

Chapter Four

Dependency, Development, and Local Powers

Kaman ifot mres warin wak sfa sa?;

‘Has there ever been a tortoise climbing a Casuarina tree on the top of the mountain?’

(Kalen Kaliele, Sasenek, 12 July 1996)

Kalen Kaliele, a *na wuon* of advanced age from the village of Tofot, told me this proverb when I inquired about the prohibition of eating tortoise (*ifot*) for initiated men. He explained that although initiated young men are told that they become seriously ill and perhaps die when they eat tortoise, they will remain tempted to eat this delicious food and thus always find ways to catch and consume the animal. For example, they may carry the tortoise deep into the forest and eat it there secretly. If they all keep the gratification veiled, then nothing will happen.

Certain spots that are hidden deep in the forest belong to the domain of *wuon*, where things are concealed. It is the place where initiations are organised, where *na wuon* operate upon *kahan*, and secrets are made. Large Casuarina trees that grow deep in the forest are called *lewel*, the same name that is given to the grounds for the *wuon* training. It is where Klen Tadyi and Bitik are called upon, where ancestral spirits communicate with humans, and where novices commence their tours through the tree tops to travel onwards to the other world (*dysi*, see Chapter 1). The forest in general and in particular the hill tops which are closest to *dysi*, stand for purity and power, as they come closest to *dysi* and the riches held by *ni mlasa*.¹ The sea or coastal areas, by contrast, stand for threats of *hong*

1. Wolan Krenak (1986a: 94-95) further clarifies the meaning of the proverb. He explains that the high Casuarina tree is the symbol for pride of the achievements of *na wuon* and that the hilltop symbolises the position of powerful and knowledgeable

parties, recent foreigners from across the seas, attacks by *lait* crocodiles, and death by drowning. Kalen Kaliele said, ‘These two worlds will never meet and the *ni mlasa* will never see the tortoise’.

In a different context than Kaliele used the proverb but set in the same world, Ester Klaflé (32) explained the tortoise climbing the tree as follows. ‘Only if marine animals climb tall trees and go up hills, will *pemerintah* be successful in our land’.² Together with others, we were sitting in a forest dwelling, smoking cigarettes after a hard day’s work in the sago groves. We were discussing non-co-operation between villagers for the implementation of a development project. Ester continued saying,

As different as the sea and the forested hills, as unfamiliar are we with *pemerintah*. But let it be, as long as we have the hills and large trees. The knowledgeable men know that all powers reside there, somewhere in the treetops, so we should not worry too much. From there, we can straighten up things and solve the problems. If we mingle our world with the Indonesian world, we will end up with more misunderstandings and confusion. We better stay alone and stand on our own feet, for everything is here and the salvation will fall to us and not because of Jakarta.

Ester suggests that Imyan should turn away from the government and instead trust the local powers, the local forms of knowledge, and the Christian promise of salvation. There is a similar tendency in the villagers’ renunciation of selling mungbeans to Indonesians with which I started this thesis. In Chapter 2, I indicated the nostalgia for an order, encompassed by the *adat* tradition representing an ideal of which present society falls short, giving way to the idea that all the good is grounded in the model of the pure, clean, and orderly *wuon* initiation. This model of autonomy can be applied to numerous events and its

people. From this goodness comes all relief, the solace that is needed in times of trouble. Formerly, men would gather in the forest, near the hills, and perform rituals for getting blessing (*berkat*): cloths, good advise, security, and peace.

2. The term *pemerintah* means ‘government’ - its unaffixed form, *perintah*, means order

geographical scale can easily be enlarged to include foreign government structures as conspiring against Imyan integrity in ways similar to women accused of using evil powers by men.

In the following chapter, I show how the model shapes Imyan ideas about Christianity and explain Ester's bracketing of *pemerintah*, autonomy and salvation. Below, I show the extent to which this model comprises the main discussions of the tradition of knowledge that Imyan gloss as *pemerintah*. We will see that a search for local leadership, strongly related to *adat* and *pembangunan* has become an important meaning of the *pemerintah* tradition of knowledge. *Pemerintah* relates to arguments for strong local leadership and local forms of knowledge to organise the community, so that it can take care of its own future, its own development and make a stance against foreign institutions.

The current meanings of *pemerintah* reflect decades of struggles with the colonial government and Indonesian *pembangunan* ideology. Accordingly, I trace the meanings of *pemerintah* in the history of government policies that are geared towards development of the area. I discuss the impact of the colonial regime, the new promises of the Indonesian government as of the mid-1960s, and the considerable extent to which the modern state of Indonesia penetrated village organisation and politics, and the influence of modern education, and *pembangunan* in both shaping and frustrating the ambitions of villagers. I show that while the meanings of *pemerintah* reflect a desire towards seclusion and village leadership defending or undermining local forms of knowledge, it also entails the coexistence of a willingness to become modern (a yielding to the temptation of *pembangunan*). Moreover, by way of introducing the next chapter I argue that Imyan reflections on the moral stature of their own society are built upon state ideologies which have reinforced the moral dimension of society.³

or command.

3. For a clear analyses of similar issues on Kairiru Island, where Catholicism and the modern state of Papua New Guinea have helped to shape people's pursuit of economic change and moral certainty, see Smith (1994).

The Struggle for Effective Leadership

Before the first missionaries arrived and promoted village formation, Imyans lived in small unstable settlements. The families and descent groups resided and moved within a vast territory of forested hills and marshes with sago trees and mangroves along the rivers and estuaries to which they claimed ancestral rights. These groups greatly varied in size. In different ways and with varying intensity all the group members were involved in exchange, ritual, and warfare. According to informants, cloth exchange connected individuals and groups who lived dispersed in a large territory, and male initiation and other major rituals regularly brought a large amount of people together. Warfare is also seen as a way to maintain good relations as it necessitated gatherings and co-operation of groups of people. In particular *wuon* practices and *kain timur* exchange, as indicated in the previous chapter, are seen to have helped to shape, express, and reproduce concepts of moral regulation, the self, and the group.

This historical horizon, as indicated in the previous chapter, is captured by Imyan with the term *adat* which in reflections on the present-day village organisation, relates to former local hierarchies and ritual organisations. Taken for granted in such accounts of *adat* are the sky deities and the spirits of trees, waters, and plots of land. Though vague, the ideas about the unseen space centre on the moral behaviour of humans. In particular, spirits of the ancestors, composed of all the deceased male Imyan, were believed to affect the welfare and prosperity of their descendants. Because initiation rituals were directed towards them and cloths were offered, the average Imyan did not need to bother about them. They were more concerned about *lait* that is of uncertain origin and may behave erratically.

Concerning more tangible politics, people chose their own leaders, usually older, knowledgeable and powerful men. There were different types of leaders, some of which are still recognised today. Although these leadership positions have different sources of authority, the same person often holds them. The most important position in society was held by the *na tmak*. He was the ritual leader or initiator. The *na tmak* conveyed his knowledge about the world during initiation

through symbolic language, communicating many secret stories about the origin of the world and the workings of magic. In the historical arena in which the sultan of Tidore formed an important centre, *raja* and *kapitan* held positions that were more political. Alongside other titles, *raja* and *kapitan* titles related to the sultan with which the populations at the south coast of the Kepala Burung have been in contact, either directly or indirectly. Local trade representatives of *rajas* in outer areas grew wealthy and powerful when world demand for birds of paradise feathers and other forests products made the island of New Guinea an important trade destination.

During Dutch colonial rule, the *raja* and *kapitan* continued to play a political role as they became preferred representatives of the local people. Bearing convenient and well-known classifications of local forms of power, they were appointed leading roles in the colonial context. In Imyan country, some *kapitan* were appointed as head of village (*kepala kampong*) and given a badge and a document. They were expected to urge their followers to live together in these newly concentrated settlements (see Elmberg 1968: 20 and Massink 1955b: 9). Consequently, the local *rajas* and *kapitans* were placed in a context of a new centre of power and wealth. The *na tmak* did not qualify for this position because they were too closely associated with ‘primitive’ customs. Not only existing *raja* or *kapitan* were granted positions in the new administration, also other powerful people such as war-leaders were appointed as *raja* or *kapitan* and then expected to be given some control over a large area.

Van Dijk notes in his 1940 Memorandum of Transfer that the administrative sub-division, the *Onderafdeeling Midden-Vogelkop*, in the late 1930s was not yet divided in districts; it comprised the Ayamaru, Ayfat, Aitinyo, Inanwatan, and Teminabuan areas. In this large area certain elders (*kepala toeha*) or any fine Papuan who could speak a little Malay, were appointed as *kapitan* (Van Dijk 1940: 3). The *kapitan* had to provide food and work force for military patrols and, where possible, extract taxes from anyone who received money for working for the military or the government.

Taxes were expected from everybody who held a salaried position as a teacher, police officer, or administrative official. In the early years of the

administration in the area, local people were expected to pay ‘taxes’ in the form of *damar* (resin) which Chinese and Arabic traders were able to sell at markets in Sorong and the Moluccas.⁴ Older informants still remember this by the expression: *cari blasting* (‘collecting taxes’). Civil servant Lotgering made an end to this system in 1940 in order to stimulate the production of *damar* for the people’s own benefit (see Lotgering 1940: 51 and Cappetti 1961: 70-78).

Throughout the Teminabuan area, *rajas* and *kapitans* thus became important middlemen who negotiated between the local people and the colonial government. These leaders were provided with a uniform and a salary, and their children received elementary education in the mission schools. Some of these children entered a vocational school, and often became the religious leaders and schoolteachers of today. The *raja* was often also an economic entrepreneur, or a local Imyan/Tehit *na kohok* or a Maybrat *bobot*. Through the accumulation of family wealth, especially valuable cloth, these entrepreneurs were able to maintain a powerful position in society.

Because of being used as brokers between the Dutch colonial government and the local people, the political positions of the local leaders were strengthened. A striking example, already mentioned in Chapter 3, is Angguok who was appointed as head of the village of Wersar at the Kaibus River and who was often consulted by colonial officers on matters pertaining to a larger area. In fact, in the 1930s, the administration of the area was indirect; it occurred through Angguok and correspondingly he is often named Raja Kaibus or Flé-flé Kondjol, meaning the noble and mighty Kondjol.⁵ A medal and a document written in Dutch and Malay called *Bewijs van aanstelling* or *Soerat angkatan* given to Angguok respectively in the name of the Dutch throne (*Kerajaan Belanda*) and the Self-government of Tidore (*Zelfbestuur van Tidore* or *Pemerintah Keradjaan*

4. In fact, by having people collect *damar* resin, the colonial government followed in the footsteps of the *raja* who for centuries tried to obtain this trade good, alongside other things. *Damar* resin has long been a major means of illumination used throughout the archipelago. The use of *damar* for lighting continued until mineral oil became available (Swadling 1996: 157).

5. *Na flé-flé* is a form of address for a leader, *raja* or *kapitan*, with more esteem than a *na kohok* (‘wealthy man’) (see Flassy 1981: xxii).

Tidore) in 1931, further added to his status and association of nobility and a link with powers associated with kingdoms. The medal and the document are well preserved by the villagers of Wersar and are presently treated as treasures that refer to autonomy and power in pre-colonial and colonial times.

In colonial times the *raja* was replaced by a queen (*ratu*), namely Queen Wilhelmina of the Netherlands. The imposition of Dutch colonial organisational forms took place gradually and allowed for a slow reformation of local alliances and the subsequent construction of villages. The space of the new state began to replace the horizon of the power of the sultan and his *rajas*. When the territory became part of Indonesia, these titles had not been used officially for some time because the people bearing them were gradually replaced by civil servants from overseas (Dutch, Ambonese and later Javanese) from the late 1940s onwards.

Particularly in this new socio-economic configuration, the Imyan began to feel increasingly marginalised. Therefore, the meanings of the titles have taken on new significance, primarily pertaining to resistance and dissent. The titles are thus associated with former centres of power that became opposed to the colonial state and presently have become a straightforward way to express Imyan opposition against the government.⁶ As Aser Kemesrar (34) recounts:

When *Belanda* came, the father of Yunus Kemesrar, Trithoin Kemesrar was appointed as head of the village [*kepala kampung*]. He was *na sebe* [war leader] and *kapitan* and the Dutch knew this. He was ordered to organise a bunch of people who did not know about *pemerintah* and *desa*. His authority was great, he was a man who could mobilise all people by giving only one order. That is because he was *kapitan*. But when the Indonesians came this changed. Amos Mejefat became head of the village because he

6. Compare Ellen (1997: 89) who reports similar associations with these titles by the present Raja Kataloka on the island of Gorom in the Southeast Seram area. Visser (1994) reports that in Sahu, Halmahera, titles associated with Tidore are also used to express power. The relation between titles, the sultanate and locally acknowledged power is also apparent in the Raja Ampat area, where the title of *marinyo* was given to the chief who arranged the tribute and the repair of the canoe, to bring the tribute to Tidore (Kamma 1982: 76; Mansoben 1982: 170).

knew Malay. He understood Pancasila and therefore the Indonesians wanted him to rule us.

Aser Kemesrar, December 1994, Tape 5A: 201-230

In the 1970s, the older forms of authority were formally replaced by a *desa* system that is part of the Indonesian administrative system based on the hierarchical model of the province (*propinsi*), district (*kabupaten*), sub-district (*kecamatan*), and village (*desa*). Regulating the villages in accordance with the Indonesian notions of community is part of a significant project of the New Order government to create national unity. While national unity is not something that local Papuans easily ascribe to, Imyan have come to conceive of their villages as an ongoing *pembangunan* project and as a key site for the formation of political entities.⁷

In Haha, the *desa* system encountered a complex social and political situation as it was already projected into a colonial village (*kampong*) with Trithoin Kemesrar as *kepala kampong* (see Chapter 2). After Trithoin was replaced by Amos Mejefat, the *desa* system sealed as it were the end of the historically grounded leadership of the Kemesrars. The end of *wuon* initiations and the demise of *na wuon* and the effective seizing of new opportunities by the Mejefats, further contributed to an almost complete neglect of historically grounded powers.

Currently, for the Kemesrar/Woloblé faction in Haha, the traditional authority relates to *wuon* and the *rajas*, whereas for the Mejefat/Klaflé faction, the new *desa* system has become increasingly important in defining their politics. The latter group benefits from the fact that no feasible alternative to the *desa* system is permitted and that, after over twenty years, villagers have become familiar with the *desa* as a vehicle of the government. But, for the fact that it is such an important government vehicle, allegedly intended to keep Papuans under Jakarta's thumb and that it prevents Imyan from getting prosperous, the other

7. See Barker (1996) for an analysis of comparable processes of Maisin's consciousness of their community as informed by European notions of villages introduced in Papua New Guinea by the colonial governments and the missions.

faction holds winning cards. Moreover, to the advantage of the Kemesrar faction, people in general view the *desa* system as deprived of any historical, mythical, and magical connotation. As Aser put it plainly:

My! The Queen of the Netherlands commissioned our *kapitan* and we belonged to Tidore. Then *pemerintah* comes and tells us that we are nothing. Indeed, they want us to learn about Javanese kings and shadow plays that dramatise Hindu epics, so that we come to think of our own royal descent as worthless. Ha! We know better because we know *adat*.

Aser Kemesrar, December 1994, Tape 5A: 334-355

I recall that in particular the Kemesrar people are presently proud of their *kapitan* titles as they refer to former powerful leaders on the island of Salawati and to the meanings these titles acquired during Dutch colonial rule. In the previous chapter, I have already indicated that the transition from *kapitan* as leader (Kemesrar) to an educated, secular, leader (Mejefat) has recently led to debates about the definition of political leadership in the village of Haha. These talks culminated as the result of increasing frustration of the weak position and the failing role of Amos Mejefat as village head.

In 1995, Amos' reputation for being a clever and responsible leader dropped to a low. Haha villagers began to vehemently criticise his stubborn and self-important way of dealing with village affairs and his thick-headed and pedantic way of addressing his subjects. After twenty years of holding the position of head of the village, alongside with being the village pastor and head of the church council, Amos began to feel increasingly lonely at the top. His egotism did not allow for publicly admitting that he should be replaced and that the time was ripe for a new style of village management. He felt, however, that he could no longer ignore the villagers' critique and their call for a fresh leader.

During public gatherings, I often heard people saying that Amos should listen to local complaints and resign from 'the presidency', as one of his opponents liked to parallel Amos' absolute rule with that of Suharto. Others also

stressed his dictator-like behaviour and pointed at other potential leaders. These potential leaders were men in their 30s or early 40s who were expected to be able to improve the village's marginal position through the better organisation of collective work and more courage to tell the government about what is needed and what not. The call for another type of leadership reflects Amos' unresolved stance regarding the villagers' resistance towards the government and the organisation of work and time for the benefit of communal *pembangunan* projects. Many also wanted to see resolute actions taken against antisocial persons and those who hampered sociality in any other way, in particular women engaged in *lait*.

Amos' refusal to accept the peoples' critique and demands in a serious manner is to be understood in the light of harsh and secretive politics in the 1970s, when he became a powerful person in the region, at first as a religious teacher in villages other than Haha. Moreover, in the late 1960s he was kidnapped by rebels from Ayamaru and Teminabuan and taken to their base-camp near the Kladuk River. There Amos was expected to assist in the struggle of the regional OPM organisation headquartered somewhere near the Kladuk River, north of the village of Wenslolo. I was told that Amos became part of the OPM against his own will. As soon as possible he fled from the OPM headquarters and reported all that he learned to the army.⁸ Though the OPM wanted him because he could speak Malay and had knowledge of the Bible, Amos assured the army that his duty was to teach the Scripture to the people of Teminabuan under any given circumstance and any government. He once compared his early work in the area with that of Paul, the Apostle of the Gentiles (Acts 13: 9).

During a discussion with me, he referred to Paul's mission work among the gentiles in the Eastern Mediterranean in the first century A.D. and suggested that the reason why he got educated at a Dutch school was a sign of God's favour. His Pauline conversion, he suggested, did not come when he was baptised by Reverend Marcus in 1953, but when he learned to read the Bible in Miei. Then

8. According to Amos himself, he was 'kidnapped' for a period of one year; others suggest a period of longer than one year and sometimes up to two years.

he experienced God talking to him. It made him realise that he was not to become a prophet like his namesake in the Bible, but that he had to embark on a special mission to bring God's Word to his own people.

'What has the OPM to do with that?' he asked me. 'Look Jaap, there is no reason for one of God's pupils to fight against a government that is sanctioned by that same God. Read Romans 13: 1-17 in which it is clearly stated that one should subject oneself to any government'. In reply, I referred to the logic of what other people do by applying this biblical quotation to the issue of an OPM government. The rhetoric of this logic was, of course, not new to him and he quickly replied by saying that the lasting nature of the Indonesian government and the fact that the Pancasila doctrine has a central place for God, indicates that God supports Suharto instead of such rebels as the former and present-day OPM leaders. Amos said, 'The OPM is disorganised and has no plan for the development of Haha. The Indonesian government brings peace and order [*orde*] and takes care of our well-being [*kesejahteraan*], just like the church'.

Amos' loyalty to the government and the church has made him an officially recognised loyal leader, more likely to be supported than leaders who would try to defend the rights and equality of villagers or the local *adat*. The Pancasila doctrine, which Amos supports, advocates the idea that God sanctioned the president and his instructions. As such, he supports the marginalisation of his village and, by implication, himself. Along this line, Haha villagers began to criticise him, not directly for his support of *pemerintah*, but for his acceptance of the situation in which they held a powerless position and were regarded as stupid and lazy people who depended on *pembangunan* support in order to survive.

Arguing against the idea that Imyan know nothing and therefore do nothing, in particular members of the Kemesrar/Woloblé camp demanded that Amos resign from his position in order to make way for someone who would be ambitious enough to tell the government that they exist. Two years later, in 1998, I learned from letters of friends that Amos had not succeeded in mobilising enough support for a fourth letter to the government office in Teminabuan stating that all the villagers of Haha supported his next term. Over half of the population had made a strong case for a fair election and succeeded in having Seppy

Kemesrar (37) to take his place.

Seppy is known for talking politics bravely with visiting sub-district officers. Beside being brash enough to open his mouth, he is also believed to have good ideas on how to mobilise and organise villagers so that communal tasks will be accomplished and that development programs will become a success. He often stressed that there is in fact consent on the need to work together and to discipline time in order to work on development. The only problem, according to Seppy, is that there are always people who excuse themselves from tasks, because they consider other concerns like cloths and harvesting sago more important. This individual decision to disobey orders led others to think along similar lines and to argue that their personal and family tasks are more important. Eventually, almost nobody showed up when there was a communal task to be performed in the framework of local development projects or the IDT. In order to avoid criticism, those who found their private concerns more important would stay in the sago groves (*dusun*) sometimes for more than a week. When Amos saw them in the church during Sunday Service after a while he would be furious with them, accusing them of disobeying God's law, collaborating with Satan, and the like. But it didn't work. As Seppy explained in public after Sunday Service in May 1996:

Everybody knows that Amos does not determine whether one is close to God or close to Satan. What we do know is that we are inclined to pay more attention to our own worries than to projects that may do some good for the village as a whole. I suggest, in order to prevent individuals from getting away with their obligation to the community we should report their behaviour to the police who can then come to punish them. In addition, the *camat* [head of the sub-district] will learn about those who ignore us. Maybe the *camat* will then decide to exclude them from financial assistance. Perhaps they can make a village of their own and then apply for subsidies themselves. You will see that out of distrust the *camat* will not help them and will leave them without assistance.

Seppy Kemesrar, March 1995, Tape 84B: 440-460

Seppy's call for hard measures was widely approved. Moreover, the struggle for power between the Kemesrar and Mejefat groups also helped Seppy to gain much credit in his attempt to create a distinct profile for himself. In speeches, he often stressed that it was not solely his personal ambition to present himself as a new leader, but that history commanded it. The Kemesrar tradition of holding powerful *adat* positions was already the argument for many villagers to shift allegiance from the Mejefats to the Kemesrars.

Significantly, the criticism of Amos' position related not only to his failure to act as a real leader who could carry the heavy load of *pembangunan*, but had to do with an assessment of the distinction between *pemerintah* and *adat*. In the camp of those who support the *desa* system and the images it evokes of national *pembangunan* were the Mejefat and the Klaflé people of the upper village. The other camp, represented by children of the former *kapitan*, war leaders, ritual leaders, and *na kohok*, consisted of the Kemesrar and Woloblé people of the lower village.

In the debates, the 'traditional' camp represented the traditional order characterised by descent group division and the authoritative roles of traditional leaders. The gloss *adat* regularly turns up in their arguments. The 'modernist' camp stresses the importance of directing the village towards the path of *pembangunan* and dutiful adherence to the precepts of the national doctrine of Pancasila. In their talk, the gloss *pemerintah* appears to function as a shorthand way of referring to their point of view and claims of authority. While their opponents did not publicly deny the modern forms of village government and the state ideologies, they claimed that older patterns of authority would be more successful. They wanted to re-install the 'natural' leaderships of former authorities.

In line with what McWilliam has observed in villages in the Amanuban region of South Central Timor, Imyan are waging 'a struggle for legitimacy by the national government over against what is perceived as the manifestation of the atomistic and divergent qualities of customary law and its attendant moral codes' (1999: 122). It is the moral code invoked by *adat* that informs Imyan

concern with village leadership and forms an important meaning of the tradition of knowledge of *pemerintah*. The advent of the *desa* has thus only undermined the actual forms of traditional leadership but not the powers and autonomy to which they relate as the recent election of a member of the Kemesrar group as ‘father of the village’ (*pak desa*) indicates. For the situation in South Central Timor, McWilliam (1999: 143) concludes that ‘the administrative and political institutions of the central government remain only a superficial graft on the local body politic’. Also in the Teminabuan area, the *desa* system is at best perfunctory, its emphasis being more on form and presentation rather than on substance and real service. In these circumstances, pre-*desa* and pre-colonial forms of organisation and practice persist.

Work and Development

The question of village leadership is on the one hand a local struggle for power but as it relates to structures and ideas that extend beyond the village domain, on the other hand, it is necessary to investigate the roots of Imyan discontent with the outside government. Current protest against and support for *pembangunan* are central to Imyan understandings of the government. In order to fully understand its present-day use, I attempt to ground the tradition of *pemerintah* in the history of development politics in the area. From the colonial period onwards, Imyan have become increasingly served by and appealed to (products of) modern technology and modern life styles. As the government’s *pembangunan* ideology promises more of all this, it has become a key meaning of the *pemerintah* tradition.

Before *pembangunan*, Dutch civil servants and missionaries made attempts at development, particularly in the 1950s. Reports by Dutch colonial officers from this period suggest that the population of the Teminabuan area was rather easily pacified and provided good quality labour for the building of offices, the construction of airstrips and roads, and the drilling for oil. For example, the oil operations in Sorong and Klamono could rely on a steady amount of indigenous

workforce and the government at Teminabuan was able to have a relatively large group of people to perform regular duties in order to keep the then unpaved road from Teminabuan and Ayamaru clean (Lotgering 1940: 39).⁹ The work schedule demanded that every village supplied manpower for a few days, whereby the coordinator in Teminabuan made sure that not more than the half of the male population of one village was ordered to the work site. Before the construction of the road and the building of offices, other projects were considered to provide work for the local people.

In the 1930s and in the post-war period, coconut seedlings have been distributed among the people. Groups of coconut trees still indicate where people had formerly built villages and where people reside today. The village of Haha has a few coconut trees, but the fruits are not considered fit for consumption or for sale at the market. Perhaps only on the occasion of the consumption of rice, are young men asked to climb a tree so that the rice can be cooked in coconut milk (*santen*). The construction of a coconut plantation with high potential had been considered at the west of the Kaibus in 1932 (see Vink 1993[1932]: 20, Cappetti 1961: 87-92).

More than sixty years later, the possibility of the cultivation of coconuts (*kelapa sawit*) has been resumed and has led to the construction of a big jetty and a road from there to Teminabuan town (see Chapter 1). Similarly, there are plans to cut all vegetation, including sago groves, at the coastal stretch from the Klabra River to the Kaibus for the cultivation of coconuts. At the planning bureau in Sorong this project is discussed with great enthusiasm and treated as a matter of prestige. I was told by one of its designers that the plantation would become the largest in the world. Eventually, Teminabuan or Sorong will house a large coconut oil plant where many local people can find work. Many Imyan villagers however, see that the recent construction of a road to their village would allow Javanese in-migrants to come and work at the plantation, leaving Imyan, at the best, with the lowest-paid jobs.

9. In contrast, because there was not much work for the local population, people in Inanwatan were obliged to devote 27 day per year to village work, so as to teach them discipline and diligence (Lotgering 1940: 39).

Another natural resource of the Teminabuan area is *Agathis* (*kewar*), a tree that grows on the dryer sandy lands above the tidal swamps. In many areas, the tree has since long been exploited by tapping the resin (*damar*, *kayir*).¹⁰ Teminabuan has never been an important production site for odoriferous resin or the liquid resins that can be used as fuel for lamps, but the production of copal (from the *Agathis* tree) became increasingly important after the Second World War, when prices went up and people sought opportunities to get cash. Although the quality of the product was low, the government began to show increasing interest in the amount of resin that could be shipped out of the Kaibus.

In the early 1960s, the Department of Forestry (*Boswezen*) began making an inventory of the locations and the number of *Agathis* stands. A survey was made on the eastern side of the Kaibus River, near Beriat. In the forest near Beriat that grows on very poor soil - white sand interspersed with loam - the large emergent trees of *Agathis* appear to be underrepresented. Wim Vink (1998: 106) notes that this is the result of long-term tapping of the resin as well as removal of seedlings for plantation. In 1932, the civil servant, A.L. Vink (1993[1932]: 34) reported that the *damar* forests in the Teminabuan area 'have in earlier years almost completely been killed by tapping'. Cappetti (1961: 69) indicates that in the early 1960s there was no longer a market for *damar*. There have been no significant exports of *damar* from Teminabuan since.

In his 1961 Memorandum of Transfer, Frans Cappetti, the last Dutch head of the *Onderafdeeling Teminaboean*, reflects on less than two decades of colonial administration and attempts to bring development. He reviews the experiments with coconut, *damar*, and sago projects and concludes that when one considers that, even though the people have plenty of time to work for these projects, the work is too much for them:

As gatherers, the people living at the coastal stretches take a passive stance towards nature and time. They do not make plans and do not look ahead.

10. Seyne Kok (1992[1919]) mentions in his Memorandum of Transfer that relatively large amounts of *damar* were then obtained from both the Fak-fak region and the northern shores of the MacCluer Gulf, in particular from the Kais and Metamani areas.

They live in a space and time that does not extend beyond the present.¹¹ Therefore, they never finish the work that has to be done. Moreover, since the pacification, there is no need for co-operation anymore because there is neither need to protect the community against enemy attacks nor is there a need to engage in war against the enemy. One of the most important preconditions for economic development of this rural area is that the people get interested in such development and learn to look ahead. They should learn to see all activities in the perspective of time and space and also learn to combine traditional activities with new ones (Cappetti 1961: 93, my translation).

In order to achieve this, Cappetti strongly argues against arbitrary measures or overloading the people with work accompanied by information about such things as the cultivation of the coconut trees as the way towards an economically better future. What matters most is to help them to organise time. Cappetti finds it important to make sure that no activity for the production of cash crops harms the family-based production of food (1961: 93-94). In the eye of the Netherlands New Guinea government, the local people remained culturally stagnant (they were still primitive after all) and lazy, while at the same time local government officials in Teminabuan found themselves bound hand and feet to a low budget. While the Memoranda of Transfer from the 1950s are filled with details on export, import, development projects, and plans, the situation was that the administration, due to shortage of funds and of personnel, could not achieve good results in terms of the development of the economic potential of the area. The Dutch government in Teminabuan was unable to fulfil the promise of development.

In Imyan recountings of this period, little mention is made of Dutch

11. Despite being widely seen as reprehensible, the idea that Papuans and ‘primitives’ in general have no sense of time is still cherished today. I have heard development officers telling about it, but, even more alarming is that the Javanese scholar Sarwono recently argued that the Amungme of Southwest New Guinea, ‘think in the present tense only. Their time frame is limited to the present. The future does not exist in their mind. That is why they do not make plans’ (1998: 359).

government officials actively working at local development but instead with roads, buildings, forestry and, above all, with maintaining law and order and the abolishment of *adat* practices such as initiation and the exchange of cloth. Whereas the mission suffered even more from shortage of funds and personnel, it seems that the missionaries had their own views of the ways of thinking and doing of the local people. While civil servants were happy to report rising amounts of collected taxes (see below), whatever increase in the amount of produce and the export of these products and the points reached with projects such as road laying, letters from such missionaries as Marcus to the government and to their home offices suggest that they worried more about the mental well-being of the people and the hard times the locals had seeing their world changing so rapidly. Not surprisingly, faith in God would help them, not only to make them less fearsome for local spirits and evil powers, but also to prepare them for a new reality, for a world in which diligence and charity would indicate one's destiny (see, for example, Marcus n.d., vol. II: 133f; Jensma 1968: 158-60).

In order to develop the area and to prepare Teminabuan people for the Rapture, the mission suggested that adjustments had to be made to local people's mentality. Reverend Marcus substantiated in a report on modern education in the Maybrat area for the Bureau of Native Affairs, that any plan for development could only succeed if there was also 'a mental and spiritual switchover to another worldview' (1956). As part of a regional plan (*streekplan*) for the Teminabuan, Kais and Ayamaru area, he wrote that in order to bring about this necessary conversion, the Maybrat,

should foremost come to understand himself as a creature devoid of the ability to influence the Creation by means of magic. He can only reach this point through diligence and intelligence. It does not matter if these qualities are his own or have foreign origins. What matters is that these qualities come to be understood as humanly attainable powers. This does not mean that everything should be produced by manual labour. But when machines are used it should be explained to them that a machine is also the product of human mental power and muscular strength. Another important factor is the

advancement of an effective education system. ... Schools should be closely involved in the establishment of village communities. The school and evangelisation must become the backbone of this community. After all, in school, people will be trained for the future and become, as the conservatives hope, good citizens, or, as the progressives hope, good allies (Marcus 1956: 8, my translation).

In Marcus' view, education and practical development should go hand in hand with mental or spiritual changes. Clearly protecting his own missionary projects he argues that, through contact with Western civilisation, the people may get some economic development but will certainly be detached from their past, their future and their spiritual ground. He foresees the formation of 'a dissatisfied rural proletariat' (Marcus 1956: 8, my translation) and suggests that evangelisation will provide the people with the necessary rationale to work for their future. He considers that it is thereby important to prevent any form of syncretism with existing institutions such as initiation and cloth exchange. These institutions should be abolished by any means because they allow the elders to hold back development:

Everywhere the old powers and leaders try to maintain their position at the cost of the general good. They do this without malicious intent but rather out of stupidity and for reasons of just keeping their position. It is, however, incommensurable with Christianity. Every *adat* and *kain timur*-complex will necessarily collide with Christianity because as entities that are determined by magic, they will produce syncretism and prevent the change to a legal order that is based on the Ten Commandments. For this reason we have decided to push for the abolishment of these institutions with full effort (Marcus 1956: 7, my translation).

The suppression of cloth exchange and *wuon* initiation belonged to the major goals of the Dutch colonial administration in the 1950s. Also the control over death-dealing *suangi* and the violence that occurred as the result of *suangi*

accusations was a major concern for Marcus and the government officials.¹² *Suangi* was seen as wrong aspects of *adat* because it disrupts society, just as *kain timur* (Herbert Marcus, personal communication 1994).

As described in Chapter 2, in particular Merkelijn and Massink were concerned with cloth exchange and the latter eventually succeeded in motivating *bobot* and *na kohok* to put an end to excessive forms of exchange that had characterised the years after the war. Less concerned with disruption of the social structure and rather more with the spiritual development of the people, Marcus and the Ambonese *guru* who were posted in the villages put much effort into breaking the powers of both the *na kohok* or *bobot* and *na tmak*.

Due to their unequivocal censorship of traditional practices like initiation rituals and the exchange of cloths, both Marcus and Massink clearly put a stamp on the area and left behind a profound impression. When discussing missionisation many Imyan readily refer to Marcus' stern character, his drastic actions against initiatory rituals, and his emphasis on living a straight and narrow life. Massink is also recalled as a strict leader. Of course, besides their personal style of engaging with local people, we must realise that during 1950s, the influence of government and mission increasingly affected the lives and concerns of the local people. In any case, in Imyan stories about this period, 'Massink' and 'Marcus' appear as icons who both stand for the rigid manner in which the government officials and missionaries proceeded.

There are two important events referred to in these recollections. The first is that Dutch missionary and government wanted to abolish the exchange of cloths. The second tells of heavy-handed missionaries such as Marcus, who patrolled the area to burn initiation houses and beat the initiators to clear the way for conversion to Christianity, for new schooling, and a new social order. Initiatory rituals were practised until the mid-1960s. Other major rituals have also disappeared within the last three decades. These rituals are now generally

12. In a verdict of a *suangi* defendant pronounced on 7 December 1956 in Teminabuan, the legal adviser Dubois states that in the use of evil powers, 'the *adat* is wrong and in breach with the general principles of humanity and therefore the local people should be made clear ... that the government will forbid these kinds of incidents in the future'

considered as improper in a modern Christian society, but this does not mean that people deny the past and present importance of these rituals. As for the *wuon* cult in particular, former knowledge and practices are being considered of great importance to the future of Imyan.

The Promises of Development

Many aspects of *pemerintah* relate to the arrival and activities of colonial administrators and missionaries, and more importantly, to the status of Imyan as second-class citizens of the Indonesian nation-state. In their response to recent *pembangunan* initiatives, Imyan have not rejected all changes. Even the ‘conservative’ older generation agrees with the ‘modern’ younger generation that some change is good. Both men and women, old and young may favour in varying degrees such new things as Christian teachings, modern schooling, health care, and *pembangunan* projects.

Imyan people’s most regular confrontation with the modern world consists of *pembangunan* projects from the government in Jakarta. The Indonesian government began to concern itself systematically with regional cultures with the design and execution of the second *Repelita* stage in the mid-70s. For the most part this concern was for the benefit of the New Order’s strategy for advancing national culture through and for *pembangunan nasional* (‘national development’). Underlying and guiding *pembangunan* are such activities as promoting the use of the national language and promoting symbols of national struggle. These programs resulted in writings such as the ‘The Struggle of the People of Irian Jaya for Independence’ (*Sejarah Perjuangan Rakyat Irian Jaya, 1900-1969*) produced at the Universitas Cenderawasih at Abepura (Jayapura).¹³

(1994a: 130, my translation).

13. There is wide range of similar books, booklets, and pamphlets that reflect official position on matters of any sensitivity and promote a new history which suggests that as of 1900 the people of Irian Jaya always were and wanted to be part of Indonesia. Ballard (1999: 153) also mentions autobiographies produced by Indonesian leaders accounting their involvement as political prisoners of the Dutch at the infamous Boven-

The Pancasila principles suggest that *kebudayaan* ('culture') is closely tied to *pembangunan* because effective *pembangunan* requires uniformity of supportive cultural values and *kebudayaan* should be able to dissolve and resolve *pembangunan*'s side-effects. Deriving their thoughts and quotations from instruction books that are produced to disseminate these *pembangunan* ideologies, local administrators in Teminabuan reiterate these Pancasila based ideologies which Imyan understand in the unintended opposite manner: If we let our *adat* to be moulded into *kebudayaan*, then we will lose our autonomy in the course of *pembangunan*. As the head of the village of Woloin expressed: 'Let them bring all the money, materials, instructions, etc. for *pembangunan*, but we won't let them get involved in our culture'. After a few seconds of contemplation, he hastened to add, There is not much left of our *kebudayaan* because our fathers did not dare to pass it on to us. They were afraid to be punished by the Indonesians. Look what happened to Arnold Ap'.

Most Imyan base the claim that the state opposed *kebudayaan* upon the arrest and death of Arnold Ap in 1984. Ap, Biak anthropologist, advocate of Irianese culture, curator at the ethnographic museum in Jayapura, and leader of the musical group Mambesak is recalled as a martyr (see Juillerat 1984; Anderson 1991: 176-8; Defert 1996: 360-1). His death is claimed to be part of the Indonesian strategy to destroy Papuan cultural traditions.¹⁴ Imyan claim that his culture projects were considered as a threat to Indonesia and that Arnold was therefore killed. *Kebudayaan* has thus become a very powerful category because expression of *kebudayaan* means protest (Pigay 2000: 297-300).

Digoel camp, or as liberators in the struggle to expel the Dutch.

14. Mambesak is mostly remembered by the collection of four tapes with recordings of songs from numerous groups, including two Tehit songs (*Women Taise* and *Weno*) that are composed by Wolas Krenak (see Mambesak 1980: 4, 13). Significantly, Imyan consider both songs as protest songs and say that after the killing of Ap, people hid the tapes in caves or burned them.

Besides suppressing *kebudayaan*, the Indonesian government aimed at bringing Papuans into the mainstream of Indonesia through *pembangunan*. From the 1980s onwards, this policy resulted in numerous large-scale programs. According to Imyan, the advent of *pembangunan* began in the early 1980s with ‘rural development aid’ (*Bandes*) funds, followed in the 1990 by the IDT program.¹⁵ *Pembangunan* has been taught by government delegations that patrol the area to inform villagers about national *pembangunan* and the sincere dedication of the government to bring ‘backward’ (*tertinggal*) and ‘out-of-the way’ (*terasing*) people into the mainstream of Indonesian life.

Having internalised much of the national development discourses, most Imyan are very open and eager to participate in the modern world. Village education at primary school, through discussions in women’s groups, and political extension sessions during which government officials explain the state’s Pancasila and state policies, shape the ambitions and minds of the Imyan. Another thing is that Imyan are generally not conservatives and they find the temptation to become ‘modern’ irresistible. They know what they want: to own a brick house, to wear fancy clothes, enjoy a salary, to shop in supermarkets, to drive a motorcycle, and to travel to other countries.

While many realise that this world is beyond their reach, there are many believing that some of these things can actually be achieved. Some want to have a paved road connection with Teminabuan for the transportation of cash crops that they plan to grow. There are quite a few who explicitly welcome all government activities because they expect that through the development programs the village will become modern. I have often heard them say that once the programs become a success, they will build a two-storeyed house with guestrooms, a shop (*toko*) and a food stall (*warung*) at the front. These ambitious men are few in number and, even more significantly, they share with most of the other society members the view that things will not go smoothly.

15. The acronym *Bandes* stands for *Bantuan Pembangunan Desa* (‘Rural Development Aid’) and comprises funds which are provided by the provincial government. IDT has been discussed before in the Introduction.

In 1993, *pembangunan* gained new momentum when the program for ‘underdeveloped villages’ (*Inpres Desa Tertinggal*, IDT) was launched. This large-scale program aims to reduce the ‘social and economic disparity’ of people whose lives are seriously left behind by progress (*tertinggal parah*). All Imyan villages were included in this category and thus eligible for the program’s projects for cash crop production, the supply of funds for buying seeds, fertilisers, and the costs of transportation to regional markets.

Despite widespread appreciation of the IDT program among Imyan villagers, they are critical of the claim that this *pembangunan* would pave the road to welfare and eventual industrial take-off (*tinggal landas*). The faith in *pembangunan* has declined over the last few decades. What keeps many Imyan from taking up the challenge of the IDT program is a general concern to maintain self-worth (or a fear of losing self-worth). As indicated by Ester at the beginning of this chapter, maintaining self-worth is strongly related to ideas about the policies of the Indonesian government. Quite a few Imyan resist many of modern demands that are posed by the Indonesian government.

Haha villagers’ reaction to the mungbean project, as discussed in the Introduction, has also shown us that complaining about the amount of time required often plays out resistance to work demanded by *pembangunan* and the related community tasks. In private or among trustworthy friends, in particular men openly express their distrust of the Indonesian government and often go on at length to discuss the policies of the Indonesians which they see as privileging Javanese families who suffer from land and food shortage and who need the natural resources to pay for the luxurious lives of the elite on Java and other inner islands.

In many ways, the Javanese have been successful in presenting themselves as the dominant cultural group in Indonesia and the state’s government has been successful in subordinating most Papuans to its power. Therefore, the Imyan have become a docile people. Yet, notwithstanding their compliance to the state’s authority, Imyan retain something of their pride and self-worth. They also remain critical of what is happening and most entertain subversive ideas.

The Threat of Development¹⁶

When people relate it to development, the tradition of *pemerintah* triggers a critique of government that Irian readily classify as corruption (*korupsi*). They are aware that a large share of the IDT funds destined for the villages are siphoned off during the transfer between *propinsi*, *kabupaten* and *kecamatan* seats, that is, between Jayapura, Sorong, and Teminabuan. Apparently, this money finances improvements in the houses of some government employees and the education of their children. Although the village leaders should distribute the cash money, they sometimes spend portions of the village subsidy during long stays in the city of Sorong. Although the Indonesian government is indeed spending much money on the development of Irian Jaya, the results are often the opposite of what is expected, both by the central government and by Papuans themselves.

This creates a paradox. For example, despite the developmental goal of assisting the Irianese, mainly non-Irianese entrepreneurs and civil servants are benefiting from the economic opportunities. A high percentage of all government positions should be offered to Irianese, but the education and training gap between Irianese and non-Irianese is too large for this target to be attained. I estimate that for the Teminabuan sub-district Irianese represent about fifteen percent of the province's civil service in the lower ranks.¹⁷

As Timmer and Visser (in press) have described elsewhere, in 1995, the head of the district planning bureau in Sorong mentioned two issues which require priority in the development of the Kepala Burung: improvement of the infrastructure (inland roads) and human resource development. The lack of infrastructure indeed frustrates economic activity. From Sorong light aircraft only fly weekly to Teminabuan, while the hilly northern parts are served by small

16. Parts of the material in this section have been discussed before in Timmer and Visser (in press).

17. There are no official figures to substantiate this. According to statistical data contained in the Monografi Teminabuan I (1992: 22, table 4.7) there are 285 civil servants of total of 8,810 inhabitants. In the same table, little less than three-quarter of the population are indexed as farmer (*petani*).

mission planes at irregular intervals. Heavy rainfall damage to the grass airstrips and airline mismanagement often means that Teminabuan has no flights for periods of more than two months. The present economic crisis in Indonesia has stopped air flights completely.

Poor roads seriously hamper the transportation of agricultural produce to the market. Most of the villages in the marshlands in the southern part of the sub-district are only accessible by canoe or a small, motorised boat. This means that men, women, and children must walk eight to twelve hours carrying heavy loads through the forest to deliver their harvest to the market or the nearest waterway. Likewise, because schoolteachers do not receive their monthly salaries in convenient bank accounts, they must walk or paddle down to Teminabuan to fetch it at the post office or the government office.

The second development priority that was mentioned by the planning officer is the development of human resources (*sumber daya manusia*). There are several interpretations of this concept. First, it refers to the government's view that development requires stronger economic participation of local Papuans. Imyan also share this definition of development. But the gap between Imyan skills and educational level and those of the immigrants is still too large. Consequently, labour relationships are marked by stark social differences.

For example, the manager of a sawmill in Teminabuan town is a Buginese. The supervisors are also men from Sulawesi or other eastern Indonesian islands. Men from Sumba, Flores, or Aru take the lowest paying jobs. The Imyan people take the most menial jobs when they are offered. Imyan resent their social and economic inferiority. They resent their own trees being processed in a foreign mill and they also feel frustration that foreigners grow wealthy.

Ironically, the human resource development is sometimes equated with personal corruption as in the case of the local elite improving their houses with money from the village subsidy. What is at stake here is not that these individuals do not acknowledge the difference between public and private, but the fact that they draw different boundaries between the two. To them, their increased status through material welfare is indeed a public interest. This perception invokes a third interpretation of human resource development: good governance.

Government employees of Irianese descent (who mainly work as teachers or nurses) often stress this point. Because Papuans rarely get white-collar jobs, Papuan civil servants often provide jobs to their relatives whether or not they have the required knowledge or skills. Employing relatives benefits the social and economic position of the family involved, but it is uncertain whether it will improve the quality of the institution.

Finally, a major threat of development is the national transmigration program that has also unfolded in the name of national *pembangunan*. Its goal is to move thousands of families from the country's overpopulated islands, mainly Java and Bali, to less populated and under-developed areas. The 'colonisation' of Irian Jaya by Indonesian migrants is viewed as a solution to the demographic problems of the Indonesian State and the development problems of Irian Jaya. According to the government, Irianese need the assistance of more clever and better-educated people from other Indonesian islands. This state ideology causes many Irianese to feel underestimated and unappreciated.

The migration program often ignores cultural traditions and in most instances it also damages the natural environment where forests are cut for in-migrant settlements. The in-migrants also suffer from poor facilities and an inability to meet the government and their own expectations. In the Teminabuan settlement for Javanese transmigrants, ethnic tensions have worsened between Javanese and local people as the following case illustrates. In 1995, four months of heavy rains destroyed a major road, but local rumour blamed ethnic tensions. As a civil servant explained:

Local Imyan caused the rains. They wanted to take a mini-bus to the market place in town, but the Javanese drivers thought that they are dirty and refused. Angry, the local people spit over their left shoulder to invoke the ancestor spirits, thus taking revenge also for the fact that when this road to the district offices was built, the local people lost much of their land to the road builders. Now they are so angry that they cause the bridge to break down, and brought the rains to ruin everything (Interview with John Wanane, June 1995; Timmer and Visser in press).

Another factor that makes Imyan resist the plans of the government to ‘develop’ their land and villages is that they do not like the disciplining of time. As described in the Introduction, many Imyan argue that they already have too many things on their minds, like food production, meetings and ceremonies, and church activities. They seem to repeat the problems indicated by Cappetti when he reflected on the problem of development in his Memorandum of Transfer and mentioned their living-by-the-day attitude and their inability to organise time and work in order to comply with the demands of modern development.

Elsewhere (Timmer 1996a, 1997), I have argued that in reports to the central government, social and cultural factors are rarely taken into account. As argued above, I believe that it is important to realise that Imyans blame their backwardness to the lack of sociality among villagers. These worries relate significantly to ideologies that have been taught by the church and the government over the last few decades. From the first missionaries and colonial civil servants to present-day representatives of the government and the church, Imyan people have been warned urgently that not being good Christians poses a threat to development.

Poverty and Lack of Morality

Imyan thus often blame their lack of co-operation and morality for the lack of economic success in their villages. As the head of the primary school in Haha, Elias Mejefat (47), explained during a discussion with people who suggested to him to invest some his salary in a local trade store,

Most people here do not know money and still think in terms of *kain timur*. But *kain timur* is different. *Kain timur* is in the hands of individuals and comes from marrying out women. Others get *kain timur* through compensation payments [*denda*]. *Kain timur* thus comes through many endeavours. Money only comes through selling goods and through salaries, but not from local people. One can only get money from fellow villagers by selling *kain timur* but not by selling garden produce or sago. Our lives are

not yet in accordance with current economics [*ekonomi*].

Villagers hold wrong ideas about money. They cannot save or invest money, unlike the Macassarese or Javanese who are able to become rich with an small initial amount of money. People here are different. If they own a little money they will share it with relatives and friends and enjoy it together. They do not think about the future but rather about today. Moreover, people here have many family and friends who always ask for assistance. We do this already since the beginning of time. Already our ancestors shared the sago. People helped each other. Also during *waktu Belanda* people worked together and were very *sosial*. According to our fathers and mothers, everybody was contended. Now this has changed.

The people of Ayamaru manage to follow the course of development. This is not because of their *adat* but simply because many children from Ayamaru go to school and their parents learn from them. Here only a few know about the modern ways and have changed their lives a little. People from Java and Sulawesi were even earlier in on schooling and development. Therefore, they are already modern [*moderen*] and therefore have money. Being modern, they can determine their own course, independent of Indonesian aid. Because we are still backward [*terbelakang*] there is not much choice for us than waiting for the *camat* to assist us and hope that he has the best of intentions. But Jakarta is unreliable, as we have seen in the past.

Also today, despite the large amount of IDT funds that are promised to us, we see that the *pembangunan* works more toward the development of immigrants [*pendatang*]. Our own people who are more developed should help us out. We have many relatives who are in the civil service [*pegawai*] in Sorong and Jayapura. We expect them to return to the village and to develop it. Some people also expect them to pay for their children's education. They are in fact waiting for them to return to work together in the village. But we see that none of them can live in the village anymore and decide to continue their indolent lives in the city.

Elias Mejefat, July 1995, Tape 60A: 400-540

In the light of aspirations for progress, these shortcomings are also contrasted with the good times in the past as ruled by *adat*. Most important in these reflections, as detailed in the previous chapter, are that Imyan forebears were better-organised and possessed effective knowledge. If people could be as strong and disciplined as their ancestors, then Imyan would match the economic successes of Indonesians and, perhaps, those of whites.

When there was *adat* there were no distractions such as young men wanting to marry Javanese or Manadonese girls, aspirations for good jobs in cities, the attractiveness of modern goods, etc. People still lived according to *adat*, which provided for harmony, solidarity, and generosity. The lives of Imyan forebears were not complicated, people only needed to trouble about a few orderly matters: seeking alliances through *kain timur* exchange in order to protect oneself against enemy attacks, ensuring food through co-operation and joining hands at large food gatherings in the coastal sago forests, and the important organisation of initiation for the dissemination of efficacious knowledge for ensuring health, prosperity, and the reproduction of society.

Imyans believe that due to a lack of clear leadership, people have become oriented towards individual households instead of towards the community. Present-day concern is with how to get food for one's own family and, following from this line of argument, community tasks are done by halves. Moreover, today people have so many things to think about that their minds wander everywhere. As Hendrik Klafle (38), teacher at the primary school of Haha, explained to one of the officials who came to the village of Haha to evaluate the IDT projects explained:

You should understand that the villagers are confused [*bingung, pusing*] because they have too many things to worry about. Their thoughts fly like kites [*pikiran layang-layang*]. All the *pemerintah* things make them more confused. Times were good before when we were on our own. From the 1970s onwards, *pemerintah* became strong, not flexible. The government and the church did not allow people to stay in the forest to harvest sago and to built bivouacs there. The Indonesians came and burned those houses and

hit the people with the butts of their guns. They ordered them to go back to the village and stay there.

Whereas these bivouacs have an important function for several households who work together and need to pound sago during several days in order to collect enough food for all. All the households who shared a bivouac formed a strong team. But the government wanted them to live as individual households in separate village houses. Since then the village has become weak when it concerns communal tasks.

Up to the present-day, we see that because of the stringent rules the economy of the village is weak. People experience food shortages and do not know what to do: they want to go to the sago groves but fear the government, oh my, they are already hungry because they have no sago. People have no opportunities anymore to collect a sufficiency of food. Formerly, people would go to the forest and pound sago during a couple of weeks. They stored the sago flour wrapped in leaves in the mud. When they were hungry they went there to collect the flour.

The head of the village often stayed in the village and called out for his people when they were needed. When people heard him blowing the Triton shell, they knew that there were duties [*dinas*] and came back to the village. They took enough sago along and were never hungry. The people did not need to worry about the economy. Nowadays, the *pemerintah* wants us to be worried about the economy and that has made us weak.

Formerly, only school-going children would stay in the village while their parents worked hard to provide them and their teachers with food. Only when the sago had to be carried to the village, the children and the teacher came to the forest to help carrying the harvest. They made sure to return before school started again. Nowadays, the teachers wait for long periods in Teminabuan or Sorong to collect their salary. When the salary arrives they buy rice and order the school children to carry these heavy loads to the village. There are many things wrong today. In the old days, the people were very social and in particular during collective work in the sago forest they worked together. When that work was done people would dance

and sing together. They did *adat* feasts. Children nowadays do not know about these feasts anymore.

Hendrik Klaflé, November 1994, Tape 31: 302-405

In his speech, Hendrik associates *pemerintah* with the harsh official policies of the Indonesian government, which are generally contrasted with a nostalgic view of the pacification, missionisation, and schooling brought by the Dutch colonial government. The colonial government is glossed as *pemerintah Belanda*, and is associated with the end of raiding, warfare, violent disputes, and other improvements in the quality of life that came with the advent of churches and schools.

Such characterisations of the colonial period are highly romanticised and need to be seen in the light of the current widespread discontent with the Indonesian government. It seems that the Dutch are now given the benefit of the doubt and emerge in a positive light by comparison with the disciplinary measures taken by the Indonesian government. I have never heard Imyan villagers say that when the mission and the schools came, things went seriously wrong. Instead, they generally believe that with the advent of the Indonesian government it all went wrong. While in parts of Papua New Guinea, the mission and the colonial government may be blamed for the disorder or destruction of customs (see, for example, Smith 1994), most Irianese relate present-day hard times to the unpleasantness with which they were treated after the Indonesian assumption of West New Guinea in 1963, with its inefficient development initiatives and the less than equitable intentions of the central government for the indigenous Irianese population.¹⁸

Older Imyan recall the military clashes between Indonesia and the Netherlands, in particular the dropping of paratroopers near Teminabuan town. They also know that the General Assembly of the United Nations in 1962 required the Dutch to hand over West New Guinea to Indonesia. Some explained to me that it was agreed that the area would be ruled by the United Nations Temporary Executive Administration for some years after which a plebiscite would be held to decide whether the people wanted independence or union with Indonesia. Though at that time the people of Teminabuan agreed to be

18. See Osborne (1985), Budiardjo and Liong (1988), and Defert (1996).

represented by one of the district officers and thus not being able to vote themselves, they now openly express their disappointment about the fact that all these so-called representatives throughout Irian were ordered to support the unification with Indonesia.

Also among the youth this event causes much discontent. What they stress is that after 1963, the Indonesian army suppressed any form of protest or political opposition. Their elders, who have sad memories about this period, feel uneasy to recollect the events. Both generations share the idea that the West Papua national *Bintang Kejora* flag, flown openly for the first time on 1 December 1961 in front of building of then installed New-Guinea Council in Hollandia, accompanied by the national anthem *Hai Tanahku Papua* ('Hey, my Papua land', composed by the Dutch Protestant missionary I.S. Kijne), are powerful symbols of resistance.

Under Suharto, public display of the *Bintang Kejora*, let alone the raising of the flag or any other pro-independence manifestation was ruthlessly suppressed. Throughout the area one can hear stories about these flags which are stored away safely in caves awaiting a time when they can be flown at full-mast.¹⁹ The actions taken against villagers residing in the sago forests to which Hendrik refers, were attempts by the military to control the people and to prevent or to eradicate both armed guerrilla movements and non-violent attempts to establish independence of West Papua. Imyan recall a period during which anti-Indonesian

19. In May 1998, the flag was unfurled in several places in Irian Jaya to express disappointment with the central government. In July 1998 hundreds of demonstrators gathered and put up the Morning Star flag on top of the water-tower in Biak harbour. On the morning of 6 July, the crowd was encircled by the police and fired on. Hundreds of people were arrested, dozens sustained gunshot wounds. Closer to Teminabuan, on 2 July 1998, several hundred people took part in a pro-independence demonstration in front of the district council in Sorong (see Pigay 2000: 315-7). They presented nine demands to the council and unfurled the flag. Police quickly appeared and opened fire causing the people to disperse. In early September 1999, people carrying knives and spears gathered in front of the Sorong Council building and attempted to hoist the flag up on the ground's flagpole. In the subsequent clash with the police one of the demonstrators got killed, two others injured, and at least ten detained. Following the eruption of independence demands and flag-raising in the province, Alex Duwit organised a flag raising in Teminabuan in December 1999, marking the resilience of a people that often come to the fore as rather docile in the present thesis for which the material was collected a few years earlier.

protest was vehement and the military operations were evil.²⁰ The few organised early OPM commands in the north of the Teminabuan area were effectively disabled through intimidation by villagers and random arrests, rape, and public killings.

Presently, the OPM still figures prominently in Imyan thoughts about the future. It is a category that refers more to a state of mind than to the real liberation movement or any concrete plan for armed resistance.²¹ Many believe that a solution to their current marginal position within the Indonesian State would be the independence of West Papua, a theme which Imyan people often talk about, though with fear and reserve. The desire for political self-determination is strong among the Imyan, but many think that the hold of the Indonesian State on their area is not negotiable due to an observed persistence of the government and the strength of Indonesia's armed forces.

Nevertheless, the problems Imyan face with the demands of the government, which wants them to comply with national *pembangunan* are more often related to internal village disputes, diminished harmony and co-operation than to political oppression. The sense of moral inadequacy is something that Imyan often blame on themselves and includes images of a lost age of plenty, power and ease.

20. In contrast to the colonial period and Indonesian rule in the 1960s and early 1970s, in the last few decades there have been no punitive expeditions intimidating the Haha villagers. Alongside more appreciation, albeit being far less than desirable, the attitude of those who represent *pemerintah* towards 'backward' villagers in the Teminabuan has gradually shifted from seeing them as wild and thus posing a threat to the New Order, to a people being out of touch with economic and political realities due to their laziness and stupidity.

21. Most Imyan know that there is a liberation movement which has leaders abroad (see Chapter 6). Many acknowledge that its military strength is limited due to a shortage of weapons and that its command structure is weak due to extreme factionalism. But this is irrelevant when people use the category OPM to express the national power of the unity of Papuans against the state of Indonesia. It is this symbolic nationalistic power which Imyan often refer to as the power of *wuon* and which people refer to when using the expression 'OPM'.

A *Suangi* View of Marginality

In the previous chapter, I have discussed the local, village based unseen violent phenomenon called *lait*. Often belonging to meanings conveyed by referring to *pemerintah*, Imyan distinguish *lait* as a traditional and local/regional invisible violent phenomenon from equally invisible damaging powers. The latter evil powers are then considered part of the confrontations between Imyan and ‘outsiders’. In that case, the evil powers are called *suangi*.²² In this respect it is interesting to note that the gloss *suangi*, after its introduction by Moluccan teachers some six decades ago, has come to stand for evil powers that are considered part of the unequal relations between Imyan and Indonesian immigrants and the Indonesian nation-state. *Pemerintah* matters such as an observed economic poverty and marginality may thus be explained by *suangi*.

To Imyan, the workings of *suangi* are not different from *lait*. The only difference is that *suangi* comes from outside the region, from across the Seram Sea. *Suangi* is associated with the dangers and dirt (‘matter out of place’, compare Douglas 1966 and 1992) generally brought to the fore when discussing, for instance, the modern market in Teminabuan town and the ethnic BBM traders who live there. Besides *suangi*, these immigrant populations are seen as sources of diseases and misfortune, and are blamed for an observed deterioration of behaviour and a degradation of land and forest (compare Clark 1993, 1995, and Strathern 1982).

Often I could not get away from the impression that a *suangi*-paranoia grips the region. People feel that they cannot control the increasing extent of the powers and effects of *suangi* and that this has dire consequences for the way people live together and their attempts to co-operate to accomplish something for the future prosperity of their society. I suggest that this fear stems not only from

22. When talking in Indonesian to outsiders or in contexts in which people are used to using Indonesian terms and expressions (for example, in prayers, in discussions of Christianity, when discussing Indonesian development programs, and modern medicine), Imyan may also translate *lait* to *suangi*. This, however, does not obviate the fact that *lait* denotes local or regional negative powers and *suangi* refers to those negative powers which originate elsewhere.

the abandonment of male initiation rituals and the loss of control that resulted from it, but also from feelings of loss of control and autonomy of Imyan in the modern world.

This increase in concerns about *suangi*-like beliefs is also reported elsewhere in New Guinea and has recently been discussed by Stewart and Strathern (1997). In line with other previous analyses of this process, Stewart and Strathern attribute the growing concerns about death-dealing evil powers among Melanesian people to the fact that,

Colonial power ... drained the villages of some of their indigenous powers and set up a space in which invisible, uncontrollable powers that previously were held into local spaces by structures of warfare and restrictions of movement, were seen as able to move more swiftly and widely (Stewart and Strathern 1997: 3).

Suffering from deprivation, inequality, and discrimination, leads Imyan to relate notions of *suangi* to representations of domination. This suggests that the modern state is considered deeply threatening and an immediate danger to Imyan survival. In this view, *suangi* is in principle an evil force which must be controlled or conquered to make society work and to gain access to the resources which are needed to become prosperous and which Imyan feel are withheld from them by Indonesian authorities. There is thus a close relation between *suangi* and the uncertainties of modern life. In that sense the discourse about *suangi* expresses a willingness, even eagerness to change the modern world, to live a modern way of life, to become prosperous, and to address modern developments.

The road to prosperity is however not only impeded by *suangi* from outside the society. Those in the villages suspected of having or using *lait* are also considered to impede economic development because it makes people deeply suspicious of each other, thus rendering it impossible for people to work together. As will become clear in the following chapters, Imyan believe that only through the intercession of God or Jesus Christ can their society be delivered from this lack of sociality. I show that this is an attempt to eradicate the practice

of *lait* to purify the new space of the village in order to obtain the benefits of ‘development’. That Imyan themselves feel incapable of doing this and expect Jesus Christ to come and punish those who are engaged in *lait*, indicates that concerns with *lait* are part of millenarian expectations.

The tradition of knowledge of *pemerintah* primarily entertains local ideas about *pembangunan*, feelings of having fallen behind, of being betrayed, as well as people’s confusion and their moral stature. People feel that they are unable to comply with the Indonesian adage *gotong-royong*, denoting voluntary mutual assistance in development. While government officials, in line with the national Pancasila ideology, stress the importance of the *gotong-royong* community self-help among Imyan for the successful implementation of development programs, Imyan see that their social relations are falling apart, that morals are deteriorating and that all the externally defined programs have an hidden agenda which aims at keeping Papuans at a distance and preventing them from getting powerful and wealthy. Consequently, they see *gotong-royong* work as obligatory, classify it as *dinas* (‘government duty’) and feel that it is part of potentially threatening programs such as IDT.

In many respects, *pemerintah* refers to a history of injustice that has prevented Imyan from bridging the gap between their expectations and the real world. As Ester said, ‘As different as the sea and the forested hills, as unfamiliar are we with *pemerintah*’. In many other areas of Melanesia and Eastern Indonesia, feelings of being deprived of autonomy, status, wealth and security has often resulted in more or less organised movements with millenarian or cargoistic aspirations, but also incited people to resist in the form of revolts and other forms of overt resistance accompanied with the use of force.

After a series of incidents and brutal use of force by the Indonesian military under Sukarno’s regime in the 1960s, the people of the Teminabuan area realised that any overt talk about the OPM, organised armed resistance, or public criticism of the Indonesian government might lead to harsh disciplinary measures from the military. Not all voices were equally muted though. In particular ideas and ideologies that pertain to both the church and *wuon* and that are glossed

under the term *agama* have a different status, as I detail in the next two chapters.