

'SECRET KNOWLEDGE' :

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AN ANALYSIS OF OMMURA CEREMONIES

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## ABSTRACT

### 'Secret Knowledge' : An Analysis of Ommura Ceremonies

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D. Phil.

Trinity 1980.

This thesis is an analysis of the life-cycle ceremonies, in particular male initiations, enacted by the Ommura of the New Guinea Eastern Highlands which constitute their most important social institutions.

Chapter two presents background data about the fieldwork area, Ommura patrilineages, warfare and poisoning and chapter three is about the importance of food as a form of payment in ceremonies. Chapter four describes the context of male initiation knowledge, the eldest mother's brother relationship and payment, similarities between male and female initiations, the relationship of initiation to other Ommura ceremonies, differences in initiation practice between villages and social change, and the sequence of events in the two male initiations observed.

Spheres of male initiation events and instructions are analyzed to determine:

- a) The extent and potential for elaboration and complexity which occurs within each sphere.
- b) The kind of statements which are made through the use of each sphere in the context of initiation.
- c) The degree of secrecy, i.e. restrictions on access to information, inherent in the conditions of use.
- d) Whether the acquisition of initiation knowledge through successive stages of male initiation knowledge constitutes a hierarchical indoctrination into a total corpus of knowledge.
- e) Similarities and differences between the forms and use of male and female initiation events and instructions which reflect the social and ideological dominance of male initiation in Ommura society.
- f) Whether repetition in the context of male initiations over time has led to a process of 'codification' whereby spheres of initiation events and instructions serve as vehicles for the presentation of higher order ideological statements.

These spheres of male initiation events and instructions, presented in chapters 6 - 14 are : the ummara nose-bleeding ceremony, the instruments or spirit cries played, the use of taroah stinging nettles, the wakyera ihi sung during ummara and the prohibitions on acts and foods to which they refer, the wakyera myths told during iyavati and ummara initiations, the verbal instructions given to initiands, the instructive mimes performed, the emblems of rank and body decorations worn by male and female initiands, and the use of food in male initiations.

In chapter 15, the events and instructions of male initiations are examined as a whole to assess the extent to which the context of use rather than the form and content determine their significance, the degree

to which the social function of male initiation as a means of promoting social and physical good health is stated, the extent of the emergence of a specifically male symbolism, and the capacity for elaboration of the forms in which initiation events and instructions are presented.

It is argued that the repetition of ummara and iyavati initiations over time has led to a situation where the basic ideological premises of the instruction in male initiations are demarcated by the contextual conditions which are enacted for their staging. The contextual conditions delineate the social framework in which initiation events and instructions take place and give them their social significance. Ummara and iyavati initiation events and instructions are used to promote the initiands to the state of social knowledge and physical health of the adult men who administer the initiations but they have not developed into a unified exposition of a conceptual system or a formalized invariable procedural series. Spheres of initiation events and instructions are detailed and complex in terms of content and take the form of genres with definite conventions for the incorporation of new material but sequence, number and items vary from initiation to initiation. For these reasons it is concluded that the contextual conditions provide the basic social and ideological framework in which initiation events and instructions occur.

Anthropological work on the interpretation of 'ritual' and on male initiations in New Guinea is reviewed in chapter 16 to demonstrate how the Ommura analysis illuminates aspects of ceremonial and social organization which previous theories and New Guinea ethnographies have obscured.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thanks to the S.S.R.C. (a two term pool award), the Canada Council (Doctoral Award W75-2884), and the Canadian I.D.R.C. (Doctoral Fellowships C.F. 3-F-75-6010-07, C.F. 3-F-77-6015-01 and C.F. 3-F-78-6015-03) for funding my research.

I would like to thank my Ommura friends and informants for enabling me to gather the data out of which this thesis has been constructed. In particular, I would like to express my gratitude to Taindo, Murabe, Miki, Tahu, Puarai, Irai, Apai, Mamu, Ndina, Tundapua, Ati Rehasa, Kwamba, Noteh, Nrinri, Afara, Kureh, Verambeh, Nondautaro, Oveh, Maria, Ata, Angone, Anno, Luhi, Siria, Baura, Huru-oh, Oteh, Robert Naio, Pwahabai. Antwa-oh, Mineh, Hongenali, Aquveh, Vevanto and Darautu.

I would also like to thank my co-fieldworker Jessica Mayer of the University of Sussex, my Oxford supervisor Edwin Ardener and my area supervisor Professor Andrew Strathern. Thanks to Professor Clifford Geertz for his comments on chapters 5 - 16.

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## 1. Introduction

This work is an analysis of the life-cycle ceremonies, in particular male initiations, enacted by the Ommura of the New Guinea Eastern Highlands, which constitute their most important social institutions. It examines the key question of what kinds of rules and codifications develop from the repetition of specific social institutions over time. Most anthropological interpretations assume that through repetition events become 'rituals' which can be deciphered to reveal major statements about social process and the transmission of ideology in the particular society. Ommura society, because of its social organization and because of the nature of New Guinea Highlands societies in general, provides a suitable field of study for investigating this question.

As will be demonstrated, it is not feasible to construct a comparative analysis of New Guinea social ideologies as articulated through major ceremonies because previous work has tended to ignore an absence of ideological elaboration. Only by presenting the Ommura material is it possible to locate absences of an explanation of process in other work on New Guinea societies because there are no other relevant 'African Models' (Barnes, 1962) to question, only data which has been written up in accordance with particular theoretical perspectives. This is by no means the location of a new problem.

As Geertz has written:

In one society, the level of elaboration of symbolic formulations of ultimate actuality may reach extraordinary degrees of complexity and systematic articulation; in another, no less developed socially, such formulations may remain primitive in the true sense, hardly more than congeries of fragmentary by-beliefs and isolated images, of sacred reflexes and spiritual pictographs (1968 : 41-2).

Given both the subject matter of this work and the attempt to formulate a new perspective, it is highly appropriate to quote Geertz again:

Yet one more meticulous case in point for such well-established propositions as that ancestor worship supports the jural authority of elders, that initiation rites are means for the establishment of sexual identity and adult status, that ritual groupings reflect political oppositions, or that myths provide charters for social institutions and rationalizations of social privilege, may well finally convince a great many people, both inside the profession and out, that anthropologists are, like theologians, firmly dedicated to proving the indubitable (1968 : 1-2).

A basic premise of this work is that the application of structural analysis has obscured major features of New Guinea social organization especially in those areas referred to as 'ritual' or 'symbolism'. As Ardener has written:

Structure does not always help us to visualize the multiple realizations that we are dealing with... In the post-structuralist period the capturing of the life of events as they articulate with structure will certainly be one outstanding problem requiring a new phase of specially collected data (1978 : 121).

It is for this reason that the Ommura research was carried out; to collect data from a new perspective that both comprehended structuralist interpretations and went beyond them.

The general conclusion of this analysis is that Ommura social organization is primarily contextual, although there are rules of precedent, and that this is demonstrated in the way in which the conditions of use of initiation events and instructions are more significant than their form and content. As Mary Douglas has written:

I have sketched some weaknesses in conceiving of the social individual and some weaknesses in dealing with culture. My remedy is to think out a better account of the social context (1978 : 6).

In the broadest sense all anthropology is an attempt to account for the social context, if this is an examination of the use and articulation of cultural knowledge in specified situations with the end of formulating models of process.

First, necessary background data is provided describing the effects of social change, Ommura patrilineages, warfare, poisoning, and food, other valuables, payment, and the relative scale of Ommura ceremonies. Then the context of male initiations is presented including the mother's brother relationship and payment, similarities between male and female initiations, the relationship of initiations to other Ommura ceremonies, the role of women in male initiation ceremonies, and differences in initiation practice between villages and social change.

Spheres of male initiation events and instructions are then analyzed to determine:

- a) The extent and potential for elaboration which occurs in each sphere.
- b) The kind of statements which are made through the use of each sphere in the context of initiation.
- c) The degree of secrecy, ie. restrictions on access to information inherent in the conditions of use.
- d) Whether the acquisition of initiation knowledge through successive stages of male initiation constitutes a hierarchical indoctrination into a total corpus of knowledge.
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These spheres are bleeding in male initiations, the instruments or spirit cries played, the use of taroah stinging nettles, the wakyera ihis sung during ummara initiations and the prohibitions on acts and foods to which they refer, the wakyera myths told, verbal instructions given to initiands in ummara, iyavati, and male pre-marriage ceremonies, the instructive mimes performed, emblems of initiation rank and body decorations worn by male and female initiands, and the use of food in male initiations.

The events and instructions of male initiations are then examined as a whole to assess the extent to which the context of use rather than the form and content determine their significance, the degree to which the social function of male initiations as a means of promoting social and physical good health is stated, the extent of the emergence of a specifically male symbolism, and the capacity for elaboration of the forms in which initiation events and instructions are presented.

It is argued that the repetition of ummara and iyavati initiations over time has led to a situation where the basic ideological premises of the institution of male initiation are demarcated by the contextual conditions which are enacted for their staging. The contextual conditions delineate the social framework in which initiation events and instructions take place and give them their social significance. Ummara and iyavati initiation events and instructions are used to promote the initiands to the state of social knowledge and physical health of the adult men who administer the initiations but they have not developed into a unified exposition of a conceptual system or a

formalized, invariable procedural series. Spheres of initiation events and instructions are detailed and complex in terms of content and take the form of genres with definite conventions for the incorporation of new material but sequence, number, and items vary from initiation to initiation. For these reasons it is concluded that the contextual conditions provide the basic social and ideological framework in which initiation events and instructions occur.

Anthropological work on the interpretation of 'ritual' and on male initiations in New Guinea is reviewed to demonstrate how the Ommura analysis illuminates aspects of ceremonial and social organization which previous theories and New Guinea ethnographies have obscured.

2. Background Data.The Fieldwork Area.

Anthropological field research was carried out from June 1975 to August 1976 in the villages around the Obura Patrol Post, which is 32 miles from Kainantu in the Eastern Highlands of Papua New Guinea. These villages - Samura, the village of residence, Sonura, Moussouri, Kurunumbaira and Asara - are situated in the Dogara Census Division (130 square miles). According to the (1975) government census (which groups the villages of Samura, Sonura and Moussouri under the collective name Yonura), the population statistics were the following:

TABLE 1

	<u>RESIDENT</u>				<u>ABSENT</u>				<u>TOTAL</u>
	Under 15 years		15 years & over		Under 15 years		15 years & over		
	m	f	m	f	m	f	m	f	
YONURA	86	78	107	125	7	9	23	2	437
KURUNUMBAIRA	60	62	81	91	9	4	13	1	321
ASARA	69	84	97	94	12	3	21	4	384

The Ommura are classified by the Summer Institute of Linguistics/Wycliffe Bible Translators as speaking a dialect of the Tairora language. It should be pointed out that the Ommura claim that Tairora as spoken in Tairora near Kainantu is not intelligible to them. It is a characteristic feature of this area, as in other parts of the New Guinea Highlands, that dialects vary considerably even within distances of three miles or less.

Altitude ranges from 4,000 to 5,300 feet along the valley floors to 8,000 foot mountain ridges. Only the upper slopes of the mountains are covered in dense rain forest. The agricultural land consists of a few inches of black soil over clay and contains a lot of stone and rock outcrops. Like other Eastern Highlands peoples, the Ommura are

slash-and-burn cultivators growing sweet potatoes, yams, taro, bananas, sugar cane, various beans, corn and greens. The gradual replacement of stone axes and digging sticks by steel axes and spades sometime around 1940 obviously enabled the Ommura to grow more with less labour. It is important to remember that the arrival of steel tools, exchanged for traditional commodities along the Markham valley trade route or the Kainantu trade route, preceded the arrival of the administration by at least 15 years. All varieties of crops are grown together in single garden plots arranged so that leafy crops will provide shade for other crops that need it. Irrigation or the watering of crops is not practised. Crops are planted before and during the rainy season and there are definite seasonal cycles of agricultural activity. As in other Highlands societies, pigs are extensively bred and the mature pig is the most valuable locally produced commodity, a pre requisite for marriage payments, funerals, peacemaking, and male and female initiations. Foodstuffs are gathered in the bush and men and boys hunt game with bows and arrows.

#### The Arrival of the Administration

The Obura Patrol Station was not established until 1965, but the area was visited by yearly patrols for several years before this date. As was the custom throughout the Highlands, the first patrols gave out steel axes, bushknives, and lap lap cloth to Ommura notables. Once in retaliation for inter-village fighting a patrol attacked a men's house, the site of which is part of the patrol post, and shot eight men dead. The government leased the land on which the patrol station and airstrip were built from the Ommura. They paid for this land and gave the money to two fight leaders to distribute, although many of the Ommura affected claim that the fight leaders distributed the

bulk of the payment to their own relatives rather than sharing it equally. The patrol officers appointed traditional big men as luluais and tultuls, village representatives of the government.

The most significant short term development arising out of the establishment of the patrol station was the enlistment of Ommura young men to work as contract labourers on coastal plantations in Kerema and New Ireland. It was a government policy, until about 1973, to send Highlanders from remote areas to work on coastal plantations. The basic idea was that in the process of this poorly paid labour - 50 kina for each year of a two year contract and a 90 kina bonus on completion - they would learn pidgin and become exposed to the greater dimensions of Papua New Guinea society and on return to their villages, would constitute a modernizing factor. The Highlands Labour Scheme was temporarily terminated when it was decided that it drained remote areas of young men and that it was better to encourage programs of purely local development. Shortly before I left the area, men were being recruited, once again, for the New Ireland plantations.

#### The Patrol Station

The Obura Patrol Post was staffed by 4 kiaps (patrol officers), 1 clerk, 5 policemen, a police clerk, 2 interpreters, 2 diddymen, one concerned with agriculture and one concerned with forestry, several carpenters, one driver and one Toyota truck. The senior kiap was from Manus and the other three from Buka, Wewak and Daru. Disputes which could not be settled locally by the elected village 'Councils' and 'Committees' were brought to the court at the police station as were all serious cases such as inter-village fights, where they were judged by the policemen or by the head kiap in his

role as magistrate. The kiaps and policemen went out on occasional patrols to all villages under the jurisdiction of the patrol station for general inspections, to conduct local elections and national elections, to collect council tax, to suppress fighting when they heard of it, to look after road building programs, and to conduct censuses.

#### The Council System

The Lamari Local Government Council was brought into being around 1970 as a direct copy of the well known Kainantu Local Government Council. The basic idea behind the Lamari Council was to set up an elected representative government for all the villages in the Obura Patrol Post district that would collect taxes from all the male inhabitants and use this money for a program of general economic development and the implementation of cash cropping. Every two years, each village grouping elects one 'Councillor' and each hamlet of this village grouping elects a 'Committee'. The Lamari Council had monthly or twice monthly meetings for which all the Councillors and Committees walked to the Council house in Obura. Once a year the kiaps collected the council tax from all men over 18. The tax in 1975 was 5 kina in those areas selling coffee, and 30 toya in those areas without coffee as a saleable cash crop.

The Council used a lot of this money on a program of road building because only with an adequate road network would it be possible for coffee buyers to get to the villages to purchase coffee. Only since 1973 had even the road from Kainantu to Obura been traversable all year round and only by 4 wheel drive vehicles. The roadworks program consisted of finishing three incomplete roads - a road to Wonenara, a road into the Bush Markham, and a road to Kawaina. The Council had sold heavily subsidised coffee skin removing machines, essential for drying and sale, to all the villages. Evidence of the relative

economic backwardness of the area was the fact that the only local vehicles were the single government truck and the one owned by the S.E.B. mission. No public motor vehicles were owned in the area. In the coffee season, coffee buyers drove in from Kainantu.

#### The Patrol Post as a Model of Papua New Guinea Identity

The Obura Patrol Station served as a model of Papua New Guinea identity for the people of the area through the activities of the kiaps, policemen, agricultural officers, and their households. Except for those owned by station personnel, radios were very rare in the area. Due to government policy, the station personnel all came from areas outside the Eastern Highlands. Pidgin was the only language used around the station, both for official and unofficial communication. Station personnel usually employed one or two Ommura boys as servants, paying them in money and clothes but primarily with an abundance of food. The 'mastah'/servant relationship was one of employer acting as patron for the employee. Station personnel were greatly admired for their sophisticated ways and the abundance of their material possessions. Especially admired by the locals was their consumption of beer and betelnut and their largesse with these things. Although they had gardens of their own, station personnel provided a ready market for any surplus crops grown by the locals. The kiaps actively promoted soccer playing by village teams in weekend matches at the station as a way of minimizing inter-village fighting by channelling aggression into sport - a government policy.

The significance of the 1975 Independence celebrations held at the patrol station went by largely unnoticed by the local people who saw it rather as a series of events: sports competitions, sing sings, speeches, and the distribution of food and independence badges by the kiaps.

Education and Christianity

The two churches in the area are the Lutheran nativist church led by a man from Henganofi who started it in 1965 and the Swiss Evangelical Brotherhood Mission established in 1964. It was staffed by Swiss expatriates and ran a primary school and aid post on its premises. The S.E.B. primary school was run on the government curriculum by three professional teachers from Manus and the Swiss missionaries. Children were educated up to Standard 6. In 1975, 25 students from the Dogara Census Division were receiving High School education; 2 in forms 3 and 4 at the Goroka High School and 23 in Forms 1, 2 and 3 at the Kainantu High School. I was told that because no students from the area had completed High School education, academic standards had been waived as a matter of policy to increase the numbers studying in High School. As it became part of the government's rural health scheme, the aid post was in the process of being localized; Papua New Guineans replacing the S.E.B. expatriate nurses. More traditional Ommura men avoided the aid post, except for the bandaging of cuts and 'shoots' of penicillin, because they regarded it as being as polluting as a woman's house due to its treatment of women.

The doctrines of the S.E.B. mission and the Lutheran church were opposed as were the two village groups from which their respective congregations were drawn. The S.E.B. mission advised its congregation against gambling, drinking, chewing betelnut, smoking, polygamy and performing male and female initiations and singsings. The Lutheran church was tolerant of all these things, consequently station policemen as well as the inhabitants of Samura, Sonura and Moussouri attended its services. The mission congregation was drawn almost entirely from Kurunumbaira, a traditional enemy of Samura, Sonura and Moussouri, and the two groups of villages were engaged in ongoing sorcery and poison accusations often resulting in court cases, or in one instance, a fight.

Christianity had had only a minimal effect on the Ommura and even the S.E.B. congregation were nominal Christians who continued to initiate their youth according to traditional practice.

#### 'Bisnis' and Development

As viewed from Obura, government development policy consisted of promoting small individual businesses with the idea that only individual entrepreneurs who kept all their profits rather than distribute them to their relatives in the customary fashion were viable economic units. A business ethic had been inculcated in the younger pidgin-speaking generation whereby the maximization of profit in any financial transaction was the greatest modernist virtue to strive for. Arabica coffee was introduced in the early 1970's. A 1975 government survey estimated that there were 180,000 coffee trees in the Dogara census district yielding an average of 1½ lbs of coffee per tree. Insufficient spacing between trees, and a lack of pruning and proper fertilizer were said to be the reasons for the low yield. It arrived at the projection that were the price of this coffee 17 toys per lb, each male in the area over 15 years old would earn K. 41.60t. per year, a very low estimate for 1976 in which prices more than doubled due to the failure of the Brazilian crop. The coffee buyers visit the area in their trucks, buy coffee after weighing it on their scales and testing its quality, and then resell it to the coffee wholesale companies they work for in Kainantu or Goroka. Peanuts were grown and sold locally during the rainy season. Several men in the area operated their own 'canteen' stores which were licensed and encouraged by the government. Although they all sold roughly the same limited range of goods - canned mackerel, tinned meat, rice, matches and trade tobacco - often at higher prices than the expatriate owned Bena store in the station, the proprietors seemed

to do quite well. Establishing one of these canteens was the easiest way of becoming a business man. The items sold were bought in bulk in Kainantu and delivered by the coffee buying trucks.

The backwardness of the Obura area in relation to other parts of the Eastern Highlands was attested to by their other business which was the occasional selling of traditional valuables - feathers, arrows and grass skirts - to buyers, generally coffee buyers and their friends, who came to the area from Kainantu, Henganofi, Goroka and Chimbu.

#### Ommura Okyera or Patrilineages

This section provides background information on aspects of the operation of Ommura okyera or patrilineages which is important in understanding the argument developed throughout this work. It describes the mountains associated through residence with particular lineages and lineage ancestors, land ownership, the formation of new lineages, migration, adoption, relatives prohibited for marriage, sister exchange, aspects of brideprice and distant relatives as trade partners. The most important data regarding lineage affiliation has been omitted from this section because one of the central arguments of this work is that it is the individuals who contribute to and participate in ego's life cycle ceremonies - birth, male or female initiation, marriage and death - who are ego's important relatives. Kinship relations are defined through the staging of these ceremonies.

Every Ommura patrilineage (okyera) has a mountain demarcating a traditional area of lineage residence and an uri or mythical lineage ancestor. Lineage mountains and lineage ancestors are cited in disputes over land, as part of an invocation of self praise after hitting or killing an enemy in battle, and in curing ceremonies, personal magic or sorcery, where the utterance of the names of ones father or grandfather and other ancestors give added power to the

performance of the actions. Examples of the mountains and mythical ancestors of lineages living in Samura, Sonura and Moussouri are:

KYONDERA	Imunara Mt.	<u>Uri</u> = Kyondera-vai
MATOTA	Orava Naior Mt.	<u>Uri</u> = Orava Naior
OVAI-IRA	Kyorakina Mt.	<u>Uri</u> = Matai-iri
WARERATA	Wamina Mt.	<u>Uri</u> = Wamina
NRORA-KYO-MATANA	Nonarata Mt.	<u>Uri</u> = Mara-iro Sanai-oh

Certain of these uri feature in the secret myths told during male initiations.

Because of their visibility and permanence, mountains provide suitable reference landmarks for the traditional land of a lineage which consists of all the land from the height of the mountain right down to the Lamari river. Land is owned by a particular lineage only so far as members of that lineage have in the past lived on and made their gardens on that land. Only if members of another lineage try to make gardens or fence off the traditional land of the owning lineage, will that lineage unite to expel them either by using force or by using arguments of the history of habitation and cultivation in court. Criteria for ownership of land within the area of a particular lineage is cultivation. The people who have cleared a garden site and grown food on it have rights of usufruct. As part of a programme to terminate warfare, the administration has encouraged different neighbouring lineages to move together to form larger mixed lineage villages, which according to informants did not exist in the warfare period before the arrival of administration.

Retreat to the territory of relatives after defeat in warfare and general migration over a long period of time has led to a situation where patrilineages are not restricted to a particular area. New lineages are formed out of the merging through marriage of two lineages.

In Samura there were men who described themselves as belonging to the Matota-Ovai-ira lineage because they were the descendents of an Ovai-ira woman from Baira who came to Samura and married a Matota man from Kurunumbaira. Because of the importance placed on ties with relatives from other villages people can remember the areas that their ancestors came from. Of the lineages residing in Asara, Kyondera had always lived there, Rehara had come from Anima, Tomavai from To'kena, Nanochia from the Bush Markham and Wairinota from To'kena.

Adoption into lineages is not that infrequent. The most important factor being that the adopted persons life cycle ceremonies of birth, male or female initiation, marriage and death are carried out for him/her by the lineage of adoption. After Rombi's Matota father was killed in warfare, his mother married an Ovai-ira man and Rombi became adopted into his stepfather's lineage, Ovai-ira. A more complicated example which demonstrates the flexibility of Ommura lineage affiliation involved the incorporation of a child into his adopted mether's lineage. Irai and Mamu had no children; Irai had sex with To-ah, the wife of Muara, she became pregnant and had a baby. After beating To-ah in a stick fight, Mamu (Irai's wife), took the baby and Irai gave compensation payment for the adultery and baby to To-ah's husband, Muara. Irai made a kyai-ha for the baby, giving the birth payment to Mamu's family and her eldest brother became its ninau.

The most offensive curse a man can use on another man is 'You have sex with your mother' (Ena nrora nyanru arava). A man cannot marry the daughters of his father's brothers or sisters, the daughters of his mother's brothers or sisters, or his father's sisters or his mother's sisters. He can, however, marry the daughters of his mother's half brothers or half sisters, the daughters of his father's half brothers or half sisters, and if his brother dies, he can marry his widow.

Ommura claim to have practised mohi sister exchange with greater frequency in the past than was evident during the period of fieldwork. The advantages of mohi are obvious in that each group involved in the exchange receives a bride, cooked pigmeat and the payment in traditional valuables and money which equalizes the expenditure in resources that they have made and binds the two groups together in an ongoing alliance. When Maria married Ta-hio (Nrorra-kyo-matana) from Moussouri, Ta-hio's half-sister Ata (same father) married Maria's brother Angone (Matota-Ovai-ira) from Samura. Each side made a payment of traditional valuable, one hundred kina, and one large and one small cooked pig.

The amount of brideprice demanded by the male relatives of the bride is often a cause of disputes. If the amount of brideprice offered has not been accepted by the bride's father and brothers, by custom she is still their property and any children arising out of the marriage belong to them until the appropriate payment has been made. In the same way if an unmarried girl has a baby, the child belongs to her father and brothers until the baby's father has paid an agreed amount of compensation and brideprice to them. An example of female independence is illustrated by the case of Ndina, daughter of the fightleader Ati Rehasa and sister of Ta-hi. She married Vo-ha as his second wife out of choice but Vo-ha gave only 30 kina marriage payment instead of the 100 kina demanded by her brothers. When the patrol officer was brought in to settle the dispute his verdict was that Vo-ha had to pay the full amount but Vo-ha said he had no money and moved to Ahea with his first wife. Ndina was left behind at Samura with her two children who were considered to belong to their ninau Ta-hi and not to their father Vo-ha because full marriage payment had not been given for Ndina. Ta-hi and his brothers then tried to make her marry Nrinti from Moussouri but she refused. Previously she had lived with a Sepik policeman for two years and they had one child but he had never given

marriage payment for her.

If a woman leaves her husband of her own accord and will not return, her brothers have an obligation to return the brideprice paid for her. ✓✓  
 Huru-oh was previously married to a Kurunumbaira man called Kyunda who had paid brideprice for her. She ran away to live with a man called Silia and her brothers returned her marriage payment to her first husband. Silia gave them a marriage payment of 80 kina and a big pig. Her brothers wanted Silia to make mohi for her with his sister Oteh (a student at Kainantu High School considered to be very desirable because of her potential wage earning capacity). He refused, Huru-oh's brothers tried to take him to court but Council Ta-hi dismissed the case because it was Huru-oh's second marriage.

Distant relatives living in other villages are eminently suitable people to establish a torti trade relationship with. When my friend Taindo of the Kyondera line in Asara visited the Bush Markham villages he stayed in Cousing with members of the Kyondera line because his father's grandfather had been a Kyondera from Cousing and in Tumbuna with his mother's relatives of the Nanochia line. He took tinned fish, rice and muruk tobacco to trade with his hosts and returned with pandanus fruits, taro and bundles of bush tobacco.

Analyzing data collected on the Kamano, another Eastern Highlands people, Elizabeth Mandeville has argued that the Kamano do not use agnatic ideology as the uniform of political and territorial groups and that in terms of descent constructs their patrilineages are shallow. She writes:

The purpose of this article is to look at this situation, anomalous for the Highlands, where a people who regard relations between agnates as a special, enduring and reliable do not employ agnatic ideology to characterize and organize the local group and to investigate the connexion between the nature of affinal ties and the employment of agnatic sentiment and ideology (1979 :107).

Mandeville states that Kamano society diverges from the 'common pattern' in the following ways:

- (1) The unity of the local group is derived from and represented by the sharing of food production and consumption, the defence of territory, parenthood of village children, and a family-like kinship which is not specifically agnatic.
- (2) Neither the local group nor the lineage clusters which occur within it are exogamous
- (3) Agnatic sentiment is strong and attached to those believed to be physically related through males. There is no way of altering membership of an agnatic group which is given at conception. No one recognized as an agnate may be married.
- (4) Strong and significant ties are maintained with agnates living in other and accessible groups (1979 : 100)

Mandeville writes:

Agnatic kinship, conceived as a bond established definitely at conception, admirably provides for inter-village cooperation between those who may never have met and have no common property, and does not serve as a model for conceptualizing local groups (1979 : 120).

She concludes:

A conception of the Kamano village as a patrilineal descent group would require quite a different set of notions from those employed to distinguish the members of shallow patrilineages, for it is not the presence of people with certain fathers, but the existence of descent constructs with the power to demonstrate the connectedness of a large number of people which is indispensable to thinking in terms of clans, phatries, and the like. I have shown that in remembering and interacting with his highly significant agnatic kin, the individual employs his own knowledge and that of his close relatives about a series of filial and fraternal relationships and not a family tree descending from an ancestor and 'placing' a large number of people, known and unknown, living and dead (1979 : 121).

While there are certain obvious parallels between the Ommura and the Kamano data as presented by Mandeville, it would appear that the Kamano situation was the result of over twenty five years of

pacification by the government, intensified aggregation into mixed lineage villages, great mission influence, and, most significantly, the abandoning of life-cycle ceremonies of the type practised by the Ommura. The reason for concentrating on Ommura life-cycle ceremonies - birth, male and female initiation, marriage, death - in this work is that they constitute the most important Ommura social institutions. Who enacts them and participates in them in what roles define all the significant kinship relations which the individual for whom they were staged is involved in. It has been shown that the Ommura have patrilineages in that everyone belongs to a definite okyera with a traditional okyera territory of habitation and okyera uri ('mythical ancestors'). Knowledge of the names of ones male ancestors is a source of power for men in making personal magic and the spirits of dead relatives are invoked when making important decisions in the present. Migrants tend to go to those villages where they have relatives who will give them land to cultivate. Although lineages have rights as a group over land which they have traditionally cultivated and lived on, individuals only own land insofar as they are living and making gardens on it.

In arguing that the Kamano do not use agnatic ideology as the uniform of political and territorial groups and that in terms of descent constructs their patrilineages are shallow, Mandeville is arguing against an anthropological model of what the Kamano system should be like were it rigidly structured. Without having to participate in this rather arid debate, I would argue that descent constructs for the Ommura are primarily those which result from birth into an okyera and those which the individual becomes enlisted into from the staging of the life-cycle ceremonies of birth, male or female initiation, marriage and death. Beyond these primary relationships there is great flexibility because all other relationships

are a matter of individual situation, opportunity, and choice although the potential and precedents for using idioms of kinship as the framework for creating other types of relationships exist.

### Warfare

Strength and prowess in warfare has continued to be one of the greatest Ommura male ideals and male initiands are exhorted to be strong fighters by their seniors. By warfare, one is referring to fighting involving the use of shields, bows and arrows and not stick, axe or fistfights. The administration had attempted to prevent traditional warfare by encouraging disputants to fight with sticks or fists and by imposing markedly more severe penalties for acts of traditional warfare - fighting with shields, bows and arrows. Incidents of warfare occurred in Asara and in Motakara resulting in prison sentences for the combatants and the arrival of the police prevented arrow shooting between Samura and Kurunumbaira in a dispute over land. Warfare occurred less frequently in the villages near the patrol station than in more remote villages because the police would get to hear about it in time to break it up. When warfare occurred in distant villages, the police would wait for the combatants to tire themselves out in fighting before moving in to arrest participants, a necessary precaution given the small number of policemen.

The purpose of male initiation is to instruct initiands into a state of adult male knowledge and to promote their health and strength so that they become good warriors. This ideal of male strength and fighting prowess is one of the most conspicuous features of Ommura male social attitudes. Fight leaders were called kepukiya vaise ('strong man'), the rigours of undergoing male initiation increase kepukiya ('strength'), and men say that men have more kepukiya than women. Initiation instruction stresses that men have an obligation to assist their male relatives in all wars or fights with enemies. Any occasion on which

men arm themselves with shields in addition to bows and arrows constitutes a kind of martial exercise. In addition to warfare these occasions are the taking of ummara initiands to have their noses bled and other demonstrations of armed male force during the male initiations, ua-ha curing ceremonies, and ihi singsings. During these occasions, the men chant the Wo Wo warcry, snap their bowstrings, and perform a male dance which consists of miming the actions of ducking and dodging arrows using their shields.

When armed for battle, men carry bows, arrows and large, rectangular wooden shields (kai-ke). For battles or celebrations, shields are decorated with a bunch of black feathers which are mounted at the end of a flexible stick projecting from the top of the shield so that the feathers vibrate with the wind and the movements of the shield bearer. Leaves are stuck into the fibre binding at the top of the shield for decoration, the fronts of the shields have a pattern composed of repeated upright angle marks scratched on them, the back of the shield has a small tua string bag in which arrows are put point upwards for accessibility in fighting, and the barkcloth strap which is used to carry the shield over the shoulder is attached through two holes, one above the other in the centre of the shield.

Certain customs are followed in warfare. If a man hits an opponent or his shield with an arrow, he triumphantly calls out the name of his patrilineage mountain and the names of his father, grandfather and other ancestors. This is only ever done in warfare, never in stick or fist fights. Men do not fight if they have had sex during the previous day because it is said that the smell (munda) of the woman stays on the man and attracts enemy arrows to his body. As an act of sympathetic magic, men sometimes chew pieces of the kind of wood from which bows are made (huru kyatava) and spit it on their bodies before fighting to give them strength. Arrow points are

removed from the body by cutting them out with a knife and removing the splinters with the fingers. If a man has been wounded by an arrow, sometimes he is given some scrapings from the extracted point to promote his recovery.

The most common tactics used in warfare are attacking the enemies men's house at night, staging ambushes, and fighting battles with the two sides shooting arrows at each other from a distance. Enemy corpses were often mutilated and disfigured to anger and humiliate the relatives of the slain. Women participated in warfare by assisting the men. In raiding expeditions, they followed behind the men carrying extra bundles of arrows, bows, and food to cook, and during fighting they would sing songs, cheer on the men, and hit enemy corpses with sticks. If their village was under attack by the enemy, the women would retreat with the children and pigs and hide in the bush.

Frequent causes of warfare were paybacks for killings or the destruction of property in previous fights, a death thought to be the result of sorcery, the killing of pigs belonging to someone from another village, failure to deliver a marriage payment, or counter-claims over a piece of land. Although there are ongoing networks of allied and enemy villages, these alliances were and are not static. The one exception to this are the traditional trade-partner villages of the Bush Markham (Anna Mata) which have always remained neutral in any wars involving Ommura villages and which served Ommura as refuges for retreat in warfare.

Fight reminiscences revealed the following wars and village alignments having taken place at some time in the remembered past. The relative scale of the conflict can be assessed by the number of villages involved.

Samura	vs	Nonta
Samura	vs	Anima
Samura	vs	Nonta
Samura	vs	Nonta Asara
Samura, Sonura, Kurunumbaira, Moussouri	vs	Nonta Asara
Nonta Asara	vs	To'kena, Hab'ina, Auraura
Samura, Sonura, Moussouri, Kurunumbaira	vs	Asara, Ahea, Anima, To'kena, Himarata
Samura, Sonura, Moussouri, Kurunumbaira	vs	Suwaira, Nompier, Barabuna
Samura, Sonura, Moussouri	vs	Kurunumbaira, Asara
Kurunumbaira, Samura	vs	Moussouri, Motakara
Samura, Sonura	vs	Moussouri, Motakara

Ati Rehasa of Samura, now deceased, was the oldest man in Samura and had been a renowned 'strong man' (kepukiya vaise) or fight leader. An edited version of some of his fight anecdotes illuminates many aspects of the Ommura practice of warfare.

#### ATI REHASA

Ati stayed with his trade partner (torti) Guan-gau in the Bush Markham (Anna Mata).

Samura fought with the Nontas and they killed Ati's grandfather, disfiguring the body. He led an ambush on the Nontas and killed ten men.

Fighting broke out with Anima and Ati went to hide with his tortis in the Bush Markham.

Kurunumbaira, Samura, Sonura and Moussouri fought against Nonta and Asara. Ati sat in front of a fire and called on the spirit (maraua) of his brother who had been killed in the fighting to ask if they should set out on a raid and his brother's spirit answered in the affirmative.

The other men were not eager but Ati wanted to avenge the death of his brother and sister in the previous fighting and convinced them to accompany him. They ambushed an Asara men's house at night when all the men were asleep. Ati shot arrows through the doorway, killing one man, and they set fire to the men's house. To celebrate their victory, they set fire to their lineage mountain, Orava Naior. The two sides terminated hostilities by staging an obu peacemaking ceremony in which each side exchanged cooked pigs.

When the Nonta and Asara people went to war against the To'kena, Himarata and Auraura people because they had made tu-hi poison against them, Ati fought on the side of the Nontans and Asarans. At some point in the fighting, he hid them in his bush, ie. on his patrilineage's land in Samura.

Ati married a woman from the Bush Markham and fought with his Bush Markham tortis against their enemies. His Bush Markham torti, Gaun-gau, called Ati his 'elder brother'. Gaun-gau gave Ati red and yellow koki feathers (eahra-kyava) and Ati gave Gaun-gau his bamboo tobacco pipe (vuka tahu). Ati brought back taro from there which he planted in Samura. All the Bush Markham women wanted to marry him. Ati claimed to have had 15 wives during his lifetime. Because of his celebrity, he assisted in the staging of many ummara and iyavati male initiations.

At one time, Ati had to move to Moussouri to avoid being killed by the Nontas. Once when he felt he had not killed enough Asara/Nontans to compensate for the people they had killed from his side, he refused to accept their invitation to make obu peace. During an obu made between Obura and Asara/Nonta each side gave the other two cooked pigs - one large one and one small one. When he lived at Samura, Ati joined with the Kurunumbairans to fight against the Nonta/Asara/Ahea people and he helped burn a men's house in Asara during the fighting.

When the Sarona and Kurunumbaira people made poison against Samura, the Samurans fought with them and the Kurunumbairans killed Ati's brother.

The Ha'bina people fought against the Samurans and Motakarans and killed the Samuran's pet cassowary. They attacked Samura and the defending Samurans set up their shields on the village palisade. Ati shot an arrow which split a Hab'ina man's shield and he triumphantly called out the name of his mountain. A member of the audience listening to this reminiscence commented Ovara kikya kakya hiro meaning that the black bird feathers stuck into the top of Ati's shield shook (kikya kakya) as he broke the enemy shield with his shot.

During a period of fighting against Nonta, the Nontans dug up the body of an ummara boy killed in the fighting and crushed in his head with a piece of wood. In retaliation, Ati used the end of his shield and axe to smash in the face of a Nonta man he had killed during the fighting, § Nondautauro of Samura told me the following anecdotes of warfare which I have edited.

#### NONDAUTAURO

A man called Kaima from Anima poisoned an Obura man called Va-re-ha. When he died the Oburans staged a hondi cooking poison oracle and the verdict was that Kaima was responsible for the poisoning. The Oburans set out on a raid to Asara and fought killing one Asara man, captured three pigs which they had cooked and ate, and set fire to Orava Naior mountain to mark their victory. In retaliation, the Asara/Anima people staged an ambush in which they killed three Obura men. The Oburans then killed an Asara man. The Asarans hid in the Obura bush and killed one woman and one girl. The Oburans killed 4 Asara men and, in another incident, 2 boys from Asara, while the Asarans killed 1 Obura man. Obura and Asara then made an obu peacemaking ceremony by exchanging cooked pigs and kyao shells.

Despite the suppression of warfare by the administration, an ethic glorifying male strength and fighting ability has continued to be transmitted to male youth through the institution of male initiation. Every man owns a shield and the bows and arrows which he uses for hunting and self-protection and male dancing in singsings is a demonstration of armed martial prowess which is considered to be synonymous with male sexual attractiveness. The idiom of men combining together to fight off a common enemy is used in the ua-ha curing ceremony in which the afflicting agent is driven off, as in warfare, by armed male strength. Individual fighting ability and strength are a major preoccupation of Ommura males and the martial ethic is a dominant feature of Ommura male ideology.

#### Poisoning

The use of poison to kill or debilitate enemies has very important political implications. As has been described in the section on warfare, a death resulting from poisoning by members of an enemy village was a common cause of fighting. It might be presumed that since the suppression of warfare by the administration, the poisoning of enemies would have increased because poisoning was the only means of exacting revenge. This was impossible to ascertain because poisoners do not publicize their activities and are generally feared by members of their own community and because poison accusations are only made public when someone has died and the male community decides that it can take the risk of publicly naming a poisoner or his village as being responsible. Older men claimed that the kinds of poison used on enemies had increased since their youth and what they are referring to is that given greater Ommura contact with the outside world, there are more opportunities for acquiring new poisons and poisoning techniques. Knowledge of poisoning techniques is restricted to adult men and although women can be poisoned, men are emphatic that women cannot make poison. Poisons are referred to as wakyera, meaning

'secret' or 'forbidden', the same word used to refer to the secret events and lore of male initiations. They are always kept away from the village and are stored in caves or tree hollows by their owners.

There are two types of poisoning; irama which is made with left over scraps of the victims food or his body wastes and tu-hi in which actual poisons are introduced into the victims body through his food or water, through his skin, or 'shot' into him. The most common technique of making irama is to slowly smoke the victim's food leavings or bodily wastes wrapped in hondi greens over a fire until they are dry and blackened and the victim's spirit (maraua) leaves him and he becomes seriously ill. Another way of making irama is to bury the food leavings or body wastes in a pwata red earth area so that the victim develops the kind of respiratory illness referred to in pidgin as 'short wind'. Poisoners store the wastes of potential victims inside containers made out of small lengths of wild bamboo bound with bush rope and yellow havarikya grass and closed at each end with rope. One of these irama poison bamboos which I was shown, contained spat betelnut, corn husk, and fibre from eii winged bean pods.

A poison technique was described to me which operates on the same principle of sympathetic magic as irama but uses only the victim's name without using his food leavings or body wastes. A cassowary rib bone is used to represent the victim's rib bone and heated over a fire with wild ginger and a substance called vapipa. As he does this, the sorcerer repeatedly calls the name of his victim and his village using a spell which says the cassowary rib bone is the victim's rib bone. I was told that, if this works, on the first day afterwards, the victim becomes listless, on the second day sick, and should be dead by the fifth day. Sometimes Okapa area poisons are used which consist of a number of nails and pointed bamboo slivers tied on a rope together with bamboo poison vials.

Because it involves a direct attack on the victim with poisonous substances, tu-hi is considered to be a much more lethal form of poisoning than irama. Tu-hi poisons are also stored in containers made of wild bamboo but much greater care is taken in handling them than with irama substances. The poisoner always puts some kind of grease on his hands to protect himself before touching them. In one form of tu-hi, the poisoner creeps up on his unsuspecting victim and from a distance, shoots poison at the back of the victim's neck. He does this by using a special kind of bamboo poison container which has cassowary claws bound around its top. The poison is magically shot from the poison container by aiming a cassowary claw at the top of the container at the victim's neck and using it like a bow. Other forms of tu-hi poison are administered by putting them in the victim's food or water so that they break his stomach or by throwing or rubbing them on his skin. Modern poisons such as battery acid and ddt are used for this purpose as well as poisons obtained from the bush. I was told about a bush poison called kyavundarura which grew in the Bush Markham and looked like the ihu capebibi plant which yields a kind of betelnut. Kyavundarura is used to poison small drinking streams and the technique consists of attaching poison leaves to a rope tied to a stick fixed in the water.

The following case study of a particular poisoning accusation demonstrates the intricate political processes which go on when the influential men in the community deliberate, in the light of previous poisoning cases, whether an illness or death was caused by poison, and if so, which village was responsible. When Noteh, one of Kwamba's wives, went to her garden to pick corn and became sick, people said it was because men from Baira had poisoned her.

1. They said that Baira men had hid near her garden and using their fingers, shot her with poison so that she became sick.

2. This was done in retaliation for A.'s poisoning of a Baira woman staying at Samura. A. had wanted to poison a Baira man, but because it was night, he threw poison in the face of a Baira woman by mistake.
3. The Bairans cooked sweetpotatoes and hondi greens in an earth oven to find out the person responsible for the woman's death. The piece allocated to A. didn't cook so they decided that he had done it.
4. Sometime afterwards, A. admitted his responsibility. He said that he had made the poison because his brother had been poisoned by the Bairan, even though his brother, a Committee, was killed with a blow from a stick by a man from Kurunumbaira while trying to settle a dispute over the killing of a pig. Later it was decided that the cause of death, the thing that made the stick blow lethal, was a poisoned tin of lime.
5. When the cause of Noteh's illness was diagnosed by the asochia men they said it was not poison but that she had been working too hard picking coffee and should rest for a week.

The adult men of any community always knew which enemy villages had outstanding grievances which might be the reason for retributive poison attempts against them. Often the inhabitants of an entire area would be held responsible for the actions of people from a single village in poison retributions carried out by people from distant areas because they were unaware of village locations. When a Samura man with an infected foot was about to be sent for treatment to Kainantu hospital, he was warned not to go because some men from Nompier had poisoned some Kainantu men and he would be poisoned in retaliation. In the pursuit of payback, many cases of mistaken identity occur. Assuming that they were people from Auraura, a village thought to have been responsible for a poisoning, men from Himarata killed 2 Barua and wounded another. The Barua were students who were walking back to Wonenara via Kainantu from school in Bulolo. So when some Barua who were walking to Kainantu gave a biscuit to Panu's son at Asara, poisoning was suspected until the

Asarans realised that there was no case. Villagers always kept a close lookout for outsiders who might be on poisoning expeditions and if any were seen, all available men armed themselves and pursued them.

Poisoning therefore constitutes a form of attack like warfare and is generally directed outside the village at the members of enemy villages. All adult men claimed some knowledge of poisoning methods as part of their personal magical techniques. Few would admit to ever practising it but most asserted that they would know what measures to take if someone poisoned or attempted to poison them. Poisoners were not approved of by their communities because people were afraid that the presence of a practising poisoner in their midst would bring retributions in the form of counter poisonings on them. In so far as great precautions were taken by adult men to avoid their body wastes and food leavings from falling into the hands of potential poisoners and that they were always on the alert for poisoning attempts, it can be argued that fear of poisoning plays a major role in villagers relations with potentially hostile outsiders.

3. Food, Other Valuables, Payment and the Relative Scale of  
Ommura Ceremonies.

Anthropologists are always struck by the important role which food plays in New Guinea societies, just like the romanticized South Sea noble savages who visit Western urban centres and report with amazement on how the people obsessively perform acts of worship involving the exchange of pieces of printed paper and round metal objects (money). This is because foodstuffs in New Guinea function as nourishment and as mediums of exchange for defining social relationships and as a form of ceremonial payment. One doesn't have to be an anthropologist to discern that the basic social evaluation in Western society of the difference between a MacDonald's hamburger and lobster and champagne, between a snack and a banquet, can be found in every society in the form of the relative distinctions made between good food and bad food, scarcity and plenty, special or feast food and everyday food.

What follows is an analysis of the Ommura social use of food and attitudes to food. By focussing on food, something which derives its social importance, other than its edibility, from the situations and relationships within which it is given, it is possible to present a wide spectrum of Ommura social existence. Because most Ommura ceremonies are centred around a payment consisting of food and other items and because Ommura family and kin groups have to conserve their food resources to meet these payments, it is possible to rank the importance of these ceremonies in terms of the amounts of food and other valuables which must be given as payment. Like most people, the Ommura assume that eating good food promotes good health and curing ceremonies and life-cycle ceremonies contain ritual statements about the relationship of good food to good health. The only word the Ommura use to refer to foodstuffs or edibles as a general category is the

compound word khyera-hondi, literally 'taro-greens', and items of food are generally referred to by their individual names such as ama ('sweet potatoes'), ova ('yams'), and wara mati ('pigmeat').

Before embarking on the Ommura analysis it is necessary to review previous anthropological work on the social significance of food. Douglas and Firth have written about the general subject and Reay, Young, Wagner and Schieffelin have written about the use of food in particular in New Guinea societies.

In 'Deciphering a Meal', Mary Douglas writes:

If food is treated as a code, the messages it encodes will be found in the pattern of social relationships being expressed. The message is about different degrees of hierarchy, inclusion and exclusion, boundaries and transactions across boundaries. Like sex, the taking of food has a social component as well as a biological one. Food categories therefore encode social events (1975 : 249)

Analyzing the food events of her own family, she concludes:

Obviously the meanings in our food system should be elucidated by much closer observation. I cut it short by drawing conclusions intuitively from the social categories which emerge. Drinks are for strangers, acquaintances, workmen and family. Meals are for family, close friends and honored guests. The grand operator of the system is the line between intimacy and distance (1975 : 256)

In much the same way it is assumed in the following analysis of Ommura ceremonies that the more important the ceremony, the greater the amount of food and valuables required to stage it.

Like Douglas, Firth in his paper 'Food Symbolism in a Pre-Industrial Society' argues that food is important primarily because of the role it plays as an object of exchange in different social relationships.

I want here to make an important point; strictly speaking there are only symbolic relationships. To speak of food in Tikopia as a symbolic object is often a convenient short-hand term, but it is the conceptualization of the object in a given relationship that is significant (1973 : 245).

Food is both a vehicle in ritual practices and an all pervasive necessity for life the consumption of which occurs in conjunction with all social relationships.

I doubt if it would be adequate to speak of food as being a dominant symbol in Tikopia, though as I shall show it enters into every ritual situation. I think it preferable to speak of the symbolization of food as a dominant - or at least prominent - theme. At the same time the symbolic relationships of food in Tikopia society can function side by side with non-symbolic, quite pragmatic relationships (1973 : 246)

Anthropologists have noted the extremely important role that food - meat and vegetables - plays as a medium in defining social relationships in New Guinea societies. In her book on the Kuma, Marie Reay states:

Food has an intimate place in all formal procedures, and giving it expresses sociality and common interests. Given informally and unobtrusively to persons belonging to some other group, it cancels the ordinary discreteness of groups; given with pomp, it emphasizes the separateness of groups by exalting the prowess of one. Its withdrawal expresses enmity and suspicion; its giving expresses more positive sentiments (1959 : 95).

In his book Fighting With Food, Young writes:

It is a truism that Melanesian peoples in general value food in ways which transcend its intrinsic value to them as a necessity of life. Its valuation is such that it appears to be used everywhere to create, maintain and manipulate social relationships. Food has the lowest common denominator and the greatest ease of convertibility of any valuable, and as a species of wealth, it is crucial to the working of most indigenous political systems. One does not need to read deeply in the ethnography to appreciate that pig festivals and food exchanges signalize a fundamental cultural interest of Melanesian peoples (1971 : 146)

In Habu, Wagner comments on how food plays a role in all Daribi social relationships and how greater social importance is accorded to relationships involving the exchange of meat as opposed to those involving the exchange of the less valuable vegetable foods. Meat

is used as an exchange valuable because as a food it promotes male powers of reproduction and lactation in women and thus perpetuates life. He writes:

Complementarity is expressed by the giving of vegetable food which is transitory in the Daribi view, merely passing through the body when eaten, and which is exchanged, together with a number of services, on a day to day basis. The definition of social units, on the other hand, involves the substitution of relatively 'permanent' items of wealth for rights in human beings. These items include the category sizibage or sibage (shell ornaments, axes, bushknives and Australian currency) as well as meat represented by live pigs, pork, smoked marsupials, chickens or tinned meat. As we have learned in an earlier section, meat is a peculiarly appropriate item to be exchanged for female reproductive capacity insofar as its juices are a necessary concomitant to male reproductive capability (1972 : 49).

Anthropologists write about the use of food in the New Guinea societies they study because as a medium of exchange in social relationships, food as a subject condenses all the associations of its use in these social relationships. Schieffelin writes:

Kaluli see food as the appropriate medium for shaping social relationships and communicating personal sentiment because it is the basis of all human life. Food is closely bound up with conceptions of birth and death, personal strength, sexuality, illness and the unseen. The kinds of food a person can eat are restricted, or tabooed, in connection with these things over a wide range of circumstances (1976 : 64).

Anyone unfamiliar with New Guinea societies would be immediately struck by the extent to which the giving off foodstuffs occurs as a part of every social relationship in Ommura society. Food serves a double function as a necessity for sustaining life and as a form of payment demarcating the various social relationships in which it is exchanged. Foodstuffs are grown in gardens, husbanded in the case of pigs, or hunted or foraged in the bush. Gardening ability is

highly rated by the Ommura and the laying out of crops in gardens is done in accordance with aesthetic as well as horticultural criteria. Slash-and-burn agriculture is practised and when a new garden site is being cleared, the men do the heavy work such as felling trees and making fences. Residential family groups cooperate in planting crops in new gardens. Often the assistance of relatives and friends is enlisted to help in clearing and planting the new garden. In return, the 'owners' of the garden reward them for their labour with a small feast called a harapa. The reason for this is that if the people who had assisted in making and planting a new garden were not paid off immediately with a harapa feast of food by the owners of the garden, they they would have a justifiable claim to some of the garden produce when it was ready to eat because they had planted it. Throughout the day, Ommura share their cooked food with their relatives and friends and even small children share their food with each other in emulation of the adults. This sharing of daily food is both a demonstration of the existence of the relationship between the sharing partners and also means that the food giver will, at some later date, receive food back in return from the recipient of the food.

A basic distinction exists between everyday food and feast food. Everyday food is roasted on fires, cooked in water in saucepans bought from tradestores, or pressure cooked in lengths of bamboo, the open end stopped up with leaves, put on the fire. Feast food is cooked in oria ('earth ovens' or 'mumus') and the very construction of an earth oven indicates that a celebration is about to take place. The steam baked flavour of food wrapped in bundles of leaves and cooked inside an earth oven is considered to be superior to the flavour of food cooked by everyday methods. The most important ingredient of any feast is pigmeat cooked in an earth oven, although small feasts often do not include pigmeat and consist only of vegetables. When pigmeat

is cooked, puddings made of grated raw bananas, pig grease and aromatic tree bark are packaged in leaves and cooked in the stone earth oven. Certain vegetable foods are conserved to be used in feasts - including red yams (afara), taro (khyera) and red sugar cane. The standard of appropriateness for the vegetables cooked in earth ovens for feasts is that there must be an abundance and that they must be both choice and relatively large in size. Smaller sizes of vegetables are used as everyday foods. For example, the smallest sweet potatoes (ama) are given to children and pigs, adults will not eat them. Building the earth oven, cutting and collecting the firewood necessary to heat the oven stones, peeling and preparing the vegetables and meat for cooking, and tending the oven during the cooking process takes a great deal of time and it is the amount of labour involved combined with the amount of food resources expended which makes feasts a major event.

Pigmeat is the most valued of the foods cooked in earth ovens and the social standing of the people invited to a pigmeat feast can be assessed by the amount and the kinds of cuts of pigmeat which are shared out to them. Cooked vegetables are used to fill out the shares of pigmeat and are appreciated because of their quality and flavour but are definitely secondary to the pigmeat, or any meat, in the hierarchy of choice foods. Meat and vegetables are two different spheres of foodstuff and of all meats pigmeat is the most prized because of its high fat (vehamera) content. Food is shared out to guests but is never consumed communally at the distribution site. Instead the lineage or family groups take the food back to their home cooking fires where it is recooked, mainly because it tastes better hot but also as a hygienic precaution against food poisoning. Ommura feasts are occasions for the cooking and distribution of food, not for the communal consumption of food with all the participants eating together as a group.

Food often serves as a medium through which people are poisoned or men become polluted by menstruating women. Irama is a form of poisoning which is carried out by the poisoner obtaining bits of the leftover food of the person he wishes to poison. The poisoner burns this leftover food over a fire while calling the name of his victim's spirit (maraua) and this results in the victim becoming sick. Ommura adults, especially men, consequently take great care to dispose of their food leavings so that they cannot be retrieved and used to poison them in the same way that they take great care to dispose of their faeces, another medium used for poisoning. When Committee Luhi was sick, the diagnosis of the asochia diviners was that he had swallowed buai ('betelnut') and he admitted that he had swallowed betelnut rather than spit it out during a meeting at the patrol station because he was afraid that his enemies would use it to make irama poison against him. If a person young enough or in good enough health for there to be a public suspicion of poisoning having been the cause, dies, a poisoning divination ceremony involving the cooking of food is carried out. Hondi greens are put in a bamboo tube and cooked over a fire. A piece of hondi is allocated to each of the neighbouring villages and the name of each village is called out as its piece of hondi is taken out of the bamboo. The village or villages whose pieces of hondi are not properly cooked are those suspected of poisoning the deceased.

Men can become ill if they eat food which has been cooked or handled by a menstruating woman and great precautions, principally the seclusion of menstruating women in the women's house, are taken to prevent this happening. Men say that if a woman carries cooked food so that it is ever at a level below her stomach, the smell (munda) of the woman will come from her genital region and spoil and pollute the food so that men cannot eat it without the risk of

incurring illness. For purely hygienic reasons, adult men avoid food which has been handled by little children. One of the reasons given by men for the division of Ommura huts into a men's half and a women's half with a fire in the middle is that this spatial arrangement facilitates the separation of the men and the women and children's spheres and makes it possible for women to cook men's food on the fire in the middle without crossing into the male sphere.

Surpluses of food are accumulated to be used as payment in ceremonies. Pigs, cooked as meat in earth ovens and distributed with an abundance of vegetables, are the most valuable Ommura foodstuff. The traditional valuables used for payment are pigs which are raised by women, string bags, hiera and rida grass-skirts, and barkcloths which are made by women, bows and bundles of arrows which are made by men, and shell decorations which are obtained by men through trade partners. Money, obtained primarily from the sale of the cash crop coffee, is also given as payment for ceremonies and as a part of brideprice. Payment in the major ceremonies - male and female initiations, brideprice, death payments, and death compensation - consists of amounts from separate spheres of valuables; food, traditional valuables, and money. The food component of any payment is the most essential because while payment in money and traditional valuables can be deferred, the distribution of food has to be made while the actual ceremony is taking place.

Money can be used to buy food from local tradestores - tinned mackerel, tinned meat, rice and hardtack biscuit - but the Ommura regard this food as being inferior to that which they raise or grow themselves. Money is also used to buy clothes - shirts, T-shirts, shorts and 'mother hubbard' dresses - from local tradestores and the town of Kainantu. Pigs and traditional valuables are hardly ever sold for money. On occasions when members of the patrol post

attempted, unsuccessfully, to buy local pigs, the price asked was over two hundred kina, over twice the cost of a pig from a Kainantu butcher. The reason for this is that while the Ommura will sell coffee, which is totally useless to them except as a source of money, for money, food is rarely exchanged for money. Outside the local groups of kin and co-villagers food is exchanged with trade partners (tortis) as a way of establishing an exchange relationship. Even when food is sold to members of the patrol station, it is generally surplus food and the money which is paid for it is not particularly valued in terms of what it will buy from the store, but rather in terms of the ongoing exchange relationship which the buyer and the seller have entered into. I used to find it rather difficult to buy vegetables with money because people valued their vegetables as something one could eat much more than anything they could buy locally with the money from their sale. If I baked yeast bread it was easy to obtain any quantity of vegetables with this food novelty because food was being exchanged for food.

A review of the roles which the use of food plays in all Ommura ceremonies reveals both the relative social importance of the types of ceremonies which can be determined by the amounts of food and other kinds of payment involved and the general social importance which is accorded to the ceremonial use of food. There are mata fertility ceremonies to increase the yield of pigs, sweet potatoes and yams, the curing ceremonies of ua-ha, vu-ha and asochia, the life-cycle ceremonies of birth, initiation, marriage and death, ceremonies involving other villages, death compensation payment, obu peacemaking ceremonies, and 'gate singsings'.

Mata fertility ceremonies for sweet potatoes, yams and pigs (ama mata, ova mata and wara mata) are performed to increase the yield of the sweet potato and yam crops or to increase the fatness of the pig population. Each of the ceremonies is carried out at night

in a hut which has been specially decorated with the appropriate leaves and objects associated with the fertility of sweet potatoes, yams and pigs. The ceremonies are carried out by an adult male specialist who is paid in food and the families for whom the particular ceremony is being enacted who assist him by singing the appropriate songs necessary for the ceremony to be efficacious. Ama mata, ova mata or wara mata songs are sung by the specialist and participants to summon the sweet potatoes, yams or pigs from the surrounding areas. Songs are sung in many different languages and dialects. The sweet potatoes, yams or pigs are called from the furthest areas working through to neighbouring dialects, and finally to the appropriate Ommura ama, ova or wara mata songs. The purpose of the singing is to attract all the spirits of the sweet potatoes, yams or pigs into the hut so that the leaves and objects relevant to the particular mata which is being performed will become imbued with fertility from the presence of all the spirits of the desired foods. At dawn after this has been done, the specialist takes the leaves and buries them in the participants' gardens among the sweet potatoes or yams, or in the case of wara mata, hangs some of the leaves up in the pig houses and mixes other with the pigs' food. Other acts of gardening magic are performed as individual acts by the adult male owners of gardens who use personal magical spells accompanied by actions such as the burying of efficacious stones in gardens to promote the yield of specific crops.

Curing ceremonies use the public singing of special efficacious songs, magical utterances and health promoting herbs, leaves and tree barks in a way which has similarities to the basic techniques of the mata fertility ceremonies. In the mata fertility ceremonies the yield of sweet potatoes, yams or pigs is increased by the singing of the appropriate songs which draw the spirits of the desired foodstuffs from everywhere into the ceremony hut where they empower the relevant

leaves and other props with their essence. In the case of sweet potatoes and yams, these leaves and other objects are buried in the garden in proximity to the crops and in the case of pigs, they are hung up in the pighouse or actually fed to the pigs. The purpose of the curing ceremonies of ua-ha, vu-ha and asochia is obviously to remove whatever agent is causing sickness and they are carried out in accordance with principles of sympathetic magic. Afflicting agents are chased away and fevers cooled down with water in ua-ha, health is restored by feeding the patient tree barks, pigmeat and health foods in vu-ha, and specialists 'see' the cause of the sickness in asochia.

In ua-ha, the sick person(s) and their relatives and friends assemble in a hut. The afflicting sickness or sorcery is chased away by adult men who charge into the hut from outside and dance around making warcries, snapping their bowstrings and spitting aromatic tree bark - hemma and handa ginger - on the sick who stand by the centre post of the hut. This is done several times and then a banana tree is split and the sick walk through it and water is poured over their heads to cool their bodies down. No payment is made to the adult men who chase the sickness away but food is brought, cooked and shared out among the participants.

Vu-ha is performed by an adult male specialist who is given a share of the pig which must be cooked and killed for this ceremony. Pigmeat mixed with curative leaves and tree bark and kapika - grated raw bananas, pig grease and tree bark, are cooked in an earth oven. The sick eat portions of this food and the specialist makes a kamara, a cross shaped construction, out of two lengths of red sugar cane with pieces of cooked pigmeat sandwiched in the split crosspiece and a bundle of medicinal bush leaves and plants arranged in a crucible shape at the top of the crosspiece. The specialist takes the sick people to a stream and they stand in the running water, a purifying agent, with the specialist who holds the kamara. He recites his own magical utterances

for curing and transfers the sickness into the kamara. In the vu-ha ceremony held to cure Irai of poisoning, the specialist Apai called the names of the enemy villages suspected of the poisoning, spat on a stone at the top of the kamara, and when he threw the stone in the water the poison was said to have been removed from Irai. The part of the kamara containing the removed sickness is thrown into the running water and the other parts are eaten.

Named after the mildly hallucinogenic tree bark which the group of male specialist chew when administering it, asochia is a relatively new form of curing ceremony. Payment must be made to the asochia men for the staging of this ceremony in food and money. They are emphatic about this and try to get paid with a cooked pig both out of self interest and as an attempt to raise their status as practitioners of an important curing ceremony. The friends and relatives of the sick person, the sick person and the asochia men, gather in a hut at night. As the assembled men, women and children sing asochia songs in Ommura and other neighbouring languages, the asochia men chew asochia tree bark, smoke tobacco and stare at a red flower in a bottle. The chewing of the asochia and the singing of songs by the other participants enables them to see the true cause of the sickness. When they have determined the cause, they remove the sickness by putting their right hands on the sick person's head and pouring a bamboo of cold water (also done in ua-ha) over the sick person.

The curing ceremonies operate on the general principle that food is always good for you and that choice food, especially pigmeat, and specially concocted health foods plus a bit of sympathetic magic will restore health and vigour. There is no notion of fasting or purging as purifying the system, only that a lack of food makes you thin, weak and unhealthy and that an abundance of good food makes you strong and fat with healthy skin. During the vu-ha for Foreh, a boy with a case of cerebral

malaria, I was struck with the way in which he was forced to eat pigmeat even though he vomited most of it up. As with all Ommura ceremonies, each curing ceremony involves the sharing out of food as payment to specialists and participants.

The life-cycle ceremonies of birth, male and female initiation, marriage and death are based around a payment made by the members of one lineage to the members of another lineage. In all the ceremonies part of the payment consists of food and, with the exception of the birth ceremony, of traditional valuables and money. The events of each ceremony contain a statement made through the medium of this food of the primary relationship which is being celebrated. In the birth ceremony, the father gives marsupial meat to his wife's father; in the male and female initiations, the father passes portions of cooked pigmeat up the sides of the initiand's body to promote health; in the marriage ceremony, the bride brings pigmeat and vegetables to cook for her husband, and in the upara funeral ceremony, the spirit of the deceased is offered pigmeat and vegetables before being banished from the village.

After a child has been born, the father kills many marsupials over a period of time and presents them to his wife's father in a ceremony called kyai-ha. If marsupials are not available, pigmeat can be substituted for the payment. The male initiations of ummara and iyavati and the female initiation kam karura, are based on the payment of traditional valuables, money and a share of the kyapairi pig feast given by the father to eldest mother's brother (ninau) for his assistance with the ceremony and the share of the kyapairi pig feast given by the father to the people who participate in the ceremony. At the end of initiations, pigmeat from the kyapairi feast is passed up the sides of the initiand's body by the father to promote their health, another example of the Ommura equation of good food promoting good health presented as a ritual action. During female initiation,

the initiands are given instructions about how they must avoid polluting men, especially through the medium of food, when they are menstruating, and during iyavati male initiations, the initiands are given instructions about the norms of reciprocity expressed primarily in terms of the exchange of food which they must obey in their relationships with their wives, relatives and co-villagers. Certain bush foods are forbidden to male and female initiates, although they are not forbidden to hunt or gather them provided they do not eat them. The reason for the prohibition of these foods is that if eaten, they would stunt growth.

Marriage ceremonies are centred around the brideprice which is given to the wife's father by the husband, his patrilineage and relatives. They always take place in the husband's hamlet, reflecting Ommura virilocality. The bride's father and male relatives are given the marriage payment by the husband's lineage and the bride, dressed in many hiera grass skirts and carrying a string bag of cooked meat and vegetables and her gardening tools, is given in exchange. No public feast is held, but the bride cooks food for her husband and shares out some of the cooked food she has brought to her husband's relatives.

The arrival of the bride with her gardening tools and pigmeat and vegetables which she cooks for her husband and distributes to her relatives constitutes a public statement about her future relationship to her husband and his kin. This is that she will work with her gardening tools growing food in the gardens her husband makes for her, that she will cook his food, and that with her husband as part of an economic unit, she will give food to his relatives. Sometimes a husband's male relatives will accuse his wife of giving away food surpluses, especially pigs, which they need for ceremonial payments and which they regard as being their property by virtue of their contribution to her brideprice, to her own relatives especially her brothers. Ommura men state that a wife's loyalties are always

divided between her family and her husband. At times of food shortages, members of the wife's family will come and ask her for food which she will give them from her and her husbands gardens, generally on the understanding that the food will be returned at a later date when it is plentiful.

When someone dies, an upara funeral ceremony is held and a payment of traditional valuables, money and earth oven cooked pigmeat and vegetables is given by the patrilineage of the dead person to the lineage of the dead person's mother's brother (ninau). After a person dies, provided that the relatives are satisfied that poisoning or sorcery were not the cause of death, male members of the persons maternal lineage bury the body and the gardens of the deceased are uprooted. Approximately a month later, the ceremonial payment is made by the patrilineage of the deceased to the maternal lineage of the deceased, the deceased is mourned, the spirit is offered a 'last meal' and banished from the village forever.

A puari-ha, a crude image representing the deceased, is made and put into the hut in which the mourning will occur and a string bag of food from the upara feast - the upara-tua - is hung up near it. The mourners daub their faces with mud(hora). All through the night, the relatives of the deceased stay in the hut and mourn by singing songs and lamenting their loss. The sound of the mourning and the food in the upara-tua are said to attract the mara-ua, the spirit of the deceased, into the puari-ha which represents the dead person. Female relatives of the deceased become para-hi, go into trances and talk to the mara-ua expressing their sorrow. Between bouts of lamentation, the men shoot arrows into the puari-ha image and the mara-ua is told that it is dead, that everyone is po - sorry about this - but it must leave the village and go off into the bush. At dawn, the spirit is called out of the hut and chased off into the bush when the puari-ha is taken to the bush and destroyed.

In February 1976, the only local trainee medical orderly, To-atu, was killed in a public motor vehicle crash outside Mt. Hagen. Although

he and his family lived in Kurunumbaira, they had originally lived in Samura village until his father had killed a man there and his family was forced to change residence. Because of the large amount of death compensation which the patrol station said the family of the boy would eventually receive, his father's relatives in Samura village, the Ovai-ira Kyondera lineage, moved in to assert their relationship to To-atu through the burial ceremony. They paid the maternal lineage (Tchaoi), members of which buried the body, in pigmeat and food, traditional valuables - grass skirts, barkcloths, bundles of arrows and shells - and three hundred and fifty five kina and twenty toya in cash (K.355.20t). By giving this payment, they were buying off any claims that the mother's lineage might have, especially as the boy had resided in the maternal village, to any of the death compensation, which due to the circumstances of death, would be an unprecedentedly large amount of money.

The Ommura have few ceremonies for engaging in relationships with people from outside villages other than those contingent on kinship such as the life-cycle ceremonies described. Inter-village trade, other than that between kin, was and is carried out between tortis (trade partners), between two individuals rather than groups from different villages. A torti is someone who visits his trade partner with commodities that the trade partner wants, exchanges them with him for other commodities or money, and accepts hospitality and food from him. People from the village of the lower altitude Bush Markham area (Annamata) are the traditional trade partners of the Ommura, exchanging pandanus and other items unobtainable in the Ommura area for pigs, dogs and garden produce. The Ommura villages never ever fought with the Bush Markham villages and there is a commonly known myth that the people in each area are descended from the same ancestors (uri). Torti can be translated as meaning both friend and

trade partner and Ommura males who are fluent in pidgin, often try to establish trade friendships with the policemen and junior patrol officers at the patrol post.

Villages which have been at war with each other and decide to end hostilities, mark the event by staging an obu peacemaking ceremony. Each side presents the other with an earth oven cooked pig. Because of the hostility left over from the fighting, the two sides do not congregate to exchange pigs. The cooked pigs are left at a pre-arranged spot in a 'no-man's land' area and the two sides watch from a distance as representatives go to leave and collect the cooked pigs. It is said that because they have eaten the enemy village's pig, they are no longer at war with that village. From this it follows, in accordance with Ommura ceremonies in general, that any new ceremony involving the participation of two or more villages would revolve around the exchange of earth oven cooked food and pigmeat.

Basic to ongoing relations between villages and co-villagers is the institution of death compensation or ieta kyo-ah, which means literally 'head payment'. Death compensation payments are made by the lineage of the killer to the lineage of the deceased in the form of amounts of traditional valuables and money and occasionally by the giving of a woman in marriage without brideprice being received in return. Payment of death compensation is the only act which eliminates the need for the lineage of the deceased to kill a member of the killer lineage in retribution or 'payback'. Death compensation like the obu peacemaking ceremony is an Ommura institution which prevents escalation into blood feuds and continuous warfare and they are both, like all Ommura ceremonies, based on payment.

In July 1976, the village of Samura held a gate singsing, a dance and food celebration, admission to which is paid for with money, for the village of Suwaira.

This was the first gate singsing which had ever been held in the Ommura area. Council Tahi, a man with teenage children, could only remember three previous (ihi) singsing food exchanges having been held with the members of other villages during his lifetime - with Asara when he was a boy, with Atakara before he married, and with Kurunumbaira sometime within the last couple of years. The difference between a gate singsing and the more traditional singsings remembered by Tahi is that in a gate singsing, the guests as a village group buy admission and food from the host village with money while in a traditional singsing, host trade partners give food to their guest trade partners.

The gate singsing was instigated and organized by the modernist Kwamba in imitation of the gate singsings held by villages closer to Kainantu and the purpose of the event was to raise money to buy a public motor vehicle for Samura village. Six hundred kina twenty two toya (K.600.22t.) was taken at the gate. This amount was made up of two hundred and twenty nine kina (K.229) taken from Suwaira men who paid ten kina each for admission, the right to dance, food and beer, and the rest was made up of the amounts of two and four kina admission charges paid by men from Samura, Sonura and neighbouring villages. Each Samura man involved in the singsing gave money to Kwamba, with which he bought beer, tinned fish and rice in the town of Kainantu. On the day of the singsing, Samura family groups cooked choice foods in earth ovens and cut down red sugar cane. The three pigs cooked belonged to Kwamba. Some of the food was taken to Kwamba's hut ready for distribution to the Suwairans and some of the food was held back by each family for their own consumption and to be distributed during the night to their trade partners. Each Samura group was allocated a section of the roofed shelter along the inside wall of the circular singsing enclosure and they spent the night cooking food over their fires and watching the elaborately dressed and decorated Suwairans

dance and sing.

A new form of ceremony common to all villages in proximity to towns in the Eastern Highlands, the admission by cash payment only gate singsing, had been successfully put on by the village of Samura. Manifested in the gate singsing were certain conflicts resulting from Ommura traditional approaches to the staging of ceremonies. The organizer, the only person to supply the necessary pigs for the meat component of the food presentation, found it difficult to obtain earth oven cooked food from his co-participants and these people held back approximately half the food they cooked for themselves and their trade partners. This demonstrated the difference between customary Ommura ceremonial interaction between kin, lineages or co-villagers and with outsiders as individual trade partners, and ceremonial interaction between different village groups, the only previous precedents for which are warfare, death compensation payments and the peacemaking ceremony. The Suwairans were invited as paying dance guests to the event because they had held gate singsings in the past, but never any to which the Samurans had been specially invited dance guests. It was uncertain whether the Suwairans would ever hold a return singsing for the Samurans or even if the Samurans would ever summon up the organization, labour and food resources to hold another one. Although the local patrol officers and police did everything to encourage this peaceful commercial hospitality between villages, it certainly was not the first event in a series of ceremonial exchanges, and a village public motor vehicle was never bought with the money thus raised.

It was unlikely, given the way in which family groups prefer to conserve their food surpluses to use as payment for life-cycle ceremonies, that gate singsings would ever become frequent events. The way in which foodstuffs, traditional valuables and money constitute separate virtually unconvertible forms of payment has already been mentioned. Gate singsings necessitate an expenditure of food resources

to obtain money in return while locally money is obtained primarily through the sale of coffee and redistributed through ceremonial payments and gambling, but not through the sale of food. Gate singsings require traditional good food - pigmeat and garden produce - which must be contributed because they cannot be bought with money, as well as store foods - tinned fish and rice - which are considered to be inferior.

The purpose of describing Ommura use of and attitudes to food has been to focus on a major cultural preoccupation as a way of presenting the social relationships in which it occurs as a medium of transaction. Obviously the cultivation and acquisition of foodstuffs to be used for nourishment and payment in ceremonies is the principal activity of all Ommura. The more wives a man has, the more gardens and children he will have and the greater resources for making payment. In describing the three spheres of payment - foodstuffs, traditional valuables and money - it has been argued that money, obtained primarily from the sale of coffee, has not replaced or diminished the importance of ceremonial payments in the form of foodstuffs and traditional valuables, it merely coexists alongside them, but is more subject to inflation. In presenting Ommura ceremonies in terms of the relative amounts of payment required to stage them, it has been indicated that the greatest amount of food resources are expended on paying for life-cycle ceremonies. Despite the cessation of full scale warfare, there is neither the organization nor the necessary surplus of pigs, vegetables and traditional valuables for any ongoing series of ceremonial exchanges between villages to have developed along the lines of the Hagen moka (Strathern:1971).

#### 4. The Context of the Ceremonies

##### The Context of Male Initiation Knowledge

All Ommura ceremonies involve payment of some kind, varying in amount from large payments consisting of traditional valuables, money and earth oven cooked pigmeat and food, to small payments of cooked food. The most important ceremonies, all centred around a payment made by members of one patrilineage to members of another patrilineage, are birth, initiation, marriage and death ceremonies. Curing ceremonies and food fertility ceremonies involve relatively small amounts of payment and are not necessarily between two lineages.

The basic foundation of the male initiations of ummara and iyavati and the female initiation Kam karura is the payment given by the father to the initiand's eldest mother's brother or ninau for his participation in the initiation. For each initiation ceremony following nihi rara, the piercing of the nasal septum of children, the father has to pay the ninau in traditional valuables, money and a share of the initiation kyapairi pig feast but the payment does not consist of a fixed amount and part of it can be deferred until sometime after the initiation. A ninau gives his ninausi(m) or ninaisi(f) a share of the payment he receives from their initiation, he contributes to his ninausi's brideprice, receives a share of the brideprice given for his ninaisi and on the death of one member of the relationship, the other receives a share of the death payment. The ninau is said to be like a father to his ninausi or ninaisi who go to him for food, shelter and assistance and who give him assistance and labour in return. In ummara initiations, it is the father who bleeds his son's nose while the ninau protects his ninausi from excessive beating with stinging nettles by shielding him with his own body.

There are two stages of male initiation - ummara and iyavati - but only one stage of female initiation - kam karura. This imbalance is

a reflection of male dominance and control over Ommura ceremonial institutions in which the initiation of males is given a greater social importance than the initiation of females. Both male and female initiations are based around a payment from the father to the ninau. At the end of an initiation, pigmeat from the kyapairi feast is passed up the sides of the initiand's body by the father and the initiands are dressed in the new clothing and decorations appropriate to their initiation status. During ummara and kam karura initiations, the initiand's noses are bled, taroah mimes are performed, and songs delineating the a-o-ira foods which the initiands are forbidden to eat are sung. Different degrees of secrecy are imposed on the staging of male initiations in the men's house (vainya) and female initiation in the women's house (kapa) which reflect the relative importance of these institutions, the staging of which is controlled by men. Women and children are forbidden to enter the vainya and precautions are taken to conceal esoteric knowledge from them but men never enter the kapa because they are afraid of the illness causing effects of exposure to menstrual pollution. The women are made to hold an ihi singsing on every night that a male initiation is taking place but the men do not hold a similar separation ceremony during female initiation, and merely stay away from the vicinity of the kapa.

The events and instructions of male initiations are described as being wakyera ('secret') and this word refers to the conditions of secrecy under which they are enacted. The word wakyera is used not only to refer to male initiation knowledge which is only ever articulated in the mens house during male initiations, but to female initiation knowledge which is only ever articulated in the women's house during female initiations, and to poisons and personal magical techniques and formula known only to men. Underlying Ommura use of the work wakyera ('secret') to describe any kind of information is the notion that were this information to be made public outside the

immediate context of its use, it would lose its efficacy and power.

Wakyera initiation knowledge is wakyera precisely because it can only ever occur in the context of the staging of an ummara or iyavati initiation and this subsumes the fact that it occurs in the vainya in conditions of secrecy and that its manifestation is controlled by the adult men as a way of instructing and disciplining a male youth. A great deal of effort is expended on preventing women, children and unauthorized male youth from seeing but primarily from hearing any initiation events and instructions which occur in the vainya or the stream enclosure. Women and children are prohibited from entering the men's house at all times, and at night during the staging of a male initiation, they are prevented from approaching the proximity of the vainya and are made to hold an ihi singsing at a distance from the vainya. With the exception of the initiands, all young males who have not yet been initiated into the stage of initiation being enacted are excluded from the vainya. In addition to the conditions of secrecy which result from holding male initiations in the vainya and excluding women, children and uninitiated males, the adult men take efforts to conceal the sounds of initiation events and instructions from those outside the vainya. This is done by talking quietly or by delegating men to sing everyday songs to hide the words of wakyera songs when they are sung.

Although the staging of male initiations is centred around the payment made by the father to the eldest mother's brother of the son he is initiating, the events and instructions of ummara and iyavati initiations are administered by the adult men as collective male knowledge. During initiations, youth who have already been initiated into the stage of initiation being enacted, are made to sit with the initiands. This practice enables the adult men to discipline and re-indoctrinate those already initiated by repeatedly subjecting them to adult male authority and initiation knowledge at the same time as

those being initiated. By this procedure, initiands and initiates are defined as a group set apart and in subordination to the adult men who control the events and instructions of the initiation ceremony as a collectivity of participants administering traditional knowledge. Repeated exposure to initiation lore by attending initiations is supposed to commit it to the memory of the initiates and impress its importance on them. Initiation ceremonies in the vainya provide a suitable forum for the discipline and punishment of initiates who have disobeyed initiation instructions.

In the male initiations of ummara and iyavati, the adult men act as a collectivity to administer the initiation events and instructions to the initiands and initiates inside the vainya and to keep them as secret as possible from the women and children outside the vainya. The organization of initiations is carried out by the fathers and ninaus of the initiands and older adult men who act as initiation specialists in accordance with current criteria of traditional practice. Men who participate in initiations provide a supporting role in the initiations and relatives of the initiands collect and bring items necessary for the initiation to the vainya. They are repaid for their participation and assistance with shares of food from the kyapairi feast at the end of the initiation. Staging of initiations depends on cooperation between the participant men over the allocation of the various activities which in combination constitute an initiation. Certain older men, who by virtue of their extensive knowledge of initiation practice and lore, act as specialists who lead the singing of the taroah songs and wakyera ihi about prohibited acts and foods, tell myths, give instructions to the initiands, and direct the staging of mimes and the playing of the spirit cry instruments by the younger men. The men participating sing the choruses of the taroah, wakyera ihi, and myth songs, interject comments about procedure and specific instructions and serve as a critical audience. Younger men are delegated to play the spirit cry instruments

and enact the mimes by the older men. The great amount of cooperative effort and labour on the part of the men which is necessary to stage an initiation is always stressed in the instructions given to the initiands.

Thus, male initiations which serve as a forum for the imposition of male authority on youth and the manifestation of adult male initiation knowledge, entail the delegation of tasks and duties among the male participants which unites them as a collectivity in the context of initiations. This is not to argue that the institution of male initiation resolves the inequalities inherent in the administration of initiation knowledge by the adult men, only that roles and duties are distributed among the male participants so that every man is given a part to play in the proceedings. Although only certain senior adult men have a comprehensive enough knowledge of the esoteric details of initiation lore to act as initiation specialists, the basic outlines of initiation lore are known to all adult men who have participated in initiations. By actively participating in male initiations, the adult men support the institution of male initiations as the repository of traditional male knowledge administered by adult men whose authority results from seniority.

#### The Ninau Relationship and Payment

The staging of male and female initiation ceremonies is centred around the payment given by the initiate's father to the initiate's eldest mother's brother for his participation in the event. For each initiation ceremony which his son or daughter undergoes following nihi rara - the piercing of the nasal septum - the father has to pay the ninau in traditional valuables, money and a share of the kyapairi pig feast held at the end of each ceremony. Each father must therefore accumulate valuables and pigs before arranging the staging of ummara and iyavati initiations for his sons and the kam karura

initiation for his daughters.

The payment given by fathers for the initiation of their children consists of two parts - the payment given to the ninau, part of which can be deferred by arrangement with the ninau, and the pig feast given at the end of the ceremony to repay the men who have participated, and out of which the ninau gets the largest share. The ninau is paid in traditional valuables - bundles of arrows, barkcloth, string bags and grass skirts - and increasingly in Papua New Guinea kina paper money, somewhere between twenty and a hundred kina, which is accumulated in the coffee season from the sale of coffee. The amount of payment is never fixed and is negotiated between the father and the ninau in accordance with what the father says he has to give and what the ninau will accept. This often results in a deferred payment because money is only abundant in the half of the year called 'copi taim', apart from isolated payments for ceremonies. Providing the food for the initiation feast requires at least one big pig, an abundance of garden produce for the earth oven, and large amounts of sugar cane. If a man is known to have money, there will be great pressure put on him by members of his lineage or maternal relatives to contribute it to their ceremonial enterprises. Consequently, if a father has a pig, food, traditional valuables and money available for the initiation of one of his children, he will try to stage the initiation as soon as possible to avoid having to divert the valuables, money and food resources into other less necessary channels. Members of his lineage who attend the initiation ceremonies contribute amounts of money and food to assist him in staging the ceremony and in paying off the ninau. In return they are given a share of the initiation feast. Whenever I attended an initiation, I would contribute money and food to the father and receive a share of pigmeat and vegetables from the feast.

The mother's eldest brother (ninau) gives the sister's son (ninausi) or sister's daughter (ninaisi), a share of the payment which he receives for participating in the staging of their initiation. In ummara, iyavati and kam karura, the ninau both protects his ninausi or ninaisi from physical abuse and takes part in disciplining them. The ninau is said to be like a father to his ninausi or ninaisi, and they go to him for food, shelter and general assistance, giving him assistance and labour in return. On the death of one, the other receives a share of the death payment. If there should be no father or father's brother to stage an initiation, the ninau himself will stage it.

#### Similarities between Male and Female Initiations

Ommura male and female initiations share certain features in common. They are enacted to discipline and instruct Ommura youth into their appropriate respective male and female roles. They entail bleeding the nose and beatings with taroah stinging nettles to promote health. ummara, iyavati and kam karura initiands are instructed to practise the same food prohibitions and are instructed by means of wakvera secret stories and songs. Burlesque mimes of the opposite sex occur in both the male and female initiations. A feast of pigmeat and vegetables must be held by the father of the initiate at the end of male and female initiations and the ninau is paid for his participation in the ceremony, and returns a share of his payment to the initiate. At the kyapairi feast held at the end of the male and female initiation, the father takes a bundle of pigmeat in each hand and passes the bundles up each side of the initiates body from feet to outstretched arms to promote health. At the end of ummara, iyavati and kam karura, the initiates are decorated and dressed in new clothes, ornaments, grease and paint.

The Ommura perform the following male and female initiations :  
nihi rara, the piercing of the nasal septum for male and female

children, kam karura, performed in the kapa (woman's house) for girls, ummara and iyavati, performed in the vainya (men's house) for boys, and the male and female pre-marriage ceremonies performed respectively in the vainya and kapa. Nihi rara is performed on young children with no distinction made as to their sex. The ceremony or operation consists of making a hole in the nasal septum with a sharpened piece of pit-pit dipped in salt after which a larger length of pit-pit, a muk-ya, is put through the hole and left in to keep the hole open. It involves no feast or payment to the ninau, and would appear to be little more than a cosmetic operation to make a hole in the nasal septum through which ornaments can be worn in later life.

It is notable that there are two stages of male initiation and only one stage of female initiation. This reflects the greater amount of wakyera secret knowledge which is passed on to males through initiations. The men control the staging of kam karura but only the women participate in the events and instructions which are enacted in the women's house. Men never enter the kapa or kapa enclosure for fear of sickness causing pollution because the women's house is the place where women go when menstruating or giving birth. The staging of kam karura is arranged by the female initiand's father, the male ninau is paid for helping with the ceremony, the kyapairi feast food is shared out by males to males and females, and the female initiand's nose is bled by her father or a male relative.

The female initiand is put in the kapa for several days in the company of her female relatives and other initiated women. Some women dress up in men's clothing and perform exaggerated imitations (memera) of men's dancing, aggressive male behaviour, and mime copulation. Female wakyera songs and stories are sung and told, instructing the initiands about menstruation and other sexual matters, including the sexual brutality of men. The female initiand is beaten with taroah

and instructed not to eat a-o-ira forbidden foods. The food taboos are identical for kam karura, ummara and iyavati.

The final initiation ceremony that males and females undergo occurs just before they are married. The Ommura marriage custom is that the husband buys his wife from her father. He acquires the marriage payment of traditional valuables and money by enlisting contributions from his father, ninau, paternal kin and maternal kin, which he is obliged to later return, to add to his own resources. The ninau of a female ninaisi receives a share of the marriage payment paid by the husband and his lineage.

The ceremonies for the bride and groom are called eta nrareh (eating banana) after the food which is cooked and consumed for these ceremonies. For each of the ceremonies, the father of the marriage partner kills a pig. Some of the pig fat is mixed with grated raw bananas and hemma, aromatic tree bark, and cooked as a cake in an earth oven. This delicacy, an Ommura 'health food', is eaten by the marriage partner and their male and female relatives after the ceremony.

The husband-to-be is put into the vainya by his male relatives. They rub his naked body from head to foot with many taroah stinging nettles tied to a string paying special attention to the penis, to make his skin healthy and strong for marriage. He is given sexual instruction and warned about the disastrous effects of female menstrual pollution. A red flower is dropped on the floor of the vainya to represent menstrual blood and he is told never to copulate with his wife when she is menstruating or he will get very sick.

In the female eta nrareh, the wife-to-be is put in the kapa by her female relatives and given sexual instruction. She is told to go to the women's house when menstruating and other ways in which she must avoid polluting her husband with her female sexuality.

The Ommura male and female initiation ceremonies of ummara, iyavati and kam karura have in common payment by the father to the ninau and a concluding feast to reward the participants, disciplining and instructing the initiands into their adult responsibility, bleeding the initiands' noses and beating them with taroah to promote their health, and dressing up and decorating the initiates at the end of the ceremony. After nihira, male youth undergo two ceremonies - ummara and iyavati - and pre-marital instruction in the mens house, while female youth undergo only one initiation ceremony - kam karura - and pre-marital instruction in the women's house.

Despite the basic similarities between Ommura initiation in general this reflects the emphasis which Ommura social ideology places on male control of men over women.

#### The Relationship of Initiation to other Ommura Ceremonies

It is necessary to give a brief description of the ceremonies which the Ommura enact other than initiation in order to chart any similarities which they may share and to place initiation ceremonies within their total social context. These other ceremonies are birth, initiations, marriage and death, curing ceremonies - ua-ha, vu-ha and asochia - and the matas, fertility rituals for sweet potatoes, yams and pigs - ana mata, ova mata and wara mata.

After a child has been born, the husband kills many marsupials over a period of time, and presents them as payment to his wife's father in a ceremony called kyai-ha. The ummara, iyavati and kam karura male and female initiations are based around the payment which the father gives to the eldest mother's brother and the pig feast which is shared out to participants in the staging of initiation. Marriage is centred around the payment which is given to the wife's father by the husband, his paternal kin and relatives. Marriage ceremonies always take place

in the husband's hamlet, reflecting Ommura virilocality. The bride's family are given the marriage payment by the husband's patrilineage and the bride, dressed in many hiera grass skirts and carrying a string bag of cooked meat and vegetables and her gardening tools, is given in exchange. No public feast is held but the bride cooks food for her husband and shares out some of the cooked food she has brought to her husband's relatives.

When someone dies, an upara funeral ceremony is held and a payment of traditional valuables, pig meat, vegetables and money is given by the patrilineage of the dead person to the lineage of the dead person's ninau - the maternal lineage - who bury the body. After a person dies, provided that the relatives are satisfied that poisoning or sorcery were not the cause of death, male members of the dead person's lineage bury the body and the gardens of the deceased are uprooted. Approximately one month later, the ceremonial payment is made by the patrilineage of the deceased to the matrilineage of the deceased. A crude image representing the deceased (puari-ha) is made and put into the hut in which the mourning will occur and a string bag of food from the upara feast (upara tua) is hung up near it. The mourners paint their faces with mud (hora). All through the night, the relatives of the deceased stay in the hut and mourn by singing songs and lamenting their loss. The sound of the mourning and the upara tua of food are said to attract the mara-ua, the spirit of the deceased into the puari-ha which represents the dead person. Female relatives of the deceased become para-hi, go into trances and talk to the mara-ua expressing their sorrow. Between bouts of lamenting, the men shoot arrows into the puari-ha image and the mara-ua is told that it is dead, that everyone is po - sorry about this, but it must leave the village and go off into the bush. At dawn, the spirit is called out of the hut and chased off into the bush when the puari-ha is taken to the bush and destroyed.

Birth, initiation, marriage and death ceremonies are all centred around a payment made by members of one lineage to members of another lineage and the events which they celebrate would not be possible without the direct or indirect participation of two lineages. The two other ceremonies which involve payment between lineages are obu, the peacemaking ceremony when two villages which have been at war exchange earth oven cooked pigs, and ieta-kyo-ah, the death compensation payment of traditional valuables, pigmeat and (nowadays) money made by the members of the lineage of the killer to the lineage of the deceased.

The Ommura practise three kinds of curing ceremonies - ua-ha, vu-ha and asochia. In ua-ha, the sick person or people and their friends and relatives gather in a hut at night. The sickness or sorcery is chased away by the adult men who charge into the hut from outside and dance around making war cries, snapping their bowstrings, and spitting aromatic tree barks - hemma and handa ginger - on the sick who stand by the centre post of the hut. This is done several times and then a banana tree is split and the sick walk through it and water is poured over their heads to cool their bodies down. No payment is made to the adult men who chase the sickness away, but food is brought, cooked and shared out among the participants.

Vu-ha is performed by an adult male specialist who is given a share of the pig which must be cooked and killed for this ceremony. Pigmeat mixed with curative leaves and tree bark and grated bananas, pig grease, and tree bark are cooked in an earth oven. The sick eat portions of this food and the specialist makes a kamara, a cross-shaped construction out of two lengths of red sugar cane with pieces of pigmeat sandwiched in the split crosspiece and a bundle of medicinal bush leaves and plants arranged in a crucible shape at the top of the crosspiece. The specialist takes the sick people to a stream and they stand in the running water with the specialist who holds the kamara. The specialist

recites his own magical utterances for curing and transfers the sickness from the people into the kamara. The part of the kamara containing the removed sickness is thrown into the running water and the other parts are eaten.

Asochia is a relatively new form of curing ceremony named after the mildly hallucinogenic tree bark which the group of male specialists chew when administering it. Payment must be made to the asochia men for the staging of this ceremony in food and money. They are emphatic about this. The friends and relatives of the sick person, the sick person, and the asochia men gather in a hut at night. As the man, women and children sing songs in Ommura and other neighbouring languages, the asochia men chew tree bark, smoke tobacco and stare at a red flower in a bottle. The chewing of the asochia and the singing of songs by the other participants enable them to see the true cause of the sickness. When they have determined the cause, they remove the sickness by putting their right hands on the sick person's head and then pouring a bamboo of cold water over the sick person.

The fertility ceremonies (matas) for sweet potatoes, yams and pigs - ama mata, ova mata and wara mata are performed to increase the yield of the sweet potatoes and yam crops or to increase the fatness and size of the pig population. The ceremonies are carried out by an adult male specialist who is paid in food and the families for whom the particular ceremony is being enacted who assist him by singing the appropriate songs necessary for the ceremony to be efficacious. Each of the ceremonies is carried out at night in a hut which has been specially decorated with the appropriate leaves and objects associated with the fertility of either sweet potatoes, yams or pigs. One of the most important parts of the matas is the singing of ama mata, ova mata or wara mata songs by the specialist and participants to summon the sweet potatoes, yams and pigs from all the surrounding areas. The

songs sung are in many different languages and dialects. The sweet potatoes, yams and pigs are called from the furthest areas working through to neighbouring dialects and finally to the appropriate Ommura ama, ova and wara mata songs. The idea behind the singing is to attract all the spirits of the sweet potatoes, yams or pigs into the hut so that the leaves and objects in the hut appropriate to the particular mata which is being performed, will become imbued with fertility from the presence of all the spirits of the desired foods. At dawn, after this has been done, the specialist takes the leaves and buries them in the participants gardens among the sweet potatoes or yams, or in the case of wara mata, hangs some of the leaves up in the pig house and mixes others with the pig's food.

The curing ceremonies of ua-ha, vu-ha and asochia and the mata fertility ceremonies for sweet potatoes, yams and pigs are all performed by adult male specialists, although women participate as spectators and in the case of curing ceremonies, also as patients. The control which adult males have over the esoteric knowledge utilized in these public ceremonies reflect the control the adult men have over all powerful esoteric knowledge in Ommura society.

The publicly enacted curing and mata ceremonies use certain techniques which are characteristic of the Ommura practice of esoteric knowledge in general. Magical spells, health promoting herbs, leaves and tree barks, and specially concocted and cooked health foods are used. The singing of special songs by the participant spectators in asochia and the matas is part of a greater complex whereby special efficacious songs are sung on particular occasions to achieve results or to engage the singers as in public celebrations.

All Ommura ceremonies involve payment of some kind varying in amount from large payments consisting of traditional valuables, earth oven cooked pigmeat and food, and money to small payments of cooked food.

The amount of payment given out for a particular ceremony is an index of the social importance of that ceremony. Male and female initiations, marriage and death ceremonies require the accumulation and distribution of the greatest amounts of payment and they all consist of payments by the members of one lineage group to the members of another lineage group. In relation to these ceremonies, the curing ceremonies of ua-ha, vu-ha and asochia and the matas for sweet potatoes, yams and pigs, all of which are carried out by male specialists, require relatively small amounts of payment, generally in cooked food. It should be noted that payments of food are never consumed communally as a feast at a ceremony but are distributed and taken home by the recipients to be recooked in his own hut.

#### The Role of Women in Male Initiation Ceremonies

Women are excluded from the events of male initiation which take place in the men's house and any wakyera initiation events staged outside the men's house. On nights during which ummara and iyavati initiations are being carried out, the women are made to hold a night long ihi singsing in a part of the village distant from the vainya. The men enforce the participation of the women in this women's celebration as a way of ensuring that the women (and children) are kept well away from the men's house and cannot overhear any of the wakyera events of the initiation. During a night-time initiation ceremony, if there is a lull in the women's singing, especially before a wakyera event, men will be sent out from the men's house to make certain that the women are engaged in singing and cannot hear anything going on in the vainya. The 'sacred' flutes and bullroarers played in the men's house compound during initiations warn women, children, and outsiders that an initiation is being carried out and scare them off.

It is significant that no similar parallel ceremony of exclusion occurs for men when the female initiation kam karura is being carried out by women. Men stay away from the women's house because it is a polluting place but they do not assemble as an excluded group like women are made to do during the male initiations. This is yet another example of the monopoly which adult men have over all powerful efficacious knowledge in Ommura society as reflected in male and female initiations. The female initiation of kam karura socializes girls into a female role which is approved of by the males who organize, but do not participate in the events of the ceremony which take place in the kapa. Women are strictly excluded from the secret wakyera events of male initiation and the men's house because if they were to find out the secret knowledge, it would no longer be powerful, and male control would be weakened. If men were exposed to the polluting effects of the women's initiation knowledge and the women's house, they would merely become polluted.

As well as holding their own singsings during the nights when male initiations are being performed, women also participate in certain public aspects of the male initiations. During the nose bleeding and washing in the stream carried out in ummara initiations, the women and girls wait outside the enclosure on the path and dance and sing. When the ummara initiands are brought out of the enclosure by the stream, the women sing and dance with the procession that escorts the initiands back to the men's house. At the Asara ummara stream washing, elder women dressed in their dance costumes, beat hand drums and danced and sang as the initiates were led back to the vainya by the men. They hit unmarried girls with sticks and joked that they were mothers and could look at the initiands but the unmarried girls could not. At the Moussouri nyako iyavati stream washing, the married women, dressed in dance costumes, sang and danced

with the initiands and men back to the men's house. They shot pit pit arrows at the initiands with small cane bows (real bows and arrows are only used by men) for their misbehaviour to them in the past. At the end of the initiations, the male initiands are not allowed to re-enter their father's huts or eat any food which has been cooked on the fires of their father's huts by women, until after unmarried girls sitting on the roof of their father's hut have hit them with sticks and taken the feathers, which are a mark of initiation status, from their hair.

The mothers of the initiands have an economic role in the initiation ceremonies because they will have raised the pigs cooked and used as payment and they will have grown much of the garden produce cooked for the kyapairi feast.

#### Differences in Initiation Practice between Villages and Social Change

An identical number of stages of male and female initiations are performed by all the villages in the vicinity of the Obura Patrol Post - Moussouri, Samura, Sonura, Asara and Kurunumbaira, the villages where I attended male or female initiations, and Baira, To'Kena, Himarata, Motakara and Auraura. The initiations are centred around payment by the father to the eldest mother's brother of the child he is initiating, are called by the same names, take place in either the men's house or women's house, involve bleeding the nose and instructing the initiands into their adult responsibilities. These neighbouring villages all perform similar ceremonies for birth, initiation, marriage and death involving payment between the members of two lineages and similar curing ceremonies and fertility ceremonies for sweet potatoes yams and pigs.

Differences between the male initiations of ummara and iyavati as performed in these villages occur in the esoteric knowledge used by the adult men carrying out the initiations to instruct and discipline the initiands and in certain variations in minor aspects of the initiation

procedure. There are differences in the exact details of the wakyera events staged outside the men's house, in the taroah songs sung, in the songs for wakyera foods, things and acts, in wakyera myths and stories, in the play and tricks performed on the initiands, in the forms in which the instructions given to socialize the initiands into their adult responsibilities are articulated, and in the everyday songs used to mask the wakyera events.

The wakyera knowledge transmitted in male initiations varies in actual content from village to village both as a result of the practice of keeping wakyera knowledge as secret as possible, and as a result of differences in dialect. Wakyera songs and myths are incorporated from neighbouring villages. The basic structure and procedure of ummara and iyavati initiations is common to all these villages.

At the time of fieldwork, the efforts of the Swiss Evangelical Brotherhood Mission, who had been in the area since the early nineteen sixties, had had virtually no effect on the practices of male and female initiation. They regarded themselves as having achieved 'no true conversions' and even their few followers continued to be initiated or initiated their children.

The presence of the patrol officers and police of the Obura Patrol Post, which was established in 1965, had led to a decline in inter-village and inter-lineage fighting insofar as when the patrol post heard that a fight had broken out, the police would be sent out to arrest the combatants for trial. States of warfare did not last for the same period of time or escalate as they had done in pre-contact times because the patrol post would arrest combatants but fights broke out with frequency, and there was much recourse to sorcery and poisoning. Because of the relative peace imposed by the presence of the patrol station, fewer men slept in men's houses at night than had done in the past as a protective measure against night time attacks. Iyavati male

initiations still placed great emphasis on fighting and on assisting one's relatives and lineage members in the instance of their being involved in a fight. During the staging of the Moussouri nyako-iyavati initiation, much time was taken up in discussing ways of retaliating against the poisoning attempts which had been made by people from Baira.

All the middle aged men I talked to about changes in the performance of male initiations were in agreement that the one major change was that less time was now spent on the staging of initiations. While previously male initiations took seven or more days to stage, now they were performed in approximately four days.

Communication with the administration, missionaries and coffee buyers is carried out in New Guinea pidgin while initiations are always carried out in the local village dialect. During the Moussouri initiation ceremonies, Murabe, one of the principal initiators, told the initiands that the 'gavman' would only give them 'tok pisin' and clothes but only ummara and iyavati would give them knowledge and that they must follow the ways of their fathers and ancestors. He also told the young men present that if they didn't learn about initiation practice, when the time came to initiate their children, they would have to pay someone else to do this for them.

The increase in the prices paid for coffee during the time of my fieldwork as a result of a world boom in coffee prices, together with improvements to the surface of the road used by coffee buying trucks, and the coming to maturity of the local coffee bushes, led to an increase in the amount of money which was available to use as a payment for the staging of ceremonies. Traditional valuables, cooked pigs and money continued to be used in combination as payment for initiations but the amounts of money given increased. The conversion values, although conversions were not common, of traditional valuables and pigs relative to money increased greatly. The amount of money in circulation

increased through coffee selling but the amounts of traditional valuables and pigs did not increase. There was a tendency for men with 'coffee money' (copi munima) to use it to initiate their children rather than dissipating it on contributions requested by their immediate kin or lineage. In order to do this, they had also to have accumulated the pre-requisite pigs, traditional valuables and food surpluses necessary to stage an initiation.

#### The Sequence of Events in the Two Male Initiations Observed

##### The Asara Ummara Initiation.

Held to initiate the two brothers Kyorapani and Hahavarikya, the two sons of Uta-oh (Matota Lineage maternal lineage Wa-re-nota) and Utai-ihu, the son of To-ambu (Rehara lineage, maternal lineage Nanochia).

Four days, three nights

First day : Initiands put in the vainya

First night : Ihi singsing in vainya. Women make ihi at distance.

Second night : Pair of Kunavero flutes played. Taroah songs, beatings and mimes.

Third Day : Initiands taken to stream enclosure for nose bleeding ceremony. Instructive mimes performed.

Third Night : Wakvera songs, taroah beatings, cheeks of assembled hit with taroah and banana bark.

Fourth Day : Kyapairi pig feast. Initiands taken out of vainya.

##### The Moussouri Nyako-Iyavati.

Nyako-iyavati is performed on boys who have reached puberty without having been initiated as ummara. The two ceremonies ummara and iyavati are performed one after the other in the combined ceremony nyako-iyavati. The staging of a single nyako-iyavati ceremony requires only one payment by the father to the ninau and participants as opposed to the two separate payments involved in the staging of an ummara ceremony followed several years later by the staging of an iyavati ceremony.

The Moussouri nyako-iyavati was performed to initiate Nora, son of Uta-ha and Nona the ninai of Murabe. Murabe, Nona's ninau, acted as his surrogate father, making payment to the ninau irrelevant.

Four days, three nights.

Women and children made to hold ihi for the three nights at a site distant from the vainya.

First day : Initiands taken and put in the vainya.

First night : Ihi singsing

Second morning : Initiands taken to river to have their noses and penises bled.

Second night : Ummara instruction. Pair of Gurekiya/Kunavero flutes played. Instructions given. Initiands washed with wild banana bark. Taroah mime. Ummara myth of the Taupupu stone. Wakyera ihis and taroah ihis sung.

Third day : Men go to bush to get leaves and herbs to cook with the food for the Kyapairi feast and firewood, and to make and test the iyavati spirit cry instruments.

Third night : Iyavati instruction. Iyavati spirit cry instruments played - Eabowkia flutes, Nra-ia datero baby crying leaves, Abua bullroarers - in conjunction with a pair of Gurekiya/Kunavero flutes. General instructions given. Nrhaise memera mime of men pretending to be women. Wakyera myths, Kyopera Nrhaise and Nuvana and Wapana.

Fourth day : Kyapairi feast. Initiands taken out of vainya

##### 5. Analysis of the Extent of Elaboration Present in the Spheres of Initiation Events and Instructions

Having presented the social context in which Ommura male initiations are enacted, it is necessary to analyze the various spheres of initiation events and instructions to investigate the degree of elaboration and complexity of each sphere and the extent of any relationship between the

different spheres. In carrying out this operation, one is examining the following factors:

- a) The extent or potential for elaboration and complexity which occurs in each sphere.
- b) The kind of statements which are made through the use of each sphere in the context of initiations.
- c) The degree of secrecy, ie. restrictions on access to information, inherent in the conditions of use.
- d) Whether the acquisition of initiation knowledge through successive stages of male initiation constitutes a hierarchical indoctrination into a total corpus of knowledge.
- e) Similarities and differences between the forms and use of male and female initiation events and instructions which reflect the social and ideological dominance of male initiation in Ommura society.
- f) Whether repetition in the context of male initiations over historical time has led to a process of 'codification' whereby spheres of initiation events and instructions serve as vehicles for the presentation of higher order ideological statements.

Analysis of initiation events and instructions will reveal the significant features of Ommura male ideology and its dissemination. This analysis of forms and functions is related to two complementary anthropological approaches : a structuralist approach which sets out to determine whether there is an underlying logically integrated ideological system which can be mapped out from an analysis of these social forms and an approach which interprets initiation events and instructions as esoteric knowledge important primarily for their use in the maintenance of traditional authority.

In the following sections, the significant features of the different spheres of the initiation events and instructions are summarized.

These spheres are :

- a) Bleeding in Male Initiations : The Ummara Nose Bleeding Ceremony
- b) The Spirit Cries or Instruments played during Male Initiations
- c) The use of Taroah in Male Initiations
- d) The Wakyera Ihis sung during Ummara Initiations and the Prohibitions on Acts and Foods to which they refer.
- e) The Wakyera Myths told during Iyavati and Ummara Initiations.
- f) Verbal Instructions given to Initiands in Ummara, Iyavati and Male Pre-Marriage Ceremonies.
- g) The Instructive Mimes performed during Ummara and Iyavati Initiations
- h) Emblems of Initiation Rank and Body Decorations worn by Ummara, Iyavati and Kam Karura Initiands
- i) The use of food in Male Initiations : Payment and Instruction.

As a cumulative process of instruction, male initiations consist of the following events and instructions :

#### Ummara

Bleeding of the Initiand's noses

Playing of Gurekiya/Kunavero paired flutes

Beating initiands with taroah, singing of taroah songs, staging of taroah mimes.

Singing of wakyera songs referring to prohibited foods and acts.

Narration of wakyera myths

Verbal Instructions

Performing of instructive mimes - taroah

Emblem of rank - lelupa tua

#### Iyavati

Penis bleeding

Playing of spirit cry instruments - Eabowkia, Nra-ia Datero, Abua in combination with Gurekiya/Kunavero

Narration of wakyera myths and their songs

Verbal instructions

Instructive mime - nrhaise memera

Emblems of rank - pig's tusks.

Pre-Marriage Ceremony

Groom to be rubbed with taroah

Verbal Instructions.

## 6. Bleeding in Male Initiations :

### The Ummara Nose-Bleeding Ceremony.

Before describing the ummara nose-bleeding ceremony, it is necessary to state emphatically that there is no evidence to support any notion that the nose and penis bleeding performed on males by the Ommura to constitute an act of male menstruation even on a purely metaphorical level. Ceremonial bleeding of the nose is performed to remove potentially dangerous blood, stuck in the forehead since conception from both male initiands during ummara initiation and female initiands during kam karura initiation. Nose-bleeding is used by Ommura males and females as a general cure for headache and blocked noses. Bleeding the urethra of the penis is performed on males sometime after they have reached puberty between the time they are initiated iyavati and marriage. It is carried out to make the penis strong (kepukiya) and Ommura males make no connection between this operation and the menstruation which women go through in the seclusion of the women's house to avoid polluting their husbands.

Bleeding the noses of initiands is a very important part of ummara male initiations and kam karura female initiations. Nose-bleeding is performed to remove the dangerous accumulation of blood which becomes lodged from the time of conception in the womb in the upper part of the sinuses in the bridge of the nose where it joins the forehead. The operation of drawing blood from the nasal passages is used as a general remedy by adults to relieve headache and sinus pain. Initiands' noses are bled in ummara male initiations and kam karura female initiations for the specific purpose of removing the deposit of dangerous blood in the bridge of the nose and forehead which could seriously affect the initiands future good health were it not to be removed. The operation of nose-bleeding is performed by simultaneously pushing two sticks with taroah leaves furled around them up into the two nasal passages of the initiand, whose head is forced back, and then rotating them around to

make blood flow from the nose. If ummara or kam karura initiands are considered to be too young to withstand the pain of nose bleeding, the ceremony is carried out during the initiation but the actual nose bleeding is deferred until the initiands are older. Bleeding, the urethra of the penis to strengthen the organ is carried out on males some time after they have reached puberty between iyavati initiation and marriage.

Although there are basic similarities between the way in which nose-bleeding is performed on ummara male initiands and kam karura female initiands, the ceremonies which occur in conjunction with the ummara nose bleeding are much more complex. In both kam karura and ummara nose bleeding, the initiands are taken to a stream or river and washed, have their noses bled by the simultaneous insertion of two sticks with taroah leaves furled around them, an act performed by the father, and are then dressed in new grass skirts. The kam karura nose-bleedings are attended by male and female relatives of the initiands and by women and initiated girls. They differ markedly from the ummara nose-bleedings which are carried out by armed and decorated men in greater conditions of secrecy which include the total exclusion of females and children.

The men who participate in the ummara nose-bleedings are attired and decorated in the manner in which men dress for war, ihi singsings, and ua-ha curing ceremonies. They carry decorated shields, bows and arrows and snap their bowstrings and chant the Wo Wo male warcry. In the ua-ha curing ceremony, armed and decorated men chase out the agents afflicting the sick people by charging around them snapping their bowstrings and chanting the male warcry. The presence of armed men chanting warcries in the ummara nose-bleeding serves to intimidate the initiands who are being initiated into a male role by this display of male strength and to impress the women and children spectators who are excluded and separated from the actual nose-bleeding events with

the power and importance of this male ceremony.

Before comparing the events of the two ummara nose-bleedings I observed, it is useful to present a summary of the sequence of the events which will be described in detail further on.

#### NOSE-BLEEDINGS

##### ASARA

(Initiands noses not bled because too young)

Morning of 3rd day

1. Initiands taken from vainya and led to stream by decorated men carrying bows, arrows and shields who chant warcries, sing, and try to scare the initiands with male aggression.

Doma-vara wind instruments played.

2. Initiands led through the arch of the stream enclosure.

3. Initiands led through a double line of men who charge at them making warcries.

4. Initiands washed in the stream.

5. Initiands too young to have their noses bled. Upper right thighs marked but not cut with bamboo knife.

##### MOUSSOURI

Morning of 2nd day.

1. Initiands taken from the vainya to the Lamari river by decorated men carrying shields, bows and arrows who make warcries and snapped their bowstrings.

2. Initiands led through the arch of the river enclosure, beaten with taroah and sticks, and led to the river.

3. Initiands washed in the river.

4. The initiands noses and penises were bled in different areas of the shallows of the river. A vertical scratch was made on their upper right thighs with a bamboo knife.

5. The dried blood was washed off the initiands and the sticks and leaves used in the operation thrown away into the river.

6. Initiands foreskins held down on a piece of red sugar can with arrows.

7. Each initiand was given an arrow and a bundle of quara-nraunro and quara-nara leaves held in each hand with the elbows bent outwards

8. The initiands were dressed in new grass skirts, string bags and a kyaimu mareh, wild pandanus leaf girdle.

9. The initiands were led back to the arch, beaten with taroah, and taken outside the enclosure.

10. The men, joined by women beating drums, girls and young boys waiting at a distance from the enclosure sing and dance while taking the initiands to a dance ground.

11. The initiands were led around the dance ground, then taken back to the vainya.

12. The men dance around the vainya snapping their bowstrings and singing.

6. The initiands and all the men present ate a mixture of ginger, salt and leaves crushed and mixed up on a taroah leaf.

7. A kyaundera arched male shell nose decoration was held over each initiand by his father.

8. The initiands were led back through the noniara arch out to the road.

9. Women waiting by the side of the road shot arrows at the initiands for their misdeeds in the past.

10. The men lead the initiands back to the vainya accompanied by the women, girls, boys and children who had been waiting outside the enclosure. They dance and sing everyday songs.

11. The initiands were led into the vainya by the men. The men carrying their shields and holding their bows upright and chanting warcries dance around the centre post of the vainya.

12. The initiands are taken out of the vainya momentarily and then put back in as a sign it is a nyako-iyavati ceremony

The spatial sequence of the ummara nose bleeding ceremony is important because it is the only time during the ummara ceremony that the initiands are taken out of the vainya enclosure and displayed to the women and children. The events of the nose-bleeding are carried out by the adult men as a predetermined series of events. The initiands are taken out of the vainya by armed men, led through an arch into an enclosure at the side of a stream or river, the nose bleeding operations are performed, and they are led out of the enclosure, back to the vainya, put back into the vainya, and the men dance around the vainya. Stylized acts of male aggression are performed by the decorated and armed men accompanying the initiands who chant the male warcry and snap their bowstrings on the way to the stream enclosure. These acts can be interpreted as a display of corporate male strength as well as a way of frightening the initiands. During the Asara nose-bleeding the initiands were threatened with the snapping of bowstrings and chanting of warcries and before being taken to the stream, they were led between a double line of charging men. During the Moussouri ummara nose-bleeding the initiands were beaten with taroah and sticks and threatened with warcries and bow string snapping.

The women and children, who are excluded from the events in the stream enclosure just as they are categorically excluded from the vainya, play an important role both as excluded spectators and as participants in the procession back to the vainya. In their role as spectators excluded from the ceremonies inside the stream enclosure, the women and children are affirming the importance and superiority of male ceremonial events as opposed to female ceremonial events in that men are not excluded from the kam-karura nose-bleeding. Some of the older women are permitted an active role in the procession back to the vainya during which they perform burlesques of aggression which amuse the spectators and would appear to mimic the behaviour of adult men towards the initiands. During the Asara nose-bleeding return procession some

older women beat hand drums and hit girls and during the Moussouri one, some older women shot toy arrows at the initiands for their misdeeds in the past.

A basic sequence of events occurred in the Asara and Moussouri nose bleeding ceremonies and emerged from the descriptions of all ummara nose-bleeding ceremonies given to me by informants. The initiand is washed in the water, his upper right thigh is vertically scratched with a bamboo knife, his father bleeds his nose by the simultaneous insertion of two sticks with taroah leaves furled around them and he is dressed in a new grassskirt. The following variations occurred in the Asara and Moussouri nose-bleeding ceremonies. In the Asara nose-bleeding, each initiand's foreskin was held down a piece of red sugar cane with an arrow and they were given a bundle of special leaves and an arrow to hold in each hand. After the operation had been carried out at the Moussouri nose and penis bleeding ceremony, all present ate a mixture of ginger, salt and leaves and a shell nose ornament was held over the head of each initiand by his 'father'.

Detailed descriptions of the Asara and Moussouri ummara nose-bleeding ceremonies from which the preceding analysis has been derived are presented below.

#### ASARA

On the morning of the third day of the Asara ummara, the men involved in the initiation decorated themselves, put feathers in their shields, and carrying them and their bows and arrows danced up to the vainya singing songs, making the Wo Wo warcry, and shouting to men from other parts of Asara village to come and watch the ceremonies. They arrived at the enclosure of the vainya and danced around slowly, chanting warcries. A number of Doma, transverse-blown bamboo gourd headed trumpets, and Vara, small end-blown bamboo tubes, were played

simultaneously to make a repetitive honking sound. The three initiands were brought out of the men's house by their ninaus (mother's eldest brothers) and some of the men drew their bowstrings and pretended that they were about to shoot the initiands. The procession, accompanied by the playing of Doma-Vara, set off in the direction of the stream. The ninaus led the initiands while the accompanying men chanting the Wo Wo warcry, made threatening gestures to the initiands telling them to hurry up and walk more quickly.

The procession arrived outside an overgrown enclosure fenced off with tankert bordering the stream where the ceremony was to be performed. While the initiands and the armed men waited outside, some old men beat down the foliage in the enclosure and tied two large clumps of grass and bushes together to form a kyau-vindiri arch. Men with shields and bows and arrows went through the arch and formed a double line facing each other inside the enclosure. The two lines of armed men approached and withdrew from each other snapping their bowstrings and making warcries. The initiands were led through the arch between two lines of men who charged at them snapping their bowstrings and singing a Renuka Bush Markham everyday song, to a muddy stream.

While the men continued singing the chorus of the Renuka song, the initiands were washed with soap and dried with towels, bought from the tradestore, and left standing naked on the bank of the stream. A man held two bundles of small green leaves called wa-oh-ah; one bundle consisting of quao-nara leaves and the other of quara-nraunro leaves. The fathers and grandfathers of the three initiands told them where to stand. A symbolic cut was made with a bamboo knife above the left thigh of each of the initiands who trembled, shook, and showed symptoms of real fear. Had the initiands been older an actual cut would have been made and their noses would have been bled with a kamuka, a stick with spiney leaves wrapped around it, two of

which are shoved up the nostrils and agitated to induce bleeding. The men initiating the boys said that their noses would be bled during some other ummara ceremony when they were older.

A piece of long uncut red sugarcane (khyaruwah) with the top leaves still attached was bought and the bundles of quao-nara and quara-nraunro leaves were given to the grandfathers of the initiands. Two men held up the long red sugarcane horizontally at the height of the initiand's groins. The three penises of the initiands were placed on the red sugarcane. The foreskin of each initiand's penis was pinned to the red sugarcane with the point of a tatai veva, an arrow bound and decorated with yellow havarikya grass, held by a man. The only explanation I could elicit for the pinning of the foreskins of the initiands to the red sugarcane was that sugarcane was put below their skin so that later, when they were grown men, they would be able to stakeup sugarcane to make it grow. Given that the three things involved in the operation - foreskin, sugarcane and an arrow - are all indisputably things that are exclusively part of the world of Ommura men, there is probably no more specific explanation for this event than that of traditional custom and the necessity of initiation as a means of promoting future good health in the initiands. The sugarcane used in the operation was later replanted in the garden of one of the fathers where it came from and had no further significance.

Each initiand was then given two tatai veva arrows, and the two bundles of wa-oh-ah leaves - one of quao-nara leaves and one of quara-nraunro leaves. They held one arrow and one bundle of leaves in each hand, holding them outwards with their elbows bent. They were dressed in new hiera grass skirts which were trimmed to the right length by their relatives with bamboo knives. A new tua string bag was hung around the neck down the back of each initiand and a kyaimu mareh green wild pandanus leaf was fastened around their waists over the

string bag as a belt or girdle. The initiands were led back to the kyaovindiri arch of the enclosure and beaten with taroah by the men before being led out under it. The men followed them.

Outside the arch and the fence the women had been dancing and beating kundu drums, forbidden to see or hear what had gone on inside the enclosure. The dancing women (married women and initiand's mothers) were wearing grass skirts with ebora and beru leaves hung from the back and rattan armbands on their upper arms with bunches of humira leaves stuck through them. They beat umara kundu drums, an instrument made by men and generally only played by men. The procession of initiands, men and women set off in the direction of the men's house dancing and singing. The dancing women made a play of hitting girl spectators with sticks, an action found amusing to all involved. The procession, still dancing and singing, halted at a dancing ground below the vainya, the initiands were led around the dance ground and taken back to the vainya by the men. The women stayed outside the vainya singing and dancing while the men, singing and dancing, led the initiands up to the vainya enclosure, led them around the outside of the men's house, took away their arrows and bundles of leaves, and put them back in the vainya. The men went clockwise around and around the outside of the vainya, snapping their bowstrings and singing.

#### MOUSSOURI

Initiation ceremonies are modified to take into account the age of the initiands. In the Asara initiation ceremony I have described, the boys noses were not bled because they were considered to be too immature and the operation was postponed to be carried out sometime during a later ummara initiation. As the two nyako-iyavati initiands had already reached puberty, their noses and their penises were bled

during the ummara part of their initiation. The bleeding of the penis is only carried out on males who have already reached puberty either during or sometime after iyavati and is done to strengthen the organ by releasing bad blood and to promote general health. Nose bleeding is performed on both ummara male and kam karura female initiands to release the bad blood of the mother which has been lodged in the initiands foreheads since conception and afterwards as a therapeutic technique for relieving headache and pain.

On the morning of the second day of the initiation ceremonies, the initiands, having spent the previous afternoon and night in the vainya, were taken to the Lamari river to have their noses bled as part of the ummara ceremony. Carrying their bows, arrows and decorated shields, dancing and making warcries, the men led the initiands from the vainya to the river. A group of women, girls and pre-iyavati boys followed the men and initiands and waited on the road some distance from the wakjera river enclosure which they were forbidden to approach.

The initiands were led through a noniara arch made by tying two sections of a thicket of undo pit pit together and beaten with taroah and sticks. The men propped up their shields by the side of the river and the initiands were washed in the river. The two initiands were made to stand naked in separate areas of the shallows at the side of the river and their noses and penises were bled with sticks of pit pit around which taroah leaves were furred. The operations were carried out in an atmosphere of corporate sadism and the initiands both tried to resist until male relatives held them so firmly that they could not move. Nora's father bled his nose and penis and Murabe, Nona's ninau and surrogate father for the initiation, performed these operations on him.

There is no notion of having to passively endure pain during nose and penis bleeding and the operation is extremely painful. The initiand's head was forced back and his hands held behind him to prevent resistance.

A vertical scratch was made on the side of each initiand's upper right thigh with a bamboo knife. Two sticks wrapped in taroah leaves were simultaneously shoved up the nostrils into the sinuses and twisted round until blood began flowing from the nostrils. The initiands were made to stand in running water during the nose and penis bleeding so that the drawn blood, a substance which could be used for sorcery, is washed away in the running water. After the nose had been bled, another stick wrapped in taroah was pushed into the urethra of the penis and turned around until blood flowed. The sticks and leaves used to draw blood were thrown away into the water and when the initiand's nostrils and penis had stopped bleeding, the dried blood was washed off.

After the initiands had been bled, the initiands and all the men present ate portions of a mixture of handa ginger, horeh salt, and hiera, the leaf from which grass skirts are made, all of which had been mixed up together on a taroah leaf. Each 'father' held a kyaundera shell - a long thin curved piece of shell worn by adult men through the hole in the nasal septum as a decoration - like an arch over the head of his initiand son. Then the men put their shields over their shoulders and making warcries, led the initiands up from the river and through the noniara arch back out to the road. They did not beat the initiands with taroah.

Waiting with the crowd on the road for the initiands and men to return from the river were women armed with small bows and arrows made of pit pit. When the initiands arrived at the end of the road, these women shot pit pit arrows at them for their misdeeds to them in the past - things like swearing or incidents of general misbehaviour. The initiands and the men, and the women, girls and young boys who had waited by the road, danced back to the village singing everyday songs. The initiands were taken into the vainya by the men who holding their bows upright and carrying their shields made warcries and danced around the centre post of the vainya. The initiands were then taken out of the vainya

by the men who made Wo Wo warcries and then led the initiands back into the vainya. I was told that the initiands were returned to the vainya, taken out and put back again because they were being initiated twice, both as ummara and iyavati.

The ummara nose bleeding ceremony is the only occasion from the time the initiands are put in the vainya and the kyapairi feast marking the end of the initiation that the initiands are taken out of the vainya and displayed in public. It has all the features of a 'rite of transition' - the procession of armed men who take the initiands from the vainya to the stream enclosure, the events surrounding the bleeding of the initiand's noses, the procession of initiands and men joined by the waiting women and children spectators back to the vainya, and the return of the initiands to the vainya by the armed men. The relative complexity of the ceremony surrounding the ummara nose bleeding when compared to the kam karura nose bleeding parallels the greater complexity of male initiation in general when compared with female initiation. Exclusion of the women and children from the events of the nose bleeding which take place in the stream enclosure combined with their participation in the procession back to the vainya constitutes a statement about the relative importance of male initiation as a social event and the extreme conditions of secrecy imposed on its enactment in comparison to female initiation.

Analysis of the features of the ummara nose bleeding ceremony reveals that it should be interpreted primarily as an operation carried out by males in conditions of secrecy to promote the health of ummara initiands by bleeding their noses. The basic aspects of the operation - washing, bleeding and dressing the initiands in new grass skirts - is common to both ummara and kam karura nose bleedings. The distinctive feature of the ummara nose bleeding is the presence of armed and decorated men who display their strength by chanting warcries, snapping

bowstrings and intimidating the initiands with aggressive behaviour.

There would appear to be no decipherable meaning in the following aspects of the nose bleeding ceremony reviewed below other than the efficacy of traditional customs. Certainly no explanation is proffered other than custom and the fact that as a part of the nose bleeding ceremony, they also help to promote the future good health of the initiands. The sugarcane on which the initiand's foreskins were held down with arrows during the Asara nose bleeding is obviously a symbol of manhood in that sugarcane is only cultivated by adult males and the arrows the initiands hold in their hands are objects made and used in everyday life only by adult males. The leaves held by the Asara initiands are intended to promote their health, just as the mixture of salt, ginger and leaves consumed by those present at the Moussouri nose bleeding was intended to promote health but the use of efficacious leaves and eating of health promoting mixtures are features of Ommura medical practice in general. The arched shell nose ornaments held over the heads of the Moussouri initiands by their fathers are valuable male nose decorations, the use of which in this manner somehow promotes good health.

In order to substantiate the argument that the ummara nose bleeding ceremony is primarily a pragmatic operation carried out to ensure and promote the future good health of the initiands in accordance with a pre-determined sequence of events and conditions, it has been necessary to review the 'meanings' or lack of 'meanings' placed by the Ommura on all aspects of the ceremony. This has been done to refute any possible claims that rich layers of symbolic meaning have in some way been left undeciphered.

7. The Instruments or Spirit Cries Played During  
Ommura Male Initiations

Previous work on the spirit cry instruments or 'sacred flutes' played in conditions of secrecy in New Guinea Highlands male initiations has tended to concentrate solely on their use in male initiations as a result and prerequisite of male dominance and power in the societies in which they occur. Writers have ignored the problem of the extent and form of any social codifications which have developed out of the repeated use of these instruments in the context of male initiations over time, thus obscuring certain culturally specific features of the organization of ritual knowledge in New Guinea societies such as a lack of cosmological elaboration.

In Male Cults and Secret Initiations, Allen wrote of initiation rituals that:

Both the rites and the groups are characterized by a high degree of secrecy (1967 : 7).

The teleological conclusion he draws from his research is of little use in explaining the role of spirit cry instruments in New Guinea societies because he is primarily concerned with similarities in the social structures of Melanesian societies in which male initiations occur. He writes:

The hypothesis of the greatest generality is concerned with the formal properties of social structure; it asserts that social division between the sexes is most prominent in those kin based societies in which the adult men or women of the local community are united by membership of a single, solidary, exogamous, unilineal descent group (1967 : 120).

The classic work on the use of 'sacred flutes' in the Eastern Highlands is Read's article on the Gahuku Gama Nama Cult which analyzes the use of the sacred flutes as an aspect of a Durkheimian relationship

of ritual to social organization. His conclusion was :

To the Gahuku-Gama the sacred flutes are a manifestation of the external supernatural force which watches over their well being and destiny. The cult in which they feature shows the widest correspondence with the existing social order, with the system of groups and inter-group relationships and sentiments which underlie it (1952 : 24).

He also wrote that :

The supernatural force which is felt to reside in the nama is related conceptually to that possessed by the spirits of the dead (1952 : 9).

Berndt, writing about Eastern Highlands peoples who practised male initiations approximating those of the Ommura, interpreted the initiation flutes as an instrument of the political dominance of men.

The flutes as ritual objects symbolize the dominance of men. Their use in ritual reinforces this constellation of ideas but expresses also the wider implications relating to fertility (1962 : 55).

A recent article by Langness - 'Ritual Power and Male Dominance in the New Guinea Highlands' - interprets New Guinea Highlands male initiation cults and the associated ritual paraphernalia as a social expression of male superiority and power.

I suggest that the most parsimonious explanation for secrecy, as well as for the existence and functioning of the nama cult itself, does not involve either male envy or inner male bonding propensities but rather, power in the most fundamental sense (1977 : 19).

The implications of the arguments reviewed are that sacred flutes are part of the secret male initiation cults which reflect the underlying kinship organization (Allen), that sacred flutes are the manifestation of a benign supernatural force and are part of the initiations which reflect the principles of the encompassing social organization (Read), that the initiation flutes symbolize the dominance

of men and are connected to notions of fertility (Berndt), and that the initiation instruments are part of the social expression of male superiority and power (Langness).

The only other kind of explanation of this phenomenon is the universalistic psychoanalytic explanation argued by Dundes in 'A Psychoanalytic Study of the Bullroarer'.

Considering the bullroarer as a flatulent phallus makes it possible to account for the overt anal and phallic characteristics found in the bullroarer complex. The hypothesis is in no way incompatible with the idea that the bullroarer is somehow connected with an ancestral (male) spirit, or that it signals male solidarity. Quite the contrary, the specific use of anal and phallic traits make it essential that it be associated with powerful males of the past (1976 : 235)

In his paper on traditional sound producing instruments subtitled 'A Study of Esoteric Instruments and their Role in Male-Female Relations', Gourlay interprets the instruments used in initiations as constituting cult objects with an appropriate mythology resulting from the conditions of their use (1975 : 118). The most sensible interpretation of the qualities of the sound producing instruments which make them suitable vehicles for the way in which they are played in initiations is in terms of their sound dynamics; their sounds carry for long distances (Gourlay 1975 : 119). As Tuzin has written of the Ilahita Arapesh flutes, loudness is a sign of superiority (Tuzin 1976 : 351).

Specific spirit cry making instruments are made and played in secret by adult men during the staging of ummara and iyavati initiations as an act of institutionalized deception directed against boys being initiated and women and children. Given the repeated use over time of these instruments under the same conditions in the context of these initiations, one might speculate that instructions about the social significance of their use, concepts of the wera or spirit

nature of the instruments, and myths about their origins would have become elaborated as part of the wakyera secret initiation knowledge. In operation, the knowledge concerning the initiation instruments which is transmitted by adult men to initiands through ummara and iyavati initiation involves little more than the contextual use of the instruments within ummara and iyavati initiations as a wakyera event, how to make and play the instruments and the names and sexes of the wera whose cries are made by playing the instruments.

A pair of Kunavero/Gurekiya flutes is played during ummara initiations and in combination with Eabowkia water flutes, Nra-ia-Datero baby crying leaves, and Abua bullroarers during iyavati initiations. Like other events and instructions which are enacted by adult men for ummara and iyavati, the making and playing of these instruments is wakyera ('secret' or 'forbidden') and can only occur in the context of the staging of an ummara or iyavati initiation. The instruments are named after the particular spirit whose cries they make when they are played and only initiated adult men who know how to make and play them are supposed to know that they are instruments and not the crying of the actual spirits (wera). They are made for each initiation, sometimes tested in remote parts of the bush, played for the appropriate initiation, and then broken and thrown away. At night during an ummara or iyavati initiation, the appropriate instruments are played in darkness in the perimeter of the men's house enclosure outside the vainya. They can be heard but cannot be seen by the initiands inside the vainya and by the women and children who are made to stage an ihi singsing in a distant part of the village on nights when male initiations are taking place. The sounds of the instruments, particularly the Abua bullroarer, carry for long distances warning women and children to stay away from the vainya and informing people in neighbouring villages that

a male initiation is being carried out, and by those being played whether it is an ummara or iyavati initiation. Like other peoples in New Guinea who play 'sacred flutes' and bullroarers during male initiation, the Ommura males have a myth that the instruments were originally owned by women until men stole them away from them, although this myth is not prominent in the instructions given to initiands.

The flutes played during male initiations are not the only Ommura flutes. Small end-blown lengths of bamboo open at one end and called Vuvira are played by men and boys to accompany the songs sung in ova mata yam fertility ceremonies which are attended by women and children. In the northern villages (Asara, To'kena, Ahea and Himarata), Doma-Vara 'flutes' are played in public by men during ihi singsings and during the publicly visible parts of ummara when the initiands are taken from the vainya to the stream enclosure to have their noses bled and afterwards when they are led back to the vainya. Vara flutes are lengths of bamboo open and blown at one end similar to the flutes played during ova mata yam fertility ceremonies. Domas are transverse blown lengths of bamboo with a hole for blowing made by burning near the sealed end of the length of bamboo and with a gourd funnel attached to the open end. Apart from the gourd funnel at one end, the Doma are similar in construction to the Gurekiya/Kunavero flutes, but they are not played in pairs as two alternating cries and most significantly, they are not wakyera. The ova mata flutes - Doma and Vara have none of the attributions of the instruments played during male initiations. They are played in public for ova mata ceremonies and ihi singsings. Other Ommura musical instruments are the umara hand drums which are played during ihi and mata fertility ceremonies and the hirima bamboo jews harps which are made by men who play them in their gardens to increase the growth of their yams. All musical instruments are made by men, even

the No-kabura miniature bows played by female initiands during kam karura initiations.

At the end of the male initiation ceremony for which they have been made and played, flutes and bullroarers are generally broken and thrown away. If a man should decide to keep an initiation instrument, he would store it in a cave or tree hollow, the same secret places where poisons and other material for sorcery are hidden. The flutes and bullroarers are never brought into the vainya. During initiations, when they are not being played, they are always kept out of sight somewhere in the men's house enclosure. The fact that the flutes and bullroarers are made for a specific initiation and are generally destroyed afterwards, rather than conserved as cult objects, is evidence that it is the way in which they are used and played and what they are said to represent within the context of the enactment of ummara and iyavati initiations which gives them their significance and power.

While the instruments are being played in darkness outside the vainya, men occasionally beat on the walls of the vainya to frighten the initiands inside into thinking that there are violent spirits outside. The older men sitting inside the vainya with the initiands further this illusion by talking to the spirits outside the vainya, addressing them as 'Old Man' (Na-oh or Na-u-oh) and telling them to go away (Na-oh u-an-de). The men inside the vainya do not refer to the instruments by their individual names when speaking in the presence of the initiands, but only as 'Old Man'. Only at the end of iyavati or nyako-iyavati initiations are the initiands told by the men that the wera cries are in fact made by instruments played by men and they are cautioned that they should never tell this wakjera knowledge to uninitiated boys, women or children. I did not hear of any cases of women ever breaking the prohibition and seeing the instruments but there is little doubt that should this ever happen, the punishment inflicted by the men would be most severe.

The pair of one hole, transverse blown flutes played during ummara initiations and in combination with Eabowkia's Nra-ia Datero leaves, and Abua during iyavati initiations are called Gurekiya in Moussouri, Samura, Sonura and Kurunumbaira, and Kunavero in Asara and neighbouring northern villages. Gurekiya/Kunavero flutes are made from a length of bamboo with an internode left intact at one end near which the hole for blowing is burned with an ember and an open end which is closed and opened with the palm of the hand when playing to vary the tone of the flute. The two players always stand facing each other and the sound of one flute alternates with the sound of the other flute in a repetitive rhythm as each of the players alternates in blowing his flute and breathing. The method of playing Gurekiya/Kunavero flutes is the same as that used in other parts of the Eastern Highlands where similar one hole, transverse blown paired flutes are played in secret by men. (Gahuka Gama Nama flutes and the flutes played by the Chimbu). Gurekiya/Kunavero flutes are male wera spirits.

Eabowkia water flutes are made out of a thick length of bamboo with one internode intact which is filled to approximately one third capacity with muddy water. A much narrower length of bamboo, open at both ends is fitted into the top of the larger length of bamboo and leaves are used as wadding to make the flute airtight. Eabowkia flutes are held in an upright position and played by blowing over the end of the top of the small bamboo. The water in the bamboo tube gives the flute a distinctive high toned sound and they are played in unison in short staccato bursts. Eabowkia flutes are female wera.

The Eabowkia wera is said to be the mother of the Nra-ia Datero 'crying baby' leaf wera. The Nra-ia Datero leaf is held between the lips as a reed. The player blows through a hollow stalk or furled leaf to make a realistic and eerie sound like a baby crying in agitation -  
'Ma Ma Ma Ma Ma Ma'.

Abua bullroarers are made out of a long, thin triangular-shaped piece of wood. A string is attached to a hole at the top of the narrowest end of the bullroarer and the other end of the string is attached to a stick which the player holds in his hands and whirls around rapidly to play the bullroarer. The rapid rotation of the Abua bullroarer produces a high pitched whining sound like a propeller.

The instruments which are played during ummara and iyavati initiations are generally played by young married men although it is possible for boys who have been initiated iyavati to play the Gurekiya/Kunavero flutes during ummara initiations. The older men sit inside the vainya with the initiands occasionally singing everyday songs while the instruments are being played. The older men do not give wakyera instruction to the initiands while the instruments are being played and when they want to do so, someone is sent outside to tell Na-u-oh to go away - to tell the instrument players to stop playing and return to the vainya.

The Gurekiya/Kunavero transverse blown paired flutes, which are the only instruments played during ummara, are also played during iyavati in combination with other instruments that are only played during iyavati initiations; the Eabowkia flutes, Nra-ia Datero leaves, and Abua bullroarers. When all these instruments are played together in combination no attempt is made to orchestrate the various spirit cries into a unity of sound and the sounds of each group of spirit voices start up, sound and stop, depending on the inclination of the players.

Concepts of the exact nature of the wera which the spirit cries produced by the initiation instruments are said to represent are extremely unelaborated. Men who know how to make and play the instruments are in agreement that the instruments - Gurekiya/Kunavero, Eabowkia, Nra-ia Datero and Abua - are named after the sounds which

they make when played.

The wera of the various instruments have definite genders. Gurekiya/Kunavero flutes, the only instruments used in ummara initiations and the Abua bullroarer, which is the central instrument used in iyavati initiations due to the loudness and quality of its sound, are both male wera. The Eabowkia water flute is a female wera who is said to be the mother of the Nra-ia Datero baby crying leaf, which, as a baby is of indeterminate gender. No explanations were given to me by the Ommura males as to why the Eabowkia water flute was a female wera. The argument could be invented that the playing of Eabowkia and Nra-ia Datero symbolize an agitated mother and her baby being separated for a male initiation or that the design of the Eabowkia water flute is a metaphor for the sexual penetration of women by men but as these explanations were never put forward by Ommura men inside or outside the context of an initiation, such speculations must be dismissed.

The wera of the spirit cry instruments are differentiated by Ommura males according to their design as instruments, their names, the cries or sounds they make when played, and their sexes. To the women and children who hear them at a distance, they are merely the cries of wera. I was once told by an ummara initiate that Gurekiya had a short nose because Abua had broken it but this was the only description I ever heard of the physical attributes of these wera.

Before the novices are taken out to the ground, their fathers tell them that the sound made by the swinging bullroarer is the voice of the spirit gu-nagu gosanamu (bullroarer old man). He is described as having no belly but a large mouth. (Berndt 1962 : 95).

Most Ommura men know the myth, a myth prevalent in most parts of New Guinea where 'sacred flutes' are played in secrecy during male initiations, that the spirit cry instruments were owned by women until a man stole them. This myth is not told to initiands as

wakyera knowledge during ummara or iyavati initiations and is given little prominence as a wakyera uri or secret myth. The basic outline of this myth is that in the past, all the initiation instruments were owned by a woman or women of a particular hamlet. The instruments made a good sound (qu-ema que nuareh varu varu) and a man living in another hamlet heard their cries on repeated occasions and traced the source of the sound to the woman's hut. While the woman was gardening, the man stole all the instruments from her hut and the men have had them ever since. The lack of importance placed on this myth in the wakyera instructions of ummara and iyavati initiations is echoed in the reply generally made by men to questions about the origin of the initiation instruments. They say that the ancestors were the first men to use the spirit cry producing instruments when making their sons ummara and iyavati and that they have been used in this context ever since.

My research indicated that the various initiation instruments had probably been incorporated into initiation practice at different periods of time as 'fashions' acquired from or through neighbouring peoples. The oldest living man I talked to, Ati Rehasa, former fight leader and initiation specialist, told me that knowledge of all the initiation instruments had come to the Ommura from peoples living at the western end of the Lamari River, the same direction from which axe stone originated. The technique of making a two or three hole flute called Una Uneva was described to me but it was not played during the initiations I attended which indicates that individual instruments could be omitted from initiations or become obsolete without affecting the role of the instruments in initiation ceremonies. A wakyera taroah song was sung during the Asara ummara initiation which mentions the Kunavero (Mokureva) flutes which were played and the Una Uneva flutes which were not. The song was : Nindo-i-oh

Vevandai Tavandai Ma-uru-oh Vevandai Tavandai, Mohureva Lai-dindi Tivari-ho, Una Uneva Lai dindi Tivari-ho. 'O mother come and see. Ma-uru-oh ( mother's name) come out and see. Mokureva makes a lot of noise he is talking. Una Uneva makes a lot of noise he is talking'. This taroah song, sung before beating ummara initiates with taroah and referring to the playing of the spirit cry instruments demonstrates the fusion of different wakyera events and knowledge into a representation of the greater context of the staging of an ummara initiation.

The instruments are referred to by a number of different names in different contexts of the initiations, the use of which reflects the way in which their true nature is hidden by adult males in the process of initiating young males as ummara and iyavati. To the women and children, the instruments are nameless crying wera, while to the boys being initiated inside the vainya, the instruments are supposedly nameless wera which make cries and bang on the outside walls and are referred to by the men as 'Old Man'. The initiated men know how to make and play Gurekiya/Kunavero, Eabowkia, Nra-ia Datero and Abua as named instruments. Just as there are several wakyera names for taroah, there are wakyera names for some of the instruments. Gurekiya/Kunavero flutes are called Mokureh and Abua bullroarers are called Utanga by older men in the context of initiations.

The spirit cry instruments are wakyera, secret or forbidden, like the other events and instructions which occur specifically in the context of the staging of ummara and iyavati initiations. The repeated enactment of ummara and iyavati over a period of time has led to a situation where the social 'meanings' of the playing of the initiation instruments have become embedded in the general context of the staging of these initiations. The staging of an ummara or iyavati initiation determines which particular spirit cry instruments

are made and played, when they are played in relation to the other initiation events and instructions, who plays them, and in what conditions, and what those who hear their sounds are supposed to think that they are - wera spirit cries for those being initiated and women and children, and named spirit cry producing instruments for fully initiated men. It is the social context in which the initiation instruments are played, the way in which the adult men use them to create the illusion of the presence of crying spirits for the initiands and women and children, not merely their sound producing qualities, which give them their social significance, and meaning.

The absence of elaboration of the precise nature of the wera of the initiation instruments or their origins by adult males both in the context of wakyera initiation knowledge and in general substantiates this. To the women and children in the village, the instruments are nameless wera and the boys being initiated only hear the spirit cry instruments being referred to as 'Old Man'. Fully initiated males know how to make and play the instruments, know their names and the sexes of the wera they represent. Gurekiya/Kunavero flutes are male, Eabowkia water flutes are female, Nra-ia Datero baby crying leaves are babies of indeterminate sex whose mother is Eabowkia and Abua bullroarers are male, but this is the extent of any 'cosmological' relationships that are made. The myth that the initiation instruments were owned by a woman until a man stole them is known to adult men but is not referred to in wakyera initiation instruction. Esoteric names for some of the instruments - Mokurɛ for Gurekiya/Kunavero flutes and Utanga for Abua bullroarers - are used in the context of initiation wakyera knowledge by older men but like the wakyera names in general they are probably names for the same instruments incorporated from neighbouring groups. The instruments

are described as having been used first by the mythical ancestors (Uri) when they initiated their sons ummara and iyavati and are said to have been used for this purpose ever since but the origins of the instruments as opposed to their use in the context of initiation have little importance. Although various instruments may have been incorporated into initiation practice at different times in the past and one flute - Una Uneva - has become virtually obsolete, this is treated as being of little importance to ongoing initiation practice and is not part of wakyera initiation knowledge.

The repeated use of the spirit cry initiation instruments in the context of ummara and iyavati has not led to an elaboration of their wera or spirit nature by the adult men who control them.

The social importance of the initiation instruments results from the way in which the sounds are used in the context of ummara and iyavati initiations as an institutionalized act of deception directed by adult males against uninitiated males and women and children. Minimal cosmological elaboration of the nature of the spirit cry instruments has arisen out of their repeated use in the same social context over a period of time other than those resulting from their use in the specific social context of the staging of ummara and iyavati initiations. This absence of elaboration is of extreme importance in comprehending the form and purpose of Highlands male initiations and is a feature ignored or obscured in previous works on the subject.

## 8. The Use of Taroah in Male Initiations

Unlike the spirit cry instruments played during ummara and iyavati initiations which are remarkable for the absence of any elaboration of their social meaning other than that arising out of the context of their use, there is an extensive amount of wakyera knowledge involved in the use of taroah stinging nettles in ummara initiations. Rubbing or beating the skin with taroah stinging nettles to promote health, knowledge which is common to all Ommura, occurs in ummara male initiations in conjunction with the singing of taroah songs and the staging of taroah mimes as wakyera events. The initiands are beaten with taroah by the men, wakyera taroah songs are sung which only certain of the adult men know in their entirety and mimes of exaggerated male sexual behaviour involving the use of taroah are performed to discipline and instruct the initiands. Any adult male who has participated in the staging of ummara initiations in the vainya during his lifetime knows virtually everything involved in taroah beatings and the enactment of taroah mimes. This is not the case with taroah songs of which a great many exist, which are often known in their individual entirety only to initiation specialists and which, although wakyera like all events and instructions of male initiation, are primarily composed around images to do with the everyday use of taroah. The conventions of the staging of ummara initiations dictate that the initiands and the initiates must be beaten with taroah, that taroah mimes must be staged, and that some taroah songs must be sung, but no pre-determined formal order of sequence is imposed on the enactment of these events. The elaboration of knowledge involved in taroah use in the vainya therefore consists of amount rather than complexity and it derives its significance primarily from the secrecy of the conditions in which it is used.

Taroah, a kind of stinging nettle which grows in the bush, is rubbed or beaten on the skin by the Ommura to stimulate and improve the condition of the skin, to remove pain and to promote general good health. The healing and health-giving properties of rubbing the skin with taroah are common knowledge to all Ommura. Women rub it on their skin after childbirth and its application is generally used to give strength after any illness. In the publicly known ancestor myth of Orava Naior, Orava Naior beats his younger brother to death for killing large numbers of marsupials and causing an earthquake and the dead man comes alive again when taroah leaves have fallen on his corpse and healed him.

Taroah is administered by adult males in the male initiations of ummara and eta nrareh for the dual purpose of promoting the health of the initiands by making their skin strong and to discipline them through the act of beating them with taroah. During the ummara part of the Moussouri nyako-iyavati, the initiands were told a myth about the strength giving properties of rubbing a skin with taroah. A man whose skin was scaly like ashes approached a father and his two daughters and the father hit the man in the face. The man went off and ate and rubbed taroah on his skin; his skin and health improved dramatically, and he went back and married the two daughters. In ummara initiations, the initiands are beaten with taroah, wakyera taroah songs are sung, and wakyera mimes are performed, involving the use of taroah. The initiands are beaten by members of their father's lineage and if or when the beating appears to be too severe, the initiand's ninau - oldest mother's brother - protects him by shielding him with his own body. The taroah beatings are very painful. The initiands show signs of fear when they anticipate a beating and try to escape the blows when one is administered. Boys who have been initiated ummara but have not yet been initiated iyavati are made to sit with those being initiated as ummara and are occasionally beaten with taroah for past misbehaviour by the men.

Taroah beatings, songs and mimes do not occur as part of iyavati initiations. In eta-nrareh pre-marriage ceremonies, the groom to be is taken into the men's house and given instruction during which men rub his naked body from head to foot with taroah leaves attached to a string, paying special attention to the penis to make him strong.

Taroah use during ummara initiations consists of the beating of the initiates with taroah, the singing of taroah songs, and the staging of mimes involving the use of taroah, taroah songs and warcries by men. The chanting of Wo Wo warcries by the men in conjunction with taroah beatings and taroah mimes is a reflection of how what is being enacted in the vainya as part of ummara initiation is demarcated as an exclusively male wakyera activity. Taroah beatings, taroah mimes and taroah songs are often concealed by the simultaneous singing of everyday songs to conceal their sounds from those outside the vainya. All of these events are controlled by the older men who instigate their enactment by younger married men and are directed at disciplining and instructing the ummara initiands as part of the initiation process. These events can only occur at night in the vainya during an ummara initiation and their status as wakyera secret or forbidden events and knowledge is a result of the way in which they are used and administered in conditions of secrecy in the context of ummara initiations.

The use of taroah in ummara manifests certain inequalities in male access to wakyera initiation knowledge which are inherent in Ummara male initiation in general. Any fully initiated married man who carries out the beating of initiands with taroah or performs in taroah mimes during ummara initiations knows virtually everything there is to know about the meaning of these events within the context of ummara initiation. This is not the case as regards the wakyera taroah songs, the words and full meaning of which are only known to initiation specialists, although adult male participants follow the lead of specialists in singing these songs and their choruses and learn the tunes, choruses and words by rote through

participation in repeated ummara initiations over time.

Taroah indi songs are known in their entirety only to adult men. Each taroah song constitutes an autonomous unity, the only factor they have in common being that they are in some way about the use of taroah and are wakjera taroah songs sometimes sung in the vainya for ummara initiations. Like Ommura songs in general they consist of a central image or theme around which they have been composed, the words rhyme in some way and they have a chorus. Taroah songs are incorporated into initiation practice from neighbouring villages and language groups in the dialect or language of their original composition. Through the process of incorporation and use in the fund of taroah songs which are used in ummara initiations, the precise meanings of the words of these songs, which are not a central part of their use in the context of ummara initiations, sometimes become lost over time or are not fully known. Few men know all the words and meanings (insofar as the words of the songs have translatable meanings) of the words of the songs except older men who take an interest in initiation lore and have participated in many ummara initiations since they were ummara. The older adult male specialists choose the songs which are sung out of their repertoire and instigate their singing, the other fully initiated men joining in. Taroah songs are not sung in a fixed or static programme in ummara initiations and the order, exact number or precise songs sung vary from ummara initiation to ummara initiation and from village to village. The meaning of the songs is never explained to the ummara initiands but they recognize the type of song, the way it is sung, and some of the words and take it as a cue that they may be beaten with taroah, often reacting with visible signs of fear such as trembling.

Analyzing the content and meaning of the words and images of the taroah songs to demonstrate the relationship of the words and images

of the songs to their use in the context of ummara initiations. Taroah is given a number of different wakyera names in the taroah songs used in the Asara and Moussouri ummara initiations. Names used for taroah in the Asara taroah songs are Ombina, Andina, Kyovauna, Veraurira and Arepira and in the Moussouri taroah songs Ombina, Toka and Omu. The wakyera names for taroah are an integral part of the wakyera taroah songs in which they occur, the rhyming potential of the sound of the words is obviously important, and they are not used to refer to taroah in any context outside the songs. The fact that different names are used for taroah in taroah songs is significant as an example of the use of multiple words to refer to one object - the health promoting taroah stinging nettle - which is given a major role in ummara initiations.

Few of the images of the taroah songs deal specifically with the way in which taroah is used in ummara initiations, although they are generally based around some aspect of taroah use. A taroah song sung during the Asara ummara initiation about beating an ummara initiand who has a fat stomach with stinging nettles conveys something of the way in which taroah is used by the men to discipline and strengthen the health of the initiands.

Nrainya Papa Vura Va-u-oh, Hirimbireri Hari-veh Vari-raro Hari-veh  
Veve-dara Ina Taroah-ama Vari-raro Hari-veh, Imbi-raro Hari-veh.

The words of the song are : Big Belly, Big Belly. Get up so we can burn you. Sit down it will burn you. The taroah from Vava-dara (a place on Orava Naior mountain) will burn you. Sit down it will burn you. Stand up it will burn you.

Another Asara taroah song, already cited in the analysis of the use of the spirit cry instruments, doesn't even refer to taroah but it is about the cries of the initiation instruments. It is noteworthy because its manifestation constitutes a fusion of two wakyera events,

the playing of the spirit cry instruments as the image of the song and the actual use of the song as a taroah song. The song is:

Nindo-i-oh Vevandai Tavandai, Ma-uru-oh Vevandai Tavandai Mokureva  
Lai Dindi Tivari-ho, Una Uneva Lai Dindi Tivari-ho Nondo-i-oh  
Vevandai Tavandai, OH OH OH OH EH EH OH OH EH EH

'O mother come and see. Ma-uru-oh(name) come and see. Mokureva makes a lot of noise, he is talking. Una Uneva makes a lot of noise, he is talking. O mother come and see.

Two Moussouri taroah songs, one about how only the men know that it is an insect called Sisipo who eats the holes in the taroah leaves, and another about how the Ikirah leaf has the same effect when applied as taroah but no one ever uses it, demonstrate the essence of wakyera initiation knowledge which is that fully initiated men have a superior knowledge of things of which the uninitiated and the women and children are ignorant. The Sisipo song is:

Ih sisipo rawnraveh. Ih sisipo rawnraveh. Sisipova airanaveh.  
Aroah rawnraveh. Aro-andiah rawnraveh. Nde rawnraveh.  
Sisipova rawnraveh Aro-andiah rawnraveh. Nde rawnraveh.

Literally translated this means : 'Sisipo ate it. Sisipo ate it. Sisipo ate it. Ate taroah. Ate taroah. I eat it. Sisipo ate it. Ate it. I eat it.' Before the song was sung the initiates were told : 'You and the women and children don't know what eats holes in taroah but we adult men know that Sisipo ate it.' The songs about Ikirah, the unused alternative kind of stinging nettles, and Sisipo, the insect which eats taroah, are composed around aspects of superior male knowledge of taroah lore.

The images of the more general taroah songs are based around aspects of the social use of taroah as an aid to promoting health. Examples of the images of taroah songs are:

- a) 'Taroah, my taroah, I eat it'
- b) 'That's my taroah, young one, beat (with) it'
- c) 'I wanted to see my dry taroah growing down'
- d) 'Big women, small women, go bring and eat taroah'
- e) 'We bring the leaves of taroah and put them in one place'
- f) 'You are my son but you didn't even bring me one taroah leaf for me to rub my skin with'
- g) 'The women wait to see the men return with taroah'
- h) 'Ayeh-taro is a man who always rubs taroah on his skin and will always rub taroah on his skin'
- i) 'Taroah grows in Vaini(Place on Orava Naior Mountain), lots of taroah grows there'

The ordering, precise number and specific taroah songs sung vary from ummara initiation to ummara initiation, custom being only that the initiands must be beaten with taroah and that taroah songs have to be sung.

The performance of taroah mimes, a kind of memera or institutionalized 'play' is central to ummara initiation. The ummara taroah memeras consist of an exaggerated mime of male sexuality involving taroah, the singing of a taroah song and the chanting of the male warcry.

In the Asara ummara, the taroah mime began with the singing of the taroah song : Khyai-ra Khyai-ra Ru-areh Ombina Oseh Andina Saira Saira Ru-areh Aya Aya Ayeh. 'Let me hit you. Let me hit you. I am the father of taroah.' While the song was being sung by the spectators the initiates were beaten with taroah and as the beating continued warcries of 'Wo Wo Wo' and 'Ha Ha Ha Ha' were chanted. Two men from the father's lineage mimed a couple copulating. Then two naked men appeared and put taroah leaves under their arms, between their buttocks, and in their mouths. The two men danced around and stood in front of the initiates mouths moving suggestively up and down. Still dancing up and down, the two taroah decorated men accompanied by the spectators,

sung another taroah song: Ombi-ana Oya-veh Oya-veh Andi-ana Oya-veh. 'I am the father of taroah, I am the father of taroah. The Wo Wo Wo Wo warcry was chanted and members of the fathers' lineages leapt up and began beating the initiands with taroah while members of the lineages of the mother's brothers intervened to protect them. Later on, at the end of the wakyera ummara events of the night, the men performed a Torindareh dance in which two rows of men line up facing each other and dance in a stationary position by bending at the knees. Two groups each consisting of two men, one group for the ummara initiands and initiates and one group for the initiated men, went around the vainya simultaneously hitting the sides of each person's cheeks with bundles of tavara red leaf taroah and eta hakawa wild banana bark. One man lightly hit one side of the person's cheeks with tavara taroah while the other man simultaneously lightly hit the other side of the cheek with eta hakawa wild banana bark. This health promoting act having been carried out, the wakyera part of the ummara initiation finished for the night.

The taroah mime performed during the ummara section of the Moussouri nyako-iyavati initiation began with the washing of the initiands with wild banana bark, a porous substance full of sap. Some naked men with taroah held in their mouths and hands entered the vainya and began dancing, chewing the taroah in their mouths and masturbating with taroah. They stood in front of the faces of the seated initiands, dancing in place and masturbating with taroah, singing : Eh Ah Eh Ah Eh Ah. Ni Ombina Ovama (I am the father of taroah) Sianqo Sianqo Wo Wo Wo Wo (warcry) Brrr Brrr. The initiation specialist instructed the performers to do it so that the initiands could see it. Various men in the audience told the initiands to look at what their fathers and brothers were doing and told the performers to do it so that women didn't hear it and that they should chant more Wo Wo warcries.

The ummara taroah mimes can be interpreted as a demonstration, carried out by the adult men as a group and directed at the boys undergoing ummara initiation, of male strength and sexual power and its promotion through the use of taroah stinging nettles. Like taroah beatings, they are enacted to discipline and instruct the initiands and are staged in a pre-determined customary manner in a form agreed upon by the initiation specialists, actors, and audience of adult males. The Asara and Moussouri taroah mimes I observed shared the following features in common : a mime acted out by a number of naked men directly involving the use of taroah and depicting exaggerated copulation or masturbation directed at the initiands who are threatened with aggressive male sexuality in the guise of passive confrontation with the naked sexual organs of the actors, the singing of the taroah song 'I am the father (owner) of taroah' by the actors and audience of men, and the chanting of Wo Wo warcries by the actors and the audience.

If questioned about the purpose or meaning of the memera, adult men will generally comment that it is a wakyera event carried out to instruct the initiands and enacted in the particular way it is staged because that is the way it has always been done. The adult men however, are highly critical of the actor's performances in the taroah memera, regarding the performance of mimes as a skill like dancing that some can do better than others. Taroah memeras would appear to be a medium for impressing the importance of taroah use in promoting male virility and strength on the initiands by means of a mime involving exaggerated male sexual behaviour, the use of taroah, the singing of a taroah song and the chanting of male warcries.

Rubbing or beating the skin with taroah stinging nettles is a method of improving the condition of the skin and promoting general health known to all Ommura. When taroah is used in the men's house during ummara initiations by adult men to beat the initiands, it becomes

a wakyera event performed in conjunction with the singing of taroah songs and the staging of taroah mimes. The appropriation of the use of taroah from a publicly known curing remedy to an integral part of the wakyera events and instructions of ummara initiations results from the conditions of its administration in a specific context - in the men's house as part of the ummara initiations - and the wakyera taroah lore - the taroah songs and the taroah mimes - which are used and have developed out of its administration. Taroah use in ummara initiations consists of two related aspects : the beating of the initiands with taroah as a form of discipline to promote their future physical well being and the singing of taroah songs and the staging of taroah mimes. All of these acts are carried out by the adult men on the initiands for the purpose of ensuring their good health, strength, obedience and to give them knowledge through the process of initiation.

The forms of the administration of taroah beatings and taroah mimes are known in their entirety to every Ommura adult male who has participated in ummara initiations over the course of his life. The taroah memeras, which consist of exaggerated mimes of aggressive male sexual behaviour involving the use of taroah, the singing of a taroah song and the chanting of the male warcry, are directed at the subordinate initiands and can be interpreted as a fusion of elements of wakyera taroah use and specifically adult male attributes to generate the message that the use of taroah promotes male physical development and strength. Only initiation specialists know all the words and meanings of the images of large numbers of taroah songs and they instigate and lead in the singing of the songs while the audience of men accompany them. Few of the taroah songs images are based around exclusively male wakyera knowledge of taroah and the majority of them are drawn from aspects of the public use of taroah. The

taroah songs used in ummara initiations vary from village to village, some become obsolete, and new ones are incorporated from neighbouring villages and areas over time. The one factor which remains constant are the conditions of their use in the vainya whereby control over their use by initiation specialists constitutes an inequality in access to items of wakyera knowledge which does not occur in the enactment of taroah beatings and taroah mimes.

9. The Wakyera Ihi sung during Ummara Initiations and the Prohibitions on Acts and Foods to which they refer.

In the following section the wakyera ihi referring to acts and foods prohibited to male initiates which are sung in conditions of secrecy during ummara initiations are analyzed in terms of their use, form and content to illuminate aspects of the relationship between the imposition of prohibitions on the initiates in ummara initiations by adult men, the way in which these prohibitions are articulated through wakyera ihi and the way in which wakyera ihi do not constitute systematic statements about the properties of the acts and foods which account for their prohibition.

Wakyera ihi or songs are sung by the adult men during ummara initiations to impress the initiands with the importance of observing prohibitions on certain acts and foods which are forbidden to them as ummara initiates and as iyavati initiates. The songs are wakyera because they are only ever sung in the context of ummara initiation in the vainya and the prohibited acts and foods are forbidden (a-o-ira) because in the case of acts they are things which men are not supposed to do, or in the case of the foods, are edibles which would damage the health of the initiates if consumed before they are old enough to have married. Virtually identical food prohibitions are imposed on female initiates from the time they are initiated as kam karura in the woman's house and they are made to spit on the fire after each song, but because they are part of female initiation any songs used to convey them are unique to kam karura and any prohibited acts would be expressed in terms of the ideal Ommura female role.

The prohibitions on certain acts and foods for males which apply from the time that they are initiated as ummara until they reach the age of marriage can only be partially enforced by the older men. These

prohibitions, especially those on foods are regularly broken by ummara and iyavati males who are punished only if they are found out. Imposition of these prohibitions therefore constitute an attempt on the part of the older men to exercise control over the youth and it is therefore hardly surprising that the prohibited foods are represented as being damaging to the health and the prohibited acts as being conduct which is unacceptable for adult males. Enforcing these prohibitions, like making youth undergo male initiation is an exercise in corporate adult male authority and punishment for breaking these prohibitions is often carried out on offenders by the men during the staging of male initiations in the vainya. It should be stressed that the food prohibitions are only on eating the forbidden foods and that the act of killing or gathering the a-o-ira foods is encouraged provided that they are handed over to kin of either sex old enough to be permitted to consume them.

There are definite similarities between the use and form of the wakyera songs about prohibitions and the taroah songs sung during ummara initiations. The wakyera songs for the specific prohibited acts and foods forbidden to ummara and iyavati initiates are sung by the adult men in conditions of secrecy in the vainya during ummara initiations and are directed at the ummara initiands who are made to spit on the fire at the end of each song. Everyday songs are sometimes sung to mask the sound of the wakyera songs or the wakyera songs are often sung softly to keep them secret from the women and children somewhere outside the vainya enclosure. The wakyera songs can be sung in any order, the exact number or precise songs sung varies from ummara to ummara and village to village, and songs are often incorporated from neighbouring groups and sung in the dialect or language of origin.

The images about the wakyera songs about prohibited foods and acts are constructed around repetition of the names of and/or aspects of Ummura male knowledge of these things. As with the taroah songs, the

men regard the rhyme and sound of the words as a very important mnemonic aspect of their use. Some of the songs consist merely of the repetition of the names of the subject and other songs have images based around the sounds which the prohibited thing makes. The more complex images of songs describing specific animals and birds are built around male experience of the habits of these creatures as observed when trying to hunt and kill them. After each song is sung, the initiation specialist who has instigated the singing of the particular song will generally explain what prohibited thing the song refers to and the image of the song if it is complex enough to merit elaboration to the initiands after or before the initiands have been made to spit on the fire as acknowledgement that they have heard the song.

The act of singing wakyera songs during ummara initiations about specific things which are prohibited to ummara initiates constitutes, like the staging of male initiations in general, the imposition of the authority and superior knowledge of the adult men on the initiates. The following wakyera song which expresses the role of the initiates in relation to the power and knowledge of the adult men was sung at the start of the wakyera songs in the ummara section of the Moussouri nyako iyavati :

<u>Ne ne na iri-a-ne</u>	'You listen
<u>Eh Aho iri-a-ne</u>	Listen to your father
<u>Aho iri-a-ne</u>	Listen to your father'

A myth was told to the initiands during the wakyera ihi singing of the Asara ummara initiation which explains why bush animals and foods are prohibited to ummara initiates because they originated as old women who were transformed after going through the anus and stomach of an old man. An old woman had been mistreated by her husband so she ran away from him. As she travelled through villages, she was joined by other old women who had also been abused by their husbands. The group of

women came across an old man called Tata Pinaka and when they asked him the way, he opened his anus and they all crawled inside up into his stomach. There was not enough room for all of them and the first old woman's legs stuck out so Tata Pinaka covered them with his barkcloth. When the husbands of the runaway women came looking for them, they asked Tata Pinaka who said he had not seen them, but the husband of the first woman saw his wife's legs sticking out of Tata Pinaka's anus under the barkcloth. The husband shot Tata Pinaka's stomach to pieces and the old women turned into birds, marsupials and all the foods of the bush. The initiates are always cautioned that they must never repeat the wakyera songs to anyone outside the vainya.

Presented below are the wakyera ihi which were sung during the Aaara ummara and some of the wakyera ihi sung during the ummara section of the Moussouri nyako-iyavati;

- a) Forbidden acts - having sexual intercourse with older women, shooting namui kunai grass arrows, throwing down doorwood and hitting dogs.
- b) Forbidden foods - Hivaru marsupials, Evahi rats, Vahi birds, Otak-ye marsupials(2), Horeah marsupials, Raingo mushrooms, the legs and snout of pigs (2), demanding shares in the division of pigmeat, Gorio birds, Vevak-ye marsupials, Vukyera cassowaries, Vukyera eggs, Evari lizards (3), Kendakye birds and Vanti eels.

Fewer songs were sung and less care was taken over their explanations in the ummara section of the Moussouri nyako-iyavati probably because of the advanced age of the initiands and the fact that they would be made iyavati on the following day.

Asara Wakyera ihi

1. Tavai yo nru-ru-aiy (repeated) 'If you do this you will get sick'.

The initiands were warned of the disastrous consequences which would occur, their growth would be stunted and their bodies would waste away, if they should have sexual intercourse with older women. They were told that when they were older the men would tell them the stories and instructions about sex.

2. The next song was about the Hivaru marsupial. Hivaru-oh Hivaru-oh (repeated). The initiands were told that now they were ummara, it was forbidden (a-o-ira) for them to eat Hivaru and how the words of the song were sung by a Hivaru as it ran away from a man who was trying to shoot it. They were told to spit on the fire after each song.

3. Evahi-yo Evahi-yo (repeated). The initiands were told not to eat Evahi rats. They were told that when a man was hunting rats, he found the rat's house but the rat urinated on it and ran away singing this song.

4. The next song was for the Vahi bird (brush turkey) and the initiands were told: 'When you walk into the bush with your mother and you see this bird it flies away and makes this song'. Se-ve-ve-to Se-ve-ve-to  
Se-ve-ve-to Naroti-po (it flies away) Eyamua muai (sound its wings make).

5. The Otak-ye marsupial called Una-Una in the Konkonbila dialect and Wananga in the Auration dialect, lives in Dori trees. The marsupial is referred to as Una Una in the song and I was told that the song was in the Konkonbila dialect.

Una Una Dori-oh, Ai-u-rondio Evan-de Airondio (repeated)

The initiands were told not to eat Otakye marsupials.

6. The image of the song for the Horeah marsupial was based around the words nyafei ('old man') and rieva ('to shoot')

Nya-pai-yo Nya-pai-yo Iri-reva, Nya-pai-yo Nya-pai-yo Iri-reva,

Nya-pai-yo Nya-pai-yo. It was explained that when an old man wanted to shoot a Horeah marsupial, it ran away singing: 'I am an old man, I am an old man, I wanted to shoot you but you ran away'.

7. The song for Raingo mushrooms was: Raingo-ne Raingo Raingo (repeated). The initiands were told if they found mushrooms, not to eat them but to give them to their mothers.
8. The image of the song for Nramui ('kunai grass') is about the movement of kunai grass in the wind. Bevam-be-ve Bevam-be-ve (repeated). The initiands were told not to shoot toy arrows made of kunai at things.
9. Bovo and Bova are names for the uri or ancestor pig Ovandina Osama is the son of the pig, and Aupi Aupi describes the act of rooting in the ground. Bovo-ah Bova-ne Bovo-ah Bova-ne Ovadina Osama Vata Aupi Aupi. The initiands were told: 'The pig roots in the ground and eats worms and other insects, you cannot eat the nose, leg or hand of pig for this reason. The pig always digs in the ground but never makes a garden, wherever it digs the bush always grows'. I was told that the nose and legs of the pig were a-o-ira to initiates because pigs rooted for and ate rubbish with those parts, and that if they were to eat them, they would stick in their stomachs.
10. The next song was for the sharing of pig meat and the initiands were told that if their father killed a pig (wara) they must not ask him for the skin (kyao-hi) or meat (mati) but must wait until he gives them some. To-am-be means 'cut and give'. Wara mati to-am-be. Wara kyao-hi to-am-be. Narotipo Eyamai Yamai (repeated).
11. Apara is doorwood, the logs of wood piled up in front of the doorway of a hut to barricade the entrance of the hut when owners are away. The song for doorwood is: Eni Oh Rausay Eni Oh Rausay (repeated). The initiands were told that if their mothers were away and the door was blocked with timbers, they must not throw them down. They must take them down one at a time and pile them up on the ground.
12. Naro-vatu-pe Oh ka-oh O-oh-a a-ye-ah ka-oh o-oh-a a-ye-ah (repeated). The initiands were told: 'If you are ummara you must never hit a dog. If you do, it will make a noise like this song. Look after a dog well, if you go into the bush it will kill marsupials for you.'

13. Gorio (name of bird) Ru-me (noise bird makes) Ru-me Goria Goria Ru-me Ru-me Titembaroiya (bird wants to fly away) Bavia (flies) Bavia Ma-re (tree branch) Zorion Tsu Tsu Nrin-re (noise made by bird). The initiands were told: 'The Gorio or Horata bird is a bird which sits on the arepa tree. When you want to shoot it, it flies off to another tree and makes this song. If you kill this bird don't eat it or you will become thin and waste away. Take it to your mother, sisters, friends.'

14. The image of the song for the Vevak-ye marsupial is based around the name of the marsupial and the sound Kupa Kupa which its tail makes beating the leaves and grass as it walks.

Vekwayo Vekwayo Kupa Kupa Yavi Yau Yo

Vekwayo Kupa Kupa Yavi Yao Yo.

The initiands were told that the Vevak-ye marsupial makes this song and that if they killed one, they should bring it to adult men and not cook and eat it in the bush or they would become thin and die,

15. A second song about the Otakye marsupial was sung, the image of which is constructed around the word Umeno ('to walk slowly'). The Otakye walks slowly and lives in a hole in the ground. The song was said to have originated in Auration or Konkonbila.

Umeno Umeno Ume-a-me Umeno, Umeno Umeno, Ume-a-me Umeno

The initiands were told that they must not eat any Otakye marsupials which they killed or they would become like the Otakye and walk slowly. They were told that when men wanted to kill an Otakye it ran away singing this song.

16. The song for the Vukyera cassowary uses the secret name for the cassowary (Imono). Imono Nranrai (cassowary washed itself) Imono Nranrai Ovara Nrak-ye (shakes water off self) Kaw-ke (he ran away) Kaw-ke.

The initiands were told that when men wanted to kill a cassowary, the cassowary washed himself in the water, then jumped, shook the water off himself and ran away making this song.

17. The wakyera song for cassowary eggs uses the word Imunora (cassowary) and Ra-ak-ye which means 'to lay eggs'. Imunora Ra-ak-ye Imunora ra-ak-ye (repeated twice more). The initiands were told that it was forbidden for them to eat cassowary eggs and that if they found any they must give them to their fathers or mothers.

18. The initiands were told never to eat Evari - a small freshwater lizard which lives in the Lamari river. Evario Sa, Evario Sa Evario Sa.

19. The initiands were cautioned never to eat the Kendakye, a blue coloured bird. Kendakyo Kendakyo Lamari Rumbai-ne (flies over the water) Repeated four times.

#### Moussouri Wakyera Ihi

In the ummara part of the Moussouri nyako iyavati, fewer wakyera ihi were sung and explained to the initiands than in the Asara ummara initiation. This was, perhaps, because of the advanced age of the initiands and the fact that the ummara initiation was being performed as the necessary preamble to the following iyavati initiation.

A wakyera ihi was sung for the Vanti eel composed around the image of the Vanti jumping out of the water so its head pops up: Yoma Aye Yoma Aye Yoni Yoma Aye (repeated)

Two wakyera ihi were sung for the Evari, a freshwater lizard which lives in the Lamari river. The first song was: Evari Mo-ka Evari Mo-po (repeated). The second song for the Evari was explained by Murabe as being the song which the Evari sings as it sits on the Taupupu rock at the side of the Lamari river.

Evari mai yokeh yawkeh, Varima yawkeh yawkeh

Evari mai yokeh. Eh yoma yawkeh. Evari mai yokeh

Eh Lamari-ma Gowseh. Eh Eh Varima Yawkeh. Evari mai yokeh.

The two different songs about the Evari sung during the Moussouri ummara like the two different songs about the Otake marsupial sung during the Asara ummara are examples of how the images of songs about

wakyera things are autonomous self-referential compositions.

A wakyera ihi for pigs was sung about the Uri pig:

Vuvu (root) Ah Vuvoneh(root) Vuvu (root) Ah.Vuvoneh (root) Ovandaira  
 (1st daughter of Uri pig) Nosama (mother). Mata (ground) Awpi (root)  
Awpi (root) Nragu-dara (2nd daughter of Uri pig) Nosama (mother)  
Mata Awpi Awpi.

Wakyera ihi refers to acts and foods which are prohibited to ummara and iyavati initiates and after each song is sung, some explanation of what prohibition each song refers to is given and the initiands are made to spit on the fire as acknowledgement that they have heard the song. Each song consists of a self-referential image referring to a particular prohibited act or food composed, according to the degree of its complexity, of a repetition of the name of the object or thing to which it refers, words describing the sound which it makes, or male knowledge of the habits of the particular animal or bird as observed when hunting them. The particular songs sung, their number and sequence varies from ummara to ummara and village to village. Despite the fact that in use the songs are used to emphasize prohibitions on acts and foods, the singing of wakyera songs in ummara initiations does not constitute a systematic exposition of every prohibited act or item. The songs would appear to constitute wakyera compositions, a kind of wakyera poetry which is good to sing but comprehensive knowledge of which is restricted to initiation experts. Occasionally, as in the case of songs for the Otake marsupial in the Asara ummara or the Evari lizard in the Moussouri ummara, two different wakyera ihi for the same thing will be sung during the course of a single ummara initiation. As with taroah songs, initiation specialists who have an extensive knowledge of the songs instigate and lead the singing accompanied by the adult men. Although the older men know the tunes and words of the wakyera ihi from hearing and singing them repeatedly in the context of ummara initiations they very often do not

know what the precise references of all their words are, if this is relevant, what the explanations of the song image is, or if they have been incorporated from neighbouring groups, as is often the case, from what dialect they originate.

The only reason given for the great majority of prohibitions on the acts and foodstuffs is that they constitute improper conduct or that they will damage the growth and general health of the initiates. It is not forbidden for the initiates to collect or kill the prohibited edibles as long as they give them to adults rather than eat them. Initiates often eat prohibited foods in the bush but if they are found out they are punished by the men. The only true characteristic which the prohibited foods have in common is that the majority of them are undomesticated, bush (aquao) foods but the only myth in any way explaining why they are forbidden is about how they originated as old women transformed after passing through the anus and into the stomach of Tata Pinaka rather than about the undomesticated dangers of nature. The food taboos for male initiates are virtually identical to those for female initiates but the way in which they are demarcated in ummara through the singing of wakyera ihi is an integral part of male secret initiation knowledge and practice.

#### 10. The Wakyera Myths told during Iyavati and Ummara Initiations

An analysis of the wakyera ('secret') myths told during Ommura iyavati and ummara male initiations reveals important aspects of the male ideology which they are used to transmit. Although it is a detailed textual analysis, the predictable reductionism of the Levi-Straussian approach is avoided in an attempt to illuminate cultural specificities. To a certain extent it follows the lead of Meggitt (1976) who has written about how the ideals and realities of social relationships can be deciphered from Western Enga stories. Comparing the Ommura myths to those of their near neighbours as described by other anthropologists, one finds neither the ancestral creation myth cycle of Jugumishanta and Morofonu reported for the Kamano, Usurufa, Jate and Fore (Berndt 1965 : 80) or the conceptual framework of binary opposites provided by the mythical Sun and Moon reported for the Baruya (Godelier 1977 : 200).

Wakyera myths (uri) specific to each stage of initiation are told during both ummara and iyavati initiations as part of the secret initiation instructions. Differences in the themes and contents of ummara and iyavati myths parallel the differences in the general instructions given to initiands in these different stages of male initiation. Myths are used as ummara and iyavati myths precisely because they are in some way a part of the instructions for an ummara or iyavati initiation and are only ever told in the appropriate context of the staging of the relevant degree of initiation. The relatively few myths told during ummara initiations are used to elaborate on acts which are prohibited or validate prohibitions on foods and acts or the therapeutic use of taroah. The narrating of wakyera myths is given a much greater prominence in iyavati initiations where iyavati myths are used to stress continuity with traditional customs and to develop themes of the relations between men and women from an adult male perspective.

The extent of and distribution of knowledge of ummara and iyavati wakyera myths is similar in practice to knowledge of other aspects of Ommura male secret initiation lore. Most adult men know the basic plots of the myths told at the ummara and iyavati initiations they have attended but only men who specialize in recounting these myths in the context of initiations know all the details and intricacies of plot and the songs which may accompany the narration of a particular myth and serve to cue specific episodes. When a myth containing songs is narrated during an initiation, the adult men present follow the lead of the narrator and accompany him in the singing of the songs, as is the case with other initiation instruction in the form of songs. Wakyera myths are recounted in ummara and iyavati initiations as a way of lecturing the initiates to give them knowledge. The person narrating the myth speaks directly to the initiands who are made to spit on the fire at the conclusion of the telling of each myth, just as is done with the ummara wakyera ihi demarcating prohibited foods and acts. Myths told during ummara and iyavati initiations vary from village to village and initiation to initiation, although the initiation myths of neighbouring villages are known to most initiation specialists. The myths told during a particular ummara or iyavati initiation are selected by the initiation specialists out of a repertoire of known myths and the criteria of selection for narration is only that some wakyera myths should be told.

Both the myths and the mythical ancestors who appear in them are called uri. An interesting feature of wakyera myths and Ommura myths in general is the extent to which precise geographical locations are given for the events which take place in them. The physical environment of the past has the same land marks as the physical environment of the present.

The telling of wakyera myths features most prominently in iyavati initiations and before proceeding to present the plots and analyses of

of individual iyavati myths it is useful to describe general similarities in their themes. Some of the iyavati myths explain the origin of prohibited areas (pwata), iyavati customs and how the uri performed iyavati initiations on their relatives. A myth explains how pwata red earth areas were made by an uri to make men afraid, lists their locations, and provides a cue for the initiators to explain the dangers of contact with pwata. In one myth, an elder brother turns into a pig which is killed so there will be the necessary pigmeat for his brother's iyavati initiation, and in another myth, an elder brother invents the customary iyavati decoration of a pair of pig's tusks which he puts through his brothers noses while initiating them. Several of the myths stress the responsibility which elder male relatives have to initiate younger male relatives as iyavati in the absence of a father. In the initiator turns into pigmeat myth and the invention of pigs tusks as an iyavati decoration myth, an elder brother initiates his younger brother(s) and in the myth of Kyavorani, Kyavorani is initiated iyavati by his grandfather. There is a myth about the uri pig who detaches his tusks, paired tusks worn through the nose being the customary iyavati decoration, and has them kill a man who is hunting him.

Other iyavati myths are concerned with sexual and marital relations between men and women, a subject prominent in the instructions given to iyavati initiands. In the myth of the Kyopera Nrhaise, two men are sexually attracted to the Wild Yam Woman, one man cuts a vagina in her and copulates with her, the other man fights with him over marrying her. He turns her into a woman and departs, the other man marries her, she has a child and then she goes off back to the bush. In the myth of Nuvana and Wapana, the boy Nuvana is stolen from his village by the older girl Wapana who initiates him through sexual experience into an adult male role, takes him back to her hamlet where her mother seduces him, and this incest results in both women having children. Nuvana leaves them to populate suitable sites for habitation by throwing down

fire making rope and eii beans. Kyavorani in the Kyavorani myth sexually molests girls but when he acquires a wife after he has been made iyavati he abuses her, neglects his responsibilities to her as a husband, and turns into a tree. In the myth of the childless couple, the man and wife travel from place to place having sexual intercourse, but the wife never conceives a child.

In terms of quantitative exposition of adult male secret knowledge, ummara wakyera myths are much less complex in theme and content than iyavati wakyera myths because they are used to transmit instructions deemed suitable for ummara initiands who are by definition junior in age rank and knowledge. The relatively few myths told during ummara initiation are used to elaborate on prohibitions or the therapeutic use of taroah and the telling of myths is greatly subordinate to the singing of wakyera ihi and taroah songs. In the Taupupu myth, the Taupupu stone rolls over and traps some children because they have been playing in its cave and marking its walls and all but two of the children have died by the time that the stone rolls back when threatened with a stone razor. This is an interesting example of the difference between ummara and iyavati myths because although the message of the Taupupu myth is that the ummara initiands should never play in caves because this is dangerous, the precise nature of the danger - that adult men store poisons and other magical substances in caves - is not told to them.

### Iyavati Myths

#### Kyopera Nrhaise ('The Wild Yam Woman')

The wakyera uri of Kyopera Nrhaise, the Wild Yam Woman, was told by Murabe during the iyavati part of the Moussouri nyako-iyavati and included two songs. In this myth, two sexually aroused men try to have intercourse with the Wild Yam Woman but cannot because she has no vagina. The second man cuts a vagina in her with his stone razor,

successfully has intercourse with her, the two men quarrel over her, the second man turns her into a woman by putting bamboo arrows and razors wrapped in red tankert in her vagina, and then he returns to his hamlet leaving the first man to marry her. Kyopera Nrhaise lives as a woman, has a son, and then wanders off. The myth treats sex in a very explicit way. The men are overcome with the urge to copulate with the Yam Woman and aggressively bang on her body with their penises looking for a vagina. The cutting of a vagina in Kyopera Nrhaise by a man is the act which effects her transformation from yam to woman with the addition of an act of male magic. The two men in the myth compete over the yam woman like men compete over women, Kararakia opens her up and has intercourse with her, the two men fight over the right to marry her, Kararakia turns her into a woman and leaves her for Kyondera-numu to marry and she has a son. The nature of Kyopera Nrhaise as a woman is that she comes from the wild, men are attracted to her, penetrate and domesticate her, Kyondera-numu has a son by her, but after living as a wife and mother, she reverts to the wild clad in woman's skirts which she has made and goes off again. 'Kyopera Nrhaise'.

Kyopera Nrhaise came from the direction of Owena travelling from place to place, spreading her leaves everywhere, putting her bottom in the ground, and making a strong smell, and although the people came to see her at all the places where she stopped, they were not good to her. She went to Vai-o-te, put down her bottom, spread her leaves and her smell went everywhere.

The uri Kyondera-numu smelled her smell from Maniokira and intoxicated by it, ran all the way to Kyopera Nrhaise. He jumped on her body and he banged her body all day and night. The sound travelled and a man from Arokyera called Kararakia heard it. He took his bow and some quatema bamboo bladed arrows, ran off towards the sound, collected nronda stone razors, two maru-hi red tankert leaves

two papura leaves and a va-tana white sugar cane, all of which he put in his string bag, and ran until he came upon Kyondera-nrumu stuck to the body of Kyopera Nrhaise. He also stuck to Kyopera Nrhaise and the two men's penises made a lot of noise. When Kyondera-nrumu got up to find some vegetables to cook, Kararakia cut a hole in Kyopera Nrhaise with his nronda stone razor and slept on her stomach. Hearing the sudden quiet, Kyondera-nrumu returned, found Kararakia asleep, tried to move him by putting hot vegetables on his skin, and then they argued about who would marry Kyopera Nrhaise.

Kararakia took his penis out of Kyopera Nrhaise and washed his skin with papura leaves and sugar cane juice. Then he put his karuka bark cape, his quatema arrows and two nronda razors wrapped in red tankert leaves in Kyopera Nrhaise's vagina (vavu). Kyondera-nrumu thanked Kararakia for opening up Kyopera Nrhaise for him and Kararakia ran back to his village.

Kyopera Nrhaise became like a woman and Kyondera-nrumu took her back to his village, married her and they had a son, called Kyatu - marekya. One day she decided to go away to Markya so she made two grass skirts, wrapped them around herself and off she went. Kyondera-nrumu sung two songs as he watched her depart (sung by Murabe and the men).

#### Nuvana and Wapana

The wakyera uri of Nuvana and Wapana, including the singing of the great number of wakyera songs specific to incidents in the myth, was told by Murabe during the iyavati ceremony of the Moussouri nyako - iyavati. The myth consists of two parts : the first part in which the girl Wapana steals the boy Nuvana from his village, initiates him through sexual intercourse and instruction into an adult male role on the way back to her hamlet, and is forced to share him as a husband with her mother, and the second part in which Nuvana is a culture hero

who populates village sites with men by throwing fire making rope and eii beans on the sites from the tops of mountains.

The first part of the myth presents an exaggerated representation of Ommura male attitudes to women. The mother Kaymoto and daughter Wapana who live alone by themselves without, but in sexual need of men, are in contrast to Nuvana a nakyo pre-ummara boy who lives with his mother and father. Wapana captures and steals the boy Nuvana from his family in much the same way that men occasionally steal women (mbore nrhaise) by taking them away from their parents without buying them with brideprice. The two women in the myth are portrayed as being sexually insatiable in their demands on Nuvana and although the wanton character of the women is exaggerated in the myth for pornographic and instructive purposes, it conforms to the Ommura male stereotype of women as being inherently libidinous and greedy for food and sex. All sexual activity in the myth is instigated by the women.

The problem of incest occurs in the myth because both the daughter and the mother have sexual intercourse with Nuvana and conceive children by him. Wapana, who is older than Nuvana, steals him from his parents and then Wapana's mother steals Nuvana from Wapana. The incestuous nature of the relationship of the two women to Nuvana as a male sexual object are clearly stated when the two women quarrel over him and Kaymoto says that Nuvana is her husband and Wapana's father and Wapana replies that Nuvana is her husband and Kaymoto's son-in-law. During iyavati initiations, the initiates are cautioned by adult men of the dangers of sleeping with older women, especially the wives of their adult male relatives for the obvious reason that the older women would generally be the wives of adult men.

Wapana initiates Nuvana, a nakyo pre-ummara boy, into an adult male role on the journey from his village to her home by answering his questions about things in the environment in terms of their relationship to 'man's

penis and bottom' and provides him with a great deal of sexual experience. She carried Nuvana on her back and he refers to her as Nyako - 'Older Sister' when asking her questions. Wapana's explanations for the things which they encounter wandering through the bush consist not only of identifying the things but of sometimes explaining them in terms of metaphors for male genitalia or as animals killed and eaten by males or foods gathered and eaten by males. Each incident and question/answer explanation is preceded by a specific wakyera song sung by the adult men led by Murabe which demarcates it and is generally followed by an act of sexual intercourse instigated by Wapana. Before they reach her home, Wapana cuts a man's uruma wooden headrest for Nuvana and makes him walk in front of her with his toy bow and arrows as men walk in front of their wives.

The myth as told during the Moussouri iyavati initiation contains thirty three wakyera songs each demarcating an incident in the myth. In the first version of the myth, I was told, the sexual instruction given by Wapana to Nuvana on their way through the bush and the songs referring to the things he questioned her about were omitted and the problem of incest did not arise because although mother and daughter quarrelled over Nuvana, only Kaymoto took him as her husband and had a baby. The songs, incidents, Nuvana's questions, Wapana's answers and the acts of sexual intercourse she instigates occupy a major part of the wakyera myth, constituting a male view of male sexuality acted out by the female Wapana who is a creation of male fantasy. Every question Nuvana asks about the things they encounter in the bush is answered by Wapana in terms of its relationship to the actions or habits of 'man's penis and bottom' and is generally followed by sexual intercourse. In this part of the myth, the male genitalia are the defining characteristics of men and the things which Nuvana asks questions about are explained in terms of their similarities to male genitalia or as foods hunted or gathered by male genitalia to eat. Through the numerous songs,

sexual incidents and explanations which occur as Wapana and Nuvana progress through the bush, a series of associations are made about male sexual power and food habits. The attention and detail taken over this subject in the myth leads one to conclude that male images of adult male sexuality constitute an important area of wakyera initiation knowledge.

In the latter part of the myth Nuvana populates village sites by standing on the tops of mountains and throwing down fire making ropes and eii winged beans on suitable sites and people and fires appear on them simultaneously. Nuvana's provision of the means of making fire and eii beans as food leads to the habitation by man of the sites he has selected. Having summoned all the people to an ihi or singing and having built the customary large fire, he falls asleep and runs away when he wakes up to find them there. In some versions of the myth, he sings a song for his stone axe when it has worn out before disappearing in the direction of the sea.

#### Nuvana and Wapana

Kaymoto and her daughter lived by themselves at Vona. One day while in the bush collecting rope for string bags, Wapana saw smoke from a fire and returned home to get food and strong rope before setting out to investigate what people were making the fire.

She went to Hovi-vira Mavi-vira and hid from the people who were burning a new garden. When a n ako (pre-ummara boy) looking for a toy arrow approached, she caught him, tied him up and ran away with him into the bush, saying to herself that he was her husband (ni vatie).

In the following part of the myth songs were sung by Murabe accompanied by the men which describe and demarcate the events which follow after the singing of the particular song. After each song is sung, serving as a cue for the events which follow it, Nuvana asks

Wapana the question 'Older sister, what's that?' (Nako mie navaneh) and Wapana gives him an answer. In the case of instances which concern the sexual characteristics or habits of men she replies by using the expression 'man's penis and bottom' (oraise eh nra-ah), a way of characterizing men in terms of their sexual parts.

Wapana carries Nuvana on her back through the bush.

1. Song for jumping on Yava-ve tree. Nuvana questions. Wapana gives no answer.
2. Song for Viho-ah bird. Question. Answer: 'It is a Viho-ah bird flying away'.
3. Song for Hera bird sitting on Taura grass. Question. Answer: 'It's only a bird.'
4. Song for jumping on water. Question. Answer: 'It's water that we are jumping on.'
5. Song for jumping on water. Question. Answer: Wapana said: 'Man's penis and bottom do like this. I came to get you because I wanted to do this' and she copulated with him.
6. Song for fish in the river. Question. Answer: 'Man's penis and bottom are like this.' Copulate.
7. Song for Vanti eel in a stream which runs away. Question. Answer: 'The Vanti looks like your penis and bottom running away.' Copulate.
8. Song for Wa'akyo banana tree. Question. Answer: 'Wa'akyo is like man's penis and bottom.' Copulate.
9. Song for Otera-oh (red) flowers on Ponara tree. Question. Answer: 'It is the same colour as man's penis and bottom.' Copulate.
10. Song for Yavuro grass. Question. Answer: 'It is like what grows on man's penis and bottom.' Copulate.
11. Song for Maranda rope growing around an Arepa tree. Question. Answer: 'Man's penis is like the rope going around the Arepa tree.'
12. Song for Kavuro mouse (brown fur) climbing on Tawra pitpit (where it nests). Question. Answer: 'Man's penis and bottom kill this mouse

- and eat it.' Copulate.
13. Song for fart. Wapana put Nuvana on her head and farted (llara nruva). Question. Answer: 'Man's penis and bottom defecate like this.' Copulate.
  14. Song for the reflection of the moon in the water of a lake. Question. Answer: 'Moon is like a man's penis and bottom.' (No copulation).
  15. Song for Hivaru marsupial eating bamboo roots which runs away. Question. Answer: 'It is only a marsupial, man's penis and bottom kill Hivaru and eat it.' Copulate.
  16. Song for another Hivaru by a river who runs away. Question. Answer: 'Hivaru's tail is like your penis, it runs away.' They ran away. (No copulation.)
  17. Song. Going into a newly made garden, they saw a Kya-we rat climbing up a Kyatari tree. Question. Answer: 'It is a Kya-we rat, man's penis and bottom kill and eat it.' Copulate.
  18. Song for Mukyarih mushrooms growing on a piece of rotten log. Question. Answer: 'Man's penis and bottom gather these mushrooms and cook them and eat them.' Copulate.
  19. Song for Vatota marsupial climbing up a tree. Question. Answer: 'Man's penis and bottom kill Vatota and eat it.' Copulate.
  20. Song for Urora shooting star in the sky. Question. Answer: 'It is like man's penis and bottom, it goes away.' (No copulation.)
  21. Song for Hilai tree. Question. Answer: 'Hilai tree is like man's penis and bottom.' Copulate.
  22. Song for Ihu tree (on which grow small betelnuts called capebibi in pidgin). Question. Answer: 'Man's penis and bottom eat Ihu.' Copulate. It was nearly morning.
  23. Song for To-amu bird singing at dawn. Question. Answer: 'A To-amu bird is making this noise, man's penis and bottom kill and eat it.' Copulate.
  24. Song for Mari-uh string bag rope because they had arrived at the

- place where Wapana had gathered it before. Both slept and urinated and defecated.
25. Nuvana sang two songs of sorrow because Wapana had stolen him from his home and family. Then Wapana carried him off.
26. Song for Vanreyo flower. Question. Answer: 'It is the same colour as man's penis and bottom.' Copulate.
27. Uruma. Wapana cuts an uruma wooden headrest from a tree for Nuvana (Song.)
28. Wapana gave Nuvana back his toy bow and arrows and made him walk in front of her. Wapana sung a song about how she had taken him from his village, had copulated with him along the way, and was now bringing him to her home.
29. Wapana sung two songs because her eii winged beans were flowering and growing well in her garden.

Kaymoto, Wapana's mother, saw them approach and said Nuvana was her husband (ni vatie). The mother and daughter quarrelled over him, the mother saying that he was her husband and Wapana's father, and Wapana saying that he was her husband and her mother's son-in-law. Then Wapana went off to get food from her garden, her mother copulated with Nuvana and Wapana was very unhappy when she came back and found them (song) but there was nothing that she could do.

The mother and daughter each gave birth to a son and they all lived there growing food and raising pigs. Nuvana lived there a long time until he tired of it. He got some bundles of iyara (bamboo ropes used for making fire) and some eii winged beans which he put in bamboo containers. He went to the tops of the mountains of Vaihi-nramuta, Okarira, Vahata, Reindu and Eturata, and from the top of each mountain he threw iyara rope and eii beans down on good sites for habitation, and fire and people appeared. He went to Vetarata, built a hut, called all the neighbouring people to an ihi singsing, built a fire, and fell asleep using his axe as a headrest. When the people came and made ihi he ran

off with his axe into the bush. Singing a song, he ran off down to the sea.

### Kyavorani

(Version told by Muraba. Other versions told by Bai-ke and Anno).

The myth of Kyavorani is about a man who turns into a tree to escape his wife. I was told that the point of the myth was that men should not be afraid, like Kyavorani, to marry and accept the responsibilities of looking after a wife. Kyavorani lives alone with his grandfather. He sexually molests some girls from a village, and tells them that they belong to him. He steals (mbore) them because he has not paid brideprice for them. The girls report their shaming to their fathers who summon all the males to the men's house and question them to find out the identity of Kyavorani, but the males all reply that they are relatives of the girls, establishing the fact that Kyavorani is an outsider. While this is going on, Kyavorani and his grandfather sit in the darkness of their hut. They don't even have a fire. Kyavorani's grandfather makes him iyavati (thereby affirming the importance and tradition of this custom) by making the appropriate decorations for him and sending him off to get the necessary bird feathers and right kind of wood for a shield. Kyavorani sets off on a journey having been initiated, and somehow - all versions of the myth are unclear about this - acquires a wife. Kyavorani mistreats his wife, abandons her and turns into a Hilai tree. His iyavati decorations revert to their original forms; the feathers turn back into a cassowary and the shield back into a tree. Kyavorani refuses to turn back into a man despite entreaties from his wife and her parents. Kyavorani is mature enough to play with marriageable girls and to have been initiated iyavati by his grandfather but he turns into a tree to escape his wife, thereby shirking his adult male responsibilities. Initiands are lectured during iyavati initiations about their duties towards their wives.

Kyavorani

The boy Kyavorani lived alone with his grandfather. One day he came upon some girls digging in a garden and asked them who their grass skirts, barkcloths and parts of their bodies were owned by, telling them that they belonged to him. He touched their vaginas (vatas) and said they are mine, they belong to Kyavorani (he steals them).

The girls told their fathers and mothers about how he had touched their bodies saying that they belonged to Kyavorani and said that he had made them feel shame. (kyo-nrinro). Their fathers cut a lot of firewood and summoned all the men to the vainya. Everyone came to the vainya and the fathers of the girls complained and asked all the boys in the men's house who Kyavorani was. All those questioned said that they were relatives of the girls, either fathers (ova), brothers (nakyava) uncles (ninauva) or grandfathers (nra-ova). Kyavorani and his grandfather were not there. They were sitting in their hut in the dark - they had no fire.

In the morning, Kyavorani's grandfather sent him off to get cassowary (vukhyera) neck and tail feathers and apandi rapuhi longtail feathers by plucking them from the living birds, a tunara stick to attach them to for a decoration, and to cut an u-oma tree for wood to make a shield (kai-ke). His grandfather decorated Kyavorani as an iyavati initiate with the clothing which he had made for him, gave him a shield decorated with the bird feathers attached to the tunara stick and Kyavorani went off.

He was followed by a woman, his wife. He left his wife and possessions on the top of a mountain. His shield turned back into an u-oma tree and the vukyera feathers turned into a cassowary which ran away. Kyavorani went off and became a Hilai tree. After sleeping, his wife followed his footprints to the Hilai tree and decided it must be her husband (in one version, she cuts it and it bleeds). She went

and got her parents and they talked to the Hilai tree but it didn't hear them. This is why there are so many Hilai trees at Hilai Ora mountain, Hab'ina. Song: Kyavorani Nranre Tiavao Tiavao Nina Ninai Tiavo Tiavo.

#### Myth of the Origin of Pwata

Pwata are areas located on the upper slopes of valleys where the earth is red in colour. No one is supposed to drink from streams which flow through pwata, men do not eat food while in a pwata, and women never venture into pwata or eat food from pwata. Any breach of these prohibitions is said to cause illness. Pwata red earth areas are particularly dangerous to women. Men who are jealous of women they are having affairs with, generally because the woman is about to marry somebody else or because she is already married to somebody else, induce the woman to have sexual intercourse with them in a pwata with the result that the woman becomes extremely ill. When the myth about the origin of pwata is narrated, the iyavati initiands are told of the dangers of having sexual intercourse with women in pwata.

The pwata myth explains the origin of the pwata as areas which were made by an uri mythical ancestor to be dangerous to men and women and provides a list of all the pwata in the area.

Quara-neti-kyao-va lived at Apo-pukira-varuva with his two wives Teotai and Nanatai. They collected food and tied up ropes and went off because Quara-neti-kyao-va had decided to make the people afraid. He made pwata at Aurora-taquira, at Tavekya-aw-ah Tavenara (Suwaira), Nrotu-aha and Tutikyavana (Obura), Saronu Manurira (Kurunumbaira), Ovara (Asara), Puatera (Anima), Nywenratzeh (Ahea), and then he went to Amavara (Hab'ina) and went into the stone.

Aipora-rata the Uri Pig (Told by Murabe)

Wild boars are the largest and strongest animals in the bush and a pair of pig's tusks are worn point upwards through the nose by iyavati initiates as a decoration which denotes their status. When men come to hunt and kill the ancestor uri pig Aipora-rata, he detaches his tusks and having been instructed by him these tusks kill a man. Through the myth, the iyavati decoration of pig's tusks worn upwards through the nose take on an added association of strength and power because of the way in which Aipora-rata's similarly detached tusks kill a man by their own volition on his instructions. Aipora-rata puts a taroah leaf in his mouth before setting off on his great run; the taroah eating giving him strength and making a parallel about the taroah use of strong pigs and strong men.

The pig Aipora-rata lived in Vu-a-aira. When many men from Barabuna came to shoot him he took out his two tusks (arai; 'teeth'). A man shot the pig on the forehead and Aipora-rata chased him. His two tusks got up and killed the man as Aipora-rata had instructed them. The pig put a taroah leaf in his mouth and ran away through Aqurata to Nundohaira, to Burokhyira, to Sausaura, through Omaura, through Taira-ira to Kainantu, to Raipinka, through Baiora and Okapa to Apairara, to Tukyupura (Pinata) and went inside that place.

Myth of the Childless Couple (Told by Aquveh of Asara)

The myth of the childless couple who travelled from place to place having sexual intercourse in an attempt to have a child, but never succeeded would appear to be a sex education myth about infertility. The couple try to have a child by having sexual intercourse in different places and at different times but the wife never gets pregnant.

Kaywaito and his wife lived near Arau but decided to travel. They went to Osarora, ate food and had sexual intercourse and they went to Antandara and copulated. He told his wife that because they had no

children, they would go to other places and try and see if she became pregnant. They went to Suwaira and copulated, and they went to Obura and copulated but there was no baby in his wife's stomach and they went to Andokyaova cave near Asara and copulated. They decided to stay there for a long time but Kaywaito's wife never became pregnant and they died there.

Myth of the Elder Brother who became a pig to provide pigmeat for his brother's iyavati. (Aquveh of Asara).

The myth about the elder brother who becomes a pig and has his brother shoot him so that there will be pigmeat for their younger brother's initiation is a custom myth which emphasizes by reference to an extreme incident located in the mythical past, the importance and necessity of having pigs to kill and eat as food for any iyavati initiation. This myth and the myth about the origin of pig's tusks as iyavati decorations which follows indicate that in the absence of senior male relatives, the eldest brother should take upon himself the responsibility of initiating his younger brothers.

Three brothers lived in Vainamata. The two eldest brothers put the youngest in the vainya and made ihi for four nights. They realized that they had no pig to kill and eat so the eldest brother told the second eldest brother that he would go into the bush and become (tuero) a pig. When the second brother went to the bush he found a big pig with upright tusks and some small pigs. The first brother, the largest pig, told his brother to shoot him but the second brother shot the small pigs. The second brother did not want to kill his eldest brother, but the first brother was insistent, so eventually he killed him and carried the pigs back to the vainya. He told his younger brother that they were making him iyavati and had no pigs so their eldest brother had turned into a pig, and he had killed him. They cooked their elder brother, the second brother dressed the younger brother in iyavati decorations,

and then they cried for their dead brother. They made iyavati in this way and we men from Lamari got the custom from them. Our ancestors did it and we do it.

Myth of the Man who invented Pig's Tusks as an Iyavati decoration

(Told by Aquveh of Asara).

The myth about the elder brother who invented a major iyavati decoration when he put pairs of pig's tusks through the noses of his three brothers while initiating them iyavati is another custom myth. Unlike the myth of Aipora-rata the uri pig, in this myth, pig's tusks are not directly equated with the strength and power of pigs but are used only because they are decorative objects to put through the initiands noses.

At Kyotaira mountain, an elder brother (sakyava) tied together the hands of each of his three younger brothers, cut a lot of firewood, and put them in the vainya to make them iyavati. He placed them near the fire and thought that they didn't look good so he rubbed pig grease on their skins but he wasn't satisfied and had nothing to put in their noses. He found some pig's tusks in his string bag and got some u-oma pitpit from the bush to join them together. He put a pair of pig's tusks point upwards in each of his brother's noses and both he and his brothers liked the way they looked. When their friends and brothers came with food for the iyavati they were very impressed with the look of the pig's teeth and decided to do this for their iyavati initiations. We use this fashion for iyavati and this man Kyao-tai was the first man to do this.

Ummara myths

The different myths told for ummara and iyavati initiations reflect in their themes and contents the differences between the kinds of wakyera instructions given to ummara initiands who are young boys and to iyavati

initiands who at one stage higher in initiation rank are older, and have generally reached puberty. There are fewer ummara myths than iyavati myths and the ummara myths are less complex in terms of theme and content because ummara initiands obviously know less about the male view of the world than iyavati initiands and the adult men control initiation knowledge in this way.

Ummara myths tend to take the form of 'just-so stories' sanctioning instructions given by adult men to the ummara initiands. During the taroah beatings and taroah songs of the Moussouri ummara, a myth was told about a man who restored his skin and health by using taroah stinging nettles and became strong enough to marry a man's two daughters. The myth in which runaway old women go through the anus of Tata Pinaka into his stomach and then turn into the a-o-ira prohibited bush foods, birds and animals when his stomach is shot to pieces by their husbands was told at Asara during the singing of the wakyera ihi for these prohibited foods.

The myth of the Taupupu stone is used to warn ummara initiands from going into and playing about in caves (mupihi or hondamu) which are places where men store poisons and other secret materials. In the myth, a stone rolls over and traps a group of children who play inside its cave, make fires and make marks on the cave walls and when the stone finally rolls back when threatened with a stone razor, a boy and a girl are the only survivors. In an Asara version of this myth, the children trapped by the stone had made a habit of cooking food stolen from adults gardens inside the stone. When the myth is told during an ummara initiation, the initiates are cautioned never to play in caves or make marks on cave walls. They are not told that men store poisons in caves, only that caves are dangerous places they should not enter. In the myth, there are wakyera songs, sung by the stone and the trapped children in the narrative, which when the myth is told are sung by the teller, accompanied by the men, just as in the case of certain iyavati myths.

Taupupu Stone

(Told by Murabe during Moussouri nyako-iyavati).

Some boys and girls always used to go into the cave of the Taupupu Stone and make fires and mark the inside walls of the cave with ashes. The stone was tired of this and found he could roll over if he wanted to. When they came back into his cave the next day, he rolled over and trapped the children inside. The stone sang a song. The only child not imprisoned went and told the parents of the trapped children who returned with her to the stone, lit fires, cooked food and waited, hoping that the stone would roll back. The trapped boys and girls sang a song. After some days, all the children inside the stone had died except the oldest boy and girl. One day, one of the fathers had the idea of trying to cut the stone open with his stone razor, and said so out loud. On hearing this, the stone was afraid his body would be cut, and rolled back to his original position. The people took the surviving boy and girl who were totally wasted away, out of the cave and back to their village. The Taupupu stone is near Ihora village, Antandara.

Differences between the themes of iyavati and ummara wakyera myths parallel differences between the wakyera instructions given to initiates during each of these stages of initiation. Myths told during ummara initiations are used to emphasize prohibitions on ummara initiates and the therapeutic use of taroah and the telling of myths is secondary to the wakyera ihi demarcating prohibited acts and foods and the songs about taroah use. Instruction through the telling of myths is more prominent in iyavati initiations and the themes of the myths concern the origins of prohibited areas, iyavati customs, and sexual and marital relations between men and women.

Certain ummara and iyavati myths - Taupupu (ummara), Kyopera Nrhaise, Nuvana and Wapana and Kyavorani (iyavati) - are accompanied when they are

narrated by the singing of songs which serve as cues in the plot of the particular myth. The occurrence of these songs within the plots of specific myths as narrated by specialists parallels features of other categories of secret initiation knowledge and provides a clue to the kind of elaboration or complexity which occurs in initiation knowledge through its practice in the context of the staging of initiations. The parallel is one of the extent or detail of secret initiation knowledge known to an initiation specialist as opposed to adult men, initiates and initiands. This is also a feature of specialist knowledge of ummara wakyera ihi and taroah songs where it is the number of different songs and their 'meanings' known to the initiation specialists which by creating inequalities in the distribution of initiation knowledge affirm its importance and give it its significance. The basic plots and themes of the ummara and iyavati myths are known to adult males but certain details and accompanying songs are known only to specialists in initiation knowledge whose recitation of these myths constitutes both a performance and a prodigious feat of memory. It can therefore be argued that repeated narration of wakyera myths - especially the more important and more complex iyavati myths - over time in the context of the staging of initiations has led to an elaboration of esoteric details and songs in certain myths and that this development is a feature of wakyera initiation knowledge in general whereby restricted access to secret knowledge provides it with significance.

11. Verbal Instructions Given to Initiands in Ummara, Iyavati and Male Pre-Marriage Ceremonies.

Initiands are given verbal instructions about the norms of behaviour expected of males of their stage of initiation rank by the adult men during ummara, iyavati and the male pre-marriage ceremony. These instructions are not secret wakyera initiation knowledge and are often invoked as approved norms of male behaviour in public disputes resulting from their violation. Taken as a whole, the instructions given to the initiands by the adult men for each stage of initiation can be interpreted as constituting the most precise definition of Ommura male social ideology which is ever articulated. Varying in accordance with the particular stage of initiation, they delineate the responsibilities and obligations which the initiates must meet in all the social relationships they are involved in, such as their duties to their relatives and mother's brother, sexual relationships with women and wives, obligations to wives, and the need to co-operate with other men in collective enterprises. The institution of male initiation is upheld as the only way of obtaining true traditional knowledge and the position of the adult men as custodians of this knowledge is thus validated. Although not treated as a wakyera sphere of knowledge, the instructions about approved norms of behaviour given to the initiates derive their significance as injunctions from the way in which they occur in the context of the male initiations which are staged and administered by adult men as an arena of adult male domination over youth.

Instructions regarding the sexual relations between men and women feature in all three of the male initiation ceremonies. During ummara, the initiands are warned that if they should have sexual intercourse with older women, their growth will be stunted and they will waste away. Iyavati initiands are told that they must not have sexual intercourse with prohibited relatives and that having sexual intercourse with other men's wives will lead to disputes and court cases and make their adult

male relatives feel shame. In the pre-marriage ceremonies, the groom-to-be is told how to avoid being polluted by his wife's menstruation, not to have sex with her during pregnancy, never to have sexual intercourse with any woman in a pwata because she would become seriously ill, and not to commit adultery.

The instructions given during iyavati initiations justify the institution of male initiation as the primary source of all Ommura male knowledge and set out the obligations which Ommura males have to their relatives, wives and other men in terms of an idiom of reciprocity. Initiands were told that the administration could provide them with the Pidgin English language and European clothes but that the staging of male initiation in accordance with the customs of the ancestors was the only way of obtaining knowledge. They were told that co-operating in the building of the men's house and participating in initiations was a male duty as was growing the exclusively male cultivated crop of sugar cane by replanting the tops and staking it up after cutting and eating it.

The principle of reciprocity underlies the following obligations which the iyavati initiands were told they must fulfil:

1. Men who assist in the staging of initiations must be given a share of pigmeat in return.
2. If you help your relatives by working for them, they will give you food.
3. Only if you make a garden for your wife and assist her in her work will she give you food. If not her brothers will help her and she will not give you their food.
4. Share your food with your relatives.
5. Help your ninau work, help him fight his enemies, and he will assist you in return and contribute to your brideprice. In the ninau/ninausi (eldest mother's brother/sister's son) relationship each gets payment on the death of the other.

6. Your male relatives will pay your brideprice.

The instructions given to the initiands are called makyakya which is a word used to refer to any kind of public speech making. Generally, the men directing the initiation do the lecturing but other men in the audience often interject instructions or amplify aspects of the instructions being given.

#### Ummara Instruction

Purely verbal instruction does not feature prominently in ummar initiations where wakyera ihi are used to demarcate prohibited foods and acts. During the Asara ummar, the adult men sung a wakyera ihi which was explained to the initiands as referring to the fact that they must not have sexual intercourse with women older than themselves or their growth would be stunted and they would waste away. They were told that later on, when they were older, the men would give them instructions about sex. Given that the initiands were way below the age of puberty, the inclusion of the wakyera ihi about not having sex with older women in their ummar initiation demonstrates the great importance that instructions about sexual relations between men and women are given in all stages of male initiation. Other norms of behaviour expected of ummar initiates were impressed on the initiands through mimes. Three mimes were performed, the messages of which were do not steal, go to the aid of your relatives when they are sick, and obey the adult men and stay away from them when they are defecating.

After bundles of sugar cane had been distributed during the Moussouri ummar, the initiands were told that they were being given sugarcane despite the fact that in the past they had stolen sugar cane and never replanted the tops so that new sugar cane would grow as a replacement. The cultivation of sugar cane is carried out exclusively by men, involves the staking up of the sugar cane so that it grows upright, and sugar

cane is an important item of food used in feasts and initiations.

The initiands were told that they must be strong so that when they fought the enemy, they shot them in the eye. They were told that if the enemy came they should get their bow and arrows otherwise the enemy would say : 'I am beating him, he is my wife.'

#### Iyavati Instruction

The instructions given to the initiands during the Moussouri iyavati centred around the following subjects: the staging of male initiations in the traditional manner as the only way of the initiands obtaining true knowledge, general norms of social behaviour expected of initiates, a husband's responsibilities to his wife, the mutual obligations existing between ninausi and ninau (sister's son and mother's eldest brother), and prohibited sexual relationships and warnings about having sexual relationships with other men's wives.

The instructions given to the initiands during the Moussouri iyavati are remarkable for the way in which they are presented in terms of an ideal of reciprocity. Outside the sphere of iyavati instruction, these norms of reciprocity are generally invoked only during disputes when individual actions are presented as obligations which have not been met. The initiands were told that men must attend and assist in the staging of initiations and that they must be given pigmeat and food from the initiation feast in return for their cooperation. They were told that if they helped their parents, ninau, and other people working for them, these people would give them food in return. Only if a man made a garden for his wife and assisted her would she give him food. If her brothers had to make her garden, the wife would not give her husband any of their food. The initiands were told that they must share all their food with their relatives. Obligations between sister's son and eldest mother's brother (ninausi and ninau) were articulated

as help your ninau work and fight his enemies and he will assist you in the same way, give you food, and contribute to your brideprice. On the death of either the ninau or ninausi, the other gets payment.

The subject of sexual relations between men and women features prominently in iyavati initiation as it does in the male pre-marriage ceremony and, to a lesser extent, in ummara instruction. The initiands were told not to engage in incestuous relationships with prohibited relatives and that brideprice would be paid for them by their male relatives. The adult men cautioned the initiands about having affairs with other men's wives because this would lead to disputes and court cases.

#### Moussouri Iyavati Instruction.

Delivered by Murabe with interjections by other men.

Murabe told the initiands to attend ummara and iyavati initiations and pay attention to what was done so that when they had children they would know all the things necessary to initiate them. If they were ignorant of these things they would have to pay a specialist to initiate their children. By attending initiations in neighbouring villages they would get knowledge (dapihi iende) from the initiators. Only if they attended initiations would the young men know everything to do with initiations when the old men died, and they would not learn these customs of the ancestors if they always slept in their huts with their wives. Other men worked hard to do these things for your iyavati and you must not, like some men, say it is a rubbish (vehi) thing because it has been done to you and later you will do it to your own children. You must keep these customs even though the government has come and you wear European clothes. Only if men co-operate can an initiation be staged because the men who come bring firewood and water and stop other men falling asleep. When they attend, they must be given pigmeat. We

have made you iyavati to make you strong enough (qitana kepukiya) to work and fight. The government will give you tok pisin (Pidgin English) and European clothes but only ummara and iyavati will give you knowledge.

Because you are old enough to have beards we are giving you this instruction (makyakya - 'talk'). Don't steal food, don't steal sugar cane, don't say bad words (swear at) to other men. If you help your parents and other people by working for them, they will give you food.

When you get married, build a hut and make a garden for your wife. If you don't make a garden for her, she will not give you food. Her brothers will make a garden for her, she will not give you any of their food, and you will hit her for no reason. If you make a garden for your wife, you will eat many foods. You only need to make the fence, your wife is a pig, she can dig the garden. Men who do not help their wives grow food and coffee but steal these things from them are like the uri son who asked to eat his mother's shit. Do not commit adultery. Wives work hard for their husbands but sometimes husbands hit their wives for nothing.

Don't steal pigs and don't fight your mother or brothers. If your father, ninau or brothers are eating food, go to them and they will share it with you. Your ninau looks after you as though you were his son and always gives you a share of his food so don't run away from him. You must contribute sugar cane to the next initiation. Two men each held a tall stick up in front of the initiands and said: 'Cut it and plant it,' meaning that when they cut sugar cane they must replant the top so that it grew again. Plant food and work hard. Share your food and any food you buy from the store with your brothers, sisters, father, mother. You are iyavati. Leave your wife and sleep in the vainya with the men even though you did not help build it.

If your ninau asks for something you must give it to him, never fight with him and don't swear in pidgin at him. Should someone hit his ninaisi, the ninau helps him hit the other man. Should someone hit

his ninau, the ninaisi helps him hit the other man. Your ninau will contribute and help you with your brideprice. You get payment from your ninau and he gets payment from you. If your ninau is alive or when he dies you get payment from him, and if you die, your ninau will get payment from you. Help your ninau by working in his garden and carrying firewood for him. Your ninau will share his marsupial and pigmeat with you and you must share yours with him. If you stay with your ninau, never steal from him but be good and eat food with him.

You must not play or have sexual intercourse with your half mother (rova rautava) or half sister. If a girl wants to marry you, go tell your father and brothers and we will pay your brideprice. Don't steal (have sexual intercourse with) women. Don't marry your true sisters (ena nrura), marry others. Now you can speak Pidgin with girls. In the past we didn't do this. Don't have sex with your brother's wife (ena vakyara nrata) or ninau's wife (ena nauna nrota).

When they are about to make a feast at Moussouri, you must go get food and contribute it. Murabe told the initiands that he and the men were not trying to anger them by giving them these instructions, they were merely giving them makyakya. Otherwise they would have sexual intercourse with other men's wives, the husbands would take them to court, and they (the adult men) would feel shame (kyo-nrinro). If they helped their parents by working hard, they would not get into trouble and would not get taken to court.

#### Pre-Marriage Ceremony Instructions

The instructions given to husbands-to-be during the male pre-marriage ceremonies in the vainya are about avoiding menstrual pollution, sexual abstinence during pregnancy, never having sexual intercourse in a pwata, and never committing adultery. Any contact with one's wife when she is menstruating is said to cause sickness in men, especially having sexual intercourse with her or eating food which she has cooked, and women live

in the women's house - a place dangerous to men for this reason - for the duration of their menstrual periods. Men are told to wait for some time until the smell of menstrual blood goes away before eating food prepared by a wife on her return after menstruation in the women's house. Although men can eat food cooked by their pregnant wives, men are warned not to have sexual intercourse with their wives when they are pregnant or to make them carry heavy loads because they may make the baby abort. Husbands are told not to commit adultery and are warned of the major illness which the female will incur if they have sexual intercourse in a pwata or area of red earth. Initiands are told during iyavati initiation instructions about the dangers for women of sexual intercourse in pwatas.

#### Male Pre-Marriage Ceremony Instruction

Don't come in contact with your wife when she is menstruating and don't go around with her or have sexual intercourse with her. Never take food from her hands. Don't let her sleep in your hut or her blood will spread everywhere and you will get sick and waste away. Don't go to the woman's house (kapa) when your wife is there menstruating and go inside it and have sexual intercourse with her or you will become extremely ill. When your wife returns from the woman's house, don't take food from her hands for some nights afterwards until the smell of blood leaves her.

When your wife has a baby in her stomach, do not sleep with her after she has not menstruated for one or two months but you can still eat the food which she cooks for you. Don't let your wife carry heavy loads when she is pregnant otherwise the baby will break (abort). Don't have sexual intercourse with your wife in a pwata (area of red earth) or she will get very ill. Do not steal (commit adultery with) another man's wife. If you are living in the same hut as your wife and eating the food she cooks for you, don't steal another man's wife. If you

meet another man's wife in the bush, don't have sexual intercourse with her in a pwata or she will become very ill and die.

Initiands are lectured by the adult men during each stage of the initiation with instructions about the norms of behaviour which they must obey. The instructions about norms of behaviour expected of the initiands constitute a charting out of the significant features of Ommura male ideology in practice because they are concerned with regulating the social relationships - with relatives, women, co-villagers, etc. - that the initiands will become involved in during the course of their daily lives. The instructions vary according to the stage of initiation and thus reveal a gradation in the norms of behaviour expected of initiates depending on their initiation rank and age. Male initiations are used as a way of re-indoctrinating ummara and iyavati initiates who are made to attend initiations appropriate to their rank where they sit with the initiands and are lectured and chastized for any transgressions they might have committed by the adult men. The institution of male initiation is used by the adult men as a way of subjecting youth to their authority and this is evident in the verbal instructions on 'how to work and how to live' which are given in the men's house during initiation. These instructions about norms of behaviour which initiates must obey constitute, as a whole, the most explicit and comprehensive statement of Ommura male social ideology which can be found in any sphere of male initiation knowledge.

12. The Instructive Mimes Performed during Ummara and Iyavati Initiations.

Mimes are performed during both ummara and iyavati initiations. These mimes constitute a form of instruction for the initiands because they are staged either in conjunction with instructions about specific norms of behaviour which the initiands must obey or they are such an integral part of a particular stage of initiation that their enactment for the benefit of the initiands is a demonstration of initiation customs and knowledge. Mimes are staged by adult men under the direction of the initiation specialists. There is a definite criteria of competence involved in the staging of mimes and the performers try to put on the best possible performance. The initiation specialists and adult male spectators are highly critical of the way in which any particular mime is carried out, judging it by much the same criteria as men judge male dancing ability in public contexts.

The staging of these wakyera instructive mimes provides an example of the delegation of authority which occurs in the organization of male initiations and of one of the basic premises of male initiation, the subjection of the initiands to the superior power and knowledge of the adult men. Mimes are performed by the younger adult men under the supervision of the initiation specialists in accordance with the criteria of traditional practice as determined by adult male consensus for the particular initiation event. The way in which the initiands are subjected to the instructive mimes is an aspect of their subjection to the control and authority of the adult males through male initiation. Initiands are not only instructed and given knowledge, they are disciplined, physically abused and tricked throughout the initiations as a way of intimidating them into obedience to the adult men. During the Asara ummara, on the night before the day of the nose bleeding, the initiands showed visible signs of fear when they were told that in the morning their genitals would be cut off and a song was sung about this.

Wakyera mimes are a form of action directed at giving the initiands initiation knowledge and instruction carried out by the adult men as a collectivity of initiation organizers, performers and audience. As will emerge in the following analysis, these mimes are illustrations of the instructions they convey or, like the ummara taroah mimes and iyavati nrhaise memera, are mimes which through repetition over time have become such an integral part of the relevant initiation as to have become virtually inseparable from the institution. Ommura males chant the Wo Wo wacry as a sign that collective male action is taking place during wakyera initiation events, public dances, before a fight, and to chase away the afflicting agent in ua-ha curing ceremonies. The mimes performed during male initiations can be interpreted as constituting the same kind of demarcating action as the chanting of the Wo Wo wacry insofar as they are carried out by the adult men acting as a group and are directed at instructing the initiands.

#### Ummara Mimes

The principal mime performed during ummara initiations is the taroah mime, described in the section on the use of taroah and taroah songs, performed in conjunction with the beating of the initiands with taroah stinging nettles and the singing of taroah songs. In the Asara taroah mime, first two naked men from the father's lineage waved their buttocks in a mime of the movements of copulation. The two naked men put taroah leaves in their mouths, under their armpits, and between their buttocks, danced around and squatted in front of the initiands mouths moving suggestively up and down. In the Moussouri nyako-iyavati ummara taroah mime, the naked performers danced around while eating taroah leaves and masturbating with taroah leaves. They stood in front of the initiands faces masturbating with taroah and singing the taroah song, 'I am the father of taroah'. In any public situation, exposure of the genitals would make the exposed male feel

shame (kyo-nrinro), but in the case of the ummara taroah mimes performed in the vainya for an exclusively male audience, it is considered to constitute both an instructive and amusing performance. The taroah mimes with their fusion of male nudity, sexual burlesque and taroah use can be interpreted as a way of impressing on the initiands how the use of taroah promotes male virility and general good health. During the male pre-marriage ceremony in the vainya, the adult men rub the naked husband-to-be from head to foot with taroah stinging nettles paying special attention to the penis as a way of making him strong and healthy.

Three mimes of instruction were performed for the Asara ummara initiands in the vainya after they had returned from being washed and bled in the stream. The purpose of these instructive mimes was to impress on the initiands that now they were ummara, they must not steal, they must obey the adult men and stay out of their way when they were defecating, and they must look after their relatives when they were sick.

In the 'do not steal' mime, nine arrows were placed point upwards in a row against the fence enclosing the vainya. The initiands were told that now they were ummara, they must not steal. If someone left their arrows, they must not steal them and if someone lost something in the bush and they found it, they must return it to the owner. A spectator remarked that because money had not been displayed with the arrows, the initiands would steal money but was told by the men organizing the event that ~~this~~ was not the custom of their fathers and ancestors.

An imitation toilet was made by scooping out earth to make a hole in the ground. Two Kyao kina shells mounted at either end of a stick (a body decoration) were given to an adult man who squatted over the hole in the posture of defecation with the two kyao shells held in his mouth to represent sweet potatoes (ama) which he had eaten. Kyao shells are associated with sweet potatoes and are hung up in the hut

in which the ceremony takes place whenever an ama mata sweet potato fertility ceremony is held. In his hand the man held a shield decoration of ovara kyao-hi, black bird feathers, to represent his adult male status. The initiands were told to always obey senior men and to stay out of their way when they were defecating. As men's excrement can be used by their enemies to make a very lethal poison to use against them, the act of defecation followed by the safe disposal of personal excrement is treated by adult men as an act vital for self-protection.

The initiands were led into the vainya where an apparently unconscious man lay slumped against the centre post. They were told that he was unconscious due to an acute stomach pain and were told to hold his stomach. Suddenly the sick man leapt up and he and the other men beat the initiands with taroah stinging nettles until they were crying and cringing. The initiands were instructed that whenever any of their relatives or patrilineage members was sick they must look after them by bringing them firewood, water and food.

One instructive trick was not carried out during this particular Asara ummara initiation. This is a way of deceiving the initiands into eating the blood of a member of their patrilineage to emphasize that they are qua nranre, 'one blood', with the members of their lineage. A member of the father's lineage bleeds his tongue puts the blood on an ahiri leaf which is then placed on the ground and the initiands are told that it is the blood of a wounded marsupial which has escaped. They are made to eat the blood and afterwards they are told that they have consumed the blood of their own lineage member.

The mimes described above are used as a means of instructing the ummara initiands that they must not steal, must stay away from adult males when they are defecating, look after sick relatives, and the unperformed mime emphasizes literally how members of a patrilineage are of 'one blood'. Each mime is an enactment of the instructions it is

used to convey. Unattended arrows are laid out and they must not be stolen. An adult man with shells in his mouth symbolizing sweet potatoes and feathers in his hand denoting his rank squats on an imitation toilet as a mime of defecation and the initiands are told to stay away from defecating adult males. An unconscious sick man regains consciousness and with other men beats the initiands with taroah to demonstrate to the initiands what punishment will befall them if they do not look after relatives who are ill. Through the deception that it is marsupial blood, the initiands are made to eat the blood of a member of their patrilineage, then they are told what they have done and the blood eating is explained as an idiom of shared descent. The mimes are therefore literal enactments of the situations and the appropriate norms of behaviour which the initiands must obey when encountering these situations.

#### Iyavati Mimes

A mime stressing the importance of replanting and staking up sugar cane, identical in basic form and presentation of instructive content to the instructive mimes performed during the Assara ummara, was performed during the Moussouri iyavati. Two men each holding a long stick to represent the planting and staking of sugar cane stood up on cue. The initiands were told to replant the tops of any sugar cane they cut down to eat and to grow sugar cane by staking it up on sticks. Sugar cane is consumed at all important social gatherings and it is considered to be essential for a man to have a stock of sugar cane to use in presentations. It is the one foodstuff cultivated by the Ommura which is grown exclusively by men and this is explained by men in terms of physical effort involved in staking up the sugar cane on tall poles which have to be cut for this purpose.

The principal mime performed during iyavati initiations is the nrhaise memera, an exaggerated imitation of the behaviour of women. With certain minor variations, nrhaise memeras like the one I observed during the Moussouri iyavati are staged for all iyavati initiations in the Ommura area. In the nrhaise memera men holding branches of auquvera leaves dance around the vainya performing an exaggerated version of the women's dance steps and sing various pig fertility, pig killing and yam fertility songs in exaggerated falsetto voices. At the end of the nrhaise memera, the leaves are thrown on the initiands and afterwards they are burned on the vainya fire.

The use of exaggerated aspects of female behaviour as the subject of the nrhaise memera parallels the burlesque of male behaviour which women perform during the kam karura female initiation. In the kam karura mime of male behaviour, women dancing with men's dance steps perform an exaggerated imitation of male warcries and male aggressive sexual behaviour. Given the general premises behind the staging of male and female initiation, exaggerated imitations of the behaviour of the opposite sex provide a suitable and entertaining subject around which to base the mimes staged during iyavati and kam karura initiations. They serve as a means of amplifying the opposition between male and female behaviour which the parallel institutions of male and female initiation serve to demarcate.

The songs used to accompany the nrhaise memera and auquvera leaf throwing are an integral part of the event and are used both to camouflage what is going on inside the vainya from anyone listening outside and as a medium for the dancers to sing in exaggerated falsetto female tones of voice. Their use does not in any way reflect a conscious or deliberate metaphorical association between iyavati initiands and the growth of pigs and yams. The ceremonies in which these songs are sung are attended by men and women who sing the songs together to promote the fertility of yams or pigs or to celebrate a pig killing. Just as

the dancing of the woman's dance step by the nrhaise memera dancers is an imitation of the way in which women dance during public festivities, the songs the men sing in imitation of the women are songs which women sing in the public ceremonies of wara mata, ova mata and pig killing ceremonies.

At the beginning of the Moussouri nrhaise memera, the men pretending to be women entered the vainya carrying branches of leaves in their hands and danced around the centre post of the vainya. They danced the women's dance step movements which consist of bending at the knees while standing in place, moving forward, and shaking the posterior outwards behind one to make the grass skirt undulate. As they danced they sang a wara mata song in exaggerated falsetto voices moving slowly around in a circle. They sang a pig killing song about how pig's blood must run on the green ebora leaves with which pig meat is cooked in bamboos. Portions of ginger and salt mixed with leaves, a concoction for promoting good health, were given to the initiands to eat. The nrhaise memera dancers sang two wara mata pig fertility songs followed by two pig killing songs. The initiands were told, 'Look at your mother and sister (ninrahua niakyahua) making ihi (dancing and singing)'. A wara mata song about a pig eating sweet potatoes under a tree was sung by the dancing men followed by a yam mata song. The men supervising the initiation told the dancers not to throw the leaves at the centre post or drop them on the ground but to throw them on the initiands and that later the leaves would be burned on the fire.

As the branches of leaves were thrown one by one on the initiands by the dancers, the initiands were instructed to always obey the men, told that they had been disobedient in the past, and that the nrhaise memera had been enacted for their benefit.

The thrown leaves were gradually put on the fire and burned and the initiands were told that in the past they had never assisted the men in fetching firewood. Murabe lectured the initiands by telling them that

the men had to go all the way to the bush to get the leaves which had been thrown on them in the nrhaise memera. This was followed by the giving of general instructions to the initiands described in the section on verbal instructions.

A structuralist might interpret the nrhaise memera as a 'rite of transition' in which men pretending to be women throw leaves, which represent some aspect of the female world, on to the bodies of the initiands and the leaves are later removed and burned on the vainya fire to symbolize the initiands status as iyavati males and their total separation from the world of women. I came across no evidence in my questioning of Ommura male initiation specialists to substantiate this interpretation. Auquvera leaves gathered in the bush are thrown on the initiands by men dancing and singing in imitation of women because, in some general way, this act promotes the health of the initiands and not because they are in any way associated with women. The mime of women is carried out as an instructive and entertaining burlesque of female behaviour in public ceremonies ('Look at your mother and sister making ihi') which parallels the burlesque of male behaviour carried out during female initiation. The importance of the nrhaise memera ('mime of the women') arises out of the way it is staged within the context of the iyavati initiation in conjunction with the other iyavati events and instructions, its complexity, and the amount of male co-operation and labour necessary to stage it.

As the preceding analysis has demonstrated, the wakyera mimes enacted during ummara and iyavati initiation for the edification of the initiands are either representations demonstrating norms of behaviour which the initiands must obey or by virtue of their central importance among the events of a particular stage of initiation constitute a demonstration of wakyera initiation knowledge. The mimes are therefore instructive mimes which derive their meaning and status as wakyera knowledge from the way in which they are used in the context of ummara

and iyavati initiation. None of the mimes contain any explicit statements relating to a higher order of Ommura metaphysical truth other than the portrayal of specific injunctions binding on the initiands although, as has been shown, they are far from lacking in complexity.

13. Emblems of Initiation Rank and Body Decorations  
worn by Ummara, Iyavati and Kam Karura Initiands

An analysis of the emblems of rank and decorations worn by male initiands in ummara and iyavati initiations and by female initiands in kam karura initiations reveals the degree of differentiation and elaboration of the various initiation statuses made by the Ommura through the medium of these decorations. Although this is not the case, it might be hypothesized that an elaborate and complex differentiation of male and female initiation ranks is made through the publicly displayed medium of initiands' emblems of rank and body decorations precisely because of the lack of systematic exegesis of wakyera initiation knowledge.

Ummara and Iyavati male initiands and kam karura female initiands are dressed in these decorations towards the end of their initiation in the men's house or woman's house. They wear these decorations in public as an announcement of their new status as initiates when they are brought out of the men's house or women's house for the initiation feast and until they return to normal life with their families. Like the food cooked and distributed at the kyapairi initiation feasts or the amount of payment given by the father to the mother's brother (ninau) for his participation in a particular initiation, the emblems of rank and decorations worn by ummara, iyavati and kam karura initiands constitute an important sphere of initiation practice for analysis precisely because of the value and labour involved in making or obtaining these items. The decorations worn by the different stages of initiands consist of items which must be hunted or obtained in the bush by men, made or assembled by men, collected and made by women, or obtained through trade with neighbouring groups for local produce. The purpose of examining the decorations worn by initiands is to determine the degree of differentiation made through the medium of decorations of the male and female initiation stages and to what extent these decorations

merely reflect differences between decorations worn by males and females on general ceremonial occasions. Obviously the act of decorating initiands is used as a way of publicly demarcating their change in social status but the vital question is the degree of complexity and elaboration which occurs in this medium of differentiation.

By 'emblems of rank', I am referring to decorations which are made specifically for a particular stage of male or female initiation and are only ever worn by the initiands for the particular stage of initiation as a mark of their new status. The emblems of rank which are used for the various stages of initiation are the nokabura miniature bow for kam karura female initiation, the lelupa tua string bag worn by ummara initiands and the pair of pig's tusks worn points upwards through the nose by iyavati initiands.

Nokabura are miniature bows which are made by male relatives for kam karura initiands. Each initiand is given one which she occasionally plays by plucking the bowstring during the period of initiation in the women's house after which time the nokabura is broken and thrown away. Men make them by using onama wood for the bow, kokata creeper for the string and ahiri leaves attached to each end of the bow as decoration. The practice of men making nokabura for kam karura has been replaced in some initiations by men loaning plastic ukeleles, purchased in towns or on the coast, to the initiands for them to play. This substitution of plastic ukeleles for the nokabura bow demonstrates that the nokabura is primarily a musical instrument made for kam karura initiands.

Ummara initiands are presented with a lelupa tua when they are decorated by the adult men at the end of ummara wakyera instruction. The lelupa tua is a tua or string bag with a piece of nakori wild bamboo attached to one side from which are hung several marsupial tails. The string bag is filled with wild banana leaves and red tankert leaves. Female relatives of the initiand knit the string bag and male relatives supply the marsupial tails, wild bamboo, leaves and assemble them all as

a lelupa tua.

A pair of wara arai pig's tusks placed points upwards through a hole in the nasal septum are worn by iyavati initiands and are given to them when they are decorated at the end of their wakyera instruction. There is an Asara iyavati wakyera myth (discussed in the section on myth) about the elder brother who originated the custom of decorating iyavati initiands with pig's tusks.

Having described the decorations which are only ever used or worn by kam karura, ummara and iyavati initiands, I will proceed to analyze the other body decorations worn by initiands of these ranks. The purpose is to demonstrate how similar, apart from the more general distinction between male and female dress, the decorations worn by ummara male and kam karura female initiands are and how the decorations worn by iyavati initiands are the most distinctive of those worn by either of the three initiation ranks thus demonstrating the presence of a hierarchy in initiation decoration.

## CHART - Emblems of Initiation Rank and Body Decorations worn by

Kam Karura, Ummara and Iyavati Initiands.

Kam KaruraUmmaraIyavatiEmblems of Rank

Nokabura, a miniature bow played by plucking. Made for women by men out of onama wood, kokata creeper and decorated with ahiri leaves at each end. Played in kapa, then thrown away. Occasionally substituted with plastic ukelele.

Lelupa tua, a patterned string bag with nakori wild bamboo attached to side from which are hung marsupial tails. Filled with wild banana and red tankert leaves.

Wara arai, a pair of pig's tusks worn point upwards through the nasal septum.

Decorations

Puandai, headband of eahra kyava white, yellow and red koki feathers.

Puandai, headband of eahra kyava white, yellow and red koki feathers.

Titiva, vukyera cassowary neck feather headband. Aparira headband made of green leaf

Tavura brown bird of paradise tailfeathers worn down back of head. Dori and Tunara leaves suspended down back of head to legs.

Asau kyao-hi, marsupial fur

Asau kyao-hi marsupial fur

Murikya red paint or ochre applied as spots to face

Murikya red paint or ochre applied to face in design of finger marks and spots.

Tamu black mineral paint, occasionally murikya or white mud.

Wara vehamera, pig fat applied to skin.

Wara vehamera, pig fat applied to skin.

Hara Pandanus oil (red in colour) applied to skin.

Havarikya okya, cane waistbands wrapped with yellow havarikya grass. Vairi vai dogs teeth worn around neck.

Havarikya okya, cane waistbands wrapped with yellow havarikya grass.

Vairi vai dogs teeth worn around neck.

Vairi vai dogs teeth worn around waist.

Kyao, kina shells, 1 or 2 worn around neck

Kyao, kina shells 1 or 2 worn around neck

Kyao, kina shells worn around neck.

Kyatema paspas arm bands worn on upper arms.

Kyatema, paspas arm bands worn on upper arms

Kyatema paspas arm bands worn on upper arms.

DRESS

Tua  
Karikari, cowrie shells  
Maru-hi sweet smelling (qu-eh munda) leaves worn as back skirt by unmarried girls.

Va-ah barkcloth cape  
Hiera grass skirt  
Va-ah mekya, back skirt made of barkcloth strips worn by men.

Va-ah barkcloth cape  
Hiera grass skirt worn in front.  
Va-ah mekya skirt made of strips of barkcloth in the back

Hiera grass skirt worn in front.

Wild pandanus leaf girdle

The decorations worn by the initiands are

- a) Decorations worn on the head. Kam Karura and Ummara initiands wear Puandai headbands of red, white and yellow eahra kyava feathers from parrots. Iyavati initiands wear headbands of vukyera cassowary neck feathers called titiva which are also worn by adult men. They wear tavura, reddish brown bird of paradise tail feathers downwards at the back of the head, dori and tunara leaves suspended from the back of the head to the legs, and an aparira green leaf as a headband around the forehead.
- b) Fur. Asau kyao-hi marsupial skin is worn hanging from the neck over the chest by both kam karura and ummara initiands.
- c) Face Paint. The faces of ummara and kam karura initiands are decorated with Murikya - red ochre paint. Kam Karura initiands have their faces decorated with spots of murikya and ummara initiands have their faces decorated with spots and finger marks of murikya. Iyavati initiands' faces are decorated with tamu, a black mineral paint, and occasionally with murikya or hora, white mud. The actual decorative marks as opposed to the act of painting the initiands face have little significance.
- d) Fats and oils applied on the body. The bodies of ummara and kam karura initiands are coated with wara vehamera pig fat and the bodies of iyavati initiands are coated with the red hara vehamera pandanus oil. This is done to beautify the skin and give it a healthy sheen. Hara pandanus does not grow at the high altitude at which the Ommura live and is obtained through trade with the villages of the Bush Markham (Annamata). The pandanus oil used to decorate the bodies of the iyavati initiands is therefore a scarcer commodity than pig fat which is a local product.
- e) Dog's teeth - vairi vai. Kam karura and ummara initiands wear a number of dog's teeth around their necks on a cord and iyavati initiands wear a number of dog's teeth from a cord worn around the waist.

- f) Havarikya okya waistbands. Havarikya okya are waistbands made of rattan cane with yellow havarikya stalks bound around them. Havarikya is a plant which grows at the top of tall trees. Havarikya okya are worn by ummara and kam karura initiands and, on occasion, by adult men.
- g) Kyao kina shells. Kyao shells originate on the coast and are obtained through trade networks with neighbouring groups or brought back from the coast by plantation labourers. All the initiation ranks wear one or two kyao shells around their necks, the number depending on availability.
- h) Kyatema woven arm bands. Woven kyatema rattan arm bands are worn on each of the upper arms by initiands of all the initiation ranks. Bunches of humira leaves are put through the arm bands on the outer arm sticking upwards producing the appearance of wings. Kyatema armbands with leaves stuck out of them are worn on all festive occasions.

Differences in the items of clothing worn by kam karura, ummara and iyavati initiands reflect general differences in the clothing worn by men and women of different ages and initiation rank on any ceremonial or festive occasion. The one convention always observed is that the clothing worn by the initiands must be newly made and clean (arakiya).

Kam Karura initiands wear tua string bags, karikari cowrie shells, and hiera rakyava, the grass skirt and leaf skirt worn by unmarried women. The unmarried woman's skirt consists of a grass skirt worn at the front of the body and a skirt of maru-hi sweet smelling (qu-eh munda) leaves at the back to cover the posterior. Married women wear a number of hiera grass skirts worn on top of each other which go right around the waist as opposed to the un-married woman's grass and leaf skirt which leave the sides of the thighs exposed.

Ummara initiands wear a hiera grass skirt at the front of their bodies and a va-ah mekya skirt made of strips of barkcloth at the back. Around their waists they wear a girdle of wild pandanus leaf and a va-ah barkcloth is worn hanging from the back of their necks. Iyavati initiands wear a hiera grass skirt in front, a va-ah mekya skirt made of strips of barkcloth in the back, and a va-ah barkcloth cape.

The actual items of clothing worn by kam karura, ummara and iyavati initiands are no different than those that would be worn by men and women of an equivalent initiation rank for any public ceremony or festive occasion. When adult men dress up for male initiations and ceremonies they carry their kai-ke wooden shields decorated with leaves and a projecting bundle of avara apande black tail feathers and their bows and arrows. When married women dress up for initiations and ceremonies, they wear several grass skirts on top of each other covering the entire lower part of the body in a multiple petticoat effect.

The Stratherns' book Self Decoration in Mt. Hagen (1971) provides interesting data for comparison on the body decorations worn by members of a different and wealthier Highlands society.

By analyzing the decorations and clothing worn by kam karura female initiands and ummara and iyavati male initiands it is possible to reach certain conclusions about the degree of differentiation of the three initiation statuses made by the Ommura through this medium. Only one decoration or accessory is specific to each initiation stage in the sense that it is only ever worn by the initiands of that particular initiation stage. These emblems of rank are the nokabura musical bow made for kam karura initiands by men and occasionally substituted with a plastic ukelele, the lelupa tua, a string bag with a piece of wild bamboo hung with marsupial tails at one side filled with wild banana leaves and red tankert carried by ummara initiands, and the pair of pig's tusks worn points upwards through a hole in the nasal septum by iyavati initiands.

The other decorations worn by the initiands consist of items which are also worn by either men or women of different ages and initiation ranks for ceremonial and festive occasions. A comparison reveals that the decorations worn by kam karura female initiands and ummara male initiands are virtually identical but in marked contrast to those worn by iyavati initiands. Kam Karura and ummara initiands wear Puandai headbands of white, yellow and red parrot feathers while iyavati initiands wear a titiva cassowary neck feather headband, tavura brown bird of paradise tail feathers, an aparira leaf headband, and dori and tunara leaves suspended from the back of the head. While the bodies of kam karura and ummara initiands are covered with the locally obtainable pig fat, the bodies of iyavati initiands are covered with pandanus oil, acquired through trade partners.

The similarity between kam karura and ummara decorations and the contrast between them and iyavati decorations parallels the hierarchy which emerges out of the situation whereby there is only one female initiation, kam karura but there are two stages of male initiation, ummara and iyavati. It could be postulated that there is little difference between the decorations with which ummara and kam karura initiands are adorned precisely because the existence of a higher stage of male initiation - iyavati - with its associated decorations serves as the area of primary contrast between male and female decoration. Most of the decorations worn by iyavati initiands are also worn by adult men who have in addition their highly decorated wooden shields and their bows and arrows.

Differences in actual items of clothing worn by the three denominations of initiands reflect the general differences between the various items of clothing worn by men and women of different ages and initiation ranks on any festive or ceremonial occasion. The Ommura general criteria of appropriate dress and decoration for ceremonial and festive occasions are that items of clothing must be new and clean looking (arakiya), the

greater the quantity of decorations and clothing the better because they are valuables, and dressing up constitutes a display of wealth, and the degree of style or creativity demonstrated by an individual in decorating and dressing his or her body in an optimal fashion.

It can therefore be concluded that a certain degree of differentiation is made between kam karura female initiands and ummara and iyavati male initiands through the medium of emblems of rank and body decorations. Initiands of each initiation rank wear or use an emblem of rank specific to that initiation rank. Given basic differences in male and female dress, the body decorations worn by kam karura and ummara initiands are virtually identical but are in contrast to those worn by iyavati initiands which are similar to decorations worn by adult men.

#### 14. The Use of Food in Male Initiations : Payment and Instruction

Food is of central importance both in the staging of male initiations where it is used as a form of payment and in the instructions given to initiands where it serves as a medium of exchange demarcating approved norms of behaviour in social relationships. Food - pigs, garden produce, and foodstuffs from the bush - is such an omnipresent and important aspect of all Ommura social relationships that it cannot be separated from the social relationships which its exchange defines. By describing the important role which food occupies in most aspects of male initiation, one incurs the danger of reducing diverse social phenomena to a unity merely to emphasize the presence of food as a medium in social relations. The justification for this analysis is the significance which the Ommura place on food and the way it features in so many diverse aspects of male initiation.

Food features in the following spheres of male initiation :

- a) The share of food from the kyapairi initiation feast which is given by the initiand's father to the eldest mother's brother as part of his payment for the staging of the initiation.
- b) The shares of food from the kyapairi initiation feast and the food distributed during the course of the initiation which are given to the men who participate in the initiation.
- c) The two bundles of pigmeat from the kyapairi initiation feast which the father passes up each side of the initiand's body to promote general good health.
- d) The instructions given in combination with the singing of wakjera ihi to ummara initiands telling them not to eat specific bush foods.
- e) The instructions given to iyavati initiands about their obligations in specific social relationships which revolve around the cultivation and exchange of food.
- f) The instructions given during male pre-marriage ceremonies about how men can become sick by eating food prepared for them by their wives

when they are menstruating.

Food is used as payment in male initiations and the male and female initiations which follow after nihirara are all centred around the payment made to the eldest mother's brother (ninau) for his participation in organizing the initiation by the father of the initiand. This payment consists of an amount of money and a number of traditional valuables - bundles of arrows, barkcloth, string bags, and grass skirts - and a relatively large share of the pigmeat and vegetables cooked for the kyapairi feast at the end of the initiation. Shares of pigmeat and vegetables from the kyapairi feast are given to men who have assisted and participated in a male initiation. The amounts shared out to participants are decided by the father in accordance with their relative status as regards the staging of the particular initiation and any contributions they may have made.

In order to stage an initiation, the father of the initiand has to have accumulated not only some of the payment given to the mother's brother for his participation but at least one big pig and an abundance of garden produce for the kyapairi feast and amounts of sugar cane to be served to the men as refreshment during the initiation ceremonies. Pigs are generally only killed and consumed on ceremonial occasions when they are cooked in specially made earth ovens (ori-ah) with vegetables. Mature big pigs are the most valuable locally produced commodity and cooked pigmeat, because of its fat content, is regarded as a great delicacy which promotes good health. Unless he has at least one large pig and abundant vegetables for the kyapairi feast it is impossible for the initiand's father to hold the initiation because he could not repay the men for their participation. The social standing of those staging the initiation and public opinion of how well an initiation was staged are directly related to the amount of food which is provided for the kyapairi feast and the initiation. During the Moussouri nyako-iyavati initiation, one of the organizers remarked in public in the vainya :

'Some men will say that we didn't have enough pigs and food to do this initiation well' and the justification given for staging it at that time was that otherwise the pigs might have spoiled someone's garden and had to have been killed to provide compensation.

The food from the kyapairi feast is not only shared out as payment to those who have contributed to and participated in the initiation, but portions of pigmeat are used in an act which is said to be beneficial to the initiands health. During the kyapairi feast held for ummara, iyavati and kam karura female initiations, the father takes a bundle of pigmeat in each hand and passes it up each side of the initiand's body from the feet to the outstretched hands. This act is said to promote the general good health of the initiand in the same way that the cooking of pigmeat mixed with special herbs and leaves in an earth oven for the vu-ha curing ceremonies is said to promote good health. In each case, the initiand eats some of the pigmeat. The passing of pigmeat up the sides of the initiand's body can be interpreted as a public statement of how the initiation and the food from the kyapairi feast are good for the initiand's health and is part of the general Ommura notion that cooked pigmeat, even the smell of cooked pigmeat, is the ultimate healthy food.

At night time in the vainya during the staging of male initiation pieces of sugar cane provided by the initiand's fathers are distributed equally among the men participating in the initiation and the initiands. This also occurs in kam karura female initiations, the sugar cane being provided by the fathers of the initiands. In the Moussouri nyako - iyavati, six bundles of sugar cane were carried into the vainya and shaken up and down by men who chanted the Wo Wo male warcry before it was shared out with one bundle going to the initiands and five bundles to the adult men. The chanting of the male warcry in conjunction with shaking the bundles of sugar cane prior to their distribution is a way of drawing attention to the importance of the distribution which will

follow. In the Asara ummara initiation great care was taken over the distribution of the sugar cane. For the Moussouri initiation, a large bundle of ihu, a kind of betelnut (pidgin - capebibi) was hung with taroah leaves from the centre post of the vainya and was later shared out to those who chewed it. Instructions about the planting of sugar cane feature prominently in ummara and iyavati initiations precisely because it is the crop grown exclusively by men which is an indispensable part of any ceremonial food presentation.

A great many of the wakyera ihi sung during ummara initiations are about specific foods which the initiands are told they must not eat. These food prohibitions apply to males from ummara initiation until the time they are married and the great majority of them also apply to females from kam karura initiation until marriage. During the Asara ummara initiation, a wakyera ihi was sung to instruct the initiands not to be greedy for pigmeat and they were told that they must not demand pigmeat until it was offered to them. An adult male stereotype of the behaviour of young boys is that they are permanently hungry or greedy for food.

Many of the instructions given to iyavati initiands are about approved norms of social relationships based on a principle of reciprocity in terms of payment with food. Of the instructions given during the Moussouri nyako-iyavati, the following involved the exchange of food:

- 1) Men who assist in the staging of initiations must be given pigmeat in return.
- 2) If you help your relatives by working for them, they will give you food.
- 3) Only if you make a garden for your wife and assist her in her work will she give you food. If not, her brothers will help her and she will not give you their food.
- 4) Share your food with your relatives.

In the pre-marriage ceremony, husbands-to-be are warned of how they can become seriously ill as a result of eating food prepared by a menstruating wife.

The purpose of presenting the preceding data has been to emphasize the importance and presence of food in most aspects of male initiation. Food is used both as a payment for the staging of male initiations and features in the instructions given to initiands where the way in which it is used demarcates approved social relationships and actions. It is the medium of exchange through which all Ommura social relationships are transacted and all major Ommura ceremonies - male and female initiations, birth, marriage, death and curing ceremonies - are centred around a payment and distribution of food.

## 15. The Extent of Ideological Elaboration

### Explicit Differentiation

What follows is an investigation into the extent of ideological elaboration which occurs in the events and instructions of male initiations which examines these questions:

- a) The extent to which the context of use rather than the form and content of the spheres of initiation events and instructions determine their significance.
- b) The degree to which the social function of male initiation as a means of promoting social and physical good health is stated in the spheres of initiation events and instructions.
- c) The extent of the emergence of a specifically male symbolism through these spheres.
- d) The forms in which the initiation events and instructions are presented and their capacity for elaboration.

Certain features of Ommura male initiations can be deciphered as explicit statements about the social significance of male initiations in Ommura society. The relative importance given to male initiation as opposed to female initiation is shown by the existence of two stages of male initiation, ummara and iyavati, but only one stage of female initiation, kam karura. Women, children and unauthorized male youth are totally excluded from male initiations in the men's house but male relatives take an active role in the organization of female initiations and do not participate in female initiations in the women's house through fear of pollution. This relative ranking of the importance of male and female initiations and the superior status of iyavati over ummara is reflected in the complexity of the emblems of rank and decorations worn by male and female initiands. Initiates of each stage wear an emblem of rank specific to that stage but given basic differences in male and female dress, the decorations worn by

ummara and kam karura initiands are virtually identical and are in opposition to the more ornate and valuable decorations worn by iyavati initiands which are similar to those worn by adult men. In the same way, the greater number of spirit cry instruments played during iyavati initiations indicates the greater social importance of iyavati as a higher stage of initiation than ummara and the playing of Gurekiya/Kunavero flutes during both ummara and iyavati is a statement of continuity in male initiations. The pair of Gurekiya/Kunavero flutes played during ummara initiations are played in combination with Eabowkie water flutes, Nra-ia Datero baby crying leaves, and Abua bullroarers during iyavati initiations.

#### Context equals condition of Use

The context in which ummara and iyavati initiations are enacted determines the use of initiation events and instructions. Context summarizes the set of conditions which are enacted for the staging of either ummara or iyavati initiations and these conditions remain constant over time as the framework in which initiation events and instructions are presented. By 'context' one is referring to the conditions which are always established for the enactment of male initiations. These are that initiations are carried out under conditions of secrecy in the men's house which entail the exclusion of women, children and unauthorized males and the subjection of the initiands and initiates to the authority and superior knowledge of the adult men who control the staging of initiations in the men's house.

Initiands are subjected to the events and instructions of ummara and iyavati initiations for the purpose of promoting health and giving them knowledge. Ummara and iyavati initiation events and instructions are wakyera secret knowledge which can only occur in the context of the enactment of the appropriate stage of initiation. Restricted access to secret initiation knowledge is a universal characteristic of all

initiation ceremonies because it establishes a hierarchy of knowledge which parallels the progression through stages of initiations from youth to adulthood. But the means by which this secrecy is imposed on initiation events and instructions varies between societies and has important effects on the presentation and 'codification' of these initiation events and instructions thereby revealing culturally specific processes.

The following contextual conditions are always imposed during the enactment of ummara and iyavati initiation events and instructions. They are carried out in the men's house (vainya) or in the case of nose and penis bleeding, inside the stream or river enclosure. Women, children and unauthorized males are excluded from the ceremonies and women and children are made to stage an ihi singsing at a site distant from the vainya on nights when initiations are being carried out. These precautions to keep initiation events and instructions secret are reflected in the spatial arrangement and use of the vainya in initiation procedures. The vainya consists of the men's house itself and the area outside the men's house which is enclosed by a fence. Initiands and initiates are made to sit together at one end of the men's house and can only leave the men's house if escorted by adult men. At night during initiations, the vainya enclosure is used as a kind of backstage area in which the spirit cry instruments are played to conceal them from the initiands, where props necessary for the initiation are stored, and where participants in mimes prepare themselves before entering the vainya to perform. The context of the staging of male initiations always involves a state of institutionalized secrecy which is imposed by the total exclusion of women, children and unauthorized males from the vainya and by the subjection of the initiands to the initiation events and instructions which are unknown to them.

A major part of the process of male initiation consists of impressing the initiands with the necessity of keeping male initiation knowledge secret from women, children and unauthorized males. This is done both by occasionally sending men outside the vainya enclosure to check that the women are engaged in their singing and that no one outside is close enough to overhear what is going on and by various ways of camouflaging events and instructions. Techniques of camouflaging wakyera instructions consist of talking quietly or delegating men to sing everyday songs to mask the words of wakyera songs, as in the case of the ummara taroah ihi and wakyera ihi about prohibited acts and foods. In the iyavati nrhaise memera imitation of women, men carrying leafy branches using the women's dance steps and sing pig killing, pig fertility and yam fertility songs in exaggerated falsetto voices. These types of song are used not as metaphors to promote the initiand's growth but because they are sung in public ceremonies by both men and women and thus provide a suitable vehicle based on reality for the burlesque of the way in which women actually sing. Given that the words of the songs are known from pig killing, pig fertility and yam fertility ceremonies, the singing of these songs is an effective way of concealing the true nature of the nrhaise memera from anyone listening outside the vainya.

The importance of the spirit cry instruments played during ummara and iyavati initiations is a result of the way they are played as an act of institutionalized deception directed against women, children and uninitiated males. Instruments are made for each initiation, are played in the vainya enclosure, are never brought into the vainya and are not conserved as 'cult objects'. To the women and children outside the vainya, the instruments are the cries of unknown wera spirits and to the initiands inside the vainya they are the cries of nameless wera spirits referred to as 'Old Man'. For the initiated men who make and play them, they are instruments which make the cries of

named spirits of different sexes but this is virtually the extent of any cosmological elaboration of the spirit nature of the instruments either in initiation instruction or general male knowledge. The significance of the spirit cry instruments derives from the way in which they are used to create the illusion of the presence of wailing spirits, directed against women and children outside the vainya and the initiands inside the vainya and their impact is dependent upon the conditions of context which are always enforced for the enactment of male initiations. These conditions are the exclusion of women from the proximity of the vainya and from male initiation knowledge and the use of the initiation instruments to frighten the initiands inside the vainya who later on, as initiated men will learn how to make and play them.

#### Acts Performed During Male Initiations to Promote the Initiand's Health.

Just as all the events and instruction of ummara and iyavati are secret because of the context in which they are presented, the purpose of all the initiation events and instructions administered to the initiands is to promote a state of social and physical good health. In so far as any kind of explanation can be elicited from adult men for the staging of male initiations other than custom, it is that they give the initiands knowledge and promote their growth into maturity as adult men. Certain procedures are carried out during initiations which are specifically directed at improving the initiand's physical state. What follows reviews these acts carried out to promote health in order to demonstrate how the therapeutic techniques used on initiands are used in everyday curative practice by adult men and women and how it is the form in which they are presented in the context of male initiations which gives them the status of male secret knowledge.

Nose-bleeding is performed on both ummara male initiands and kam karura female initiands to release potentially dangerous blood from the mother lodged in the initiand's sinuses since gestation and is also used as a general cure for headache and sinus pain by Ommura adults. Penis bleeding is performed on initiands during iyavati to strengthen the organ. All blood drawn from the initiands is disposed of in running water, an Ommura procedure to protect against the use of such leavings for sorcery by enemies. Rubbing or beating the skin with taroah stinging nettles is a technique used by the Ommura to improve the condition of the skin and general health. Initiands are beaten with taroah in conjunction with the singing of wakyera taroah songs and the staging of wakyera taroah mimes during ummara initiations, the husband-to-be is rubbed with taroah during the pre-marriage ceremonies, and female initiands are beaten with taroah during kam karura initiations. Bleeding the nose and rubbing the skin with taroah, the explicitly health promoting operations performed on ummara initiands, are also performed on female initiands and are used in medical practice by Ommura adults. The conditions under which they are carried out and the wakyera events and instructions which accompany their enactment are specific to ummara initiations and make them an integral part of male initiations.

Different formulae or acts for promoting growth accompany the ummara nose bleeding in different villages and these formulae conform to Ommura general medical practice. During the Asara nose-bleeding, each initiand's foreskin was held down on a piece of red sugar cane with an arrow and they were given a bundle of leaves and an arrow to hold in each hand. During the Moussouri nyako-iyavati, all present ate portions of a health promoting mixture of ginger and salt and an arched shell nose ornament worn by adult men was held over the heads of the initiands. After the taroah beatings in the Asara ummara, one pair of men hit the cheeks of the initiands and initiates and another pair of men hit the

cheeks of the adult men with red taroah leaves and wild banana bark. The throwing of auguvera leaves on the laps of the iyavati initiands by the nrhaise memera dancers and the burning of the leaves in the fire afterwards, is also a health promoting act.

Acts which are explicitly performed to promote the initiand's health have been summarized in order to stress that they are part of Ommura public medical practice and are given the status of wakyera secret male knowledge by the events and instructions which occur in conjunction with their staging in the context of male initiations. The acts or formulas for promoting growth may utilize specifically male objects but the forms in which they occur are basic to Ommura curing techniques.

#### The Problem of Male Symbolism

Given that the purpose of the cumulative stages of male initiation is to bring about a transition, in terms of health, growth and degrees of knowledge, from youth to the state of adult manhood, one might expect to find a high degree of male 'symbolism' involving the use of attributes or objects associated with adult manhood in the initiation events and instructions. Because of the contextual conditions established for the staging of male initiations every aspect of initiation events and instructions is to some degree part of an exclusively male sphere of esoteric practical knowledge. For this reason it is rather meaningless to reduce aspects of initiation events and instructions to metaphors of adult manhood but an examination of phenomena which could possibly be interpreted in this way illuminates our central argument about the predominance of context of use.

The spirit cry instruments are made and played by men in conditions of secrecy as an act of institutionalized deception directed against the women and children outside the vainya and the initiands inside the vainya. They could be interpreted as objects which through their use represent

or symbolize male initiations or male dominance over women on account of their role in the male initiation complex which totally excludes women from male initiation knowledge. As there is little cosmological elaboration of their spirit nature, this interpretation of the spirit cry instruments would be based on the obvious fact that knowledge of how to make and play these instruments is restricted to adult men and the conditions under which they are played in the context of initiations.

The Wo Wo warcry is chanted by the adult men during male initiations as a signal that collective male activity is being directed at the initiands. Unlike the spirit cry instruments which are only ever used in the context of male initiations, the Wo Wo warcry is chanted by men during fighting, ih singsings, male initiations and the ua-ha curing ceremony in which armed men chase away the illness causing agent by a display of armed strength. From the contexts in which it is used it is safe to conclude that the chanting of the Wo Wo warcry signals male aggression and strength in contexts of collective male activity. Wo Wo is chanted during the nose-bleeding procession and taroah beatings and at other times during male initiations when the adult men are enacting events and instructions for the benefit of the initiands.

Objects associated with the activities of adult men are used in wakyera initiation events as efficacious props. In the Asara nose-bleeding, each initiand's foreskin was pinned with an arrow to a red sugar cane - a crop cultivated exclusively by men - and they were given an arrow to hold in each hand. In the Moussouri nose/penis-bleeding, an arched shell nose ornament of the kind worn by adult men was held over the initiand's head as a health promoting act. As the general purpose of the male initiations is to raise male youth to the status of adult men, it is appropriate and even necessary that objects associated with adult male activities are used in initiation events.

In much the same way male behaviour and the physical characteristics of adult manhood are used in wakyera initiation events as the model for the initiand's successful growth into sexual maturity and strength. The taroah mimes use an exaggerated burlesque of aggressive male sexual behaviour and male nakedness combined with the use of taroah to make the point that taroah use promotes health, strength and virility.

As has been demonstrated above, a quest for 'male symbolism' becomes a somewhat meaningless exercise in generalities given that the contextual conditions enacted for the staging of male initiations dictate that all aspects of male initiations are by definition male. It was for this reason that semantic analysis has been concentrated instead on discrete spheres of initiation events and instructions and the degree to which they combined through the stages of ummara, iyavati and the pre-marriage ceremony to constitute a cumulative system.

The Forms in Which Initiation Instructions are Presented and their Capacity for Elaboration.

Ummara and iyavati instruction is presented in the form of verbal instructions, songs, myths and instructive mimes. The particular form in which the different spheres of initiation instructions are presented is an obvious factor in the degree of elaboration and complexity which occurs in each sphere because the form of presentation includes criteria for the incorporation of new material into each sphere and subsumes the contextual conditions of use inherent in the articulation of content for each sphere. These forms through which the various spheres of initiation instruction are conveyed have developed over time through the repeated staging of male initiations. By analyzing them in terms of structure, content and function, one is investigating the degree of internal logical coherence and this has important implications for the problem of the way in which Ommura male ideology is transmitted through the system of male initiations in the form of secret initiation

instructions.

The verbal instructions given during ummara, iyavati and the pre-marriage ceremonies constitute, as a whole, the most comprehensive definition of Ommura male ideology which is articulated in initiations. Often expressed in idioms of reciprocity, they outline the duties and obligations binding on initiates regarding a variety of social relationships and relations between men and women. Adult men lecture initiands with these instructions which are not wakyera, are referred to as makyakya ('talk'), a word used to describe public speech making, and are cited in public disputes resulting from breaches of the norms which they outline. Because it uses the medium of everyday speech, virtually any new instructions can be transmitted through what we have termed 'verbal instruction', the adult men lecturing the initiands.

Taroah ihi and wakyera ihi about prohibited acts and foods are wakyera instructions presented through the medium of songs. These songs consist of an image section which is sung by the specialists who introduce the songs and a chorus which the audience of adult men join in singing. Images of taroah ihi are based around aspects of the use of taroah, few of these images are constructed from exclusively male knowledge of taroah and the images of the songs are not explained to the initiands. In contrast, the images of the wakyera ihi about prohibited foods and acts are explained to initiands but there is no explanation about the qualities which make the things referred to prohibited. The images of wakyera ihi are composed, according to their degree of complexity, of repetition of the name of the thing or object referred to, words describing the sound it makes, or male knowledge of its habits. Taroah and wakyera songs are incorporated from neighbouring areas and are sung in their dialects or languages of origin and often several different wakyera songs are sung about a prohibited food or act. Esoteric names are used for taroah and prohibited acts and foods in the songs.

As long as they conform to the criteria for taroah ihi or wakyera ihi, any number of new songs can be incorporated into these spheres of wakyera instruction because initiation custom dictates only that some taroah and wakyera songs must be sung during ummara initiations without specifying the precise songs, sequence or exact number. Setting aside the problem of the images of individual songs, it can be argued that complexity in the sphere of taroah ihi and wakyera ihi takes the form of the amount or number of songs known to initiation specialists. In that comprehensive knowledge consists of the number of different songs known to adult male specialists and that new songs are regularly incorporated from neighbouring groups, it is obvious that a fair amount of variation and change in content occurs within the framework of each sphere.

Wakyera myths (uri) about the activities of mythical ancestors (uri) are told in ummara and iyavati initiations. Uri play a more prominent role in iyavati instructions and concern the origins of prohibited areas, iyavati customs, and the sexual and marital relations between men and women while the relatively few ummara uri are about prohibited acts and foods and the therapeutic use of taroah. The wakyera uri used in initiations vary from village to village and from initiation to initiation but all adult men know the basic plots of the local repertoire of wakyera uri. Uri are narrated by adult male specialists who know esoteric details and any songs which occur in the myths. As in the case of taroah ihi and wakyera ihi, it is the extent of knowledge of the details and songs which gives certain adult men the qualifications to perform as initiation specialists who narrate the myths. Repeated narration of initiation myths over time has led to an elaboration or development of esoteric details and songs.

Comprehensive knowledge of the wakyera songs and myths thus consists of the extent of esoteric knowledge and detail known to specialists and not all knowledge is necessarily made public in a given initiation. In

contrast, the instructive mimes (memeras) are portrayals of instructive situations designed to be immediately comprehensible to the initiands which are enacted by the younger adult men under the supervision of older specialists in accordance with convention. The messages of instructive mimes can be easily deciphered, they are used to intimidate and instruct the initiands, and audience judgement of whether they have been well staged is based primarily on the quality of the performance as entertainment. Analysis of the instructive mimes reveals that they are constructed to be interpreted literally as exaggerated portrayals of archetypal situations which are in some way instructive.

The taroah mimes consist of an exaggerated burlesque of male sexual behaviour performed by naked men using taroah to put across the message that taroah use promotes health, growth and strength. In the Asara ummara instructive mimes, arrows representing male property were laid out in a row and the initiands were told never to steal. A man holding black bird feathers in his hand as a sign of adult male status and a kyao kina shell ornament in his mouth to represent sweet potatoes or food, because kyao shells are equated with sweet potatoes in the sweet potato fertility ceremony, squatted over a hole in the ground (toilet) in mime of the act of defecation. The initiands were told that they must obey the adult men and stay out of their way when they were defecating. A seemingly unconscious and very ill man suddenly regained consciousness to join with the other men in beating the initiands with taroah. Instructions were given to the initiands that they must always look after their relatives when they were sick. In the Moussouri iyavati sugar cane mime, two men each held up a stick to represent the staking up of sugar cane and the initiands were told that after cutting sugar cane they must replant the top and stake it up. In the nrhaise memera, men dance the women's dance steps, sing yam fertility, pig fertility and pig killing songs in exaggerated female falsetto voices and carry branches of auquvera leaves which they throw on the initiands

laps to be later burned in the fire. The throwing of the leaves in some way promotes the initiand's health and the mime derives its significance from the incongruity - the overemphasis of gender differences - of the miming of female behaviour by men in the context of an iyavati initiation.

The instructive mimes consist of the acting out in mime form of situations which in some way convey an instructive message related to other aspects of initiation instruction. As they are performed by the younger adult men under the supervision of the older men and contain few hidden meanings, they differ markedly from the wakyera songs and myths which are known in their entirety only to adult male specialists. Mimes are performed during public ihi singsings and mimes of aggressive male sexual behaviour are staged during kam karura female initiations so the mime form is a feature of Ommura social gatherings and the wakyera instructive mimes derive their significance from the context in which they occur as part of the initiation instructions.

The forms in which initiation instructions are presented have been analyzed because they reveal the flexibility of the system of initiation instruction. In order to make generalizations about these forms it is necessary to distinguish the verbal instructions and instructive mimes from the wakyera songs and myths because of differences in the way in which they are administered and the way in which they incorporate new content. The verbal instructions use the medium of everyday speech and thus have infinite capacity to accommodate changes and adaptation in instruction. Instructive mimes which are performed by the younger men under the supervision of specialists are limited by the mime form which presents easily decipherable 'instructive' situations composed of elements derived from the everyday experience of Ommura males as play acting. Only specialists have a comprehensive knowledge of the taroah songs, wakyera songs about prohibited acts and foods and the wakyera myths. No formal sequence is imposed on the singing of the taroah

or wakyera songs and the precise songs sung out of individual repertoires of known songs varies from initiation to initiation. Often several wakyera songs will be sung about the same object and taroah and wakyera songs are continually being composed or adopted from neighbouring areas in the dialects of origin. Although the basic plots of wakyera myths are known to all Ommura men, only specialists who narrate the myths know all the details and songs which cue events in the plots.

The most important point to emerge from this analysis is that although there are criteria and rules for each form of initiation instruction to which all phenomena classified as belonging to these forms must conform, a great majority of the actual instructive phenomena of a given form are interchangeable. This is most apparent in the spheres of specialist knowledge - the taroah and wakyera songs and wakyera myths rather than in the verbal instructions and instructive mimes. It can be argued that the fact that the use of forms or genres of initiation instruction allow for the substitution, adaptation, and incorporation of content reveals a significant flexibility in the system of initiation instruction.

#### The Degree of Ideological Elaboration Found in Male Initiation Events and Instructions.

The basic question behind this analysis has been why the repetition or routinization of male initiations over historical time has not led to the development of a system of codification whereby initiation events and instructions contain statements or meanings which combine to present a coherent exposition of Ommura male ideology. Behind the posing of this question lies an ideal type structuralist model of a taxonomically organized logically integrated conceptual system which can be charted out of the events and instructions of an initiation system, which the Ommura analysis contradicts. The Ommura male initiations which are based around payment from the father to the initiand's eldest mother's brother and payment to participants in shares of initiation feast food

have all the standard features of the classical anthropological definition of what constitutes a male initiation. This system of male initiations, consisting of ummara, iyavati and the pre-marriage ceremony, is designed to promote initiands to state of social and physical good health through a series of events and instructions specific to each stage but cumulative in their effect. Ummara and iyavati initiations consist of the presentation of events and instructions specific to each initiation which as discrete spheres are complex and detailed but derive their significance primarily from the context in which they are used.

The basic ideological premises of male initiations are conveyed by the contextual conditions under which initiation events and instructions are administered rather than in the content of the ummara and iyavati instructions which is secondary to the conditions of use. By context I am referring to the general conditions of use under which initiation events and instructions are enacted. Male initiations are carried out in the men's house in conditions of secrecy which entail the total exclusion of women and children and unauthorized males and the process of initiation consists of subjecting the initiands and initiates to the authority and superior knowledge of the adult men who act as a collectivity to administer initiation events and instructions. Most of the initiation events and instructions are wakjera ('secret') because of the contextual conditions under which they occur and additional precautions are taken to ensure that those outside the men's house cannot see or hear them. Ummara and iyavati events and instructions derive their efficacy and social significance as secret initiation knowledge primarily because they are only ever articulated in the framework provided by the contextual conditions under which male initiations are staged.

The events and instructions of ummara and iyavati initiations constitute a cumulative progression to adult male knowledge and those of iyavati, the higher stage, are concerned with more advanced themes than those of ummara. Certain spheres are used to differentiate initiation statuses - the

different emblems of rank and ornaments worn by initiands of the different stages, and the different spirit cry instruments played for ummara and iyavati. The health promoting operation of bleeding initiand's noses and introducing them to the therapeutic properties of taroah stinging nettles are part of both ummara and kam karura female initiations so we can conclude that it is the wakyera events and instructions which occur in conjunction with these operations in ummara which given them their significance as an exclusively male phenomenon.

From this it might follow that because initiation events and instructions are male secret knowledge, they would always be presented in an unchanging formal order and that there would be no variation in the events and information presented in one initiation or another. In fact there is a great deal of substitution and no fixed sequence in the presentation of initiation events and instructions. Even what one might presume to be the central operation of ummara initiation, the bleeding of the initiand's nose to release potentially dangerous blood, can be deferred to a later date if the initiands are considered to be too young, although the unbled initiands are still taken to the stream enclosure and washed. It is possible to distinguish between events and instructions which are enacted by the collectivity of men - nose-bleeding, the instructive mimes, the playing of the spirit cry instruments, the verbal instructions about norms of behaviour which are not wakyera because they are cited outside the context of initiations - and specialist knowledge - taroah songs, wakyera songs and myths.

Specialist knowledge is measure in terms of the amount of items and extent of details committed to memory and the specialist thus has a more comprehensive knowledge of certain spheres of initiation instruction than other adult men, a disparity in access to knowledge which is not so prominent in the initiation events and instructions enacted by the adult men acting as a collectivity. Convention dictates only that some taroah songs, wakyera songs and myths must be presented and does not

specify which precise ones or how many. A number of secret names are used to refer to taroah in the taroah songs, to certain prohibited objects in the wakyera ihi, and to some of the spirit cry instruments. This use of secret names, most of which are either archaic or have been incorporated from neighbouring dialects or languages is a result of the process whereby provided it conforms to the conventions of existing genres, new information is continually being incorporated into wakyera secret knowledge often in neighbouring dialects and languages. Specialist initiation knowledge is therefore complex and occurs in the form of specific genres but its content is variable and changing and has not become formalized into a static corpus of initiation instruction.

Repetition of ummara and iyavati initiations over historical time has led to a situation where the basic ideological premises of the institution of male initiations are demarcated by the contextual conditions which are enacted for their staging. The contextual conditions delineate the social framework in which the events and instructions that comprise ummara and iyavati initiations take place and give them their social significance. Ummara and iyavati events and instructions are used to promote the initiands to the state of social knowledge and physical health of the adult men who administer the initiations but they have not developed into a unified exposition of a conceptual system or a formalized invariable procedural series. Spheres of initiation events and instructions are detailed and complex in terms of content and take the form of genres with definite conventions for the incorporation of new material but sequence, number and items vary from initiation to initiation. For these reasons, it can be concluded that it is the contextual conditions which provide the basic social and ideological framework in which initiation events and instructions occur. Although ~~this~~ 'system' can incorporate a great amount of change in the content or even forms of initiation events and instructions, any change in the contextual conditions would totally alter the institution of male

16. A Review of Previous Work from the Perspective of the  
Analysis of Ommura Male Initiations.

The primary question investigated in the preceding analysis has been why the routinization or repetition of male initiations over historical time has not led to the development of a system of codification whereby initiation events and instructions contain statements or meanings which combine to present a coherent exposition of Ommura male ideology. What follows is a review of anthropological work on the general interpretation of ritual and on male initiation in New Guinea societies which situates the findings of the Ommura analysis within a wider perspective. Although it is generally assumed that an analysis of male initiations - 'ritual' - is a search for an underlying conceptual or ideological unity, the analysis of Ommura male initiations has been an investigation into the degree of a lack of unity, a semantic analysis of the extent of complexity and elaboration which occurs in the different spheres of initiation events and instructions. The principal conclusion was that the basic ideological premises of male initiation are conveyed by the contextual conditions under which events and instructions are administered rather than in their content which is secondary to the conditions of use. Ommura male initiations, have all the standard features of the classical anthropological definition of what constitutes a male initiation as a rite de passage. While taking these standard features of 'ritual' into account, the analysis has operated from the assumption that classical anthropological definitions of the social universal 'ritual' produce predictable self-generating conclusions which tend to eliminate or obscure the more significant cultural specificities.

If the conclusions about the importance of context of use as determining the form of male initiation events and instructions had been presented, devoid of Ommura ethnography, as the conclusion of a review of anthropological theories of ritual and male initiations, they would be

dismissed as a truism, a teleology, a return to functionalism or a tedious presentation of the location of a gap in the theoretical domain masquerading as a solution. What passes as a contribution to theory in anthropology often consists of the author presenting a critical summary of all recent and past works on a particular subject and ending with a conclusion which is nothing more than an idiosyncratic reshuffling of a deck of cards, the pack of previous works. The only way out of this impasse whereby the subject matter - in this case 'ritual' and 'male initiations' - automatically constricts analysis into the possible permutations within the limited domain of existing theories is through the analysis of new fieldwork data which answers the questions implicit in existing approaches but goes on to ask different questions. Most theories of the interpretation of ritual are presented as being universally applicable to all societies so that the same processes can be found at work in the folk manifestations of the major world religions and in New Guinea rituals. Ommura male initiations have been analysed because they are the most important ongoing Ommura social institution and can therefore reveal something about the dynamics of Ommura social organization, not as a way of restating existing anthropological definitions of the phenomenon 'ritual'.

Anthropological work on the subject of ritual continues to generate a limited number of perspectives which are so general as to be irrelevant to this work on Ommura male initiations. The most basic formulation that any social event which is socially recreated over periods of historical time and therefore engenders rules which define it as a social event, a 'ritual', continues to be a useful orientation but does not assist very much in determining cultural specificities. Recent work on ritual is caught in a trap, a situation resulting from the need to produce general theories building on previous work, of arguing that rites de passage are expositions, decipherable through the application

of structural analysis of the conceptual system of a particular society or that they are events designed and used to uphold the status quo of the traditional authority which administers them. A double bind resulting from the application of the symbolic form and social function approaches. Van Gennep's classic work The Rites of Passage sets out the implications in terms of socially organized time of the way in which rites de passage as rituals serve to demarcate a state of transition between statuses in the life-cycles of individuals or groups as part of their subjection to social authority. Turner's The Ritual Process : Structure and Anti-Structure defines rituals from a structuralist perspective whereby rituals occur within the domain of a conceptual system and are constructed out of elements or transformations of elements from this domain.

In their introduction to the book Secular Ritual, Moore and Meyerhoff define ritual in such general terms that it becomes nothing more than any cultural event repeatedly enacted in accordance with general universal rules. They state that the formal properties of ritual are:

1. Repetition. 2. Acting. 3. Special behaviour or stylization. 4. Order. 5. Evocative presentational style: staging. 6. The Collective dimension, by definition collective ritual has a social meaning. Its very occurrence contains a social message (1977 : 7-8)

The 'dimensions of ritual outcome' consist of :

1. Explicit purpose. 2. Explicit symbols and messages
3. Implicit statements. 4. Social relationships affected.
5. Culture versus chaos (1977 : 15-16).

Ritual is any social form which has these formal properties and dimensions of ritual outcome :

Ritual is in part a form, and a form which gives certain meanings to its contents. The work of ritual, then, is partly attributable to its morphological characteristics. Its medium is part of its message. It can contain almost

anything for any aspect of social life, any aspect of behaviour or ideology may lend itself to ritualization (Nadel 1954:99). And once used in a collective ceremony, whether performed for the first time or the thousandth, the circumstances of having been put in the ritual form and mode has a tradition - like effect (1977:8)

Using their criteria every social event becomes a ritual - a suitable object for analysis - but the crucial problem of differentiation in ritual forms becomes lost in the generalities of definition.

In her article 'The Power of Rights' La Fontaine argues that initiation rituals consist of the self-validating traditional wisdom of the elders being administered by the elders as a manifestation of their authority and writes :

Initiation rituals create occasions in which traditional wisdom is communicated, tested, and vindicated as the source of the power of rights. (1977 : 434).

Bloch's work is an extreme example of this double bind in current approaches to ritual. He argues that the symbolic form approaches have the effect of creating the illusion of cognitive consonance by placing all facets of social life within the domain of a static, all - encompassing conceptual system which is nothing more than the ideology of the dominant political interests. Following the social function approach he argues that the phenomena, irrelevant to ongoing socio-economic forces, reified by the symbolic form anthropologists is nothing more than a form of social control used by the dominant political authority to maintain their interests. The simplicity of this approach is such that there would be no point in analyzing the content of television commercials to map out socially significant idealized images about the role of housewife/mother and the family, the sexual relationships between men and women, status and certain types of possessions, because the only important thing about t.v. commercials is that they are advertisements produced for the purpose of selling other products.

In 'Symbols, Song, Dance and Features of Articulation, or is Religion an Extreme Form of Political Authority', Bloch criticizes the structuralist interpretation of symbols in rituals as constituting units of meaning and concludes that rituals and religions consist of formalized codes which are used to maintain the power of traditional authority.

Religion is the last place to find anything 'explained' because, as we have seen, religious communication rules out the very tools of explanation, which, when reintroduced are considered sacrilegious or irreverent (1974 : 71).

He contrasts the creative potential of speech with the formalized codes which are used in rituals to support traditional authority writing that :

Formalization has the effect of removing the possible alternatives from a mode of communication (1975 : 21).

Bloch argues that through the application of their theories on the limited 'ritual' aspects of different societies, by ignoring more dynamic socio-economic aspects, the structuralists have created, tidy, static, logically integrated models of social structure.

This means that not only is it easy to build up social structure if one concentrates only on ritual communication, but also that we find in it, given to us in the very words of the people we study, the academic theory of social structure (1977 : 286).

Bloch is a prisoner of the same anthropological concepts which he criticizes and concepts such as formalization and traditional authority merely constitute a shifting in emphasis as regards what has already been formulated and reformulated to the point of impoverishment.

What follows is a review of works on New Guinea that are relevant to the Ommura study both in terms of their ethnographic subject matter and because of the theories which the various anthropologists have used in their works. The pioneer work on the interpretation of New Guinea

initiation rituals was Bateson's Naven, remarkable for its use of the concept of 'schizogenesis' and other basic principles of systems theory. Rappaport's Pigs for the Ancestors is constructed around a socio-ecological functionalist model held together with concepts from systems theory and a quotation from it will suffice as criticism.

Maring ritual, in short, operates not only as a homeostat - maintaining a number of variables that comprise the total system within ranges of viability - but also as a transducer - 'translating' changes in the state of one subsystem into information that can produce changes in a second subsystem. It should be recalled here that the transduction operation of the ritual cycle is such that the participation of local populations in respect to warfare, which is important in the redistribution of land and personnel but is also dangerous, is not continuous. It could therefore be argued that the ritual transducer maintains coherence between subsystems at levels above or below which the perpetuation of the total system might be endangered (1968 : 229).

Gell's Metamorphosis of the Cassowaries : Umeda Society, Language and Ritual is an extreme case of structural analysis in which Umeda society is presented as being held together by a logically integrated conceptual system which permeates every facet of Umeda social existence, especially language and is manifested in metaphors deciphered by the anthropologist. Gell writes :

I mention these instances not to impugn Umeda naivety, but to illustrate the unity of their conception of the world, the way in which all the separate domains of experience, the most diverse phenomena, were related back to a single over-riding model; the organism. The triple analogy I have been describing which obtains between the structure of the body, the structure of trees, and the structure of society, is the fundamental instance of this. And not only is the organism the model for structural relationships but also of processes (1975 : 154-5).

In Wagner's Habu : The Innovation of Meaning in Daribi Culture he argues that :

... meaning is created by the formation of metaphors involving the formal elements of a culture (1972 : 7).

He writes that :

...the conceptual basis of a culture can never be summed up as a logical ordering or closed system of internally consistent propositions (1972 : 10).

His solution to this impasse which consists of arguing that meaning is innovated by transformations performed on existing metaphors does not free his argument from the limitations created by acceptance of the premises of structuralism. This point is demonstrated by the following quotation :

The interchange between signification and metaphorization, wherein each draws upon the other, produces a situation in which meaning is a function of change as well as of formal signification and in which the creative aspect of change is metaphoric innovation. Any meaning which impinges upon, or 'opposes', a central cultural tenet or proposition must take the form of an innovation upon it, a metaphoric expression involving the tenet itself, and in fact metaphorizing it (1972 : 169).

In his most recent book, Lethal Speech : Daribi Myth as Symbolic Obviation, Wagner expands the concept of metaphoric innovation to obviation and myths are interpreted as obviation sequences.

Obviation is the effect of supplanting a conventional semiotic relation with a innovative and self-contained relation; it is the definitive paradigm of semiotic transformation. When applied on the scale of individual words or other symbolic elements, obviation takes the form of a trope or metaphor; when applied on the scale of semiotic modality (the realm of human responsibility and of the innate), obviation assumes the force of a major cultural derivation or demonstration (1978 : 31).

Wagner has developed the concept of obviation out of his previous use of the concept of metaphorization to avoid any inherent implications that his analysis of the social creativity of the process of the production of cultural forms constitutes a closed system like the formal structuralism of Levi-Strauss.

As its ternary dialectical form suggests, myth is at once open to the shared associations and meanings of 'culture' (including 'normative' formulations) and closed - or perhaps self-closing, in the sense that it develops these shared associations in unique realizations. Closure defines the particularism of myth - its integrity as a nonsystemic event, and it also provides a measure of the degree to which the invention of one experiential realm out of another can never be reduced to 'system' (1978 : 51).

The relationship which he uncovers in the ethnographic data using the concept of obviation are subordinated to his general purpose which is to construct a universal semiotic theory of the symbolic process.

Hallpike's Bloodshed and Vengeance in the Papuan Mountains interprets Tuade social organization as deficient, Heraclitean as opposed to Aristotelian, constituting a kind of negative ideal type in which violence plays an integral part in determining all social relationships. In his model, the Tuade 'Heraclitean Cognitive Orientation' consists of 'No Symbolism', 'No concept of the social order', 'No time reckoning and quantification', 'The individual as creative', and 'The passions as the appropriate mode of social interaction' (1977 : 281).

Most of the works based on exchange theory suffer from the fact that in applying the principles of exchange, which can be found universally, on New Guinea societies that have been characterized as 'loosely structured', the anthropologist imposes over - formalized structuralist models which distort ethnographic processes. In Exchange in the Social Structure of the Orokaiva Schwimmer analyzes the 'laws of the exchange system' (1973 : 217) as the underlying model on which the symbolic system of the Orokaiva is based. The exchange principle provides the mechanism whereby Orokaiva social structure can be presented as a coherent unity and he deals with social change by describing it as consisting of transformations on his model.

Rubel and Rosman's 'Your Own Pigs You May Not Eat : A Comparative Study of New Guinea Societies' argues that ceremonial exchange provides the underlying structure of the New Guinea societies they compare and that it determines other variables of social organization. The drawback of

their structuralist approach is that it reduces 'ethnographic facts' through over-formalization into coherent logical models which virtually obliterate the dynamic social processes that characterize these societies. A discussion of certain points in their model of the 'Prototypical structure' of New Guinea societies in the light of the Ommura analysis will suffice to illustrate this criticism. Point i.: 'Presence of rules making it obligatory to exchange' (1978 : 321) is the essence of Rubel and Rosmans' argument about New Guinea societies and verbal instructions given to Ommura initiands which are presented in terms of idioms of reciprocity have been described. Problems arise from the way they use the universally found norm of exchange to connect and integrate other spheres of social existence.

Model point m. illustrates this :

Though women are central to the reproduction of society through childbearing and central to the reproduction of crops, fertility is symbolically controlled by the actions of men. This is accomplished through rituals enlisting the assistance of the spirit world. Flutes which are associated with spirits and with men, and are forbidden to women, play a central role. Sacrifice and the feeding of flutes may form a part of these rituals (1978 : 322).

From their control of exchange men are accorded control over 'fertility' by virtue of their administration of rituals which involve enlisting the aid of the spirit world through sacrifices and the playing of sacred flutes, vehicles for the manifestation of or communication with the spirits. An over-formalized model has been created whereby fertility is controlled by ceremonial exchanges - reified into 'sacrifices' - made by men through ritual to the spirit worlds to which the playing of sacred flutes provides access. If we use Ommura social organization as a 'prototypical structure' it is obvious that our analysis, especially the section on the spirit cry instruments, refutes Rubel and Rosmans over-formalized model. Sacred flutes were or are only ever played in certain culture areas of New Guinea, were never common to the whole of New Guinea, and their social importance varies

from society to society.

This is not to argue that Rubel and Rosmans' structural analysis does not chart out obvious basic features of New Guinea societies such as point n. :

Ritual separation of men and women. Sacred objects, mainly flutes, are kept from women in a ritual house which women cannot enter (1978 : 322).

The problem is that their variety of structural enterprise leads to the creation of a prototypical structure which is as complex and integrated as possible. Point o. is :

Importance of male initiation ceremonies. Boys are separated from their mothers, secluded, and taught the secrets of male ceremonialism and of the flutes. Initiation rites are carried out within the autonomous group which is divided into two sides. The opposite side acts as initiator, mother's brother performing the role if there are no ordeals, or a surrogate in the opposite moiety if ordeals are involved. Thus at initiation the two sides are exchanging ritual services. The culmination of initiation is a ceremonial distribution by the host group to other politically autonomous groups (1978 : 322).

It has been stressed in the analysis of the Ommura material that male and female initiations are centred around payment made by the father to the initiand's eldest mother's brother which is a prerequisite for the staging of an initiation although the absence of either father or mother's brother and payment does not mean that an initiation cannot be staged. Again Rubel and Rosman are striving to make New Guinea social structures more complex than they necessarily are, turning relationships between relatives into relationships between unified lineages, an initiation feast distributed to kin and participants into a ceremonial exchange between autonomous lineages, and initiation into a symbolic exchange of ritual services which reduplicates the principles of other sectors of ceremonial exchange. One can only repeat that the conclusions their study produces are predictable given the structural analysis they apply.

By far the best recent monograph on New Guinea initiations is Frederik Barth's Ritual and Knowledge Among the Baktaman of New Guinea. Male

initiations are analyzed because they are 'the most didactically powerful organization' (1975 : 260), in Baktaman society and the social praxis of male initiation is the result of three factors; the segregation of men and women, the segregation of the male population into a small number of residential collectives, and the formal barriers of secrecy (1975 : 256). A more detailed analysis of Barth's Baktaman has been presented elsewhere (Johnson : 1976) and the purpose of reviewing this work is to stress the positive aspects of Barth's use of communications theory in his analysis. He writes :

Briefly I will argue that the dynamism of a sector of knowledge depends both (i) on the potential of the major codifications; i.e. the fertility and capacity for precision and development of the symbolic apparatus by which it is handled, and (ii) on the praxis, i.e. the social organization of statuses and tasks that channel the communication (1975 : 239).

Barth concludes that :

The force of sacred symbols in constructing a Baktaman reality arises from secrecy rather than a logical coherence of form. But secrecy entails a pattern of distribution whereby most actors are excluded from knowledge. This exclusion affects the very process whereby such reality is socially constructed, and so emerge the characteristic features of Baktaman tradition; at once poorly shared, poorly systematized and puzzling and groping in thought and imagery, while yet creative, complex, moving and rich (1975 : 265).

The analysis of Ommura male initiations is an attempt to go beyond Barth's use of the concept of secrecy which in operation provides a means of explaining, by presenting the conditions of use rather than by analyzing specific content, why Baktaman ritual knowledge does not conform to the model of a logically integrated conceptual system. Barth writes of the Baktaman sacred symbols :

Their relevance is overwhelmingly to agricultural growth and fertility and they encode this in the manner of a mystery cult (1975 : 236).

It is hardly surprising given the nature of New Guinea societies, that Baktaman sacred symbols would be concerned with agricultural growth and fertility as these two processes inevitably constitute major social preoccupations and are basic to the perpetuation of Baktaman society. The problem addressed in the Ommura study has been the extent and degree to which there are any 'sacred symbols' in Ommura male initiations and the conclusions differ from Barth's interpretation of the Baktaman institution.

In Day of Shining Red : An Essay on Understanding Ritual, Lewis contrasts his understanding of the meaning of Gnau puberty rites with the presuppositions of general theories of ritual. The Gnau do not have a word to isolate the concept of ritual (1980 : 39). Restrictions on access to esoteric knowledge in Gnau rites parallel those found in the initiation ceremonies of other New Guinea societies. Lewis writes :

The Gnau do not have a style of ritual marked by didactic explanations of the symbolism of what they do. What is done without necessary explanation is open to comment and reflection chiefly in the light of what is common knowledge. Some special knowledge is restricted by sex, age or other criteria. Restriction relates primarily to the spells and secret names, to certain actions (1980 : 141).

Regarding shared meanings he writes :

A degree of consensus about some items may be reached because everyone shares the relevant knowledge and experience. A degree of consensus might also be achieved because the meaning or interpretation can hardly be missed once one has seen the rites done (1980 : 142).

Gnau Tambin male puberty rites were so flexible that in the absence of a son, the eldest daughter could be initiated into the male ceremony in the men's house provided that she did not witness penis bleeding. Lewis cites one incident of this occurring as evidence that the existence of male puberty rites was not a result of 'sexual antagonism' (1980 : 181-2).

Lewis criticizes existing theories of ritual for imposing systems of meaning from outside onto the participants' reasons for enacting rites.

To presume that ritual is essentially a form of communication prejudices what is to be found out. The presumption leads to a search for meanings when the actors in the situation do not name them. The emphasis on communication can lead to a contrived intellectualisation of ritual in which the conviction that it is to be understood by means of a linguistic model distorts observation, and provokes such ingenuity in detection that the actors are told what they mean when they do not know it (1980 : 117).

He writes that :

The search for cognitive content and possible symbols in other people's rites outweighs concern for what people may feel about them. I think that this neglect may distort their just interpretation (1980 : 186).

Although Lewis is critical of theories of ritual and argues that theories should be based on an analysis of ethnographic reality, he appears to operate from the assumption that 'ritual' is a phenomenological universal. Summarizing his approach, he writes :

I have not tried to classify custom into defined types or to construct ideal types of ritual. Instead I have directed my attention rather to the question of deciding how, when we observe something we are not familiar with, we should direct our efforts at interpretative understanding. I argue that we require positive grounds before we assume that we need to look for a symbolism or expression that is not apparent or explicit in the minds of the actors or in the reasons that they give for what they do. We require positive grounds so as to avoid a waste of misdirected effort, and the lures of too free choice that may lead us in unbound speculation to light on what we want to find (1980 : 220).

By demonstrating how his data on Gnau puberty rites differs from the preconceptions of theories of ritual, Lewis is left with the crucial problem of what it is about New Guinea initiation ceremonies - their cultural specificities - which distinguish them from initiation ceremonies in other parts of the world.

In his article 'Misconstrued Order in Melanesian Religion', Brunton raises the question of whether anthropologists have imposed formal systems

in their interpretations of New Guinea ceremonial institutions or 'religions'. He concludes that :

At this stage, my suggestions are tentative; further research and more careful presentation of data may well enable refinements and modifications to be made. Nevertheless I hope to have established two general propositions; first, in their concern with discerning underlying patterns, anthropologists have virtually ignored important variations in the degree of elaboration and coherence in Melanesian religion; secondly, once these variations are recognized, the most satisfactory starting point for explaining them lies in an examination of the processes of political division and competition (1980 : 126-7).

Rather than argue categorically that structural analyses have created logically integrated systems out of Melanesian initiation ceremonies, Brunton states that there is a spectrum of social forms in the Melanesian culture area ranging from logically integrated to fluid in the extreme. In any society the degree of coherence and elaboration in the realms of the supernatural is related to the extent of social divisions and competition over material resources. Religious institutions are a reflection of social and economic processes.

When Brunton uses the term 'religion' he is really referring to ideology and the transmission of ideology through ceremonial institutions. He has located a central problem but his use of other anthropologist's research limits his conclusion to a basic point about a general feature of New Guinea social organizations and the interplay between the social and economic and the realms of social ideology.

It is useful to present a recently written summary of the basic features of New Guinea Highlands male initiation systems in order to demonstrate how the features of initiation organization, content and use which we have analyzed in the Ommura material have been ignored in previous analyses or obscured by ambiguous generalizations about ritual knowledge. In her book Highland Peoples of New Guinea, Paula Brown writes:

Associated with the alliance of men in ritual and political activities is, in different ways, a cult or cults and the initiation of boys into the men's group. In the highlands, many of the classic features of rites de passage are present - planning by mature men, information and meanings concealed from the uninitiated and all women, rituals held in seclusion, paraphernalia prepared in secret, surprise carrying off of the novices to be initiated, infliction of pain and tests of endurance, taboos and deprivation of food and water, instruction in proper manly behaviour and in significance of symbols, and public presentation of initiates after seclusion. Initiation is one of the first rituals to be discarded in conversion to Christianity and cultural change (1978 : 151).

Having concluded that the events and instructions of Ommura ummara and iyavati initiations derive their significance primarily from the context in which they are used, it is only proper that recognition be accorded to Malinowski for his use of the concept 'context of situation' in Coral Gardens and their Magic. Malinowski's ethnographic theory of language was that social meaning is the result of the interplay of the variables of context of culture and context of situation. He wrote:

In the course of our analysis it has become increasingly clear that the contextual definition of each utterance is of the greatest importance for the understanding of it, and that this contextual reference must be two fold. In the first place, an utterance belongs to a special context of culture, i.e. it refers to a definite subject matter... But side by side with this context of culture or context of reference as it might be called, we have another context; the situation in which the words have been uttered....The pragmatic relevance of words is greatest when these words are uttered actually within the situation to which they belong and uttered so that they achieve an immediate effect. For it is in such a situation that words acquire their meaning. Since it is the function, the active and effective influence of a word within a given context which constitutes its meaning, let us examine such pragmatic utterances (1935 : 51-2).

Because they are being used to put forward different arguments and therefore exist in different theoretical domains at different historical times in anthropological discourse, there is little similarity between Malinowski's use of the variable of context and my own. However, it can be argued that Malinowski's formulation of the dynamic between context of culture and context of situation in his analysis of the meaning of Trobriand gardening magic provides a better starting point

for analysis of the ethnographic specificities of New Guinea societies than the later structuralism of certain of his critics.

The review of previous anthropological work on New Guinea societies has stressed that a great majority of the studies have been attempts to make the New Guinea ethnographic material conform to a particular current theoretical approach. It is the theoretical approach which provides the structure or form for the ethnographic facts and this is especially true of those studies written from the position of structuralism or exchange theory. The problem is that these reductionist theories while providing a coherent structure for the author's exposition of the ethnographic facts obscure the cultural specificities of New Guinea societies by presenting them as being more unified and conceptually integrated than might be assumed from a reading of the ethnographic facts.

Most theories of ritual start from the assumption that rituals are events which through their continual recreation over time lead to the emergence of social rules which determine the conditions under which they are enacted and demarcate their social importance. At least this common starting point acknowledges the major variables which must be taken into consideration in any interpretation of such an event; what are the 'rules', what are the contextual conditions, and what is the social significance of the event. As has been pointed out, the problem with existing theoretical approaches to the interpretation of ritual is that the relationships of the variables are already predefined and the symbolic form/social function polarity results in foregone conclusions about ideological-conceptual integration, or the use of rituals to uphold the domination of traditional authority. The analysis of Ommura male initiations has been an attempt to illuminate features of New Guinea 'ritual' which previous general theories and New Guinea ethnographies have obscured.

## 17. Conclusion

Ommura society could be characterized as having a 'minimal' degree of social organization. As political groupings their patrilineages are weak as opposed to unified and social divisions are based on gender and age. Differences in adult male status result primarily from the amount of resources which a given man has at his disposal. By resources, I am referring to the number of gardens and pigs he has as well as the numbers of wives and dependents he has to work for him. The wealthier a man is, the more wives he can purchase and dependents he can support. Ommura social organization is centred around the life-cycle ceremonies of birth, male and female initiations, marriage and death, which are based around a payment given by one kinship grouping to another. The individuals who participate in any particular life-cycle ceremony are the significant kin of the person(s) for whom the ceremony is being enacted. Life-cycle ceremonies have been analyzed in depth because it was assumed that as they were the most important Ommura social institutions, repeatedly enacted over a period of time, they would encompass all important aspects of the transmission of Ommura social ideology,

Any anthropological interpretation of a New Guinea Highlands society is confronted with the problem of how to decipher some kind of formal patterning or order for that society out of the observed events of fieldwork data. A major difficulty is that because of the small scale nature of these societies it is possible to formulate models of social organization which might appear facile were they to be applied to more stratified complex societies. There has been a tendency for anthropologists to locate the most basic social divisions in these New Guinea societies and concentrate on them as an end in themselves. Those writing about New Guinea Highlands societies have been pre-occupied with kinship, male/female relations, ceremonial exchange, warfare and entrepreneurial individualism.

Certain analytic approaches have been used precisely because they can be adapted to this type of society. A kind of psychoanalytic analysis,

derived ultimately from Freud, has been employed to interpret social forms as resulting from universal psychological drives clad in the scantiest of social specificities. Examples are male menstruation and phallic symbols in male ritual. In a small scale society everything to do with adult males can be treated as symbolizing male sexuality and power because of the general lack of explicit differentiation. At the other extreme is structuralism which has the advantage of being the analytic apparatus of the Western mind and can be used to impose a formal order on all those facts. Structuralism can be applied to create a logically integrated system out of any data and the resulting conclusions are generally that the basic social divisions of the society are reduplicated ad infinitum in all its social forms. Transactionalism is an approach perfectly suited to New Guinea Highlands societies because it enables the anthropologist observing a series of events during fieldwork to construct rules of procedure and precedent which are not that different from those employed by native participants. The drawback of this approach is that it is most applicable to the analysis of publicly enacted events in which public as opposed to private information is articulated - disputes, ceremonial exchanges, brideprice negotiations, death compensations, etc.

If we had used any of these standard approaches, the conclusions drawn would probably have been a predictable presentation of the basic features of Ommura social organization. Gender divisions are predominant, marked by the existence of male and female initiations carried out respectively in the men's house and women's house. Male dominance is attested by the greater importance placed on male initiations, ultimate male control over the staging of female initiations, and the precautions taken by men to avoid pollution by women. The explanation given by Ommura males for the staging of male initiations is that they promote the health and growth of male youth and serve as a forum for instructing them into secret male knowledge and approved norms of behaviour. Given the

conditions of secrecy under which it is transmitted to male initiands by the adult men, the basic social significance of secret initiation knowledge is obvious but other questions about the nature of this repository of cultural knowledge remain unanswered.

Analysis revealed that the ideological premises of male initiation were conveyed by the contextual conditions under which they were administered rather than in the content of initiation events and instructions. Initiation events and instructions are articulated in the form of specific genres, there is an elaboration of detail and amount, and some initiation knowledge is known only to specialists. The repetition of the various spheres of initiation events and instructions in the context of the staging of male initiations over historical time has not led to a situation where they combine to present a coherent exposition of Ommura male ideology. On the contrary initiation events and instructions are presented in random order, can be omitted or substituted, and new content is frequently incorporated provided that it conforms to the conventions of a particular genre. For these reasons it was concluded that the contextual conditions imposed for the enactment of male initiations comprised the basic social and ideological framework within which the various spheres of initiation events and instructions derived their significance.

The spheres of initiation knowledge can incorporate a great deal of change in content and could even be replaced without the general purpose of male initiations - making the initiands obedient to adult authority, instructing them in male knowledge, and promoting their health and growth - being affected. If the contextual conditions enforced for male initiations - performance in the men's house in conditions of secrecy - should be abandoned as has happened in other Eastern Highlands societies, the secret knowledge would lose its power as secret knowledge and the initiation system would lapse or become abbreviated into a ceremonial payment between father and mother's brother. Any major change

in the contextual conditions enacted for male initiations would lead to a change in the spheres of initiation events and instructions because their social importance derives from their conditions of use and not because the metaphysics of male ideology are expressed through their content.

It has been argued that the 'rules' governing the staging of male initiations are to be found in the contextual conditions which determine the use of secret initiation events and instructions rather than in the form and content of these instructions. All Ommura ceremonies are contextual in that they are enacted in accordance with established conventions for a particular purpose but within this framework they can incorporate new techniques and content provided they conform to existing conventions. The fertility ceremonies for sweet potatoes, yams and pigs use as many fertility songs in different languages from outside areas as possible because it makes the ceremonies more powerful in bringing about their given ends. New procedures in curing ceremonies and new poisoning techniques are continually being adopted from outside. Initiation events and instructions are not the only information which is kept contextually secret. Most information which is powerful in that it can be used to further effects in the real world is kept secret, because if it is made public, it loses its effectivity. New techniques are considered to be potentially superior to old techniques and for this reason new esoteric knowledge is always being incorporated into ceremonial procedures and individual magical practices.

In arguing that context of use is predominant over form and content of initiation events and instructions, we have come to a significant conclusion about the cultural specificities of Ommura social organization. For example if one examines a society possessing a 'minimal' degree of social organization and decides that conditions of secrecy determine the form and status of esoteric knowledge, one is making a statement about the level of social organization and not about the form and content of this

knowledge. Content and form can only become paramount as vehicles for social meaning in societies complex enough for context to be secondary to the use of information content. Ommura males use the word wakyera to refer to the events and instructions of male initiations, poisoning techniques and other male secret knowledge. Its meaning is 'secret' or 'forbidden', a description of the conditions of use.

This work has been concerned with the problem of what kinds of rules and codifications emerge from the repetition of major social ceremonies over a period of historical time. Because of the nature of Ommura social organization and the varying interpretations of New Guinea initiation 'rituals' presented by anthropologists, the Ommura life-cycle ceremonies provided a suitable field for analysis. By locating the importance of context, by concentrating on process, and by examining the attendant anthropological questions generally asked of this subject matter, I hope to have provided some kind of antidote to an arid debate which vacillates between extreme characterizations of 'loosely structured' and 'logically integrated'.

AppendixSocial Change : November/December 1979

When I returned to Obura during November and December 1979, the few social changes which had occurred in the previous three years had not significantly affected ongoing Ommura social organization. The Ommura had more money, more items of Western clothing, and a greater range of goods were available from the local tradestores. The increase in the amount of money in circulation locally was a result of the effects of inflation. It did not represent a rise in the relative prosperity of the area. The road to Kainantu had been improved so that more vehicles came into the area and greater numbers of people visited Kainantu more frequently to buy goods from the town tradestores. Consumption of alcohol, which had been a novelty, had become an accepted fashion. Men were still going to Port Moresby and New Ireland to work as contract labourers on plantations.

The Ommura were becoming more aware of coffee prices and the value of coffee by weight and it had become more difficult for coffee buyers to make large profits in buying from them. Informants estimated that it was possible for a man and his family to make anywhere from 200 to 600 kina a year from selling coffee. A man in Moussouri claimed to have made 650 kina in one year from his coffee. Committee Luhi, the wealthiest of the two Samura tradestore owners, said that he made between 700 and 800 kina a year in profit from his store. Both he and Hongenali, the other Samura tradestore owner, worked as labourers at the patrol station for wages of 28 kina a fortnight. A few cattle were owned by family groups from the villages of Kurunumbaira and Asara. 'Bulmakau' were bought for 200 kina when young and grazed for a year or more. When butchered approximately 400 kina could be made from the sale of a cow's meat.

All the life-cycle ceremonies of birth, initiation, marriage and death were still being enacted. The only change was that the amounts of money being given in payment had risen considerably. Brideprice had doubled.

Gate Singsings and the Purchase of Vehicles

Several gate singsings had been held in the area since Kwamba organized the first gate singsing in Samura in July 1976. These pay for admission at the gate singsings were a progressive fashion, generally held to raise money to buy village public motor vehicles. A great deal of alcohol was consumed at these festivities and men regarded it as an act of prestige to pay up to thirty kina admission to dance, eat and drink.

At the time of my restudy, Kwamba was working as a labourer on a Port Moresby plantation because he had lost most of his money and a great deal of his social standing through a truck purchasing fiasco. All the money he raised from the gate singsing, his savings, and the contributions of between ten to forty kina he enlisted from Samura men had been used to buy a truck from a Goroka auction. He summoned his driver relative John back from Port Moresby and they bought the truck for 2,800 kina. On its maiden drive back to Samura it crashed into the only other local P.M.V. owned by Siria of Sonura and never worked again. The truck was stripped down and the parts were sold. All the people who had given money for the truck purchase were angry with Kwamba and he went off on a plantation labour contract.

Siria had bought his truck at a Lae auction for 1,800 kina which he had earned from his Samura tradestore. For a while he was running a flourishing P.M.V. business but he spent all the profits on gambling and alcohol. He became very unpopular in the villages where he attended gate singsings because of his intoxication and the fights he started by propositioning local women. People took their dislike of him out on his truck, poisoning it by putting salt and sugar in the gas tank until it would no longer work.

In 1978, the people of Moussouri held a gate singsing which made 455 kina. With this money they bought a decrepit truck from a Gadsup man. When he sold it to them, he removed vital parts of the engine, so they could never get it to work. A few months later, the Gadsup man came

back at night, fixed the vehicle and drove off in it. They never caught up with him.

The only vehicle operating in the Obura area during my restudy was a Toyota Stout truck owned by some men from Kurunumbaira. It had been bought second hand in Henganofi for 3,900 kina two months previously. Two men from Baira, the Provincial Assembly Member and a Sepik tradestore owner married to a local woman, owned a second hand Toyota truck driven by a Bairan ex-coffee buyer. The truck was garaged at the Sepik man's store in the patrol station and operated as a P.M.V. to Kainantu.

None of the gate singsings brought in more than 800 kina. This money was used to buy things of permanence and prestige - vehicles, and in the villages of Kurunumbaira and Asara, a few cows. No group in the area could afford to buy new vehicles. Consensus was that because people could only afford to buy cheap second hand vehicles and because few people had sufficient mechanical knowledge to service and repair them, local P.M.V.'s had very short running lives.

#### The Women's Club

Women from the villages of Samura, Sonura, Moussouri and Kurunumbaira belonged to a Women's Club. It was established after Margaret, the wife of the station driver, attended a meeting about women's self-help organizations in Goroka. The members contributed fifty toya each and the amount was used to buy seeds which were planted to grow crops for sale. A schism emerged when a woman from Kurunumbaira claimed that as she was a charter member she owned half of the club's bank balance but this was resolved. Club membership contributions were raised to 3 kina for original members and 5 kina for new members. With the subscription money plus the money they earned, the Club had a bank balance of 300 kina. Two hundred kina was used to buy a sewing machine, sewing accessories and cloth. The machine was kept at Margaret's house in the patrol station and

clothes were made. Laplaps sold for  $2\frac{1}{2}$  kina, blouses for 4 kina, skirts with elastic for  $2\frac{1}{2}$  kina and skirts with belts for 4 kina. A weekly vegetable market was held in Samura by the Women's Club which received the tariff of ten or twenty toya charged as a rent for selling.

### Warfare

At the time of my re-study, the Obura sub province was the last area of the Eastern Highlands still declared a 'fight zone' under state of emergency legislation. I arrived in the aftermath of a major outbreak of fighting.

Several weeks before Provincial Independence Day had been celebrated at the patrol station. Fighting broke out during a basketball game when Baito of Sonura hit a man from the Auraura team and he retaliated. The two teams began fighting and the police tried to break it up. A man from the To'kena team asked the Samura team if they were women who didn't want to fight, precipitating further violence. Baito hit his opponent's head with a bicycle chain. Other men fought with rocks. Hearing about the fight, the Samura men chopped down a tree to block the road. This prevented the To'kena mission driver from driving the enemy teams back to their villages. The police fired a tear gas cannister to disperse the fighters. Some men ran away thinking it was a bomb while others went to the stream to wash the gas from their eyes. Having quelled the fighting, the police went to Samura and removed the tree which was barricading the road. The men from To'kena and Auraura were taken back to their villages in the government truck.

On the following day, Sunday morning, men from six villages - Auraura, To'kena, Anima, Ahea, Nonta and Asara - combined for a retaliatory attack on Samura and Sonura. The attackers, over 500 men armed with bows, arrows and shields, outnumbered the defenders by five to one. Having posted lookouts on a mountain, the Samurans knew that this force was approaching. They hurriedly sent the women and children off to safe

villages with all the valuables and pigs they could take. The defenders were beaten back down to the patrol station. The kiaps and policemen locked themselves in their houses while the fighting went on. Many arrows were found embedded in the walls of the patrol station buildings. The attackers looted Samura; they killed pigs which they carried away to cook and eat, killed dogs, broke down doors and stole valuables from huts, destroyed fences and set fire to huts and pig houses. No one was seriously injured. Some men received arrow wounds in their arms, heels or legs and one man with an arrow grazed scalp was treated at Kainantu hospital before being sent to jail.

When the fighting ended, the kiaps radioed Goroka for the riot police who arrived on the following day. Many of the fighters hid in the bush from the police. Because they were too well known and their village was adjacent to the patrol station, the principal Samura fighters couldn't run away and were sentenced at Kainantu to two months kalaboose. Not bothering to go as far as the major attacking villages of Auraura and To'kena, the riot police went to Asara and randomly arrested a few men marginally involved in the fighting. These men were sentenced to one month in jail.

The Samurans said that the fight would not finish until the six enemy villages paid a compensation of between two to three thousand kina for property damage. Until they received this payment, all people from the enemy villages were to be prevented by threat of attack from walking on the road to the patrol station. Every night during my stay, men patrolled the village bush as a precaution against enemy attack by arms or poison.

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