brain.

21 An *'o' a* is a kind of pheasant.
father. Having reached the destination, wherever that may be, the baby is again given a piece of equipment, either weaving tools, a machete or more modern implements, to keep for use when he or she is older. When baby boys are taken to the garden, a piece of firewood or some of the garden’s produce is also given. Upon return to the parents’ house, a piong tewok sacrifice of an animal, either chicken or pig, is made to the family’s ancestor spirits, and the ritual thereby comes to a close.

As in the tung puhe oha rites, the lodong me expresses much about the learning behavior assumed in children. The baby is thought to be shaped by these rituals in a way that will affect his or her future development, and successful completion ensures the child will grow to be a responsible, moral, and useful member of the community. The mimicry of gendered adult activities and whispered instructions to the infant are telling examples of the consequence these rituals are thought to have. The use of pens and paper, and the choice of school for the child’s first destination after his or her ‘lowering’ from the house, speak of the continuing relevance of these rites in the modern world. Both these rituals are intellectual reflections of the Adat community’s view of how children learn. They are equally moral reflections on how the community hopes their children will develop.

6. Conclusion

The rituals of birth and childhood practiced by the Adat community presuppose that children learn from a very young age. Indeed, it is thought that even whilst inside the womb a fetus can absorb the negative or positive words or deeds of others and be affected by them in later life. Whilst some of these practices are occult, such as the communication between newborn and placenta, others, such as the mimicry of adult activities, are premised on the very pragmatic performative method of education I outlined in the previous chapter. Even if we bracket the Adat explanations of the function of these rituals, they nonetheless remain an important part of childhood development. As subjects of the rites discussed in this chapter, and as participants from a young age of almost all other Adat rituals (albeit as peripheral attendees), children become ‘ritualized’ (Turner 1969; Goodenough 1990). In other words, early experiences of ritual make individuals receptive to the rituals that continue on throughout their lives. Rituals, whether viewed from local or sociological perspectives, are critical to the education of children in the Adat community.

Children are not the only people who learn during these rituals. The ritual’s key canonical statements are experienced by the participating parents and family members. The ritual language and actions described above are directed towards the well-being of the infant, yet
they are also performed, seen and heard by others. In this way, by enacting procedures that are outwardly about the child’s welfare, the wider family is also taught the definition of the child’s welfare. There are many specific expressions of this definition, but the crux of the message is that for a child to grow well these rituals must be performed. According to Adat, the future of the child is overwhelmingly determined by the favor of the ancestor spirits and the deity, and people are agents in the production of such favors by virtue of their ritual activity.

The rituals of birth and childhood teach the participants that these rituals, and by extension all Adat rituals, are essential for future happiness and prosperity. In this respect, rituals teach that rituals must always be performed. And yet some rituals are no longer performed, and some are changed. For example, the *gareng 'lamen* male initiation ceremony is a distant memory, and although the classifications of age groups I discussed earlier are still used, they are now measured increasingly in ways that reflect the opportunities available in modern Indonesia. Farming, weaving and domestic skills are augmented by technical and academic skills, and a child’s progress through formal schooling marks maturity as much as the ability to weave and farm. The Catholic rites of passage including baptism (BI: *permandian*) and confirmation (*sambut baru*) are also now equally significant in measuring a child’s growth.

I chose for analysis the two rituals discussed in Section 5 to highlight the contingency of Adat canon. The placement of the placenta in a tree top in the *tung puhe oha* ritual is now regularly eschewed in favor of burial near the house (but which also invokes the protective relationship between baby and placenta). The tree top method is less common nowadays because, people say, with the increase in population there are few suitable places to situate the placenta. There are few accessible wild forests, and according to traditional practice the placenta cannot be placed in trees located in gardens or inhabited land. The *lodong me* rites illustrate the adaptability of ritual to incorporate contemporary values and practices. New ways of conceiving a child’s future are integrated into the traditional ritual structure that once admitted only weaving and farming life-skills.

The tension between modernity and tradition highlighted by these two rituals is an example of the economy of the stability of canon and the flexibility of variation. The sanctified contexts of these rituals and the ‘true’ messages they communicate stand in relation to other true contexts (such as the sanctity of Catholic rituals, the imperative of schooling in the modern nation-state, or the patent lack of accessible wild forests). In this system, each truth must ‘flex’

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22 The messages relating to correct childhood development do not exhaust the totality of canon taught in these rituals. For example, the passing of the child from the mother’s *'a'a winé* to the father’s *'a'a winé* in the ‘lowering of the child’ ritual communicates messages about the nature of affiliation and reproduction (something to which I will return in Chapter 6).
to a certain degree in order to persist. Part of this flexibility is the accommodation of other true orders. Disparate contexts are brought into a relationship through the deutero-learning of individuals for whom these contexts are a regular part of life. For example, Adat truths and Catholic truths, or Adat truths and economic and material imperatives, co-mingle in the embodied deutero-learning of individuals for whom all these truths are necessary and effective. The changes and developments in the Adat ritual contexts discussed in this chapter are products of the recursion between deutero-learning and context which includes, importantly, ‘true’ ideologies and circumstances other than Adat.

Thus, the canonical truths accepted by participants of Adat rituals do not stand alone, and they do not assuage nor smother other ideologies and practices with which they must compete. Nor, in turn, is the Adat cosmology completely overwhelmed. I have shown in this chapter that rituals of birth and childhood continue to play an important role in the life of the Adat community. They express a mode of living and theory of childhood development that is compelling in its necessity. The theoretical position I adopted in Section 2 (that ritual performance creates accepted truths) is supported by the empirical evidence presented in Sections 3, 4 and 5. That is, the test of a sanctified religious canon is that its propositions are accepted and continue to be implemented. The acceptance of the Adat proposition ‘ritual is necessary for childhood development’ is borne out by the continued, albeit adapted, practice of most Adat birth and childhood rituals. In the next chapter I will explore further rituals place in the education of Adat. In doing so I move from the explicit analysis of the content of canonical messages presented in this chapter to an analysis that considers the embodied and implicit deutero-learning experiences that ritual participants have of this content.
Gifts of Blood and Ivory

1. Introduction

The sequence of standard Adat marriage rites (S: *wain plan* – see Section 3) involves three distinct stages consisting of a total of eight separate rituals which are carried out intermittently over a matter of months, or sometimes even years. One of the most important features of this long and complex process is the complementary prestation of goods, animals and foodstuffs between the families of the bride and bridegroom. In this chapter I describe these marital exchanges and the educational value they have for the families and individuals involved.

In doing this I build upon the theory of ritual education introduced in the previous chapter. I have argued, following Rappaport, that the canonical ideas communicated during ritual contexts are accepted as truths by the participants. This is achieved by the sanctification of these ideas through the performance of the mystical and ineffable, and hence unquestionable, Ultimate Sacred Postulates. I continue in this chapter by looking more closely at the relationship between performance and sanctification, and concentrate in particular on the enactment of religious ideas. I contend that during the performance of Adat rituals participants’ experiences are an encounter with these ideas made manifest as a physical and temporal reality. Just as theatre brings the black and white words of a script to life, the performance of ritual physically substantiates the canonical ideas of religion (see Turner 1982). Unlike a play, however, religious canon always stands on the certainty and consequence entailed by the ritual form and its centrality in the human cosmos. For the participants, ritual is a negotiation with a deity and ancestor spirits who hold *bona fide* control over their welfare, and can affect life and death decisions. I suggest that the performative substantiation of Adat’s canon educates participants as it integrates ideas into their unconscious being through the process of deutero-learning. In this way, Adat canon
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is learnt not in static and abstract forms, but as a contingent and embodied experience.

By focusing on marriage rites and bridewealth exchanges I aim to describe the lessons learnt as embodied skills by the ritual participants about the institution of marriage. One of the most pressing issues in this regard, both for the local community and anthropology, is to understand how the personal relationship between husband and wife and the social relationship between two descent groups is to be harmoniously constituted in an alliance system that is characterized by asymmetry. Bridewealth and counterprestation exchanges are only one element of marriage rituals, but they are the element that most directly represents these relationships. I will show that exchanges are a means of mediating, and ultimately ameliorating, the asymmetry associated with marriage in which life and reproductive potential is given by one party but not returned by the other. Giving and receiving bridewealth is an enactment of Adat’s canonical ideas that address the complementary oscillation of separation and recombination, and difference and similarity, of the bride and bridegroom and their respective clans. Importantly, during ritual the participants do not just hear about or see these oscillations, they implement and produce them.

The data I use to support my argument in this chapter is, for the most part, drawn directly from marriage rituals that I have witnessed. On many occasions I was told explicitly by informants about the ideal of complementarity between descent groups engaged in marriage exchanges, and I incorporate into my analysis some direct quotes and paraphrases that emphasize this sentiment. Indeed, the ideal of complementarity is uncontroversial among the Adat community, and my informants unambiguously agreed on this matter. However, the theory of ritual education I am advancing in this treatise is grounded in the performative and practical actions of community members. I weigh the evidence of the ritual actions and ritual speeches that I have observed and recorded in situ more heavily than the information gathered in the relatively abstract context of interviews between ethnographer and informant. In this respect, I do not consider the ritual language chanted to the bride and groom during the apex of Adat marriage rites, for example, as a purely formal text without sentiment. Rather, such speech is a valid representation of people’s ideals and emotions concerning marriage. In this chapter, and those that follow, I continue to emphasize that ritual is enacted by intentional and creative people. Although ritual has important formulaic properties, it is not completely played out by rote, but is brought into being, each time anew, affective and meaningful for the participants.
2. Learning Experiences During Ritual

In this section I set the theoretical basis from which to describe how bridewealth exchanges teach the participants about the Adat marriage canon – especially with regard to those canonical ideas treating the reciprocal relationships between wife-giver and wife-taker groups and the wedded couple. Bridewealth exchanges more than just encourage the conscious acceptance of the truth of this reciprocity, they also contribute to the embodiment of this truth through deutero-learning. I argue that this embodiment means that Adat is learnt performatively as patterns of behavior that produce and reproduce the referents of canonical propositions. In fact, for some participants the religious canon, when expressed purely through ritual language, is an opaque collection of archaic metaphors and tricky concepts. The substantiation of the canon with physical activity is for these people a valuable avenue for learning Adat.

The embodiment of ideas achieved by ritual performances is a process of sanctified deutero-learning. In their performance of ritual, participants encounter Adat’s canonical ideas expressed in ritual language and other symbolic media and substantiated in ritual’s formulaic activity. In Chapter 4 I discussed the sanctity of the canonical propositions as they are communicated via symbolic media. I argued that Adat’s canonical propositions are transformed into accepted truths by self-referential ritual performance. Thus, I focused on the way the performance of ritual sanctifies (i.e., makes true) the religious ideas that are communicated in the ritual context. In this chapter I argue the matter of ritual sanctification in terms of the complementary component of the ecology of mind. That is, I investigate the way in which the performance of ritual sanctifies the religious ideas (that motivate and structure the ritual) as these ideas are enacted and inform deutero-learning.

The argument that ritual creates an environment in which symbolic codes are transformed into a performative actuality is now well established in anthropological theory. In ritual, religious propositions are not just a page read or instruction heard, but a reality experienced first-hand by participants. Rappaport (1999: 153) writes of this phenomenon in terms of the unification of form and substance, such that

…the performer incarnates or embodies a canonical form. As he participates in the form or order he incorporates it into himself. His body gives substance to the canon as the canon provides his body with form.

A comparable argument has been put forward by Schieffelin (1985), who emphasizes the role of ritual performance in constructing a context in which symbolic propositions are
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directly experienced by participants (see also Bell 1992: 141). In eastern Indonesian ethnography Allerton (2004) makes a similar point in her study of marriage among the Manggarai of western Flores. She notes that

...relations of marriage can be understood not simply as a set of rules and classifications, but as a sequence of place-based, practical actions (ibid.: 340).

Allerton argues that there is a real connection between the metaphor of ‘path’ used in marriage canon and the trails that are trodden into the landscape by the wedding party. Path is a common trope for marriage used throughout eastern Indonesia, but it is normally considered by anthropologists solely as a “mode of representation” or “idiom” (ibid: 340). And yet, the Manggarai bride walking the path to her new home is an experience from which path symbolism can arise. That marriage is a long and fulfilling, and sometimes treacherous, road is something the newlyweds learn from an analogous experience on Manggarai’s muddy trails.

Most recently, Kray has advocated a practice approach to ritual to describe the movement and energy of bodies in the enactment of social relationships. She writes:

Ritual obliges groups of people to come together, to coordinate their movements and their goods at regular points in time, and to perform submission, hierarchy, opposition, community and gender (Kray 2007: 533, my emphasis).

Although these processes are arguably at work to some degree in almost every aspect of social life, it is in ritual that ideas and actions are condensed into a particularly formidable mixture. The incorporation of relational patterns such as submission, hierarchy, opposition, community, gender, or, most importantly for this chapter, complementarity into the participants' selfhood is enabled, to a great degree, by the profundity of indexicality.

The educational value of ‘acting out’ canonical ideas is strengthened by ritual’s ability to manufacture indexical, or causal, connections between the ritual’s concepts and actions. For example, in engaging in bridewealth transactions participants are not simply

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1 Bell writes that ritual is an “environment, constructed and reconstructed by the actions of the social agents within it, provides an experience of the objective reality of the embodied subjective schemes that have created it” (Bell 1992: 141).

2 An index is a sign that is causally related to that which it signifies.

3 There have always been ambiguities in Peircean semiotics about the definition of an index sign. Rappaport writes that this is consequent upon a difference between “natural” and “constructed” indices (1999: 63). A constructed index, the kind this chapter primarily treats, are “deliberately constructed and employed by humans to indicate whatever they do indicate” (ibid.: 63). These
role-playing notions of propriety in marriage, they are in actual fact fulfilling this propriety. Ritual exchanges compel participants to carry out, in one context at least, the kind of behavior endorsed by the religious doctrine. The rectitude of the relationship between the married couple and their families is configured in ritual to be dependent upon the reciprocal exchange of bridewealth and counterprestation.

However, it must also be realized that this causality flows in two directions. The canonical ideas of Adat command that particular rituals must be carried out. In the case at hand, bridewealth must be exchanged for a marriage to be correct. In doing these rituals, the ideas that prompt the action are subsequently themselves entailed by the action. That is, bridewealth exchanges are practiced because the Adat canon decrees it necessary to bring probity to the relationships of those involved in the marriage, and, equally, in carrying out these exchanges probity is indeed visibly and concretely brought to the families. On the one hand, the occurrence of bridewealth exchanges is an index of the existence of a proper marriage, and, on the other hand, a proper marriage is an index of the effectiveness of bridewealth exchanges.

This dyadic relationship can be understood using Keane’s (1997, 2003) model of ‘representational economies’. According to Keane, the dichotomization of ideas and objects, such that one completely determines the other, is unhelpful when analyzing the logical–causal relations between these ideas and objects in a given society. Instead, the

...goal is to open up social analysis to the historicity and social power of material things without reducing them either to being only vehicles of meaning, on the one hand, or ultimate determinants, on the other (Keane 2003: 411).

Neither the canon of Adat nor the performance of ritual decides the other, instead they respond to each other in mutual development. They are bound together so that each is entailed by the other in a feed-back loop.\(^4\) In fact, though analytically separable, in practice it is difficult to distinguish the two. As I have stated in previous chapters, even the ritual language, which is a direct symbolic expression of Adat canon, itself carries illocutionary force. In the oral traditions of Adat, the canon is a slippery fish to grasp; it is performed rather than written and read, and it resides in the memories, imaginations and practices of its practitioners (see also Chapter 7). Importantly, when ideas and actions are

\(^4\) I am equating performance (as it is a physical exercise) with Keane’s notion of materiality.
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conjoined indexically (i.e., interdependently) people need not be aware of an ‘abstract text’ of canon to be able to learn about the world in a way that can be described by canon.

There are, undoubtedly, several educational processes that can occur within ritual other than the performative type I am discussing here. For example, Spindler (2000) has called attention to the importance of discontinuity. Ritual’s liminal intervals are separate from ‘normal time’ and bring cultural knowledge into sharp relief, impressing upon the participants certain aspects of culture that are otherwise not easily perceived. Wallace (1966) makes a similar point, but in cognitive scientific terms, when he writes that ritual learning proceeds according to the law of dissociation. According to this view, in ritual

\[\text{and affective elements can be restructured more rapidly and more extensively the more of the perceptual cues from the environment associated with\ldots previous learning of other matters are excluded from conscious awareness, and the more\ldots new cues immediately relevant to the elements to be organised are presented (Wallace 1966: 239).}\]

In addition to discontinuity, in ritual education we can find conditioning, imitation, and admonition. Cognitive studies of ritual have also made great advances in recent years, the majority of which stress the increased receptivity to, and gestalt processing of, information (see Chapter 6).

In this treatise, however, I have chosen to concentrate on performance-based learning and the embodiment of religious ideas. The local pedagogy itself endorses this kind of education and, therefore, it is sociologically important to measure the extent to which this method is actually utilized. My own observations of Adat rituals, as I present them throughout this work, also suggests that more than any other type of learning, the performance of ritual is the primary means of education (particularly as performance is connected indexically to Adat’s canonical ideas). There is no professional teaching class, no written texts to study, nor are there occasions of education outside of ritual that are approximate to ritual’s organization and depth. I also suggest that some other educative aspects of ritual, such as discontinuity, are better understood as factors that contribute to setting up a special context in which participants then learn through their performance.

I contend that deutero-learning is the most inclusive type of learning that occurs during the performance of ritual. As I explained in Chapter 1, deutero-learning is the development of an individual’s skill to recognize, manipulate, and reproduce certain contexts. Prolonged or profound exposure to a specific context enables the individual to achieve an unconscious ‘intuitive’ understanding of that context through deutero-learning.

The experiences of Adat ritual participants are structured into tightly controlled
patterns of behavior which are repeated often and are (apparently) strictly homogeneous, even across different types of ritual (for example, tung piong and piong tewok sacrificial rites are necessary in all types of Adat rituals – see Chapter 4). And as I argued above, behavior in these conditions is patterned as indexical referents of Adat’s canonical ideas in a way that both reflects and reinforces these ideas. In the frequent performances of the highly formulaic Adat rituals the substantiation of ideas is causal, such that performance is entailed by ideas and, equally, ideas are entailed by performance. This dynamic of indexicality ensures that the ritual is experienced as having profound consequences for the community’s welfare. The redundant and causal enactment of Adat propositions provide an ideal opportunity for ritual participants to embody these propositions through deutero-learning. That is, ritual participants fully concentrate their attention to perceive the context of ritual.5 The patterns, or frame, of the ritual context is then ‘sunk’ into the semi-rigid internal state of deutero-learning (per the ‘economy of flexibility’) and become self-validating, unconscious truths.

The patterns of behavior enacted in ritual contribute to the development of an individual’s sanctified deutero-learning because these behaviors are the substantiation of Adat’s religious truth. The establishment of such sanctified deutero-learning means that the sanctified contexts in which this deutero-learning first develops will be reproduced in future activity. This does not necessarily entail an exact reduplication of context (although this is approximated in repetitions of ritual), rather it entails that individuals will construct meaningful Adat contexts from the array of phenomena they experience daily (see Chapters 7 & 9).

The focus of this chapter complements the discussion in Chapter 4 and closes the circle of the recursive relationship between context and deutero-learning in ritual. In Chapter 4 I argued that in the ritual context religious ideas are communicated as truths by virtue of self-referential performance. In this chapter I show that religious ideas are also transformed into truths of deutero-learning by virtue of communication (i.e., the communicated truths structure the ritual’s formulaic activity). In the following sections I argue that according to Adat the exchange of bridewealth is necessary for a proper and successful marriage, and that these exchanges reflect and reinforce the Adat canon of the complementary relationship between husband and wife and their respective families. This complementarity is ‘deutero-learnt’ by participants through their repeated and profound

5 We must also consider that not all people have the same concentration of attention or perceive the exactly the same context (see Chapter 6).
performance of exchange in marriage rituals.

3. Marriage and its Meaning in the Adat Community

There are four types of marriage for the Adat community, each with its own set of rituals. The marriage ina ama wen (mother and father bestow) is an arranged marriage organized by the parents of the bride and bridegroom that is usually made in consideration of the wealth and social status of the two families involved. This type of marriage is very rarely practiced these days and I myself did not meet anybody who was married in such a way. Another rare form of marriage is that called lébo kuat (cook for the clan), which entails the entry of the bridegroom into the descent group of the bride. Such a marriage only occurs when the husband and his family are unable or unwilling to enter into a bridewealth exchange with the bride’s family. The marriage du’a depo la’i (woman follows the man), on the other hand, is becoming more common these days. In this case, the man and woman who wish to be together do so without the express permission of their parents and before any formal marriage ceremony is conducted. This somewhat awkward situation, however, is easily remedied with the ritual ruku gapu wa’in, kongong piru liman (kneel and embrace the feet, bow and kiss the hands). With this ceremony, the husband asks for belated permission from his wife’s parents to marry, and then initiates bridewealth exchanges to sanction the marriage.

Wain plan (invited wife) marriage is held in the highest regard and is also the most common in the Adat community, and thus my analysis will concentrate upon this form of marriage. A popular phrase made with reference to the transparency and sincerity of this marriage states that the bridegroom ‘enters through the front door so that the mother sees and the father hears’ (tama depo wa geté iana inan gita aman rena). The first of the three stages (totaling eight separate rites) required for this marriage is called ga’i glengan (desire and intention) and involves the rites mobo tulung (gather together) and wua ta’a diri mipin (betel and areca hear the dream). This early stage is essentially a time for the families of the couple to gauge the appropriateness of the proposed marriage. In its most correct form, during the mobo tulung the bridegroom and a close friend or family member visit the house of the prospective bride’s parents to simply sit and converse. After several

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6 Lewis notes that among the Ata Sikka this marriage is called léma lepo. This unusual type of marriage (in that it is contracted without bridewealth) has interesting implications for the comparative study of Sikka and Tana ‘Ai societies, the latter of whom only have marriages of this ‘non-bridewealth’ type. Lewis (forthcoming: 139) writes that “a marriage without bridewealth in Sikka Natar has, with respect to the affiliation of offspring of the marriage, the same result as marriage in Tana ‘Ai’.”
visits the bridegroom’s associates formally state the intention to marry, and the bride’s parents ask them to return in preparation for the ritual ‘betel and areca hear the dream’. At home, the bridegroom’s party bundle a portion of betel, areca and tobacco in a cloth and bring this and a chicken to the house of the bride. In exchange the bridegroom is given rice and dried fish to eat and palm gin to drink – the leftovers of which he must give to his parents so they may also join with the bride’s parents in this dreaming ritual. With the help of the ancestor spirits and deity that is solicited with these offerings and exchanges, the parents dream that night about the suitability of their child’s relationship. If the dreams indicate success the marriage proceeds. If they indicate failure the marriage is canceled.

The second stage of wain plan marriage is the formalization of the engagement during a stage called beta wain heron men (call the wife and children), which consists of four rituals. First, on an agreed day the two families gather at the bride’s house for the elaborately titled rite wua lema lepo, pla wain nian poa, ta’a rawit woga, heron men lero tawa (areca ascends into the house, to invite the wife and earth to reveal all, betel climbs into the dwelling, to ask for the children and sun to shine brightly). This requires that the bridegroom’s family pick fresh areca nut and betel peppers, carefully leaving the stalks attached as a sign of the wholeheartedness of their commitment. This is then placed with tobacco upon the household altar to obtain the ancestors blessing. The next day they all travel to the bride’s house, though it is only the a’a winé (aunts and sisters) who carry these offerings, as well as a rooster, and a small amount of gold or money in a lilin (container made from lontar palm leaves). Upon entering the house of the bride the lilin is immediately placed on their household altar to report the occasion to the ancestor spirits. Immediately afterwards the pati wawi pla’an wua ta’a (sacrifice the pig and offer the areca and betel) ritual is carried out. This involves the sacrifice of a pig provided by the bride’s family. The pig’s blood is daubed on the foreheads of both the fiancée and fiancé. This is the final step in the formalization of the engagement. When this ritual is complete the commencement of an affinal relationship between the two groups is formally recognized. Hereafter, the bride’s family is formally known as the ina ama (the mother and father – wife-giver) and the bridegroom’s family becomes known as the me pu (the child and nephew [ZS] – wife-taker).

The next two rituals in the beta wain heron men stage of marriage are hiwi hao (service) and tuji lin taji welin (the spur prizes opens the value). The former signifies the

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7 Tuji is a small spur or knife-like instrument used for weaving and other odd jobs such as opening lids. Taji also refers to such an object (as the cognate word does in bahasa Indonesia), but is
husband’s responsibility for his wife to be, and the latter involves discussions that
determine the amount of bridewealth to be exchanged. I will treat both these rituals in
more detail in the next sections, along with an analysis of the final stage of the wain plan
marriage rituals. This final stage, called wawi api ara planga (roasted pig and cooked
rice), is the pinnacle of marriage. It involves the ritual leto woter (give and obtain) in
which the majority of bridewealth goods are given, and, finally, the ritual wawi wotik (fed
the pork), in which the bride and groom make their oath of marriage. This ultimate step
signifies the completion of the couple’s marriage, and the new wife formally enters her
husband’s descent group.

There are, of course, many factors that mitigate an absolute influence of Adat rituals on
people’s knowledge (embodied or discursive) of marriage. For example, Catholic marriage
rituals also play an important role, and the first-hand, day to day experience of one’s own,
family’s or friends’ marriages is of course also influential. One major theme, however,
that was ubiquitous in my discussions about marriage with the Adat community relates
directly to the function of the Adat rituals. That is, marriage generates inequalities between
the two families of the betrothed, and these inequalities, whilst admitted and ameliorated
between the families, must not be allowed to affect the personal relationship between the
married couple. Instead, inequalities must be known for their complementarity. For this the
exchange of Adat bridewealth is paramount.

Adat marriage is a means of sanctioning the reproductive relationship between a man
and woman, and it thereby ensures the rights of their children within the father’s descent
group. This authorization is ultimately given by the deity and ancestor spirits during the
marriage rituals and is consequently accepted by the entire Adat community. One of the
most fundamental principles of Adat marriage is that, through marriage, the ‘wife and
husband share the same path throughout life’ (wain la’in ‘lihan lalan). The primary object
of this union is the birth of children who will share the responsibilities of the clan, as well
as partake in its wealth and privileges. These children ‘ease the burden and lessen the load’
(hu’u buluk ‘wara glerang) and ‘cut the trunks and snip the stems’ (ploi pu’an plaru

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8 Adat marriages are commonly undertaken before Catholic marriages. It is not unusual for a couple
to marry according to Adat and two or three years later, after having saved more money, follow
the Catholic rituals. However, whereas in the past it was possible for a man to take two wives
(and some older people still have two wives), Catholic canonical law forbids this practice.
The relationship between two individuals for the purpose of giving birth to the next generation of clan members, however, causes a disparity between the families of these individuals. As is common throughout eastern Indonesia, where descent groups are mostly exogamous and reckoned through the male line, the family of the wife (i.e., the wife-giver) is deemed superior to the family of the husband (the wife-taker) (see Fox 1980a: passim). In a system of affinal asymmetric alliance and patrilineal descent, structural and sentimental superiority has its origins in the indebtedness of the wife-taker to the wife-giver for the gift of ‘life’. Of a neighbouring community from the village of Sikka Natar, Lewis (forthcoming: 135) writes that bridewealth

...is a recognition of the permanent and continuing debt owed by the husband’s group to that of his wife for the gift of life her group have given in her person. This is why bridewealth gifts continue through the lifetime of a married couple and are most onerous for wife-takers following the birth of a child.

In effect, by entering the clan of her husband, a wife, and by extension her natal descent group, gives to the husband’s clan her children. In this discrete exchange cycle, therefore, a woman’s natal clan forfeits the potential for their own reproduction.

In the Adat community, the me pu (wife-taker) is in receipt, from the hands of another, of their only possibility to propagate themselves. The me pu, consequently, must show great respect and humility towards the ina ama (wife-giver), from whom they receive this most valuable of gifts. Thus it is said ‘the wife’s family is the blunt handle, the husband’s family is the sharp blade’ (ina ama e pahan, me pu e diran). Both families are bound together holding the same knife, but the me pu grasp the most potent, and yet dangerous, end. They are reliant upon the grace of the ina ama for their safety.

However, it is clear that whilst the me pu wife-takers incur the debt of the gift and the inferiority it presupposes, they are also beneficiaries of the marriage. It is, after all, they who gain a wife and children. Marriage effectively creates two types of inequality. One type is in favor of the wife’s family consequent upon the indebtedness of the gift taker towards the gift giver. And the other is in favor of the husband’s clan consequent upon their procurement of, what is in effect, the continuity of their descent group.

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9 The latter expression refers to both the hard work and its reward as children grow and help with their families and develop their own livelihoods.

10 This asymmetry is most commonly manifested in ritual and in the metaphoric expressions of ritual language. It can be expressed in other arenas, such as enactments of the political structure of precedence (see Chapter 2).
And yet, from the outset of marriage the husband and wife themselves should neither experience nor exhibit these inequalities. Although there are, traditionally, different chores and responsibilities accorded to each gender, a fundamental equality of the couple is thought to be nurtured in marriage. This equality is configured not as equivalence, but as complementarity, which is a natural state originating from the gendered duality of the deity. However, there is the possibility that the complementarity existing between the individual man and woman will be tarnished by the practical inequalities apparent in the group dynamics of marriage. Protection from this incursion is an important function of bridewealth exchanges, and is particularly evident during the exchange called *wawi api* that accompanies the oath of marriage (see Section 5).

We must ask, then, in what way do bridewealth exchanges emphasize the complementarity of the relationship between descent groups which could otherwise be considered unequal? This question can be answered by firstly looking at structural reasons as to why difference and complementarity are important aspects of marriage. That is, why is the non-reciprocal flow of women and their reproductive potential transacted by the reciprocal flow of goods?

Difference, and the tension it brings, is always present in the relationship between the two descent groups, but it is also able to be managed through the exchanges of bridewealth and counterprestations. In the words of the Adat expert Mo’an Pasisius Pasing, in such exchanges

…ethics, manners and etiquette, as well as the amount and degree of bridewealth are the features that measure in its entirety the pinnacle of humanity’s value and dignity, and through which descent groups are protected and held high.

In potentially dangerous circumstances, as when one party holds the knife’s handle and the other the blade, exchanges of material goods, food and animals are not merely economic transactions, but a means for each party to expressly indicate and admit the importance of the other. Beginning with marriage, these exchanges continue throughout the life of the married couple, and sometimes even beyond, occur at every important family gathering to reinforce the imperative of co-operation. To this end, Adat bridewealth and counterprestations are of similar value – they are reciprocal.

The function of bridewealth to ameliorate negative sentiments and unequal

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11 Although the amount of bridewealth is said to index the respect held for the other party, many in the Adat community comment that large exchanges are counterproductive (in regard to the financial pressure it places on the families) and were rarely so extravagant in the past.
relationships is highlighted by Valeri in his work on the affinal exchange system of the Huaulu from Seram. In terms of sentiment, he argues that bridewealth payments are locally justified because

...one is prompted by feelings which are nothing but obligations turned into sentimental habitus. One gives, that is to say, out of 'compassion' (sayani), 'shame' (mukae) (for not doing the right thing), or because 'one's heart goes to them' (halini ala asie). One gives, also, in order to sopo ('help') and to avoid titikalu ('rejecting', literally 'turning one's back to') somebody (Valeri 1994: 6).

In terms of structure, the reciprocity of bridewealth and counterprestation, Valeri states, solidifies the independent identity of each descent group. If in contracting a marriage one group permanently subsumes the other, both cease to exist as independent units. A mother’s children would then not be classifierily different from her brother’s children, and the system would collapse.

The reciprocity of exchange marks each group as independent, equal and, most significantly, complementary. Valeri (1980: 184) writes:

A mere exchange of women for bridewealth would separate the two groups, but it would not indicate that this separation is meaningful only as a condition for perpetuating their relationship.

Thus, reciprocity frames the independence of groups in terms of the complementarity (as wife-giver and wife-taker) that this independence allows.

In the Adat community the complementary equality of ina ama and me pu is necessary, not only to salve the angst of the wedding parties, but to keep their independent identities intact. In this way they can still continue to engage autonomously in affinal alliances with other descent groups because their children are indubitably members of their father’s clan. Thus, bridewealth and counterprestation rescues a structural complementarity from an apparently irretrievably unequal position by asserting each groups independence.

In summary, two fundamental premises pertain to bridewealth and counterprestation. First, the practice of reciprocal exchanges of goods is necessary for the asymmetric marriage system to remain intact. Second, sentimental parity – such as the avoidance of emotions such as jealousy and arrogance – flows from the reciprocity of these exchanges.

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12 In Timor, and indeed throughout eastern Indonesia, exchange is “the idiom of life” states Shepard Forman (1980: 153). Dualism pervades cosmological thought about reproduction, such as ‘blood and sperm’, ‘woman and man’, and gendered deities. Forman concentrates on funeral exchanges, saying death is a threat to life, therefore exchange (which is life) kicks in at high gear. Through exchange the descent group asserts it’s continuity, and in doing so reconfirms the importance of alliance and exchange.
The continuity of both can only be produced by participants’ performance of the exchange.

4. The Value of Exchange Goods

In this section I describe the array of Adat bridewealth and counterprestations and explore the multiple expressions of complementarity of these objects that contribute to individuals’ deutero-learning of sentimental equality between husband and wife. The value of exchange objects effects the substantiation of the canonical message of this equality between wife-givers and wife-takers in two ways. First, the exchange of highly valuable objects indicates the significance attributed by each party to the other. The combined quantity, expense and scarcity of the gift means it takes sacrifice and organization to gather and give, and great humility and appreciation to receive. Perhaps the most important measure of the value of exchange goods, however, is the categorical meanings they hold for the Adat community. An object’s ‘biography’ includes aspects of gender, sanctity, durability and consumability – all of which contribute to their appreciation by ritual participants as objects worthy of mediating the flow of life.

In contracting affinal alliances Adat requires that the family of the husband (wife-takers/me pu) give the family of the wife (wife-givers/ina ama) bridewealth in the form of classificatory male goods including ivory\textsuperscript{13} (bala), horses (jarang), gold coins or jewelry (bahar), chickens (manu), coconut (kabor), corn (lele), and bananas (mu’u). These are collectively called bahar balik or to’o balik. Added to this are smaller offerings of betel and areca (wua ta’a) and tobacco (bako) that are required throughout the marriage. Counterprestations from wife-givers to wife-takers must be paid in the form of classificatory female goods including sarong cloth (’utan and lipa) and blouses (labu), which are referred to as paten when given simultaneously in an exchange, pigs (wawi), palm gin (tua) and rice (paré) (see Figure 11, overleaf). These goods are collectively called ’utan labu wawi paré or wawi paré tua patan, or sometimes hi’a lëma wua (rope to climb the areca tree).\textsuperscript{14} While these are the minimum requirements, it is not uncommon that they are complemented by other item. For example, cash money and cattle are often given as masculine gifts, and household furnishings and utensils can be given as feminine gifts.

\textsuperscript{13} Nowadays complete elephant tusks are very difficult and expensive to obtain, so most ivory is given as bracelets or small pre-cut sections.

\textsuperscript{14} A hi’a is a rope tied between the climbers ankles to grip the tree trunk.
As I mentioned in the previous section, *leto woter* is the name given to the moment during which the bulk of goods are exchanged, and as such it is commonly employed to describe the general phenomenon of bridewealth exchanges. Perhaps the most common descriptor, however, is that of *belis*. *Belis* is not recognized in the Indonesian lexicon to mean bridewealth,\(^\text{15}\) however it is treated as such in Sikka and, indeed, throughout Flores. It is also inflected using Indonesian grammar as *membelis* (to give *belis*) and *pembelisan* (the giving of *belis*). This curious word is sometimes used to cover both bridewealth and counterprestations, and sometimes it is only used for the former and the Indonesian *ongkos* (fee/price) is used for the latter. Another interesting phrase used to describe bridewealth is the indigenous term *lin wélín*. Lewis (1993) notes that the Ata Sikka reflex *ling wélîng* is used to denote goods given by the wife-taking group. I have also heard it used in this way, with the exception that it is specifically made in reference only to horses, ivory and gold.

\(^\text{15}\) In Stevens & Schmidgall-Tellings (2004) *belis* is defined as an Arabic/Javanese word meaning “Satan, demon, devil, bad/evil spirit”. This definition does not seem to describe in any way the term *belis* as it is used by the Adat community.
whilst the remaining ‘male’ goods are called hiwi hao. Lin wélin appears in the ritual name tuji lin taji welin mentioned above, and is also part of the iconic ritual language phrase ata du’a naha nora lin, ata la’i naha nora wélin (wives must have value, husbands must have worth). The expression captures further the essence of the role of bridewealth to safeguard the complementary value of husband and wife.

Both parties responsibilities for exchange come in two parts. One type of exchange is the hu’er héréng (measure of the moment)\(^\text{16}\), and the other is wu’un larun (joints and nodes).\(^\text{17}\) Each of these types is composed of several distinct parcels in which portions of the total amount of goods are exchanged at different phases throughout the marriage rituals. There is nowadays a wide disagreement (and considerable uncertainty) as to the exact number and names of these parcels – if, indeed, there ever was consensus. My data swing between eight and twelve packets of hu’er héréng and between six and twelve packets of wu’un larun, with some of these reserved for bridewealth exchanges that accompany mortuary rites. Again it is unclear whether this uncertainty is a symptom of a decline of Adat or, simply, an aspect of the variations between villages and clans in their Adat practice.

The hu’er héréng are small parcels of offerings of betel and areca nut, tobacco, and small amounts of money given by the me pu (wife-takers) that, as the name suggests, measure the progress of the marriage. The offerings are, in effect, a narrative of the transformation of the two parties from strangers to ‘in-laws’. They begin with parcel ‘the rap to call the mother, the knock to call the father’ (sedon pekok dopo inan, papa rek pele aman), followed by the ‘wiping of feet on stone and stairs’ (watu pédar dan pélat), and then progress to the ‘door is opened and the steps emplaced’ (tie uhe hading dan). Once the groom’s family are figuratively inside the house the ‘rice is lifted and weighed’ (ra’u rebong) and at the hearth ‘ashes are [scattered] to the left and right’ (awu wiri awu wana). Subsequently, the ‘pot is cleaned and used for cooking’ (hapu unu perang pladan), the ‘cage is opened and pig lassoed’ (tige wan wawi talin) and the ‘knife cuts the chicken, cuts the banana hand’ (kiat poro manu poron hepi mu’u). Afterwards the ‘bloodied mat is pulled’ (ngoro meran)\(^\text{18}\) and it is ‘hung securely and its bloodiness raised’ (irin menong

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\(^\text{16}\) Hu’er héréng is a shortened versions of ‘hu’er tion héréng belan’. Hu’er means an accurate measurement. For example, when weaving a small tool called a hu’er is used to measure parts of the cloth so one knows when to commence with the next color or pattern. Thus, hu’er tion means to measure accurately. Héréng belan means ‘correct movement’ or ‘correct placement’.

\(^\text{17}\) Specifically, wu’un are the joints in a length of bamboo. Larun is the meeting point of a branch and the trunk from which it grows.

\(^\text{18}\) This mat refers to leaves on which meat is cut that is afterwards thrown away.
The counterprestations made by the bride’s family is the very hospitality to which these bridewealth packets refer.

The *wu’un larun* (joints and nodes), on the other hand, are the substantial offerings of the *bahar balik* and *wawi paré tua patan* described above. While these offerings are essential to exchanges, their type and number have been simplified in recent years. Still common parcels of *wu’un larun* include the *tudi helit gebi, poron song garan* (machete embedded below the stairs, knife inserted at the front door), *kila* (ring), *klu’ut* (refuse), *wawi api* (roasted pig),19 *wua ta’a gete* (the big betel and areca nut), and *kabor* (coconut). I have heard of, but not witnessed, the exchange of the parcel *poron pati tali pigang lotak wair* (the machete cuts the rope and plate from which water is sprinkled), which has been described to me variously as both a *wu’un larun* and also a *hu’er héréng*. Other parcels that are rarely invoked now include *wua ta’a gaer* (mix betel and areca nut), *uhe* (door), *liman* (hands). There are still others I have yet to fully understand.20 Each parcel is constituted by an agreed upon amount of the sanctioned goods, both bridewealth gift and counterprestation. To give an idea of the amounts involved, in my experience total bridewealth payments can range up to forty or fifty horses, tens of millions of Indonesian *rupiah* in cash money or gold, and one or two short lengths of ivory. The majority of marriages, however, involve much less than these amounts. Added to this are generous quantities of bananas, coconuts, and so on. In return, counterprestations can include upwards of ten pigs, hundreds of litres of palm gin and rice, and several dozen sarong cloths and blouses, as well as all the costs of hosting the rituals.

In the present day it is rare for all distinct exchange packages to be carried out, rather the exchanges are simplified into between one and five parcels in a system called ‘*wu’un borong*’ (combined joints). I was told on many occasions that a full exchange of all *wu’un larun* would require too much time to organize and consume too many resources to be sensible. When discussing this matter with the community there were always several theories floated as to why people in the past could fulfill each exchange, whereas today people could not. Some would cite modern economic pressures such as school fees, and others would comment they lacked the knowledge and confidence to be able to identify and implement each exchange at its proper time. Many argued that the need for a Catholic wedding and reception added enough expense and pomp to the already complicated

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19 Also called *wawi dadi* (the becoming pig).
20 Other types of bridewealth I have heard mentioned but have not witnessed and have yet to decipher are *honan, lea, taka, korak, pahar lian idet nukak, kiku lilu, hoet betan klageng rapen kata bihan togan bitak*. 
Lessons of the Ancestors

marriage process, and using a single *wu’un borong* instead of the many *wu’un larun* was a small concession to make.

This simplification means that moments of exchange are fewer and the meaning of each exchange more general. The specificity of meaning achieved by having up to twenty separate exchanges directed expressly towards twenty quite specific canonical messages is lost when the exchange is simplified as a *wu’un borong*. Some individual exchanges are, however, still regularly kept separately. In the next section I will discuss two of those, namely, the *wu’un larun* called *tudi helit gebi poron song garan* and the *wawi api*. Yet, even in light of the specificity of the *wu’un larun*, it is clear that all exchanges operate under the umbrella of the core idea of emphasizing the complementarity of the husband and wife and their respectively descent groups. Although it can be argued that the message is less precise and the educational experience less detailed under the new *wu’un borong* system, the message is still there and the substantiation of it still experienced.

The issue I now wish to address refers to the nature of the goods used in these exchanges. The question is: how does the exchange of these particular objects produce the *gravitas* needed to indicate affinal respect, equality and interdependence? Why, for instance, is exchanging pigs and horses meaningful, whereas exchanging cats and dogs is not? And why are these particular goods such high stakes when some of them, such as bananas and rice, are found in cheap abundance in everyday life?

Tracing the biographies of such objects offers an answer, especially when we consider them in terms of the simultaneous ‘bundling’ of different qualities. Keane (2003: 414) writes of bundling in terms of Peircean qualisigns, arguing that

...qualisigns must be embodied in something in particular. But as soon as they do, they are actually, and often contingently (rather than by logical necessity), bound up with other qualities – redness in an apple comes along with spherical shape, light weight, and so forth.

Thus, when goods enter into exchanges, they carry with them a collection of different qualities that are products of both formal properties and historical processes. Moreover, contends Keane, this co-presence means that “any object will shift in their relative value, utility, and relevance across contexts” (ibid.: 414). I contend that the qualities that come to the fore in Adat bridewealth exchanges are those qualities that connect together the different objects of each transferable category, namely; bridewealth, counterprestation, and women. That is, the qualisigns that make, for example, the pigs and cloth of the counterprestation exchangeable for the horses and ivory of the bridewealth, are paramount in value, utility and relevance. It is through these connections that the relationship between
wife-givers and wife-takers is mediated to achieve the canonical ideal of sentimental equality.

Importantly, I argue that the asymmetry of exchange, such that wife-givers give twice (i.e., they give a wife and counterprestations) and the wife-takers only once (i.e., they give only bridewealth), is ameliorated through the imminence of qualisigns that separate these exchanges into two conceptually different sets (see Figure 12). Although there are numerous qualisigns apparent in the biography of Adat exchange objects, to argue this point I concentrate here on the economic and spiritual qualities of objects on the one hand, and the durability and consumability of objects on the other.

First, economic and spiritual qualisigns link both bridewealth and counterprestation as equal exchanges, while at the same time excluding women from this arrangement (‘Set 2’ in Figure 12). In economic terms, both bridewealth and counterprestation are indistinguishable. Bridewealth objects such as horses and ivory on the one hand, and counterprestations of pigs and cloth on the other are costly items. This expense is balanced by the ubiquity of the staples that are elements of both categories, such as bananas, rice, coconuts and palm gin. It is hoped, indeed expected, by the Adat community that the

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21 One intriguing idea put forward by Valeri (1980) is that the categorical divisions between counterprestation and bridewealth are better understood as a difference between ‘quantity and formlessness’ and ‘quality and form’. One of the functions of the exchange goods, he writes, is to transform individual women into equivalents, and therefore they are able to be given via the medium of bridewealth.
transaction of *wu'ian larun* exchange parcels exerts equal economic pressures on both parties. Spiritual qualities are also manifested equally. Materials used in *tung piong* and *piong tewok* sacrificial rituals (see Chapter 4), such as pigs (wife-giver) and chickens (wife-taker), are all highly sanctified and carry great weight in any Adat community activity. Cloths (wife-giver) are encoded with complex cosmological and historical meanings, and coconuts and bananas (wife-taker) arise frequently in ritual language as metaphors for health and fertility, to mention but a few examples.

Economically and spiritually significant exchanges are exclusively bridewealth and counterprestation transactions, and do not directly involve women. In fact, if women can be considered as the motivation or rationale for these exchanges it is only in terms of the complementary relationship they have with men (and men are not exchanged). Much affinal prestation theory has focused on the relationship between material prestations and marriage as an issue of whether or not the bride is actually purchased (see Valeri 1994: 3). That exchange is generally bilateral, as it is in the Adat community, indicates that in such transactions a bride can be neither bought nor sold. Whereas bridewealth without counterprestation involves a direct exchange of women for goods, the equivalence of gifts in Adat exchanges effectively sidelines women from the transaction. Women are also external to the spiritual qualities of the exchange because, in these terms, there can be no severance of women from men. In other words, if women are to be exchanged for spiritually significant objects, so must be men. In Adat cosmology female and male exist as complementary pairs, in a relationship that must remain intact throughout the system. Consider, for example, the unity of female and male in the deity *ina nian tana wawa, ama lero wulan reta* (mother of the earth and land below, father of the sun and moon above), or in Adat experts *du'a kula mo'an kara* (women who confer men who measure).

The economic and spiritual equality of bridewealth and counterprestation provides a means to balance the structural asymmetry of the marriage, and its enactment indexes the marriage of the couple (see Section 5), but it is not a *direct* exchange of bridewealth for women. Such a direct exchange is only able to be transacted when the relationship between bridewealth and women is articulated through the qualsign of ‘durability’ (*Set 1* in Figure 12). Counterprestations are excluded from this exchange because they are ‘consumable’.

22 By way of comparison, McKinnon (1991: 177) has states that on Tanimbar exchange goods have contrasting properties of ‘hardness’ for male goods and ‘softness’ for female goods arising from “outright sexual symbolism”. Similarly, Forth (2001: 109-111) shows that the Keo of central Flores explicitly refer to male bridewealth as ‘hard’ and female counter-prestations as ‘soft’.
transition through the system. Lewis (forthcoming: 133) writes of the Ata Sikka that bridewealth consists of durable goods that

…are thought of as ancestral goods, heirlooms which have devolved through many generations of Ata Sikka from the ancestors to contemporary members of the community...Feminine goods, in contrast, must be constantly replenished because the items that constitute this class of goods are consumed or deteriorate with use.

In the Adat community durable goods, such as ivory, gold and horses,23 are continually circulated through bridewealth exchanges and they link different marriages together.24 Women share this quality. Upon marriage they change clans, and their daughters will do the same. For instance, at any one time a man is usually involved in several exchanges (remembering exchanges continue throughout the life of the married couple). These exchanges may involve his mother, his wife, his daughter-in-law, his paternal aunt, his daughter and his sister. His house (lepo woga) gives bridewealth for his mother, wife and daughter-in-law, and receives it for his aunt, sister, and daughter. This man is involved as both wife-giver and wife-taker in an equal number of transactions, and the bridewealth he receives from an exchange in which he ‘gives’ a female can be used as a gift for an exchange in which he ‘obtains’ a female. Further, the aunt, sister, and daughter he gives to other clans will produce daughters who will then move through marriage into yet other clans.

Counterprestations, on the other hand, do not exhibit this durable transferability. They are consumable goods, and are typified by cloths, which, as Lewis notes, require in their manufacture an effort and skill unnecessary for durables (ibid.: 133). Cloths are properly exchanged only when uncut, and are later sewn into wearable sarongs and discarded after use (though the fine ones are often kept as exemplars for future weaving). While the breadth of motifs for cloths is vast and is limited only by imagination, the sanctioned exchange cloths have much narrower variation. These cloths, called 'utan welak, are of

23 Nowadays horses are used almost exclusively for bridewealth. Only rarely are they ridden, and their lives seem to consist of endless journeys from market to house and back to market again, ready to be sold for the next transaction.

24 Some objects have quite counter-intuitive qualities. Bananas, for instance, are consumed in abundance and with great fervor, but they are a wife-taker’s good, and therefore durable. We must look to ritual language for clues. The following couplet reveals that bananas are revered more for the durability of their harvest than the consumability of its flesh:

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\begin{align*}
\text{nian du'an ganu mu'u} & \quad \text{the earth is as reliable as bananas} \\
\text{tana teran ganu o'a} & \quad \text{the land is tough like the o'a tree}
\end{align*}
\]
only five types, namely; *ria nipa*, *bata ta’a*, *tedang*, *manlela*, *bola* (see Figure 13). Cloths worn by males, which are also exchanged, are of two types; *lipa* and *ragi mitan*.26

In summary, there are two levels of exchange transactions, each denoted by the qualisigns that enable three elements (bride, bridewealth and counterprestation) to enter into sets of complementary exchange. At one level, ‘bride and bridewealth’ is articulated as an exchange of durable for durable, in that both women and bridewealth goods circulate through the system and allow for the reproduction of both clans, be it through birth of children or through the provision of the means to contract further marriages. Secondly, women are accompanied in their transition by counterprestations which, when perceived as economic and spiritual qualisigns, invoke an equal exchange for bridewealth. In this

25 The patterns or motifs of cloths are called *kelan*. All ‘*utan welak*’ cloths contain only the following motifs (all or only some): *hura pu’an*, *pedan puhun*, *mawa rane*, *teke*, *tibun*, *kikir*, *kobar*, *widin matan*.

26 Admittedly, nowadays counterprestations tend to also include many everyday cloths.
way, a wife cannot be mistaken for a purchase because the material gifts of bridewealth are reciprocated and, furthermore, the spiritual reciprocity reinforces the equality between women and men. Whereas a marriage exchange is outwardly characterized by asymmetry in which ‘two of one thing’ (wife and counterprestation) are exchange for only ‘one of another thing’ (bridewealth), the operation of qualisigns divides the exchange into two equal and complementary transactions in which bridewealth, by turns, is equated with either the bride or with counterprestations.

I am proposing a phenomenology of bridewealth exchange. There are many qualisigns bundled in Adat exchange goods, and even within the rigorous environment of ritual objects can have a multitude of meanings. Strathern (1992: 193) has noted that exchange goods makes “values visible”, and the plurality of this proposition is evident in the differentiation of the two conceptual types of Adat exchange. The values of the Adat community concerning marriage are codified in canon as it is expressed in ritual language and liturgy, but these values are constituted, experienced and reaffirmed by individuals as they together transact bridewealth exchanges. In this section I have focused on the economic, spiritual and durable qualisigns – or values – of exchange elements. These values can only be invoked in the complex relationship between person, history, context and object, and are subject to change. A child who handles an ivory tusk knows his older brother is preparing for marriage; an elder knows this too, but he can also relate to the dense mythological, historical and social meanings it holds. A general consensus cross-cutting age and gender barriers, however, was clear from my observations and interviews, and it is this; the objects of exchange and the way they are categorized teach participants of an essential complementarity between wife-giver and wife-taker groups, and also, importantly, between husband and wife.

5. Moments of Exchange

In this section I move from consideration of the objects of exchange to the moments of exchange. I explore the way the objects discussed in the previous section are used within the immediate, human and dynamic contexts of the ritual environment. I do this in three parts; I begin with the first major *wu’un larun* exchange, I then treat the negotiation of bridewealth amounts and its settlement, and, last, I describe the pinnacle of the marriage rituals and the accompanying exchanges. Throughout I argue that during these moments the exchanges are indexes of the transformation of the bride from unmarried to married, from a member and responsibility of her natal clan to that of her husband’s clan.
During the _beta wain heron men_ stage of marriage in the ritual _hiwi hao_, the first bridewealth parcel (_wu’un larun_, _tudi helit gebi, poron song garan_ (machete embedded below the stairs, knife inserted at the front door), is gifted. Like all rituals, _hiwi hao_ begins and ends with _piong tewok_ sacrificial offerings and prayers at the household altar. It also sees the commencement of a time in which the prospective husband is expected to lend a hand doing chores for his intended’s household. Bridewealth, however, is the core element of this ritual, and it is only with this transaction that the _me pu_ (wife-taker) formally changes the status of the women to a fiancée and future wife of their clan. With this engagement, the _me pu_ clan must clearly exhibit their responsibility towards the woman’s welfare and happiness. The _tudi_ bridewealth achieves the woman’s transformation at this point by indicating the means of the wife-taker to fulfill this responsibility. Machetes and knives stuck into the stairs and door are representations of the defensive capability of the husband’s clan, who are willing and able to keep their fiancée safe.

The weaponry does not, in actual fact, constitute any part of this _wu’un larun_. It is rather made up of horses and gold (or money) – considered proof enough of their responsibility. Counterprestations are made in the form of victuals consumed during the ritual activities, the leftovers of which the _me pu_ take with them on departure. It is significant that this exchange occurs before the official discussion of bridewealth, and in this respect the wife-takers make this offering on their own account as another sign of their reliability and worthiness. In this ritual the bridewealth alone transforms the ‘girlfriend’ into the ‘fiancée’, and marks the beginning of her transition between clans.

The ‘_beta wain heron men_ stage of marriage continues with the ritual negotiations ‘_tuji lin taji welin_’ that determine the amount of bridewealth to be given. Prior to this occasion both families busily gather their uncles, aunts and cousins together and devise a plan of attack. Indeed, both sides must consider the limits to what they can afford because counterprestations are indexed to bridewealth. Every _wu’un larun_ that is demanded from the wife-taker has its own obligatory counterprestations. Families are motivated by this system to engage with their new responsibilities towards each other and their opposites. Domestic finances are assiduously reviewed and tallies of each households potential

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27 That the wife-taker ‘changes’ the status of the woman with the bridewealth was stated explicitly by my informants, one saying in a mixture of Sikkanese (italicized) and Indonesian “_nora tug nora ewe hapapa me pu mengubah status gadis dadi seorang calon isteri_” (with this duty the wife-taker changes the status of the girl to become a fiancée).

28 It is important to add at this point that during the length of the marriage ceremonies each side cannot partake in the consumption of the flesh that it offers. Thus, the wife giver cannot eat pig, and the wife taker cannot eat chicken. This also extends to the vegetables and fruit. Notable exceptions are rice and lontar palm gin, which flows freely throughout.
contributions are made; neither party is willing to be shamed by thriftiness or to bankrupt themselves with overly generous contributions.

When the moment for negotiation arrives the discussions are formulaic, polite and respectful, but not without pressure. Bridewealth is considered a measure of both the dignity and merit of humanity, and thus the discussions are characterized by plays of gentility and fortitude. Moods of ebullient fraternity are interspersed with subtle challenges. The wife-giver usually makes demands well beyond the means of the wife-taker, if anything to bat the essential asymmetry of marriage into the me pu’s court. Here the wife-takers underline their inability to compensate for the prospective wife’s invaluableness, and beg the wife-givers to accept the good faith of their ‘meager’ offerings.

It is important to note that the amounts of bridewealth and counterprestation that are agreed at this time do not need to be fulfilled at once. This allows both sides to safely inflate their demands and means. In fact, it is appropriate for transactions to continue throughout the life of the married couple. It is said that bridewealth is ‘eaten until the grind stone is worn, drunk until the lontar palm is towering’ (ea da’a ribang nopok, tinu da’a koli tokar). When eventually the totality of bridewealth fulfilled it is said the ‘bridewealth equals the egg’ (leto hama telo). An egg is splattered under foot by the wife-takers at the wife-giver’s house in celebration. It is also possible that excessive pressure from the wife-giver for too large amounts of bridewealth can cause the marriage to be cancelled. If the wife-taker is not able, or does not want, to pay they can withdraw themselves from the negotiations and marriage. They escape from their responsibilities as ‘the goat’s long legs jump’ (widin wain gahar poar). The Adat law then required to cease the negotiations is ‘the thread cut and spur broken, the chickens are called apart’ (gurun betan sadin boga, ae tora manu manu). Both parties are wary of these dangers, and consequently they are very careful with their negotiations. They do not want to incite the happy couple into running away, and entering the du’a depo la’i category of marriage. The negotiations are therefore carried out with restraint and transparency, and most of the talking is undertaken by senior representatives who, in this capacity, are called ‘men of the middle way’ (mo’an dolo loran).

These sentiments are carried on into the moment during which the majority of bridewealth assigned for immediate exchange is given. This occurs during the wawi api ara planga stage of marriage, shortly before the oath (wawi wotik), in the ritual called leto woter. As the wife-takers make their way to the wife-givers house they carry with them all
the bridewealth they are to give at this time in a procession called *witi mu’u manu* (carry together the bananas and chickens) (see Figure 14). The procession itself is organized so that the sisters and aunts of the bridegroom (*a’a winé*) walk in the front, carrying a cock and hen, and a container filled with betel, areca, tobacco, and gold or money. The others, including the bridegroom and his parents, follow in line. Having arrived at the house, the wife-takers sit isolated in a room especially set aside for the bridewealth transactions and are accorded all the privileges of honored guests. When the wife-givers are ready to begin the transaction they enter the room. The bride and groom sit together surrounded on each side by their respective *a’a winé* and parents. As in the earlier *tuji lin taji welin* discussions, some confrontation may occur if the wife-giver deems that the bridewealth brought on this day is unequal to the agreed amount. However, again politeness in speech and behavior is a paramount virtue. After the bridewealth has been ticked off and the horses and chickens quartered to everyone’s satisfaction, the gifts are sanctified further by the sacrifice of a pig and a *piong tewok* ritual. Additionally, the bride and groom, and by extension the entire wedding party together, are ‘cooled’ in a *huler wair* ritual (see Chapter 6).

Figure 14: Men from the wife-taking clan (*me pu*) carry *bahar balik* bridewealth payments to the house of the bride’s family (*ina ama*). Seen in picture are horses, bananas, coconuts, and corn.
A short time after the *leto woter*, the *wawi wotik* marriage oath is held. This ritual is accompanied by the *wu’un larun* called alternatively *wawi api* or *wawi dadi*. In the room of the household altar are gathered the bride and groom, the ‘*a’a winé* of both sides, the parents and other family, as well as the Adat expert (*du’a kula mo’an kara*) to conduct the ritual, who, more than likely, is the head of the bride’s natal household or clan. Also required in this room are some elements of the *wu’un larun*, including gold and/or money (*bahar*) from the *me pu* and cloth and blouses (*patan*) from the *ina ama*. Also necessary are bottles of lontar palm gin (*tuak*), raw pig flesh and cooked liver, and uncooked and cooked rice, which constitute part of the wife-giver’s *wawi api* counterprestation. The uncooked rice and flesh is placed in two containers (*tawu*), as are the cooked rice and liver. These are called the *ara benu* (fill of rice) (see Figure 15).

A plate of the cooked rice, liver and a glass of *tuak* is placed in front of the bride and bridgetroom respectively. The Adat expert sits in front of the couple and he first takes some rice and liver from the groom’s plate and, holding it, he addresses the ancestors and, through them, the deity, and the bride. Following this prayer he feeds the bride the rice and liver, which is accompanied by a glass of gin (*tuak*). He then takes rice and liver from the plate of the bride, and addresses the spirits and the groom. He then feeds the rice, liver and

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Figure 15: The *wawi api* exchange during the *wawi wotik* phase of marriage. Note the *ara benu* strips of pork and bowls of cooked rice. The lengths of bamboo contain *lekun*, a sweet red rice cake given by the *ina ama* to the *me pu*. 
gin to the groom (see Figure 16).

![Image of wedding ceremony](image)

Figure 16: The moment of the *wawi wotik* marriage oath. Here, the bridegroom eats the liver of the *wawi api*.

These prayers are no exception to the variation in ritual language between villages, clans and individuals that I have made clear in the previous chapters. There are, however, some passages that are essential to this oath and have direct bearing on the subsequent bridewealth and counterprestations.

After the necessary invocations of the ancestor spirits the prayer begins with the couplet:

- *ami bati api nora wawi api* we cut and roast for you the roasted pig
- *perang planga nora ara planga* cook and prepare for you the cooked rice

The chanted prayer must also include the following explicit reference to the oath made by the husband and wife:

- *dadi wain nora la’in* you become wife and husband
- *jaji lihan*¹⁹ nora lalan you swear through life until death

The bride is then told:

¹⁹ *Lihan* is derived from ‘*teu liha*’ which is the earth dug up by mice as they make their nest. In this context it refers to the earth of a dug grave, indicating that the marriage lasts until death.
And the bridegroom told:

*mo’an naha mangan plamang woga*  
you must become a strong husband of the house

The bride is implored to:

(a) *ma hu’u beli sai ata wungun*  
go and bear them a descent group
(b) *ma moni beli sai ata ‘wisung*  
sweep and give them a dwelling place
(c) *bua buri ganu wetan*  
give birth like the spreading of millet

And the husband, in the complementary ritual language phrases, is also implored to:

(a) *ma kobor beli sai ata kuat*  
carry to them a descent group
(b) *ma orok beli sai ata wangar*  
clear and give them a residence
(c) *ma ga’e teto sai ganu atong*  
cradle like the scattering of amaranth grain

In more expansive passages there are additional explicit messages to the couple in regard to their future married life. These include references to their need to sustain and comfort each other in the provision of material and emotion support.

Following the oath of marriage the wife-givers relinquish their daughter once and for all into the hands of the clan of the wife-takers through the prestation of the *wawi api* – particularly in its *ara benu* component. This exchange is conducted only between the ‘a’a winé (sisters and aunts) of both parties. At this very moment, however, the ‘a’a winé manifest a more specific identity; those of the *ina ama* become known as *ata loka tung*, which means the ‘people who escort and accompany’, and those of the *me pu* are then known as the *ata wain reti men lora*, meaning ‘people who take in the wife and children’. The former category highlights that the sisters and aunts are the channel through which ‘blood’ (i.e., reproductive potential) flows between clans, and the latter impresses that they are therefore the appropriate people to then accept this blood.30

For this exchange, the ‘a’a winé of the *ina ama* present the *ara benu* containers of rice, flesh and liver, as well as the cloth and blouses (*patan*), to the ‘a’a winé of the *me pu*. The ‘a’a winé from the *me pu* then present the gold or money (*bahar*) to the ‘a’a winé of the *ina ama*, while at the same time holding the recently received *ara benu* and *patan* in one hand. The marriage is now formally complete, and the bride is transferred with full rights and

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30 The centrality of ‘a’a winé in Adat rituals is discussed further in Chapter 6.
responsibilities to her husband’s clan.31

These moments of exchange emphasize the necessity of bridewealth transactions for the successful contraction of marriage. The verbal ritual language performances presented above articulate the value of the transactions. These statements enable the wife-giving and wife-taking groups to speak about themselves and each other and their relative positions – which makes the community ‘imaginable’ (Merlan & Rumsey 1991). This intersection of ritual language and ritual action not only indicates the occurrence of marriage and the transformation of two people and their families, but also the engagement of ritual participants with spiritual forces. Participants are part of a greater whole. They live in a society that includes ancestor spirits and a deity which demand certain obligations. With the considerable effort required to enact the emotionally, economically, and spiritually expensive transactions of marital exchange the participants do what the Adat canon exhorts. By using the valuable goods of exchange the me pu and ina ama have little choice but to behave towards each other with deference and equality. But in doing this, the participants are not passively following a canonical script, they are in fact creating the conditions in which that script gains legitimacy. They experience their actions not as an imitation or play of complementarity in lieu of structural asymmetries, but as a real and consequential enactment of this complementarity.

6. Conclusion

The ethnographic material presented in this chapter describes the sanctified deutero-learning of participants during bridewealth exchanges in Adat marriage rituals. The description has not been based on physiological the patterning of ritual participants’ neural networks, although Adaptive Resonance Theory could be used for this purpose (see Footnote 11 in Chapter 1). Rather, the description is made in terms of the Ecology of Mind and the accompanying theory of embodiment. This ecological model requires we use the analytical device called double description, through which patterns of deutero-learning are known from the patterns of relationship between individuals and their environment.

In Section 3 I examined the types of Adat marriages and highlighted local opinions (primarily expressed through ritual language) that express the importance of marriage in the affirmation of the complementarity of husband and wife and their respective descent

31 As the me pu prepare to leave for home, taking with them the bride, all the counterprestations that have not been consumed during the rituals are also taken. Having arrived at the house of the groom, they are welcomed with a ritual at the household altar, and with the ‘plaha oha piren sorong loni glaran’ (unroll the sacred mat, set the hallowed pillow) rite they are bound together to form a unit from which a new household (lepo woga) will grow.
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groups. In Section 4 I discussed the oscillating meanings of exchange goods as the ‘biographies’ of these goods articulate different relationships between bridewealth, counterprestation, and bride. These differences re-configure the patent asymmetry of exchange into an exchange that participants perceive as complementary. In Section 5 I depicted two moments of marital exchange and concluded that the performances of participants at these moments are related indexically to the canonical idea of complementarity. That is, enacting exchange is an activity that causes the idea of complementarity, and vice-versa. Throughout this analysis I have described both the actions of ritual participants and the environmental conditions (including symbolism) with which the actions coalesce. I describe the pattern emergent in the activity of individuals and the structure of context in these exchanges as a complementarity of the two halves of the wedding party.

The deutero-learning of ritual participants shares the same pattern as their activity and their environmental context. The redundant and formal qualities of Adat bridewealth exchanges (and peoples’ experience of them) contribute to the effectiveness of the ritual on deutero-learning. These qualities are exemplified by the multitude of exacting exchange parcels (hu’er héréng and wu’un larun), the high frequency of moments of exchange within marriage rites and throughout the life of the couple, and the mutual reinforcement of ideas and actions that are connected as indexes. In terms of Bateson’s economy of flexibility, the redundancy and formality of the enactments of complementarity ensure it becomes part of the ritual participants’ rigid, unconscious, embodied self. Bateson (2000: 509, my emphasis and brackets) states that the ideas of a context

...which survive repeated use [i.e., enactment] are actually handled in a special way which is different from the way in which the mind handles new ideas. The phenomenon of habit formation [i.e., deutero-learning] sorts out the ideas which survive repeated use and puts them in a more or less separate category. These trusted ideas then become available for immediate use without thoughtful inspection, while the more flexible parts of the mind can be saved for use on newer matters.

Deutero-learning Adat canonical ideas transforms these ideas into a form of embodied truth. Deutero-learnt ideas are implicitly ‘trusted’, and contribute to the generation of future contexts that share in this trustworthiness, or truth (see Chapters 8 & 9).32 Thus, the

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32 As we speak of ‘ideas’ being part of an individual’s deutero-learning it is important to remember that in deutero-learning these ideas are not formed as symbolic propositions. The conscious, reflective, and intellectual self is of a different logical type to deutero-learning. Deutero-learning
truths of context discussed in Chapter 4 and the truths of deuto-learning discussed in this chapter meet each other in Adat rituals in a cycle of mutual validation. In the next chapter I turn to an analysis of mortuary rites to highlight the variations in the deuto-learning of different participants in Adat rituals.
Who Learns What From Mortuary Rituals?

1. Introduction

The lodo hu'er is the final in the series of mortuary rites of the Adat community and it accomplishes the movement of the deceased's soul to the afterlife. Prior to this ritual, which can take place a number of years after death, the soul resides under and around the house of his or her family. Soon this proximity becomes a burden to both the living and dead and so the lodo hu'er is conducted. By local standards it is a long, complicated and expensive ritual, taking a minimum of four days to complete and requiring the participation and resources of the extended family.

In this chapter I consider the reach and variability of ritual’s educational influence through an analysis of these lodo hu'er mortuary rites. The logic of the emergence of individual minds in recursive relationships between people and their environments entails the production of individually unique deutero-learning and contexts. While each mind is unique in this way, similar or shared experiences can bring the minds of individuals into close alignment. Such shared experiences are produced in the highly formal activity of ritual. And yet, participants can still experience rituals differently according the specific duties they undertake. The question I address here is, to what extent do different participants’ tasks and responsibilities during ritual differentiate their learning experiences?¹

¹ There are many sources of experiential differences between ritual participants other than duties. For example, women from other areas of Indonesia (who have married local men) have different life histories and patterns of deutero-learning than locally born Adat ritual participants. Differences in age, gender, and relative experience of Adat rituals are also important, as are variations in individual cognitive and sensory capacities such as intelligence, sight, and hearing. Physiological and emotional factors such as stress, illness, excitement, or boredom can also affect individual experiences of ritual. In this chapter I focus on differences in ritual tasks and responsibilities because among similarly aged, experienced, and abled participants these factors
A key element of this chapter is a critique of the hypothesis that ritual education is purely a function of alterations in cognition caused by ritual’s formality and repetition. Whilst certain Adat ritual acts are consistent with the singular kinds of activities liable to induce these cognitive changes, the majority of participants in large Adat rituals undertake activities that, at least when viewed in terms of physical movement, are not so far removed from ordinary life. I argue that instead of thinking about religious ritual learning solely in terms of extraordinary cognitive changes, which are measured during very limited types of activity, the sheer variety of ritual experience requires that we consider the totality of the ritual environment, including its semiotic component. All participants, from principal actors to peripheral attendees, experience and learn something of the religious canon during ritual. Ritual is an extraordinary environment that will indeed elicit extraordinary states of consciousness, but we must remain mindful that ritual is built as much from extraordinary signs and their substantiation during performance, as it is by intense moments of repetitive and stereotyped activity.

The lodo hu'er ritual is a particularly apt example for exploring this issue because it involves a great variety of actions performed by a diverse cast of participants. From my analysis of the 'orak wu’a and lodo sub-rites of the lodo hu'er mortuary ritual it is evident that participants do not share a perfectly uniform experience of the ritual. I first identify the different classifications of ritual actors and roles they have to play, and then relate these roles to the particular canonical messages with which the participants come into contact. In the previous chapters I have argued that the accepted truths and performatively substantiated canon found in religious rituals provide an education for the participants, whoever they may be. However, despite ritual’s reputation for invariance and formality, the potential for education in ritual is not necessarily, or even ordinarily, homogeneous. I also wish to emphasize that all participants learn in the same overarching ritual environment. That is, while ritual affords biases in particular learning experiences, all these experiences are nonetheless encompassed under the one symbolic umbrella with which every participant engages.

Moreover, the lodo hu'er ritual is undertaken relatively rarely and is regarded as a momentous occasion, and thus it is clearly marked from everyday life. All Adat rituals are bounded to some degree from non-ritual life using special invocations and material are significant differentials of ritual experience. Moreover, other differentials, such as gender, map onto the differences in ritual responsibilities. For example, the 'a'a winé (aunts and sisters) position is gender exclusive (they are only female), and although the Adat experts can be represented by either men or women, in practice, they are almost always males.
objects. In the *lodo hu'er* this takes the form of the opening *liko higer* and closing *roat nahun hokit hoban* ceremonies. These rites erect and lower a protective barrier around the ritual activities of the *lodo hu'er*. This characteristic indicates a degree of uniformity in participants' ritual experience in contra-distinction to non-participants. However, there is nonetheless a flow of information between ritual and non-ritual life. The boundaries between ritual and non-ritual are not absolute, and Adat rituals also communicate knowledge to non-participants, albeit in a highly restricted mode. In sum, I argue in this chapter that although ritual involves particular learning biases, these biases are framed within a broader context of uniformity, and, furthermore, some restricted messages from ritual also educate non-participants.

2. The Continuation of Life after Death

In this section I describe the Adat liturgy required upon an individual’s death. I first explore the meaning of death as it is imagined in terms of the Adat definition of the relationship between humanity, ancestor spirits and the deity. I then give brief account of the series of rituals conducted immediately after death. I provide a more detailed description of the ritual on which this chapter is focused, namely, the final mortuary rite called the *lodo hu'er*.

For the Adat community, the death of humans is by order of the deity (*cf* Traube 1986). The deity suffers and sustains human existence, and this gift must be repaid by the sacrifice of blood, the ultimate of which is an individual’s own death (see also Chapter 8). In this way, ‘the earth calls death, the land declares loss’ (*nian beta mate, tana heron potat*). The death of an individual in this life is the first of seven deaths and eight rebirths that eventually lead one to the highest realm of existence or, for the unfortunate, the lowest.\(^2\) The final stage bears close comparison with the Catholic version of heaven and hell, and indeed is often used to express the unity of Catholicism and Adat. However, only the first death and the two realms that bookend it are apprehended by the living community, as the other six deaths and realms are too distant to be of relevance. The first death of an individual is a transition between life as we know it and the second realm of existence, which in the ritual language is called *nian nitu natar, tana noan klo’ang* (the

\(^2\) The final journey is conceived of as the walking of a tightrope, which the individual either crosses and passes into the ultimate reality, or slips off and falls to become fish in the earth’s oceans (for the Tana ‘Ai version see Lewis 1988: 269).
earth of the ancestors’ village and land of the spirits’ hamlet).  

A living person (ata bi’an) is constituted by three qualities; uhek manar, ajin, and maen. My informants described an individual’s uhek manar in bahasa Indonesia as his or her ‘keistiméwaan’ (peculiarity/specialness). Uhek manar is that part of a person which makes them different from others, either in terms of character or aptitude. For example, the uhek manar of a rawin (healer) includes his or her unique ability to restore health. Anything from sporting talent to ritual skill is described by this human quality (see also Chapter 3). A person’s ajin, on the other hand, refers purely to the physical quality of the living body. The health and vitality or, conversely, illness and lethargy of an individual is a measure of the current state of his or her ajin. In the prime of life, when physical health is at its fullest, one is said to have an ajin bolek, literally meaning a ‘corpulent’ ajin. Both these qualities, the uhek manar and ajin, are part of the living individual only. Upon death these particular qualities, characteristics, facilities and physicality that define an individual in the first realm of life are lost.

The maen, however, survives the body’s death and is carried through into the afterlife. The permanency of the maen is the continuity of an individual as it proceeds towards the ultimate stage of existence. Similar to the Christian concept of soul, the maen is truly the essence of beings that otherwise exist only momentarily. Death triggers the move of the maen from the living person, ata bi’an, to the ancestor spirit, nitu noan.

Nitu noan do not immediately move to the first realm of afterlife upon death, but encounter a transitional stage in which they remain close to their house and village. This zone is called wawa tana lau reta (at the top and bottom of the land) and for both the deceased and living family this state involves a degree of comfort and hardship. The nitu noan and his or her family, not wanting to be separated by the gulf death creates, remain close during this time, and experience frequent sightings and communications. During household piong tewok rituals, when the attendance and assistance of a specific nitu noan of this zone is invited, the ritual orator will call this spirit using the same name used when the spirit was a live person. However, between a few months and years after death this situation becomes unhappy as the nitu noan begins to make demands of his family. The principal demand is that the deceased be sent onwards to join fellow spirits at the spirit village, which is also called ‘palace of the dead’ (ber ma’an). The lodo hu’er ritual is performed to achieve this transition.

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3 An ancestor spirit is called a ‘nitu noan’ or most simply a ‘nitu’. Both words individually and paired mean ‘ancestor spirit(s)’. For stylistic reasons I have translated nitu as ancestor and noan as spirit in my ritual language translations.
There is a class of ‘bad’ death for whose sufferers the lodo hu’er is not carried out. A person who dies in unusual circumstances, such as suicide, unaccountable illness, murder or freak accident, is said to have in their life ‘held the branches of an old and dry tree, held onto vines eaten by worms’ (rema ‘at plereng du’ur, toe tali ute puhar). These unfortunates are people who have through fault or chance not lived in accord with the guiding principles of Adat. Instead of becoming nitu noan and living in the spirit village, the maen of such people become ‘the beast with teeth like the seeds of the jackfruit, the ogre with ears large and stretched out like coconut leaves’ (ata sege re’e niu nakat, laman du’a tilu klakon). Alternative gendered names for these demon-like creatures are ata (or du’a) helang for females and ata badang to’e robong for males. The former often appears as a femme fatale luring men into dangerous situations, and the latter indicates a creature with a large hole in the middle of his back. These beings, sometimes mischievous and sometimes evil, reside in a place called nian opi dun, tana karé taden (the land where work is stopped, the land where slicing the lontar palm is left aside) (see Chapter 8).

The deep loss and sense of crisis any death occasions is accompanied by a rush of ritual activity. Prayers of separation (pué sera) and ritualized grieving in the form of tani not, for an elderly person, and tani wohe, for a person who is considered to have died before their time, are performed. The ‘a’a winé (sisters and aunts) of the deceased begin to lobé mitan (wear black), for which they wear a mourning sarong and do not travel far from their houses for a period of seven weeks. Mortuary bridewealth (bahar maten) is given and the rights held by the deceased are transferred to his or her descendents in the me nérang korak (the child’s bowl) ritual. The deceased’s soul, which remains within close proximity of the corpse is attended to and calmed with the ritual wawi pati tua pola (killed pig and poured tuak). For the first and second night after death the body is laid in state as preparations are made and family and friends gather for the burial. Then the grave is dug (ali kewo) and the body buried (kewo lera) with parting words (pué liar ‘eder rang). The grave is covered and adorned (kota watu) and a temporary altar is emplaced to perform a sacrificial offering to the deity. For three consecutive nights the ‘a’a winé eat in the company of the spirit (a blatan) to further ease its transition. Also at this time family and

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4 For such people, on death the usual rituals are carried out except the lodo hu’er. However, during the initial rituals the body is not placed inside the house, but directly buried.
5 The du’a li’an (widow) is then taken care of by the ue wari (clan brothers) of the deceased. Young children of the deceased are ‘idet me nukak’ (children pulled in). That is, these children become the responsibility (are ‘pulled in’) by the clan brothers of the deceased.
6 The grave is always located so that the deceased’s head is located uphill (reta).
7 The kota watu stage of the funeral is also called ‘tokang peti matan’ (covering of the coffin).
Lessons of the Ancestors

friends gather at night (nara guman) to talk, eat, drink and play so that the spirit does not feel isolated and frightened. On the morning after the final night (guman wutun) the family of the deceased cleanse themselves of grief as they wash their faces (popo waen), and thereafter the mortuary rites pause until the performance of the lodo hu’er.8

There is no compulsory timeframe within which the lodo hu’er must be completed, although it usually happens a few months after death at a minimum and a few years at a maximum. The decision is left to the close family members, and is generally made in consideration of financial means and, most especially, visions and dreams or misfortunes that reflect the deceased’s desire to move from its purgatory-like state (wawa tana lau reta) to the village of the ancestor spirits.9 This lodo hu’er ritual itself comprises eight separate steps, all of which are aimed at facilitating the movement of the deceased’s spirit. For the people of Romanduru10 this is expressed through the following passage of ritual language:

tung le’u nimu nitu lau nan

deri gi’it nora inan ata dulak bua

lau nitu natar

mole sera le’u nimu lau noan mangan

nora aman ata loran ga’e

lau noan klo’ang

accompany him down to the ancestors
to sit with the mothers who bore him
at the ancestor village
and convey him down to the spirits
with the fathers who cradled him
at the spirit hamlet

The transition of the spirit can only be effected by the living community’s performance of the lodo hu’er, and so their responsibility for the spirit’s well-being is heavy. The benefits,

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8 _Lodo_ is a reflex of ‘lodong’ which, as I explained in Chapter 4 with regard to the ritual lodong me, means to ‘lower’. _Hu’er_, as I explained in Chapter 5 with regard to the bridewealth parcels called ‘hu’er héréng’, means to ‘measure’. The meaning of _lodo hu’er_ is thus ‘to lower (or drop) the measures’. The name of the ritual makes specific reference to the sub-rite ‘lodo’ (discussed below and in Chapter 7). The relationship of _hu’er_ to bridewealth also references the important role of exchange in this ritual. The _lodo hu’er_ can also be called the _lodo kusang_. _Kusang_ refers to the act of cleaning and purifying oneself with water and coconut oil (which is done towards the end of the ritual). In ritual language it is said ‘lodo tena meluk ganu wair, kusang tena dên ganu lengi’ (lowering makes us clean like water, cleansing makes us smooth like oil.

9 Often more than one spirit is the subject of a single lodo hu’er ritual. Households (lepo woga) with several recently deceased members will gather their resources to ‘send’ them together to the ‘ancestor village spirit hamlet’.

10 I reiterate again that there is some variation between clans and villages on specific procedure. The data presented here is taken from two lodo hu’er rituals I witnessed of people from clans Buang Baling and Keitimu Aur Pu’an from the natar tana (village and domain) of Romanduru and Wolomotong respectively, and also from extensive conversations with Mo’an Servas K. Belo and Mo’an Klemens Hago.
however, are great. The ancestor spirits who are successfully conveyed to the spirit village become a powerful source of future assistance.

When it becomes necessary to perform a *lodo hu’er* the family gather and organize the ritual, including, importantly, arranging and informing the people required for the various ritual roles. The rite commences, like most major ritual occasions, with a visit to the clan’s ‘wild’ altar (*toma ‘ai tali*) to request support from the deity and the clan’s ancestor spirits. This is followed by the *waké nuhun tamang hoban* (erect the mortar and initiate the charm) which consists of two parts. First, in the *tokang nuhun* (position the mortar) a mortar used for de-husking rice is sprinkled with the blood of a sacrificed pig and positioned near the front of the house. The symbolic pounding of rice and construction of the granary (*’wai paré laba kajang*) that is also enacted at this time asserts the relationship between the spirit and the garden. In this way, the spirit for whom the *lodo hu’er* has been completed then functions collectively with other ancestor spirits to ensure the fertility of the gardens.\(^{11}\) When this rite is complete the *liko higer* (protect and surround) is initiated to defend the integrity of the ritual from outside disturbances. At the conclusion of the *lodo hu’er*, the protective barrier erected by this rituals are retracted by the *ro’at nuhun hokit hoban* (tip over the mortar and pull down the charm) rite. These elements will be discussed at length in Section 4.

The *lodo hu’er* proper begins with *waké ‘lo’e* (raise the spirit’s head) with which the spirit is called to attention and escorted from its gravesite into its former house. The ritual leader (*du’a kula mo’an kara*) and members of the deceased’s descent group spread an offering of rice and dried fish tail on the grave and call the spirit’s name three times. A small stone (*watu ‘lo’e*)\(^{12}\) is gathered from near the headstone of the grave and placed upon a cloth, called the *patan ‘lo’e*, which is often especially woven for this occasion.\(^{13}\) The cloth and the stone it now holds are carried by members of the deceased’s mother’s brother’s clan (*ata pu lamé*). The cloth and stone are taken into the room of the household altar. A pig is then sacrificed and its blood is sprinkled on the *watu ‘lo’e*. This done, the spirit is formally received into the house and together the ritual participants and spirit eat (*a blatan*) and wait throughout the night (*pire blatan*).

The next day the *’orak wu’a* (move the stone) stage begins. In two rituals over two

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\(^{11}\) This conception is expressed similarly in the Tana ‘Ai final stage mortuary rite *’lo’e ‘unur* (Lewis 1988: 290).

\(^{12}\) *Watu ‘lo’e* literally translates as the ‘head stone’. However, in this context the term ‘head (*’lo’e*)’ refers to the spirit of the deceased. Thus, in text I translate *watu ‘lo’e* as ‘spirit stone’.

\(^{13}\) This cloth is also called the *patan ngerang ‘lo’e* (cloth of the spirit’s journey).
days the spirit is escorted to the spirit village as the ‘spirit stone’ is removed from the house and taken to rest at it’s clan’s village altar (wu’a mahe ‘wisung wangar). The first ritual, called tung lo’e, is discussed in Section 3. The second, loka, is centred on a feast held together with the other clans of the village. For this ritual a sacrificial offering is made at the deceased’s clan altar and the newly transported spirit is asked to:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{dopo dété wi’in sai} & \quad \text{call and lead each other} \\
\text{mora ue lu’ur liwun} & \quad \text{the elder brothers stacked up} \\
\text{wari lodan lelen} & \quad \text{younger brothers in line} \\
\text{ei lepo geté woga wasan} & \quad \text{in the great house of our clan} \\
\text{mai ea tinu} & \quad \text{come, we eat and drink} \\
\text{ea atang tora a’an} & \quad \text{eat together with our aunts} \\
\text{tinu kirang tora keran} & \quad \text{drink together with our brother’s-in-law} \\
\text{mole pue kasang wi’it} & \quad \text{and so we part from each other} \\
\text{iana nimu nitu lau nan gi’it} & \quad \text{thus, he is a spirit who has strength} \\
\text{noan lau nan mangan} & \quad \text{a spirit who belongs there} \\
\text{meten gete paok mosan} & \quad \text{our great hope and faith}
\end{align*}
\]

Members of all the other clans of the village are then invited to eat together. In effect, all the clans, represented by their living members and ancestor spirits, are brought together through this feast to express their ties of brotherhood. The phrase ‘eat together with our aunts and drink together with our brother’s-in-law’ (ea atang tora a’an, tinu kirang tora keran) represents the sentimental and physical interdependence of the clans who share their lives in the one village, and, moreover, enforces a structural superiority of the deceased’s clan.\(^{14}\)

Before the break of dawn on the next day the lulun plahan tede oha (the expanse of the unrolled mat) is performed. There are several elements to this ritual revolving around and giving of bridewealth and the cutting of a coconut and cassava and their division among the sisters and aunts (’a’a winé) of the deceased. These actions further solidify the transition of the spirit (in Chapter 7 I will discuss this rite in more detail).

Shortly afterwards, ideally at the break of dawn as the cocks crow, the spirit

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\(^{14}\) In this ritual language sentence the clan of the deceased are positioned as wife-givers in relation to the other clans of the village, which in the asymmetric marriage system confers upon them a measure of superiority. That is, ‘aunts’ (’a’an) refer to women who have married out of the ego clan, and ‘brothers-in-law’ (keran) refer to men who have married sisters of the ego clan. I suggest that the conferment of this superiority is a means of maintaining clan integrity at a difficult time, and possibly equates the ‘giving’ of the spirit to the afterlife to the giving of a wife to wife-takers.
irrevocably takes its place in the ancestor spirit village with the ritual called *lodo*. Through this ritual the spirit departs this world for the next with all the necessary requirements needed to continue its existence. These requirements are the *huru pu’ur tawu beak*, which literally means the ‘cutlery, plates and worn coconut implements’\(^{15}\) with which it can eat and thereby sustain its life. To affect the spirit’s final departure these items, along with the skin of the coconut cut in the previous stage, the flesh of the coconut squeezed into oil, the skin of the cassava, the tail, hooves, ears and snout of the sacrificed pig,\(^{16}\) water, palm gin, and charcoal, are dropped under the house.\(^{17}\) Immediately prior to the drop of these materials a small offering of rice and pork is placed on the foot of the deceased’s husband or wife (or another close family member) and the ritual leader chants:

\[ \text{ena tei ami tung le’u ’au…} \quad \text{now we escort you (name of deceased)} \]
\[ \text{nora huru pu’ur} \quad \text{with cutlery and plates} \]
\[ \text{mole nawu le’u nora tawu béak} \quad \text{with his worn coconut shell implements} \]
\[ \text{iana} \quad \text{thus} \]
\[ \text{dadi ma sai nitu gi’it noan mangan} \quad \text{so you go to become a strong and true spirit} \]
\[ \text{lau nitut natar noan klo’ang} \quad \text{down at the ancestor village spirit hamlet} \]
\[ \text{niat wau lero wawa} \quad \text{as the earth is dark and the sun sets} \]
\[ \text{bui lekuk baler mai} \quad \text{crouch waiting for the wealth to come} \]
\[ \text{bui ami gu’a oti uma kare oti tua} \quad \text{wait as we work the gardens and gather the lontar juice} \]
\[ \text{guk li’u beli ami ihin gete} \quad \text{then come and give to us great harvest} \]
\[ \text{leba beli dolo mosan} \quad \text{lift and give to us abundance} \]
\[ \text{iana} \quad \text{thus} \]
\[ \text{ami gea dena menu ta’in} \quad \text{we may eat to fill our stomachs} \]
\[ \text{menu dena blatan kokon} \quad \text{drink to cool our throats} \]
\[ \text{gea gatang mora a’an} \quad \text{eat counting our aunts among us} \]
\[ \text{minu kirang mora keron} \quad \text{drink counting our brother-in-law’s} \]

After this prayer the offering on the foot is then let slide under the house and the *huru pu’ur tawu béak* follow in quick succession (see Figure 17). The ritual leader then takes the coconut oil and daubs it on participants’ foreheads to cool their emotions and ease their

\(^{15}\) *Tawu* are eating utensils and bowls made from the shell of coconuts.

\(^{16}\) All pigs sacrificed in Adat rituals have titles corresponding to either the name of the rite for which they are sacrificed or the purpose of their sacrifice. The pig used in the *lodo* rite is called the *wawi gi’it menong* (the pig of strength and sturdiness) or the *wawi lodo* (the ‘lodo’ pig).

\(^{17}\) Today there are very few traditional stilted houses, and so the *lodo* sacrifice is dropped below a bed onto the earthen or concrete floor (beds are commonly constructed with bamboo slats which are moved apart for the *lodo*).
detachment from the departed spirit. From this point on the spirit is no longer mentioned by name in the household rituals. It has become part of the clan’s general pantheon of ancestor spirits. The spirit and their living family are thus separate, only to come into contact in controled ritual situations.

Figure 17: The *hura pu’ur tawu béak* offering is positioned on the subject’s toe by the Adat expert in preparation to be dropped during the *lodo* rite.

3. Ritual Roles

In this section I explore the *tung ‘lo’e* and *loka* sub-rites of the *lodo hu'er* with consideration of the different roles performed by the participants. The performative type of learning I described in the previous chapter describes the educational development of individuals in terms of their ritual experiences. Every participant encounters the canonical ideas that are substantiated by their actions, and every participant, if they are not directly involved themselves, witnesses or is affected by the actions of others. Untangling the distinctiveness of all individual ritual performances and the extent to which witness, rather than first-hand performance, educates participants is a complex undertaking. I propose here to go some way towards understanding these disparities by identifying the different roles in the *lodo hu'er* ritual, and then concentrating on three different types of ritual performance, namely; the experiences of the ritual experts (*du’a kula mo’an kara*), the wife-givers (*ina ama*), and the aunts and sisters (*’a’a winé*). Before commencing this analysis it is necessary to highlight that ritual is a diverse environment, in which a variety
of learning experiences are possible. The trend in cognitive studies to define ritual learning in very exclusive terms overlooks a wide spectrum of educative contexts.

Cognitive and behavioural neuroscientific studies of both non-religious and religious ritual have a valuable contribution to make to ethnographic studies of ritual education. Analyses of animal rituals, pathological individual rituals, and meditation or trance states seek an evolutionary explanation of ritual, and one that more often than not locates the origin of religion in the brain, particularly in those remarkable states of mind that can be manifested during ritual’s liminal periods. The emphasis of these studies is placed on ritual’s liminality and repetitive activity and the production **gestalt** awareness or self-transcendence – what d’Aquili and Newberg have characterised as “hyperlucid unitary states” – which can lead to graceful experiences of an “absolute unitary being” (d’Aquili & Newberg 1998: 197). Equal attention is given to the adaptive advantage of such experiences, including the ability to control anxiety and to formulate intelligent responses from our mind’s “hazard management or precaution systems” to threatening situations (Fiddick, Cosmides & Tooby 2000).

Neuroimaging shows that the repetition of movement, postures or speech activates the brain’s right hemisphere, which functions to enable, among other things, associational learning and the holistic processing of information. These qualities can be beneficial in the management of potentially dangerous encounters between strangers, for instance Alcorta and Sosis (2006: 613) propose that

> …ritual activation of the cortico-limbic-striatal networks kicks socio-emotional appraisal and learning processes into high gear and initiates right hemispheric processing of the complex cost/benefit calculations associated with approach/avoidance decisions that lie at the heart of non-agonistic social interaction between unrelated conspecifics.

Evidence also suggests that ritualized activity can help in preparedness for and successful completion of challenging physical and intellectual tasks, from sporting competitions to school examinations (e.g., Jackson 2003).

Understanding ritual’s role in mediating an individual’s perception and memory of, and response to, information is a key development for enquiries into ritual education. Studies

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18 Ritual activity includes individual pathological behaviors relating to states of anxiety, such as obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD), autism, schizophrenia, and Tourette’s syndrome. Studies of brain function during these states illustrate how ritualized activity can alleviate anxiety (e.g. Dulaney & Fiske 1994; Fiske & Haslam 1997). Boyer and Leinard argue that cultural/religious rituals are by-products (or innovations) of individual pathologically induced ritualized behavior (Boyer & Liénard 2006). Theories such as these understand rituals as evolutionary adaptations for the avoidance of and response to danger.
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of this kind are still in their infancy and a healthy debate surrounds theories that explain ritual and religion’s origin and efficacy in terms of cognition, as the varied and spirited response to Boyer and Liénard’s (2006) correlation of pathological and cultural rituals amply demonstrates. However, all these studies uniformly show that ritual is not simply a normal educational setting, rather, it is an exceptional context for learning in which measurable transformations to brain function occur for the betterment of the participants. Ease of memorization (from redundancy and over-learning), emotional saliency and empathy, and associational and holistic assembly of diverse data are all elements of ritual experience that have been measured by neuroscientific research. These findings re-enforce much of the ethnographic data on social rituals and complement the major anthropological theories of religious ritual that I discussed in the preceding chapters.

The parameters used by cognitive and neuroscientific studies to define ritual are too narrowly defined to fully account for Adat ritual education. Stereotypy does play an important role in Adat rituals, and trance-like states are seemingly induced by ritual language chanting and the highly formal placement of offerings on ritual altars. In such cases the chanter can be presumed to perceive and assimilate Adat’s canonical messages with the kind of holistic awareness and social intelligence described in the paragraphs above. Yet, the procedures of many Adat rituals are far from exhausted by these specialized actions, and I suggest, furthermore, that those individuals whose experiences fall outside the limits of these actions are still engaged with an exceptional learning environment. If we are to focus solely on the participants of ritual and the occasion of ritual itself, again we cannot be limited to a singular experience of repetition and stereotypy inducing trance like states.

A breakdown of roles in the lodo hu'er rituals reveals six formal and a wide array of informal positions. The organization of the ritual begins within the house (lepo woga) and clan (kuat wungun) of the deceased with the ‘gathering and ordering of the elder blood brothers with the younger blood brothers’ (utun atur ue lu’ur liwun tora wari lodar lelen). Upon these people – the ue wari of the clan – falls the responsibility for the smooth running of the ritual. One of their foremost tasks is to gather together the people who must serve in specific ritual positions. This task is not always easy, and can indeed stretch their genealogical knowledge if, for example, closer relations are unavailable and they must strive to obtain more distant, though classificatorily comparable, persons.

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19 I make this claim based on anecdotal evidence and my interpretation of observed behavior. I have not measured such states using neuroscientific methods.

20 In the ritual context the ue wari are also often called ata ama (people of the father).
Two of the most significant positions are that of the *ina ama pu lame* and the *ina ama loka tung*. Both are taken from the wife-giving group (*ina ama*) of the deceased. That is, if the deceased is male these positions are filled by members of his wife’s or his father’s wife’s family. If the deceased is female these groups are members of either her natal clan or the wife-givers to her natal clan. The *ina ama pu lame* are a male deceased’s wife’s brothers, and a female deceased’s own blood brothers. The *ina ama loka tung* are the male’s and the female’s mother’s brothers (see Figure 18 & 19).

As I discussed in the Chapter 5, the *ina ama* are the source of another clan’s life. They give of themselves for the benefit of another descent group and of this receive bridewealth gifts. In the *lodo hu'er* their primary role is also to receive bridewealth, without which the spirit cannot be moved to the ancestor’s village.

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![Diagram of *ina ama* positions for a deceased male in the *lodo hu'er* ritual.](image1)

![Diagram of *ina ama* positions for a deceased female in the *lodo hu'er* ritual.](image2)

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21 These figures are simplified to show only the male ego who represents *ina ama* faction. The ego’s own ‘clan brothers’ (*ue wari*), such as his father, mother, sons, brothers, sisters and paternal aunts can also act in this position if required.
Of equal ritual importance are the 'a'a winé, of whose role in the lodo hu'er it is said:

*a'u topo ora ‘a’an du’at*  
I call for the noble aunts

*mai tuke beli a’u mudeng*  
come with support and give me truth

*a’u heron ora ‘winé sikeng kera ler*  
I call for the reliable sisters and their husbands

*mai sikeng beli a’u molo*  
come with support and give me truth

These ‘aunts and sisters’ are, in effect, that which a wife-giving group give of themselves. They are women who move away from a male ego’s descent group: they are a man’s sisters and his father’s sisters, and, equally, they are generalised to all women who are part of the ego’s wife-taker (*me pu*) clans (see Figure 20).  

The complementary filiation (Fortes 1953) of these women, in that their identity and relationships straddle their natal and affinal clans, is of crucial importance in the Adat social cosmology. The phrase *wait ata lodo ‘a’an* (wives give birth to aunts) encapsulates their position as the keystone that holds the multitude of clans together in a single Adat community (see Chapter 2). In the lodo hu'er they take on several crucial roles. They must, among other things, take hold of the cloth containing the ‘lo’e stone (*hoé patan lo’e*), take the cassava stem (*ohu pu’an*) and tip (*ohu wutun*), eat with the spirit (*ea blatan*), and they are responsible for the care of the ritual’s rice supply (*kara paré*).

![Figure 20: The 'a’a winé (aunts and sisters) of clan A.](image)

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22 Note that *kerja* (sister’s husband) is paired with *winé* (sister) in ritual language.

23 That is, the category of ‘sisters and aunts’ can be generalized to include any women who, in the asymmetric marriage system, cannot marry into the ego clan.
Other significant actors in the *lodo hu'er* are the members of the clan’s wife-takers (*ata me pu*). As the family of the ‘*a’a winé* who have married into their clan their primary function is that of providing material and emotional support, and guaranteeing that bridewealth commitments are made. Additionally, the ritual expert(s) (*ata du’a kula mo’an kara*) is tasked with ensuring the ritual is properly carried out and are asked to perform the ritual sacrifices (see Figure 21). The experts need not be members of the deceased’s clan, although some family connection is preferable. Also involved are a cast of people, both young and old from all of the groups I have mentioned above, who see to the cooking and cleaning, the serving of food, preparations of accommodations and innumerable other practical and domestic tasks required for a successful ritual.

![Figure 21: Mo’an Gregorius Goris serving as a du’a kula mo’an kara ritual expert performs a tung piong sacrifice in the tung ‘lo’e segment of the lodo hu’er rites.](image)

It is important, moreover, to recognize that there is some polysemy of positions and tasks that individuals take on when they are positioned relative to each other. For example, the *ue wari* of the deceased’s clan are identified as *me pu* (wife-takers) when they are engaged with their *ina ama* (wife-givers) and are required to give bridewealth. When, on the other hand, they are engaged with their own *me pu*, they assume the role of *ina ama* and thus receive bridewealth and give counterprestations. And in their dealings with the
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ritual experts and the performance of sacrificial rituals the _ue wari_ are expected to pay close attention because the expert acts on their behalf. However, it is unlikely that a single individual will play more than one role (although this can depend on the number of people available for the ritual).

During the _tung ‘lo’e_ ritual, as is the case throughout the _lodo hu’er_, the Adat expert carries the greatest ritual workload. The most fundamental function of the _tung ‘lo’e_ is to carry the spirits stone (_watu ‘lo’e_) from the house to the _wu’a mahe_ altar of his or her clan and thereby instigate the transition of the spirit from the _wawa tana lau reta_ (at the top and bottom of the land) to the _nitu natar noan klo’ang_ (ancestors village spirits hamlet). In the movement of the participants and spirit from the house to the clan altar, and then back to the house again, the Adat expert must perform no less than five sacrificial rituals. Two are performed at the household altar on departure and return to the house, and the others are performed at the clan altar.

The first _tung piong_ sacrifice and offering at the clan altar occurs immediately after the spirit stone has been emplaced. The Adat expert uses the essential ingredients of tobacco, betel and areca (*bako wua ta’a*) and both uncooked offerings (*wawi pare da’an*) and later cooked offerings (*wawi pare daha*) of pig flesh and rice. He then invokes the deity and clan ancestors and speaks:

```
ena tei ami mai
sera beli me pu, _ue wari_, ina ama amin...
(name of the deceased).
ami tung le’u nimu nora huru pu’ur
lau na nitu gi’it
nora inan ata buan
lau nitut natar
ami nantu le’u nimu nora tawuk béak
nora aman ata loran ga’e
lau noan klo’ang
niat lau nian piren
lau man e’o lau main
tanat lau tanat glaran
lau man ene balong
bui ami gu’a oti uma
kare oti tua
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now we come
to hand over our wife-taker, clan brother,
(name of deceased)
wife-giver...(name of deceased)
we accompany him with all his needs
down to where the ancestors belong
with the mothers who gave birth to him
down to the ancestor village
we convey him with all his needs
with the fathers who cradled him
down to the spirit hamlet
the earth down there the earth that is sacred
going down there and not coming from there
the land down there the land that is revered
to go down there and not return
wait there as we work the gardens
and gather the lontar juice
The expert must then visit every other clan altar in the village, stopping at each to make the same offering and a similar (though more succinct) prayer. As the ritual party prepares to leave the clan altar and return to the house he must, after parting prayer made to the deity and clan ancestor spirits at the altar, take a torch made from coconut tree leaves (urun) and light and extinguish it in the ritual pera urun papa blatan. This act ends the journey of the spirit ‘as the water is spilt and the fire extinguished’ (ganu wair di howen api di beren ba’a).

The roles of the ina ama wife-givers (both the pu lame and loka tung incarnations) are different from that of the Adat expert. For example, they do not perform the sacrificial rituals, although their presence is necessary. Instead, the ina ama pu lame are tasked with carrying the cloth and spirit stone (patan ‘lo’e) from the house to the clan altar, after which a member of the ina ama loka tung takes the stone and places it at the altar (legur watu lo’e), its position down between the flat and standing stones. By this action the spirit joins for the first time the other ancestors at the spirit village. Moreover, the pig sacrificed in the following tung piong ritual, and whose flesh is offered and blood sprinkled, is a gift from the ina ama loka tung.

The role of the aunts and sisters (‘a’a winé) is different again. After the spirit stone has been emplaced, the cloth used to carry it is taken up by the ue wari of the clan and given to their ‘a’a winé (see Figure 22). In response the ‘a’a winé give bridewealth in the form of gold and horses (wu’un bahar watu) directly into the hands of the ina ama. This is a somewhat unusual exchange in that the ‘a’a winé give bridewealth to the wife-givers of their wife-givers. In other words, the ‘durability’ of these bridewealth goods is asserted as they, in a sense, bypass the middle man (see Chapter 5). In contracting this exchange the ‘a’a winé act both on behalf of their affinal descent group, or me pu of their natal clan, and their cognatic descent group, who are the me pu for the recipients of the wu’un bahar watu gift. In performing this exchange the ‘a’a winé substantiate their socio-cosmological position as the ‘go-betweens’ of descent groups.

All these people have roles to play in the lodo hu’er rites, but they are not all engaging
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in activities that are repetitive and stereotyped in a way described by cognitive scientists. Only the du'a kula mo'an kara ritual experts would seem to fit this category. Their long and formal chanted invocations and careful positioning of offerings on the altar stones is typical of the behavior that can produce hypnotic or ecstatic states. The performances of the ina ama and 'a'a winé participants, however, is on the surface much more mundane. From a purely physical standpoint, they do little more than handle objects, eat, and exchange gifts. Yet, they are a crucial part of the ritual, and it would be simplifying matters greatly to say that they were not significantly affected by proceedings. Nor would it be correct to say that their entire ritual experience is defined only by the role they personally undertake.

Figure 22: The cloth (patan) used to carry the watu 'lo’e is given by a member of the clan’s ue wari (man standing on left) to his 'a'a winé during the tung 'lo’e stage of the lodo hu'er.

Analyses must be broadened beyond consideration of only homogeneous stereotyped ritual actions in order to appreciate the full educational significance of religious ritual. The variety of ritual roles in the lodo hu'er rites indicates that the experiences of ritual participants are diverse. Adat experts fulfill the most challenging and complex role as they are directly involved in both the organization and performance of ritual procedures. Their holistic grasp of the entire ritual performance and their skillful chanting of ritual language sets them apart from most other participants. Their deep involvement in ritual suggests that they are in a position to learn most during ritual. In this way, the position of Adat
expert is self-perpetuating. That is, the very roles and responsibilities Adat experts assume in ritual help them become more expert, and thus more suited to leading future rituals.

The roles of wife-givers (ina ama) and aunts and sisters (ʻaʻa winé) in the lodo hu'er rites are very different to that of the Adat expert. The former are primarily responsible for transporting the spirit stone from the house to the central clan altar, and the latter are primarily engaged in the exchange of bridewealth. According to the theory of ritual education developed in the preceding chapters, these different performances substantiate different canonical ideas and contribute to deutero-learning. For example, as wife-givers move the spirit stone they are not only given the opportunity to reflect on the importance of their position as givers of life (i.e., reproductive potential) to other clans, but they also enact it. In effect, the life of the deceased came from their clan, and by transporting the spirit stone they again give the deceased new life in the spirit world. And as I noted above, the aunts and sisters (ʻaʻa winé), enact and thus embody their position as the living connection between wife-giver and wife-taker clans as they exchange bridewealth goods.

The embodied learning opportunities of these three groups in the lodo hu'er are directed towards different aspects of the Adat canon. However, I also contend that the formality of ritual also constructs an environment in which the individually experienced contexts and deutero-learning of participants become attuned with each other. Despite the biases in learning opportunities accordant with different ritual roles, all participants experience and embody certain base-line lessons of Adat canon. That is, although each ritual actor contributes something specific to the production of ritual, each and every one, from the principal players to the young boys and girls who run errands and wash dishes, are subject to certain general conditions.

If we look back for a moment to the previous chapter, we see that although almost everybody is involved in the organisation of bridewealth, even if that be no more than tying up horses or hauling bananas, only a few people conduct the actual exchange. However, all are engaged with the milieu of exchange; everybody is connected in some way to the event, they know it is happening, they see or hear some part of it, and they contribute some labor or wealth. In the lodo hu'er rites the central ritual activity is also enacted by a privileged few, and yet the attendance and attention of others is a necessary component of these activities. Adat ritual is not constituted by a series of discrete and solitary acts. Rather, ritual involves networks of acts that are performed by different people but connected through the continuity of experience of all participants in the general ritual environment. The next section is concerned with understanding this general ritual
environment and describing the standardization of individuals’ contexts and deuto-
learning. In doing this I also draw comparisons of learning experiences between those
within ritual and those without.

4. Ritual Boundaries

Within the lodo hu'er there are several roles required of the participants, and each role
provides a different experiential perspective on a single and integrated ritual environment.
In this section I explore the integration of participants’ experiences through an analysis of
ritual boundaries. Kray (2007: 533) argues that the Yucatan Catholic rituals are so
entrenched in life’s day-to-day routine that any decisive beginnings and endings of ritual
are obscured, if indeed they exist at all. Adat rituals share a similar ubiquity—piong tewok
rituals are an almost daily occurrence in all households, and given the density of
population the larger marriage and funeral rites proceed at a constant pace. However,
every Adat ritual is distinctly different from ordinary life, and they are made so by the use
of particular materials and prayers that initiate and subsequently revoke the ritual
environment. In local terms, these actions open and close a window through which
humans engage in close communication with spirits. In sociological terms, as I have been
arguing throughout this thesis, these actions are the first and last that performatively
substantiate the sacred canonical ideas of Adat.

The production of a learning environment separate from ordinary life also begs the
question of what, if anything, do non-participants learn from something they are not
directly part of? The issue is not just one of locational difference, although this is certainly
a factor because non-participants do not usually see or hear the ritual. The difference is
also one of relationship and identity. The ritual group is in close association with their
ancestor spirits and are subject to experiences and codes that do not apply otherwise. The
non-ritual group, on the other hand, is not. A small example serves to illustrate this
disparity. As ritual participants travel between sacred sites, such as from the household
altar (ulu higun) to the clan’s village altar (wu’a mahe) or wild altar (‘ai tali), they must
not engage in any conversation with non-participants (see Figure 23). Whilst ritual
participants and non-participants may pass within metres of each other on the same foot
path, they are in fact very distant. They are temporarily separated by their different
positions relative to the spiritual domain.

Ritual’s educative value is not terminated at these ritual boundaries. Those who are not
part of the ritual proper are nevertheless still part of the cosmos in which the ritual takes
who learns what from mortuary rituals?

place. Rituals are not only an individual’s or family’s responsibility to themselves, but are also their responsibility to the community as a whole. The messages communicated to outsiders are also those messages that participants ultimately receive from ritual. To turn once more to the work of Rappaport (1999: 51, 104), completed rituals convert fuzzy “qualitative and analogic” processes into simple “quantitative and digital” results.24 For example, the binary essence of the lodo hu'er is the relocation of a spirit from the purgatory of wawa tana lau reta to the peace of nitu natar noan klo’ang (ancestor village spirit hamlet). The ritual performance communicates this message to all of the community, whether they endured the internal processes or not. Importantly, the performance teaches the community that ritual is an effective means of achieving this transformation.

figure 23: a ritual procession travels from the house to the clan altar. during this journey ritual participants are not permitted to communicate with non-participants.

the distinction between ritual and non-ritual time is categorized by the adat community as a distinction between ‘hot’ (rou gahu) and ‘cool’ (blatan bliran) time. Rituals bring humans, ancestor spirits, and the deity into close communication. through

24 the analogic process within ritual produce digital outcomes such as the transformation of boy to man, unmarried to married, or war to peace. while ritual participants experience both the analogic processes and digital outcome of such transformations, non-participants experience only the digital outcomes.
this interaction humans are able to receive the intellectual, emotional and material support (*ihin geté dolo mosang*) that can be provided by the spirit beings. All ritual occasions begin with offerings of betel and areca nut and tobacco (*bako wua ta’a*), because ‘areca is the first invitation and tobacco the preferred welcome’ (*wua nodin hoit bako bajak papak*). Indeed, offering and imbibing tobacco, areca and betel are the methodical beginnings of any formal greeting, be it between people only, or with the ancestor spirits and deity. Smoking and chewing these substances ‘heats’ the relationship and opens the occasion for spiritually meaningful interaction, of which it is said:

*naha wua oti mera wiwin* with areca we must redden our lips  
*bako oti gahu ahang* with tobacco heat our molars  
*geruk tiat liar dor wor* then we can give our voice  
*dokang rang pota resa* and contribute our accent

Through this process the ordinary ‘cool’ context is made into a ritual ‘hot’ context. Indeed, for any ritual to be known as such the participants must first ‘separate the cool’ (*ebang blatan*). The now hot ritual environment is replete with a power not otherwise encountered or controlled. All words, actions and even circumstantial happenings take on a deep significance, and participants must behave with grace and humility. Ritual is a time of absolute truth and propriety, where none of the prevarication and nuance of normal ‘cool’ life is admitted. This potent situation requires a lot of spiritual energy to maintain, and cannot be held indefinitely. A hot context is one of strength, but it is also a hazardous context that punishes mistakes.

At the conclusion of a ritual, the normal condition of *blatan bliran* (cool) must be returned to avoid negative repercussions. Whilst this condition does not have the same spiritual potency as *rou gahu* (hot) ritual contexts, it does mean that one is freed from the

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25 Although the totality of *wua ta’a* is hot, the complementary pairs include hot and cold. Areca is classed as hot and betel is classed as cool. This reflects Reid’s classification for Southeast Asia. He writes: “the union of its two major elements, areca and betel, undoubtedly represents complementarity and balance, particularly as areca is seen as ‘hot’ in the universal humoral classification of Southeast Asia, and betel leaves are seen as ‘cool’” (Reid 1985: 531).

26 The ritual *a blatan* or *ea blatan* (eat with the spirits [literally, ‘eat the cool’]), of which I have often spoken in this thesis, is an act of *ebang blatan* (removing the cool). That is, by sharing food with the ancestor spirits the normal ‘cool’ separation between humans and spirits is replaced with the extraordinary ‘hot’ communion of the two.

27 Although I have not witnessed any such occult punishments, numerous anecdotes abound about illnesses and deaths caused by improper ritual activity. In sociological terms, ritual is hazardous because false or mistaken performance can undermine the social benefits of conducting ritual (see Keane 1997). However, in my experience, mistaken performance of Adat ritual is able to be rectified within the analogical process of ritual, and so the ultimate digital result of ritual is correct (see Chapter 7).
oppression of truth. Coolness is characterized by freedom and tolerance, whereby human mistakes are made and forgiven. It is also the quality of health – a cool throat and a cool skin are the healthy counterparts to hot physical illness. In the ritual *wevar huler wair* coolness is returned to (or maintained in) individuals who have undergone (or are about to undergo) experiences of either illness or danger. The ritual subject is sprinkled with water and fresh coconut juice using a leaf of the *huler* plant whilst a prayer is chanted. Again keeping in mind great variation in the region, the following is an example recorded from a member of clan *Mana* of Romanduru:

*bblatan ganu wair* cool like water  
*ganu wair wali napun* like water that flows down the stream  
*bliran ganu bao* fresh like the banyan tree  
*ganu bao blutuk reta wolon bliran* like the young banyan that grows on the cool hillside  
*ubut naha lebuk* the tips must sprout upwards  
*ganu tebuk lau detun* like the palms down on the flatlands  
*bakut naha plia* the stems must spring forth  
*ganu baki reta ili* like the forest bananas in the heights  
*iana* thus  
*ami dena meten ganu wunun* we have hope like the dusk insects  
*pauk ganu noan* and have faith like the dawn bugs

This cooling ritual for individuals is appropriate on many occasions, including the departure or return from long journeys, recovery from illness, protection against accidents, and on taking up a new responsibility. Rituals, however, are cooled in other ways. Small rites, such as those at the household altar, are cooled through the proper ritual language of departure and separation. Large rites, such as the *lodo hu'er*, are cooled through the ritual *lobat kabor kubar*, in which a sacrifice is made and a young coconut is cut open and upturned on a stake.

As a major series of rites, the *lodo hu'er* is first heated by a specific ritual which involves more than just the use of *bako wua ta'a* (tobacco, betel and areca) and is later cooled using a variation on the *lobat kabor kubar* ritual. In a sense, the *lodo hu'er* involves a gradual build up of rituals (including *toma 'ai tali* and *tokang nuhun*, see Section 2) that eventually lead to the transportation of the spirit stone into the house (*wake 'lo'e*). However, the *liko higer* (or simply *liko*) ritual, immediately following the *tokang nuhun*, most clearly separates the *lodo hu'er* from ordinary cool life and establishes the ritual’s hot boundaries. As I stated in Section 2, the *liko* protects the participants, materials, and the
ritual performance of the *lodo hu'er* from negative influences. This is required because the great heat generated by such an important and long ritual is liable to both induce participants into making errors of judgement and encourage malevolent spirits to take advantage of this. Yet, the *liko* does not attempt to reduce the potency of the ritual’s heat, rather it adds to it in a very particular and disciplined way.

After the compulsory visit to the household altar the Adat expert and the *ina ama pu lame* (wife-giver) proceed outside to the rice mortar emplaced earlier to enact a *tung piong* sacrifice to the deity. Along with a regular *tung piong* offering (see Chapter 4) the ritual leader chants:

- *ami neni mora ina nian tana wawa* - we ask the mother of the earth and land below
- *plawi mora ama lero wulan reta* - plead of the father of the sun and moon above
- *mora nitu pitu wali ulu* - with the seven ancestors of the top
- *noan walu lala higun* - and the eight spirits of the corners
- *mai tuke ler jaga plamang* - come with support and protection
- *beli ami ia na ngawun balik* - give to us valued materials
- *wi ami siap na’in tei* - we are ready to commit ourselves
- *ata rehi jewang jahong* - people must not be enticed into malevolence
- *mole kesa beli ami noran* - but contribute that which they have
- *ia na ita tena lose lose le’u naruk tei* - so that we fulfill our responsibility
- *mole wuwu ma’a wi’it nora bekar* - and share the rewards many times over

Immediately afterwards the first of the *hoban tegor* charms is positioned close by the rice mortar. The Adat expert then speaks:

- *ami e tei liko le’u ba’a* - with this we have completed the *liko*
- *nora nilo ilin lepeng le’u ba’a* - shining rays channeled down the mountain slopes
- *nora papan blatan* - with the coolness controlled
- *ia na jaga beli pare, wawi, tua, balik amin* - thus, protect our rice, pigs, gin, and gold
- *ata rehi jewang* - the people must not stray

More of the *hoban tegor* charms are then hung at the outside corners of the house, at the cooking hearth, and another is taken to be positioned near the clan’s central altar.

The composition of these charms varies from clan to clan, and they are made from a range of different materials, some of which are kept secret. There are, however, three ingredients uniform across all the variations. Every charm contains lontar palm leaf (*koli*), amareanth seeds (*wetan*), and parts of a sacrificed dog (*ahu*). Charms take shape as small
red cloth bundles of the ingredients are strung under a cascade of thin strips of the lontar palm leaves (called *koli wojong*). I have discussed the spiritual potency of the *koli* and *wetan* in Chapter 3, and the dog is considered to have similar properties. The blood, tail, ears, nose and paws of the dog are used in the charm, and the dog lives on and guards the ritual until the *liko* is revoked at its completion.

The *lodo hu'er* is then cooled at its finish during the *roat nuhun hokit hoban* (tip over the mortar and take down the charm) ritual. At the altar located near the rice mortar a sacrifice is made with the following prayer:

\begin{verbatim}
ia ue wari miu mai nia nirang ba'a mole teleng wolon ba'a ami heron epan gawan mora miu meti sai ngawun wi ami beli na'in tei ma balong sai
\end{verbatim}

*here you brothers come*  
*having looked down from the heights*  
*and seen afar from the mountains*  
*we call out many thanks to you*  
*so carry away the goods we have given*  
*now go and return home*

The mortar is then toppled over and the *hoban* charms positioned around the house and at the hearth are taken down (see Figure 24, overleaf). When these duties are completed the cooling ritual *lobat kabor kubar* begins. The room containing the household altar, the hearth, and the mortar are cooled with the juice of young coconuts which are then upturned on a stake. Prayers spoken in accompanyment are based around the *blatan ganu wair, bliran ganu bao* (cool like water, fresh like the banyan tree) theme described above. With these rituals the spiritual potency of the *lodo hu'er* is ended and the communication between participants, ancestor spirits, and deity returns to a normal level.

The prayers, objects and actions of the *liko* and *roat nuhun hokit hoban* rituals evoke and revoke a ritual environment that is unmistakably separate from normal life. The ritual language passages presented above contain explicit messages about the incorporation and disbandment of participants: thus, ‘we are ready to commit ourselves’ and ‘having seen afar from the mountains…now go and return home’. That the ‘shining rays [are] channeled down the mountain slopes, with the coolness controlled’ (*nora nilo ilin lepeng le'u ba'a, nora papan blatan*) is a clear statement of the function of the *liko* to manage the potentially dangerous heat of the *lodo hu'er*. The *hoban* charms and materials used to create them, such as lontar, amaranth and canine, are themselves imbued with an intense and directed spiritual power. Heatings and coolings are, in effect, indexes of the power and hazard of close communication between humans and spirits. These bookend rituals are performed to protect participants and, thus, the very performance is a self-referential
statement that what they need protection from is a real thing indeed. In performing these rituals participants also signal a beginning and end to ritual, and thereby bracket an exclusive reality from mundane life. Those who are excluded from this environment are not, however, excluded from its effects. Non-participants receive the unambiguous messages that are ritual’s ‘output’, and, like the participants, are therefore taught a specific canonical message (i.e., that a spirit has moved to the afterlife) and a general lesson about ritual’s efficacy.

![Image](image-url)

**Figure 24:** During the roat nunhun hokit hoban phase of the lodo hu'er ritual the mortar is tipped over. Note the young coconuts in the foreground in preparation for the lobat kabur kabar cooling rite that follows. Note the young boy and girl watching attentively.

The exclusive ritual environment that is invoked and revoked by the heating and cooling rites contributes to the unification of individual contexts and deutero-learning. Heating rites separate ritual participants from the normal ‘cool’ world of relative freedom and diversity. According to local exegesis, the heat, or spiritual potency, of ritual prohibits mistakes and forces participants into performing only ‘true’ actions.²⁸ According to the theory of the ecology of mind, the heating rites indicate the transition of participants into

²⁸ True actions are actions that allow direct communication between human and spirit domains. These actions enable such communication because they replicate conditions that are close to the source of the unity of humans, spirits, and deity (see Chapter 8).
an environment in which such true actions are in fact highly formalized actions from which the participants cannot stray. In the lodo hu'er all participants, regardless of their particular roles, must conform to similar conditions that restrict their actions and perceptions. All people are brought into a close relationship with their ancestor spirits which requires them to act with humility and, importantly, carefully attend to the ritual activity and prayers. All people see, hear, and move within an atmosphere of symbols and actions that communicate the necessity and benefit of the transition of the deceased’s spirit to the afterlife. Some people add a greater depth of experience and learning to this base through their enactment of specific procedures. However, these enactments are also perceived by others as intimately connected with the general ritual conditions which they too produce.

5. Conclusion

The fundamental uniformity of Adat ritual experience which collectively patterns the deuto-learning and contexts of different ritual participants can be most generally characterized as an experience of the truth and effectiveness of ritual. This shared experience of truth is based on the self-referentiality of ritual performance that engenders ‘accepted truths’ (see Chapter 4). That is, the fundamental experience of all ritual participants is their acceptance of the truth (as reality, necessity and effectiveness) of what they are doing. Beyond this basis, participants also share experiences of some of ritual’s specific performances and messages. In the lodo hu'er, for example, all participants are transported from the ‘cool’ of ordinary life into the ‘heat’ of ritual where the human and spirit domains are brought into close proximity. More specific contributions of different actors further construct an overarching ritual context experienced by all in which the deceased’s spirit is relocated to the afterlife as the spirit stone is moved from the grave to the house and onto the clan’s central altar. Further still, the most specific of the lodo hu'er performances and messages stratify the learning experiences of participants as the privileged few enact first-hand some of the ritual’s key procedures. However, in the integrated ritual environment even these exclusive acts are experienced (though to a lesser degree of embodiment) by others.

This is at once a semiotic, phenomenological and ecological theory of ritual education, in which states of consciousness, such as gestalt awareness, are better thought of as a product of a gestalt environment. Participants’ experience of signs, objects, and their own and others’ performances are all connected in a ritual environment that is constituted as
special bounded whole separate from ordinary life. The differences that do prevail within
the ritual environment contribute to more immediate and deeply affective learning
experiences for those to whom these differences apply. And yet, these differences do not
completely exclude others from their own learning experiences of these differences. For
example, through the exchange of mortuary bridewealth the ‘a’a winé (aunts and sisters)
directly embody their responsibility and fate as the personification of the connection
between clans in the asymmetric alliance system. However, others who attend to this
exchange also have their own embodied experience of the ‘a’a winé’s embodied
experience. The attendee’s to this exchange are, by their very participation in the ritual,
themselves embodying a real and valuable connection with the ‘a’a winé. Thus, the
attendee may embody, for instance, the experience of ‘my aunt and sisters are the
personification of the connection between clans’. Differences in ritual roles are a
significant source of variations in learning, but these variations must be recognized as
punctuation marks in an underlying shared experience.
Mastery of Ritual Language and Procedure

1. Introduction

The preceding chapters have focused on the lessons learnt by participants during Adat rituals. These lessons constitute an education in the Adat world-view (including its metaphysical, moral and social aspects) through a process of embodiment. In this chapter I turn from the cosmological substance of Adat to consider educational methods regarding the procedural matters of ritual. The question is, how do people learn to conduct the prayers, actions and orders of ceremony of Adat rituals?

The education of Adat ritual experts (du’a kula mo’an kara) which I spoke of in Chapter 3 emphasized occult methods for acquiring of ritual knowledge and skill. Initiation, heredity, dreaming, and visions signify the proximity of the individual to the spiritual domain and are considered to be the primary means by which Adat experts become expert. I contended that a system of family-based apprenticeship runs in parallel to this occult learning. From an early age Adat experts are introduced into their field of expertise as they follow their elders and watch, listen, assist in, and eventually perform the requisite duties of ritual. Moreover, the importance of family and participation in the Adat education extends beyond experts. Those for whom ritual duties involve no more than enacting small household rituals (piong tewok) or being supporting actors in large rituals also obtain their knowledge of ritual procedure through ritual performances under the guidance of elders. This educational methodology, however, does not stand alone. The ritual language statements and procedural order of Adat rituals possess formal properties that make learning ritual especially amenable to the participatory mode of education.

First, invocations and prayers can be learnt during ritual because Adat ritual does not always demand lengthy and complex speeches. The same ritual can be completed correctly and effectively using either a minimum of ritual speech or an elaborate performance in
which the full virtuosity of the chanter is displayed. The economy of flexibility and the
variety of ritual speech that I have emphasized throughout this thesis indicates that there
are no absolute scripts that ritualists must follow. Rather, rituals consist of a specific
number of canonical (i.e., rigid) couplets that must be spoken for the ritual to be fulfilled,
upon which varieties of individual elaborations are added.

Thus, ritual language can be learnt progressively during ritual. Practitioners can start
with basic and elemental speech and with time and experience develop more advanced
masterworks. This flexibility is permitted because ritual speech is viewed by the Adat
community as a conversation with the deity and ancestor spirits. The ritual conversation is
a forum for the creativity and innovation of the chanter, and the dialogue between humans
and spirits cannot be unequivocally predicted and scripted. However, the conversation
must proceed according to a grammar constituted by the canonical ritual language couplets
that are necessary for the ritual to be correct and effective. The number of couplets
essential for each ritual are relatively few, and this enables inexperienced ritual
practitioners to begin their career and develop their knowledge and skill during actual
ritual performances.1

Second, the procedural order of Adat rituals is able to be learnt during the performance
of rituals because, even at these formal events, participants are given the opportunity to
discuss, reflect and improvise upon procedure. Participants are able to learn and develop
their knowledge of ritual procedure in consultation with others or through their own
creativity as rituals progress. Although most household rituals are relatively small and
simply organized, the larger rituals, such as marriages and funerals, involve numerous
phases and a great complexity of activity. The difficulties in mastering this latter class of
ritual, however, are offset by the fluidity of the Adat ritual form. Rituals provide ample
time between the moments of important activity, such as sacrifice and exchange, for
participants to prepare and consult with each other. The educational importance of these
‘in-between’ moments cannot be underestimated. At these times participants gather to talk
about the methods, history and rationality of Adat ritual in a way rarely emulated in non-
ritual life.

Ritual procedure, like ritual language, contains a necessary, or rigid, core. However,

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1 My use of the term ‘inexperienced’ must be qualified. I have argued throughout the thesis that
members of the Adat community gain experience in ritual from an early age, but only lead rituals
in adulthood (see Chapter 3). Thus, in this context the ritual practitioner is inexperienced only
insofar as he or she is inexperienced in the leading tasks of chanting or conducting in procedural
matters.
there is no completely scripted procedure from which ritual activity cannot stray. Village, clan and individual interpretations of ritual procedure often differ and are based on the previous experiences of participants. There are no manuals for ritual, just memories, imaginations, embodied deutero-learning, and actions. Moreover, even if an Adat expert is thought by himself or others to have mastered a particular ritual procedure, complications and novel situations are often thrown up. At these times participants call on all their resources to reach a correct outcome. In exceptionally difficult situations long lost memories are trawled, past experiences are critiqued, and signs from the spirits are sought.

Ritual procedure is dynamic, especially in its most hazardous and creative periods, and participants learn much of how to enact, guide, and accept this dynamism during ritual.

In this chapter I focus on the formal educational properties of Adat ritual language and procedure using data from marriage and mortuary rites. These formal properties complement the standard participatory educational method of Adat (that has been described in previous chapters) by providing opportunities within ritual for participants to learn through their own creativity. I present passages of ritual speech recorded during the performance of sacrificial rituals that highlight the conversational style and innovative use of ritual language. I then present a transcription of part of a discussion that occurred during a particularly sensitive and difficult moment of an Adat mortuary ritual. The analysis of these events also leads to a more detailed exploration than has hitherto been made in this thesis of the comparative aspects of indigenous rituals of the Sara Sikka speaking peoples. Utilizing data provided by Lewis, Asch & Asch (1994) and Lewis (2006) I contrast the formal properties of Adat rituals with those of the Ata Sikka and Ata Tana ‘Ai. In conclusion to this chapter I remark on the embodied skill that Adat ritual practitioners develop to recognize and implement ritual contexts.

2. Elaboration and Innovation in Ritual Language Learning

The Adat ritual language for the same ritual can be spoken succinctly or elaborately. The invocations and prayers can last for less than a minute and contain only a few couplets, or they can last for tens of minutes and contain hundreds of couplets. Either way, the ritual still successfully accomplishes its function. This flexibility allows novice ritual speakers to perform ritual duties fully and to further develop their skill through the practice of rituals, rather than through study and recitation in non-ritual contexts. This flexibility also allows experienced speakers to make choices and innovate during their performances, rather than having to consistently follow only strict formal procedure. In this section I describe how
ritual speakers elaborate on the formal structure of ritual language invocations and prayers. I also describe the conversational style of ritual speech and illustrate how speakers can use this informality to freely express original or non-canonical ideas during performance. In contrast to Kuiper’s (1998) theory of ‘echo and elaboration’ discussed in Chapter 3, my definition of Adat ritual language learning is firmly based in ritual activity. That is, the elaborations and innovations are made by Adat community ritual chanters during ritual, and not in non-ritual (or, pre-ritual) contexts like the Weyewa of Sumba.

Learning Adat ritual language is not simply about learning passages of normal speech. Many words in the ritual register of Sara Sikka have different meanings to the same word in colloquial speech (cf Du Bois 1986: 317). Furthermore, according to the semantic parallelism of ritual language, many words must only be paired with certain other words. The task is complex and challenging, and few people become truly exceptional ritual speakers. One of the most notable characteristics of ritual speech, which is especially apparent when one inquires into its education, is what Du Bois calls its gestalt quality. That is,

…the ritual text often appears to be known (and learned) as an indivisible whole. Specialists are often unable to present their chants in line-by-line fragments for the investigator, and they teach the texts (whether to outside scholar or indigenous novice) through many repetitions of the whole” (ibid.: 319).

Barring Du Bois’s assessment that specialists actively ‘teach the texts’, I observed the same principle in the Adat community. In fact, on occasions when I asked Adat experts to speak ritual language invocations outside of ritual, or when they themselves would spontaneously do so for my education, they not only recited concurrent groups of couplets rather than single couplets, they would also need to evoke contexts that mirrored ritual in some way in order to speak fluently. For example, the speakers would tend to shift into a context that mirrored ritual by using tobacco or palm gin, or, as some related to me, with concentrated efforts to imagine themselves into ritual.

It is important to emphasize that this holism does not imply invariability. In other words, knowing a ritual language text as a whole does not mean that this whole is unchangeable, either by a single individual or between individuals. Indeed, according to Rubin (1995), variability is a decisive feature of the long-term stability of oral traditions.

2 The unquestionableness of invariance is still maintained in lieu of variation. As I noted in Chapter 4, variation is admitted in the theory of sanctification so long as the appearance of invariation is maintained.
Rubin’s theory of remembering oral traditions (which could equally be called a theory of learning) begins with the idea that oral traditions consist of texts that are recalled serially. That is, texts such as poems, songs, and ritual language chants proceed sequentially from beginning to end. The structural formality, what Rubin calls ‘constraints’, that orders these sequences fixes reminders in the text so that “what is recalled early in the piece can be used to cue later recall” (ibid.: 175). Constraints on texts can include imagery, theme, rhythm, alliteration, music, and, most pertinent to the present study, semantic parallelism. By limiting choices and organizing the sequence of recitation these constraints aid memory. However, the constraints must also be weak enough to allow variation, because within limits, Rubin (ibid.: 6) writes in relation to song, variability

…allows a singer to adapt a piece to suit individual habits and needs, and in this way to develop an easier-to-recall variant that would be less likely to disappear from the singer’s repertoire than the original.

Among the Adat community, ritual speakers invariably declare that the register’s invariant semantic parallelism, as well as being the container for profound truths, makes ritual language easy to learn. Less attention is given by community members to the role of variability in learning. I argue, following Rubin, that in Adat ritual language constraint and variability are crucial features that aid learning. I also argue that variability is evident as much in the intentional manipulation of constraints as it is in freestyle innovation.

The elemental ritual language components of Adat rituals are specific couplets that must be spoken for the ritual to be valid. These canonical couplets invariably include the invocations of the ancestor spirits and the deity, and are necessary to call the spiritual parties to attention and ask them to attend the ritual. Once this is achieved subsequent couplets explain to the spirits the reason for the rituals and ask for the assistance required by the ritual participants. Canonical couplets are often only a part of the ritual language that is spoken in ritual. Additionally, the positioning of these necessary couplets within the totality of the speech and the exact construction of the phrases used to deliver them is determined by the individual speaker. For example, although ritual speech begins with invocations, these can be repeated in various places throughout the speech according to the judgment of the speaker. The elaborations that are made on the core couplets are incorporated into the speech at the will of the speaker.

Most of the ritual language presented in the preceding chapters, as I indicated in Chapter 4, is based on these canonical couplets. Although there is some variations between villages and clans, the core couplets are to the greater extent shared by all members of the Adat community. In this chapter, however, I present passages of ritual language that have
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not been edited to exclude idiosyncratic speech. It is important to emphasize that ritual speech is highly personal. It reflects a conversation about very serious matters between an individual, his or her family and clan, their ancestor spirits, and the deity. It is not expected to be repeated outside of the ritual context. The speech could, for example, contain idioms that others may prosecute as mistakes, or it could contain information not willingly shared with other clans. The popular Adat epigram *woło blon lopa lebu* (the hills are long so don’t be indiscrete) holds true for ritual speech. For this reason the authors of the passages I present here remain anonymous.

The freedom to elaborate on core couplets is exemplified by a passage of ritual speech I recorded from the *wawi wotik* stage of a *wain plan* marriage (see Chapter 5). The clan leader of the bride undertook the requisite ritual at the household altar before the sacrifice of the pig (*wawi api*) with whose liver the marriage oath is made. The purpose of the ritual was to inform the ancestor spirits that the pig was about to be sacrificed and to ask for their blessing and support. The essential couplet for this ritual is the statement that explains the ritual’s purpose. This couplet is generically be expressed as:

*pati api nora wawi api* slay and roast with the roasted pig
*perang pranga nora ara pranga* cook and prepare with the cooked rice

Along with this statement the ritual speech, like all *pioŋ tewok* rituals, requires the invocation of ancestor spirits and requests for assistance (see Chapter 4).

The speech I recorded elaborated significantly on these elements, thus the clan leader spoke:

```plaintext
2 nitu ina bu’an mother ancestors who gave birth to us
2 nitu pitu wali ulu seven ancestors at the head
noan walu wali higun eight ancestors in the corner
[Here the names of ancestors of this clan’s central house (*lepo geté*) for whom the *lodo hu’er* has not yet been performed are spoken, in this case eleven people]
16 dopo horok keran blapu wutun call in our respected brothers in law
pele tetap wali unen bring them politely to the inside
18 mora ve libu lu’ur with our elder siblings stacked up
mora wari lobar lelen and our younger siblings in line
20 loning ena tei me itan now because of our child
[Here the name of the bride is spoken]
22 ita ga’i pati weli ga nora wawi api we want to slay and give her the roasted pig to eat
prang planga nora ara planga cook and prepare the cooked rice
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In this passage several aspects of the elaboration of ritual speech are immediately apparent. In line 22 half of the essential couplet is expressed differently to the generic version. Thus, *ita ga’i pati weli ga nora wawi api* (we want to slay and give her the
roasted pig to eat) is said instead of the canonical *pati api nora wawi api* (slay and roast with the roasted pig). Lines 24-25 specify further the way in which the sacrifice will be performed, stating forthrightly ‘so at this moment we slay the fire pig, thus we go out to spear the fire pig’. Lines 42-47 evoke ritual language normally used with ‘cooling’ rituals such as the *wewar huler wair* and *lobat kabur kabar* to emphasize the promise and fertility of marriage. In lines 32-36 the request for good fortune (*ihin geté dolo mosang*) is amplified with an appeal that it comes twofold and four times over. Other elaborations abound in this passage, such as the repetition of the invocation of the ancestors (lines 28, 29, 49, 50), and the use of conversational narrative markers (lines 48 & 55). All these features illustrate the manner in which experienced chanters can add complexity and depth to the canonical couplets.

The second feature of Adat ritual language I wish to highlight is its conversational style. The formality and constraint of the semantically parallel couplets is tempered by the use of phrases that provide a narrative continuity to the speech. The speakers often use non-couplet sentences and single words to state directly what they are doing and why they are doing it. Interestingly, the use of informal language as well as Indonesian words lends the speech more authenticity as a conversation, rather than as a simple recitation. As ritual speakers sit down in front of the altar stone, carefully place the offerings upon it, and begin talking, they are engaging in a dialogue with the ancestors and deity. The freedom to use conversational idioms in the otherwise restrictively formal speech also gives the speaker respite and pause in which to formulate correctly the upcoming canonical couplets. The following passage shows the conversational nature of Adat ritual speech (non-couplets and informal language are shown in bold):  

1 *ina mula pu’an*  
   ancestor mothers of the planted trees
2 *ama ongen unen*  
   ancestor fathers of the fertile gardens
3 *mora ue libu la’ur*  
   with our elder siblings stacked up
4 *wari ladar lelen*  
   and our younger siblings in line
5 *odi ita mogat pano ta wali lepo gete*  
   as we travel together in this great house
6 *ia guk ita tutur naruk harang lalan*  
   we then talk the issue and speak the path

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3 For this sacrifice the pig must be speared (*S: robak*). Nowadays, the pig is tied and a standard bush knife is used to stab the animal until it dies. In the past a spear was used.
4 This passage is taken from a *toma ‘ai tali* ritual conducted in the lead up to a marriage.
7 loning hari Sabtu leron boga\textsuperscript{5} because Saturday is a day of change
8 odi ita himo tora as we receive
9 ue libu lu’ur with our elder siblings stacked up
10 wari lodar lelen and our younger siblings in line
11 naha hotak mole da’a wot must splash and overflow
12 dadi a’u nen\textnt{tali e’o dagir wa’in} so I ask that the vines don’t tangle my feet
13 karang e’o kaet alan the branches don’t strike my head
14 ti weit liar du weti weit sitting with a voice of great courage
15 porang rang du ejon ajar an accent with the freedom of victors
16 tabê excuse [us]
17 ora ina mula pu’an with the ancestor mothers of the planted trees
18 ama ongen unen ancestor fathers of the fertile gardens
19 mora ue libu lu’ur with our elder siblings stacked up
20 wari lodar lelen and our younger siblings in line
21 ami pué liar éde rang\textsuperscript{6} we leave with this voice and part with this accent
22 ko ina mula pu’an so ancestor mothers of the planted trees
23 ama ongen unen ancestor fathers of the fertile gardens
24 a’u nen ita mogat pano teri I ask that we go and sit together
25 da’a hari Sabtu sore guk walong until Saturday afternoon and then return home

Particles such as \textit{odi} (now, then), \textit{ko} (so, or), \textit{du} (verb emphasis), \textit{ora} (with) and \textit{dadi} (thus, so) organize the narrative and set its pace. The alternating uses of pronouns such as \textit{a’u} (I), ‘\textit{au} (you), \textit{ami} (we, exclusive) and \textit{ita} (we, inclusive) also emphasizes the conversational structure of the speech. Non-couplet sentences, such as those in lines 5-8, 11, 24 and 25, are less metaphoric than the canonical couplets and keep both the human and spirit audience informed and engaged with the ritual with easily understood descriptive sentences.

The opportunity to include non-canonical speech forms in ritual speech also allows the speaker to contribute his or her own innovations. The speaker is free to make choices (concordant with his or her knowledge and skill) about whether or not to elaborate and about what these elaborations will mean. That is, elaborations need not only be descriptive

\textsuperscript{5} ‘Hari Sabtu’ is the Indonesian term for Saturday. All the indigenous terms for the days of the week have been replaced by the Indonesian terms. In the past the different locations of daily markets (\textit{regang}) were used to denote the days of the week.

\textsuperscript{6} This sentence is a contraction of the couplet ‘pue nora liar sina, ‘eder nora rang jawa’ (leave with this valuable voice, part with this precious accent).
statements about the ritual process, they can also be more critical or reflective commentaries. The provision for ritual speakers to step outside of the strict canonical form gives the medium of ritual speech and the forum of ritual performance significant strategic importance. This is illustrated by the following passage, which is a segment of a long invocation and prayer chanted by an expert speaker:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{ata mai huma e tei ‘au meti} & \quad \text{people who come to disturb us, you take away} \\
\text{ita naha mogat} & \quad \text{together we must} \\
\text{tuke wi’t ganu tena} & \quad \text{support ourselves like a boat} \\
\text{tube ganu jong jawa} & \quad \text{shore up like a valuable craft} \\
\text{epae Adat sah naha sah} & \quad \text{wherever Adat is right it must be right} \\
\text{loning ita wotik ba’a wawi waten} & \quad \text{because we’ve been fed the pig’s liver} \\
\text{kawin Adat sah} & \quad \text{Adat marriage is rightful} \\
\text{naha deri buri buri sai ganu wetan} & \quad \text{must sit giving birth like the spreading of millet} \\
\text{ga’e teton ganu atong} & \quad \text{cradle like the scattering of amaranth grain} \\
\text{ita naha meten ganu wungun} & \quad \text{we have hope like the dusk insects} \\
\text{paok ganu noan} & \quad \text{and faith like the dawn bugs} \\
\text{dadi poi ganu ia} & \quad \text{so it’s just like that} \\
\text{mai ita deri ea wua ta’a} & \quad \text{come we sit and eat areca and betel} \\
\text{naha ea tinu oti} & \quad \text{we must eat and drink now} \\
\text{mogat hama hama e orin e uma} & \quad \text{together the people of this house and garden}
\end{align*}
\]

The most noteworthy part of this speech are lines 191-193 in which the speaker mentions the legitimacy of Adat marriage. This ritual speech was made in the context of a mortuary rite for a married couple who had both died in unfortunate circumstances. There was some consternation in the family that the couple’s marriage by Adat law in precedence to Catholic married had some cause in the deaths. The speaker of this passage uses the sanctity of ritual to refute this claim. The Indonesian word \textit{adat} is not part of canonical ritual language (see Chapter 10), nor are the Indonesian words \textit{sah} (right) and \textit{kawin} (marriage). As such, these three lines, which are surrounded by hundreds of relatively precisely spoken canonical couplets, make an enormous impact on the ritual participants. The inclusion of this statement in support of Adat marriage was an intentional choice on the part of the speaker to create innovative ritual speech. It was a strategic deployment of his own social authority in the sacred ritual environment to quash doubts about the legitimacy of Adat marriage.

Diverging from the pure recitation of canonical couplets in this innovative way is
usually not something done by novice speakers because it involves a significant risk. The propriety of innovations stems from individual interpretations of the Adat canon relating to what ritual language is and how it can be used. Most importantly, speakers must be sure that the ancestor spirits and deity understand the message and do not take offence. However, while anecdotes about the wrong use of canonical couplets, intentional or not, and its consequences are plentiful, stories about the dangers of innovations are few. Those that I have heard on this score are about people who have been intentionally disrespectful to the spirits. I suspect that the spiritual risk of innovation is downplayed because its rectitude is a matter of content, and this rectitude is ultimately judged by the spirits, and not humans.\(^7\) That being said, innovations that make requests, criticisms or reflections are strategic and political. Innovations are raised in conversations with the spirit world, but are chiefly directed to the human social world. Opinions are sanctified and legitimized in the context of ritual, at least for those who are attending. Therein lies the danger, for if controversial innovations become known by unsympathetic others, disputes can arise among those who disagree or take offence. In this way, innovation also involves social, rather than only spiritual, hazards. Thus, such strategic innovation is a feature of ritual language more commonly employed by experienced speakers who already carry a high degree of social authority.

Elaboration that reinforces the conversational style of ritual speech, on the other hand, is a relatively innocent addition to the core couplets. Elaborations such as repetition, descriptive non-couplet sentences, and particles that maintain the fluency of the speech are valuable learning tools for early career ritual speakers. The rigid canonical couplets are learned through repeated hearings and personal reflection experienced in and motivated by ritual performance. Above this canonical baseline speakers are free to create the order and degree of repetition of the couplets, and to expound and elaborate certain aspects of this canon by adding still more couplets. Speakers are also free to mix particles, conjunctions and descriptive sentences into the performance. These ‘flexibilities’ allow people to learn and develop their ritual language knowledge and skills during ritual. Importantly, these properties are products of the orality of Adat of ritual language, there is no unyielding written text to constrain the creativity, innovativeness and conversational quality of ritual speech.

If Adat ritual language were written the flexibility of elaboration and innovation would

\(^7\) From my experience, most people are likely to support innovations because rituals are mostly family affairs and the ritual speaker usually carries great authority (e.g., the speaker is commonly the clan or house leader).
likely disappear under the weight of rigidity. Although it is difficult to make such a prediction, some understanding of the consequences of a transformation from orality to literacy can be attained through a comparison with the ritual speech of the lowland Ata Sikka. The people of the village of Sikka now rarely perform Adat rituals, and maintain their Adat primarily through bridewealth exchanges (see Chapter 2). However, Lewis (2006) has recorded and analyzed a recent Adat ritual which was aimed at reconciling the branches of the Sikkanese royal house (*lepo geté*).\(^8\) The ritual was called a *hu’er héréng* which, as we recall from Chapter 5, is what the Adat community call a particular series of bridewealth exchanges. In the Ata Sikka context the *hu’er héréng* refers to a cooling ritual\(^9\) that involves the sacrifice of coconuts and a pig and a shared meal (ibid.: 315). The ritual speech for the occasion was written beforehand by the ritual leader, Guru Mundus. Lewis (ibid.: 329) explains:

> Guru Mundus prepared a typescript, a script for the ritual, which consisted of notes for the commentary and invocations in Sikkanese ritual language. His script was in effect a liturgy, a number of ceremonial and ritualistic actions and speeches to be performed in a prescribed sequence. Each of the seven rites that made up the *hu’er héréng* opened with a *komentar* (BI commentary) spoken by Gondolphus Pareira, Guru Mundus’s assistant. Each commentary was followed by a recitation in ritual language by Guru Mundus. The commentator closed the ritual with a final speech. In writing out a detailed programme for the event in advance, Guru Mundus did not simply write out roles and speeches for himself and the commentator to perform. He created a liturgy for the performance, on a particular occasion, of a Sikkanese religious ritual.

Lewis recorded Mundus’ ritual speech and notes that he “read from the text he had prepared” (ibid.: 328) and that “the performance followed closely, though not word for word, the script” (ibid.: 318). Lewis’s argument emphasizes that the liturgy of this ritual recapitulates the Catholic mass and that “the recitation of formulaic couplets in Sikkanese ritual language parallels the reading of scripture” (ibid.: 330).

The differences between this Sikkanese ritual and those of the Adat community are typified by the manner of the performance: Adat ritual language is not scripted nor read.

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\(^8\) Lewis notes that “the *hu’er héréng* was not a spontaneous expression of a pattern of practices common in the daily life of the urban Ata Sikka. It was, instead, an artifice old in Sikkanese culture but new to the experience of the individuals participating in it in Maumere in 1993” (2006: 328).

\(^9\) This ritual is very similar in procedure (excepting the specific references to the Ata Sikka royal house) to the *lobat kabur kabur* cooling rituals of the Adat community.
This difference in turn produces a different type of ritual speech. In performance, the Sikkanese version is more like the purely canonical renderings of Adat ritual language presented in previous chapters, and less like the in situ performances presented above. The elaborations, innovations, and conversational particles and pronouns that I have argued are central to the education of ritual language are not present in the Ata Sikka script. This fact is exemplified by the following passage, which is a particularly evocative segment of ritual speech from the Sikkanese hu’er héréng ritual recorded (in performance) by Lewis (ibid.: 323):

```
kasing ‘ora mé buang  sympathy for all the children
   ganu puhung a’ung wuang  all like blossoms I have borne
   pu a’ung lu’ur           my sisters’ children closely related
   ganu waté a’ung karé    as my heart has been tapped
   kasing ‘ora tibong      sympathy for all the youths
   regang werung sagang sareng  meeting anew their beautiful forms and faces
60  tibong léma é’i mai  let the youths arise and come hither
   ‘lameng rawit é bawo      and the men climb the house ladder from below
   deri dena ‘liting gi’it   sitting and resting here strongly as natives
   gera dena ‘lér mangang    standing and leaning sturdily as indigenes
   lepo ha Lepo Geté        in this house, the great House
70  woga ha dang gabar    and this pavilion with its high house ladder
   blapu raé blapu raja     into the great hall of the raja
   lepo Gete blapu Sina     in the great House with its Chinese gallery
   mai papang é’i papang    come the two sides together
    mai dolang é’i limang    held in the lap and in the arms [of the family]
75  pa’a é’i du’e blatang  no longer to live in the cold
   hu’er a du’é dolo        measure life’s harvest
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This passage is typical of the entire speech, which is entirely constituted by recitation of exact canonical couplets. It is a performance of perfect formality which, for a speech of this length, is not found in the rituals of the Adat community.

This strict codification makes the recitation of ritual language dauntingly difficult without notes from which to read. It removes the speech from its conversational context and reduces the autonomy of the speaker. Of course in this case the speaker, a knowledgeable elder of the community, wrote the speech himself. Nonetheless, he still found it necessary to read from the script. It is also reasonable to assume that the presence
of such scripts written by experts would come to be used by others, thus solidifying the
canon of Adat into a rigid scripture-like form that heretofore has not been part of this
indigenous religion.

In sum, the ritual speakers of the Adat community – from the occasional practitioner to
the most expert – typically learn their ritual language from hearing it spoken in ritual and
then speaking it themselves in ritual. Ritual language invocations and prayers are only
infrequently noted down for future reference or as a heuristic technique and are rarely used
outside of ritual contexts. Many people told me that they sometimes practice key ritual
language couplets in their mind or spoken softly in preparation for a performance.
However, the focal point of ritual language use, and thus the focal point of learning, is
during ritual. Speakers insist that in the context of ritual their speech is delivered with
greater fluency than it otherwise would be in non-ritual settings. For these speakers, ritual
is a real conversation, with real interlocutors, and it involves a natural flow of speech. To
learn and practice such a conversation without the presence of the spiritual interlocutors is a
limited, and perhaps counter-productive, undertaking.

3. Uncertainty, Novelty and Discussion in Ritual Procedure Learning

The actions and the order of actions of ritual procedure, like ritual language, are able to be
learnt while participants undertake ritual. The piong tewok rituals carried out at the
household altar are mostly simple affairs and the order of ceremony is learnt
comprehensively by most members of the Adat community. From individuals’ childhood
until their maturity, when they are able to personally conducted these rites, they will
potentially have witnessed and participated in these rites hundreds of times. The piong
tewok rituals are almost a daily, and at the very least weekly, event in all Adat community
households. The most complex Adat rituals, such as marriage and mortuary rites, are also
the least frequently performed. These complex rituals are experienced most regularly by
the Adat experts (du’a kula mo’an kara), and those who are informally apprenticed to
them. These experts lead the rituals of many different families, not just their own. It is

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10 I have seen, and some people have told me they have kept, a small number of short notes of ritual
language containing couplets they have thought important but have yet to memorize.

11 This, of course, depends on the length of time they are at home. Children who are sent away to
school and live in Maumere and subsequently find employment away from home are likely to
have witnessed fewer piong tewok rituals.
expected that these experts know the order of ceremony before they take on the responsibility of acting as ritual leaders.\footnote{Indeed, the family responsible for the ritual would not ask for the services of an individual if they did not have confidence in that individual’s expertise. Although most villages, clans, and even clan lineages have people expert in ritual, occasionally an expert must be sought from outside of these groups if assistance is required. However, such outside assistance invariably is sought from a well-known and well-trusted member of the wider community.}

Ritual experts learn their knowledge and skill through their frequent practice. Although ultimately a complex ritual is a somewhat democratic affair, as many different participants know something of the ritual procedure, the role of the *du’a kula mo’an kara* is a particularly busy and demanding job. They must be masters of the totality of the ritual, and ensure that all the different participants perform their functions in a proper and timely fashion. However, on occasion a ritual still produces unexpected or unusual situations for which the correct procedure is not immediately known by any one individual. Having an anthropologist present for the first time at a ritual is one such novel situation. Or, as I will explore in this section, the novelty can arise when the equilibrium of a ritual is disturbed by mistake or misfortune. In such cases, Adat rituals are often corrected through actions based on decisions made during discussions among the participants.

Complex Adat rituals are constituted by a series of rites interspersed with pockets of time, sometimes hours, during which the progress of the ritual can be assessed and the upcoming rites prepared for. Thus, going into a ritual, it is not necessary that each person, even the Adat expert, has complete understanding of every possible eventuality. The correct procedure for unexpected and unknown eventuality can be learnt during the ritual through discussions in which participants pool and share each others knowledge.\footnote{I have not witnessed nor heard of eventualities when a ritual party had to seek help from persons not involved in the ritual from the outset.}

Many Adat rituals have internal measures of success. For example, the livers of sacrificed animals are divined, and specific abnormalities signify specific problems with the ritual. Another measure of success is the type of ritual activity that, as a physical task, is demanding and risky. If the task is performed well the ritual is deemed a success, if the task is failed the ritual has encountered a problem. The source of such problems can range from incorrect speech or actions to more general issues of family discord or external occult disruptions. Each type of problem has a particular means of redress. The example I present for analysis here is a case of a failed physical test during a *lodo hu'er* mortuary rite. This occurrence caused momentary confusion and debate amongst ritual participants as the reason for the problem and its solution were sought.
Immediately prior to dawn on the final day of the lodo hu’er rites a ritual called the *lulun plahan tede oha* (the expanse of the unrolled mat) is performed. The name refers to the mat upon which the ritual participants sit to exchange bridewealth. The immediate family (*ue wari*) of the deceased must give four types of bridewealth to their house’s (*lepo woga*) wife-givers (*ina ama*). One type is called *orak wu’a watu* (move the spirit stone), which is given to signify that the deceased’s spirit has moved to the spirit world (*nitu natar noan klo’ang*). This exchange indicates that the wife-givers do not have the right to receive any future bridewealth payments (beyond these four). Another type is the bridewealth after which this rite is named, the *lulun plahan tede oha*. This bridewealth repays the wife-givers who must provide the mat for this ritual. The bridewealth called *tudi taka* (knife and ax), of which it is said ‘the knife sharpens the stake, the ax cuts the bamboo floor’ (*tudi eto té’en taka patar halar*), is given specifically to the *ina ama loka tung* who at this exchange represent earth and land (*nian tana*) (see Chapter 6). They receive this payment as recompense for the injury done to *nian tana* by the digging of the deceased’s grave.

The final bridewealth type, called the *poron papa kabor, kiat tewi ohu* (machete cuts the coconut, knife slices the tuber), repays the wife-givers for the gift of a machete and knife that are integral to the next phase of this ritual. In this next phase a tuber, usually cassava (*’ai ohu*), which represents the spirit of the deceased, is cut by the knife into three segments by the *ue wari*. The third that comprises the tuber’s tip (*ohu erin*) is given to the deceased’s sisters (*winé*), the middle section (*ohu loran*) is used for the ritual offering necessary for the lodo stage of the lodo hu’er ritual, and the root or trunk section (*ohu lo’en*) is given to the deceased’s aunts (*’a’a*). The parts given to the *’a’a winé* are recognized as proof of the successful completion of the lodo hu’er and are not eaten or planted. Prior to the division of the tuber, however, the ritual as a whole to this point must be known to be successful. This is achieved by a member of the *ue wari* who must cut in half a coconut (*kabor*) with absolute precision. First, the machete is used to cut the outer skin of the coconut into an odd number of strips, usually three or five, without separating the strips fully from each other or from the nut (i.e., the coconut skin is peeled but kept intact at one end). If the skin is separated or the coconut not cut perfectly the entire lodo hu’er ritual is deemed ‘not yet correct’ (*la’en molo*).

During one such ritual that I witnessed the coconut was not cut correctly. Instead of

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14 Even numbers are thought more auspicious than odd numbers. Here the coconut is cut into odd numbers because the deceased’s spirit is also counted as one, and thus the numbers tally even.
being a clean straight cut, the machete strike produced a coconut split with jagged edges. The uneven balance of the coconut (due to the fact that it is still partly attached to the skin), the somewhat awkward sitting position from which the cut must be made, and the pressure of this tense ritual moment, mean that for anybody this act is challenging. However, I have witnessed other occasions when the cut has been perfect, and the imperfect cut in the ritual in question was sufficiently uncommon that the situation required some thought. The first step taken was to diagnose the meaning of the crooked cut. Different shaped edges at different locations have specific meanings. Once the diagnosis was made, the participants determined how to correct the problem. The imperfect cut led the ritual into relatively unchartered territory, and the participants worked together to solve the crisis. In effect, the participants learnt from each other the correct procedure for this eventuality during the heat of ritual.

The small room in which this ritual took place was crowded with over twenty people, and many voices contributed to the discussion. The extract I present here occurred at the tail end of the discussion as the threads were drawn together. It involves the member of the ue wari who cut the coconut (person A), a du’a kula mo’an kara ritual expert (B), and a knowledgeable member of the deceased’s clan (C):

A: “For a moment we will look at the straightening of the coconut we are currently working on – is it like that?”

B: “Examine the coconut, the lower part of the coconut shows us it is flawed, too long, and so it is in this house. Because we see at the lower part of the coconut there is a conflict, this small crooked flaw means that the people of the mother’s brothers [S: ati ina ama pu lame] are not as one, and so all the family is not yet safe. The flaw in the lower part means the family of this house are not of one mind. In their workings one is like this and one is like that. So the lesson of the coconut flawed in its lower and up until it’s upper parts, so we the family of this house talk without loyalty, [one] talks in this way and [another] says it must be that way. This is the lesson of the coconut.”

A: “Now we understand. So now it’s like this, what seems like the Adat way to straighten this crooked coconut? How do we make it flat?”

C: “Make it flat, make it straight again with the blood of one pig, sacrifice another pig and it’ll be made straight on the edges.”
A: “Because I see it like it is wrong, immediately correct it – it’s time now we make the coconut correctly halved.”

C: “Work now the sacrifice of the pig. Place the blood [on the coconut] and then it’ll be correctly halved.”

The responsibility for the imperfect cut is removed from the man who made the cut. The examination of the crooked edges revealed that the imperfection was caused by a specific unhealthy relationship in the wife-giver section of the ritual party. The action necessary to fix this problem was determined to be the sprinkling a sacrificed pig’s blood on the crooked coconut (see Figure 25). This offering would – if not actually resolve the familial conflict – suggest to the ancestor spirits an intention for resolution, and thereby return the ritual to the proper path.

Figure 25: The blood of the pig sacrificed to ‘straighten’ the imperfectly split coconut is displayed to the camera. Note the split coconut on the mat to the left of the blood.

The rituals of the Tana ‘Ai people share a similar discussive property. Their large and complex rituals are also characterized by debate and consultation during the ritual process. In fact, the performance in 1980 of the largest Tana ‘Ai ritual of all, the gren mahé, displayed an even greater level of processual confusion, discussion and decision than the lodo hu’er ritual of the Adat community described above. The gren mahé ritual, for which

15 For ‘correctly halved’ the word ‘keru’ is used. Keru is a measurement of exactly half a coconut shell.
there is no equivalent in the Adat community, is a “celebration of the origins of the domain and...a reaffirmation of the primacy of the founders of Tana Wai Brama...and of the order of precedence of the domain’s subaltern clans” (Lewis 1996: 113 f). It is a once in a generation event and involves hundreds, if not thousands, of participants during its course. Like the more complex Adat community rituals, the gren mahé is constituted by a series of rites enacted over a number of days. The rarity of this ritual, the large number of participants, and the complexity of the procedure make the gren mahé a challenging event for its leaders.

Dialogue from the ethnographic film A Celebration of Origins (Lewis, Asch & Asch 1993) illustrates the imperfect knowledge of ritual participants and the need to negotiate correct procedure as the ritual progresses (dialogue quoted from shot list [Lewis 2000]). This is best summed up by a comment of Mo’an Sina, the de facto leader of the ritual,16 who at a particularly difficult and contested moment said:

“Ask Déwa. He’s been here for days. I want to see how he would do the ritual” (ibid.: shot 69).

On another occasion prior to the rite pati wawi blikon, a sacrifice of a pig to consecrate the boundary of the ritual site, the clan responsible for the provision of the pig was unclear. Mo’an Koa, a senior ritual specialist of clan Tana Wai Brama, engaged in a discussion with members of other clans to decide the matter. A segment of this conversation proceeded as follows:

Teka: “I’m asking about the purpose of the boundary sacrifice. You say no particular clan is responsible. So whom should we look to for the pig?” (ibid.: shot 42).

Koa: “We’re in trouble because we expected Déwa to bring the pig. I am the most central person here. If I, Koa, had agreed to provide a pig, it would be here now. I’d run away in embarrassment if it were not. You must only open your mouth for a reason. Déwa said he’d provide the pig” (ibid.: shot 43).

Unidentified Man: “Déwa is not here, so please, elders, tell us what to do” (ibid.: shot 47).

16 To make matters more complicated, the primary ritual leader of the gren mahé, the tana pu’an (source of the domain), died before the gren mahé of 1980 could be conducted. As a senior and experienced ritual specialist, and the father of new and inexperienced tana pu’an, Mo’an Sina took over much of the responsibility for the ritual.
The matter is eventually resolved by Mo’an Koa, who identifies the clan responsible for providing the pig for the mahé boundary. He later says to those gathered in debate:

Koa: “We elders don’t play with our mouths, we play with our brains”
(ibid.: shot 47).

The gren mahé ritual is much more overtly contested and political than the Adat community rituals. It involves all the clans of the domain and its purpose is to reinforce the order of precedence of those clans. Many individuals and clans harbor interests or ambitions that contravene the order of precedence as it is reckoned by the source clan. The task of the ritual leaders is very difficult, not only must they ensure correct procedure of a ritual rarely practiced, they must also manage with diplomacy the numerous competing parties.

In summary, the participants of Adat rituals and of Tana ‘Ai rituals are given the freedom to negotiate ritual procedure during the ritual itself. Indeed, in many cases this freedom is a necessity. Large rituals involve a significant number of unexpected and novel situations in which even the knowledge of ritual experts is tested. At these moments participants can pool their resources in discussions aimed at identifying the proper course of action. Participants draw on past experiences or accounts (such as stories from elders), or on similar situations in other rituals in order to discover solutions to difficulties. In this way, participants learn of atypical ritual procedure in a collaborative and dialogical manner. This method complements the education of typical ritual procedure, which also occurs during ritual but with greater predictability and emphasis on performance.

4. Conclusion

In this chapter I have shown that complex ritual speech and procedure are able to be learnt during ritual performance. This is possible because the correct, or standard, versions of ritual speech and procedure come into being in this performance. In other words, if we are to think of Adat ritual as a scripted set of speeches and actions, then such a script for these speeches and actions exists in the participants’ remembered and embodied experiences of previously performed rituals, and, crucially, in the unfolding creative processes of currently performed rituals.17 Adat canon is thus synonymous with the recursively structured relationship between sanctified deutero-learning and sanctified contexts.

17 To a lesser extent, some specific information regarding Adat ritual procedure is archived in durable ritual objects. For example, the flat and standing altar stones in and of themselves suggest some substantive aspects of Adat ritual procedure (such as the placement of sacrifices on the flat stone).
Mastery of Ritual Language and Procedure

described in the previous chapters. The flexibility of ritual language and ritual procedure tempers the rigidity of Adat’s canonical core and allows individuals with imperfect knowledge to enter into ritual and develop their skills through participatory performance. In this way, ritual language couplets that are deemed necessary (known as such from previous performances) are relatively few, can be repeated at will during performance, and can be complemented by elaborations and innovations. Further, the ins and outs of difficult ritual procedure can be discussed and debated during ritual in a cooperative and creative manner. Thus, while a foundational knowledge of ritual language and procedure is learnt through mostly passive participation (i.e., seeing, hearing, and enacting minor roles), the ritual mastery of experts is developed through active participation in key roles.

Throughout this chapter I have argued that individuals learn their expertise at ritual language and procedure through the operation of flexibility, whereas in the previous chapters I wrote of the education of Adat in terms of the rigidity of deutero-learning. I have yet to speak of deutero-learning in this chapter because the specific couplets of ritual language and the specific order of ritual procedure are symbolic propositions, and deutero-learning is inherently non-propositional. The spoken chants and discussions of ritual procedures are conscious expressions of propositions that are retrieved from memories, synthesized from other statements, or created individually. Deutero-learning becomes important when these conscious flexibilities are selected, stabilized, and repeated in future contexts. That is, deutero-learning occurs if the flexibilities that have aided in the education of ritual experts become part of the rigid canonical couplets and procedures that inform experts’ regular ritual activity (which then frees up cognitive ‘space’ for new elaborations, innovations, and discussions).

Deutero-learning the ‘how’ (rather than the cosmological content) of Adat’s canonical ritual language and procedure is a process of ‘learning to learn’ about the contexts in which this language and procedure is necessary, appropriate, or beneficial. This is a process of ritualization (see also Chapter 4). Bell (1992) has developed the idea of ritualization with a distinctive political orientation that emphasizes the strategic deployment of ritual in social life. She argues that peoples’ mastery of ritual involves

…an internalisation of schemes with which they are capable of reinterpreting reality in such a way as to afford perceptions and experiences of a redemptive hegemonic order (ibid.: 141).18

For Bell (ibid.: 181), ritual is not an instrument of control, but ‘constitutes a particular

18 Bell’s concepts of ‘the internalization of schemes’ and ‘hegemonic orders’ are similar to my definitions of deutero-learning and religious canon.
dynamic of social empowerment” of participants. In terms of the ecology of mind, it is evident that ritual performance manifests a particular canonical ideology that is embodied by the participants and thereafter contributes to structuring contexts that reflect this ideology. The extent to which individuals can freely choose to strategically deploy their ritual mastery, and the extent to which individuals are only afforded by previous deutero-learning to reproduce a ‘hegemonic order’ is, I contend, a matter of the relationship between flexibility and rigidity. That is, the rigid deutero-learnt skills of knowing when and how to use ritual are only able to be used strategically when the flexibility of creativity and novelty is invoked.

Most individuals in the Adat community certainly become masters of determining when it is appropriate to have a ritual. Occasions that are widely known to require Adat rituals include births, before sexual unions, after deaths, at harvest times, before long journeys, and upon sickness. However, some individuals also become masters of determining when it is strategically beneficial for their own interests to have a ritual. I recall on one instance the widening of a walking track between houses was proposed at the cost of some trees belonging to neighboring houses. The proposer quickly conducted a ritual appropriate to the development before the work had been agreed to by all the interested parties. In effect, the ritual was used to pre-emptively sanctify the project so that those who initially disagreed would find it difficult to continue to do so. And of course, as I mentioned in Section 2, some individuals are masters at innovating within ritual to make strategic social commentaries.

This kind of calculated, and some might say exploitative, ritual mastery is produced through the combination of a deeply embodied understanding of how to perform ritual with a conscious and creatively novel (i.e., non-canonical) application of this embodied understanding. Thus, the economy of flexibility and rigidity continuously works in different spheres of Adat ritual. In this chapter I have focused on the importance of flexibility for the education of Adat experts in ritual language and procedure. Flexibility enables ‘novice’ experts to learn of Adat’s rigid canon during their performances. As flexibility helps experts become confident in enacting rigid canon, so to it produces the means by which the canon can change. And furthermore, as experts deutero-learn the canonical uses of ritual, so to can they creatively manipulate these uses.

19 By ‘strategic’ I refer to the creative and intentional use of ritual for the subject’s benefit. This use is above and beyond the standard canonical practice of ritual which is necessary and predictable.
Landscape, Creation and the Obligation to Sacrifice

1. Introduction

According to the theory of the ecology of mind, all people dwell in a landscape that is informed by their habitation and, in turn, have their identities, thoughts and behavior informed by the landscape in which they dwell (see also Basso 1988; Eves 1997: 175; Ingold 1992: 40). The value of this model for describing Austronesian societies is evidenced by three important volumes (Fox 1993, 1997; Reuter 2006).¹ Fox (1997: 2) writes that ethnographies of place involve a number of perspectives, such that

…‘landscape’ is variously represented as a topographic vista, as an intimate emplacement of local experiences, or as the ‘interanimation’ of sense, speech and memory.

Perhaps the most basic characteristic of eastern Indonesian landscapes is spatial orientation. Directions invariably have social meaning, often of a moral character and based on corporeal tropes, and are used to orient houses, graves, ritual altars and bodies and movement. Another aspect is topogeny, which I have already mentioned in Chapter 2 with regard to its expression in origin histories. Reuter (2006: 11) affirms that topogenies are the inscription of histories on both landscapes and minds by social practices – especially sacred activity – that together “generate a powerful sense of belonging and emplacement.” In a similar manner, material objects such as houses, clothes and ritual altars are also inscribed with social meaning. For example, houses are, in Fox’s (1993: 2) words, “culturally emblematic” and physically represent “abstract social ideals and a variety of culturally specific values.”

The prism of education refracts the many ways landscapes are invested with meaning

¹ These volumes are; Inside Austronesian Houses (Fox 1993), The Poetic Power of Place (Fox 1997) and Dividing the Land, Sharing the Earth (Reuter 2006).
Lessons of the Ancestors

and people are shaped by their environment. After all, when we speak of the ‘inscription of minds’ we are speaking of those minds learning. Be it particular spatial orientations, or houses, or the topogenetic paths of sacred sites strung out across mountains, valleys and seas, the landscape is always learned to be so by a community of individuals. For instance, among the Adat community it is widely recognized that to truly know Adat one must do a lot of walking. A walk through the villages, gardens and forests is a visit made to the religion’s primary actors and locales. In villages one encounters not only people but also the central clan wards (‘wisung wangar) and the sanctioned sacrificial animals. In the gardens and forests there is much of the plant and animal life spoken of in the ritual language, as well as the presence of and possibility to witness the ancestor spirits – both good and evil. Dotted throughout the ridges and valleys, in the villages and beyond, are countless ritual altars (wu’a mahé) consisting of small groupings of standing and flat stones on which tung piong sacrifices are made. Less permanent ritual signs and material such as protective charms (hoban) and warning or deterrent fetishes (uru tada) are also sometimes seen. Most importantly, at every step and with every breath, one visits upon the principal spiritual being, the ‘mother of the earth and land below, father of the sun and moon above’ (ina nian tana wawa, ama lero wulan reta). The entirety of the landscape, both natural and artificial, is permeated by the spirit of this deity. From this focal point the natural world is sanctified, such that Adat is something not merely known, but something lived in and with.

In this chapter I explore how a landscape is learnt as an Adat landscape. I concentrate on two elements; first, the intrinsic spiritual quality of the land, and, second, the division of the land into zones of habitation and usage. An adult member of the Adat community who walks through the landscape knows these different categories of land and the meanings they encapsulate. On approaching a particular part of the forest or a ritual altar he or she understands what it is and how it should be treated. Novices, on the other hand, are given no immediate propositional information from the environment. Unlike during a ritual when invocations and prayers provide propositional context for the movements and exchanges taking place, in the landscape there are no essential explicit instructions. A learner must be informed of these meanings and guided by advice and exemplars. Much of the learner’s skill at recognizing and behaving correctly in the landscape is developed

2 Fox (1987: 524) has described this spiritual quality of the land in relation to other eastern Indonesian cosmologies as an “immanence of life” in the land.

3 Even physical features that have symbolic meanings (such as altars, charms, and houses) must be learnt to be interpreted.
during long-term practice beginning in childhood and continuing until death. That is, much of the detailed knowledge about the locations and meanings of different land categories and sacred objects are taught in normal, non-ritual interactions.

However, I maintain that the values and the general classifications of the Adat landscape, and even some specific details about these classifications, are learnt primarily during ritual. Although children are likely, for example, to first hear of the deity from their parents in conversations and stories, they directly experience the truth of these informal lessons in ritual. In keeping with the focus of this ethnography I will only treat this ritual aspect of the education of the Adat landscape. I do not wish to obscure the learning practices of daily life, rather to reinforce my theory of ritual education which suggests these ‘ordinary’ learning practices are underwritten by the sanctified deutero-learning that occurs during ritual. Ritual foregrounds non-ritual education of the landscape by setting up embodied truths that subsequently inform the future construction of sanctified contexts.

We recall that deutero-learning is a developmental process by which “the subject has acquired a habit of looking for contexts and sequences of one type rather than another” (Bateson 2000: 166). The deutero-learning of Adat’s cosmological ideas during ritual contributes to the organization of the contexts perceived by individuals outside of ritual. This is how I describe the sanctification of the natural world as an Adat world. The truths embodied in the domain of ritual are carried over into the non-ritual domain, and the minds of the Adat community continuously perceive and act in a sacred, Adat landscape.

This is not say that the Adat landscape stands uncontested. The deutero-learning of cosmological ideas about the landscape that occurs in Adat rituals is contested by alternate ideas. These alternate ideas stem from various sources that are also relevant to the lives of the Adat community, such as Catholic canon and economic imperatives. In the conclusion to this chapter, and in the following chapter, I discuss some of the challenges faced by the Adat worldview as individuals experience contexts in which non-Adat cosmologies and epistemologies are embodied.

Throughout this chapter I am mindful that Adat is a small-scale indigenous religion and its cosmology is closely related to the local environment. Most Adat practices must make use of materials or be located in areas that are highly specific. Such is the identification with place that people traveling afar often take with them local water, rocks and earth as protective charms. These objects are a link to one’s home – one’s nian litin gi’it tana ler mangan. Thus, this chapter’s discussion of Adat landscape is also about Adat identity. When people learn the Adat landscape they learn not only where they are in terms of the
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local area, but also of their position in the wider social and physical universe. The ‘mind’
that the Adat community embodies in ritual is an identity that places each individual in
relationship of obligation with their world. It is an identity that incorporates people into a
cycle of life, death and sacrifice in which the deity is the universe and the people its
children.

2. The Deity and Universe

The Adat community invoke their deity during tung piong rituals and from this learn that
the deity is the natural world and that they are indebted to the deity for their livelihood and
well-being. In Chapter 4 I wrote that the invocations of the deity are Adat Ultimate Sacred
Postulates. The invocations are unquestionable ritual language statements that name and
describe the deity and ask it to attend to the ritual and hear the pleas (neni plawi) of the
participants. I argued that the performance of these statements confers truth upon (i.e., it
sanctifies) the more specific canonical propositions that accompany birth and childhood
rituals. I contend in this section that the ritual invocations of the deity also sanctify the
Adat landscape, and they do this by enacting the relationship of obligation between
humans and deity.

Adat rituals substantiate a relational structure between human and spiritual domains
based on sacrifice. However, rituals lack a direct narrative that explains the origin and
meaning of the deity. The Adat origin myths are not included in formal ritual activity,
rather they are told ‘around’ rites during lulls in performance, or are otherwise expressed
in ordinary contexts. Although knowledge of Adat cosmogonies is still widespread
amongst adults, they are nowadays infrequently narrated and more emphasis is given to
the genesis myths taught by Catholicism. There is, in fact, a high degree of variability in
the Adat version of creation, and during fieldwork I was able to discern two very different
narratives. These two narratives, however, share the logic of sacrifice that is enacted in
ritual. I argue, therefore, that Adat ritual activity sanctifies a structure of relationship, and
the narratives that explicate this structure are variable. Given the influence of the Church,
Adat cosmogonies are clothed distinctively in Christian symbolism, but they also contain

4 The lack of explicit creation mythology in Adat ritual is in contrast to Tana ‘Ai, where the
narration of origin myths is part of the gren mahe rites.
5 Similar to Traube’s (1986: 31) experience among the Mambai, I found that often only fragments
of origin myths are told at any one time, and piecing them together can imply an artificial
completeness of the texts.
6 However, due to the lack of records it is difficult, if not impossible, to reconstruct these origin
myths to the time before Catholic influence.
themes of separation and obligation, and the tropes of ‘trunk’ and ‘tip’, that are immediately recognizable as bearing similarity with other eastern Indonesian origin myths (e.g., Forth 1998: 11; McWilliam 2002: 290).

One Adat cosmogony begins in the primordial past with a baby girl called Maria Mariadam who sits under a banyan tree (bao) atop a small rock surrounded by an endless sea. She grows and one day meets a man named Ae Roa and they travel together over the sea. She marries Ae Roa and has four children named Riang and Bangur and Adang and Ewang. Eventually they seek a permanent place to live and return to the original rock. There, Maria Mariadam strikes the water with her fist and land rises, and the rock at the centre of the new landmass becomes known as the ‘forest’s tail’ (‘ai i’ur). At this time she disappears into the earth and becomes the female element of the deity, ina nian tana wawa (the mother of the earth and land below), and Ae Roa ascends upwards and becomes the male element, ama lero wulan reta (father of the sun and moon above). Through this transformation the earth is separated from the heavens, and day, night and seasonal variations are introduced. The four children descend to live on the earth, but when they work the land to find food and build shelter it causes ina nian tana wawa to suffer. In order to ease her pain the children offer: ‘mother, rest quietly, if you need to also eat, then eat our daughters, mothers and our elders’ (ina ‘au du’e bile bile, ‘au raik ganu ga’i goa, ia te nurak di goa, du’an di goa, daha di goa). The mother of the earth and land agrees. She decrees that humankind thereafter must die and return to her (nian beta mate, tana heron potat). In ritual language it is said:

\[
\begin{align*}
nian tana beta: & \quad \text{earth and land says:} \\
bé Riang bé Bangur & \quad \text{hey Riang hey Bangur} \\
hoka hokot goa sai & \quad \text{work the land and you may eat} \\
goa dena na’in ta’in & \quad \text{eat and fill your stomach} \\
bé Adang bé Ewang & \quad \text{hey Adang hey Ewang} \\
ploi sai pu’an beta & \quad \text{cut the trunk and slice the stem} \\
dena minu blatan kokon & \quad \text{make fluid to cool your throat} \\
ata bi’an beta: & \quad \text{humans say:} \\
a’u hoka hokot geruk ‘oa & \quad \text{I work the land then eat} \\
‘oa tena na’in ta’in & \quad \text{food that fills my stomach}
\end{align*}
\]

7 Riang (male) and Bangur (female) are twins and Adang (male) and Ewang (female) are also twins. Note that in Tana ‘Ai Lewis has reported that the origin mythology, Ngeng Ngerang Tota Nian Paga Tana (the History of the Search for Land and Finding of Earth), recounts that the first humans were similarly named as Iang and Bangu, Adang and Ewang (Lewis 1988: 51).
At this point the relationship between the deity and her children (i.e., humankind) becomes one of obligation, and mortality is the ultimate sacrifice made by humans to assuage the suffering of their mother.⁸ The myth indicates that the deity is the natural world and all people, from infants to the elderly, must eventually exchange their lives for the privilege

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⁸ It is interesting to note that in all versions of the Adat cosmogony the father aspect of the deity (ama lero wulan reta) remains a distant figure, and the mother aspect receives all the personal, physical and emotional attention of her children.
of living upon and within the mother of the earth and land below and father of the sun and moon above.

During a person’s life other, less absolute, sacrifices are continually made to reciprocate the gifts of the deity. The nature of these sacrificial obligations are more clearly expressed in another Adat myth of origin. This version unfolds over a period of seven days and is concerned with both the emergence of different classes of creatures from a primal and original unity and the fall from grace of humanity that compels sacrifice. According to this cosmogony, in the beginning the land and sky were so close as to be almost one and there was no life in the universe except for the deity. As the earth and heavens separated the two elements of the gendered deity became the two elements of the natural world. From congress of the heat of the sun in the sky and the cold of the land homogeneous creatures were born of a saliva-like fluid. On the days that followed the deity offered choices to the creatures, by which they were separated into humans and animals, and the humans were then separated into those who are wise and good (bisa ngasiang) and those who are evil. On the fourth day the humans were told that they could use and eat anything on the earth except for the tree at the centre of the garden (‘ai bong kiok tali molo belan). The good humans, however, were tricked by the evil group into eating from this tree. The good were told that by eating from the tree they would become more knowledgeable than the deity (raik miu gea miu bisa toi le’u nimu). The following day the deity upbraids humanity, saying:

\begin{verbatim}
miu gea ba’a ‘ai bon kiok you have eaten from the tree that calls loudly 
odi pu’at lahin and so the trunk is injured 
miu minu ba’a tali molo belan you have drunk from the vines that are true 
odi ubut blain and so the tips are wilted
\end{verbatim}

Therefore, from this time on if humans wish to live well they must work hard in the gardens and gather the palm juice (gu’a uma dena ihin karé tua dena dolo). They must also divide into opposite sexes and give birth to generations and populate the earth (bua buri sai ganu wetan, ga’e teto sai ganu atong). People must also offer regular sacrifices to the deity. In the ritual language it is said humans must:

\begin{verbatim}
9 The name of the ritual altar ‘ai tali is derived from the sentence ‘ai bong kiok tali molo belan.
\end{verbatim}
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The sacrificial offerings are made in all rituals as either tung piong and piong tewok rites (see Chapter 4). The completion of sacrifices earns people their rights and freedom to work and live upon the land. It is said that sacrifices:

\[
\text{dena song wi’in wawa widen piren} \quad \text{frees yourself down at your revered heels}
\]
\[
\text{mole lapan wi’in reta boir hotik} \quad \text{and loosens yourself up at your blessed neck}
\]

Some versions of the myth then end with the establishment by the deity of the leadership roles \(\text{du’a litin pitu, mo’an ler walu}\) of the Adat community (see Chapter 2).

The position of ancestor spirits \(\text{nitu noan}\) in the relationship between humans and deity requires some explanation. Whereas the deity is conceived of as the whole landscape, the \text{nitu noan} only inhabit and have influence over particular parts of the landscape, including most importantly the gardens. In the second Adat cosmogony Nogo and Suban, who represent the totality of the ancestor spirits, are described in terms of their responsibility for the ‘\(\text{ai tali}\) (trees and vines). The foremost garden of each clan on a domain \(\text{tana}\) has a wild (i.e., unworked) ‘\(\text{ai tali}\) area with a ritual altar at its centre. From this wild centre the entire garden is protected and cared for under the auspices of the ancestor spirits.\(^\text{11}\) For this reason rituals at the ‘\(\text{ai tali}\) call to the ancestors, but rather than using the names Nogo and Suban, as the myth does, the ancestors are invoked in these rituals as:

\[
\text{ina du’a ei mula pu’an} \quad \text{ancestor mothers of the planted trees}
\]
\[
\text{ama mo’an ei ongen unen} \quad \text{ancestor fathers of the fertile gardens}
\]

The exact nature of the relationship between deity and ancestor spirits is difficult to ascertain. However, if we regard, as the Adat community do, the movement of an

\(^{10}\) Du’a Nogo and Mo’an Suban are some of the earliest ancestors shared by all people. I have yet to determine their relationship with the first humans (Riang, Bangur, Adang and Ewang) in the mythic narratives.

\(^{11}\) The ‘\(\text{ai tali}\) is ‘wild’ but it is also social because it is a place where rituals are performed. The classifications of ‘land not for human use’ that I discuss below are also wild, but they too are social spaces where spiritual beings (who are part of the wider social network) congregate. No place is exclusively wild or domestic, nor exclusively non-social or social (\textit{cf} Strathern 1980).
individual’s spirit (maen) through life and death as a movement towards the source, then ancestors are certainly in closer contact with the deity than are humans (see Chapter 6).

I have presented these two myths in a very truncated form, and this does not represent the great variety of narrative detail that different people use during their recitations. The complexity of the myths themselves, and the fact that two very different narratives are in common use by the Adat community – and not to forget the equally valued Catholic mythology – indicates the numerous lines of analysis that can be taken. At this time, however, I wish only to make an observation regarding the similarities between these myths in relation to the structure of the ritual system.

Most importantly, both myths tell of a segmentation of an original unity (cf. Barnes 1974: 28; Forth 1998: 217; Lewis 1988a: 45; McKinnon 1991: 16) and a relationship of obligation that provides the rationale for sacrificial ritual (cf. Traube 1986: 13). With regard to segmentation (or separation), Lewis (1988a: 266; 1988b passim) notes that for the people of Tana ‘Ai both the telling of origin myths and doing of sacrificial rituals are said to ‘reconstruct the source’ (waké pu’an). This is equally so for the Adat community. The original unity of all things is broken by the separation of the earth from the sky, the deity from humans, humans from animals, males from females, and good from bad. The consequence of separation and individuality is mutual obligation. The deity provides the materials necessary for human life, and in return humans provide the deity with sacrificial offerings. The rituals of sacrifice fulfill obligations because with these rituals the source is reconstructed and the primevally separated entities are reconnected (see Figure 26, overleaf). During the ‘heat’ of ritual, humans, ancestors, the deity, and even the sacrificed animals, are joined together in a dense field of communication not otherwise experienced in normal life. Seen in this way, Adat rituals not only benefit the human actors (for whom the ritual settles cosmological debts, sanctions social transformations such as marriage, and generally ensures good harvests, health and fortune) but are also made for the benefit of the deity and ancestors. Indeed, like children returning home to their parents, reconstructing the source momentarily gives back to the deity something dear and missed.

The Adat origin myths express the circular relationship between source, separation,

12 For example, these myths open up interesting possibilities for studies of religious syncretism, a comparative study of the cosmogonies of eastern Indonesian societies, and a study of the relationship between general creation myths and the myths of origin of clans.

13 This the logic of this obligation is similar to the logic of the relationship between descent groups. The independence (i.e., separation) of exogamous clans requires that they engage in relationships of mutual dependence (see Chapter 5). Seen in this way, ritual sacrifice is an aspect of reciprocal exchange that incorporates the natural world into social exchange networks.
obligation, ritual and recombination that is enacted in ritual. The tung piong and piong tewok sacrificial rituals involve both ritual language invocations and physical actions that describe and perform the relationship of obligation that is imaginatively reproduced in myth. Numerous signs represent this structure during ritual, but two are fundamental. The sacrifices of animals and offerings of victuals are the manifest fulfillment of debts owed to the deity and ancestors. And the transition from the ‘cool’ of normal life to the ‘heat’ of close proximity to and uninterrupted communication with the spirit worlds is a transition from the separation of post-creation to the unification at the source of creation.

Figure 26: In the circular structure of Adat ritual obligation the primordial unity of all things at the ‘source’ is reconstituted in ritual.

Equally, the relationship of obligation enacted in ritual is underpinned by the mythological definition of the deity as the natural world and the categorization of humans as living upon, within and from the deity. These definitions are the heart of the structural relations that inform ritual. The sunshine, rain, wind, soil, plants and trees, streams, rocks and so forth are parts of the ina nian tana wawa ama lero wulan reta. Humans (and animals) are also a part of the deity, but they are separated during life and can only be returned intermittently through rituals, and, eventually, forever through death. However, nowadays – and perhaps always – the frequency of origin myth recitations pales in comparison to the ubiquity of ritual performance. The primacy of ritual, rather than the abstraction of myth, in the articulation of the relationship of obligation reinforces the idea that the Adat cosmology is not simply a classification of the world, but a mode of living within the world. With regard to the Buntao of the Sa’dan Toraja, Tsintjilonis (2004: 450) has described this type of animistic cosmology as a “register of embodiment”. Members of
the Adat community embody the relationship of obligation that they experience during ritual. For example, as the complementary relationship between wife-takers and wife-givers is embodied in reciprocal bridewealth exchanges (see Chapter 5), so is the correct relationship between humanity and the deity, and by extension the landscape, embodied in sacrificial rituals. Ritual reconnects people to the cosmological source, but it is also a educational source from which the Adat register of embodiment is born of the deutero-learning of participants (see Section 3).

At its most literal the deity is defined by the earth (*nian*), land (*tana*), sun (*lero*), and moon (*wulan*), but at their most inclusive these four concepts encapsulate the entirety of the universe’s contents. In the following section I explore those parts of the universe with which the Adat community closely live. While people are affected by the classificatory male sun and moon, they remain distant objects. The heavens are not classified further than what they are in the ritual language invocations. The female earth and land, on the other hand, are proximate, intimate, they are the lived landscape, and they are divided further.

3. The Sanctified Landscape

The division of the land was undertaken by the earliest ancestors who recognized that certain areas of land have qualities that if lived on or cultivated are harmful to humans and the deity. The partitions of the land are therefore broadly grouped into two classifications, each of which is constituted by six unique categories.\(^\text{14}\) One lot is forbidden to human habitation and cultivation, and in the other lot these activities are permitted.\(^\text{15}\) Unlike the general statements pertaining to the deity and the universe, the specific cosmological propositions about the twelve divisions of the Adat landscape are not directly mentioned in the invocations used in the ubiquitous *tung piong* and *piong tewok* sacrificial rituals. And yet, the Adat community do regard these propositions, and the areas of land to which they refer, as sacred. Like the canonical propositions about childhood development discussed in

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\(^{14}\) It is important to note that several differences are apparent between my description of the Adat landscape and that described by Metzner (1982: 113-117), whose work is the only published source on this matter. Metzner’s research was focused in far greater detail than mine on the region’s agricultural practices and he obtained the majority of his data from an area localized around the village of Hewotklo’ang, which is a number of kilometers to the west of my field site. I will not treat the differences between our findings in this thesis, but suggest that the different research foci and locations account for the dissimilarities.

\(^{15}\) The two broad divisions and twelve specific divisions of land do not constitute single discrete areas. Instead, these divisions are constituted by numerous small interspersed plots of land. Thus, gardens are located between villages, and interspersed among the gardens are the areas forbidden to human use, such as forests of ancestor spirits.
Chapter 4, the landscape divisions are sanctified through their involvement in particular forms of ritual. For instance, in marriages and in rites required for the atonement of transgressions of Adat law, the symbolic divisions of the landscape are sanctified by the invariant and unquestionable ritual context. Through the recursion of the ecology of mind, these truths of context also become truths of *deutero-learning*. Such deutero-learning is an embodied ‘pattern for perception’ that is carried forth into non-ritual situations.

Examining the landscape in this way brings to light certain issues surrounding education and Rappaport’s theory of sanctification that require further definition. In particular, the relationship between the generality ascribed to sanctity and the specificity ascribed to the non-sacred must be clarified. I argue that while the sanctity of a context is a function of the generality of Ultimate Sacred Postulates (when connected with the self-referential activity of ritual), the specificity of certain ritual activities contributes also to the sanctification of contexts. For example, the location in which rituals occur ascribes sanctity to that specific location.

The land forbidden to human habitation and cultivation is closest to the spiritual power of the deity. These areas express most potently the land’s ‘inside power’ (uhek manar), which is also manifested in the *naga sawaria* (serpent/reticulated python) that roam these areas. These areas include the highest mountain peaks, called the ‘earth where the clouds suspend, land where the mist gathers’ (nian klu putun tana kowa dapar), and the watersheds and springs called the ‘earth at the rain’s source, land at the water’s eye’ (nian uran pu’an tana wair matan) that run down the steep slopes and into streams that service the villages. Located at certain points along these watercourses, where the trees are unusually tall and rocks large, are areas called ‘rocks that cover the valleys, trees that shade the hills’ (watu ‘wau napun ‘ai gon wolon). Although these places are comfortable resting places for people, evil spirits (du’a helang and ata badang to’e robong) also gather here, and so people stop only momentarily and will often speak prayers asking for protection as they pass through. Places where there are precipitous creek banks, rocky cliffs or particularly steep valleys are called ‘earth of the dangerous cliffs, land of the steep crags’ (nian répin go’it tana raen ra’at). Here cultivation is forbidden to avoid erosion (lewat). The residences of the ancestor spirits are also included among the forbidden areas. These pockets of untouched forest adjoin gardens and streams and are called ‘earth of the ancestors’ village, land of the spirits’ hamlet’ (nian nitu natar tana noan klo’ang) (see Chapter 6). Finally, there is a broad category of land called ‘earth not worked, land not

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16 See Chapters 3 and 6 for a description of the *uhek manar* quality in humans.
sliced’ (nian opi dun, tana karé taden). These areas cover places where ‘ai tali ritual altars are located, or where there are spring waters close to villages, or other areas where evil or unfortunate spirits gather.

The forbidden divisions of the Adat landscape are both the source of life and the playground of the mischievous and evil. These locales incorporate the water springs and streams that sustain life, the habitations of the ancestor spirits who help and guide their living descendants, and the ‘ai tali ritual altar from which such help and guidance is requested. And yet these locales also incorporate places where much harm can be done, both physical and spiritual. Some of these places, such as the mountain tops and cliff faces, are rarely, if ever, visited by the human population. Other places, such as spring waters and ‘ai tali ritual altars, are sites of frequent human activity. This human activity, however, is very restricted, and in no circumstances should result in harm to the deity. Trees must not be felled or burned, nor vines cut or soil tilled. Reverence and caution is expected of all people who enter these areas. In many ways entering these locations is like entering a ritual environment, it is a movement from the ‘cool’ of normal life to the ‘heat’ of close proximity to the spirits and deity (see Chapter 6).

The rest of the landscape is classified for the use of humans. At the coast there are areas called ‘earth of the sharp dibble, land to dry the net’ (nian te’en puket tana pak rabang). This land is located on the sand of beaches and is collectively owned and used as a place for the activities of fishers. Further inland is the ‘earth to distill salt, land to cook lime’ (nian tu hini tana rope apur) and adjoining rivers that meet the sea are the ‘delta of tasty pork, river of delicious fish’ (nuba wura wawi nanga laran i’an). This area was traditionally the place where farmers, fishers and makers of salt and lime would meet to trade. Areas that are regularly used by the people of the Adat community who live in the mountainous central regions include the ‘earth of the streaming liquid, land of the rolling clod’ (nian siot linok tana ogor wokor). The colorful language used to describe this land befits its purpose. It is ideally a thickly forested locale used by the village as a toilet and rubbish tip. The ‘earth of worked fields, land of lined cut trees’ (nian opi roin tana ro’a lorak) is farming land used for gardens (uma) that are nowadays planted primarily with cocoa, cloves, vanilla, and coconuts. Finally, there is the ‘earth on which to rest strongly, land on which to lean surely’ (nian litin gi’it, tana ler mangan) where villages are located and people make their homes on ‘wisung wangar wards (see Chapter 2).

I can only presume that all twelve landscape categories are implicated in ritual. Although my present data on Adat rituals does not contain references to all the
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classifications, I am aware (and have been suggestively told by my informants) that there are many rituals I have yet to see and understand. For example, I cannot write in detail of the rituals held at the domain altars called the mahé uran dara, where people ask for the deity and ancestors assistance in the regulation of the weather to ensure stable agricultural cycles. Yet, I can tentatively expect, based on the purpose of the ritual, that the area classified as the ‘earth at the rain’s source, land at the water’s eye’ is somehow involved in this ritual. I can, however, write with confidence about a number of other rituals that incorporate landscape classifications into their content. For instance, in Chapter 6 I described in depth the mortuary ritual lodo hu'er which is underwritten by the existence of the ‘earth of the ancestors’ village, land of the spirits’ hamlet’. Throughout the series of lodo hu'er rites the sanctity of spirit villages is reinforced in ritual language and activity. In this section, however, I will discuss both the rituals enacted for the punishment of transgressions against areas forbidden to human use, and the ritual enacted when a bride enters her husband’s house for the first time after marriage.

People who harm any of the areas forbidden to human use, from the ‘earth where the clouds suspend, land where the mist gathers’ to the ‘earth not worked, land not sliced’ must repent through various rituals and payments which are ‘demanded until the saliva dries, insisted upon until the tongue is parched’ (rusik ilur meti ela man marak) by the deity. If trees are felled or vines and grasses cut the culprit is subject to the reprimand called ‘fell, cut, slice and chop’ (bungun puka karé haru)17 and must enact a ritual called ‘connect the vines, transfer the trees’ (sube tali nunga ‘ai). If, on the other hand, a forbidden area is set ablaze the culprit is subject to the reprimand ‘light the stumps, throw the embers’ (sedu retun nolar nabur) and must carry out the ritual ‘afraid of the earth, cool the land’ (blau nian blatan tana). These rituals begin, as all rituals do, with a piong tewok rite at the household altar and proceed from there outside to the site of the offense.

In both cases the land is restored to its natural state by the ritual planting of a tree. Moreover, if any plant life or wood was taken from the site – to use for building material for example – this must also be returned. At the site of the offense the rituals proceed like any other tung piong rite with the invocation of the deity and ancestor spirits, offerings of areca, betel, tobacco and rice, and with the sacrifice of a pig. Following the invocation the ritual leader incants variations18 on the following text that relates specifically to

17 This sentence refers to various cutting styles. Bungun means to fell a tree, puka means to cut with a slanting angle, karé means to slice, and haru means to chop in a straight up and down motion.
18 Again, there are variations according to who is conducting the ritual. The ritual language presented here is a version I have produced in accord to several versions from various Adat
transgressions and punishments:

ra’ik gopi roin ro’a lorak  
if trees are felled and the forest cleared

te ‘la’ir nian nitu natar  
then be aware of the spirit dwellings

‘lala tana wair matan  
and observe the spring waters

lopa bungun puka kare haru  
don’t cut and chop indiscriminately

sedu retun nolar nabur  
or ignite stumps and throw embers

odi nian bitak ganu pigang  
otherwise the earth will crack like a plate

tana lalang ganu beru  
the land will break as though struck

te blau–blau ganu mate  
so be afraid as though of death

blau nian rudu jung  
afraid the earth demands your penitence

blau tana tura golot  
afraid the land insists on your contrition

di pla-pla galek-galek  
so examine your deepest motivations

rusik da’a ilur metin  
demanded until your saliva dries

ela sape man marak  
insisted until your tongue parched

According to Adat law the culprit is only free from danger if these rituals are carried out. If the rituals are not undertaken it is expected that the offender and his or her family will be subject to misfortunes such as unidentifiable and incurable illnesses. Like all rituals, these supplicatory rituals are sanctified contexts in which participants, through their self-referential performance, experience the truth of their wrongdoing and, importantly, the truth of the classifications of land against which they transgressed.

A further example of the sanctification of the Adat landscape divisions is the inclusion of the area designated as ‘earth on which to rest strongly, land on which to lean surely’ (nian litin gi’it, tana ler mangan) in marriage ritual. In its most restricted sense this designation refers to the land on which villages are located, covering the clan quarters (‘wisung wangar), the central clan altars (wua du’a mahe mo’an), and houses (lepo woga). In a wider sense this designation connotes a homeland. Thus, clan histories always include the following couplet when the first ancestors eventually arrive and settle in a domain village (natar tana):

nian ami litin gi’it  
the earth upon which we rest with strength

tana ami ler mangan  
the land upon which we lean with surety

In the ritual language context the terms gi’it and mangan imply a strong and sure connection between the people and their land. In this way, the areas called nian litin gi’it experts which contain minor stylistic variations. During fieldwork I did not have the opportunity to witness firsthand any supplicatory rituals.
tana ler mangan are not merely designated places for living, but are places where the connection between humans and the deity is most natural, or fitting. Although ritual brings people closer to the deity in terms of communicative efficacy, ritual is not an enduring state of affairs and can only be borne momentarily. Litin gi’it ler mangan is the ‘belonging-ness’ of individuals to the land on which they live their daily lives, and where they are properly and safely positioned in the cosmos.

Numerous rituals make reference to the concept of litin gi’it ler mangan, but in marriage it is central. As the bride moves between clans she also moves between places of litin gi’it ‘ler mangan’. For example, after the wawi wotik stage of a wain plan marriage, during which the bride and groom take their oath of marriage, the wedding party of the wife-takers (me pu) return home and receive the bride into their clan house for the first time. The husband’s family gather at the front of the house and the clan leader speaks the following words:

ami ina dulak bua we are the mothers who give birth
ami ama loran ga’e we are the fathers who cradle
béle ‘au léder ‘au invite you and bring you close
4 mai litin gi’it lepo unen come rest with strength inside this house
5 ler mangan woga wutun lean surely at the edges of this home
mai hu’u beli ami wungun come and bear us a descent group
kobor beli ami kuat carry to us a clan
mai moni beli ami ‘wisung come sweep and give us a dwelling place
orok beli ami wangar clear and give us a residence
‘wisung naha poa woér the dwelling place must shine clearly
wangar naha ‘élon meluk the residence must be beautifully clean

In this passage the ‘belonging-ness’ (litin gi’it ler mangan) of the bride is not configured in general terms of nian tana, but in the more specific terms of the lepo woga (house) and ‘wisung wangar (clan ward) into which she moves (lines 4 & 5). The physical space in which clans reside, houses are built, and people go about their domestic business is represented in this ritual language passage in terms of the relationship between men, women and the children that consolidate the clan’s future. An individual’s belonging to the earth and land, and to his or her house and village ward, is equated to an individual’s belonging to their own family.

19 That is, with regard to complementary filiation the bride does not cut ties with her natal descent group. Thus, she also remains connected with her original nian litin gi’it tana ler mangan.
These examples emphasize the generality of the landscape classifications sanctified in ritual. Ritual establishes the ‘truth’ of the classifications but does not flesh out detail in propositional form. The rituals relating to the punishments for the transgression of forbidden land validate the existence of forbidden land. The very performance of the ritual is a self-referential message that confirms the participants’ acceptance that this landscape classification is true and relevant. The ritual symbolism and canonical propositions refer only to the quality of land so classified, they make no specific statements about the location of these places. Equally, the marriage rituals validate the existence of land suitable for habitation. The performance of the ritual actions and exchanges are indexed to the transformation of the bride from one clan to another (see Chapter 5), and this transformation is, as we have seen above, also indexed to the bride’s movement between the physical spaces in which clans live and propagate. However, again the ritual language speaks only in general terms about the quality of this land. In this case the ‘earth on which to rest strongly, land on which to lean surely’ is defined metaphorically in relation to descent groups.

The sanctification of these landscape classifications in ritual indeed requires that a high degree of generality is maintained. Rappaport describes a hierarchy of sanctification in which Ultimate Sacred Postulates rank as the most highly sanctified, cosmological axioms are less so, and the utilitarian rules, directives and reports of states of affairs are least so. In fact, he lists 14 types of religious expressions that can be sanctified to varying degrees, including myths, taxonomies, taboos, commissives, factive acts and utterances, and divinations (ibid.: 320). With regard to the ordering of a hierarchy he writes:

The degree of sanctity accorded to liturgically ordered expressions should be directly correlated with the longevity, generality, efficacy, authority and immutability of that which they represent, and inversely correlated with their social and material specificity, concreteness and the instrumentality of their significata (ibid.: 314, original emphasis).

In terms of the Adat landscape, the unity of the deity and the universe is highly sanctified because the classification is made as an Ultimate Sacred Postulate during invocations in sacrificial rituals. The expression of this unity in cosmogonic myths, which are related in non-ritual settings and involve greater specificity, is less sanctified, and this is reflected in the diversity of its interpretations.

The designations of the twelve areas of land usage are both sanctified cosmological axioms and less sanctified directive principles. That is, the designations are statements that both describe the Adat world and advise proper behaviour. They both represent the ancient
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wisdom of the earliest ancestors and have specific material referents which are instrumental in determining action. For example, the instrumentality of the divisions is manifested in directives that farming, or building houses, or felling trees, or disposing of rubbish is only allowed in certain areas. Landscape classifications, then, are sanctified to varying degrees during different types of activity. In ritual, such as those described above, classifications are quite general and highly sanctified. Outside of ritual, such as when people decide to walk around, rather than through, a particular forbidden area, the classifications become more specific and less sanctified.

However, I contend that Rappaport’s model of a hierarchy of sanctification needs to be revised to recognize the sanctity of specific actions. It is evident that some specific knowledge about the Adat landscape is highly sanctified. Or to put it another way, some specific knowledge about the Adat landscape is learnt by participants from the highly sanctified ritual environment. For example, marriage rituals require that the bride physically journeys from her natal house to the house of the bridegroom. More than likely she has already set foot in her new home, but certainly not in the context in which her belonging (litin gi’it ler mangan) to the clan land of her husband is sanctified by ritual. Furthermore, during the supplicatory rituals for transgressions against forbidden land, trees are planted on the land that was harmed, and any wood cut and taken from the scene of the crime must be returned. If the culprit did not know that this land was forbidden before the transgression, he or she certainly knows it after the ritual has taken place. And those who accompany the ritual party, including children, gain firsthand experience of the whereabouts of this tract of land. Importantly, participants of these rituals also embody the correct behaviour required on this land through their ritually structured performances. For instance, supplicatory rituals demand humility and contrition from the participants, and marriages, as we saw in Chapter 5, demand that the two families and the husband and wife relate with empathy and reciprocity. Thus, ritual practice, in contrast to the general and metaphoric ritual language statements, imparts a degree of specific knowledge about the location of land divisions and the type of behaviour expected on them.

During ritual the sanctification of the landscape in symbolic representations also coincides with a practical engagement with that very landscape. The generality of ritual symbolism joins with the specificity of ritual activity, and the sanctified landscape is at once known both abstractly and practically. In the ritual language propositions communicated by supplicatory rituals the participants learn messages such as ‘there are tracts of land where ancestor spirits dwell’ and ‘do not cut trees on such land’. In the
practice of these rituals the participants learn messages such as ‘this is the land where ancestor spirits dwell’ and ‘do not cut trees on this particular tract of land’. Outside of rituals youths will hear similar messages from their elders, but these messages will not be as potently sanctified as they are by the self-referential ‘truths of acceptance’ entailed by the ritual form.

In these moments of ritual, when the abstract and the practical combine and are sanctified simultaneously, a powerful educational environment is produced. Rappaport (ibid.: 318) notes that sanctity “escapes” ritual and pervades everyday life. An Ultimate Sacred Postulate or cosmological axiom accepted in ritual retains its veracity in non-ritual occasions. Members of the Adat community still identify the universe as ina nian tana wawa, ama lero wulan reta even when they are not directly invoking this truth during rituals. The land designated for the ‘ancestor village, spirit hamlet’ remains as such even when it is not immediately being sanctified in the lodo hu'er or rituals of atonement. I suggest this is so because the sanctified ritual contexts provide the perceptual material for sanctified deutero-learning, which then contribute to individuals’ construction of future contexts. The concept of sanctified deutero-learning resolves the problematic relationship between general and specific sanctity in Rappaport’s hierarchy of sanctification outlined above.

In summary, the Adat landscape exists in the ecology of mind of the Adat community. Through their participation in rituals such as those discussed in this chapter individuals embody the cosmology that defines the universe as a deity and the land as comprising of 12 divisions. For instance, these individuals deutero-learn to perceive particular tracts of forest as not just collections of trees and scrub suitable for burning and felling, but as areas in which ancestor spirits dwell. Such deeply embodied deutero-learning also organizes individuals broadest perceptions of the universe. All of the earth and land, and the sun and moon, wherever the Adat community member stands on this world, is the deity.

4. Conclusion

In this chapter I have described the Adat landscape and the way it is sanctified through rituals that address both its general and specific classifications. This is an important aspect of the education of Adat because it emphasizes that during the sanctified ritual context people can learn of the general cosmological principles that underpin the Adat landscape and of the particular locations and modes of behaviour appropriate for each division. Experiences of sanctified contexts are significant for education because these contexts are
a fountainhead of deutero-learning from which future perceptions of the landscape flow. Walking through the Adat landscape and it enjoying its gifts and abiding by its restrictions then becomes an act of devotion. Knowing the landscape is knowing the deity, and the social and spiritual rewards for this knowledge is significant.

I have purposefully described a very pure articulation of the education of the Adat landscape in order to define the fundamental processes of embodiment (in context and deutero-learning) according to the theory of the ecology of mind. However, the reality experienced by the Adat community is not dislocated from other cosmologies, and the Adat landscape is not the only symbolic landscape in which the Adat community live. As Dwyer (1996: 157) states, “in the domain of human affairs, culture should be taken as prior, nature as emergent.” Definitions of the physical landscape emerge from the cosmologies that speak about this landscape, be they modern scientific, religious, or political measures. In other words, several ‘natures’ can overlap one another on the same landscape. For the people living in my area of fieldwork the landscape is known in compound ways. It is known (and experienced) as a Roman Catholic landscape, created by God and divided into diocese and parishes. It is known as a political landscape, created by Jakarta and divided into kecamatan, desa and dusun. The landscape is also agricultural, a place in which the practicalities of planting cash crops and yielding good harvests are paramount. And it is for me, and possibly came to be for some of my informants, a field of anthropological study.

The validity and relevance of each of the various landscape classifications is very much a function of their relative sanctity. Non-Adat religious and secular ideologies that are accorded truth with reference to qualities such as efficacy, legitimacy and authority are contributing to the de-sanctification of the Adat landscape. For example, with the advent of new technologies and services, some land, such as the ‘earth of the streaming liquid, land of the rolling clod’ (*nian siot linok tana ogor wokor*), is no longer needed for its intended Adat purpose. Moreover, under the pressure of population increases and the demands of obtaining a sustainable income some forbidden areas such as the ‘earth not worked, land not sliced’ have been cleared for housing and gardens.

The sociological measures of the extent, or stability, of the deutero-learning of ideas are the redundancy and indexicality of the ideational (and performative) context experienced by subjects, the subjects’ future patterns of behavior subsequent to this experience, and the subjects’ experiences of other redundant and indexical contexts that challenge the ideas of the initial context. With ritual Adat has a powerfully redundant and
indexical context for reproducing its sanctified deutero-learning in participants. The continued importance of these rituals in the life of the Adat community is a testament to their educative force. However, Adat coexists with several other cosmologies which are not only very different from Adat, but also produce contexts that are equally ‘sanctified’. One such cosmology and context is that of Indonesian schools, and in the next chapter I explore the encounter between these schools and Adat.
Sacred Classrooms

1. Introduction

In this chapter I will chart the education of Adat in Indonesian schools through the Local Content Curriculum (BI: Kurikulum Muatan Lokal) program. This program allows a degree of autonomy for schools to choose subjects they see fit for local conditions. It takes in a wide range of possible subjects and includes ‘Regional Socio-Cultural Knowledge’ (Pengetahuan Lingkungan Sosial Budaya Daerah), which is currently taught in all the primary and junior secondary schools in my fieldwork area. This subject incorporates lessons about many aspects of Adat, including music and dance, local village and clan history, traditional costume, and, in the high schools, more advanced courses in Adat cosmology as it relates to notions of community and morality. The data and analysis I present in this chapter is primarily based on research at the Watublapi junior secondary school and with the teacher of its Local Content Curriculum (LCC) program, Mo’an Pasisius Pasing who hails from Baomekot. In light of my contention that Adat education is based on participation in rituals, we must ask what happens when Adat is included in the school curriculum? Is Adat taught and learnt according to its traditional educational principles? Or, does the Indonesian educational system supersede local pedagogy and contribute to new interpretations of the Adat cosmology?

I argue in this chapter that the epistemology and pedagogy of the school environment works to decontextualize Adat from the family and village based participatory ritual environment in which it is customarily learnt. With regard to the ecology of mind, and the argument that Adat is constituted by embodied practices of individuals, it is apparent that the movement of Adat education from rituals to schools is in fact a movement of minds. That is, the decontextualization of Adat is a consequence of the differences between the

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1 The muatan lokal program is colloquially referred to as mulok.
contexts of ritual and school, and between the deuto-learning that occurs within these disparate contexts.

In this treatise I use the term sanctity to refer to religious ideas and practices that are cast as ‘accepted truths’ by ritual. The sanctity of Adat is a quality of both ritual context and deuto-learning in which redundant, self-referential and indexical performance enables individuals to deeply embody Adat’s canonical propositions. School contexts also contain certain ideas and practices that are embodied as ‘truth’ by students and teachers alike. Schools exhibit characteristics of ritual, and indeed involve particular religious and secular rites such as prayers (in Catholic and Islamic schools), assemblies, and flag raising ceremonies. Formality, repetition, the mutually validating relationship between lesson content and examination, and the seemingly sacred postulations of textbooks and policies of the Ministry responsible for education suggest that many parallels can be drawn between school and ritual contexts. I do not make explicit comparisons in this chapter between the ‘truth generating’ forms of school and ritual, and I do not think that the complex totality of school education can be equated exactly with religious ritual. However, I do contend that the knowledge communicated in schools carries an authority and truth value that approximates that of religious sanctity.

To illustrate the authority of scholastic knowledge I explore historical, rather than formal or structural, factors. I begin this chapter with a general explanation of the Local Content Curriculum (LCC) and the various challenges it has faced since its implementation. I contextualize the national LCC program to local conditions by exploring the history of education in Sikka Regency from the Netherlands colonial administration to the New Order regime of Suharto, especially as it has related to Adat. It is clear from this history that school education has mostly railed against Adat in both ideological and epistemological terms. Although the education of Adat in the LCC program represents a significant break from the scholastic tradition in Indonesia, the epistemology inherent in schools is nonetheless very different to that of Adat. In Section 4 I present for analysis a passage of ritual language used in the Watublapi school LCC classes. An examination of the Indonesian translations shows that the teacher has changed much of the literal content of the ritual language. Although all students are fluent in the local language, and live in villages close-by, expectations about school pedagogy and considerations of the age and social position of students have occluded a more literal translation. I argue that these changes reflect the difference between the school context in which knowledge is perceived as abstract and the Adat ritual context in which knowledge
is perceived as inextricably linked to physical action.

The education of Adat in school is problematic for teachers and students (who are all local) because their established deutero-learning about Adat is developed primarily in ritual contexts which have a performative pedagogy. Thus, in the classroom the deutero-learning about Adat from one context bumps up against a context in which the ideas of Adat are taught very differently. A detailed understanding of the tension between the ‘sanctified’ deutero-learning of the ritual context and the equally ‘true’ deutero-learning that occurs in the school context will require further ethnographic research. In this chapter I set a basis for future studies by suggesting that school epistemology and pedagogy are subject to syncretic influence from the sanctified Adat deutero-learning of students and teachers. The performative and participatory educational method that is applied in ritual and embodied by participants is given by LCC classes a window of opportunity to enter into the wider school context. That is, while school students have always carried forth Adat deutero-learning into schools, the powerful authority of the school context has effectively sidelined Adat deutero-learning, or at worst positioned it as a negative influence. However, through specifically designated Adat classes this deutero-learning receives at least some validating feedback from the school context. I illustrate this process through an examination of the Watublapi LCC teacher’s innovative use of Bahasa Indonesia to replicate the restricted environment of ritual, and thus communicate the meanings of ritual language appropriate to school-aged children.

2. Local Content Curriculum

With the implementation in the province Nusa Tenggara Timur of the Local Content Curriculum in 1994 a new opportunity was given to schools to enhance the relevance of the education they provide for the local community.2 The new policy allowed for 20% of the school curriculum (up to six hours per week) to be chosen and developed by individual schools in consultation with Regency authorities. The Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture (Departemen Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan), as it then was,3 had began to explore the possibilities of decentralizing the education system as early as the 1980’s with

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2 The policy of LCC was codified in NTT Province by the ‘Keputusan Kepala Kantor Wilayah Departemen Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan Propinsi NTT No.9/121/I194, tanggal 13 Juni 1994’. Nationally, the policy was renewed with the decentralization laws made in 1999 and enacted in 2001 (Law 22/1999). The policy was further codified in ‘UURI No.20, 2003 tentang sistem pendidikan nasional pasal 37 ayat 1 and pasal 38 ayat 2’, and in the 2005 ‘Peraturan Pemerintah Republic Indonesia Nomor 19 tentang standar Nasional Pendidikan’.

3 The Ministry responsible for education is now called the ‘National Ministry of Education’ (Departemen Pendidikan Nasional).
programs to increase the powers of school administrators, teachers and the community (Bjork 2005: 25). Ultimately, the LCC program became the focal program in the decentralization and transfer of educational authority from the central bureaucracy to local levels. It is conceived as a way for the Ministry to reduce costs and for the schools to reduce dropout rates, provide vocational training, and improve the quality of teaching. By adjusting curricula to local conditions it is hoped the program will enable both an increase in community involvement in schools and an improvement in general educational outcomes (ibid.: 30).

Although early evaluations showed great optimism for the program’s success (Vicencio 1996), Bjork has presented a much bleaker picture. Bjork’s research in six East Java junior high schools provides teacher-focused critique of the LCC program, contending that it has in fact failed to improve the autonomy of local schools. Teachers, as the primary agents of change in the program, have been unable to effectively embrace the more independent teaching practices required by the LCC. Bjork (2005: 83) writes:

The government expected teachers to assume more extensive responsibilities at their schools and to experiment with innovative pedagogies in the classroom. According to MOEC plans, instructors should design original curricula, experiment with instructional strategies, and meet with members of the community – all tasks not previously demanded of them.

Bjork (ibid.: 84) continues with the observation that

...Indonesian teachers are rooted in environments that have not historically promoted the behaviours and attitudes that lie at the core of recently adopted education reforms.

Teachers’ own assumptions about teaching are chiefly based on obedience to a central authority and are, therefore, counterproductive to the successful implementation of a program that requires the very opposite of them. In Indonesia, teaching generally occurs within a strict authoritarian hierarchy whereby the curricula is determined by the central Ministry and expressed through text books. This systemic bias means that teachers are expected to be skilled only at ensuring the students remember the contents of these texts in order to reproduce them during examinations.

Leigh’s (1991, 1999) work on the ‘textbook’ culture of schools in New Order Indonesia supports this argument. She contends that under Suharto’s regime schools were commoditized into institutions with the sole objective of instilling and upholding national

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4 MOEC = Ministry of Education and Culture.
unity. A consequence of this politicization was that schools forsook the potential for reflexivity and criticism. Complex knowledge was framed so that

…statements, calculations, hypotheses, grammatical rules are all learnt as either true or false, right or wrong, correct or incorrect, factual or in error. Children learn to see the world in black and white – not just the scientific world and the world of nature, but also the social world and the affairs of people (Leigh 1999: 38).

The dichotomous epistememe was both political and moral in origin and was authoritarian in character – it dealt in the absolute good of the nation-state. This model pervaded all levels of education and flowed through into the reformed post-New Order Indonesia due primarily, as Nilan (2003) notes for Bali, to the poor conditions, training, salaries and facilities provided to teachers. There are, of course, individual exceptions. Many teachers do have the requisite grasp of the subject matter and expertise in communication necessary for independent and innovative education. However, the history of authoritarian and restrictive curricula, and a lack of personal and institutional support for training and the provision of facilities, have not equipped all Indonesian teachers for these challenges. Indeed, most scholars agree that the skill-sets of most teachers, and the systemic support offered to them, are not well suited to the requirements of the LCC program.

A great variety of subjects fall under the purview of the LCC program. These include additional hours studying regular school subjects, technical subjects such as carpentry, and vocational subjects such as tourism and sewing. Of most interest to the present study is the inclusion of local languages and regional socio-cultural knowledge in school curricula. Notably, it is through these ‘culture’ subjects that the differences between local and national knowledge systems, and their constituent pedagogies, are most sharply contrasted. What, then, are the consequences of bringing indigenous forms of knowledge into the classroom? Does indigenous knowledge contain qualities that can improve teaching and learning outcomes in both LCC subjects and the school community as a whole?

A major obstacle (as it is indeed the rationale) for the creation and success of intercultural schools is the domination of one ideology over another and the seemingly inherent and irreconcilable differences between the epistemologies and educational systems these ideologies hold. Since Durkheim, education has been recognized principally as a normative exercise aimed at reproducing the values and attitudes of the majority or the powerful (Durkheim 1956; see also Saha 2001). Schools in the western scientific tradition have long been regarded as engines of democracy and civilization (as they are regarded in Indonesia), and have been understood to perpetuate class, race, gender and
Lessons of the Ancestors

ethnic inequalities (e.g., Levinson, Foley & Holland 1996; Ogbu 1974, 1978). That is, schools can be highly politicized social fields that reinforce the dominant configuration of power relations in a given society (e.g., Fordham 1993; Holland & Eisenhart 1990). In indigenous communities, school curriculum and pedagogy are often a significant departure from local values and attitudes, which are consequently shut out of the educational process. When indigenous ideas and practices are introduced into classrooms they often suffer from misrepresentation as they are incorporated into the dominant system.

Barnhardt and Kawagley (2005) write of this problem in terms of a fundamental difference between dominant modes of Western and sub-ordinal indigenous education systems. Thus:

> Although Western science and education tend to emphasize compartmentalized knowledge that is often decontextualized and taught in the detached setting of a classroom or laboratory, Indigenous people have traditionally acquired their knowledge through direct experience in the natural world (ibid.: 11).

Barnhardt and Kawagley continue by arguing that each system’s measurement of competency is also quite different. Western notions knowledge and preparedness are based on objective or theoretically constructed examinations, whereas indigenous methods prefer measures relating to practical application and usefulness (cf Spindler & Spindler 2000 [1989]). How, then, is it possible to reconcile these differences, and accommodate holistic and contextual learning traditions in the compartmentalizing and decontextualizing atmosphere of formal school classrooms? Because indigenous people often reject outright formal schooling or, alternatively, suffer poor educational outcomes, this is a question of great importance for many people the world over (e.g., Aikman 1999; Battiste 2002).

Throughout this treatise I have argued that Adat is primarily learnt during the practice of rituals which are structured around family involvement. Meanwhile, in this Section I have shown that Indonesian formal schools are generally distant from the communities in which they are situated and are characterized by an authoritarian hierarchy that discourages engagement with locally developed subject matter. Bjork (2005: 34) writes that in Java

> …the division between schools and community solidified over time and is now an accepted feature of a majority of the schools I visited.

There is an equally profound division between the Adat community and schools in Sikka

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5 Although, in some cases, schools provide opportunities for the contestation of a society’s prevailing modes of domination (e.g., Demerath 2003; McRobbie 1994).
Regency. This is not only a difference in content, but also of epistemology and pedagogy. Before moving on to a case study of the convergence of indigenous and school education in the LCC classes at Watublapi junior high, I will first outline the historical events that contributed to the formation of the chasm that makes this convergence so problematic.

3. Catholicism, Nationalism and Schools in Sikka Regency

Education is a cornerstone of Christian proselytization and was the first concerted effort made by Europeans to ‘civilize’ the native population of Flores. Indeed, no great distinction was made between Christianity and civility, and all education was framed as a means to achieve this end. For example, fluency in the Malay language and literacy were needed so that the native population could follow the catechism and read scriptures and prayer books. At a Catholic Congress in Holland in 1922 the renowned Catholic educator P. van Lith (SJ) spoke of this sacred role of education. Webb (1986: 23, my emphasis) writes that van Lith

…told the assembly that the task of the Church ‘helped by the Treasury of Faith’ was to ‘educate humanity to the highest form of perfection’, so that humanity could know God its Maker.

Van Lith went on to state the importance of a strong education for Indonesian Christians in an equally emotive and more overtly politically fashion, declaring that a religious education was necessary so that

…Indonesian Christians could remain vigorous when their tutors are driven out. And that the tutors are going to be driven out, is certain. Therefore it is the task of the mission to educate a Christian core…the mission must cultivate a small but strong and contentious well educated and well furbished army, which is always able to defend itself (cited in Webb 1986: 24).

Such aggressive sentiments were later echoed by P. Cornelissen (SVD), the founder of St. Paul’s High Seminary Ledalero, who wrote the following in his survey of Catholic education:

Schools with Catholic teachers have been compared with a bulldozer which ploughs into peasants who are un-Christianised (tanah kafir) and afterwards sows the seeds of the Christian religion in them (cited in Webb 1986: 66).

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6 I use ‘P.’ to denote ‘Priest’. Catholic priests on Flores are entitled with the Latin Pater (Father).
Yet, the Catholic Church in Flores, especially when the mission came under SVD leadership, were also sensible of the pragmatic results of their education program. As the prioritization of a largely theoretical education over economic development programs came in for criticism among many in the clergy, a steady inclusion of agricultural, health and hygiene classes, as well as other practically oriented studies such as weaving, carpentry and mechanics was instituted.

Noted Florenese educator L. Lame Uran (SVD) has written that the story of formal education on Flores begins with the opening of the first school on December 3rd 1862 by the Jesuit priest Franssen in the eastern town of Larantuka. Franssen had gathered 59 male students (of whom 34 were adults) under a basic wood and grass-roofed building to study the Malay language, reading, writing, numeracy and the Christian doctrine for three years. Over the following years the Bishop of Batavia sent more teaching help and by 1880 a girls school had also been built. In 1868 one of these teaching assistants, P. Omtzigt (SJ), was sent by Franssen to survey the region of Maumere, Sikka, Nita and Bebeng to determine the suitability for establishing a new Station and school. Omtzigt estimated that there was a population of over 6000 Catholic adherents in this region, and he opened the Station of Maumere five years later in 1873. Omtzigt died in 1874 and thus it was his replacement, P. Ten Brink (SJ), who oversaw the construction of the first church and school (complete with boarding house) in this new Station. Rapid development soon followed and in 1887 a Station with school in Koting was opened by P. Ijsseldijk (SJ) and a girls school in Maumere was also opened by the sisters Putri Kasih in 1890.

By 1900 there were five schools run by the Jesuit mission on Flores; two were located in Larantuka and three in the Maumere Onderafdeling (Subdivision), which is now Sikka

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7 See Appendix for details of Uran’s manuscript and its bibliography.
8 These teachers were; P. Metz (1863), Tino Fernandez (from Larantuka, 1863), P. Lambert (from Ambon, 1863), P. Meyer (1864, an agricultural specialist who died within 6 months), P. A. Ellenbeck (1868), P. C. Omzigt (1868), Brother. H. De Ruyter (1870), P. Dijk Mann (1870), P. Tenbrink (1872), Br. Joanes A. Vanden Biggelaar (1872).
9 These schools expanded to include handicraft, home economics. Study times were from 7am-12pm, and again from 2pm-4pm. By 1890, P. Asselbergs (who replaced P. Tenbrink who had moved to Maumere where he later died) wrote that at the boys school there were 3 classes with a total of 133 students. The school was in line with the colonial governments standard for 3 year sekolah dasar schooling. The girls school had 172 students, including students from Lewolaga, Konga, Lewotobi, and Wureh on the outlying island Adonara.
10 A ‘station’ is a mission area (BI: stasi).
11 Ten Brink was assisted by Br. Van Den Biggelaar, Br. De Ruyter, and Br. A. Van Der Velde.
12 In 1884 a second Station was opened in Sikka Natar by P. Le Cocq D’Armandville, and a third was opened in Nita in 1889, both were without schools.
Regency.\textsuperscript{13} The expansion continued and soon 10 more schools were opened in the Maumere Subdivision in the villages of Nele, Hiat, Koting, Nita, Paga, Geliting, Ili, Sloro, Wukak and Maumere. Moreover, government run schools were also fast being launched following the King’s Decree Number 44 (1893) that educational opportunities be improved for native populations in the Dutch East Indies, and the subsequent introduction in 1907 of the village school (D: \textit{volksschool}; BI: \textit{sekolah desa}) (Bjork 2005: 42). By 1910 there were 21 schools operated and paid for by the Church and seven Dutch colonial government schools on Flores. Of the latter, three were located at Sikka Natar, Nele and Lela in the Maumere Subdivision. The school in Lela was later made into a combined ‘standarschool’ and ‘vervolgschool’ which offered a more comprehensive curriculum than the village school, and included subjects such as biology, geography, mathematics, and Dutch. By 1941 there were nine of these schools on Flores. Furthermore, a ‘normal cursus’ school was also opened in Lela in 1922\textsuperscript{14} to provide a curriculum focused on educating future teachers. Thus, on the brink of Japanese invasion of the Dutch East Indies in 1942 there were 277 village schools with 575 teachers and 33600 students, on Flores.\textsuperscript{15}

Despite the establishment of the small number of government run schools at the turn of the twentieth century, the Church was undoubtedly the prime-mover of education on Flores. This situation was reinforced further by the Flores Council of Schools (D: \textit{School Vereniging Flores}; BI: \textit{Panitia Sekolah Flores}). The Council convened between 1911 and 1913 to produce recommendations for the future of education on Flores, especially in terms of the relationship between the Catholic Church and Colonial Government. Even though the instruction of religion in all government schools in the Dutch East Indies was banned in 1871\textsuperscript{16} (Kelabora 1976: 234), such was the overall influence of the Catholic Church on Flores the practical differences between Church and government “village schools” were small. Basic instruction in Malay language, reading, writing and numeracy were the same throughout all Church and government village schools, and the Catechism missed by those students in the government schools was invariably made up for by the energetic priests. As a result of the Council’s deliberation the ‘Soembaregeling’ (Sumba Agreement) was enacted between 1913-1923. Under this program all schools on Flores

\textsuperscript{13} Two schools were in Maumere and one was in Koting.

\textsuperscript{14} This was one of only three such schools on Flores. However, the Lela school and one other were closed in 1933.

\textsuperscript{15} By this time the Mission was in the hands of the ‘Society of the Divine Word’ (SVD) (L: \textit{Societas Verbi Divini}; BI: \textit{Serikat Sabda Allah}).

\textsuperscript{16} Because of tensions with Islamic communities the Dutch administration did not want to be seen as biased, thus they withdrew any form of religious instruction (be it Christian or Muslim) from schools.
were managed by the Church with the help of subsidies from the government.

The reach and influence of schools, however, was still quite minimal. It is estimated that in 1945 less than 6% of the population of the nascent Indonesian nation were literate (Brojonegoro 2001; Kristiansen & Pratikno 2006: 514). Although there are no literacy statistics for Flores for this era, it is evident that only a small proportion of the population were able to attend schools, and some of the schools were proving unsuccessful (at least by Church and government standards). For example, an inspection by colonial administration officials on 9 November 1923 of schools in Ili, Nele and Botang\(^{17}\) showed teachers were straying from the decreed curriculum, and in Koting four days later the officials found that one student had spent four years in the first grade.

However, some communities were able to take advantage of the education and possibilities for social advancement offered by the schools. In the Maumere Subdivision most schools were clustered around the villages of Sikka Natar, Lela, Nita and Koting, and it was these groups, rather than the more distant highland populations, who embraced Christianity and their schools. Lewis (forthcoming: 10) writes that

\[
\text{…a disproportionate number of people from Sikka Natar, flocked also to the middle and higher schools when they were established. Their graduates went into government service, became schoolteachers, or entered the Church through the seminaries established by the Catholic Church on Flores. The rajas and people of Sikka Natar were especially quick to exploit the opportunities and benefits afforded by education.}
\]

In fact, the Catholic mission was criticized by many in the Dutch colonial government for placing too much emphasis on education, thereby increasing the independence and abilities of the local population (Webb 1986: 24). Many Catholic priests and educators were supportive of the Indonesian nationalist movement and the schools, whilst proselytizing Christianity and its accompanying ideals of civilized society, also enabled an educated local elite to express resistance to the colonial power.

After the disbandment of the short lived *Negara Indonesia Timur* and the incorporation of Flores into the Republic of Indonesia in 1950, the development of education was underpinned by the imperative of national unity. Religion was drafted into this project, particularly in response to the perceived menace of communism, and became a compulsory subject at all levels of schooling, including university (Kelabora 1976; Thomas 1981). Initially, in the Education Act of 1950 a modern, secular and scientific

\(^{17}\) The Botang school, opened in 1918 or 1919, was the first school built within 10 kilometres of my fieldwork site.
education was planned for Indonesia, and religion was included only as a non-compulsory and non-graded subject. The first crop of Ministers of Education, including Ki Hadjah Dewantara, Mangunsarkoko and Prijono, argued that the religious cosmopolitanism of the national ideology Pancasila\(^{18}\) necessarily entailed voluntary religious education, in which genuine spirituality was fostered with freedom (Kelabora 1976: 238). However, this policy was reversed in the early 1960’s as the Indonesian Communist Party (Partai Komunis Indonesia) became increasingly powerful. The army, as the proclaimed protectors of Indonesian unity and nationhood, threw their support behind Islamic groups (such as Muhammadiyah and Nahdutal Ulama) who had long lobbied for compulsory religious education. Religion was viewed by Indonesian nationalists as an antidote to the communist sentiments which threatened to destabilize the country, and Islamic groups found that their hard-line stance on religious education, formerly rebuffed, was now in favor. Christian groups, who had until this point supported the voluntary ideal, were insisted upon to follow the new policy, and by 1965 it was required by law that all schools teach at least one of the major religions sanctioned by Pancasila.

Formal schools in Indonesia have long been recognized as a means for integrating the vast diversity of Indonesian ethnic and religious communities into one nation (e.g., Bjork 2005; Djojonegoro 1997; Kipp 1993; Leigh 1991). The national curriculum has prioritized moral education over the intellectual and aimed to instill values common to all Indonesian citizens at the expense of local variety. Subjects such as ‘Pancasila Moral Education’ and ‘History of the Struggle for Nationhood’ have taught that understanding the unity of Indonesia is the most important educational outcome for students. Local languages are the principle medium of instruction in only the first year of primary school, thereafter Indonesian is exclusively used. Indeed, these subjects along with religious education and the study of the Indonesian literature dominated the timetable of secondary schools throughout the 1980’s (Leigh 1991: 24; Nilan 2003: 566).

It must be noted, however, that according to Lamé Uran there has been some leeway on

\(^{18}\) Pancasila are the five principles of Indonesian national ideology proclaimed by President Sukarno on June 1, 1945:

1. Principle of belief in the one and only God (Silat Ketuhanan yang Maha Esa).
2. Principle of a just and civilized humanity (Silat Kemanusiaan yang Adil dan Berabad).
3. Principle of the unity of Indonesia (Silat Persatuan Indonesia).
4. Principle of democracy guided by the inner wisdom in the unanimity arising out of deliberations among representatives (Silat Kerakyatan yang Dipimpin oleh Hikmat Kebijaksanaan dalam Permusyawaratan/Perwakilan).
5. Principle of social justice for the whole of the Indonesian people (Silat Keadilan Sosial Seluruh Rakyat Indonesia).
Flores for the incorporation of local knowledge and traditions in subjects taught in Catholic schools. Reports and policy statements from the Vedapura Foundation, a special branch of the SVD mission established in 1955 and chartered to manage Flores’ Catholic schools, encouraged the use of local material to enhance the relevance of the standard curriculum and draw the interest of students, so long as it fell within the government imposed limitations. For example, physical education classes were encouraged to employ local dances, songs and instruments. Yet, this too tended to disparage local traditions in favor of modern development. Thus, mathematics classes were impressed to include the study of thrift (pendidikan menghemat) because of the view that resources were wasted on large village celebrations and ceremonies. Additionally, health studies were encouraged to include traditional healing techniques, but only when framed to emphasize its dangers and ill-effects while promoting the use of western medicine in clinics and hospitals.

Schools were still few in the early stages of Indonesian independence and access was largely granted only to local elites. The 1971 census figures for the NTT province show that 70.3% of people had never been to school, and only 28% had finished six years of primary schooling, 1.2% had completed junior and senior high school, and 0.2% had tertiary education experience (Webb 1983: 173). In fact, in Indonesia as a whole a free and readily accessible primary education was only made ubiquitous in the 1980’s. Moreover, nine years of schooling (that is, six years of primary and three years of junior high schooling) was made compulsory only in the mid 1990’s (Kristiansen & Pratikno 2006: 514). Although a target of 95% enrollment for eligible students throughout 9 years of schooling has been set by the National Ministry of Education, the reality is still far in arrears of the ideal, and in 2004 only 90 of 440 Districts had attained this target (ibid: 515).

In summary, in the colonial era of the Dutch East Indies, schools on Flores were for the most part established and managed by the Catholic mission and focused on proselytization. Subsequently, post-independence Indonesian schools have been used as a political instrument focused on the development of nationalist values, and they largely continue to be so. In both cases, schools were antagonistic towards indigenous knowledge and were advocates of alien ideologies. The developmental benefits of Catholic and governmental action are undoubtedly significant. Famines have been averted by the advent of cash cropping. Deaths from childbirth and preventable or curable diseases have been reduced. Many, even from very poor families, have been given the opportunity for a good standard of Western education in the Catholic seminaries or Indonesian universities,
leading to careers in the clergy or public service.

Despite these influences, in the Sikka Regency Adat is still a vital part of life for many. This is a testament to the rather recent arrival and initially limited reach of the Church and their schools,¹⁹ and to the relatively tolerant stance of recent Catholicism towards the indigenous religions of Flores. However, it is also clear from this short historical analysis that a positive representation of Adat in both Catholic and government schools has been largely ignored. And if not totally ignored, then Adat has been recast as ‘display’ that is abstracted from its spiritual base. Adat has by turns been defined as either non-Christian or non-National and therefore excluded from school curricula. The introduction of the LCC program, and the attendant provision of a space in which to teach Adat, is therefore nothing less than a revolutionary shift in Indonesian education policy. The issue that must now be addressed is twofold: How will this new policy affect the future of Indonesia’s indigenous religions, and how will it affect the schools themselves?

4. Bringing Adat into the Classroom

In this section I present a case study of the instruction of Adat at the Watublapi junior high school. I begin with a brief survey of the school and introduce the teacher of the LCC classes, Mo’an Pasitus Pasing, who is a renowned Adat expert from Baomekot. From the discussion in Sections 2 and 3 it is apparent that the school learning environment is radically different to the traditional Adat learning environment. In his LCC classes Pasing was therefore obliged by his own sense of propriety to simplify and essentialize the messages contained within Adat liturgy. These changes are manifested in the way ritual language is translated and codified. I analyze a key excerpt of ritual language used in LCC classes which highlights Adat’s decontextualization from local practice and re-contextualization into the ideology and epistemology of the school context.

The Watublapi school is one of 48 Junior High Schools (SMTP) in Sikka Regency, which combined employ 694 teachers and teach 10,250 students.²⁰ Of the 200 odd

¹⁹ The first Church within easy walking distance from my fieldsite was built in 1938 at Watublapi.
²⁰ These statistics are taken from the 2003 Kabupaten Sikka Dalam Angka. Statistics also show that there are 295 Primary schools with 2369 teachers and 41394 students and 20 High Schools (SMTA) with 531 teachers and 7125 students. Seven of these high schools are ‘practical’ (kejuruan) and include STM (senior technical high school), SMEA (senior economic high school), SMIP (public senior tourism industrial high school), and SMPS (public senior social worker high school). In kecamatan Kewapante there are 38 primary schools (of which 23 are private), 5 junior high schools (of which 4 are private), and 3 high schools (all of which are private).
students at Watublapi all participated in the LCC classes. The school takes in students from a wide area, including Baomekot and Romanduru, and as the longest running junior high school in the region has developed a reputation for quality and consistency of education. LCC classes concerning Adat begin in the first year with a focus on its artistic aspects, such as music, dance and costume. In the second year Adat marriage is taught, and the third year (i.e., final year of junior high school) concentrates on Adat concepts of citizenship and community. One of the central directives regarding LCC is that it does not detract from students’ performance in the other subjects, and therefore homework duties are light and examinations, although undertaken with due solemnity, are not strictly applied.

Bjork (2005) has shown us that teachers are the backbone of the LCC program, and that the unfortunate systemic impediments to teacher innovation have meant the program has not enjoyed a successful beginning. The teachers of Regional Socio-Cultural Knowledge are doubly challenged because the subject they teach is locally specific. Especially in the more remote and poor regions of Indonesia, such as the Sikka Regency, the teachers of this subject cannot rely on readily available published textbooks or teacher training courses to master the material and create a lesson plan. In Sikka a cottage industry of teacher guides concerning the history, culture and environment of the region is beginning to develop. It is still very limited, however, and I was able to come across only three such works and a only handful of other more general textual materials that could possibly be used.

In the 1997 work by Yonas Sendo (Principal of the Misir Primary School) titled “A Concise History of the Establishment of Sikka Regency” (BI: Sejarah Singkat Berdirinya Kabupaten Daerah Tingkat II Sikka) the author concentrates on the political history of the Sikkanes Rajadom and the Regency after Indonesian independence. Attention is also given to natural resources and statistics relating to agricultural and fisheries production. In the preface the Head of the Sikka Regency Office of Education and Culture at the time, Willybordus Woga (1997), writes that LCC

...is one of the subjects required to be taught to students so that they may better know, value, love and be able to interact with the natural, social and cultural environment, and consequently it is hoped they acquire an attitude

21 Exact numbers of enrolment are difficult to obtain because of the high numbers of mid-semester enrolments and drop-outs. This situation is not uncommon throughout the schools in my research area, especially at high school levels, because of financial pressures and family responsibilites that mitigated for and against student participation in schools at different times of the year.

22 For example, Pareira (1985, 1990), Pareira (1992), Sendo (1997).
and behavior to conserve [these environments] and promote national and regional development.

Although it is quite clearly stated that society and culture are primary concerns, the amount of detail given to Adat in this work (and most others) is negligible. Teachers wishing to teach Adat with a commitment to the complexity of the subject must therefore rely on their own resources. It follows that those most qualified to teach it are not trained school teachers at all, but knowledgeable members of the local community who are willing to contribute their time. This is significant because many LCC teachers, as is the case of the Watublapi teacher, are not formally trained as such. In some respects they are thus freed from the overly centralized and dominating pedagogical ethic described in Section 2, and are thereby able to be more creative and reflexive in their teaching.

The Watublapi LCC Adat teacher, Mo’an Pasisius Pasing, has, in what is a relatively unusual occurrence for the area, been able to straddle the worlds of traditional Adat and modern Indonesian bureaucracy. He has long been regarded as one of the regions principal Adat experts (a mo’an jaganat, see Chapters 2 & 3) whose skill extends to ritual practice and Adat law, history and theology. He also served for over twenty years as secretary and later head of the desa of Wolomapa (what is now called desa Baomekot), and even now in his retirement is often called upon to advise the current administration. Pasing has also long been a member of the Watublapi school council, although he was never formally educated as a school teacher, has taught the LCC Adat class since its inception (Figure 27, overleaf). Pasing’s own take on the role of LCC is much more oriented towards the moral, rather than the intellectual, benefits of the subject. Thus, in the introduction to the unpublished and handwritten lesson plans he has produced for LCC at Watublapi he writes:

Our education gives more importance to academic knowledge, and it is not well balanced with an education in good character, behavior, morality and sensibility. Eventually this results in clever people, but who are not completed with a strong character, nobility and high morals (Pasisius Pasing n.d.).

He sees Adat as a crucial treatment for this imbalance:

From the time people are still in their mothers wombs, until they are born into this world and move through their life-cycle, planted within are the lessons of Adat to help protect them lead a moral and pure life (ibid.).

Pasing locates Adat in a relationship with the Catholicism and Indonesian civil law by recognizing it as a vernacular ideology and morality that functions at personal, familial
and local community levels. In larger communities in which people have different adat but the same agama (religion), then it is this religion that can function as a guiding principle for group action. In yet larger Indonesian communities in which people have different religions, then civil law acts as the guiding principle for group action. In Pasing’s eyes Adat, therefore, is an important link in the chain of individual development and community membership. It is part of an extensive pattern of relations that constitute the Indonesian identity, and it is consequently eminently suitable for teaching in schools.

Figure 27: Mo’an Pasing teaching an LCC Adat class at Watublapi junior high school.

Before beginning the analysis of the use of ritual language in LCC classes, it is important to reiterate the difference between school and Adat learning contexts. As I mentioned earlier, Indonesian schools are institutions based on a western scientific model and characterized by a high degree of textbook-based rote learning directed towards exam success. As such, the subject matter and way it is taught is largely disconnected from the local community. Throughout this thesis I have made it clear that Adat is traditionally taught through the performance of rituals. The Adat educational system emphasizes learning by practice and, through the agency of family, incorporates the entire community. In this respect, schools are an epistemologically hostile environment for Adat – a situation
further exacerbated by the historical enmity I have described in Section 3. This situation mitigates against the literal transition of the Adat learning environment into classrooms: there are no Adat rituals in schools. Additionally, the young teenagers who make up the junior high school student body do not usually enact the most complex Adat performances. In the preceding chapters I have examined in some detail the different levels of participation, and the corresponding depth of knowledge, experienced by particular ritual actors. For example, in Chapter 3 I wrote of how the ritual *pasen wae gelor awak* (substitution of the representative) confers upon an individual the responsibility for carrying out the ritual obligations of his or her family. This ritual is normally not undertaken until the subject is in his thirties, and sometimes even later. Mo’an Pasing does not expect his junior high school students attain this level of proficiency, and, indeed, the fullest meanings of the Adat ritual language are not always suitable for people of the students’ age.

I have chosen for analysis a short passage of ritual language used by Pasing in his third year ‘citizenship’ classes. The passage is of the *nao tonen* (stories of advice) genre and provides a concise explanation of the role and requirements of an Adat leader. The passage is as follows:

1 'lair sai rivun wiri wana
2 tangar sai ngasun papa rua
3 ta’in morun kokon mara
4 sapu wau lobe sobeng
5 kwuwu mut pang maran
6 ulit blatan ama bliran
7 tali dagir karang kaét
8 du’a lin mo’an welin
9 tutur pletuk harang pat
10 uru du’ur tada tawan

Pasing explains in his classes that this passage (along with some other similar passages) express that:

Suitable and capable leaders are people who are learned and wise, who give of themselves totally, and work with all their energy for the welfare of those who are lead. They must become an exemplar figure in all aspects of life, and must not work to enrich themselves by way of oppression, corruption, etc. They must be able to create a peaceful atmosphere so that
when a potentially damaging problem arises, however small, it can be anticipated and prevented (ibid.).

The translation of the ritual language passage into Indonesian is instructive on a number of levels of the disjuncture between Adat and schools. As an Adat expert, Pasing is conscious of the dangers of misinterpretation, and he argues strongly that a literal translation will only confuse the young students and obscure the essential meaning of the text. In traditional educational settings Adat ritual language is contextualized to ritual practice, and individual interpretations are arrived at through holistic experiences of the system. In classrooms, however, the ritual language is abstracted from this environment, and interpretation rests only on conceptual grounds. Considering that all the students are fluent in the local language, the bahasa Indonesia translation acts as a filter through which these concepts are interpreted.

In the first two lines of the passage it is evident that in Pasing’s translation, although the basic structure of semantic parallelism is maintained, the metaphors used are different. Thus:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ritual Speech</th>
<th>Pasing's Indonesian Translation of Ritual Speech</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1  'lair sai riwun wiri wana</td>
<td>tuntunlah rakyat kemuara selamat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2  tangar sai ngasun papa rua</td>
<td>bimbinglah masa kepantai bahagia</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Literal Translation of Ritual Speech

| 1  consider the thousands to the left and right | lead the populace to the safe estuary |
| 2  respect the hundreds at the front and back | guide the masses to the joyous beach |

The substitution of the ‘left/right/front/back’ (lines 1 & 2) metaphor for the Indonesian expression of the ‘safe estuary’ and ‘joyous beach’ retains the idea that a leader’s responsibility is all encompassing whilst emphasizing more explicitly its purpose and outcomes. Of interest also is that in local idiom estuary (nuba), which is always paired with river (nanga), refers to a ritual site (see Chapter 8) and also expresses the very directionality and wellbeing that Pasing eludes to in his Indonesian translation. The substitution of ‘consider/respect’ for ‘lead/guide’ is also indicative of his translation’s unequivocal nature. The former pairing implies the latter pairing, which in ordinary Sara Sikka are glossed as ‘donen’ (lead, guide, instruct, point), but is more polysemous in its inclusion of ideas such as humility and co-operation.

The translation of the following two couplets leave behind literal parallelism and condenses and expands parts of the original text to underscore particularly important
concepts. The translations are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ritual Speech</th>
<th>Indonesian Translation of Ritual Speech</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3 ta’in morun kokon mara</td>
<td>bebas lapar bebas dahaga</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 sapu ‘wau lobe sobeng</td>
<td>rumah pantas busana layak</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 kuwu mut pang maran²³</td>
<td>sehat jasmani sehat rohani</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 ulit blatan ama bliran</td>
<td>harkat dijaga martabat dirawat</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Literal Translation of Ritual Speech**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>3 hungry stomachs and thirsty throats</th>
<th>free of hunger and thirst</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4 shaded by cloth arrayed and worn</td>
<td>with a suitable house and proper clothing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 a warm shelter and dry hut</td>
<td>a healthy body and soul</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 cool skin and fresh innards</td>
<td>dignity protected and values cared for</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The first difference of note is that in line 3, Pasing makes explicit in translation what is only implied in the ritual language. That is, the hunger and thirst of the population are slaked by worthy leaders. Also of interest is the phrase *ulit blatan ama bliran* (line 6), which does indeed mean a ‘healthy body and soul’ (expressed in line 5 of Pasing’s translation) because the terms ‘cool’ and ‘fresh’ are synonymous with health (see Chapter 6). In this context *ama* refers to the inside skin of a grain of rice and also signifies generally the internal organs of a person. Its use evokes a similarity between rice and humanity that originates in the myth of Du’a Nalu Paré, the ‘rice mother’, who was sacrificed by her father and thenceforth became rice. There are several versions of this myth throughout Flores (see Kohl 1998; Orinbao 1992), and a version related to me by Mo’an Klemens Hago shares similarities with these other texts. Importantly, we see also in this passage that lines 4 and 5 of the original text are merged into a single sentence (line 4 of Pasing’s translation) so that the whole quatrain can be given an independent exegesis in line 6 of Pasing’s translation. The phrase ‘dignity protected and values cared for’ digests the practical references to victuals, house, clothes, and health into an abstract conceptualization that is otherwise only implied.

The final two couplets delve into complex ideas that themselves reach out into the ritual life of Adat. Thus:

²³ A *kuwu* is a shelter under which palm gin (*tuak*) is distilled, and a *pang* is a small hut built in gardens.
It is immediately apparent that Pasing chooses to translate the entirety of this passage abstractly in order to draw out the themes of obedience, honesty, fairness and loyalty that pervade this ritual speech. Line 7 of the ritual language is a contraction of the couplet ‘tali dagir wawa wa’in, kareng kaet reta alan’ (vines below entangle the feet, branches above stick the head), which is given full expression with regard to leadership in the iconic phrase ‘raise yourself with the women of the seven foundations, freeing your feet from the tangled vines below, lift yourself with the men of the eight supports, freeing your head from the striking branches above’ (wake wi’in sai nora ata du’a litin pitu, tena lahi weli miu dagir wawa wain, ore wi’in sai nora ata mo’an ler walu, tena lahi weli miu bolet kareng kaet reta alan). Pasing summarizes this conceptualization in line 10 of his translation.

It is in lines 8 and 10 of the original text, however, that the depth of meaning in ritual language is most clearly illustrated. In the discussion of bridewealth in Chapter 5 I explained that the phrase ‘du’a lin mo’an welin’, and the variations thereof, is a name given to the prestations of ivory, horses and gold given by the me pu clan (wife-taker) to the ina ama (wife-giver). These marital exchanges, I argued, functioned to ameliorate systemic asymmetries, especially as they would impact negatively upon the newlyweds. In the ritual language passage presently under analysis the meaning of this phrase, underwritten by the convoluted and expensive marital exchange process, is mapped onto the qualities required of Adat leaders. In his translation Pasing captures the essence of this meaning in line 9 of his translation, stating that a leader must be ‘honest and loyal throughout life’. In line 10 of the ritual speech another Adat ritual is evoked, this time the uru tada rites of protection. An uru is a private, individual ritual used to ward off danger...
and safeguard property. For example, an uru is often initiated in a garden so that its produce is not stolen. A tada, on the other hand, is a public ritual that plays two roles. It provides village wide protection against potential danger, both human and spiritual, and, secondly, it acts as a decree that regulates public behavior. For example, it can decree that no person may harvest coconuts until a certain date, thus ensuring full cooperation when the harvest comes. Thus, uru du’ur tada tawan24 indicates that, as Pasing expresses in line 8 of his translation, a leader must ‘obey the laws and bow to the rules’.

My analysis suggests that the Indonesian translations of the ritual language made by Mo’an Pasing for use in LCC classes are aimed at making the ritual language appropriate to the age group and social position of the students. Without the knowledge management mechanisms found in traditional learning contexts, such as the constraints of relative depths of experience entailed by the participatory education system, the school teacher uses the translations as a medium for regulating access to the various meanings of ritual language. By pinpointing only particular messages contained within the ritual language, and leaving out other material, the translations act as a substitute for the practical context provided by ritual. Without the practical context, the ritual language must be changed, at least in its translation, so that misunderstandings do not arise. Pasing’s Adat classes are still very different to the traditional learning environment. LCC classes are still informed by a formal school methodology, the material is still written on and copied from blackboards, and Adat rituals are not carried out in the classroom. However, these classes also involve innovations made by the teacher in order to preserve the integrity of Adat. Pasing attempts to exert some control over traditional material in the modern school by, ironically, co-opting the national Indonesian language to achieve a similar end to traditional Adat education, albeit via a different method.

5. Conclusion

The skillful innovations made by Pasing are attempts to reproduce a traditional learning outcome within the strictures of the school context. Although the school context reconstructs Adat knowledge very differently from its ritual and participatory roots, a degree of traditional Adat epistemology and ontology is carried over into schools in the embodied deutero-learning of the teacher. Pasing’s assumptions about what Adat knowledge is and how and to whom it should be communicated (that are deutero-learnt in

24 Du’ur and tawan refer to the association of uru tada with the picking of coconuts. Under a tada coconuts must not picked until they are dry (du’ur), or until they are sprouting/or aged (tawan).
his years of ritual participation and leadership) cannot be completely constrained by the authority of the school’s own epistemology.

In this way, Adat is not only brought into the classroom, but the classroom is also brought into Adat. LCC Adat classes help incorporate schools into the wider community by legitimating, to some extent at least, the ecology of mind (or, ‘registers of embodiment’) that are developed in the community. Furthermore, as ritual-based deutero-learning is made relevant in schools, so too are schools made more relevant to the Adat community. Indonesian schools are notoriously isolated from the communities in which they are situated. However, the divisions between schools and local communities are broken down as school curricula are made relevant to a majority of the population. Families of students are often alienated by the esoteric knowledge of, for instance, English or mathematics that is taught in modern Indonesian schools. The teaching of Adat, on the other hand, provides an entry point for these families into a meaningful engagement with their children’s school life. From my observations, children are much more likely to consult their family on Adat classes than any other, simply because they know their family will be interested and knowledgeable. Indeed, many of my own interviews were attended by school students eager to gather information for their LCC classes. On one occasion, for example, as I conducted an interview with Mo’an Fernandes Don Dalo, Willem Wio and Stefanus Gleko about the history of the settlement of Romanduru village, Don’s son, Edwin, busily took notes for his assignment on the origins of his clan, Buang Baling.

The inclusion in schools of a subject matter that is both intellectually interesting and spiritually important to the local community means that they all have a stake in its success. As I have made clear at various points throughout this thesis, misrepresentation or misuse of Adat is thought to have grave consequences, and thus it exacts from the community great responsibility for its proper practice. By virtue of this gravity, the LCC Adat classes partly recontextualize schools to local conditions in a way not achieved by the national curriculum, which for economically and opportunity poor rural communities is largely obscure.

School-based education is, nonetheless, regarded by the Adat community as the only gateway through which their children’s living standards can improve. Knowledge and skills important for the modern workforce, such as languages, economics, and sciences, can only be learnt in the classroom, and are not taught by Adat. However, the responsibility that parents feel towards their children under the traditional Adat educational system is only partially felt in relation to schooling. The school education of
children happens only in the classroom, not in the home, and the parents responsibility only extends so far as making sure of their children’s attendance. Bringing the classroom into Adat, therefore, acts as a gateway through which the parents enter into and engage with the broad scope of their children’s education.

Eilenberg (2005: 167) has argued that among the Iban the *habitus* of school children “fits poorly and has little value within the field of national schooling”. The same can be argued for the school children of the Adat community. School classrooms are very much an alien environment for both students and parents. School involves seemingly innocuous differences to village life, such as the necessity to wear shoes and to speak only Bahasa Indonesia, that challenges students from day one. In school, bodies and intellects are disciplined differently to village-based learning contexts. The inclusion of Adat in schools is thus a major step towards redressing the anxiety and incompatibility felt by many students for their formal education. The potential benefits of this program, to my mind, are less in the content of the Adat classes, than in the possibility for the indigenous epistemology and pedagogy that underpins Adat to seep into other, conventional subjects.

However, the data and analysis I have presented in this chapter has highlighted that, at this time at least, in school classrooms Adat knowledge is primarily *decontextualized* from its practical grounding in ritual practice. The supplementation of the otherwise exclusively oral ritual language medium with written transcriptions and Indonesian translations takes Adat from its performative origins into the text-based school environment. As a step towards the transformation of Adat from an oral to a written tradition this process cannot be underestimated. If, as Goody (1977, 2000) suggests, literacy entails a fundamental change to the society in which it develops, then significant changes in Adat are to be expected. The people of Sikka have long been literate, and the history and cosmology of the Adat of the Ata Sikka has been recorded in the past by Mo’ang Boer, Mo’ang Kondi and others (see Lewis 1998). However, for the people of Romanduru, Wolomotong, Baomekot and surrounds, the advent of the LCC classes are the first time Adat has been systematically treated with the tools of a literate tradition. This ‘writing down’ of Adat raises issues that can alter its future practice, such as the possibility for unregulated access to particular knowledge and a gaze of history that, for the first time, can judge Adat through time as a static phenomenon.
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1. Reflections on the Ecology of Mind of the Adat Community

The findings of this treatise suggest that the potential opportunities for indigenous Adat education are restricted to participation in religious events, especially ritual. In other words, learning Adat is a sacred pursuit that requires sanctified learning contexts. This conception mirrors some of Steiner’s (2003: 3) own thoughts about the sacred origins of teaching:

Genuine teaching has been held to be an *imitatio* of a transcendent or, more precisely divine, act of disclosure, of that unfolding and folding inward of truths which Heidegger attributes to Being (*aletheia*). The secular primer or advanced study are mimetic of a sacred, canonical template and original which was itself, in philosophic and mythological readings, communicated orally. The teacher is no more, but also no less, than an auditor and messenger whose inspired, then schooled, receptivity has enabled him to apprehend a revealed *Logos*, that ‘Word in the beginning’.

Although most, if not all, Adat experts personally count among their responsibilities the astute guidance of the community, they do not consider themselves the source of knowledge. Instead, Adat experts contribute to the construction of ritual contexts, in which participants learn through their performances as they are brought into close communication with the deity and ancestor spirits.

This method of education must be understood within the frame of indigenous epistemology. The epistemology underlying Adat knowledge involves a unification of language and action, such that taken individually these elements alone do not constitute an elemental Adat phenomenon or experience. A person can only learn of and conform to the Adat moral and legal codes, mytho-historical injunctions and cosmological truths through their expression in a *combination* of speech and performance. This epistemology makes
participation in religious performances the cornerstone of Adat pedagogy. That is, *doing* Adat is the only way to *learn* Adat.

Immediate family is given initial responsibility for the education of the young. Mothers and fathers have a duty to include their children in sanctioned Adat behavior, such as the rituals frequently performed at each household’s ritual altar. This very practical and liturgical method of education is augmented by the direct intervention of spiritual beings in the education of Adat experts. Visions and dreams enable direct access to the spiritual realm and confer new knowledge and authority on those able to make this journey.

The indigenous theory and practice of education bears many similarities to the theoretical model of education and ritual that I have applied to this research. I have held to the supposition that ideas are always accompanied by the energy, movement, and attention of learners. Although this is equally true in literate traditions, it is all the more apparent in traditions in which knowledge is expressed only in oral and physical performance, and in often opaque, and sometimes fleeting, iconography. I have argued that in the Adat ‘community of practice’ people are guided towards the discovery of Adat truths in the profound and redundant context of ritual. Ritual is a sanctified context because the self-referentiality of performance and material ambiguity of the religion’s Ultimate Sacred Postulates produce ‘truths of acceptance’. In this context participants embody the cosmological propositions of Adat through sanctified deutero-learning. Thus, just as local exegesis describes the efficacy of learning through performance, so to does the theory of the ecology of mind.

At the beginning of this treatise I wrote of the concerns of Mo’an Roja’s sons when the eldest, Firminus, took over the important position of source of the domain of Romanduru. Firminus, and his younger brother Don, often lamented their limited knowledge of Adat compared to their illustrious father. The findings of my research indicate that Roja was not necessarily lax in the instruction of his sons, nor were Firminus and Don inattentive students. Adat is customarily learnt in its practice, especially ritual, and not in classroom lectures or through text-based study. Perhaps, like Mo’an Klemens Hago was apt to say, only people who have reached 60 years of age can consider themselves truly expert in Adat, and Firminus and Don are simply moving along the normal, gradual learning path. Or perhaps, because of travel, work and the increasing influence of Catholicism, they have had fewer opportunities to participate in ritual than their father. Maybe a cycle of steady decline has begun, in which reduced ritual activity leads to reduced knowledge of Adat cosmology, which, in turn, leads to further reductions or simplifications in ritual activity.
Alternatively, it could be argued that Adat is due for an efflorescence, and Firminus’ and Don’s own children will develop a high level of Adat expertise. The legitimization of Adat in the national consciousness as a spiritual and political force, suitable for inclusion in school curricula, could inspire increased ritual activity.

The minds of the Adat community are now, and have been for some time, poised between several authoritative ideologies which promise to expunge Adat, but have yet to do so. As I review my fieldwork experiences, I am sometimes persuaded that in a generation or two Adat will continue to be a dominant cosmology, and at other times I think that Adat will soon be lost to history. Writing this now, I suspect that the answer lies somewhere in between. One morning in April 2006 at the St. Maria high school near Romanduru I chatted with a group of students about Darwinian evolution. As the students attempted to understand the importance of evolution in their lives, the conversation jumped around the multitude of worldviews that are relevant to these teenagers. This relevance is not limited to just academic interest: The cosmologies of Adat, Catholicism, Islam, modern science, nationalism and global economics are all to some extent embodied in their daily experiences. These young individuals are a nexus of diverse and sometimes competing definitions of reality. As they grow older and seek education and work away from their villages of birth they will have less time to devote to Adat ritual activity. Even those who remain at home will seek opportunities to improve their lives under the auspices of non-Adat worldviews. For instance, population pressure, changing land use patterns, and modern agricultural techniques contribute to changes in the Adat landscape. And the role of Catholicism as a spiritual and pragmatic inspiration will continue to be effective as it connects the community to the powerful worldwide network of the faithful.

The diverse ideological and epistemological contexts to which these students are exposed coalesce in the students’ embodied practice. That is, they deutero-learn in these contexts not by the passive receipt of rules and representations, but by way of their behavior in communities of practice. The rules of a cosmology are nothing if not enacted, and the cultural knowledge passed on from one generation to the next is encountered and embodied in the use of this knowledge. Ingold (2003: 51, my emphasis) writes that individuals discover their lifeworld as

\[\text{…each generation contributes to the next…the specific conditions of development under which successors, growing up in a social world, can build up their own aptitudes and dispositions.}\]

In relation to Adat education, ritual is informed by canonical ritual language and procedure, and this canon guides the experience of the participants. However, it is only
through the experience, ordered and restricted as it is, that participants are able to discover the knowledge contained within ritual. While relationships approximate to master and apprentice are apparent in families, like that between father and son or mother and daughter, the manifestation of such educational relationships is always found in the performance of Adat.

Each of the cosmologies relevant to the students of St. Maria high school has ‘specific conditions of development’, or contexts of learning, that are set in motion by others (be they parents, teachers, priests, politicians, artists, employers, or television producers) in their respective communities of practice. As the students join these communities and engage in these contexts they begin to deutero-learn about these contexts. According to Bateson (2000: 314, my emphasis), by deutero-learning individuals begin to develop

…a body of habitual assumptions or premises implicit in the relationship between man and environment, and that these premises may be true or false.

With the statement ‘true or false’ Bateson is referring to an objective measure of reality, or in evolutionary terms, adaptive or maladaptive premises. The habitual assumptions embodied through deutero-learning are subjective ‘truths of acceptance’ that are self-validating in their recursive relationship with ‘friendly’ contexts. These assumptions may be false or maladaptive in other contexts, but they are always true in the contexts in which they first develop. In Chapter 9 I broached the contradictions and syncretic innovations that arise when sanctified deutero-learning from Adat ritual contexts encounters the school context, which is epistemologically and pedagogically very different from ritual. If we multiply such encounters to include Catholic, political, scientific, economic and Islamic contexts, we can see that the ecologies of mind of these students are indeed very complex.

The subjective truth and falsity of each ideological context is primarily a function of the strength of its concomitant deutero-learning, which in turn is a function of the redundancy and profundity of the contexts in which these ideologies are experienced. I have shown in this treatise that Adat ritual contexts are well suited to enabling powerful deutero-learning of ideas. Rituals are highly formal and repeated often, and they involve physical activities with sure outcomes that are indexes of the religion’s canonical propositions. The very performance of ritual validates the propositions as ‘accepted truths’, and the regular and regulated experiences of participants are ideal for the production of deeply embodied assumptions and dispositions patterned by these propositions. However, Catholicism also involves rituals, and other ideologies, such as school education, have mechanisms for producing equally authoritative deutero-learning.
The future of Adat depends on the outcomes of the negotiations between these different contexts and patterns of deuterol-learning in the ecologies of mind of the young generation of the Adat community. Syncretic forms of Adat are inevitable, and this is already evident in the Christian influenced Adat cosmogonies discussed in Chapter 8 and the school-based transformations in ritual language discussed in Chapter 9. The important question is, ‘to what extent will the Adat cosmology as it now stands dominate, or be dominated by, these other relevant cosmologies?’ Or, in less totalizing terms, ‘what form will the syncretism between Adat and the other cosmologies take?’

2. Indigenous Customs and State Religions

Detailed answers to the questions raised above must be discovered in future ethnographies. However, much can be learnt about the future of Adat from current efforts to raise national and international awareness of Adat and other similar Indonesian indigenous cosmologies (collectively called *adat*). In this section and the next I will explore some of the ways in which representatives of the indigenous cosmologies of Indonesia are seeking to regain ground from competing cosmologies. I discuss the traditionally antagonistic relationship between ‘custom’ (*adat*) and ‘religion’ (BI: *agama*), and then turn my focus to the potential for *adat* to become a significant force in schools throughout the nation. First we must understand how Sikkanese Adat relates to broader expressions and discourses of indigenous religion and intercultural education in Indonesia.

Tracing the connections between the local Adat of Romanduru, Baomekot, Wolomotong and the surrounding villages in the central mountains of Sikka to the multitude of indigenous traditions throughout Indonesia begins with the term ‘*adat*’ itself. The generic *adat* is a term of Arabic origin that is used in Malay and Indonesian to refer generally to ‘custom’ or ‘tradition’. It is not a native term in Sara Sikka, and does not appear in canonical ritual language couplets. The Adat community’s use of a foreign term for the designation of their indigenous cosmology and ritual system is made willingly and knowingly. Although the term has a certain privileged position in the local lexicon because of the value of that to which it refers, and although it is used as freely and fluently in everyday Sara Sikka speech, its Malay origins and its use throughout the archipelago in reference to other traditions is well recognized.

The Adat community have adopted the term *adat* to describe a distinctly spiritual phenomenon. Their Adat defines a lifeworld, or register of embodiment, that is *religious* by any conventional sociological definition. The established Malay and Indonesian
definitions of *adat*, however, are conspicuous for their aversion to any spiritual, religious, or otherwise occult references. These categories are instead referred to under the rubric of ‘*agama*’ (religion), while *adat* is understood primarily in relation to custom and law. Of Wilkinson’s (1959) eleven separate definitions of *adat* eight make direct reference to *adat* as a system of law or rules. For instance, he defines *adat* as “(iv) the operation of natural laws…(v) rules governing games or sports…(viii) common law or customary law in general…(ix) the law of autocratic sultanates” (ibid.). Further, Marsden’s (1984 [1812]) earlier publication defines *adat* as “custom, usage, habit state, mode, fashion; rite, ceremony; rules of justice or judiciary proceeding; customary tribute or fee.” Most recently Stevens and Schmidgall-Tellings (2000) have defined *adat* as “1. customary law, practices which have become unwritten local law….2. tradition, custom, habit, practice, convention….3. (cla) customs, duties, tolls, taxes (in harbors, etc.).”

The emphasis on jurisprudence in these definitions is reflected in the Dutch colonial study of *adat* as ‘*adat* law’ (D: *adatrecht*). According to Koentjaraningrat (1975), the different expressions of *adat* in the colony were largely ignored until research into customary legal systems was pioneered by C. Snouck Hurgronje. His work was later developed at the turn of the 20th century by Van Vollenhoven and Van Ossenbruggen. Van Vollenhoven sought recognition of the relevance of *adat* law for the colonial administration, and his three volume *Het Adatrecht van Nederlandsch-Indië* (*Adat Law of the Netherlands-Indies*) (1918-1933) and the publication of the *Adatrechtbundels* (*adat* law volumes) from 1910 onwards signaled was the first comprehensive and comparative treatment of *adat*.¹ Only Van Ossenbruggen was more deeply concerned with the wider socio-religious context of *adat* laws. His studies of the indigenous magic and rituals used for protection against smallpox epidemics and his research into Javanese village confederations called *mancapat* illustrate his conviction that *adat* extended beyond just legality (Koentjaraningrat 1975: 97, 98).

In addition to law, the definition of *adat* as ‘tradition’ and ‘custom’ again reflect the emphasis on non-spiritual matters. In this secular configuration, *adat* is cast as a generic label for a very narrowly defined concept of indigenous culture, and at its most obtuse represents indigenous architecture, costume, myth and ritual as nothing more than exotic

¹ Van Vollenhoven classified 19 separate *adat* law areas in the colony. He also produced a 10 volume record of *adat* law under different topic categories: “(1) rights of disposal of land and water; (2) rights to usufruct of land; (3) native property rights over land; (4) other rights concerning land and water; (5) inheritance law; (6) marriage law; (7) laws on forms of marriage; (8) laws concerning kinship relations and divorce; and (9) laws of obligations” (Koentjaraningrat 1975: 93).
curiosities. In more positive terms, this ‘non-spiritual’ adat is reflected in the abstraction of indigenous artistic objects and performance from spiritual bases to be, for example, enjoyed as spectacle by local and international tourists and used as a means of income for local populations (e.g., Acciaioli 1985; Picard 1997; Allerton 2003). Alternatively, the modern classification of adat as tradition or custom returns to the definition’s legal roots to accentuate adat’s role in resource management. Many local and national political lobby groups, and academic researchers, emphasize the definition of adat as laws of ownership and rights of use over natural resources such as forests, fishing grounds and minerals (e.g., Li 2001; McCarthy 2005; Reuter 2006).

Law, art, architecture and customary land tenure are fundamental aspects of the indigenous religion that I researched in Sikka Regency. However, to call only these phenomena adat is to define adat much more exclusively than the way the people of Romanduru, Baomekot and Wolomotong do. These phenomena may well be defined as the adat of an indigenous religion, but then the spiritual basis of the indigenous religion is excluded from the definition. Yet, the people of the central mountains of Sikka do designate the totality of their indigenous cosmology – including its law, art, land tenure, and its ritual and spirituality – as adat. What is more, they have chosen to do so. From all the options in Bahasa Indonesia and Sara Sikka that could have been employed, and despite all the exclusive definitions of dictionaries and academics, this community has chosen, and continues to choose, to use adat to refer to distinctly religious ideas and practices.

I suggest that the choice of adat over, for instance, agama has a lot to do with the discourse, and experience, of marginality in Indonesia. In the conventional usage adat is not explicitly defined as having the property of spirituality or, importantly, the sanctity that is entailed by this spirituality. Agama, on the other hand, is conventionally defined as ‘religion’, and, therefore, those religious cosmologies to which it refers are ipso facto classified as sacred. As agama in Indonesia defines only the state-sanctioned major world religions, a cosmology designated as adat cannot be religious or sacred in the same way as a cosmology defined as agama. Dominating cosmologies, such as Christianity and Islam (and the nation-state within which they subsist), are able to co-opt the term agama at the exclusion of smaller cosmologies and exploit the sanctity implied by the conventional definition of the term.²

² Kipp & Rodgers (eds) (1987) provide a discussion of agama in New Order Indonesia and note that agama is a highly politicized concept. For example, during the anti-Communist purge
Despite the hegemony of more powerful cosmologies, I maintain that the use of *adat* to designate the indigenous religion is a *strategic choice* of members of the Adat community of Sikka. The use of *agama* would place the indigenous religion in direct competition with the other *agama*, and would, in the very limited official Indonesian classification of religion, most likely be met with disapproval and hostility (that is, without significant alterations to the cosmology). The use of *adat*, however, in effect defines the indigenous religion in the public sphere as ‘not-religion’. It is thereby not only tolerated by officialdom, but is indeed supported in some ways through the policy of preserving the *apparently* non-spiritual customs of *adat*, especially those customs that have an artistic expression. The strategic benefit, however, is more than simply a matter of a marginalized community maintaining their integrity in the shadow of the hegemonic powers. The use of *adat* instead of *agama* also has a personal dividend. To put it crudely, it allows individuals to attend Mass on Sunday and sacrifice pigs for the ancestors on Monday without significant tension. In effect, the political and conceptual separation of *adat* and *agama* helps ameliorate many of the contradictions that are evident in the simultaneous practice of two different religious traditions. In the formidably syncretistic lives of the Adat community, Catholicism and Adat are not necessarily contradictory. Rather, Catholicism and Adat can be different, but complementary, truths.

This particular configuration of the relationship between *adat* and *agama* is not consistent throughout Indonesia. For example, Schiller (1996, 1997) argues that Indonesian political and bureaucratic powers, realizing the covert spiritual freedom – and hence unpredictability – that *adat* allows the citizenry, have sought to redefine the *adat* of the Ngaju Dayaks as *agama*. Whereas the state and the state-sanctioned world religions had previously excluded indigenous religions from the privileged category of *agama*, they have recaptured the initiative by classifying the Ngaju indigenous religion, called Hindu Kaharingan, as *agama*. The reclassification comes with strings attached that overtly favor the state; in Schiller’s (1996: 410) words, *agama* is an “emergent field of discourse which seeks to supplant local discourse on the nature of the sacred and supernatural world”.

The Ngaju indigenous religion was accepted as a state-sanctioned ‘sacred’ cosmology only when it conformed to the state’s definition of *agama*. Several bureaucratic hurdles must be negotiated to achieve this conformity, including the production of written and authorized sacred texts, and the establishment of formal ‘seminary-style’ schooling.

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beginning in 1965 *agama* “became the refuge against accusation, imprisonment, or execution…[because]…religious devotion was seen as incompatible with communism” (ibid.: 19).
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Schiller (ibid.: 416) continues:

I would suggest that it is through such efforts to routinize, and, ultimately, ‘domesticate’ local religions such as Hindu Kaharingan, that the state hopes to foster investment in a larger ‘moral community’ of its own device, one which supersedes minority attachments.

In the Ngaju case a local adat is codified by the technologies of literacy (i.e., writing and classrooms) and, under its new appellation as an ‘agama’, is brought into the state’s field of influence.

The costs and benefits of a move such as this are by no means one sided, and the choices of local communities are not completely repressed by the impositions of state functionaries. For example, significant benefits can result from an adat becoming recognized as an agama, such as wider exposure and increased funding and support. The negotiation between adat and agama is played out differently in different regions across Indonesia, and the agenda of the interested parties sometimes overlap and sometimes conflict. For the Adat community of Sikka I contend that the use of adat functions to preserve the spiritual integrity of both their indigenous religion and Catholicism. There is no local lobby nor – as far as I know – a state sponsored push to have Adat redefined as agama like the Ngaju case. In a community with no general native ethnonym, and no single native term for liturgy or ritual speech, it is not surprising that a foreign word stands instead of a native umbrella term for the indigenous religion. I suspect that prior to the constant and widespread experience of alternate cosmologies such as Catholicism and Islam, the totality of the Sikkanese indigenous religion did not need to be classified. And when it became necessary to do so in contradistinction to these alternate cosmologies – especially when the sanctity and truth of the one of these cosmologies is also accepted – the use of the term adat has proven to be a safe political and spiritual strategy.

3. National Representation and Intercultural Education

The Adat community’s use of the term adat to designate their indigenous religion overtly implicates them in the national and international discourse on indigenous rights. Although the tag ‘indigenous’ is notoriously difficult to define in relation to the Indonesian population (Barnes 1995; Gray 1995), it has nonetheless become synonymous with the definition of ‘masyarakat adat’ (traditional, or customary, society). The rights\(^3\) of

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\(^3\) Acciaioli (2007: 305) notes that the ‘right’ claimed by indigenous communities is framed as the ‘sovereignty’ of the communities (BI: kedaulatan masyarakat adat) under, and not necessarily
Indonesia’s *masyarakat adat* is currently most energetically advocated by the ‘Alliance of the Indigenous Peoples of the Archipelago’ (*Aliansi Masyarakat Adat Nusantara*, or AMAN) (see Davidson & Henley 2007). The purview of AMAN is chiefly concerned with the issues of resource management, land tenure and sustainability that inform much of the international debate surrounding indigenous peoples and their customs. However, education is also an important part of AMAN’s agenda.

The educational aspirations of AMAN are various and, as yet, not fully realized. According to AMAN’s latest work agenda, they will initiate programs that strive for

…the formation of indigenous [i.e., *adat*] community educational centres,

the establishment of a local content education curriculum based on

indigenous societies, critical education at the village level, and

comparative studies between communities of indigenous societies

(AMAN, n.d.).\(^4\)

With a central body such as AMAN promoting the education of Indonesia’s multitude of regionally specific *‘adats’* it is necessary to question the kind of education they will espouse. For example, who will determine which *adat* is taught? To return for a moment to Chapter 2, we recall that the Adat community have been marginalized by the politically dominant Ata Sikka. It is reasonable to envisage that small – but distinct – religious configurations of *adat* will be superseded in education by larger, more powerful, polity-oriented configurations of *adat*. Moreover, we must ask how will *adat* be taught? In Chapter 9 I wrote of the differences between the indigenous educational system of the *adat* community and the Indonesian formal school system. In this light, we may ask ‘to what extent will local epistemologies and pedagogies be compromised in an attempt to gain educational legitimacy for *adat* in the modern Indonesian state?’

These questions are, of course, preliminary to any substantial action on the part of AMAN. However, clues to the way AMAN will handle its advocacy of *adat* education can be gleaned from the constitution of its membership. Acciaioli reports that AMAN defines its members as

…the group of inhabitants (community) of a customary society

(‘indigenous people’) that owns a distinct customary territory, a legal system and set of customary institutions with its own exclusive quality,

\(^4\) BI: “*pembentukan pusat-pusat pendidikan masyarakat adat, pengadaan kurikulum pendidikan muatan lokal berbasis masyarakat adat, pendidikan kritis di tingkat kampung, dan studi banding antar komunitas masyarakat adat.*”
and has declared itself and been accepted officially as being a member of AMAN (cited in Acciaioli 2007: 300).

Acciaioli also notes that the definition of AMAN membership is flexible and can potentially incorporate communities that range from single villages to entire ethnic groups. Such a diverse membership would certainly help alleviate the problems of obscuring or stereotyping the more marginal adat communities in Indonesia. Nevertheless, this flexibility and inclusiveness is tempered to a degree by the partial selection of members and, indeed, the relative interest of different adat communities in becoming members.

Acciaioli (ibid.: 300) writes that

…in some provinces efforts have been made to gain members from across the province (Central Sulawesi is one example, Jambi may well be another), but in others only members of certain peripheral groups within the province have either shown interest or been considered eligible for certification.

In this regard, the Province of Nusa Tenggara Timur has already been granted a position at the AMAN table as a regional member through the representation of the ‘Nusa Tenggara Timur Network of Adat Societies Movement’ (Jaringan Gerakan Masyarakat Adat Nusa Tenggara Timur). Below this level, Flores island as a whole is slated to soon become a member through the representation of the ‘Organization of Florenese Adat Societies’ (Organisasi Masyarakat Adat Flores) (AMAN, n.d.). Thus, for now at least, the adat community of Sikka can expect only very minor or very general representation in AMAN.

At this point it is still difficult to judge the extent of participation and influence small adat communities will have in AMAN’s decision making on education policy. Indeed, it is difficult to judge whether AMAN’s policies will have a significant impact on education in Indonesia at all – although Davidson and Henley’s (2007) recent volume attests to both the increasing profile of this organization and the academic interest it has generated. However, AMAN is not the only game in town, and the advocacy and ‘deployment’ of adat is becoming a feature of the wider political landscape of post-New Order decentralized Indonesia. The revitalization of adat in public political life makes adat, like any other ideology implicated in power struggles, subject to exploitation and misrepresentation. Erb (2005; 2007) has highlighted the way political elites and the local villagers have taken different views of the meaning and importance of Manggarai (western Flores) adat in land
disputes. Erb (2005: 331) states:

What is interesting is that both groups see traditional culture as their ally. Politicians believe that by using cultural allusions, traditional ties and ceremonial offerings, they can win over the populace to vote for them. However, the villagers understand traditional relationships and the obligations that they entail far better than most urban-based campaigners and candidates. Because of this, the way of adat can be used to their benefit.

Some disparities between native practitioners of an adat and those who would use this adat for their own political or professional gain are insurmountable. External representations in any form – even the best intentioned and helpful representations – inevitably draw adat into a more diverse and complex fields of relations in which change is unavoidable, indeed necessary. The analysis I presented in Chapter 9 of adat ritual language translations in formal school LCC classes underscores this point.

The determination of authenticity amongst this change is subjective, for anybody can claim the authenticity of their stance. Some claims are valid relative to a spiritual and cosmological base, some are exploitative, and some are quite possibly both. In grassroots terms, however, the authenticity of an engagement with and representation of an indigenous religion is most fundamentally sourced from the acceptance of its sanctified canonical truths through practice – especially through the practice of ritual. This, of course, is the domain of the local adat communities. However, authentic local practice does not ensure that the representations of these communities are necessarily persuasive to others or instituted in policy.

The future of intercultural education in Indonesia will be determined by the relative success of the different claims of authenticity made by the different interested parties. And the decisions that will be made by politicians, bureaucrats, educators, activists and local communities about scholastic adat education are particularly crucial for the overall future of adat. I explained in Chapter 1 that education is a doubled edged sword; it is both an agent of change and preserver of tradition. For instance, the early educational opportunities in Sikka provided by the Church and government schools were, partly by accident of geography and partly by political dominance, taken full advantage of by the lowland Ata Sikka. The anti-adat orientation of these educational institutions has

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5 In 2002-3 the local government in Manggarai felled the coffee plantations of local farmers claiming they were illegally using government forest land. Later in 2004 farmers were arrested for logging government forest land and the ensuing protests resulted in the deaths of six people (Erb 2005: 329).
guaranteed the continued political and economic dominance of the Ata Sikka, but has
equally resulted in the widespread loss of their indigenous religion (see Chapters 2 & 9).
Meanwhile, the indigenous education system of the people of the central highlands with
whom I worked was not challenged by Church or government until much later, and the
indigenous religion still persists with vitality to this day.

The ascendancy of either change or tradition in educational systems depends greatly
upon the relationship between the material taught and the epistemology and pedagogy that
rationalizes the education. This thesis has demonstrated that the cosmological and moral
canon, liturgy, and epistemology of Adat are reproduced and strengthened in its native
educational environment (i.e., ritual). In formal Indonesian schools, on the other hand, the
native epistemology and pedagogy of Adat, and even some of its literal content, are
changed to accord with the educational methods and expectations of formal schooling,
which are vastly different from that of Adat. In this case, change in Adat is ascendant as
the school re-forms Adat knowledge according to its own epistemology and pedagogy.

The ideal format for intercultural schooling for those who support the continued
existence and relevance of indigenous knowledge systems, be they religious or not, is to
incorporate into the school as much as possible the indigenous educational system. In
relation to the Arakmbut of Peru, Aikman (1999: 27) has stated:

For an intercultural education programme to be viable, it must reflect the
indigenous notion of culture and must therefore accommodate the criteria
put forward by the indigenous people themselves.

Aikman argues that the Peruvian Ministry of Education, whilst intending in good faith to
initiate intercultural schooling, proceeded with an outmoded understanding of the
indigenous culture, and the initiative was thus unsuccessful (ibid.: 25). In Indonesia the
Local Content Curriculum program has, as the name suggests, inserted indigenous content
into the curriculum, but has, like the Peruvian government, not fully incorporated the
deeper structure of indigenous educational methodology into the schools.

That said, the LCC program is only a small first step that may lead to more ambitious
policies. Already the freedom and personal responsibility allowed of LCC teachers, which
Bjork (2005) identifies as a major stumbling block of the program, enables teachers to
positively represent local culture – providing, of course, they are willing and capable.
With a measured use of indigenous content and educational methods in combination with
more traditional scholastic subjects and conventional pedagogies, students in Indonesia,
especially those from areas where adat is still vital, would, I believe, benefit greatly. The
critical question regarding this project – other than the question of whether the project will
be realized at all – is who will have the lion’s share of influence over its design and implementation?

4. Conclusion

The question raised at the end of the previous section sets an agenda for further research. Anthropologists and educationists, both international and Indonesian, can profitably chart the development of intercultural education in Indonesia by studying in tandem schools and indigenous education systems. Research based on the twin pillars of comprehensive ethnographies of both school and indigenous learning environments will provide crucial data that separate studies would likely miss. In other words, understanding local cosmologies, and the education systems at work within them, is a prerequisite for understanding the ways these cosmologies are taught and learnt in schools. Through such research, critical analyses of education with regard to the strategic and unequal relationship between different communities and between different national interests (including government and non-governmental organizations) can be fed back into the decision making processes.

This thesis has contributed a beginning to this research agenda. The core objective has been to describe the indigenous religion of the people of Sikka Regency’s central highlands and, in particular, outline its educational system. My description and analysis of Adat education in Local Content Curriculum classes has been limited to the schools of one small area, and has focused only on the use of ritual language. More detailed ethnographical research in schools throughout Sikka Regency, and indeed Indonesia, is necessary to gain a broader comparative perspective of scholastic adat education. Such research must give attention to the possible flow-on influence of LCC classes to conventional subjects. With this research we can begin to measure the importance of the LCC program as a forerunner for the establishment of intercultural education in Indonesia.

Of equal significance is the necessity for further comparative studies of the ways in which indigenous traditions (as they are practiced outside of schools) influence the educational experiences of students and teachers in schools. Nationalized curriculum and examinations overlay on diverse local communities an epistemology based on western scientific and compartmentalized definitions of knowledge. We must seek to understand how the epistemological differences between school and village (and family) contribute to the consistently poor educational outcomes of the economically disadvantaged and remote rural communities in Indonesia. According to the theory of the ecology of mind advanced
in this thesis, children who learn in local communities of practice are potentially subject to ‘epistemological disadvantage.’ That is, if incompatibilities exist between the indigenous and school knowledge systems, and thus between the different truths of deutero-learning individuals generate within each of these systems, students can be expected to experience difficulties of integration.

For example, in the Adat community knowledge is constituted by the unification of language and action, and learning occurs during contexts, such as ritual, in which symbolic propositions and practical performances combine and complement each other. Individuals deutero-learn in a recursive relationship with these contexts and embody assumptions about what knowledge is and how it should be used. These embodied assumptions begin developing early in life and contrast sharply with the epistemology of the school context. Students nonetheless do their best to adapt to different learning environments, and many individuals complete their school careers with success. However, differences in epistemologies can also impede student performance and create unproductive schisms between home and school life. I suggest that so long as Adat continues to make an important contribution to childrens’ minds, hopes for improved educational outcomes depend to a large extent on the formation of intercultural schools. It is imperative that this hypothesis is tested for all Indonesian communities in which indigenous traditions are still vital, because, if it is correct, the promise of modern education to improve all lives will only be fully realized if this education encourages young minds to develop with continuity to locally meaningful knowledge.
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Lessons of the Ancestors


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Lessons of the Ancestors


Appendix

L. Lame Uran’s Manuscript

In Chapter 9 I draw on L. Lame Uran’s manuscript, *Sejarah Persekolahan Pulau Flores: 1862-1990* (A History of Schooling on the Island of Flores: 1862-1990), to outline the history of Florenese Catholic and Government education. The manuscript was made available to me at Candraditya Research Centre for the Study of Religion and Culture. Uran was a noted historian and educator in Flores and he died before the manuscript could be completed and brought to publication. His personal experiences, regional focus and treatment of both Government and Catholic schools contributes a deeper exploration of education on Flores than either Vriens (1972) or Steenbrink (2003). However, Uran does not cite his secondary sources in text. Instead, he includes a bibliography at the beginning of the manuscript. For this reason I reproduce here this bibliography as it is written by Uran:


8. Larantuka 1914-1918: Missiewerk der S.J. en S.V.D.
11. Dagboek Posthouder Maumere 1890-1895. (K.A.E.)
18. Koordinasi Yayasan-yayasan baru MAP. S. 27 (KAE)
31. Surat edaran Vikaris Apostolik 1921-1942 (KAE).
34. Encyclopedie der Nederlands Oost Indie (KAE).
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16. J. Aarts: Vit de school der historie.
17. Dr. Otto Willmann: Didaktik als Bildungslehre.
18. UNESCO 1976: Learning to be.
20. Undang-undang pengajaran 1947 negara Indonesia Timur. (N.I.T.)
27. L. Lame Uran: Jiwa anak remaja. Pegangan bagi guru sekolah menengah pertama.
28. L. Lame Uran: Buku-buku pembaharuan metodik untuk 7 mata pelajaran S.D.