

TORBEN MONBERG



THE RELIGION OF BELLONA ISLAND

The Concepts of Supernaturals

LANGUAGE AND CULTURE OF RENNELL AND BELLONA ISLANDS: VOLUME II, PART 1

THE RELIGION OF BELLONA ISLAND

IN THIS SERIES:

Volume I: FROM THE TWO CANOES. Oral Traditons of Rennell and Bellona Islands. By Samuel H. Elbert and Torben Monberg. Published by the University of Hawaii Press and the National Museum of Denmark 1965.

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THE RELIGION OF BELLONA ISLAND

A Study of the Place of
Beliefs and Rites in the Social
Life of Pre-Christian Bellona

PART 1:
The Concepts of
Supernaturals

TORBEN MONBERG

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h. a. dec.

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TO SA'ENGEIKA

. . . na'e au kua sanga hakaputu,
kua maatino i taku hongau . . .

PREFACE

The present study contains a description and analysis of certain pre-Christian religious concepts on Bellona, a Polynesian Outlier island in the British Solomon Islands. It is published as Part 1 of Volume II in a series intended to present data and analyses of various aspects of the language and culture of Rennell and Bellona Islands. Part 2 of Volume II will contain an analysis of the rituals. Volume I is devoted to the oral traditions of these two islands and was prepared by Samuel H. Elbert and the present author. In Volume I we have expressed our thanks to all the individuals and institutions in the British Solomon Islands, Hawaii, and elsewhere who made our research possible and who have been so helpful to us over the years. These include: Sir John and Lady Gutch; Sir David and Lady Trench; H. E. Gass; V. J. Andersen; M. B. Hamilton; M. A. Andrew; Derek and Vrai Cudmore; Sandy and Margaret Wilkie; C. H. Allan; Dudley Wright; R. Davis; T. Mitchell; J. O. Tedder; John C. Grover; R. Thompson; P. A. Pudsey-Dawson; the members of the Noona Dan Expedition; Alexander Spoehr; Gordon Macgregor; Thomas Nickerson, and Robert W. Sparks.

As regards the present study I must mention particularly certain persons who have in one way or another contributed to its completion, but who are of course in no way responsible for the points of view expressed herein.

Thanks are due to my teacher, Professor J. Prytz Johansen of the University of Copenhagen, who evoked my interests in Pacific studies and who with his extensive knowledge of semantic and religious problems guided my first steps in the analysis of Polynesian religions.

Thanks are also due to Dr. Kaj Birket-Smith of the Danish National Museum who with his book *An Ethnological Sketch of Rennell Island* inspired further research on Rennell and Bellona and arranged for me to go to Rennell and Bellona in 1958.

Collaboration in the field and at the desk has been a characteristic of later years' studies of Rennell and Bellona. I owe my thanks to two friends and colleagues, Professor Samuel H. Elbert of the University of Hawaii, and Leif Christensen of the University of Copenhagen, co-workers in the field and at home. Not only in previous work but also in connection with the present study have I drawn heavily on Elbert's vast knowledge of the Pacific in general and the language and culture of Rennell and Bellona in particular. Elbert has read the book from its first sketchy stage until the manuscript was completed and has devoted much time to a critical revision of my more or less halting attempts to write in English.

As the book will show, I have not only drawn on data collected by Elbert but also on what has been collected by Leif Christensen during our field work on Bellona and during Taupongi's stay in Denmark 1964–65. Christensen has read the manuscript and offered valuable advice especially concerning the sections dealing with methodology and field technique.

The manuscript has also been read by Verner Goldschmidt, professor of sociology at the University of Copenhagen, who has offered valuable criticism. To him and to my two colleagues in the field I offer my most sincere thanks.

Thanks are also due to the Danish State Research Foundation (Statens Videnskabsfond) which has financed the major part of my work on Rennell and Bellona; to the United States Educational Foundation and the Rask-Ørsted Foundation who financed my trip to Hawaii in 1961 to work with Elbert and Taupongi; to the Danish Government and the Secretariat for Technical Cooperation with Underdeveloped Countries who financed Taupongi's stay in Denmark and also my field trip to Bellona in 1963; and to Mr. Werner Jacobsen and the Danish National Museum who arranged for the publication of this book. I am grateful also to the University of Copenhagen for a research grant which provided time for writing up the material from Rennell and Bellona.

To my Bellonese friends and co-workers I feel more grateful than I can adequately express. Without their hospitality, their tolerance, and their readiness to cooperate, this book would never have been written. It is dedicated to my old friend and teacher, Sa'engeika, and I have endeavored to express my own feelings with a quotation (page VII) from an old Bellonese ritual. It is part of an invocation to the god Tehu'aingabenga towards whom the reciter debases himself by saying: "I have made numerous mistakes and I realized this on my long voyage to a distant land." Sa'engeika and his countrymen will readily appreciate the symbolism of these words from their own past.

Torben Monberg.

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CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. *Field work and sources.* Rennell and Bellona Islands were selected for a study of Polynesian religion and of social dynamics because of their extreme isolation until the middle of the nineteen thirties and because Christianity was accepted as late as in 1938, more than a hundred years after its acceptance by the Samoans, Hawaiians, and other Polynesians.

The only documentations of the pre-Christian religion were brief notes by Hogbin (1931), a vivid eye-witness account of a Rennellese harvest ritual by Macgregor (1943) plus highly personal journalese by S. M. Lambert (1931, 1934, 1941). The data presented in *From the Two Canoes* (Elbert and Monberg 1965) and in this volume were collected during field trips to the islands and while working with islanders elsewhere.

I was on Rennell and Bellona and in the Solomons on three occasions: from October 2, 1958 to January 31, 1959, from August 1 to October 9, 1962, and from October 2 to November 30, 1963. Leif Christensen of the University of Copenhagen was with me in 1962. In addition, Taupongi of Bellona was in Honolulu to work with Professor Samuel H. Elbert and me from June 10 to August 12, 1961, and was in Denmark from June 1964 to March 1965, assisting Elbert, Christensen, and me.

During the periods away from Bellona I received written material from informants, and also made long-distance interviews concerning minor problems and single details by means of a tape-recorder stationed on Bellona. Tapes were mailed to Denmark and they have helped to fill out some gaps in the data. I also had the privilege of drawing on data collected by my two colleagues Elbert and Christensen.

All the material was collected in the language of Rennell and Bellona. A previous reading knowledge of other Polynesian languages (Maori and Tahitian) considerably speeded up the process of learning Rennellese and Bellonese. During the first weeks in the islands I used some pidgin English in daily speech, but all data were written down in Bellonese. The ability to speak and understand came rather quickly. At the end of my first stay and during the following periods of field work communication seemed free and easy and did not present any obstacle to my work.

1.2. *The purpose of the present study.* The main purposes of this book are the following:

1. To present ethnographic data concerning certain aspects of religious concepts and practices on pre-Christian Bellona.

2. To analyse these data in order to elicit correlations, if any, between the religious beliefs and the social structure and social activities of the island.

3. To provide time depth for studies which Christensen and I are making of the present-day society, with emphasis on the dynamics of social change.

It will be obvious to readers familiar with the sciences that include the study of religions, that religious acts and beliefs can be studied in various ways and from various angles and that they may be analysed on a great number of levels of abstraction. The historian may endeavour to seek the roots of a certain religion, or (as many unfortunate attempts have shown) of all religions in this world. The

ethnologist may be particularly interested in the diffusion of religious beliefs and practices within a certain culture area. The psychologist may focus his attention on the place of religion in the life of the individual, or on the relationship of the individual to his deities. The folklorist may be particularly interested in the mythical traditions; the historian and the anthropologist may seek to analyse the relationships of myths and rituals. The student of material culture may examine the ritual paraphernalia; the economist may explore the relationships of economic transactions and rituals. This list is almost unlimited. An examination of studies of religious beliefs and actions in various societies will show that we often find these types of research combined in various ways, but any study of religion has its limits and may not embrace all angles at one time.

The subject of this book is the religion of pre-Christian Bellona as it existed in 1938 when it was suddenly replaced with Christianity (Monberg 1962). It is not concerned with the comparison of Bellonese religion to religions of other cultures, with the origin of Bellonese religion, or with the present-day Christian religion. It does not present any psychological analysis of the position of religion in the life of the Bellonese individual, nor a folkloristic motif analysis of Bellonese religious traditions.

The first part of the study concerns the structure of the beliefs in a supernatural world as seen in relation to the social organization of the island. The second part, which I hope to publish later as a separate volume, will deal with the interrelationships of rituals and other social activities.

When I first set out to study the religion of Bellona and of the neighboring island, Rennell, the hypothetical framework determining the research was a very broad one. I hoped to be able to throw further light on such statements as those formulated and discussed by Goode (1951:43), namely that religion in primitive societies is of great social importance; that religious beliefs and rituals are social phenomena passed on from one generation to the next through the socialization process; that relationship between gods and man is a social one; that the sphere of religion is one of ultimate groupal values, and that this suggests that religion usually approves action which is in conformity with existing custom, and that individuals are motivated by such values to devote their energies to what is believed to be the welfare of the society. Goode does not claim that these suggestions are his own invention. In fact, they seem to be the broad hypotheses according to which many functional studies in primitive societies have been carried out. Nor does Goode claim that they are entirely valid. He questions some of them. As this book will show, I have come to similar doubts. The Bellonese material may show that these hypotheses are not of universal application. The relationship between man and gods on Bellona is for example not always a social one, and the religious acts are not always carried out for the welfare of the entire society.

Similar doubts have been formulated by Merton. According to him it is debatable whether "standardized social activities or cultural items are functional for the *entire* social or cultural system; second that *all* such social and cultural items fulfill sociological functions; and third, that these items are consequently indispensable." (Merton 1957:25.)

In the field the student may receive an impression of a unity which is based on the mere fact that all members of the society live in the same ecological niche, speak the same language, and, at least to some extent, share the traditions about the past. He may also find a higher degree of social integration among members of the small society which he is studying than he finds in the industrialized society in which he was born and educated. But he will probably not find that the society studied is a completely integrated and "harmonious" unit.

In the field of religion he will encounter diversity of personality. He may find the agnostic, the firm believer, the influential, the clever, and the stupid. He may find an individual who deviates in his beliefs and his religious practices and who perhaps uses rituals as a means of acquiring prestige for himself, and not primarily to gain welfare for the society as a whole; he may find individuals who appeal to the deities for the deaths of their own close kin, and others who conform to the hypothesis that ritual practices (in contrast to those of magic) are a means of acquiring good health for all members of the society. These variations may be socially accepted or they may not be. Whether they are accepted or not does not alter the fact that within the religious and social system of a society the values and acts of an individual in one of his social roles form a single variable, at least on one level of analysis, and the totality of variables constitute the society as a whole. In this there is unity as well as diversity.

If it is our broad aim as anthropologists "to study people's customs, social institutions and values and the ways they are interrelated" (Beattie 1964:16), we may perhaps in our field work begin with an assumption of general unity in the small society which we are studying. We may assume that the religious beliefs are shared by everyone and that rituals are acts carried out for the welfare of the society as a whole. When we proceed with our studies and collect data from a still wider number of informants and on a still wider range of aspects of social organization and values and of religious beliefs and acts, we see that variations occur, and we may then ask what is the nature of these variations from the postulated unified pattern, and on what grounds. Depending on our predilections and on our scientific training, we will then seek to explain the variations according to their correlations with biological, psychological, or sociological information. If, for example, we discover that a certain individual's beliefs concerning the afterworld differ from those of others, there may be several explanations. The social scientist will look for correlates between a person's beliefs and his position within the socio-cultural universe. If he finds that variations in beliefs correlate with variations in social status, he may perhaps assert that he has made a discovery. If he finds variations which cannot be explained according to the social roles of the informants, he may, as I have done, suggest that further research into this problem is outside the range of his study and should be left to other scientists.

This may be considered a fairly rigid approach to the study of religion, and I can only agree. In the present analysis I have submitted to this rigidity and, accordingly, limited this study to the interrelation of social organization and religion. I am well aware that this does not explain or define a religion in its entirety. I am also aware that other approaches to the subjet may prove equally fruitful, perhaps even more so. However, our tools for the study of religion seem still in many ways crude, and I think that we should limit ourselves to attempts to solve, or suggest ways of solving, specific problems in the hope that they may, in one way or another, be a step towards an understanding of the nature of a human society.

It will be obvious that this study of pre-Christian religion also has limitations in being retrospective and reconstructive. This problem will be discussed i Section 1.4. below.

1.3. *Methods.* My colleagues Elbert, Christensen, and I were the first white men to live on Bellona over a long period. Rennell and Bellona are still covered by the Closed Districts Regulation of the British Solomon Islands Protectorate. No one is allowed to visit the islands without the permission of the Government, and no one is allowed to settle permanently on the two islands.

As previously mentioned, the old religion of Bellona was replaced by Christianity in 1938. Participation in, and observation of, the pre-Christian religion has

not been possible; but a description of the degree and the type of participant observation carried out on present-day Bellona by a compiler of data about the old religion is of importance for an evaluation of the reliability of the material.

I do not think that my colleagues and I can say that we have been absorbed in Bellonese society, or that we have become its members. Our roles were very definitely those of an unusual assignment. Although we knew the language and could speak it, and although we lived with the Bellonese, shared their houses and their food, took part in their everyday life and their feasts, we were definitely strangers. Surprising as it may sound, this was an advantage. Unlike, for instance, the Tikopians, the Bellonese have no traditions of assigning specific kinship roles to arriving strangers. I have never been called by any kinship term by the Bellonese, only by the familiar and affectionate term *teiana* (friend), by first name, or, on more formal occasions, by the honorific name assigned to me. Kinship terms are restricted to Bellonese and Rennellese, but the system of friendships (*hemasi'inga*) is considered by the Bellonese almost as strong as kin ties. I had the good fortune of being generally recognized as a special friend of three persons, Temoa of the Tongomainge lineage, his son Taupongi, and Paul Sa'engeika of the Ngikobaka lineage. The consequence was that a free and unrestrained relationship existed between us. We were supposed to have no secrets from one another, and we were tied together by the system of *hena'ia'aki,* which meant that we could borrow each others' things and eat each others' food without asking permission.

And yet I was a stranger. My work was different from any other work known on Bellona. I was asking all kinds of questions and I wrote down the answers to them. No one seems to have thought that his disclosures of secrets would be used for obscure political purposes. Although I was considered a friend of certain men, no one expected me to take their sides in political or social matters. In that respect I may have been considered a completely harmless creature. There was only once a hint of trouble. A man from Ghongau district with whom I had had friendly relations during my first stay on Bellona but who later turned out to be more money-conscious than the Bellonese and my colleagues and I enjoyed, tried to persuade Sa'engeika and others to cooperate with us only if we paid them for their services as informants and moved from our house in the rival Ngango district to stay permanently in his district of Ghongau. The whole affair, however, passed off rather quickly. Our friendship with Sa'engeika was too firmly rooted to be more than momentarily swayed by such pressures.

During my stay on Bellona in 1958–59 I lived in Headman Haikiu's house in the village of Ngotokanaba, then considered the capital of the island. In 1962 and 1963 I stayed in Taupongi's house in the village of Matahenua in the west end of the island. A brief period in 1962 was spent in the house of Ngiusanga in Ngongona (Ghongau district) in the middle of the island. Bellona is tiny, 11.5 kilometers in length, and traveling is easy. One can walk from one end of the island to the other in two and a half hours. It was easy to visit other villages even if one had established permanent residence in one village. The Bellonese themselves are great walkers, and they seem to think nothing of crossing the island several times in one day. Strategically the village of Matahenua was probably the best choice for a permanent residence as it lies only three minutes away from the best anchorage of the island, at Ahanga, and people from all parts of the island drift constantly through this village as they go to and from the beach.

During our stays, Taupongi's home became a public gathering place. The house was often crammed with people; we were gossiping, interviewing, singing, arguing, reciting ritual formulas, listening to the tape-recorder, eating, and sleeping. Sometimes one felt that one might just as well have set up the cot in the middle of the main

trail running through Bellona. From a professional point of view, this was a fortunate situation; but from a personal point of view, it was rather strenuous at times. The house became a sort of free-port where people apparently felt free to sit down and talk, not only with me, but also in smaller private groups.

As mentioned, it was virtually impossible to obtain data for the present study through direct observation. The rituals are no longer enacted and the residential pattern of Bellona has greatly changed since the acceptance of Christianity. Except for what could be gained from observing old sites and from reconstructions of the rituals, all information had to be gathered through interviews or from volunteered information.

Not many days after my arrival on Bellona my hosts knew that I was particularly interested in the pre-Christian beliefs and rituals. In spite of the fact (or was it one of the reasons?) that the two missions had discouraged all thinking about the pagan past, the Bellonese showed great interest in my publicized plans to write a book about the pre-Christian times. Even a person met for the first time would very often ask whether I knew this or that story, belief, or ritual of the old days. Much of the information presented in this book was given voluntarily. When a picture of the conceptual and ritual structure began to emerge, I could ask relevant questions and thus fill out gaps in my material and check information obtained previously.

Often sessions with informants were combinations of interviewing, volunteered information, and demonstrations of details in ritual practices, now and again interrupted by informants asking questions about the world outside Bellona and the Solomons. (Apart from being a good linguistic exercise, this was the best lesson I have ever had in the inadequacy of doing field work without knowing the language of one's informants. I think that one can rightly assume that it would have been just as difficult for them to explain the intricacies of their social system and their religion by means of pidgin English as it was for me to translate Western concepts into Bellonese.)

The methods of compiling data varied in accordance with the stage of the research and also with the subject under investigation. Some interviews were made in privacy with a single informant, others in public with from two to ten Bellonese listening in. Others, again, were group discussions, some quite long. A session might last more than four hours. Some interviews were structuralized whereas others were open-ended and unstructuralized.

The unstructuralized interview proved to be the most useful especially in the first stages of the research. I arrived at Bellona with very little background knowledge of the social organization and the pre-Christian religion of the island. I had only had the opportunity of going through Elbert's field notes briefly when he returned to Hawaii from Rennell Island, and very little had been published about the social organization of Rennell and Bellona.

On this basis it would have been impossible to construct sets of standardized interviews, and these would probably also have been of less use. In a cross-cultural field situation the open-ended interview has its advantage in evoking information by letting the informant talk along his own line of thought, which may in the beginning be strange but always revealing to the field worker. The opening question might be one dealing with a specific subject about which something was known from previous work. In the course of the conversation one might wander through a range of various subjects, ending with a discussion of something quite different from the starting point. The advantage of this type of interview is, as Paul (1953: 445) has expressed it, that it "gives the respondent maximum opportunity to reveal how he structures his world of experience," and also that the data are presented

by the informants in a context which is relevant for themselves and for their society.

This may be the first stage in the anthropologist's formulation of a model of the religious structure. The unstructuralized discussions and interviews often presented a more generalized picture of beliefs and ritual practices. The next stage was to obtain a case material and to elicit variations in opinions and behavior by means of a more standardized interviewing. The fact that informants' general knowledge and ability to remember past events varied considerably, made it uneconomic, and perhaps even impossible, to formulate a set of standardized questions covering all aspects of Bellonese religious life. My course of proceedings was therefore to check the different aspects of the religious system with a varying number of informants. Some of these checks were made by asking from two to five persons the same few questions, others were made by means of lists of standardized questions which were used in interviews with a larger number of informants. Data obtained in this way included information on the respondents' ritual roles, the amount and character of their rituals, names of guests and ritual assistants, mediumship, and encounters with supernaturals. In addition to this Taupongi, my principal friend and assistant, taped standardized interviews with 33 informants concerning certain aspects of the worship of ancestors, attitudes towards the breaking of taboos, and attitudes towards the district deities. In our studies of social organization and of modern religious Christian concepts, Christensen and I have used questionnaires.

Interviews with groups and with individuals, with an audience present, were usually unstructuralized. These two types of communication between field worker and respondent had their obvious advantages particularly when general beliefs and practices were being discussed and there were no controversial subjects. Bellonese informants seemed inspired by an audience (this comes out clearly in the tape recordings). Also, they are generally good listeners. They very rarely interrupt the speaker and they have considerable respect for opinions differing from their own. They do not mind expressing a different opinion from that of members of their audience. After some time in the field, the field worker acquires a certain skill in using his group of informants as an instrument, as by provoking arguments among them when this seems to illuminate the subject discussed.

It is characteristic of the Bellonese that they are masters of generalized statements. They can discuss the institutions of their society in abstract terms. They have a lot to say, for instance, about the general implications of brother-sister avoidance, or the concepts of patrilineality, or of the social position of the priest-chief. This is often of great advantage to the field worker. In group interviews he can discuss such matters in general terms without having to ask for embarrassing examples or details as concerning incestuous marriages or breaches of taboo. Later he may obtain in personal interviews information on specific cases, and he can check the generalized ideas of his informants.

Some of the data given in this book are of the type which Barton and Lazarsfeld (1961:112) have termed quasi-statistical. Such data would include statements as, for instance, that "most Bellonese now live in larger villages," "many Bellonese say they would never dream of eating eels," "the Bellonese believe the sexual act to be merely a pleasant, but important pastime." There are several reasons why data are presented in this way.

1. The information given in Chapter 2 on the social organization of Bellona is a preliminary survey only intended to make the data on religion meaningful. The considerable quantitative data collected on various aspects of Bellonese social organization will, it is hoped, be published in a later volume in this series.

2. Bellonese beliefs have appeared to be in many ways homogeneous. Nothing is gained by presenting quantitative data on such aspects af the classification of various types of food connected with deities or the classification of supernaturals and their relation to specific social groups.

3. In a study of an entirely foreign society it is virtually impossible to meet the demands for exhaustive quantification of data. Whereas the sociologist working in his own society may assume certain facts as known to his readers, the anthropologist describing and analysing a foreign society must discuss even minute details that would seem trivialities in a description of his own group. To quantify such data would be an overwhelming task. The reader will sometimes have to take his words at face value as when he asserts that the word for house is *hange,* without adding that out of 100 persons asked, 100 said that this was the case. I admit that this example is extreme, but it may be an indication that in the social sciences we still need discussions of when to quantify our data and when not. I shall not venture into this discussion here.

4. In many cases quantification of the present material has proved impossible. Some data could only be obtained from one, or from a few, informants. Sometimes the field situation necessitated group interviews of a larger number of informants. Quantification of data collected in this way was impossible, often because all candidates for interviewing were present and contributed at the same session, and also because quantification of data obtained through group interviews seems to present problems which apparently have not yet been solved.

It is however regrettable that we do not possess quantitative data on every little detail in the society under investigation. I do not think that any student of culture, even the most ardent supporter of artistic or intuitive methods of analysis, would, be he given the choice, choose a few data to a large number. The dilemma which we are facing is thus not that of quantification versus qualification, but rather that of what data are actually available and of how to economize our efforts and evaluate our methods in field work.

The present study is of a small and comparatively homogeneous community with a fairly small number of informants. I have therefore chosen to present my material as a running description of the opinions and the cases available. The description consists of generalizations based on available data and will be analysed accordingly.

Constant reference will be made to material published by Elbert and Monberg in: *From the Two Canoes. Oral Traditions of Rennell and Bellona.* Honolulu and Copenhagen 1965. References to texts and notes in this publication will appear as follows:

T = Text. (T27:3 = Text 27, Verse 3; T31[B]:7 = Text 31, Variant B, Verse 7.)

N = Notes. (49:1 = Notes to Text 49, Verse 1; N41[A]:6 = Notes to Text 41, Variant A, Verse 6; N4[II] = Division II of Notes to Text 4.)

Whenever possible persons mentioned in this study will be identified by reference to the Genealogies or the Plate in which they appear. No Genealogies are given in the present volume, and all references to Genealogies or Plates will be to those published in the book mentioned above.

References to material other than texts, notes, or genealogies in *From the Two Canoes* will be shown by the word: *Canoes,* followed by page number or chapter number.

The present study is concerned with the religion of Bellona, without consideration of the larger neighbor, Rennell. Most references will therefore be to the oral

traditions of this island. Oral traditions of Rennell Island have only been referred to when similar traditions exist on Bellona which have not been documented in the published texts.

Except when a reference is to a person or a tradition of Rennell, all names, single words, or texts are given in Bellonese spelling. (For dialect differences between Rennellese and Bellonese readers may consult *Canoes*, page 20.)

In translations of texts certain words have been inserted by the translator for grammatical clarity. These are enclosed within brackets.

1.4. *Limitations of the present study*. The subject of this book is the religion on Bellona Island as it was in and around 1938, exactly 20 years before the first part of my field study was carried out. At the end of 1938 Christianity was, without much warning or preparation, suddenly introduced on the island (*Canoes*, Chapter 10), and 1938 thus became the last year when the old rituals were performed in their entirety.

It will be clear that this is therefore a reconstructive study. What is presented here is not material from direct observation in the field, but data based on information from Bellonese informants on what happened then. Apart from Lambert's Hogbin's, Firth's, and Macgregor's brief descriptions of beliefs and rituals, we have no contemporary accounts of the religion of Rennell and Bellona before 1938.

If the material presented here is compared with what has been published on the religion of another Polynesian community that is in many ways so similar to that of Bellona, Tikopia, this book will be set in its right perspective and be seen as what it is: a torso. Firth's accounts of Tikopian religion have, apart from being masterly studies of the religion of a non-literate society, their advantage in being based on observations of a living Polynesian religion. In a study based on an anthropologist's direct observation in a living culture, the only factors which determine the amount and the character of the data collected are the anthropologist's own hypotheses, methods, and resources. In a retrospective and reconstructive study there is an additional determinant: the sifting of data consciously or subconsciously by the informants. By 'sifting' I mean the process whereby certain data fall into oblivion, and also the conscious or subconscious distortion of facts which may take place during the process of social change. This process may seriously distort the picture, or it may not, or it may distort some aspects and not others. Whether slight or serious, we should bear in mind that the picture which emerges from a reconstructive study such as the present one, is not only that of the time we seek to reconstruct but of what our informants (in this case the present-day Bellonese), now *believe* about their past and what they think was believed and happened on their island in 1938. In this sense it is, I think, a reliable basic material for a study of such problems as present-day social organization, for it is these concepts of the past which constitute one variable in the present-day social system, not the actual event.

Having performed this act of scholarly strip-tease, we shall try to make an evaluation of our material. We shall discuss the reliability and validity of the material presented. It may be convenient to consider both positive and negative aspects. By positive is here meant factors that may seem to have enabled the anthropologist to gain an accurate picture of Bellonese religion as it was in 1938. By negative is meant those factors which may have contributed to a distortion of the picture.

1.5. *Positive factors*. Information on religion and social organization has been obtained from persons who belonged to the various social groups (lineages, rank groups, age groups) on pre-Christian Bellona and therefore also from actual participants in the rituals, as well as from people who, because of their social position (youth, low status), did not participate in all rituals, or in any. Cross-checking of

different parts of the material and of data obtained from different informants has been possible to a considerable degree.

Although rituals could not be observed in their original context, a number of these, as the cycle of harvest rituals, were re-enacted for my benefit with a great number of participants. This observation has been of help as an addition to other information obtained concerning these rituals. The participants could in some instances not make the re-enactment entirely true to life, because much of the paraphernalia, as sticks, tapas, and turmeric, were unobtainable. The informants were conscious of the inaccuracies and made great efforts to explain on which points the re-enactments differed from the "original" cults. Informants' explanations and my own observations have been checked with the comparatively few data on Rennellese and Bellonese rituals obtainable from Lambert (1941), Macgregor (1943) and Firth (1931), and also with a film and a number of photographs of rituals taken during the Templeton Crocker expedition in 1933.

Religious beliefs within a society may constitute a logico-meaningful structure (Geertz 1957:34). When such a structure has been determined it is to some extent possible to establish inconsistencies which may occur in the informants' descriptions of past events, and further research may be directed accordingly.

1.6. *Negative factors.* No direct synchronic observation has been possible. All non-Christian rituals are a thing of the past. Re-enactments can never be completely satisfactory. Although they may give a fairly accurate picture of the ritual acts, the social side of the ritual feasts cannot be observed. We do not know exactly how the offering was distributed in specific situations (only what informants of today think they did); we do not know exactly who participated in a certain ritual on a certain occasion. (Such things are hard to remember even for the Bellonese, who as members of a small-scale society with a smaller frequency of variation in social activities may have a greater ability for remembering past events than people of a literate and more complex society.) This does not mean that it was impossible to get any information on such matters. As will be seen below, informants seemed to remember who were present on certain occasions and which guests received the various portions of the offerings, but the picture is far from complete and checking was sometimes impossible. It has often been difficult to get any reliable impression of the variations in ritual behavior. It is obvious that there was considerable freedom to choose among different types of rituals, but from available material we cannot always tell to what degree a person's choice was socially determined.

Informants' picture of religious beliefs of the time prior to Christianity may have been subject to changes due to social change that had already taken place; one might suspect that old concepts were sometimes mixed with the new ones, as those introduced with the Christian faith.

1.7. *General evaluation of the material.* In the course of our review of the religious beliefs on Bellona, I shall, when this seems relevant, discuss the reliability of the data collected. Here it will merely be considered in more general terms.

A considerable number of people who had reached maturity before 1938 were still alive in 1958. Of the 69 grown males who took an active part in the rituals before 1938, 43 had survived. A number of these had only recently become initiated as religious officials in 1938 and could not give much information about the intricacies of the rituals, but their information, as well as information given by younger people who evaluated beliefs and practices from the point of view of the teenager, were naturally taken into consideration. As for females, the percentage is about the same as that of males.

It is characteristic of the Bellonese that they constantly stress the value of relating what they consider the truth about their old culture and society. This was also

noted in relation to anthropological research and here it may have to do with the roles which they attributed to my colleagues Elbert, Christensen, and to me, and also with the particular position in which the two Christian missions have placed themselves on the island. The South Seas Evangelical Mission as well as the Seventh Day Adventist Mission, have banned any practicing of the old rituals and also any dancing and singing of the pre-Christian traditional songs. Performance of the old rituals, dancing, and to some extent singing is considered sinful behavior. Persons violating this taboo will be "censored" from the church for shorter or longer periods depending on the character of the offense. Local church officials on Bellona assert that the Christian God becomes angry or offended if the old dances are danced because they belong to the *'atua,* the old gods, which by the missionaries are said to be identical with the devil.

This attitude is accepted by most Bellonese but not without their regret. In fact, most of my older informants said that in many ways the heathen days *(na 'aso hiiteni)* were better "because we had the rituals, and the feasts and the dancing, and it was good. The only thing bad about the old days was the fighting, the fighting always. That was bad." But here now is the new power, the Christian God and his missionary servants, who want the Bellonese to change their thoughts *(sui tengeu'a)* and forget the heathen past. "The power of God is great," the Bellonese now say. "One has to obey His orders and respect the new taboos."

But then a new type of strangers came. They were anthropologists, people of the same race as those who had instituted the new faith, but they had different interests. With their arrival something seems to have happened on the island. The new men came to live with the people, and in the beginning it may have seemed strange what they wanted. They were not missionaries or salesmen, they were not government officials, and they were doing something entirely new and hitherto unexperienced. They expressed a wish to learn the language, to listen and to watch, and to ask questions about people's lives now and in the past. This strange kind of work was apparently neither frowned upon nor looked upon with suspicion, but in the beginning was indeed a subject of some astonishment and bewilderment. Usually the white man had a more straightforward aim when he came to Bellona. He was either a representative of *gahumanu* (government) or a missionary. What was our aim? During the following months the Bellonese view of our role or roles in the society acquired an established form. (I know about this from the way my closer friends introduced me to other Bellonese when I was to work with them for the first time, and also because I have been told about it by friends during later visits to the island.) We were apparently accepted as persons who wanted to know everything in detail *(na'a lualua),* and write it down in books so that the former life of the Bellonese should not be forgotten. Our work, in this way, came to be something which served the Bellonese as an excuse for keeping the traditions about the past alive. Many of my informants have expressed the feeling that "it is good that the stories of old are written in books so that the young who do not know anything may be able to read about them." As the two missions had strived to suppress all traditions concerning the old religion, and also the pre-Christian songs, few of the boys and girls born after 1938 knew anything about them, and this fact was deplored by the elders, who were often contemptuous when they referred to the island's teenagers as being "stupid and ignorant."

In many ways the role which my colleagues and I played on Bellona resembled that of a container. We were considered vessels into which one could pour information. Like a container, we did not object or react to what was poured into us. We did not play any direct roles in the local fights, we did not condemn the deeds of yesterday or yesteryear, and we did not act as judges, neither of people's acts nor

of their words. But the picture of the anthropologists as merely containers must not be carried to the extreme. There were differences. We were active in the sense that we asked questions, sometimes neutral but often embarrassing, we directed what was poured into us by prompting our poor victims to answer all manner of questions. But being asked by outsiders, these questions may have been felt less embarrassing than if they had been asked by a member of the society. I think the Bellonese somehow had the feeling that they could tell us their secrets, because telling them to us was in some ways like talking into the void. The revelations were recorded by the stranger and carried away from the island, they were not utilized to defame the informant and usually had no bearing upon his position within the society. An exception to this attitute may be found below.

Yet the people knew that we were writing down the ancient customs (the Bellonese often use the English term custom rather than their own *tonginga*) so that they might be read by future generations. Some informants undoubtedly tried to withhold information. Certain men were reluctant about telling whom they had killed in the days before 1938. It was here interesting to note that the reason for their reluctance was, according to themselves, not that they feared punishment from their new God, from the missionaries, or from the government, but that they were afraid that old lineage fights might be revived when the kinsmen of their victims were reminded of these acts. Bellonese society is, however, so thoroughly penetrated by conflicting interests among groups of a wide variety of constellations, that checking of such information as who killed whom was comparatively easy, once one knew to whom to turn to get variants of opinions.

The Bellonese also have another advantage, again as viewed by the field worker. As mentioned, they set great value upon truth. While working with them I noticed that they either tell the truth or remain quiet. Except for rare cases with certain individuals, I observed that a Bellonese either tells what he considers the full story, or says that he does not know it. If he says that he does not know, it may either mean that he is reluctant to talk about a certain subject, or that he really does not know. It is characteristic that the Bellonese will only give information which he is sure about. Whenever I asked a person about certain aspects of the rituals, he would not pretend knowledge that he did not possess, but rather refer me to somebody else whom he thought might know about it. In their endeavours to be objective some informants even went to such extremes as to suggest that I consult people whom they disliked personally or even an enemy whose knowledge they nevertheless respected. There is no prestige gained on Bellona by relating information as such; information must be correct if it is to be admired. Among older informants quite a number who had acted as priest-chiefs in important rituals frankly stated that they had forgotten most of the rituals, and they would then either refer me to someone else or endeavour to obtain the information from others before discussing it. Prestige is involved in evoking the past, but a man attempting to invent would be ridiculed.

One informant was highly imaginative and had a talent for misstatements. He constantly mixed people's names and attached incorrect ritual formulas. This would not have been serious had it not been that he always volunteered information, even in public gatherings by saying "listen here . . ." "No, you are wrong; it is like this." On such occasions the Bellonese were polite and merely tried to correct him in an urbane way and mildly reproach him for his inaccuracies. Even without these corrections it would have been obvious when this man's information was wrong, especially when it concerned religious matters. It usually was inconsistent in some point with the logic of a ritual or a story. The wrong deity was associated with a ritual, the wrong ritual with a deity. This informant was an exception to the practice of

the Bellonese of always being very careful to relate what they considered correct.

This attitude towards their own cultural heritage is also reflected in another way. The Bellonese intellectually distinguish sharply between pre-Christian beliefs and practices and post-Christian beliefs and practices. To them there is a very clearly defined "before mission" and "after." The reader of the Rennellese and Bellonese texts published in *Canoes* will probably only be able to discover one story (T29) in which Christian and pre-Christian concepts *may* have been mixed. When the Bellonese talk about their pre-Christian beliefs they do not mix them with Christian ones. This would easily be discovered by the anthropologist, at least after he had become familiar with the structure of beliefs and with the social system of the island. Christian ideas were not projected onto the accounts about the old religion.

There seems to be two reasons for this rather unusual intellectual distinction between beliefs of the past and of the present. One is that only twenty years have elapsed since Christianity was introduced. Many of my informants had gone through the major part of the socialization process before the contact with Christianity. A series of data collected on the Bellonese view of the new religion showed that the old and middle aged seem to know the Bible extremely well, they are well versed in the teachings of Christianity as presented by their extremely conservative missions, and apparently they do not view Christianity with the eyes of the past. The two worlds are something wide apart.

This intellectual distinction between the old and the new was evident in beliefs as well as in religious practices. The new faith came suddenly and almost without any warning in 1938. During the second world war the Bellonese worshipped the Christian God in feasts that were somewhat similar to the rituals of pre-Christian times, not with the old formulas but with gatherings in which prayers were recited to the Christian God, hymns sung, and the harvest distributed according to the same system as before 1938. With the arrival of a zealous Melanesian missionary in 1949 these feasts were brought to an end, and church services and Christmas (by one of the missions only) and New Year feasts now became the important type of public gatherings. The abrupt breaking up of the old rituals may have been followed by a similar abruptness in the breaking up of the system of beliefs.

For the anthropologist who wants to know something about the old religion this seems fortunate, but we must bear in mind that human memory is selective (Bartlett 1932). Informants' descriptions of a religion which disappeared some 20 years ago must necessarily have been somewhat influenced by later experiences. Even though pre-Christian beliefs could more easily be distinguished from those of the new faith because of the slight overlapping between the two, we must still calculate with a certain degree of distortion of our picture. When giving a generalized description of the old beliefs and ritual practices the Bellonese may have tended to draw an idealized sketch of their past. However, the fact that information could be cross-checked to a considerable degree and also that the generalizations could be checked with information on concrete cases may have enabled us to neutralize this distortion to some extent.

All in all, informants' attitude towards the research carried out, their high evaluation of truth, and the way in which Christianity was introduced on Bellona, has in all probability made it possible to obtain data which have a comparatively high degree of reliability.

It is, however, not my intention to give the reader the impression that what is related in this book is as accurate as it would have been had this study been carried out 25 years ago. It is not, and it could never be. It is obvious and will be obvious to anyone that a study of this type contains serious lakunae, and the existence of such lakunae must be kept in mind and the material evaluated accordingly.

In our defense for the lateness of this study, I may say that living on Bellona many months and studying the religion in detail in 1933 would have been impossible. The government of the British Solomon Islands would probably not have given permission for such a dangerous undertaking.

I have above briefly stated my purposes in presenting this retrospective material. I consider it sufficiently reliable to serve as a basis for an analysis of certain aspects of the general problem of the relation of religion and social organization in a nonliterate community. Further it will serve as a part of a larger project of studying the structure of the present time, and of the process of culture change in general, both changes which occurred after the Bellonese came into contact with the surrounding world and those that will ensue in the years to come.

1.8. *Present-day attitudes.* The principal characters of this book are the many supernatural beings inhabiting the world of the Bellonese. From numerous discussions about the beliefs in these beings, it seems safe to state that no individual on Bellona denied their existence or ignored them in the time prior to the introduction of Christianity. In fact, even today only one or two Bellonese claim that the gods do not exist or have never existed. These are the men who have had several years training in the Seventh Day Adventist Mission schools abroad. All informants are certain that before the advent of Christianity everyone on the island believed in the existence of gods and other supernaturals and participated in the rituals.

Although we do not find any atheists in Bellonese society, we meet a rather widespread mildly agnostic attitude towards religious phenomena. A few elderly or middle-aged men who have themselves played a prominent part in the old religion claim ignorance of the appearance of the world of supernaturals. Tamua of Matabaingei said: "How can we know what the gods were like, good or bad, men or snakes? Have we seen them? No, we have only seen happenings." Some claimed ignorance of the godly abodes and said: "We do not know. Have we perhaps been there to see them?" One informant said: "Only the ancestors know what the gods look like. They go and visit them, but as for us, we live in the world of light (that is, not in the underworld)." Once, when I asked Temoa how he knew that the gods had come to the rituals and actually taken their seats, he said with a smile: "We did not know; we just assumed they were there." It might be added that Temoa and the rest of the Bellonese with whom these matters were discussed were firm believers in the existence of the gods. Even after having accepted Christianity they have no doubts whatsoever that the gods still exist. They assert that today the gods merely stay quiet in their heavenly abodes and that they have no power to do any harm because the Christian God has taken over Bellona.

When I asked some of the modern agnostics what they thought about the traditions concerning the abodes of the deities and about the various acts of the gods related in the stories, one of them said: "They are naturally true *(ma'ongi),* they are stories of old *(mai nga'aso).* The mediums have told them." Other informants expressed similar opinions. These might appear to be contradictions of the apparently agnostic attitude, but I do not think that they should be viewed as such. It is characteristic of the Bellonese that when telling about an event, they nearly always stress whether they have witnessed this event or not. It is not that they doubt what they hear, but rather a way of classifying events in those experienced and those merely heard of. The event experienced, that is the one that has been perceived with one's own senses, has greater value than the one heard of. At least one can be certain that it is true. Related events may be true or they may not be, but what one has seen or heard oneself has a different quality. In discussions among the Bellonese one very often hears questions such as: "Were you there yourself? Did you actu-

ally see it or have you just heard about it? Who told you? What were the words you heard? Were you there all the time?"

When the agnostic claims ignorance of the realm of the gods it is because he has not seen it himself. He has probably heard the gods talking many times through the mediums and he does not doubt that it is the god who is talking, but he has not perceived the abodes of the gods or the gods themselves. This, at least to some Bellonese, gives the matter a different quality.

No doubt, this is a question of individual personality. Some informants were perfectly content with relating traditional tales about the deities as a proof of their existence and did not seem to doubt their veracity. At least they did no express such doubts.

Another type of variation of the individual's relation to the realm of the deities occurs on a different level, namely that of the attitude towards the sacredness of the gods. Some individuals were apparently less fearsome and more apt to violate the religious taboos than were others. The variations in the personal adjustment of individuals to the beliefs and religious acts probably both stem from differences in personality and from the varieties of personal experience. An analysis of the psychological factors determining these variations belongs on another level of research, and the entire problem, although interesting in itself, falls outside the scope of the present book.

1.9. *Informants.* In *Canoes,* Chapter 2, brief accounts of the tellers of Rennellese and Bellonese tales are presented. The following are intended as supplementary biographies of the principal informants concerning Bellonese beliefs and rituals. Only the more important of them are listed here. To present data concerning all who have contributed to this study would in fact include the majority of grown-up male members of Bellonese society and a considerable number of females. Persons who have contributed only small amounts of data and who were only questioned for checking are therefore excluded. Informants are listed in alphabetical order according to the name by which they are most commonly known. Their established names *(ingoa hakama'u)* are shown in capital letters; for further identification their baptismal or European names are given last.

Each biography briefly lists data on the informant's social status and his activities in the pre-Christian society, and his status and his activities in 1962–63. Special emphasis has been laid on information which is relevant for an understanding of the informant's religious roles, such as the size of the sponsored ritual feast.

'Aasia Tongaka TETAPUA. Matabaingei lineage.

In 1938 'Aasia was only about 17 years old and lived in the homestead of his father, Tango'eha (Genealogy 9, Generation 20). He had been initiated as *hakabaka* (assistant to the priests) and as such helped his father in his numerous large rituals.

In 1962–63 'Aasia lived in Matahenua village with his wife and children. He was a deacon of the Seventh Day Adventist church.

'Aasia contributed considerable information on the pre-Christian beliefs. He was a most helpful and reliable informant.

Bete (Betesaau) PUKU'UHI Tuhenua. Tongomainge lineage. (Genealogy 9, Generation 21.)

In 1938 Bete was about 40 years old and one of the two *matu'a* (land holders)

of Tongomainge lineage. He was known as a good fisherman, he was a priest-chief *(tunihenua)* and his ritual feasts were of a medium size.

In 1962–63 Bete lived in Matahenua village. He was a member of the Seventh Day Adventist mission. He contributed information on rituals concerned with fishing. He was found drowned at the beach on the morning of my arrival in October 1963.

Kaabei HU'AITEKABA Tamua (Stephen). Ngikobaka lineage.

In 1938 Kaabei lived with his father Sa'engeahe (see below) in Ngikobaka homestead. Being young, he was initiated only as assistant to the priests *(hakabaka)*. He did not perform many rituals himself, but helped in those made by other members of his lineage. He was unmarried.

In 1962–63 Kaabei lived in Ngotokanaba village. He had been trained in the South Seas Evangelical Mission (SSEM) School in Onepusu on Malaita, and was pastor of the church in Ngotokanaba and also president of the SSEM mission on Bellona.

Kaabei was a very intelligent informant, with great interest in the old culture and with a fine ability to describe religious concepts and to give accounts of personal experiences.

Kaipua SUUBAI (Joshua). Ghongau lineage. (*Canoes,* page 37.)

In 1938 Kaipua was about 25 years old and one of the land holders of Ghongau lineage. He had been priest-chief and had made his own feasts, which, however, were of medium size.

In 1962–63 Kaipua lived in Ghongau and was a deacon of the SSEM mission and one of the justices of Bellona Native Court. During my first stay on Bellona he assisted Sa'engeika in explaining rituals on many occasions; he had a good knowledge of details and an excellent way of explaining religious concepts.

Kaisa'unga TE'OTAIKA. Hangekumi lineage. (*Canoes,* Figure 1, Generation 22 and N136[B].)

Kaisa'unga, wife of Temoa (see below) and mother of Taupongi, was about 45 years old in 1938 and lived with her husband in Patonu and Tebaitahe homesteads. She was known as a very intelligent woman and an expert in female handicrafts, and a composer and singer of traditional songs.

In 1962–63 Kaisa'unga lived with Temoa in Matahenua village. In spite of her age and her frail constitution, she was still quick in her thought and her work. A member of the SDA mission, she was a faithful worshipper in the church in Matahenua, and she often complained to me about her son, Taupongi's, negligence of the rules of the mission to which he belonged. Although she blamed me for my bad influence on Taupongi, resulting in his disinterest in the activities of the SDA mission, we became intimate friends. Being my neighboor we met daily and often had long discussions about life on Bellona.

Kaisa'unga was a wonderful informant. Due to their inferior social position Bellonese women were often shy towards strangers, and it was usually difficult to use them as informants. Among the women who have contributed with information, Kaisa'unga has an outstanding place. She gave vivid descriptions of women's rituals, and it was from her that I obtained my best data on women's religious activities in the old days. Kaisa'unga died in the beginning of 1963, and when I visited Bellona the same year, I realized how much I missed this remarkable woman.

Kaitu'u SAU'UHI. Baitanga lineage.

In 1938 Kaitu'u was only an assistant to the priests. He had made no rituals himself, but had just established his own household. He was unmarried.

In 1962–63 Kaitu'u lived in Matahenua village where he was a pastor and teacher in the SDA mission church and school.

Kaitu'u, a modest and generous man, has not contributed with much information on Bellonese rituals, but his knowledge of the pre-Christian beliefs was good, and during the many discussions in Taupongi's house in Matahenua he contributed a great amount of information and showed fine pedagogy when explaining intricate problems.

MA'ITAKI Tongaka. Sa'apai lineage. (Genealogy 4, Generation 22.)

In 1938 Ma'itaki was the head of Sa'apai lineage and was of its *hano'anga* (lineage of first-born sons). He was about 30 in 1938, and acted as priest-chief for most of the rituals made by members of his lineage; his own ritual feasts were quite large. As a medium he had been possessed twice by his mother's father, Tongaka, a man from Rennell who had come to Bellona to live in Matangi district. Ma'itaki was a clever ritual leader and a good dancer and singer. He was a widower.

In 1962–63 Ma'itaki lived in Ngongona village. He was a member of the SDA mission, but did not play any prominent role in church life.

Ma'itaki was a good informant, especially as regards his own experiences. He remembered certain parts of the rituals clearly, but could not give any coherent description of ritual practices. His descriptions of pre-Christian beliefs seemed sound and well balanced.

NAMONA Saungongo (Simon). Nuku'angoha lineage. (Genealogy 7, Generation 22.)

Namona was one of the land holders *(matu'a)* of Nuku'angoha lineage in 1938. Although he was of its *hano 'anga* (his fathers' older brother, Temoa, had adopted him because be had no sons himself) he was not considered head of his lineage *(hakahua)*. His ritual feasts were of medium size. Namona was married and had three wives.

In 1962–63 Namona lived in his old homestead, 'Okota. He was a member of the SSEM mission.

Namona was a quiet, serious man. He participated in the re-enacting of the harvest rituals in 1962 and explained some of their intricacies, but it was obvious that he had forgotten many details and he did not remember ritual formulas too well.

PUIA Tema'ungasua (R.). Nuku'angoha lineage. (Genealogy 7, Generation 22; also *Canoes,* page 39.)

In 1938 Puia still lived with his father in Nuku'angoha homestead. He was unmarried but had been initiated as second priest-chief. Although only about 18 years old, he was a man of considerable prestige, and a number of Bellonese asserts that had Christianity not been introduced, Puia would have become a great *hakahua* on Bellona.

In 1962–63 Puia lived in Ngongona where he took great part in the activities of the SDA mission, and was president of the Bellona Cooperative Society. He was a deacon and church elder, and a strong supporter of the new faith. He talked with great contempt about pre-Christian days, and strongly disapproved of the re-enactment of rituals, saying that this was the work of the devil. Nevertheless, he seemed to bear no resentment for my interest in such things, and was always

pleasant, dignified, and cooperative. He was most intelligent. Although he did not contribute descriptions of rituals, he provided information concerning the quasi-historical traditions, and was of great help in establishing the geographical location of temples and explaining their organization.

SA'ENGEAHE Momoka (Moses). Ngikobaka lineage. (Genealogy 6, Generation 21.)

In 1938 Sa'engeahe was one of the prominent elders of his lineage; he was about 40 years old. He was an expert gardener who made elaborate harvest feasts, and he was tattooed with the solid *taukuka* tattoo, a sign of high prestige. Had it not been because his lineage had fostered two of the most prominent men on the island, Sa'engeika (see below) and Pongi (who died about 1953) he would have been considered a *hakahua* (chief) of Ngikobaka. Sa'engeahe was married and he was the father of Kaabei (see above).

In 1962–63 Sa'engeahe lived in Ngotokanaba village. He was a deacon of the SSEM mission, and unlike many other deacons was reluctant to participate in the re-enactments of the rituals in 1962. He had been an expert dancer, but had given up dancing after the acceptance of Christianity. Sa'engeahe's contributions consisted of valuable additions to information on rituals.

SA'ENGEIKA Taangika Ngiumatangi (Paul). Ngikobaka lineage. (Genealogy 6, Generation 21; also *Canoes,* page 39 and Figures 7, 9, and 10.)

In 1938 Sa'engeika was considered one of the most outstanding characters on Bellona, not only by his own clan, but by nearly all Bellonese. He was an expert in almost all the skills. He was a prominent canoe builder and fisherman, an expert gardener, a fine dancer and composer of songs. He had the *taukuka* tattoo, and in spite of being only about 40 years old, was considered one of the best performers of rituals. His rituals were famous for the large amount of garden produce and fish offered to the deities and distributed among the participants. He was a courageous fighter and had been engaged in several interlineage fights in the years prior to 1938. The only skill which he apparently did not possess was that of story-telling. Sa'engeika was married and had two wives.

In 1962–63 Sa'engeika lived in Kapata, one of his old homesteads, with two wives. He was a member of the SDA mission, but did not have any official position within the church, allegedly because the mission disapproved of his polygynous marriages.

Sa'engeika is probably the person who has contributed most substantially to this study of Bellonese religion. The description of rituals are mainly based on his information, and he also acted as my teacher concerning basic knowledge of Bellonese religious beliefs. Ever since my first visit to Bellona he considered it his responsibility to train me in the intricacies of Bellonese beliefs and rituals. His abilities as a teacher were outstanding. Although nearly 25 years had gone since he had performed the old rituals, he still remembered them to the minutest detail, and I have only rarely heard him falter in his recitations. I am honored that this outstanding man has included me among his closest friends, and being his pupil in religious affairs has been one of the greatest experiences in my life.

Sanga'eha TEMANGUPOU'U. Sauhakapoi lineage. (Genealogy 9, Generation 21; also *Canoes,* page 40 and Figures 9 and 10.)

Sanga'eha was about 45 years old in 1938. He was a famous fisherman and an industrious gardener. He was a priest-chief and often made joint rituals with Sa'omoana. He was a medium and was possessed by district deities as well as ancestors.

In 1962–63 Sanga'eha lived in Matahenua with his wife. He was a member of

the SDA mission. In spite of his age he was still a very hard garden worker and also an industrious fisherman.

Sanga'eha was a good informant. He had a clear memory of the past, and his descriptions of beliefs and rituals were very vivid. He was a man with a fierce temper, and was often engaged in furious arguments with people.

SA'OMOANA Tukunga Taupongi (Mathew). Sauhakapoi lineage. (Genealogy 9, Generation 21.)

Sa'omoana, about 50 years old in 1938 was considered one of the great *hakahua* (chiefs) of Bellona. He was of the *hano 'anga* of Sauhakapoi lineage. He was famous as a gardener and fisherman. He made large ritual feasts and was tattooed with the *taukuka* pattern. He was married.

In 1962–63 Sa'omoana lived in Ngotokanaba village and was a member of the SSEM mission. During the second world war Sa'omoana lived close to the anchorage at Ahanga, and was the first to establish closer contact with British government officials. In 1945 he was appointed the first District headman of Bellona.

Sa'omoana was an extremely modest and dignified old gentleman. He had a great knowledge of the oral traditions of the island and also of the rituals. Being rather old, his memory sometimes failed him, and he tended to mix up ritual formulas, but his knowledge of genealogies and particularly of songs was still vivid.

SAUNGONGO Sa'oghatogha Tuhaika (Philip). Nuku'angoha lineage. (Genealogy 7, Generation 21.)

Although Saungongo had established his own household in 1938 and was married, he was still too young (about 18 years old) to have become a priest-chief when Christianity was introduced. He acted as second priest-chief *(haihenua)* at rituals made by other members of his lineage, and also at a few minor harvest rituals performed in his own homestead. Although he was young, he had already acquired a certain prestige as an industrious gardener, and he took part in some of the lineage fights which occurred in the late thirties.

In 1962–63 Saungongo lived in Pauta where he was a pastor of the SSEM mission church. He did not participate in the re-enactments of rituals and generally disapproved of them. He was, however, a helpful informant and gave a wealth of good information about the religious activities carried out by various members of his own clan.

TAKIIKA Tepuke Sangatango. Nuku'angoha lineage. (Genealogy 7, Generation 21; also *Canoes,* page 41.)

In 1938 Takiika was considered one of the great *hakahua* of the island in spite of the fact that he was not of the line of first-born sons (see 2.5.) of Nuku'angoha. Takiika was a famous gardener and fisherman, and his ritual feasts ranked in size with those of Sa'engeika, Pongi, and Sa'omona. He was also an expert fighter, and was one of the front figures in the fight against Matangi in about 1935. He was a medium and had been possessed by ancestors as well as by district deities.

In 1962–63 Takiika lived in Ngongona. He was a deacon of the SDA mission, but had no objections to participating in the re-enactment of the rituals or to demonstrating and explaining details in beliefs and rituals.

Takiika was a fine and most unusual personality. He was extremely eloquent and his detailed descriptions of various aspects of religion and social organization were presented in a very vivid language and were spiced with humor. He had a hot temper and often got into long arguments with his countrymen and with me about trifles, but even when he appeared to be in his most hectic mood and talked in

what might superficially seem to be an angry way, his speech was full of jokes and humorous expressions, his high-pitched voice almost constantly tingling with laughter. Being one of the key figures in the pre-Christian society, his information has naturally been extremely valuable, and I am greatly indebted to him for his assistance.

TAMUA Pakeika 'Angikieke (Naiham). Matabaingei lineage. (Genealogy 9, Generation 21; also *Canoes,* page 42.)

Tamua was about 30 years old in 1938. He had been initiated as a priest-chief and lived in his own homestead with his wife and children. Tamua was the oldest son of Tango'eha, the *hakahua* of Matabaingei lineage. (Tango'eha was one of the prominent figures of the Iho clan, a man of great age. During my stays on the island he had become almost completely deaf and it was impossible to communicate with him.) Tamua was a man well versed in the traditions and activities of his island. He contributed a long and extremely detailed description of the rituals connected with canoe-building and with shark fishing, and he also gave extensive information concerning the appointment of religious officials.

In 1962–63 Tamua lived in Ngotokanaba village. He was a deacon of the SSEM mission. Holding this post, he was afraid to assist in the re-enactment of the rituals, although he said that he would very much like to have done so. He talked freely about the old religion, and was a frequent visitor to my house and also a prominent participant in group discussions of religion and social organization.

Tapuika TENGAUNGAKIU Tinohitu. Sa'apai lineage. (Genealogy 4, Generation 22; also *Canoes,* page 42.)

Being only about ten years old in 1938, Tapuika was too young to have been a religious official. He was, however, an extremely efficient assistant during my first stay on the island in 1958–59. He knew a lot about the oral traditions, and was an excellent help in explaining intricate conceptions. Checking his information showed that nearly all his contributions met with the approval of the elders of his clan. During our later stays on the island we did not use Tapuika as an informant, but between 1959 and 1962 he occasionally mailed neatly written information to me at his own initiative. Tapuika had been a member of the Solomon Islands police corps in Honiara.

Taupongi NGIBAUIKA. Tongomainge lineage. (Genealogy 9, Generation 21; also *Canoes,* page 43.)

Taupongi lived with his parents, Temoa and Kaisa'unga, in Tebaitahe homestead, in 1938. Born about 1925, he was too young to be a religious official. Already as a boy he was said to have shown great interest in the oral traditions of Bellona, and his kinsmen characterized him as a young man with an unusual memory and an unsatiable desire for knowledge.

In 1962–63 Taupongi lived in Matahenua village in Ngango district where he acted as a host for my colleagues and me during our stays on Bellona. Taupongi was a member of the SDA mission, but he did not take an active part in the mission's activities, seldom attended services, smoked, and ate forbidden food. He was married.

Taupongi is one of the Bellonese to whom Elbert, Christensen, and I owe a great deal of our knowledge, particularly about language and social organization. In spite of the fact that he had never attended a proper school, his superb memory, his outstanding intelligence, and his ability to grasp the idea of anthropological research, made him from the first an invaluable informant and assistant. His extre-

me honesty and his fine personality added to the pleasure which it has been to have him as a friend and helper. In 1961 he spent two months in Hawaii as a language informant for Elbert and me, and in 1964–65 he was in Denmark for nine months, assisting Elbert, Christensen, and me in the checking of our material on language and social organization. At home on Bellona he made taped interviews under our supervision and also in other ways contributed to our research. It should be added that Taupongi, in spite of his young age, was generally recognized as the person on Bellona who had the deepest knowledge of the cultural traditions of his island, even by members of rivaling fractions.

Temoa PUANGONGO. Tongomainge lineage. (Genealogy 9, Generation 20; *Canoes,* page 46.)

Temoa, Taupongi's father, was one of the two *matu'a* of Tongomainge lineage in 1938. He was an expert ritual leader, and his ritual feasts were of medium size. He was a prominent fisherman and an expert story-teller. He was about 35 years old and he was married when Christianity was introduced. Temoa lived in Matahenua village in 1962–63, and was a member of the SDA mission.

Temoa was an excellent informant. In spite of his age he still remembered even small details concerning the past. He was of a very kind disposition, but in discussions about intellectual matters he might at times become very excited, and angry debates with his countrymen might follow.

CHAPTER 2. BELLONA SOCIETY. AN OUTLINE

The following very brief description concerns conditions on Bellona in the years immediately prior to the introduction of Christianity in 1938. The outline af Rennellese and Bellonese culture given in Chapter 1 in *Canoes* contains a more detailed description of various aspects of this culture, especially kinship terminology and language, and may be read in conjunction with this chapter. Both descriptions are, however, preliminary, and a more detailed analysis of social change and of culture and social organization of present-day Bellona is reserved for later publication in this series.

2.1. *Geography and economy*. Bellona, a Polynesian Outlier island in the British Solomon Islands, lies at 11° south latitude and about 140 kilometers south of Guadalcanal (Figure 1). Its native name is Mungiki. Together with the neighboring island, Rennell (Mugaba), it forms a distinct culture area, different from other cultures of the Melanesian islands in the Solomon Islands group.

Bellona is a raised coral atoll, 11.5 kilometers long and 3 kilometers wide. It is girded by limestone cliffs covered with dense vegetation and nearly everywhere raising vertically out of the ocean, reaching a height of about 30 meters. There is no safe anchorage at the coast and only in a few places on the north side of the island are small strips of white sand.

The interior of the island forms an oblong depression surrounded by the forest-clad coral rim. This is the inhabited and cultivated area. Through this area a trail runs from Ahanga, the landing place in the northwestern end, to Tingoa in the east. There are no rivers or streams on this porous limestone island. The interior depression is extremely fertile, and most gardens are clustered along the main trail like beads on a string.

The economy was based on horticulture, fishing, and to a lesser extent on hunting and on collection of wild fruits and roots in the bush. The slash-and-burn method was applied to the cultivation of land: a garden area lay fallow about 4 to 6 years before being used again, and the length of the period depended on the type of crop to be cultivated. A study of Bellonese ecology is presently being made by Sofus Christiansen of the University of Copenhagen, with consideration of methods of cultivation, hunting, and collecting.

The most important crops included yams, bananas, taro, and coconuts. Collecting in the bush provided the Bellonese with the important *ngeemungi* (Gnetum sp.?) fruit and with a wide variety of wild yams and of vines, whose leaves were baked as spinach.

Plants grown for technical purposes included the coconut tree, pandanus, and turmeric. Coconut leaves and fruits were used for mats, baskets, and sennit. Houses were thatched with pandanus leaves. Turmeric provided a dye of great ritual significance. The bush trees covering the coral rim of the island also provided the Bellonese with trees, whose bark was suitable for the preparation of tapa, with the huge *ghaimenga* trees out of which canoes were carved, and with a number of

other trees and vines from which house posts, paddles, ceremonial staffs, fish-hooks, lines and nets were made.

Fishing was important but perhaps less so than in most Polynesian societies. The reason may be the scarcity of good beaches which could provide landing places for the outrigger canoes. Shark, flying fish, and bonito were the most important fish, but a great variety of other fish also were caught (see page 40). Inside the reef men and women collected mollusks and Crustacea.

In the bush men hunted flying foxes *(peka),* coconut crabs *(akui)* and occasionally pigeons *(ngupe)* and parrots *(ghisua).*

2.2. *Clans, subclans, and lineages.* There were between 430 and 440 inhabitants on Bellona immediately prior to the introduction of Christianity in 1938. The major social divisions were those of clans *(sa'a),* subclans *(kakai 'anga),* and patrilineal descent groups *(manaha).*

There were two clans on Bellona, *sa'a* Kaitu'u and *sa'a* Taupongi. According to Bellonese traditions, the island originally had eight clans but six of these had been exterminated several generations back. The members of the Kaitu'u clan claimed to be descendants of Kaitu'u, one of the first immigrators, and the members of the Taupongi clan claimed to descend from another immigrator, Taupongi (see T66). These clans were the major patrilineal descent groups of the island and were also residential units. Male members of the Taupongi clan all owned land and resided in the same district *(kanomanaha),* Ngango, at the western end of the island. This clan was commonly called the Iho clan after one of the first ancestors (T139), and this is the term used throughout this book. Male members of the Kaitu'u clan owned land and resided in the middle district, Ghongau, and in the eastern district, Matangi.

Male landowners residing within the same district considered themselves as belonging to a *kakai 'anga,* a term indicating the largest subdivision of a clan. Its members all traced patrilineal descent to an ancestor of a later generation than that of the first immigrants. (Principles of district division are shown in Plate 3.) The separation of male members of the Kaitu'u clan at Ghongau and Matangi was rationalized by the Bellonese by reference to specific "historic" traditions which related how the Kaitu'u clan had been subject to furcation resulting in the creation of two *kakai 'anga* residing in and controlling different areas. In recent times Ghongau district has split up into two branches, Tengutuangabangika'ango and Tengutuangabangitakungu (T133), which, by some Bellonese, were considered separate *kakai 'anga.* The rift is so recent that there is still disagreement as to whether these two branches should be called separate social units. Moreover, their members still live intermingled within the same area and it is impossible to draw a borderline between the areas controlled by people of these two groups. The people of the Iho clan considered themselves one *kakai 'anga* (Genealogy 9) and the district inhabited by them was a *kanomanaha.* In spite of this, the term subclan seems an adequate translation of *kakai 'anga.* According to the traditions, even the Iho clan had once been divided into two *kakai 'anga,* but one of these, Temanu (N144 and Genealogy 9), had become extinct in Generation 14.

In 1938 the Bellonese thus recognized three distinct districts *(kanomanaha):* Ngango owned by the Iho clan, Ghongau owned by a subclan of the Kaitu'u clan which was on the verge of splitting up into two distinct subclans, and Matangi owned by onother subclan of the Kaitu'u clan.

The subclans were again subdivided into minor patrilineal descent groups, *manaha.* (In this book the word lineage is used synonymously with the term patrilineal descent group.) A person's membership in a subclan was of great importance in many social affairs and determined the deities he turned to for support, set cer-

tain rules of marriage, and furnished him with kinsmen of certain types; nevertheless the most important affiliation in a man's daily affairs was the *manaha*. According to Bellonese traditions, *manaha* were formed by fission of the subclans into smaller social units (T66:72) often because of disagreements among kinsmen. The Bellonese stated that the formation of *manaha* was a dynamic process, constantly taking place. Some *manaha* had been formed recently (Sauhakapoi in the Iho clan), others were formed a few generations back and sometimes characterized as one *manaha* (Patonu and Tangakitonga, Ngikobaka and Sabesabea, all in the Kaitu'u clan), others again were just about to become divided because of interlineage fights (Nuku'angoha).

The *manaha* were exogamous patrilineal descent groups. Their cores were the lineages of first-born sons *(hano 'anga)*. Figure 2 gives a simplified picture of how the Bellonese conceived the segmentation of one of their clans:

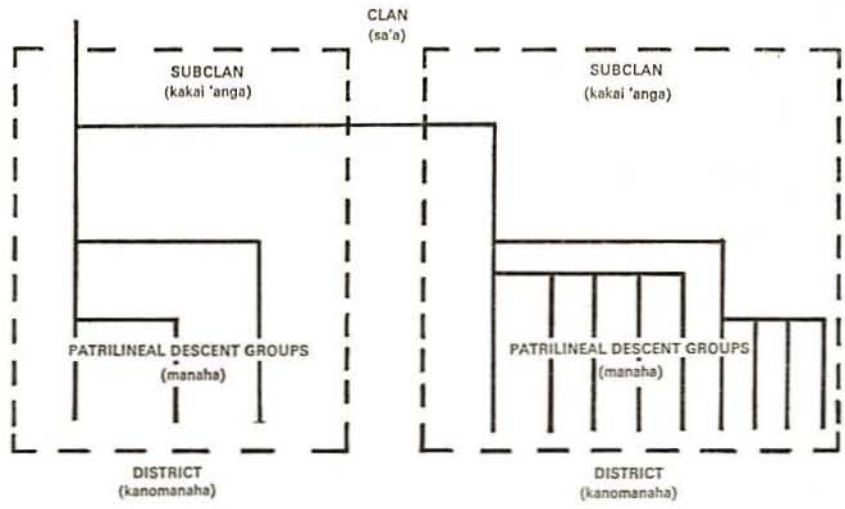


Figure 2: The segmentation of a Bellona clan.

Land belonging to the members of a *manaha* often lay as a cluster of garden areas and homesteads, but there was also a certain dispersion of land owned by members of the same patrilineal descent group. The result was that land owned by different lineages lay intermingled within a district.

There were 18 major lineages on Bellona in 1938. Figure 3 shows how they were grouped together in the subclans inhabiting the island's districts. Comparison with the genealogies in *Canoes* shows how the Bellonese rationalized the existence of these lineages by reference to fissions claimed to have taken place in previous generations. (It should be noted that certain lineages existing in 1939 are not shown in Plate 3 or in other genealogies. An example is the Sauhakapoi lineage, established as an offshoot of Matabaingei lineage in the Iho clan [Genealogy 9] by Baiabe in Generation 20. Also some of the more recent lineages of the Matangi subclan are not shown, namely Tehakapaia, Ahenoa, and Te'atubai. Te'atubai was founded by a Rennellese, Tangosia, who was still alive in 1938. He had come to stay with people of the Pangangiu lineage, who gave him some of their land. He decided to stay on Bellona, and he and his descendants were recognized as an independant lineage. Tehakapaia and Ahenoa were founded by furcations

Patrilineal descent groups *(manaha)*	Number of individuals inhabiting the ground owned by members of the lineage in 1938	Number of male landholders *(matu'a)* having their own households in 1938
KAITU'U CLAN		
Matangi district		
Tehakapaia	44	5
Pangangiu	5	2
Te'atubai	14	2
Ahenoa	16	1
Ghongau district		
(Sub-group: Tengutuangabangika'ango)		
Ghongau	31	5
Tongaba	19	3
Mata'ubea I	7	1
Baitanga	19	4
Ngikobaka, Sabesabea *)	49	11
Nuku'angoha	74	10
Mata'ubea II	16	2
(Sub-group: Tengutuangabangitakungu)		
Hangekumi	17	2
Tangakitonga, Patonu *)	32	4
'Ubea	7	1
Sa'apai	23	4
'Angohi	9	2
IHO CLAN		
Ngango district		
Matabaingei	29	6
Sauhakapoi	12	2
Tongomainge	15	2

*) commonly considered one lineage with two sublineages.

Figure 3: The population of Bellona in 1938.

of Mataki'ubea and Pangangiu in Generation 18.) The figure also shows the number of individuals inhabiting the land owned by the members of each of the Bellonese lineages. This number includes not only persons who, according to the principle of patrilineal descent, were recognized as actual members of the lineage, but also women married to its members, and, occasionally, a few individuals who had come to stay permanently with them because they had lost their own immediate kinsmen, or for other reasons. The figure finally gives the number of grown-up men of the lineage who were owning land and who had established their own households. These were also the religious officials of pre-Christian Bellona. All heads of households acted as priest-chiefs at the rituals in which ceremonial distributions took place.

The prime importance of the patrilineal descent groups *(manaha)* was that they regulated economic cooperation and succession to land. Land was hereditary in the agnatic line. An analysis has shown that the usual pattern was inheritance from father to son, and that land was also commonly vested in a brother's son. Only under rare and exceptional circumstances was land vested in

someone from another *manaha*. Arable land was divided into small plots, most of which had individual names. These plots were owned by individual males (as a rule women could not own land), but in some cases a piece of land was owned jointly by a father and a son. Members of a lineage often cooperated in the cultivation of land. They might borrow each other's garden areas for cultivation during one or more seasons, but it was a strict rule that one could not plant coconut trees or any other type of trees on land borrowed from someone else, not even on land borrowed from a kinsman of the same lineage. The reason was that to plant trees on a piece of land indicated annexation. Cooperation also took place on two other levels. Members of the same lineage most commonly helped each other in the tilling of land, especially when a larger area was under cultivation. Also they commonly pooled each other's garden produce and performed a joint ritual feast with ceremonial distributions of the crops.

A man might also borrow land for cultivation from members of other patrilineal descent groups or subclans, but these transactions were more formal, not only requiring specific requests for permission, but also a certain recompensation.

One of the most common sources for disagreements and open fights was the problem of rights over land. These fights have been attested in oral traditions, as for example, T66, T126, T133. Unlike, for instance, Tikopia, Bellona had no central political authority (see 2.9) who could settle these disagreements; this often led to serious fights and also to fission of lineages.

2.3. *The household*. A lineage was subdivided into a number of households. The term for household is the same as that for lineage, namely *manaha*. *Manaha* also means an important land area. A lineage derived its name from the most prominent homestead and land area belonging to one of its members, namely that owned by the first man to branch off from his original lineage to form a new patrilineal descent group. This homestead and land area was called a *hakanohonga*.

Each landowner had one or more houses on his land. The majority of homesteads lay along the main trail going through Bellona from southeast to northwest. In *Canoes*, page 10, we have given a brief description of a Bellonese homestead. Before 1938 there were no actual villages on the island. A man might own land and build his living houses in various parts of the district of his subclan. Here he lived with his household. This consisted commonly of the nuclear family, usually with one or more kinsmen living there for shorter or longer periods. It was characteristic of the Bellonese residence pattern that landowners and their wives only rarely went to live with other people for long periods, but usually remained in one of their own homesteads; but it was also characteristic that the young, unmarried people, the very old, and the few landless men were constantly moving, now living in one homestead belonging to a kinsman, now in another. There was in this way a constant fluctuation in the residential pattern, the most stable part being the nuclear family, man, wife, and their infant children. In times of interlineal fights on the island, an almost constant state, movements of certain individuals, especially grown-up men, were restricted by fear of sudden attacks launched by an enemy. Commonly men who were engaged in fights moved to hidden homesteads *(abaaba)* in the bush. Here they might live with their families for months or sometimes even years at a time, and they only secretly ventured into the cultivated areas of the island to collect food or on their way to the beach to go fishing.

2.4. *Marriage*. The Bellonese claimed that ideally the subclan *(kakai 'anga)* should be an exogamous kin group, but that during later generations intermarriages had taken place within some of the *kakai 'anga*. A survey of marriages prior to 1938 reveals the following pattern: The Iho clan was exogamous. No cases of endogamy were recorded. The Matangi subclan was ideally exogamous; only one

case of endogamy was recorded. The Tengutuangabangitakungu fraction of the Ghongau subclan was also ideally exogamous, only two cases of endogamy having been found. In the Tengutuangabangika'ango fraction of the same subclan members of the patrilineal descent groups intermarried frequently.

A preliminary analysis of marriages in 1938 and in previous generations has shown a statistical preference for intermarriages of certain patrilineal descent groups. The Bellonese ideal was that one should not marry any members of one's own patrilineal descent group or of one's matriline. (Further implications of matrilineal descent will be dealt with below.) Marriages of people of the same lineage or matriline were termed incestuous *(ngetu)*. Although no organized sanctions were carried out against such marriages, they were strongly disapproved of and taunt songs were commonly composed ridiculing the breakers of the incest rules. A man and a woman of the same generation who were not allowed to marry stood in a *tau tuhahine* relationship to each other. These relationships included brothers and sisters, or half brothers and sisters with either father or mother in common, and also lineal cousins of opposite sex. Cross cousins on both father's and mother's side were marriageable. Of his own generation, a man could theoretically marry any woman whom he would like to live with, provided this person was not his classificatory sister *(tuhahine)*. Parents had no rights to interfere with their children's choice of spouses, but in practice a number of marriages actually seemed to have been arranged by parents of the young couples.

Marriage itself was an informal affair. Before marrying, a man would usually have made his own homestead on land given him by his father or by another member of his lineage. He would then merely go and fetch the girl in her parents' homestead. Usually this took place without the girl's parents knowing when it happened. If the cohabitation proved to be successful, the man would, after some time had elapsed, go to the house of his father-in-law with food and other presents, and an exchange of goods would take place confirming the establishment of affinal ties *(hepotu'akinga)* between the two patrilineal descent groups. The exchange of presents might also take place during a ritual feast in the young man's homestead where his wife's father would receive an important share of the distributed food.

Within the nuclear family the division of labor was as follows: The wife did the cooking, cleaning of the homestead, collecting of firewood, plaiting of floor mats, baskets, bags, and fine mats. She also made turmeric and tapa. She did the lighter garden work, cleared and burned the garden plot, and assisted in planting and digging of the crops. She collected mollusks and other seafood inside the reef, and occasionally gathered wild roots and fruits in the bush. She also took care of infant children, and in the settling of peace after a fight she acted as the intermediary between the enemy groups. The husband was the house-builder and canoe-builder, he carved weapons and artifacts and plaited the fishing lines. He supervised all garden activities and did the hard work himself. He did the off-shore fishing, and the hunting for coconut crabs and flying foxes in the bush. He was active in fights and in rituals.

Divorce was extremely common. Marriages were dissolved by the wife leaving her husband's home, often returning to the homestead of her parents. At the dissolution of the marriage the affinal ties to the wife's lineage were also dissolved, and the husband had no longer any economic obligations towards this group of people. If there were infant children in the marriage, the mother would take them with her when she left, but as they still belonged to their father's lineage, there were strict rules that they should return to him when they were old enough to learn to take care of themselves.

There were only 7 polygynous marriages on Bellona in 1938. However, a succession of spouses was extremely common. Constant divorces and remarriages were a characteristic feature of the Bellonese society, resulting in a complicated network of changing kin ties.

Common reasons for divorce were adultery or the spouse's carelessness and neglect in work. A woman's inability to bear children has never been recorded as a reason for divorce. This should perhaps be seen in relation to the Bellonese system of adoption, discussed in 2.5.

Bellonese reasons for polygyny included such factors as the desirability of extensive female assistance in the house, of having many children, and of a great number of affinal kinsmen.

2.5. *Parents and children.* The Bellonese asserted that before closer contact was established with Europeans immediately prior to the second world war, they were ignorant about the connection of copulation and pregnancy. Children were implanted in the wombs of women by the ancestors. In Chapter 10 these concepts will be discussed in more detail. A married couple were said to have received offspring usually because the husband had asked his lineal ancestors for a child. His wife's pregnancy was the sign that his request had been granted. Immediately after the child's birth it was given names by both parents, and a few days later a ritual was performed in the homestead asking the deities to protect the infant. Ceremonies involving male infants were more elaborate than those involving females.

Children normally grew up in their parents' homestead, but they were also frequently taken to visit kinsmen, such as father's and mother's brothers and grandparents on both sides, for shorter or longer periods. This seems to have been an important part of the upbringing and a way for a child to get to know his kinsmen. Both parents took part in the education of the child. Fathers taught their sons men's work, and mothers were responsible for the education of their daughters. The relationship of parents and children was comparatively free and unrestrained. A son would, for instance, only be mildly reproached if he used obscene words in his father's presence, but he had to be more careful of his speech in the presence of his mother.

Adoption was a common feature. The most common reason for adoption was childlessness. However, a married couple who had only children of one sex might adopt one or more children of the other sex, and even people who had children of both sexes might adopt a child.

There were several types of adoption. Parents might give one of their children to an older brother of the husband. This was common if the oldest brother in a lineage had no sons. As will be seen later, primogeniture was of importance within a patrilineal descent group. Persons being in the lineage of firstborn sons *(hano 'anga)* had specific rights and privileges, and it was considered of importance that this lineage continue. This was secured through the system of adoption. Parents might also adopt children of members of other lineages if they had no children themselves. A very common type of adoption was of children born out of wedlock. A child having no *pater* had very low social status in the Bellonese society because he was not affiliated with any patrilineal descent group and thus had no kinsmen from whom he could inherit land. Through adoption a fatherless child might become a member of a patrilineal descent group, but his status would only rarely become as high as that of the true members of this group, and he would usually only inherit little land from his kinsmen by adoption.

2.6. *Siblings and cousins.* Between siblings and parallel cousins of the same sex there was not only a free and unrestrained relationship, but also considerable cooperation. The remoter the relationship the less the obligations to cooperate. Sib-

lings and cousins who belonged to the same lineage assisted each other in many undertakings, provided they were on good terms. They helped each other in the tilling of land and in fishing. They were often allies in fights against other lineages, they brought up each other's children, and they held joint rituals with distribution of their garden produce and their catch. They borrowed each other's canoes, fishing gear, garden plots, and adzes. The cooperative and unrestrained relationship of two persons was indicated by the term *hai hanau*. Two individuals standing in a *hai hanau* relationship to each other were not bound to any decorous behavior towards one another. They could use obscene words and tell risqué stories in each other's presence. However, there were many cases where people in a *hai hanau* relationship were enemies.

Whereas the term *hai hanau* indicated freedom of restraint, the term *tau tuhahine* was an indicator of mutual avoidance. As mentioned above, *tau tuhahine* relationship meant that of classificatory brothers and sisters. Bellonese social norms required complete and strict avoidance among *tau tuhahine*. They could not speak to each other, not mention each other's established name *(ingoa hakama'u)*. They could not as grown ups live in the same homestead, and if they met at the trail, the woman had to keep out of her brother's sight. This avoidance was not an indicator of formal enmity between the two parts. On the contrary, they were supposed to respect and honor *(haka'eha'eha)* each other and present each other with gifts, relayed through a third kinsman.

Cross-cousin marriage was allowed on Bellona. The term for cross-cousins is *ha'anga,* and the cross-cousin system was symmetric. According to traditions, cross-cousin marriage was tabooed during earlier generations but made permissable in the 12th generation (see T66:69–71 and T126:11–13). Marriages of first cross-cousins were not very common, whereas there was a considerable number of marriages between second, third and fourth cross-cousins.

2.7. *Mother's brother and man's sister's child.* Among collateral kinsmen the relation of a male to his sister's or parallel female cousin's child was of importance. Above we have considered the importance attached to patrilineal descent as a determinant for inheritance, residence, and choice of spouse. In *Canoes,* Plate 3 and Chapter 3, we have presented the outlines of Bellonese genealogies and discussed their significance; documentation of their importance has been given in the texts.

Matrilineal descent was also of importance on Bellona, but its significance was different from that of the patriline. According to the Bellonese themselves, the matriline *(hohonga 'anga)* was important for the establishment of kin ties to certain living individuals, whereas the patriline was important because it was the determinant factor for succession to land titles *(sui 'anga ki te kenge)*. The matriline was not remembered very far back. Actually only those matrilineal ancestors through whom one traced descent to closer, living matrilateral kinsmen were known.

Certain matrilateral kinsmen were of specific importance, namely those of one's mother's brothers and cousins who belonged to one's *hohonga 'anga*. A mother's brother or male parallel cousin was termed *tu'aatina,* and a man's sister's or parallel female cousin's child of either sex was called his *'ingaamutu*. The relationship between *tu'aatina* and *'ingaamutu* was called *tau tu'aatina*. Ideally this relationship was one of mutual affection and help. A man would take part in his sister's sons upbringing, present him with gifts, and the two would assist each other in garden work, fishing, fights, and in the performance of rituals. The relationship between the two was comparatively free of restraints. Ideally they were supposed to treat each other with a certain respect, but if they were of the same sex they could swear and use obscene words in each other's presence without causing too much

embarrassment. As for succession to land, a *tu'aatina* would give land to his *'ingaamutu* if the latter was fatherless or if they belonged to the same subclan. Our material shows that vesting of land in a sister's son was uncommon, and that it was mildly disapproved of; the proper heir was a son or brother's son.

Although the mother's brother was probably the person outside one's own descent group to whom one had the closest and most affectionate social ties, even other individuals of the mother's patrilineal descent group were of importance. The young Bellonese seem to have spent a considerable amount of time in the homesteads of their mother's patrilineage. This lineage was termed the one a person "originated in," whereas he was "born into" his own patrilineal descent group. This has to do with the Bellonese view on conception and childbirth, discussed in Chapter 10.

2.8. *Affinal kinsmen.* Among a man's affinal kinsmen, his brothers-in-law were the most important.

They were considered those individuals through which his formal ties to lineages other than those of his father and mother were primarily channelized. Through his own marriage and through his sister's marriages, formal relations were established between two lineages, which were theoretically strangers to each other, and the behavioral norms of brothers-in-law were of a very decorous nature. The way they addressed each other was extremely formal, they had to be very careful with their language in each other's presence, and in a group of persons where two brothers-in-law were present, an air of formality penetrated everyone's behavior. A great many words commonly used with other persons were banned, and there could not be the slightest nuance of sexuality in the conversation.

The term for brother-in-law is *ma'aa.* This term included one's wife's brothers and male parallel cousins, and sisters' and female cousins' husbands. A female's *ma'aa* were her brothers' and male parallel cousins' wives, and her husband's sisters and female parallel cousins. The relationship was less strained with more remote *ma'aa.*

Even cooperation among brothers-in-law was very formal. One could not ask one's *ma'aa* to help with garden work, fishing, or any other activity, but a brother-in-law might offer his help voluntarily and as an act of courtesy. Any assistance from a *ma'aa* called for generous recompensations. The relationship of *ma'aa* involved an elaborate exchange of goods and services. In the description of the rituals we shall see how this was in fact one of the most important aspects of the system of ceremonial distributions.

In times of interlineage fights a man was theoretically compelled to come to the assistance of his *ma'aa,* take his side and act as his ally. This was also commonly done, but there were cases in which two *ma'aa* have been engaged in fights.

2.9. *Social stratification and the political system.* There was no central authority on Bellona, no high chief or chiefs of the type found in a number of Polynesian communities. Each patrilineal descent group was autonomous. No member of a different lineage had any authority over extraneous land or people.

Each lineage consisted of a number of male landholders *(matu'a).* Each had complete authority over his own land, but, as mentioned, there was very close cooperation among the landholders within the lineage. There was a certain stratification among these landholders. Their social status depended on two factors, the principle of primogeniture and personal abilities. First-born sons in each generation usually inherited more land than others, and they were commonly chosen as *hakahua* of the lineage by their father and by the other elders of the group. The *hakahua* of the lineage was the man enjoying the highest prestige among the landholders. This title did not give the holder any authority over others, but the *hakahua* would often be a person to whom one turned for advice or help, and he would be the

leader in interlineage fights. *Hakahua* was an honorary term of reference for a man with considerable abilities. A *hakahua* was expected to make large feasts with ceremonial distributions of food (this was easier for a man who had inherited much land on which he could grow large amounts of food crops), he was also expected to be generous and helpful, modest and kind, courageous in fights, a great fisherman and canoe-builder, a good dancer and an expert ritual leader. Naturally not all first-born sons showed all these abilities, but being first-born son commonly meant that one's upbringing was directed towards evoking one's abilities as a *hakahua.*

The stress on the principle of primogeniture, however, did not preclude men who were not first-born sons from being considered *hakahua.* There are several examples of younger brothers being referred to as *hakahua* because they had shown outstanding abilities. There are also examples of first-born sons who were not considered *hakahua,* simply because they did not live up to the standard. Not all Bellonese lineages had a *hakahua.* If none of the landholders *(matu'a)* had the extraordinary qualities necessary to be recognized as *hakahua,* the lineage would merely consist of a number of *matu'a.* In some lineages there were more than one *hakahua.* This was, for instance, the case in Ngikobaka lineage, in which two men, Pongi and Sa'engeika (Genealogy 6, Generation 21) both were extremely prominent figures showing all the characteristics considered ideal on Bellona.

From what has been said above it will be clear that although the *hakahua* of Bellona did not form a power group they constituted a distinct social class.

There seems to have been a certain tendency for intermarriage of children of the *hakahua* and greater *matu'a* of the island. The term for such children was *tama tau tu'unganga,* a word which might be translated prominent offspring. The term was, however, vague, as it could also be used as a general term for all children born in wedlock, in contrast to children of unmarried mothers.

The *hakahua* and *matu'a* of Bellona did not dress or live much differently than other members of the society. Some *hakahua* might live in larger houses and own more land and a greater number of weapons, mats, sacred objects, or canoes than others. On the other hand, one might also find landholders with less land who had impressive houses and owned many objects. All landholders, including the *hakahua,* did the same types of work, and there was no specialization in activities. The only difference was that *hakahua* and other important landholders did almost everything on a larger scale than others. They cultivated more land, carved more canoes, did more fishing, and had more elaborate ritual feasts. The social graduation among Bellonese men thus lay on the level of the amount of land possessed and of the amount of work carried out.

There was a small group of practically landless men on Bellona. These were the so-called *tangani pengea* (abortive people), sometimes also called *pengea i tu'a* (subsidiary characters). The majority of these were persons born out of wedlock who resided with their mother's kin, often with a mother's brother. They commonly acted as servants *(nguani* or *tino)* for the influential elders of the lineage with whom they resided. This group also included some individuals with low intelligence or other mental handicaps and also some men who had been brought to Bellona from Rennell to act as servants. The *tangani pengea* thus formed a distinct class with very low prestige.

CHAPTER 3. THE UNIVERSE

3.1. *Creation of the world.* To the Bellonese the question of how the world they lived in had come into being was apparently not a matter of special interest. They had no elaborate cosmogonies of the type found in a great number of other Polynesian societies, in which the world and its inhabitants were created by the pairing of elements that created offspring, and which again mated and produced new offspring. This may be only natural, for it would admittedly be surprising to find cosmogonies of this type in a society whose members claimed ignorance of biological fatherhood.

On Bellona most men could relate that the island began as a Nerita shell that rose out of the ocean. Only few, however, could tell a fuller story about this event (T10). The Nerita shell grew upwards and came to the surface, and soil "was there." The first living creature *(manu)* on the island was the *pangati* beetle. Later came the *soi tea* plant, an arrowroot which grew and the sky rested upon it. But one of the deities, Tangangoa, wanted to separate the sky and the earth, and so he lifted the sky up but he was too short to get it up sufficiently high. Another of the gods then took the sacred staff of the priest-chief and propped up the sky with it.

It is, however, characteristic, that none of those gods who were of ritual significance took part in the creation of the world, and this act was never referred to in the rituals. In a study of Bellona rites we hope to show that rituals were neither latently nor manifestly considered acts of creation.

This also applies to the traditions concerning the creation of the neighboring island Rennell. On Rennell, as well as on Bellona, it was generally accepted that the culture hero Mautikitiki (*Canoes,* Chapter 5) caught Rennell on his hook while he was on a fishing trip and hauled it to the surface (T31[A], T33:11, T36:3, T39). At that time Bellona already existed, and was the home of Mautikitiki and his two brothers (T31[A,B], T39). Mautikitiki and his brothers were, however, not gods but culture heroes. These were not worshipped, and the hauling up of Rennell was not referred to in the context of any ritual.

It will be shown later how the culture heroes *(kakai),* a group of anthropomorphic creatures who were said to have lived in the dim past on various unknown islands as well as on Rennell and Bellona, were believed to have created various elements of nature, such as the moon, the whale, the bonito, the skink, the flounder, the legs of the coconut crab, certain kinds of food, the fiery color of birds, and the chronology and constellations of stars, but not one of the gods worshipped on Rennell and Bellona was involved in any original act of creation.

We have an example of this attitude in the traditions about the coconut. N41(B) tells that Mautikitiki created the flesh and water of the coconut from his urine and from he mucus of his penis, and also that this culture hero was instructed in the ritual use of the nut. But from a ritual point of view the act of creation of the coconut was of no significance. What mattered to the Bellonese was that the worshipped gods had an abundance of these nuts in their heavenly abodes, Nukuahea and Manukatu'u, and that it was these gods who provided their worshippers with coconuts in exchange for the food offerings presented to them in the rituals.

The Bellonese had no traditions as to how man was created. A few informants

tended to say that the culture heroes themselves were kinds of human beings, but some Bellonese denied this. Once, when talking with a group of informants, I wanted to ask each of them how he thought man had come into being. The first answer was: "We do not know. Man existed before he came to Rennell and Bellona, but we do not know about this. We know that Kaitu'u came here from 'Ubea (the traditional homeland), but was he a human being? No, he was something between a human being and a god." Afterwards everyone agreed to this and said that there was nothing to add. So this is probably as far as one can go. The question of how this world became a world seemed of little significance; it was simply a question not asked; it was socially irrelevant; what mattered to the islanders was apparently the perpetuation of this world once established, how to prevent it from dying out, disappearing, or being polluted by evil gods. Here the rituals became significant.

Traditions concerning the culture heroes were explanatory, and to some extent they served to establish a moral codex and certain norms and values of conduct. It is here significant that these stories were frequently told children as part of their upbringing.

By this I do not claim that the traditions of culture heroes have never had any connection with ritual practices. They may very well have had some connection in a remote time and in a different cultural milieu. In fact they do contain common Polynesian elements that may be of a ritual origin, but an historical analysis of this problem falls outside the scope of the present study. What concerns us here is their social significance at a given time and place, namely Bellona immediately prior to the acceptance of Christianity in 1938.

To the Bellonese the creation of the world may have taken place in a dim past without any chronology of its own. The act of creation itself was not of interest to them, any more than the time when it took place.

Once there was a world filled with gods, culture heroes, and the previous inhabitants of Rennell and Bellona, the *hiti*. Who came first was less relevant. What was relevant was the time when man entered the traditions, namely when the first immigrants set out from their traditional homeland, 'Ubea, and, after a long voyage, reached Rennell and Bellona, where they took possession of the two islands and killed the *hiti*.

Here—so their traditions claim—they have lived for about twenty-four generations. Their contact with the outside world was only slight until World War II, when white men began to visit the islands more frequently. In *Canoes,* Chapter 18, the people tell of their traditions about *haahaa 'anga,* overseas voyages, both of Rennellese and Bellonese who went to distant lands, and also about strangers coming to the islands in drift canoes. But these traditions are few. Isolation was a characteristic feature of the society of the two islands. There are no stories of massive invasions of strangers having settled permanently on Rennell and Bellona, and on both islands people appear to have been mostly self-sufficient and self-centered. Their traditions of the outside world were as dim and vague as the traditions of their distant origin.

3.2. *The universe.* These two islands, *ngua 'aamonga nei,* lay in the center of the world surrounded by ocean. Somewhere, far away, lay islands whose names were known. They were the islands which the Bellonese asserted to have touched upon when coming here from 'Ubea: Ngua Hutuna, and Henuatai (T66: 1–9, N66:1). It does not concern us here whether these islands can be plotted on a map. To the Bellonese they were hardly more than names. From the top of the coastal coral cliff the Bellonese could see the mountains of Guadalcanal when the weather was clear. Before Christianity was introduced in 1938 and closer contact was

established with government officials and missionaries, the tradition was that it was dangerous to go there, as one would be eaten up by the *tongahiti,* the Melanesians. Long ocean voyages seem to have been very rare before World War II (see *Canoes,* Chapter 18). The Rennellese and Bellonese only took their canoes out on the open sea when they went shark fishing or ventured upon a voyage between the two islands themselves. But even that was a dangerous undertaking. The passage between Rennell and Bellona took great courage and there are many stories about people who have lost their lives on voyages between the islands before 1938. Once the Bellonese left his island he was more than ever surrounded by dangerous powers, and the gods were free to do to him what they liked. The story of Tamungeu and his grandson who meet two of the gods on their way from Rennell to Bellona (T185 A,B) gives some of the atmosphere of fright which was an essential part of the inter-island voyages *(hongau).*

But there was the island, Bellona, a place in the center of the world. Above was the sky, propped up by the priestly staff, with stars, a sun, and a moon wandering upon it. Some stars were considered embodiments *(tino)* of culture heroes, a number of constellations had names, and stars' arrivals and disappearances at certain seasons provoked storms and dangerous seas. What the sky itself consisted of was not a matter of concern. I once discussed this with a group of old men, and one of them, Bete, said: "How can we know what the sky *(ngangi)* is? Is it water or something firm *(ma'u)*? We have not been there to see." This last remark, which was not rarely heard when talking of distant places and gods, evoked smiles and affirmative grunts from the others.

Below them the Bellonese had the *poo'ungi,* the underworld. It was a dark place under the soil of the island. Here ancestors lived and here the gods traveled. In the underworld was also the abode of the annihilated ancestors, and of snakes and other loathed creatures, such as centipedes and lizards.

On pre-Christian Bellona one obviously did not seek an explanation of the origin of all natural phenomena. A number of them were merely taken for granted. In the new era of today, with the schooling of mission teachers, and some lessons in geography and natural history, a new curiosity has been evoked. Today everybody asks questions, especially members of the younger generations who have been to school. In the old days no one would apparently formulate a question such as: What was before this world? What was before man and the gods? The world was there, and so were men and gods.

The sky was also the domain of the deities. Out there where it meets the ocean is the horizon *(ba'e ngangi),* but far away in the *tu'aa ngangi,* the place behind the blue arch of the sky, were the homes of the gods. To the east southeast from where the tradewind blows was Manukatu'u, the abode of the important god Tehainga-'atua. Also to the east southeast was Nukuahea, the home of another important god, Tehu'aingabenga. In the northwest, from where the *Noho Tonu* wind comes, lay Mungingangi, the home of the great district god of the Iho clan, Ekeitehua. To the north was Nukungeingei, where the god Nguatunihenua lived.

In T28 Naiham Tamua and Taupongi tell that the winds coming from the directions mentioned above were also attributed to the gods who lived there. The rest of the winds were attributed to other gods, but it was asserted that this did not indicate that all the gods had their residences in the directions from which their winds came. This was confirmed by Sa'engeika later (1962), who said: "We do not know much about the homes of the gods. But we know where Nukuahea, Manukatu'u, and Mungingangi are. Some people assume that the other gods also stay in those places from where their winds come. But we do not know. Maybe they all live in Nukuahea and Manukatu'u."

This vagueness in matters relating to the world of the supernaturals was noted time and time again. Bellonese beliefs left room for private constructions and interpretations. There was also a vagueness among informants as to whether the homes of the gods lay above or below the horizon. The reason for this disagreement may very well be that I raised the question. It seems as if the people had not given it much thought before I pressed for an answer. Some people said that the abodes were below the horizon in the darkness of the underworld from where the sun and moon rise. Others said that they did not know, others again that they were in the sky *(ngangi),* and others asserted that they were just far out somewhere to the east, because "the gods traveled to these islands through the sky as well as through the underworld." This last answer, for all its vagueness, seemed most in tune with the general feelings of the Bellonese. The homes of the gods were something outside their own sphere; whether above or below the horizon or under the earth seemed irrelevant.

But their own island was oriented in a fixed position in this world. With Baiabe, the son of Sanga'eha and about 38 years old, I discussed the ritual used for driving the non-worshipped gods *('apai)* away from the gardens. Assisted by Sa'engeika, he gave the ritual formula used for this purpose. In this formula the ancestors and benevolent gods were asked to take the malevolent gods to the south so as to make the soil of Bellona free and unafflicted. I asked why the malevolent gods should be taken to the south. Baiabe said: "This land faces north, and at our back (south) there are no abodes of gods—in the same way as a man knows what happens before him, but he doesn't know what is behind him. That is why the *'apai* (non-worshipped gods) live to the south, and the temples face north. The south is a dirty place, full of evils." Bellonese temples faced north. They lay on the south side of the main trail *(anga tu'u)* with the cult grounds on the north side of the temple house. The gods arrived from the vague distance, usually entering the island from the east, along the same route as that taken by the first immigrants, and were received by officials sitting facing eastward at the west side of the cult grounds.

It seems safe to conclude that variations of Bellonese interpretations of cosmogony and cosmology cannot be attributed to informants' ties to specific social groups. These variations did not stress specific interests of such groups, and the pattern of variations cannot be correlated with their structure. The small variations found seem to have their roots in the personality differences of each individual. My material does not permit an analysis of this type as regards the views of the Bellonese concerning cosmogony and cosmology.

It has been mentioned above that the members of the Iho clan claimed that the abode of their principal district god, Ekeitehua, lay in the western sky, whereas the abode of the principal district god of the Kaitu'u clan was in the eastern sky. The two clans were opponents in most social affairs, and there was considerable rivalry between them, a theme which is stressed over and over in the traditions and which even today is a prominent social trait on Bellona. The cosmological idea of homes of their respective gods in different corners of the world may be another indicator of this opposition. However, this does not mean that the members of the two clans disagreed as to the position of the homes of their gods. Both groups said that the home of the principal district deity of the Iho clan was in the western sky and that of the principal district deity of the Kaitu'u clan was in the eastern sky. Thus even members of opponent social groups agreed as to the general conception of their universe. Variations in the view were derived from interpretations by individuals; these interpretations hardly ever seemed to be a source of conflicts, and they appeared as being of secondary interest. The world was shared by all Bellonese, but within the society lay the sources of conflicts.

CHAPTER 4. THE GODS IN GENERAL

4.1. *Types and physiognomies of the gods.* The world of the Bellonese was inhabited by different types of beings that had one thing in common, namely that they possessed, and were, *ma'ungi. Ma'ungi* is both a verb and a noun. When preceded by a verbal particle *(e ma'ungi te pengea)* it means to be alive (the man is living), and conveys the idea of movement and growth, and the ability to move or grow. In connection with humans it may also be used as a noun *(te ma'ungi o te pengea,* the *ma'ungi* of the man). The *ma'ungi* is in this context considered the life principle of the person, a separate entity which may survive bodily death, in which case it is, even today, frequently referred to by the term *'ata. 'Ata* is in some ways similar to our idea of the soul. This problem will be dealt with in Section 10.1. in the discussion of Bellonese beliefs concerning life after death.

The various types of supernaturals were also considered as being, and having, *ma'ungi,* but they had certain characteristics which distinguished them from humans. One was that they had caused their bodies to disappear *(hakangingotino),* and were invisible to humans except in trances and in dreams. The Bellonese frequently said that a supernatural was a *ma'ungi* who had hidden his body.

The Bellonese distinguished between different classes of supernaturals: gods *('atua, 'aitu, ngasuenga, 'apai),* ancestors *(pengea mate),* culture heroes *(kakai),* and *hiti.* This classification may be illustrated by a simple table:

Supernaturals worshipped			Supernaturals not worshipped			
Gods		Ancestors		Others		Gods
Sky gods *('atua ngangi)*	District gods *('aitu; ngasuenga)*	Worshipped ancestors *(sa'amaa-tu'a)*	Annihilated ancestors *(pengea maangi)*	Culture heroes *(kakai)*	Aborigines of Rennell and Bellona *(hiti)*	Harmful gods *('apai)*

Figure 4: The Bellonese classification of supernaturals.

One often heard the word *'atua* used as a general term for supernaturals. This was, however, only in informal and casual talk. In more technical language the Bellonese distinguished between *'atua* and other types of supernaturals.

In daily speech *'atua* might also mean rough, stormy, and to be of an unkind or wild disposition. *Te 'aso 'atua* means the stormy season. It might also be used about people of an unkind or rather aberrant type. One of my informants had a fierce temper. He talked in a shrill, loud voice, and with great hand and body movements. People said about him *Ko T. te 'atua,* T. is an *'atua.* This did not mean that any supernatural powers were attached to him, but rather that he behaved in an unusual way. The word might often be translated by deviant. A stick insect, a giant grasshopper of a particularly unpleasant type which stings people

walking through high grass, is called *'atua sengesenge ba'e* (*'atua* cutting leg). *Ghape 'atua* is the name of an inedible bush vine, believed related to the *ghape* vine, the leaves of which are eaten as spinach. *Kingi 'atua* (skin of an *'atua*) is the term for a skin disease.

As a technical term, *'atua* will here be translated by god or deity, as the *'atua* had the qualities usually ascribed to gods. They were anthropomorphic, anthroposocial (being able to perceive what man was doing and to communicate with man), and anthropopsychic (because relations with them were conducted as though they had mentalities like those of human members of the society) (Goode 1951:43, 50, and 54). The *'atua,* however, were not believed to be related to humans. Men and gods had no kin ties to each other, and they were generally considered entirely different classes of beings.

Even though the word supernatural implies a conceptual distinction which has its roots in western cultures the use of this term for such beings as deities, culture heroes, *hiti,* and deceased ancestors seems justified because the Bellonese themselves make a similar distinction between natural and supernatural. The Bellonese supernaturals were beings who under normal circumstances could not be perceived with one's senses. They were said to have caused their bodies to disappear, they were invisible. Also, the supernaturals had power to do things which in accordance with everyday experiences were impossible for humans. To the Bellonese the supernaturals were, however, actual, factual creatures whose existence no one seemed to doubt. They were as real as man was to his fellow man.

There was a body of commonly shared ideas of what gods were, and of the personalities of the individual gods. The Bellonese also had similar beliefs concerning the proper attitude mortals should assume vis-a-vis the gods (rituals, rules of taboo). There were, however, certain variations in their concepts, which may be attributed to the social affiliation and the personality of the individual, and to the specific context in which a god was seen. This problem is dealt with below.

Although the gods were conceived of as being anthropomorphic, the Bellonese had not developed any specific interest in their actual appearance. It was generally agreed that they were invisible to humans and that they had no permanent body *(tino).* The Bellonese said that the gods were only visible to other gods, to dead ancestors, to mediums in their trances, and to humans in dreams. One informant, Benny Puia of Rennell, who had himself been a medium *(taaunga),* described the appearance of the gods, and his description was agreed to by Sanga'eha, a former Bellonese medium: "When about to possess a man, the god first appears in human form, then comes and sits in front of the person (the medium) and talks (through him) and people listen. He looks like a human, but the god who is dressed in a loincloth is very big, and his skin in nice looking, and his head is large, and the god has rings round his arms and earrings in his ears. Sometimes, when the god arrives, his skin is brown, sometimes when he comes, his skin is white and he looks like a white man."

The gods had a striking resemblance to Rennellese and Bellonese dressed for feasts. The concept of gods with white skin may have its origin in the early days of contact with Europeans. It may also be an old idea. We shall probably never know.

A Bellonese informant who had been a medium described the gods as looking like the *'ata,* spiritual self, of a human being. This means that gods looked like humans, as the *'ata* of a deceased person was said to look exactly as the person himself. However, details of the physical features of the gods were rarely, if ever, mentioned by informants unless they were directly asked, and then their answers were hazy. This matter, important to Europeans, did not seem to interest the Bel-

lonese. People usually confined themselves to saying that the gods were invisible and no one was particularly interested in their actual appearance.

No images of gods were made on Bellona. Portraits of the deities were neither carved in stone, drawn, or plaited. A sacred pole about one meter long, the *ma-'ungitehenua,* was the embodiment of the god Tehainga'atua, but it had only a vague resemblance to the human figure. Its upper part was called the head *('ungu),* the part immediately below was termed the neck *(u'a),* and the rest of the pole was called the body *(tino).* The bottom part, which was slightly thicker than the rest, was the buttocks *(tobigha)* of the god. An embodiment of one of the most important of all the gods, the staff was as non-representational as it could possibly be. When a replica of this staff was presented to Christensen and me in 1962, one of the older men looked at it and laughingly said: "What silly gods we had then! Look at him, neither face nor arms. Just an old stick!"

4.2. *Relationship of gods to flora and fauna.* Although the gods were themselves invisible, they could well assume the shape of a living being, man or animal, or of an object, as a stick or a stone, and in this way reveal their presence. In stories man's encounter with gods is a favorite topic and is the theme for T171–194.

The Bellonese feared gods who appeared suddenly and uninvited, that is, without having been ritually asked to come to Bellona. In T2(B) the god Tehainga'atua assumes the shape of a black graybird. When the Bellonese heard this bird cry at night they believed that the god was near. The two gods Nguatupu'a and Tepoutu'uingangi were believed to take the shape of the yellow-eyed graybird. People hearing the graybirds crying at night uttered short formulas for the purpose of making the two gods return to their home. In a story from Rennell (T161) the same Nguatupu'a (Rennellese: Guatupu'a) embodies herself in a dragonfly to help her thirsty worshippers find their way to a pool of water in the bush. The Bellonese agree that Nguatupu'a, and also other gods, might take the form of various animals and objects and that although they had favorite shapes they did not restrict themselves to one species or one type of object.

Another important god, Tehu'aingabenga, and his numerous offspring often traveled in the shape of frigate birds *(kataha),* as was also said of the god Tehainga-'atua mentioned above. The goddess Sikingimoemoe embodied herself in fireflies seen in the interior of the island (T172). Fireflies were usually found at the coast, and were only rarely seen in the interior.

A Rennellese story tells how Sikingimoemoe once appeared in front of a man in the shape of a sting ray (T185[B]). Other examples of deities embodying themselves in animals and humans may be found in the stories.

If we look at the traditions of man's encounters with gods embodied in fauna, it is obvious that unusual events in daily life were interpreted as having taken place through the act of a supernatural being. And very often the supernatural was a god. This does not refer to the encounter of man and god which took place in rituals. The ritual was a mechanism in itself, a circuit of sacredness into which man entered at certain times and in which he could ask the gods to come and take part in the proceedings without any danger to himself, because it was man who commanded and controlled, and it was he who could make the gods arrive and disappear at his own will by ritual acts and formulas.

But the unusual event which took place outside the ritual sphere, as to an individual walking on a trail, or sleeping, working in the gardens, or paddling a canoe, events which seemed unwarranted and not called for, were acts of the gods.

The Rennellese story about Taheta'u (T174) and his brothers who are poisoned from eating a *ga'ea* fish and interpret their ill fortune as due to the goddess Baa-

benga, whom they have seen in a dream and also seen embodied as a white-collared kingfisher near their sleeping place, is an example. T180 about the woman who disappears at the bottom of the lake on Rennell and is said to have been abducted by the deity Tangangoa, whose embodiment, a red fireball, is seen in the lake waters, is another example. One need only read the Rennellese and Bellonese stories about man's encounter with gods to see how the interpretation of gods assuming one visual shape or the other arises from specific situations in which the unusual happens and in which, at the same time, an animal or an object which is normally not seen in that particular place suddenly appears.

The embodiment of gods in animals or humans was momentary, not permanent. The white-collared kingfisher was not always the body of the goddess Baabenga. The frigate birds soaring high over Bellona were not always the embodiments of the god Tehu'aingabenga and his sons. Lizards or reef herons were not always embodied by deities. Although the gods could, in theory, embody themselves in any living being or object, they obviously had their preferences.

The connection of gods with animals was not part of a totemic system. (For a discussion of similar problems on Tikopia, see Firth, 1930). The Bellonese did not consider animals or plants as connected with or controlled by specific social groups. Neither did the Bellonese consider birds, plants, and objects as permanent bodies of specific gods. There were a few exceptions. The yellow-eyed graybird was believed sacred and forbidden to eat *(tapu ki te kai),* not only because it was the embodiment of the two gods Nguatupu'a and Tepoutu'uingangi *(te tino o Nguatupu'a ma Tepoutu'uingangi),* as mentioned above, but also the body of worshipped ancestors *(te tino o sa'amaatu'a).* This embodiment was considered permanent, and it was therefore forbidden to eat graybirds.

Snakes also were associated with a deity, Tehanonga, who controlled them and whose embodiment they were. Tehanonga, however, was a god not worshipped, and he was without specific ritual significance.

The only gods who were connected with plants were Ekeitehua, the district god of the Iho clan, and Tehu'aingabenga, the district god of the Kaitu'u clan. Ekeitehua was born out of a yam (T5) but this did not give him any power of control over yams, and yams were not considered his embodiment. Tehu'aingabenga was born out of turmeric, but turmeric as such was not his body, only a thing *(me'a)* belonging to this particular god.

Except for sharks, which could be embodiments of any god or ancestor, none of the animals in which gods embodied themselves were very important as food. The booby *(kanapu)* and the frigate bird *(kataha)* could be killed and eaten freely by anyone, and in contrast to nearly all other types of food, they could be consumed without ritual observations of any kind. They belonged to the same class of food as wild berries and vines gathered in the bush, as longicorns and mollusks, which could be eaten without uttering any prayers to gods or ancestors and without performing any rituals.

How did the Bellonese actually visualize the connection of animals and gods? The general term used was that the gods *hakatino kinai.* This term may be translated as "taking shape as." This is, however, a vague expression and it may be clarified with reference to explanations given by the Bellonese themselves. One concept was that the spiritual self *('ata)* of the god entered the animal and controlled its movements. The animal existed as an individual before it was entered by the god. When it was killed the *'ata* of the deity left the body.

Another term used about the relation of god and animal was that the god *anga kinai,* which in this context is equivalent to "appear as." The god appears as an

animal. Temoa said: "The gods do not enter the animals. Just sacred for them, and they are called the body of the god *(Na 'atua he'e ungu ki na manu. Noko manga tapu kinai i te hakaingoa te tino o te 'atua).*" It was thus the sacredness *(tapu)* of the god which penetrated the animal and controlled its movements. Not everybody agreed to Temoa's generalization. When discussing the story about the girl Tehu'ata who was possessed by the non-worshipped goddess Teu'uhi (T150) whom she saw in the garden in the shape of a short-tailed monitor lizard, Sa'engeika said that Teu'uhi had actually entered *(ungu)* the animal. "How do you know?" I asked. Sa'engeika answered: "I just think so because Teu'uhi possessed Tehu'ata and she died."

The Bellonese seemed vague as to the exact nature of animals' relation to deities. The story given on pages 61-2 about Patiange who was taken by a shark who "was Sikingimoemoe," (the goddess), evoked a discussion among some Bellonese as to whether Sikingimoemoe had actually entered the animal or whether it was merely her sacredness which controlled its movements. Some said that Sikingimoemoe had entered the shark because it behaved maliciously "just as people who are entered *(ungu)* by a malicious deity become crazy." Others said that the shark was merely made sacred by the goddess. I then asked what the relation was between gods and sharks caught on a fishing trip. People agreed that this was different. Sharks were merely possessed *(eketia)* by the gods sitting on their back "just like gods sitting on the backs of mediums."

On the whole the problem of the exact character of animals' possession by gods may not have been of extreme importance to the Bellonese. When I raised the question it was obvious that my informants disagreed among themselves. To them it was, however, important that the animals were visible manifestations of the deities. Ma'itaki expressed it this way: "It is like people who act as representatives of the gods in rituals. When they anoint themselves with turmeric they look like the district deities. The district deities assume the skin (of the men) *(hakakingi kinai),* assume their bodies *(hakatino kinai).* We say that the district deity has assumed the skin here. It is like this with animals. The gods assume their skin, embody themselves in them." Ma'itaki did not discuss whether the animals were entered by the deities, and this frame of concepts seemed alien to him. I did not press the matter further.

The relation of animals and plants to supernaturals was, however, of a twofold nature. They might be considered the materialization of one or more of the deities or, as was most common, the food of the gods.

The Bellonese distinquished two types of animal and plant foods that were used as offerings and subsequently eaten by the people, *angatonu* and *'inati. Angatonu* was food presented as offerings to the deities of the type called sky gods (Tehainga'atua and his family, as Baabenga and Sikingimoemoe). *'Inati* was food presented as offerings to Tehu'aingabenga and his family, the *ngasuenga* (district deities). For the distinction between sky gods and district gods, see 4.4. Some types of food were considered both *angatonu* and *'inati.* The following table will indicate the Bellonese view of the relationship between supernaturals and important flora and fauna.

	Relationships to supernaturals	Other information and text references
FAUNA		
mangoo (shark)	Embodiment of such gods as Tehainga'atua, Baabenga, and Sikingimoemoe; *angatonu*, *'inati*	eaten
tahonga'a (whale, porpoise)	*angatonu*	T185(A) considered a gift (*tonu*) from Tehainga'atua. Eaten; only caught when stranded on the beach
honu (turtle)	*angatonu*	T218:1 considered a gift (*tonu*) from Tehainga'atua; eaten; only caught when on the beach
'ungua (a large fish)	*angatonu*	gift of Tehainga'atua; eaten
taha'ungi (fish)	*angatonu*, *'inati*	eaten
liakumu (fish)	*angatonu*, *'inati*	eaten
sasabe (flying fish)	*angatonu*, *'inati*	gift of Tehu'aingabenga; eaten
sungumenga (small fish)	*angatonu*, *'inati*	gift of Tehu'aingabenga; eaten
nga'ea (parrot fish)	*'inati*	small household rituals; eaten
hu'aaika (fish)	*'inati*	small household rituals; eaten
hangamea (fish)	*'inati*	only few caught at a time. Eaten. Small household rituals. Considered an unimportant food
pangangi (fish)	*'inati*	only a few caught at a time. Eaten. Small household rituals. Considered an unimportant food
pongo (fish)	*angatonu*, *'inati*	T3:4 gift of Tehainga'atua; eaten
bangukango (bonito ?)	*angatonu*, *'inati*	
mata-huhunga (fish)	*'inati*	only few caught at a time. Eaten by men. Taboo for women and children because believed to cause boils
ligho (white-collared kingfisher)	embodiment of Baabenga	T174 not eaten
lingobai (yellow-eyed graybird, white variety)	embodiment of Nguatupu'a and Tepoutu'uingangi and sometimes also of ancestral spirits	T2(B) a taboo on eating, because body of the two gods. If it cried at night near homesteads, people recited the *langa hakasinga* formula to make it pass on to its home in Ngabenga

(continued)	Relationships to supernaturals	Other information and text references
lingobai 'ungi (yellow-eyed graybird, dark variety)	embodiment of Tehainga'atua	T2(B) taboo on eating
kataha (frigate bird)	embodiment of Tehainga'atua or Tehu'aingabenga	T13:8 Could be eaten without any ritual acts
kataha ngenga (frigate bird with yellowish feathers in certain places)	embodiment of Nguatinihenua	could be eaten without any ritual acts
kataha puloghutea (frigate bird with white feathers on breast)	embodiment of Ekeitehua	could be eaten without any ritual acts
kanapu (booby)	embodiment of ancestral spirits and of Baabenga	rarely eaten but no taboo involved
kangau (reef heron)	embodiment of Baabenga and of non-worshipped gods (*'apai*)	not eaten
kangae (swamp hen)	embodiment of Baabenga and of non-worshipped gods (*'apai*)	not eaten
ngungu (white owl)	embodiment of Baabenga and of non-worshipped gods (*'apai*)	not eaten
ngupe (dove)	*'inati*	eaten; usually only small household rituals
taghoa (ibis)	embodiment of non-worshipped gods (*'apai*)	not eaten; its rare night cries believed to indicate presence of *'apai*
mangibae (osprey, eagle)	embodiment of non-worshipped gods (*'apai*)	not eaten; its rare night cries believed to indicate presence of *'apai*
taba (sparrow hawk)	embodiment of non-worshipped gods (*'apai*)	T52(A):5 not eaten
katongua pheasant dove)	embodiment of non-worshipped gods (*'apai*)	T54:3 not eaten
tongehua (a moth)	embodiment of ancestral spirits	not eaten
'angito (firefly seen inland)	embodiment of the goddess Sikingimoemoe	T172 not eaten; taboo on killing. Rare
manu beetui (firefly seen at coast)	no relationship	not eaten. No taboo on killing
angaipaipai (centipede)	embodiment of non-worshipped gods	poisonous. not eaten
kanokano (social wasp)	embodiment of non-worshipped gods	T52(A):4 poisonous. Not eaten
ngata (snake)	embodiment of non-worshipped gods (especially Tehanonga)	T22 not eaten

(continued)	Relationships to supernaturals	Other information and text references
kimoa (rat)	embodiment of non-worshipped gods	not eaten
hokai (monitor lizard)	embodiment of non-worshipped gods (especially *hokai* with short tails); small *hokai* were sometimes the embodiment of Kaitu'u, the first immigrator.	T150 not eaten
kangisi (skink)	embodiment of non-worshipped gods	not eaten
FLORA		
'uhi (yam in general)	*angatonu, 'inati*	
'uhingaba (panna yam)	*angatonu, 'inati*	
tango (taro)	*angatonu, 'inati*	
huti (banana and plantain)	*angatonu, 'inati*	
abubu (type of yam, fruit and tuber)	*angatonu, 'inati*	
beetape (type of yam)	*angatonu, 'inati*	
boiato (type of yam)	*angatonu, 'inati*	
ghape (bush vine)	*angatonu, 'inati*	
suinamo (type of yam)	*angatonu, 'inati*	
polo (coconut)	*angatonu, 'inati*	
ngeemungi (Gnetum sp?)	*angatonu, 'inati;* sometimes considered hair of Tehainga'atua	gift of Tehainga'atua
kape (dry land taro)	*angatonu, 'inati*	T192:2

Figure 5: The relationships of supernaturals to flora and fauna.

The ritual significance of the relation of supernaturals to animals and plants will be discussed in more detail in connection with an analysis of the rituals.

4.3. *Worshipped and non-worshipped gods.* Like humans, the gods of the Bellonese ate and drank, they had wives and produced offspring, loved and hated, did good and were malignant. Their world and life basically resembled that of man. Man created gods in his own image, but the gods belonged to a different order from that of man. They had power *('ao)* over nature; they sent the fruits of the gardens, the animals of the sea and the bush, storms and rain; they had the power to make people prosper or wither, live and die. The gods were powerful, but man and god could communicate through the mediums and become identical in the rituals in which gods spoke through certain officiating priests. So man and god were alike in some ways. Yet still their power and sacredness made them entirely different from man. In the following we shall see how this difference was emphasized.

In addition to the classification outlined in 4.1. was the dichotomy of the worshipped gods *('atua ngiua)* and the gods not worshipped *('atua he'e ngiua).*

The gods not worshipped were generally characterized as a group of evil beings that always behaved malevolently towards people by creating sickness and accidents, and by spoiling gardens, but the worshipped gods were not characterized as their counterparts, that is as *good* gods. Bellonese informants stated that even the worshipped gods were only good *(ngaoi)* and protective *(mangu)* to humans if they were treated correctly *(tonu),* that is, by performing rituals in the established way at regular intervals. If taboos were broken or rituals not carried out, even the worshipped gods might cause harm.

The distinction between worshipped and non-worshipped gods lay not on the level of godly "ethics". It was not a question of good gods and bad gods. The difference of the two groups was that the worshipped gods belonged within the social sphere of humans. They led a social life which, at least to some extent, resembled that of the Bellonese, and man could communicate with them and even control their behavior by means of rituals. The non-worshipped gods were distinctly non-social. We do not hear about their social life, because they did not lead any. They were single creatures that lived in the bush and at the coast and appeared only to cause harm and disaster. The non-worshipped gods could not be appeased by humans, not even by prayers or rituals. Also, the non-worshipped gods were less powerful than those who were worshipped. The latter had strength enough to control the behavior of the non-worshipped gods. Several Rennellese and Bellonese stories as T14, T15, T16, T17(A,B), T18, T21, T22, and T23 tell of fights between the worshipped gods and the mischievous and non-social gods.

4.4. *Duality of the worshipped gods.* In T66 and T67 concerning the migration to Bellona by ancestors coming from the traditional homelands, 'Ubeangango and 'Ubeamatangi, the Bellonese have rationalized and institutionalized the relations of social groups and the gods. Eight groups of travelers venture forth to seek new land; they take two black stones with them, the embodiments of the female and male gods, Nguatupu'a and Tepoutu'uingangi. During their long sea voyage they encounter rough weather and high seas, and one of the sacred stone gods, Tepoutu'uingangi, falls overboard and is lost. They then arrive at the island of Henuatai, and the voyagers replace the lost stone with a stalactite found in a cave. After this unpleasant incident the voyagers feel the need for further protection by the gods in their dangerous voyage. The head of each of the eight groups asks for or claims *(hakapupungu)* two or more gods to protect his people. Each claims gods of two different classes, *'atua ngangi* (literally sky gods) and the *ngasuenga* (district gods). Thus there is introduced a two-fold division of the worshipped gods. The eight groups are the founders of the eight traditional clans of Bellona. Today there are only two clans, the rest are asserted to have been exterminated through fights several generations back, and the gods of the exterminated clans who were not worshipped by the two surviving clans became non-worshipped gods *('atua he'e ngiua).* The other division was that of the sky gods and the district gods. This duality of the Bellonese pantheon was of extreme importance, and in the following it will be seen how it was correlated with Bellonese conceptions of their universe and with the social processes.

Of the two classes of worshipped gods, the sky gods were considered the most sacred and the oldest in a genealogical sense. In *Canoes,* Chapter 4, is given the genealogies of this class of deities. The general term *'atua ngangi* should perhaps not be taken too literally. It means the gods of the sky *(ngangi),* but all Bellonese deities had their homes in the *ngangi.* The Bellonese themselves said that it was just a name *(manga te ingoa).* But it seems obvious that it reflected the general

Bellonese idea that these gods were more sacred, and more powerful, and living in remoter spheres than the district gods.

In the immigration story mentioned above, each of the eight clans claims certain sky gods as their special deities. The Iho, Kaitu'u, Tongo, Ngoha, Nikatemono, and the Sau clan claim Tehainga'atua as their supreme protector. The Tanga clan claims Nguatupu'a and her brother, and the Puka clan claims the female deity Sikingimoemoe as its god.

The sky gods were worshipped by all clans. After the alleged extermination of six of these clans, the members of the two surviving clans, Kaitu'u and Taupongi (Iho), still worshipped Sikingimoemoe and Nguatupu'a and her brother Tepoutu-'uingangi, together with Tehainga'atua. The sky gods were thus universally worshipped on Bellona, whereas the second group of gods, the district gods, were divided into groups, each of which was considered the protectors and helpers of specific segments of the society. This will be discussed in detail in Chapter 6.

This is but one aspect of the differentiation of the two groups of deities. The other concepts concerning these supernaturals fit into the same pattern. In one Rennellese version of the immigration story (T67:2–3) the great sky god, Tehainga'atua, says to his grandson Tehu'aingabenga who is the prime god among the district gods: "The island are to be subject to me." Tehu'aingabenga answers: "The worshippers are mine." Tehainga'atua claims the land to be his, and Tehu'aingabenga claims its people. This division permeated all Rennellese and Bellonese rituals and religious concepts. Tehainga'atua and the rest of the sky gods were closely connected with the land, nature, and all its phenomena, and Tehu'aingabenga and the rest of the district gods were connected with society, with man and his activities. Nature surrounded all humans and its deities were worshipped by everyone. Society was divided into smaller units, lineages and districts, and these units had in many ways conflicting interests; no unit shared a total pantheon with another unit. Each individual needed deities who could protect his particular interests and with whom specific transactions could be carried out. Such deities were the district gods.

In the following we shall look closer at the various classes of gods and their characteristics. We shall attempt a picture of how the Bellonese elaborated the concepts sketched above, and we shall show how these concepts were integrated with certain social values.

CHAPTER 5. THE SKY GODS

5.1. *The gods in Ngabenga.* Like all the worshipped gods on Bellona, the sky gods *('atua ngangi)* constituted a group whose members were related to each other through kinship ties. Genealogy 12 in *Canoes* shows this. The Bellonese, however, did not attach too much attention to the establishment of the exact relationship of these gods to each other. There seems to have been a certain freedom to arrange genealogies of the gods in this class in various fashions. Variations did not follow social lines. Even people of the same patrilineal descent group and of the same status might disagree. One of the experts on ritual matters, Sa'engeika, was uninterested in establishing the kinship ties of this group of gods. During a session where the deities were discussed, he merely shrugged his shoulders and said: "How can I know who are the parents of Tehainga'atua? No, I don't know either whether he had any true offspring; some of the gods we just call the parents of Tehainga'atua and others we call his children." He then immediately went on to explain some of the intricacies of the rituals connected with the sky gods.

Although the Bellonese were vague as to the exact relationship of some of the sky gods to each other, there was no doubt as to the degree of sacredness *(tapu)* of the individual gods. (Bellonese concepts of the sacred are discussed in the Appendix.) Most sacred were Nguatupu'a and her brother, the deities previously mentioned whose embodiments were the two stones in Ngabenga, Western Bellona. Their mother, Sinakibi, was not considered particularly sacred; she was not worshipped and did not appear in any ritual context. Very sacred, but less so than Nguatupu'a and her brother, was Tehainga'atua, a god of prime ritual importance. His sister Sikingimoemoe, had the same degree of sacredness. His children (Baabenga, Teangaitaku, and Tehahine'angiki) were less sacred than their father and their father's sister. For the worshipped sky gods the degree of sacredness increased with seniority. The junior members of the family (the district gods) were considered less sacred than the sky gods.

According to the story of the immigration to Rennell and Bellona (T66), Tongo, the founder of one of the clans, was in charge of the two stone gods. In a Rennellese version of the story (T67), Togo (the Rennellese name) tries to set up the two stones in various places on Rennell; he carries them up the cliff that surrounds Rennell, an arduous climb, but always when he returns to his canoe, the gods are there; they do not want to stay on Rennell. He proceeds to Bellona, and the stones are set up in the middle of the island at a place called Sangungu'eteaki. But the ocean floods the west end of the island as far as the stones. Tongo realizes that the island is now too small for the immigrants to live on. He returns to the west end where the immigrants have landed and places the two stones in an area called Ngabenga. The ocean retracts and Bellona assumes its original shape. The two gods have found their permanent dwelling place. This story epitomizes the generally accepted idea that the two gods did not want any human dwellings, gardens, or temples to the west of them. Therefore the strip of land between the west end of Bellona and Ngabenga was neither inhabited nor cultivated by the two clans before the acceptance of Christianity in 1938. It was a sacred place *(te kunga tapu)*. Informants

said that this was because these two sacred gods wanted to be at the end of the land. Sauhonu, father of old Tango'eha of the Iho clan (Genealogy 9, Generation 19), was said to have attempted to construct a temple at the extreme west end of the island. But a huge wave hit him while he was working there and he was thus punished "because he was on the wrong side of Ngabenga."

When I asked the Bellonese why they did not cultivate the land west of Ngabenga, one of them said: "Ngabenga is the abode of the two gods. We approach them from the east and the stones face towards the east. Just like the homes of the other gods (Tehainga'atua and Tehu'aingabenga), there can be nothing behind the home of the stone gods."

But the two gods, Nguatupu'a and her brother, lived on Bellona. In this they contrasted to other worshipped gods of the island who had their homes *(nuku)* in the sky. Ngabenga, the home of the two stone gods, was a bush area, uninhabited and uncultivated. The stone bodies of the two gods stood half buried in the ground and were completely overgrown by bush. The two stones were smashed in 1939 by a Rennellese, Moa (T235[A], T236), who came to Bellona to preach Christianity. Actually only three people living today had been close to the two stones. No one else had dared to approach them. One of the witnesses, Tango'eha of the Iho clan, was too old to act as an informant. The following sketch was made after instructions given *in situ* by Taupongi's father, Temoa, and by Takiika of Nuku'angoha lineage, both of whom had assisted Moa in destroying the stones.

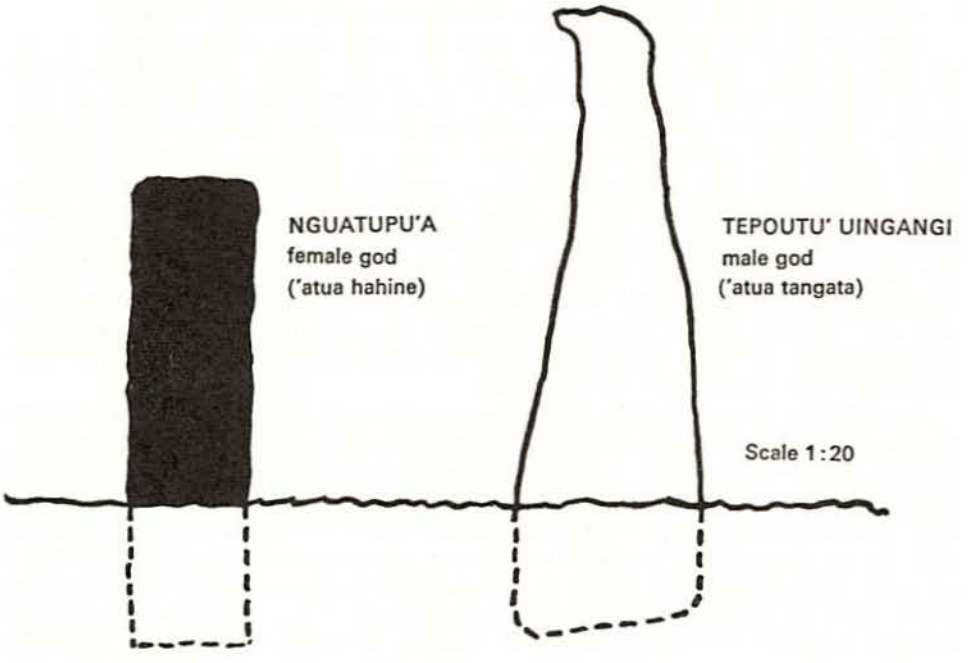


Figure 6: The stone gods in Ngabenga.

The area around the two stones was considered very sacred *(hu'aaitapu)*. Uncultivated, only the people of the Iho clan could dig wild yam, pick fruits, or fell trees without becoming sick or dying as a result of affliction *(nga'ua)* by its sacredness. Temoa said that the area had been cultivated in ancient times and that the

main trail through Bellona had passed close by the two stones. But when the two sons of Nausu of the Tongomainge lineage (Genealogy 9, Generation 16) became very ill because of working in the area, it was declared *tapu* and a new trail was cleared farther north. It was considered dangerous even to pass by the area. When walking down to Ahanga, the beach on the north coast, people of the Kaitu'u clan had to sing a particular kind of song, the *maghiiti,* to avert affliction by the sacredness of the area.

Nguatupu'a was female, Tepoutu'uingangi male. Their shapes had a vague likeness to what are probably representations of sexual organs found in other Polynesian societies (Emory 1939:4; Henry 1928:348). When I mentioned that the male god had an almost phallic shape, one informant said: "It is not the penis of the god, it is merely his body." The association of the two gods with human sexual organs seemed definitely more obvious to the European enquirer than to the Bellonese. The two gods were in no contexts associated with human genitalia, and the idea seemed absurd to anyone asked. This is in tune with the complete absence of references to anything sexual in rituals or in any other religious context. The Bellonese claimed the sexual act to be a pleasant, but important pastime, a good thing, a game, but not the origin of life. It was apparently not a matter that needed religious confirmation.

The very names of the two stones have for the Euro-american sexual connotations. A possible but by no means certain translation af Ngua-tupu'a (and one not recognized by the Bellonese) would be "sacred pit." (*-tupu'a* is an element occurring in the common words for story, *tangatupu'a* and *tautupu'a,* and in a variant name for Tehainga'atua, Te-tupu'a.) The name of the male god, Te-pou-tu'u-ingangi, can without much uncertainty be translated "the pole standing in heaven." The translations would not receive the approval of the Bellonese, probably because they frequently do not recognize bound morphemes, and because they think of the names as single entities. And also because they are not accustomed to hidden sexual meanings, as explained above. I give these translations with considerable diffidence, and at the suggestion of colleagues; in general, name translations seem to me to be guesses and little more.

Nguatupu'a and Tepoutu'uingangi were brother and sister and they were also man and wife. Their marriage was incestuous and referred to as such by the Bellonese. During discussions of the genealogies of the sky gods, Takiika said: "The gods are truly powerful. They can marry their sisters. How different from men!" If one asked how it happened that it was forbidden for a man to marry his sister or his cousin, one might get one of three answers. Either that it was unpleasant *(maase'i),* or that it was only done by the sky gods, or that it was "bad" for two persons of the same lineage to marry. In Daniel Tuhanuku's account of the seven original clans on Bellona (T126:12) we have a reference to the Bellonese view of the problem of incest. The taboo on marrying sisters and parallel cousins is religiously sanctioned by calling it a sacred law of Tehu'aingabenga, the prime district god of the Kaitu'u clan. At one time I thought that it was a general characteristic of all Bellonese gods that they married their immediate kin, but the Bellonese corrected my mistake. During a session with a number of men from both clans, among them Ma'itaki, Temoa, Sanga'eha, and a number of younger men, the subject of incest was discussed. I asked why it was taboo to marry a sister or a parallel cousin. Ma'itaki answered: "You know the district gods. Tehu'ingabenga did not marry his sister. It was *tapu* (taboo) for him. Only the sky gods married their sisters. They were wild *(ta'ane).* This is the reason people of Bellona did not marry their classificatory sisters." Everybody agreed to this, and Temoa added that Ekeitehua, the prime district god of the Iho clan, did not commit incest either. One could hardly

wish for a more manifest example of religious beliefs functioning as social sanctions. What is socially undesirable is restricted to the sacred sphere of the sky gods—those with the upmost sacredness. By making incestuous liaisons sacred, they also became impossible for humans.

The relation of Tepoutu'uingangi to his sister, Nguatupu'a, was also in other ways non-human. As brother and sister they talked to each other and they even quarreled. The moral code of the Bellonese insisted on strict brother-sister avoidance, and when they communicated indirectly, by messages relayed through other relatives, they were supposed to keep a strict decorum and express only niceties and compliments of a formal kind. Direct communication of brother and sister belonged to the sacred sphere of the gods. It was sacred behavior, and also non-human. It would be misleading to say that this was the reason why humans kept brother-sister avoidance; it would also be misleading to say that by means of this rationalization the Bellonese kept the restrictions on brother-sister relationships. There were other means, but by projecting the incestuous behavior onto the sphere of the sky gods, the behavior became religiously sanctioned.

According to traditions, the Ngabenga area was originally the temple grounds of the now extinct Tanga clan, but when this clan died out the place was allowed to lie unkept and unattended. The two stones were said to have been standing at the east side of the Tanga temple grounds, but after the extinction of the Tanga clan and until the introduction of Christianity, the place was overgrown with bush and trees. The Bellonese said: "We feared the two gods very much after the Tanga people had died out. They had become like the *'apai,* (the wild and uncontrollable gods), but they were very sacred *(tapu).* They were the gods of the Tanga clan, and the people of the Tanga clan were *'atua* and very sacred because they worshipped the two gods. If this clan had not died out they would have been the *hakahua* (chiefs) over all of us because they worshipped the two gods."

That the Tanga clan was attributed with unusual qualities will be seen from the fact that Tupaukiu, one of the Tanga people, was the only human ancestor on Bellona said to have become an *'atua.* It was said that when he died in about the seventh generation after Kaitu'u, he stayed with Tehainga'atua in his home at Manukatu'u and there became a god (N162). But when the Tanga line became extinct, Nguatupu'a and Tepoutu'uingangi lost their original worshippers *(kainanga),* and, according to the traditions of the members of the two surviving clans, this made them particularly dangerous. In T161 is seen how the two gods actually protected the people of the Tanga clan. The Kaitu'u and the Iho clans both continued to conduct rituals invoking them, but these rituals had more the character of averting danger than that of imploring them to bestow richness and good fortune upon the country. We shall later consider the way in which these two gods were invoked in the Bellonese rituals, especially those connected with harvest and the distribution of food.

All in all the fearful sacredness of the two stone gods seemed more a danger than a blessing. These two aspects of sacredness were always present, but after the true worshippers of the stone gods had perished, namely the members of the Tanga clan, the dangerous side of the *tapu* was uppermost.

T1 concerns the two stone gods and their mother, Sinakibi, and seems to be one of the few tales told on Bellona that reflects ritual practices. In this important story the theme of the danger of the two gods is ever present. They have stolen the life-principle *(ma'ungi)* of a man named Moesabengubengu. (Life-principle stealing seems to have been a favorite pastime of the sky gods and reflects the Bellonese concept that death, especially a sudden one, was the result of the god's stealing a person's *ma'ungi.*) The stone gods have taken Moesabengubengu's *ma'ungi* back

to Ngabenga, presumably to eat it. Meanwhile the mother of the two gods, Sinakibi (blind Sina), has had her sight restored by the wife of the dead man, and in gratitude she gives her husband's life-principle. The wife takes it back to her husband in their homestead. When the two gods learn this, they rush off to get it back. Arriving at Moesabengubengu's homestead, the man, however, manages to divert the two gods by an ingenious trick. He addresses the female first in a short ritual formula, and he lays out two pieces of tapa *(kongoa)* in front of the homestead, one large and one small. The gods arrive and the female snatches the large tapa, and only a small one is left for the male. The latter's anger at his sister is still further heightened when Moesabengubengu, in the formula, addresses the female first. The male god gets so annoyed that he decides that they shall leave the homestead instead of stealing Moesabengubengu's life-principle for a second time.

This story reflects ritual as a means of averting the dangers of the two gods. The ingenuity of Moesabengubengu's behavior lies in the fact that he manages to divert the two gods by violating the behavioral norms of humans. It is unthinkable that one should ever address a brother and sister at the same time, let alone mention the sister's name first. It is also unthinkable that one should give a woman a larger present than a man. Among humans this would be an impossible breach of social norms; it would not only offend and humiliate the male but also make both man and woman ashamed *(papa'a)*.

The dangerous sacredness of the two deities was sometimes utilized to kill an enemy. In each temple house was a row of posts known as *kongo*. These posts were permeated by the sacredness of Nguatupu'a and Tepoutu'uingangi *(tapu kia Nguatupu'a and Tepoutu'uingangi)*, chiefly because the sacred tapas used in rituals for the two deities were tied to them during periods when rituals were not performed. If a person wanted to kill an enemy he plaited a small doll of coconut midribs known as *hakatino* (embodiment), and secretly approached the temple. Here he buried the doll in the mound of earth at the base of the posts and uttered the following prayer: *"Teenei, Nguatupu'a, te ma'ungi o X. Taa mate atu ma'au.* (This, Nguatupu'a is the life-principle of X. Kill [him] for yourself.)" By this means, the Bellonese claimed, the person whose name was mentioned would be afflicted *(nga'ua)*, the gods would eat his life-principle and he would die.

All in all it will be realized that these two gods, at the apex of the hierarchy of deities, were the most important because of the danger of their sacredness. This does not mean that their sacredness *(tapu)* was of a different kind from that of other gods, it was merely stronger. In the rituals the Bellonese turned to the other deities and asked *them* to pray to Nguatupu'a and Tepoutu'uingangi for food, affluence *(saahenga)*, and life *(ma'ungi)*. It was dangerous for man to turn directly to the two gods for favors. And yet, a single ritual called the *nganguenga hano* was performed at Ngabenga but usually only in a situation of the utmost distress after all other rituals had failed. It was so rare that it was only made about once in every generation. No living Bellonese has performed it. The last to perform it was Kaitu'u of Generation 21 in the Tongaba lineage, and only fragments of its formulas are known today.

From what has been said above, it may be clear that the Bellonese did not attach special attention to the physical appearance or personalities of Nguatupu'a and Tepoutu'uingangi. The picture was somewhat vague and fluctuating. Although they were clearly thought of as being anthropomorphic, as male and female with a mother (the otherwise insignificant goddess Sinakibi), and a home (Ngabenga), there was general disagreement as to whether the two had actually any children or not. All informants said that they had no immediate offspring. Some, however, stated that the god Tehainga'atua was an adopted son of the two. This was the

belief of such informants as Paul Sa'engeika and Temoa. Moses Sa'engeahe, who was about the same age as Sa'engeika and of the same lineage and of similar social status, disagreed. He believed that an obscure goddess, Tupengusu, a snake of whom nothing else was known, was Tehainga'atua's true mother. Some informants said that she was married to Tepoutu'uingangi, others asserted that she was an adopted daughter of the two gods of Ngabenga, and others again denied that there was any relationship between the two gods and Tehainga'atua. In ritual formulas, Nguatupu'a and Tepoutu'uingangi were, however, always referred to as the *maatu'a* (parents) of Tehainga'atua and the goddess Sikingimoemoe, as in T2(B) about Patikonge and the two gods appearing as yellow-eyed graybirds.

It is obvious that the actual relationship between Nguatupu'a and Tepoutu'uingangi and the rest of the gods was not of any extreme social or religious importance to the Bellonese.

5.2. *Tehainga'atua.* Among the deities usually referred to as children of Nguatupu'a and her brother, Tehainga'atua was the most important. T66 concerns the immigration to Rennell and Bellona from the distant homeland of 'Ubea. The voyagers brought the two sacred stones and the sacred pole, *ma'ungitehenua.* This name is easily translated; it means the life-principle of the land. The Bellonese explained that Tehainga'atua was the god who gave life *(ma'ungi)* to the new land, and the pole called *ma'ungitehenua* was considered the body *(tino)* of this god.

About the deities of the Rennellese and Bellonese pantheon, aged chief Aaron Taupongi of Tegano district on Rennell said the following: "Kaitu'u came from 'Ubea, and he landed (the gods) Tehainga'atua and Tehu'aingabenga. Kaitu'u brought here the body *(tino)* of Tehainga'atua from 'Ubea. It was the *ma'ungitehenua,* it was like a bottle *(poati)."* Taupongi meant that the *ma'ungitehenua* was like a vessel containing Tehainga'atua. By using the word *poati,* Rennellese for bottle, he was trying to convey the idea that a god could be encapsulated in a pole. This explanation was obviously an attempt to adapt Rennellese concepts to English ones (Taupongi had been to the South Seas Evangelical Mission school), and was for the benefit of the arriving stranger who could not be assumed to understand the Rennellese idea of gods embodied or contained in sticks.

The traditions concerning Tehainga'atua's arrival from 'Ubea in the *ma'ungitehenua* were identical on Rennell and Bellona. That Tehainga'atua arrived on the islands in this way does not mean that he had his permanent home there. As mentioned before, Nguatupu'a and Tepoutu'uingangi lived on Bellona, but Tehainga'atua and the rest of the gods were said to have their abodes *(nuku)* in the sky, somewhere beyond the horizon. From there they traveled to Bellona when summoned to the rituals.

It is often difficult to describe the Bellonese gods without reference to rituals, as their character was closely associated with their position in the rituals. The Bellonese conceptions of the appearance and personality of Tehainga'atua were fairly vague; the characterization of the worshipped gods, and their relations to fellow gods and to men, was moulded after ritual procedures and ritual objects. Old chief Aaron Taupongi of Rennell gave an illuminating picture of the Rennellese and Bellonese concepts of Tehainga'atua and his heavenly abode (T3): "Manukatu'u is the settlement of Tehainga'atua and his offspring. It was of a special nature. [It] was rich in all things, garden crops, and coconut trees, and fruit from trees, and fish. And [these gods] ate people very much, Tehainga'atua, and his offspring, and his wife, and his sister, and his parents. And Tehainga'atua and his offspring came here only to the feasts, to the *kaba ki gangi* rituals. And [they] came here to the temple rituals in all harvest seasons, and all seasons without crops. When people do not have food, Tehainga'atua and his offspring will kill for themselves a priest-chief,

or a second priest-chief, or an assistant to the priests to bring to Manukatu'u that they may eat. When happy because of food, they will not kill people, and Tehainga'atua becomes very happy and pays for the priest-chief's food offerings with *pogo* fish and *geemugi* fruits. And turtles and the very important *panna,* and taro, and coconuts, and yams, and *abubu* tubers, and bananas, and breadfruits, and *beetape* tubers, and *suinamo* yams. Manukatu'u was like a temple, except that there were very many coconut trees, as well as all garden crops, and all fruits of trees."

This is illuminating information concerning Rennellese and Bellonese beliefs. The heavenly abode of the god was conceived as being exactly like the temples of the two islands, except that the food stored there was in much greater abundance. To Taupongi it was apparently impossible to describe the god Tehainga'atua without reference to his role in the rituals. If he receieved offerings of food, he would give back a richness of food. If not, he would eat the officiating priests, he would punish the people.

In Taupongi's account, with which the Bellonese unanimously agreed, we do not hear precise details about Tehainga'atua's abode, as its nature was perfectly obvious to the Rennellese and the Bellonese. Sa'engeika on Bellona said: *"Te nganguenga te hakatino o te manaha o Tehainga'atua,* the temple is the embodiment of Tehainga'atua's homestead." As mentioned, Manukatu'u was said to lie towards the east, somewhere beyond the horizon in the direction where 'Ubea, the traditional homeland, was said to be. Here Tehainga'atua stayed with his family when he was not visiting Rennell and Bellona. We do not hear much about how he spent his time there, and it did not seem to interest people particularly. We have few traditions about the private life of this important god in his home, and in most of these the focus is on his dealings with humans. In T171 a man named Tehugi curses *(igho)* the gods. He dies, and as was the usual procedure for the dead, goes to Manukatu'u, where Tehainga'atua punishes him by using his head as a torch to illuminate his meals. In another Rennellese tale (T192) Tehainga'atua complains to his wife that he has too little to eat. "The *angatonu* share here is short," he says, using the ritual word for the food offerings directed to him. His wife has secretly given some of his food to two human visitors in the godly abode. Tehainga'atua now tries to punish the intruders by hurling thunderbolts after them; but he does not succeed because his wife has made the men invisible. This story is perhaps a play on the idea of the danger of an improperly performed ritual in which a taboo is broken by people eating indiscriminately from the heaps of sacred food. The moral is that Tehainga'atua's wrath would fall upon taboo breakers, here in the form of thunderbolts, unless they were helped by some other deity who was gracious enough to protect them.

The anthropomorphic character of Tehainga'atua is seen also in the fact that he was considered the owner "things" *('ota'ota).* He had a canoe. We know what this canoe looked like, because canoe-shaped altars were found in various places on Rennell and Bellona (T4, N4). Each of them was considered the embodiment of Tehainga'atua's canoe.

To the canoe belonged sacred paddles *(sua). (*Birket-Smith 1956: figure 16 d.) We know what they were like, because a great number of them were kept, not at the canoe-shaped altars, but in the temples and were also hung on racks in the dwelling houses, near the *ma'ungitehenua* poles. These paddles, *sua ki ngangi* (*sua* of the heaven), were considered the embodiments of Tehainga'atua's paddles: *te sua, te hakatino o naa hoe o te baka o Tehainga'atua,* the *sua* is the embodiment of the paddles of Tehainga'atua's canoe.

Tehainga'atua dressed in tapa like the Bellonese. Tapa, called *bengo,* was placed on a shelf on the rack in houses with the *ma'ungitehenua.* During rituals it was

folded out at the place where the god was believed to sit. This was a sign that he had arrived.

Tehainga'atua also had a walking stick and a dancing stick. The walking stick, *nga'akau tu'uti* (Birket-Smith 1956: figure 16 a), was carried by priest-chiefs on ceremonial occasions, and the dancing stick, *tapanihutu* (Birket-Smith 1956: figure 18), was used as a scepter during the dancing at the temple ritual.

Some traditions, however, about the god Tehainga'atua do not directly concern rituals. They relate to his fights with other gods. In T14 the non-worshipped malevolent god Tangangoa steals Tehainga'atua's children, one by one. He whirls down, claws them, and flies away with them. Tehainga'atua tries to shoot the thief with his spears. But Tangangoa is clever. He simply retracts his abdomen every time a spear approaches him. The spear misses, and Tangangoa can go on stealing the children of Tehainga'atua. The great god complains about this to his grandson, Tehu'aingabenga, who arrives on the scene with a bundle of his barbed spears *(tao hakasanisani).* (Birket-Smith 1956: figure 16 e-g.) Tangangoa sees him and is frightened. He retracts his abdomen, and, when again extending it, Tehu'aingabenga hurls his spears against him. With his body full of spears, Tangangoa flies back to his home where his servants try to pull them out, but in vain. They are buried firmly in his body, and remain there forever after.

There are, in this story, at least two points significant to our understanding of the Bellonese concepts of supernaturals. One is aetiological. The god Tangangoa is said to be seen as a fireball traveling at great speed over the sky, red and radiant. The Bellonese said that the rays emanating from this natural object (whatever it may be) were the spears of Tangangoa. Another problem rises when we ask why the gods were believed to fight. This is not an irrelevant question; in discussions I have heard the Bellonese asking each other the same, and I think we can suggest an answer. In the stories about the fights of the deities, Tehainga'atua battles with gods of other classes, or, as we may put it, of different social spheres. The stories mostly tell about Tehainga'atua and his grandson Tehu'aingabenga fighting with gods of the mischievous group called *'apai* whom we shall discuss later. These gods were anti-social creatures who roamed around in bush and uncultivated land, always doing harm to human beings. But humans had no means of preventing their evil deeds. They could only rely on protection from the social gods, the ones who belonged to their own sphere and whom they worshipped in their rituals. The stories about Tehainga'atua's fights with Tangangoa (T14, T17[A,B]) are perhaps examples of this, psychological tranquilizers, assuring man that the evil gods are conquered by the ones whom they choose as their protectors.

One should not, however, conclude that Tehainga'atua was an entirely benevolent god. In most stories about Tehainga'atua and his relations to man we learn that this god had to be constantly appeased in order not to do harm. To the Bellonese he was an *'atua hakamataku,* a fearsome god. We have seen above that he would kill people if rituals were not carried out properly. Persons planning a raid decided who would kill whom (T126), and before going into battle the victims were ceremonially dedicated to Tehainga'atua in a ritual carried out in a hidden place in the bush. The Bellonese said that when the attack began, the god would steal the victim's *ma'ungi* (life-principle) and in this way make him die. In the story about Tamungeu and his grandson (T185[A,B]) we are told how Tehainga'atua and Sikingimoemoe are about to punish the two men in their canoe because the grandson has mentioned the name for whales and porpoises. It is a general characteristic of Bellonese concepts that the wrath of these gods was evoked especially when a taboo was violated or rituals neglected. On the other hand, the god's anger

could be stilled, for example by promising to perform a certain ritual or to construct a new temple in his honor.

But wrath was only one side of Tehainga'atua's character. He was also considered a god who could be generous to humans. It has been mentioned that he presented garden products, good health, fish, and guests in castaway canoes from overseas. Everything that the Bellonese desired and which was not a result of their own productivity could be given them by Tehainga'atua. Ngiuika (T217, T218) is given a large turtle and a canoe full of strangers because he has composed a *ngeba* song of praise of Tehainga'atua. The song had the same effect as rituals. It made Tehainga'atua grateful *(mangaohie),* and he paid for the song with presents, called *tonu. Tonu* were all the good things which Tehainga'atua sent people. Turtles were a rare treat on the island. They were never caught at sea, but only when they came up to lay their eggs in the sand on the beaches, and this happened only rarely. Also visits by strangers were so rare as to seem miraculous and to convey great esteem on the person who first encountered them. The strangers were led inland, treated hospitably, and a *manga'e* ritual was performed in which food offerings were first presented to Tehainga'atua and next to the guests from overseas (T217–219, T225).

In the Rennellese story about Tinopau (T97) we have an example of the system of reciprocity involving man's relations to Tehainga'atua. Tinopau, who is dead, composes a *saka* song in the underworld. This song makes Tehainga'atua so happy that he grabs Tinopau's hair and yanks him out of the underworld and makes him young again.

There is no doubt that Tehainga'atua was considered a god of a violent character. This has to do with the concepts of a connection between godly power *('ao)* and sacredness. The stone gods were seen to be truly powerful, and their power was explained by the Bellonese as being the same as their sacredness *(tapu).* This was also the case with Tehainga'atua. His power was his relation to natural phenomena. In one tale (T30) we are told that Tehainga'atua claims thunder and lightning to be "sacred for him," that is to be his domain. In fact thunderstorms were considered a sign that Tehainga'atua was coming to the island. During an evening in 1959 when lightning flashed behind the rim of coral cliffs and the thunder rumbled, an old man sitting on the floor in my house jokingly remarked: "Oh listen! Tehainga'atua is here." Everybody smiled. They felt safe because they knew that after the faith, Christianity, came to the island, the old gods, including Tehainga'atua, were powerless.

The few hurricanes that the two islands have experienced were believed to have been sent by Tehainga'atua, and each was named after the person who at its arrival held the title as priest-chief *(tunihenua)* at the oldest and most revered of the island's temples, Te'atumatangi. The reason for this is that the priest-chief was considered to have the most intimate contact with Tehainga'atua. It is of interest to note that the Bellonese did not consider hurricanes, although devastating to life on the islands, a punishment from the deity, but said that they were, and have always been, ignorant as to the reason why the god sent these furious storms.

Earthquakes, which were rare, were attributed to a deity, Mahuike, but he acted on Tehainga'atua's orders (T21).

In the rituals there is further proof that Tehainga'atua was more closely connected with the nature surrounding man than with man's social activities. Offerings to Tehainga'atua always consisted of raw, uncooked food. He was presented with the first gifts of garden produce. Cooked tubers were offered to Tehu'aingabenga, the god connected with the social sphere.

Another example of this concept is that Tehainga'atua and the rest of the sky gods did not possess human mediums. It was considered a privilege of Tehu'aingabenga and his family and of the worshipped ancestors to relay their thoughts and wishes through human mouthpieces. The Bellonese said, when questioned, that if one of the sky gods possessed a man he would become crazy *(unguhia)* "because the *'atua* are very sacred *(hu'aaitapu)*."

That Tehainga'atua was considered outside the social sphere is seen clearly in his behavior. Not only did he control the violent forces of nature, his behavior also was non-human. This was manifested in two ways. He was a cannibal and he lived in an incestuous marriage. The idea of eating human flesh was indeed repulsive to the Bellonese, and just as repulsive was the thought of sexual relations between classificatory brothers and sisters *(tau tuhahine)*. Such acts belonged to a different world than that of humans, they were of the wild powers of nature which surround man.

The distinction between Tehainga'atua as a god of the realms outside human society was reflected also in the Bellonese classification of him as a god "of the outside" *('atua i haho)*, and his grandson, Tehu'aingabenga, as the god "of the house" *('atua hange)* (T6[A,B]). These terms were used very commonly indeed when the Bellonese explained the difference between the sky gods and the district gods. They are connected with two aspects of Bellonese religion. Some rituals to Tehainga'atua were carried out on the cult grounds in front of the house in the homestead. The Bellonese said: "Tehainga'atua can only enter living houses when Tehu'aingabenga permits." Other rituals to Tehainga'atua were carried out in the temples which lay in small secluded areas among the homesteads surrounded by bush and wilderness.

This seems to be a reflection of the idea that Tehainga'atua did not belong to the social sphere. Houses, the main center of social activities, were not his domain. He belonged to the outside where man and nature met, and to the temple grounds which lay in uncultivated areas among homesteads and gardens.

"Rennell and Bellona are one people," the Bellonese say "because we have the same two stones and Tehainga'atua as our deities." There seemed to be correlation between this view of Rennell and Bellona as united in their recognition of Tehainga'atua as the god of both islands, and as connected with the nature which surrounds man. The ecological situation of all kin groups was the same; they lived under the same natural conditions, the possible dangers and hardships were the same, they had the same possibilities of utilizing land and ocean as a source of food. They stood in the same relationship to the powers controlling nature. These powers were seen as administrated by Tehainga'atua. From this point of view he was also a deity who reflected the concept of Rennell and Bellona as a single social system. But this social system was again divided into sub-systems, islands (Rennell and Bellona), clans, sub-clans, and lineages. They were also divided into diverse, and often opponent groups on other levels, as for instance males and females, children and grown-ups. But segmentation was not reflected in the concepts of the *'atua ngangi*. Only in the sphere of the district deities, "social deities" as one might call them, were the conflicting interests of the social groups expressed in the religious concepts.

5.3. *Other sky gods*. Thus far we have discussed Tehainga'atua, the primary sky god of both the remaining clans (Kaitu'u and Iho), and the two stone gods, who were the prime deities of the now extinct Tanga clan, but were feared by all the clans. The extinct Puka clan worshipped the goddess Sikingimoemoe. Sikingimoemoe (Genealogy 12) was considered Tehainga'atua's sister and wife, and offerings to her also were included in the rituals of the Kaitu'u and the Taupongi clans.

She was a creature with the same ferocious qualities as her brother, but the picture of her personality was equally vague. In most stories she is seen in relation to ritual practices and sanctions. T173 relates how a priest-chief hunting coconut crabs in the bush, builds a fire and is punished by Sikingimoemoe who shaves off his hair while he is asleep. The priest-chief is terrified and dies. The horror of this story is of course appreciated when we know that a priest-chief could under no circumstances make a fire, and that the priest-chief's hair was sacred. He had broken a taboo and was punished. In the story about Tamungeu and his grandson (T185 [A,B]), who breaks a taboo by mentioning the name for whales and porpoises during a voyage to Rennell, it is Sikingimoemoe who suggests to her brother that the two be punished. In T149 Sikingimoemoe, together with the goddess Hakakamu'eha, the wife of Tehu'aingabenga, steal the life-principles of two men and hide them because one of the men has cursed Hakakamu'eha. In T172 Sikingimoemoe punishes a man with death because he has killed the inland fireflies which are her embodiments.

The Bellonese say that Sikingimoemoe's fierceness was due to the fact that the clan which worshipped her as their prime deity had died out. "The goddess has no longer any true subjects *(kainanga ma'ongi);* that is the reason she kills people."

This idea of the importance of having a special group of worshippers *(kainanga)* is reflected in the story about Tongiki of the Puka clan (T155). Tongiki's daughter is possessed by Sikingimoemoe and becomes crazy. She climbs the roof of her father's house and urinates on it—an act repulsive to the Bellonese, who look upon urine and feces with disgust and are very careful about where to relieve nature; male and female defecation were far apart and secluded. Tongiki becomes angry with the deity and decides to take revenge by adopting Tehainga'atua as his prime deity instead of Sikingimoemoe. The goddess becomes angry and jealous of her brother, and she starts hammering the roof so as to frighten Tongiki. But Tongiki does not become frightened; he just moves to another house.

It should be added that this type of revenge-taking seems to have been quite common, and it shows something about the attitude of men to gods. It was not one of reverence only, and reciprocity was involved in their behavior. One informant, P., told that when his wife died in childbirth giving birth to twins, he became furious at various goddesses, who he believed had presented him with the twins —a thing most disliked on Bellona—and had then killed his wife. After his wife's death, P. killed the infants and then decided that he would give up performing rituals to the female deities, especially Sikingimoemoe. When I asked him how he dared, he said that it was because he was so angry and grieved, and that he expected them to take revenge, but nothing happened.

The story about Tongiki also shows how Bellonese gods were dependent on the offering and rituals directed to them. Sikingimoemoe gets angry because a member of her own clan, Puka, deserts her. She loses a worshipper on whom she is economically dependent for offerings.

Here the ideology of economic transactions is reflected in the attitude towards the gods. On Bellona the entire economic system rested upon the exchange of goods. The Bellonese landholder did not cultivate his gardens with the purpose of feeding his immediate kin with the produce. The produce was distributed almost in its entirety in the ritual feasts to members of other kin groups, and in these feasts the landholder would get other landholders' garden produce as his share. It was unthinkable that a person should consume his own garden produce himself, and so also for the gods. I asked the Bellonese why the gods did not live from what they produced in their heavenly abodes instead of bothering people, but this thought puzzled them indeed. One informant answered: "The gods live from what they get

in the offerings, and they give life *(ma'ungi)* to the gardens here so that we can go on making rituals *(hengiu'aki)*. It is only today (i.e. after Christianity has been introduced) that they live by themselves *(kakai soko)* in their abodes." The belief that gods lived from what they got from man was expressed over and over again in the rituals; in fact it was the whole core of the ritual procedures.

But when men stop performing the rituals the economic circuit joining gods and men is disconnected, and the system of economic exchange between the kin groups of the gods and the kin groups of men stops. This is just as disturbing as when the economic relation between the kin groups on Bellona is interrupted. One might say that it is even worse, for the gods gave life in exchange for the offerings. Without it everything would come to an end.

T12 gives us an idea of the importance of the rituals to the gods. It tells how Sikingimoemoe is hit by a leaf and pretends to loose consciousness. Tehainga'atua tries to restore her to life by all sorts of treatments, but he does not succeed until he recites the ritual formula used by humans in addressing the two of them. The story stresses that Sikingimoemoe is made happy and wakens when she hears the formula.

To the Bellonese it was in no way queer that the gods themselves uttered the ritual formulas used by men. Their world was apparently a sacred replica of the world of man, and it was in the rituals that the two worlds met in social interaction. (The implications of this are discussed in Chapter 11.)

Another relative of Tehainga'atua was the goddess Baabenga, a strange deity who was known for her ability to change sex. We do not hear much about this in the traditional tales, except for a few instances where she suddenly appears in the shape of a mortal (T175, T176). Although Baabenga was classified as an *'atua ngangi,* she was nevertheless said to have been a *ngasuenga* of the extinct Sau clan (T66:13). Her ritual importance was not great. The reason was that the Sau clan, which originally worshipped her as their prime district god, had died out. We have seen above how gods were extremely sensitive to the loss of worshippers. The breaking of ties to humans resulted in the god or goddess becoming more fierce and anti-social. Baabenga was known to play mischievous tricks on humans (T175, T176); only to the members of the Sau clan was she generous (T218). The Bellonese, however, presented offerings to her at major rites, allegedly to appease her. This was, however, not the entire truth. Baabenga was also vaguely connected with sharks. During shark fishing the Bellonese used two baited hooks and also a bait tied to the end of a long line. The latter was used to lure the shark into a looped rope, and it was dedicated ceremonially to Baabenga. If the shark chose this bait and was caught in the loop instead of on the hooks, the Bellonese knew that it was Baabenga who had given the shark to the fishermen.

Baabenga's relationship to the other gods was a source of conflicting statements. On Rennell she was usually said to be a daughter of Sikingimoemoe and Tehainga'atua, and also to be Tehainga'atua's wife, by whom he had the daughter Titigau'agaba (Genealogy 11). On Bellona she was usually considered the daughter of the non-worshipped deity Mauloko (Genealogy 12), but even on Bellona there were disagreements. It should be added that exhaustive enquiries on Bellona have confirmed that conflicting statements concerning the genealogies of these deities did not correlate with the kinship ties or differences in the social status of the informants. The disagreements seem rather to be a result of a lack of specific interest in this subject. It is a field in which people seemed to develop private theories, especially as regards the less important deities.

Like Baabenga, the rest of the sky gods, especially her brother Teangaitaku and her sister Tehahine'angiki (Genealogy 12), played only small roles in the oral

traditions (T17[B], T21). They were vague gods whose primary role seemed to be to act as objects of worship by all lineages and both clans and as receivers of certain portions of the offering. Some of the sky gods did not play ritual roles, but merely acted as characters in tales. This was the case with Tesikubai (T150) and Sa'opunuasee and his brothers (T13). These deities were considered mischievous gods by some informants, but usually they were merely termed sky gods. They are of no direct significance for our understanding of the Bellonese religious system; even the oral traditions give very little information about them.

One god of the *'atua ngangi* class has not yet been mentioned. This is Ekeitehua (also called Singano) (Genealogy 12), the god of the Iho clan, and a brother of Tehainga'atua (Genealogy 14). He was claimed as an *'atua* by the Taupongi clan during the immigration. This means that although he was classed as an *'atua ngangi,* he nevertheless belonged to the *ngasuenga* class in rituals. Ekeitehua had some interesting qualities. In T5 we learn that he and his sister Teu'uhi were born out of a certain type of yam. His adopted mother was the goddess 'Iti'iti, who was not worshipped and was only known in this particular story, and his father was the non-worshipped god, Sikingingangi.

In the above outline we have tried to give a picture of the Bellonese conceptions of the *'atua ngangi,* a group of gods closely connected with the world that surrounded the Bellonese. It was a world of blessings mixed with dangers, and this seems reflected in the picture of the gods. Its blessings and its dangers were closely connected with the Bellonese concept of the sacred as being of this twofold nature (see Appendix). But man had to live with his surroundings; he had to establish a relationship to nature and its phenomena. This was done by ritual transactions. Men and sky gods were believed to exchange goods and services with one another, and in this way they became bound together in a system of mutual obligations. It was the *tunihenua* (priest-chief) who submitted himself to the world's dangers. By taking charge of *(pipiki)* the temple and supervising the rituals, he was the one person of the society who came closest to the dangers of the sacredness of these gods. He was subject to their punishments and it was through him that the gods presented welfare and disaster to their mortal subjects. His acts channelized and structurized the behavior of the gods, and the way in which men approached them. It is no wonder that the priest-chiefs of Bellona felt fear when performing their priestly functions, and that they, during the period when they "held the temple," were considered sacred, and had to subject themselves to a number of ritual restrictions lest their contact with the *'atua ngangi* afflict them and the society for whose welfare they felt responsible.

CHAPTER 6. THE DISTRICT GODS *(NGASUENGA)*

6.1. *'Aitu and ngasuenga.* The *'atua ngangi* discussed in the previous chapter were the gods at the apex of the godly hierarchy. When we begin a discussion of the second class of Bellonese deities, the district gods *(ngasuenga),* we enter a different conceptual sphere. These gods were believed to be the descendants of the *'atua ngangi* and they were considered less sacred.

Another word for *ngasuenga* is *'aitu.* This was not a fixed term on Bellona, but rather indicative of a vague area the sacredness of which lay between the *'atua ngangi* on the one hand, and the worshipped ancestors on the other. *'Aitu* seems to be tantamount to English "lord," namely one directly over ego, not necessarily the supreme one. Thus the *'atua ngangi* were the lords *('aitu)* of the district gods *(ngasuenga)* and of the worshipped ancestors, and the district gods were the *'aitu* of humans. In general speech *'aitu* however referred to Tehu'aingabenga and his numerous progeny, and these were the gods of men. One informant expressed the relationship in this way: "We are afraid of the *'atua ngangi* because they are the lords of the deities *(na 'aitu o na 'atua),* but we are only a little afraid of the *'aitu* because they are our deities." The sentence reflects the Bellonese concept of what an *'aitu* is.

The fact that the district gods were considered less fearsome than the sky gods did not make them less important in a ritual sense. On the contrary, they played an even greater ritual role than that of the sky gods. When informants were asked for a definition of the *'aitu* in contrast to the *'atua ngangi,* they would often say that Tehu'aingabenga and his family were called *'aitu* because they were *'atua hange* (house gods), whereas Tehainga'atua and his family were *'atua i haho* (outside gods). We discussed this dichotomy above, and we have seen that the distinction related to ritual circumstances (the *'atua ngangi* were worshipped in the ritual grounds and the *'aitu* were worshipped in the houses), and to the concepts of the *'atua ngangi* as being closely connected with nature and the *'aitu* with the social aspects of Bellonese life.

As mentioned earlier, the *'aitu* were also referred to by the term *ngasuenga.* Whereas the term *'aitu* was used when talking about this group of gods in their position in the godly hierarchy, the term *ngasuenga* was most commonly used about the relation of these gods to man.

6.2. *Tehu'aingabenga.* The prime figure among the *ngasuenga,* district gods, was the god Tehu'aingabenga. One might call him the god *par excellence* of Bellona, constantly referred to and constantly worshipped. He was the only one of the whole group of *ngasuenga* who was considered as having some sort of an individual personality. The account of his birth was one of the best known stories. In *Canoes,* T6 (A,B), we have given only two Rennellese versions of the story, but the traditions are identical on the two islands, except for a minor variation mentioned below. In T6(A), Tehainga'atua is married to a human woman, Ha'usanga, who has no children, only a pet skink. One day when she is preparing turmeric she finds a child in the wooden bowl of turmeric liquid. Surprised, she takes the child out of the bowl and names him Tupuimanukatu'u (Growing-up-in-Manukatu'u); Manukatu'u is the heavenly home of Tehainga'atua. Ha'usanga cares for the child. Te-

hainga'atua wants him to be worshipped in the cult grounds before the homestead, but Ha'usanga is afraid and takes him into the house where he is worshipped thenceforth. Tehainga'atua, however, remains in the cult grounds. When the boy has grown up, Ha'usanga builds him a home, Nukuahea. This is how the two gods become separated. Tehainga'atua lives in Manukatu'u and Tehu'aingabenga in Nukuahea.

In this story the attitude of humans towards the two gods respectively is clearly expressed.

In T6(B), old chief Aaron Taupongi has given a less detailed account, leaving out some of the information referring to the rituals. His version also differs in that Tehu'aingabenga has no father, and that after the child has appeared in the turmeric, Tehainga'atua claims him as his grandson. This relationship, grandson-grandfather *(tau tupuna)* was established in all Bellonese rituals. Aaron Taupongi's account also gives Tehu'aingabenga's principal name *(ingoa hakama'u)* as Tupuitengenga (Grown-out-of-the-turmeric), the name used again and again in ritual formulas. The information in T6(B) was unanimously agreed to by informants belonging to the Kaitu'u clan and no one had anything to add to the story. Only the people of the Iho clan had a differing tradition. They said that Tehu'aingabenga was raised by the non-worshipped goddess 'Iti'iti (T5). This clan did not have Tehu'aingabenga as its deity, and their traditions may be an attempt to belittle the importance of Tehu'aingabenga by making him an adopted son of a gooddess with a name meaning small *('iti'iti)*. The latter tradition was unknown among members of the Kaitu'u clan (N6[B]).

It is of some interest to note that informants agreed in stating that Tehu'aingabenga's "mother," Ha'usanga, was not a goddess. There was some discussion as to whether she should be called a culture hero *(kakai)* or a human. This is in tune with the idea of Tehu'aingabenga as being closer to the human world than was his grandfather Tehainga'atua. We saw in Chapter 4 that Tehainga'atua claimed the islands of Rennell and Bellona as his property, while Tehu'aingabenga claimed that the "worshippers,"—that is the people—where his. There was a mild rivalry between the two gods, a rivalry also seen in T7 about a fishing trip. Each deity wants a large *gabenga* fish, but Tehu'aigabenga claims it first, and, therefore, Tehainga'atua gives him the name Tehu'aigabenga (The-large-*gabenga*-fish), a Rennellese story and hence Rennellese "g" in the great god's name. This story may be a rationalization or folk etymologizing of a godly name not understood.

In contrast to the sky gods, Tehu'aingabenga was considered a deity who protected his subjects *(kainanga)*, who were in all ways helped by him and his godly kinsmen. He treads on the two stars from which Tehainga'atua's hurricanes come (T26). In T62 he breaks the arm of Tetinomanu, a star sending hurricanes. In T105 we hear how 'Angongua (Rennellese: 'Agogua), a Bellonese acting as second priest-chief *(haihenua)*, is killed and cut into pieces during a fight. At midnight Tehu'aingabenga joins the pieces of the poor man together and restores him to life. One might wonder why it is expressly said that 'Angongua is a second priest-chief. This sort of information is usually not given in the tales unless it is of some significance for the understanding of the story. Second priest-chiefs were the religious officials especially connected with the distribution of offerings to Tehu'aingabenga, and it is hence not surprising that 'Angongua is restored to life by this particular god.

In T149 two men, Nausu and Teosi, are engaged in a fight and each is about to die; Tehu'aingabenga searches for the *ma'ungi* (life-principle) of Teosi, who, as a member of the Hu'aingupe clan (Genealogy 8), is one of his worshippers. Tehu'aingabenga arrives at the homestead of the fearsome goddess, Sikingimoemoe, and

asks her where she has hidden Teosi's life-principle. She shows him that it has been buried under a stone together with the life-principle of his enemy Nausu. Teosi's life-principle still quivers *(poponge)*, whereas Nausu's life-principle is covered with ants. The symbolism is clear to the Bellonese. Teosi is still alive, but Nausu is presumably dead. Tehu'aingabenga picks up Teosi's life-principle and takes it back to him, and he recovers. It is not clear how Hakakamu'eha, the wife of Tehu'aingabenga, manages to restore Nausu to life even though his life-principle is dead. The Bellonese did not explain this.

It is obvious not only from the tales but also from rituals that Tehu'aingabenga was considered a protector and helper of man. Tehu'aingabenga's protection was stated directly by the Bellonese, who said: "The district gods are deities who protect *(baangahitaki)* their subjects *(kainanga)*." But the attitude of the district gods was not entirely benevolent. They might also punish people, but the punishment was usually provoked by the breaking of taboo or negligence in ritual. There is a well-known story about Sengeika of the Patonu lineage (Genealogy 4, Generation 19), who for unknown reasons swears *(igho)* against the deities. It is here given as told in 1963 by Taupongi. Other informants could not add any information to Taupongi's account:

1. Sengeika noko igho ki na 'atua ma te eke a Tehu'aingabenga kia Tongaka. 2. Eke ma'u te 'atua kia Sau'uhi, te pengea o Baitanga, kae he'e na'a e au te pengea noko eketia ma'u. 3. O boo te kaahinga kia Sengeika. Sisinga ake i Patonu, angu e kingatou ia Sengeika. 4. Tenge a Sengeika i te anga ki 'angunga o mumuni. 5. He'engiko te tokatongu 'atua o singi ki 'angunga ia Sengeika, he'e kite e kingatou. 6. Sopo iho a Sengeika o hai atu: "Ii! He'e kite, e kikibi!" 7. Tenge a Sengeika o pau o hano. Ngiu a Tehu'aingabenga ma ngu 'atua noko heeketi ngatahi ki na pengea o boo sosopo ki te tu'a o te hange o Nangauika, te manaha o Tongaka e taaunga. 8. Hakaputu a Ghongau o taku ki te tokatongu 'atua e kango. 9. Boo ake o to'o tanu ake o songi ki te tokatongu 'atua. 10. Hinake ma'u a Sengeika, ku tanu manganga, kae hai te hu'aimalughubei kaa o hakaeke i te 'ungu. 11. Hinake o songi ki te tokatongu 'atua. 12. Haiho a Tehu'aingabenga noko ia Tongaka: "Hai ki teenga ana hai 'anga, hai ma'u te hai 'anga!"

1. Sengeika swore against the gods, and Tehu'aingabenga possessed Tongaka as a medium. 2. A god also possessed Sau'uhi, a man from Baitanga [lineage], and I don't know [the name] of the man who was also possessed. 3. [They] went on a raid against Sengeika. [They] went up to Patonu [a homestead] and they chased Sengeika. 4. Sengeika ran along the trail upland and hid. 5. The three gods gave chase and passed Sengeika [on their way] upland, and they did not find [him]. 6. Sengeika went down [to Patonu] and said [teasingly]: "Ha, ha! [I] wasn't found; [they] are blind!" 7. Sengeika ran and went away. Tehu'aingabenga and the two gods who had together possessed the men returned and went and sat on the roof of the house in Nangauika, the homestead of Tongaka, the medium. 8. The people of Ghongau district assembled and prayed to the three punishing gods. 9. [They] went up to [the gods] and took up peace-making gifts and prayed to the three gods. 10. Sengeika came up also anointed with charcoal [a symbol of submission], and had placed a large burning faggot on his head. 11. [He] went up and prayed to the three gods. 12. Tehu'aingabenga who was represented by Tongaka said: "[He] did some other things before, now he is doing something [wrong] again!"

The Bellonese considered this story very amusing. Nobody knew whether the gods punished *(kango)* Sengeika. Some said that he was not punished; others said that he must have been. The point in the story is that when the gods, impersonated by the three mediums, come to take revenge, Sengeika teases them by calling them blind. When he returns to make peace with the gods he has properly smeared himself with charcoal, but he also carries a burning faggot. On Bellona it was considered a serious break of taboo if a grown-up man made or carried fire (see T173). T187 tells of a man who travels from Bellona to Rennell. Although he is second priest-chief *(haihenua),* he makes a fire when he reaches land. Tehu'aingabenga and his mother Baabenga are about to punish him for his breach of a taboo, but he manages to appease the two gods by making an offering to Tehu'aingabenga. The god is pleased *(mangaohie)* with the offering presented, and the man escapes unhurt.

It is obvious, however, that the district gods were not conceived as deities who primarily punished men. Although they did not tolerate any breach of taboo which might disrupt the structure of the relationship between them and man, their character as helping gods was most often stressed by the Bellonese. A final example may throw light on man's relationship to the district gods and also to the sky gods. It is given here as it was told me in 1963 by Temoa and his son, Taupongi.

1. Ko Patiange noko hano i Ahanga o tangu i Tehutu. 2. Nimaa tui tona bugho o suki ki te 'ango o te baka, ma te manga ngenge ake te mangoo o tau i te ngima o samu iho e ia o to'o o hano. 3. Ka te mangoo ko Sikingimoemoe. Ma te a'u te baka o a'u, a'u, a'u, sahe i Ahanga. Ma te hinaiho a Baiango ki te baka e sahe ake. Si'ai he pengea. 4. O inaiho ki te ngiu, ko te taina he'e kitea. Lunga e ia te bugho noko i te ngiu o te baka, he'e kitea ma'u. 5. Nimaa lungatu e ia te haangongo; he'e kitea ma'u a te taina. Ma te mangepe hinake o hunge, hano o singa i Ngangitapu o ebeebe e ia te hataa sua noko i te nganguenga. 6. Hinake o sa'u iho te bengo o Sikingimoemoe o sungu i te tobigha o mangepe hano ki Matabaingei kae huhu kia Ekeitehua ma tena hanau. 7. Ma te tangangongoina noko sehu a Ekeitehua. Nimaa sopo mai ki te manaha o Sikingimoemoe, ko Sikingimoemoe manga hai baakai. 8. Ma te hai atu a Ekeitehua: "Na baakai ke aa te manga hai?" Ma te hai atu a Sikingimoemoe: "Ke ta'o ai te haka'atibai kia Patiange." 9. Ma te hai atu a Ekei-

1. Patiange [of Matabaingei lineage, Generation 17] went out from Ahanga [beach] to catch flying fish with a seine at Tehutu. 2. [Afterwards] when he put his seine on a stick inside the canoe a shark jumped up and caught his arm and he dragged [him] down and took [him] away. 3. And the shark was [the goddess] Sikingimoemoe. And the canoe came, came, came and reached [the shore] at Ahanga. And Baiango [the older brother of Patiange] went down to the canoe that had drifted ashore. Nobody was there. 4. And [he] looked into the hull; the younger brother was not there. He opened the seine which lay at the bottom of the canoe, [he] wasn't there either. 5. When he pushed aside the coconut shell [lying there], there was no sign of the younger brother there either. Wailing he went up inland and cut down [coconut trees in mourning], went and turned aside to [the temple] Ngangitapu and he tore to bits the shelf for the sacred paddles which was in the temple house. 6. Went up and took down the sacred loincloth belonging to [the goddess] Sikingimoemoe and inserted it into his buttocks and wailing, went back to Matabaingei and abused [the god] Ekeitehua and his children. 7. And it was told by a medium that Ekeitehua was

tehua: "Patiange hea?" Ma te hai atu a Sikingimoemoe: "A Patiange noko i maangama." 10. Ma te hai atu a Ekeitehua: "Kae a'u i ti aa?" Ma te hai atu a Sikingimoemoe: "E hano au o kakabe mai." 11. Ma te huhu a Ekeitehua ki Sikingimoemoe; ma te a'u a Ekeitehua ke saangongo ia Baiango. 12. Ku hunge te manaha kae hano ia o ebeebe te hataa sua noko i Ngangitapu.

out walking. When [he] came to the home of Sikingimoemoe, Sikingimoemoe was getting firewood. 8. Ekeitehua said: "What is that firewood for that [you] are getting?" Sikingimoemoe said: "To cook a meal of welcome with for Patiange." 9. And Ekeitehua said: "Which Patiange?" And Sikingimoemoe said: "Patiange who was in the world of light [Bellona]." 10. And Ekeitehua said: "And why does [he] come?" And Sikingimoemoe said: "I went and brought him here." 11. And Ekeitehua became angry and scolded Sikingimoemoe; and Ekeitehua came to look for Baiango to tell the news. 12. [Baiango] had cut down [the coconut trees of] his homestead, and he had torn to bits the shelf with sacred paddles which was in Ngangitapu [temple].

I discussed this story with a group of informants in Taupongi's house in Matahenua. They all agreed that although he had broken a taboo, Patiange was not punished by Sikingimoemoe. Some said that Sikingimoemoe had just taken him with her to her home because she liked him so very much, an example of the rationalization regarding a mysterious death otherwise unexplainable. In this story we also have an example of how the district deity, in this case Ekeitehua, the great god of the Iho clan, took sides with his worshippers against the sky gods, here Sikingimoemoe. The story also from another point of view reveals something about the Bellonese attitude towards the gods. Baiango is unhappy because of the loss of his brother, and it is for the Bellonese appropriate that they direct their anger for the unexplicable loss against the gods. Baiango as an extremist violates the sacred objects of the temple, and humiliates the goddess by letting her sacred loincloth come in contact with his private parts. When I asked whether Baiango was punished by the gods because of this behavior, everybody present said that they did not know. Temoa added that he thought that Ekeitehua had protected him against Sikingimoemoe.

The story about Patiange and Baiango exemplifies the concept of the district gods as man's helpers and protectors, and also of the reciprocity involved in the interaction of men and gods. There are fewer stories about the wrath of this group of deities than there are stories about how they helped their worshippers.

Tehu'aingabenga, his children, and his grandchildren, had their abode in the eastern skies just as the sky gods did. The name of their homestead was Nukuahea. Old chief Taupongi and others have given a good description of Nukuahea (T8), a description to which everybody on both islands agreed. Nukuahea looked exactly like the homesteads of people on Rennell and Bellona, but it was much richer in all things than any earthly home. It was filled with coconut trees, betel palms, pepper plants, breadfruits, panna, yams, *suinamo* yams, taro, bananas, *beetape* tubers, and *abubu* tubers. And in the house, called the Sacred House *(Te Hange Tapu),* there were sacred paddles, sacred spears, the "very important turmeric," turbans, mats, tapas, foods, and fish. There was also a bird by the name of Tengigongigo. This bird gave life principles *(ma'ungi)* to people; nobody had seen

the bird; it was just heard at night, and then people knew that Tehu'aingabenga was near and they prayed to him. It might be added that the tradition of this bird was the only part of Aaron Taupongi's tale of which the people of Bellona did not approve. No one on Bellona had ever heard of such a bird, and everybody said that this must be a tradition of the Lake district on Rennell only.

When I discussed Nukuahea with Sa'engeika, he added that in Nukuahea were houses containing life-principles of humans, garden crops, goods *('ota'ota),* children (this is where children came from), fish, and other seafood. The concept was that Tehu'aingabenga took things from his abundant stores and gave them to people.

Nukuahea was considered somewhat like the Bellonese homesteads. It was generally said on Bellona that *te ha'itunga o te manaha te hakatino o te hange o Tehu'aingabenga,* the house of the homestead is the embodiment of Tehu-'aingabenga's house. This idea is significant for an understanding of the rituals. During rites, the homes of men and gods were considered as one in the sense that the sanctity of the godly sphere pervaded the house of men and the ritual grounds.

How closely the world of the gods resembled that of man can be seen from the fact that even the gods performed rituals in their heavenly abodes (T178). This Rennellese story, well-known also on Bellona, is in other ways illuminating. It tells about Kangebu and his wife Teatamatu'a, two humans who die and go to the underworld where they build a home and have a daughter, Kaukaugogo (on Bellona Kaukaungongo). She is bathed *(kaukau)* in coconut oil *(gogo)* and the gods desire her. One of Tehu'aingabenga's sons, Tinotonu, a god of whom we do not hear much elsewhere, sends a messenger to Kaukaugogo with an invitation to a feast with ritual distributions in Tehu'aingabenga's homestead, Nukuahea. The girl arrives at the feast with her parents, and Tehu'aingabenga sees her and desires her. He asks her to come and sit at his side and he gives her a basket of cooked food, a share of the ritual. His son Tinotonu sees this and gets angry with his father, so angry that he decides to leave the godly abode, and he prepares his canoe to sail away. Tehu'aingabenga tries to persuade him to stay, saying that although Kaukaugogo belongs "mostly" to him, the son may have "access" to her. Tinotonu does not agree to his father's proposition and decides to kill the girl. He sends a school of sharks when she is bathing in the expectation that they will eat her, but the girl is protected by Tehu'aingabenga, the sharks disappear, and the girl remains unhurt.

This story does not state directly that Tehu'aingabenga marries the girl. It is, however, the Bellonese tradition, and it is also agreed on by all informants, that Kaukaugogo, Koginuku or Hakakamu'eha, as she is most often called, becomes the mother of all the sons of Tehu'aingabenga (Genealogies 13,14 and page 67 below).

The idea of mortals in their post-mortem existence marrying gods in the underworld was not a common one on Bellona. With the exception of the tradition of Konginuku, no Bellonese knew of any ancestors having married gods. So, the marriage of Tehu'aingabenga and Konginuku was unusual, and Konginuku was, furthermore, not considered a true human. She was the child of deceased Bellonese parents, born in the underworld, and as such, termed an *'atua,* deity.

The Bellonese had no tradition of a genealogical relationship between gods and men, as is the case in other Polynesian societies. It was expressly stressed by everyone asked on Bellona that gods were something very different from men, another type of beings. But why, then, was Konginuku, this quasi-human creature, introduced in the godly genealogies? There may be a hint in this marriage that district gods and mortals were rather close together, and closer certainly than the sky gods. It may also be a way to stress that the district gods were social deities who in many ways behaved like humans and to whom one could enter in a relationship that

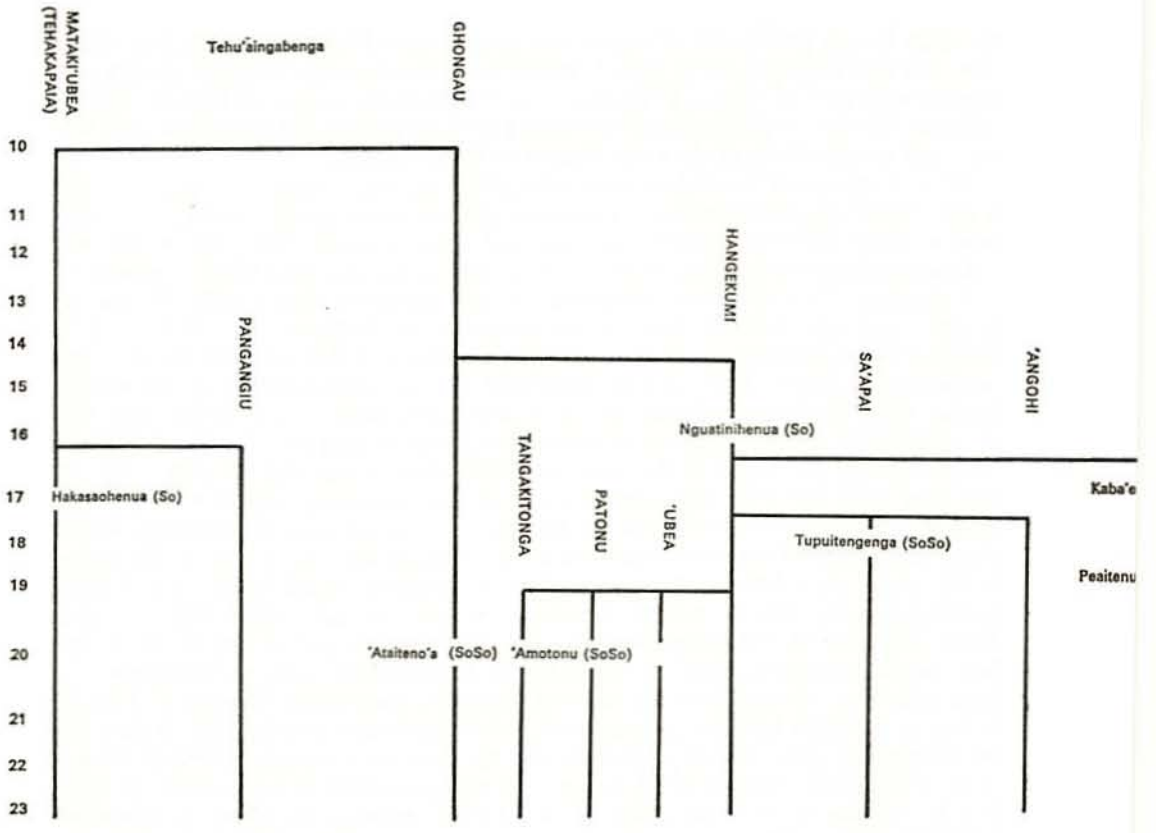
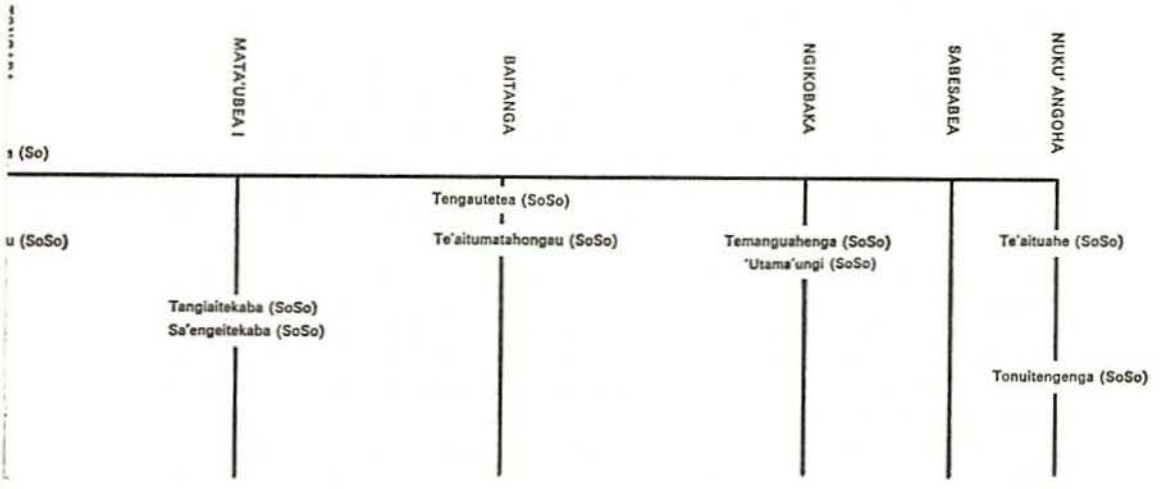


Figure 7: The institution of district gods in the Kaitu'u clan.
(The lines indicate the segmentation of the clan. Names of patrilineal descent groups are shown vertically in capital letters. Names of deities are shown horizontally in the generation in which they were believed to have been instituted. Their relationship to Tehu'aingabenga is given in a parenthesis after the name. So: son; SoSo: son's son. For more detailed information about the institution of these deities, see notes to Figure 8.)

was similar to the relationship between different social groups on Bellona. The story stresses the human character of these gods, but it also stresses that there are no actual kin ties between gods and men: Konginuku is not born on Bellona, but of deceased humans in the underworld, the realm of the gods.

6.3. *Other district gods.* From the marriage of Tehu'aingabenga and the semi-human girl, Konginuku, were born deities, the district gods of Bellona. These gods figure in a number of Rennellese and Bellonese traditional tales, (as for example T15, T23, T28, T101–3, T121, T136 [B, C], T178, T179), and like their father, they were protectors and helpers of man. With a discussion of these district gods we enter the area of Bellonese religious concepts in which beliefs are closely linked not only with man's general attitude towards his natural environment, as was the case with the sky gods, but with man as a social being. Traditions of the district gods were closely associated with the ideal structure underlying Bellonese social organization.

According to Bellonese traditions, worship of the various sons of Tehu'aingabenga was instituted *(hakanoho)* by Bellonese who can be plotted in the genealogies. The belief was that earlier people of the Kaitu'u clan worshipped only Te-



hu'aingabenga, whereas the other clans worshipped the respective deities claimed by them to be their protectors when traveling from the homeland of 'Ubea to Rennell and Bellona:

Clan	*District god*
Kaitu'u	*Tehu'aingabenga*
Taupongi	*Singano* (Ekeitehua)
Tongo	Hu'aitekongo
Ngoha	Singano (Ekeitehua)
Tanga	Tepou
Nikatemono	Tehu'aingabenga
Puka	Tehu'aingabenga
Sau	Baabenga

According to a tradition generally acknowledged on Bellona, a female medium named Pangea, daughter of Hu'aitebaka'eha of the Tongomainge lineage in the Iho clan (Genealogy 9, Generation 15), revealed the names of some of Tehu'aingabenga's sons. Pangea was married to Kautasi of Generation 16 in Ghongau lineage, but was otherwise unknown. Once, during a feast in Tingoa on the northeast coast, she was possessed by Hakakamu'eha, the wife of Tehu'aingabenga. The goddess said that Tehu'aingabenga's children "had now grown up" and she told the names of some of them. Among these was a number of gods who became district gods of Rennell lineages. She also told the names Nguatinihenua, the principle district

god *(tungi ngasuenga)* of the Ghongau subclan, and Hakasaohenua, who became the *tungi ngasuenga* of the Matangi subclan. The tradition is that when Pangea had revealed the names of these two gods, Tangahau (Mataki'ubea lineage, Plate 3, Generation 16) instituted *(hakanoho)* Hakasaohenua as the district god of Mataki'ubea lineage, and Teikangongo (Genealogy 5, Generation 16), who was considered a member of Tongaba lineage as well as of Hangekumi (a new lineage founded by his father), instituted Nguatinihenua as the district god of Tongaba, Hangekumi, and Ghongau. After that time the institution of other district gods was started, a process which continued until the acceptance of Christianity in 1938. The ritual procedure of instituting a new god was very simple. A new mat was laid on the floor of the house during one of the homestead rituals (the *hainga'atua* or the *kaba ki hange*), and the new district god was addressed by name and presented with a part of the offering.

But why, we may ask, did the Bellonese create new deities? Having no written sources on the pre-Christian religion we cannot tell what the actual reason was. We can only relate what the Bellonese *think* happened, how they *think* they believed. Whereas we may to a great extent be able to check our data on beliefs held and rituals carried out by our informants immediately prior to the introduction of Christianity in 1938, we have, of course, no means of verifying events asserted to have taken place several generations ago.

The Bellonese had fixed traditions as to when the various district gods were instituted and by whom. Figure 7 gives a simplified picture of these traditions. The lines show the different lineages of the Kaitu'u clan and the generations in which they were believed to have furcated, with each branch becoming more or less independent. We have inserted the names of the deities in the lineage and generation when it was said to have been instituted.

But what do the data on Bellonese district gods given in this table tell us? We must again bear in mind that the traditions do not provide actual historical information. There was a certain correlation between the establishment of new lineages as independent units *(manaha)*, and the instituting of new district deities. The Bellonese themselves indirectly confirmed this. When I discussed the instituting of new district gods, one of my informants, Kaabei, said: "The head of a lineage instituted a district god in order to have a god for himself personally who could protect him." What he meant was that when a lineage had become independent it would need its own district god, independent of those of other lineages. This was agreed to by everybody, and another informant added that "the district gods were in the homestead and protected us against the attacks of *'apai* (evil gods) and enemies." The "enemies" were people of other lineages or districts who might attack and kill everyone in a lineage.

The instituting of new district gods seems to reflect organizational pressures within the society. In Figure 7 is seen that groups which have fought most persistently, such as the clusters of lineages called Tengutuangabangika'ango and Tengutuangabangitakungu (T133), have instituted different sets of deities. Also the different lineages in Tengutuangabangika'ango have in this way stressed their mutual independence (according to traditions they have been engaged in interlineage fights). On the other hand the three lineages Tangakitonga, Patonu, and 'Ubea, which considered themselves as close allies, had the same district deity, 'Amotonu. In Matangi district where the lineages had not been engaged in hostilities among themselves, the same district gods were recognized by all lineages. An exception was Te'atubai, whose people came from the western end of Rennell only few generations ago, and who recognized Tupuimatangi, the principal district deity of Western Rennell, as their prime deity.

The information in the table above is not detailed. There are gaps, but nevertheless the traditions do show that there was a certain correlation between the segmentations of the Kaitu'u clan and the instituting of new district deities. There was also a correlation between the segmentation and the genealogies of the district deities. The two gods instituted in Generation 16 and 17, Nguatinihenua and Hakasaohenua, were considered sons of Tehu'aingabenga. When Ghongau, Hangekumi, and Tongaba were subdivided into new lineages, these lineages all instituted new district deities who were considered Nguatinihenua's sons.

On the basis of data obtained later than those published in *Canoes*, Genealogy 14, we might thus present graphically the genealogy of the district deities of the Kaitu'u clan as follows.



Figure 8: Genealogy of the district gods of the Kaitu'u clan.

1. Brought from 'Ubea by the first settlers. See T66:24.
2. Other names Hakakamu'eha, Kaukaungongo. Daughter of deceased humans. See T178.
3. Originally a district deity of the Puka clan. Said to have been re-instituted by Saungongo of Tongaba (Genealogy 5, Generation 17). By all informants said to be oldest son of Tehu'aingabenga.
4. Sometimes called Nguatunihenua. Instituted by Teikangongo of Tongaba and Hangekumi (Genealogy 5, Generation 16). District god of Tongaba, Hangekumi, and Ghongau.
5. Daughter of Ekeitehua, the principal district deity of the Iho clan. See page 71.
6. A Rennellese district deity, instituted by Temoa of Mugihenua, Rennell (Plate 3, Generation 15).
7. Instituted by Teikanoa (Plate 3, Generation 17). District deity of Pangangiu, Tehakapaia, and Ahenoa.
8. Instituted by Tangania from Mugihenua district, Rennell. Generation unknown.
9. District deity of the Lake district, Rennell. His name was revealed by the female medium, Pangea. See page 65.
10. Instituted by Te'ungutiange of Baitanga lineage (Genealogy 5, Generation 18).
11. Instituted by Ma'itaki of Sa'apai lineage (Genealogy 4, Generation 18).
12. Instituted by To'atupu of Baitanga lineage (Genealogy 5, Generation 19).
13. Instituted by Sa'o'angiki of Ngikobaka lineage (Genealogy 6, Generation 19).
14. Instituted by Henua'eha of Ngikobaka lineage (Genealogy 6, Generation 19).
15. Instituted by Putuika of Ghongau lineage (Plate 3, Generation 20).
16. Instituted by Ngibauika of Nuku'angoha lineage (Genealogy 7, Generation 19).
17. Institutor unknown. District deity of Hangekumi lineage.
18. Instituted by Mau'eha of Tongaba lineage, son of Tehoaki. (See 21 below).
19. Instituted by Sa'engeahe of Mata'ubea I lineage (Genealogy 5, Generation 20).
20. Instituted by Sa'engeahe of Mata'ubea I lineage (Genealogy 5, Generation 20).
21. Instituted by Tehoaki of Tongaba, younger brother of Utahenua (Genealogy 5, Generation 19). Tehoaki was the founder of Tepoongima, a sublineage of Tongaba.
22. Instituted by Takiika of Nuku'angoha lineage (Genealogy 7, Generation 21).
23. Institutor unknown. Tu'uiteika was worshipped by all lineages and considered the least important of all district deities.
24. Instituted by Taukiu of Patonu lineage (Genealogy 4, Generation 20). 'Amotonu was the principal deity of Tangakitonga, Patonu, and 'Ubea. Informants were uncertain as to whether he was a son of Tehu'aingabenga or of Nguatinihenua.
25. Instituted by Temoa of Mugihenua, Rennell (Plate 3, Generation 15).

Other district deities whose relationships to the rest were uncertain included Aheitengenga, Sa'engeitetuhu (instituted by Sa'engeika), 'Ataitekaba, No'aitengenga, Sa'engepeau, Tuhaitengenga, Peamasahu, Pungutiaitengenga.

Genealogy 14 in *Canoes* is based on information which later was revealed as ambiguous. This genealogy gives more names of sons of Tehu'aingabenga than listed above. Some of the differences can be explained by the fact that some informants who contributed information did not realize that certain gods had more

than one name. Further, some very minor deities were listed as sons of Tehu'aingabenga. Exhaustive analyses made in 1962 and 1963 on Bellona resulted in the picture given above. These analyses confirmed that evidence on district deities was shared by the whole society and the traditions themselves were not a source of conflicts among social groups. The material was checked again with 15 informants, and the genealogy presented above emerged.

The district gods who were the offspring of the god Tehu'aingabenga were considered as belonging to two groups: those who were worshipped by members of the lineages of Matangi district, and those who were worshipped by the lineages of Ghongau district. This distribution makes district gods an appropriate translation of the term *ngasuenga* (Rennellese: *ngasuenga*). This word has no other meanings in Bellonese.

The Bellonese themselves did not manifestly express the correlation of the genealogy of Tehu'aingabenga and his family and the furcation of their own genealogies into patrilineal descent groups. The interrelationships are only elicited by our compilation of the various data concerning ancestral traditions and the traditions of how and when the district gods were instituted. The Bellonese merely asserted that the worship of a district god was instituted by a certain individual in order that the deity might protect the institutor and kinsmen of his lineage. It may, however, be relevant to ask why a new deity was said to have been instituted by a man of one of the first generations in a new lineage, were it not because it was a means of sanctioning the independence of this lineage in relation to the one from which it had branched off. It this were not the case, the members of the new lineage might perhaps just as well have relied on the protection from the gods of their lineage of origin.

If the traditions concerning the establishment of new district gods thus religiously reflected the segmentation of various lineage groups, we may ask another question: Why did the Bellonese traditions not always attribute the instituting of the new gods to the ancestor who was said to have been the founder of the lineage? There is an answer to this question. From furcations which have taken place recently we know that several generations might elapse before a lineage was publicly recognized as being independent of the lineage from which it had branched off. Several of the Bellonese lineages consisted of two or more sublineages each taking its name from one of the large homesteads. Thus the Sa'apai lineage consisted of two sublineages, namely that of Sa'apai and that of Ngongomangu. The members of these sublineages, however, both considered themselves people of Sa'apai. If conditions such as rivalry, enmity between the two sublineages, or the existence of a powerful and individualistic elder in Ngongomangu lineage had favored a furcation, the people of Ngongomangu might have declared themselves as a lineage independent of Sa'apai. This had recently happened in another Bellonese lineage, namely that of Matabaingei in the Iho clan (Genealogy 9). Matabaingei consisted of two sublineages, Matabaingei and Sauhakapoi, but the emergence at the same time of two equally powerful and influential men, Tango'eha of Matabaingei (Genealogy 9, Generation 20) and Sa'omoana Taupongi of Sauhakapoi (Genealogy 9, Generation 21), resulted in a bifurcation of the Matabaingei lineage. The sublineage of Sauhakapoi had, however, been founded by the grandfather of Sa'omoana Taupongi, but two generations elapsed before Sauhakapoi was recognized as entirely independent. Similar examples of the gradual emergence of independent lineages may be found in the majority of Bellonese patrilineal descent groups. The process is at any time seen in varying stages when Bellona is examined as a whole.

The gradualness of the formation of independent lineages may account for the traditional conception that the district gods were not always established by the an-

cestor who was considered the founder. The Bellonese said that there were often fights and argumentations *(hetata'i)* about whether a lineage was independent or not. Even today the lineage of Sauhakapoi is not universally recognized as independent. Some Bellonese still say that it is merely a sublineage of Matabaingei.

The Bellonese material offers an example of how a society itself explains the origin of a group of deities. Two things should, however, be mentioned in this connection. It would be unsafe to assert that the traditions present us with an example of how Bellonese gods were actually created. As previously stated oral traditions should never be treated as reliable historical sources. They can only give us material for an analysis of how a certain culture structuralizes its beliefs and its conceptions of the world. As such, the present material merely reveals a correlation of traditions concerning genealogies of district gods and of men.

The Bellonese did not believe that the instituting of certain district gods meant that these deities were invented by the institutor. As we have seen above, the names of gods were revealed by mediums. When the name of a certain district god became known, he could be instituted as an object of worship. All the gods were living in the abode of Tehu'aingabenga. Sa'engeika said: "There are many gods in Tehu'aingabenga's abode, but perhaps we do not know them all. Some af them are merely youngsters. On Bellona we only worshipped some of them, the grown-up gods." The Bellonese thus believed in a host of deitites, but only some of these were known and worshipped, and only the worshipped members of Tehu'aingabenga's family were of significance.

By claiming that there was a genealogical relationship between the district gods who all descend from Tehu'aingabenga, the Bellonese may have reflected their conception of descent principles. Here the ideological conflict characteristic of Bellonese society was at work. On one hand there was a constant drive towards mutual independence of the patrilineal descent groups, and on the other hand the members of these groups regretted the lack of unity of all Bellonese society. Again and again I heard statements such as "we are one people, but constant fights and jealousy have split Bellona into patrilineal descent groups, and this is bad."

This ideological conflict may be exemplified by references to the ritual roles of the district gods. In smaller household rituals in Ghongau district with a limited number of participants, the offerings were dedicated to only a few district deities, usually Tehu'aingabenga, his son Nguatinihenua, and to the god instituted by the lineage to which the man performing the ritual belonged. A Sa'apai man would dedicate the offering to Tehu'aingabenga, Nguatinihenua, and Tupuitengenga, a Nuku'angoha man to Tehu'aingabenga, Nguatinihenua, and Te'aituahe, and a Tehakapaia man in Matangi district to Tehu'aingabenga, Hakasaohenua, and Nguakabangea.

The more food distributed and the more participants, the greater was the number of district deities invoked. In the large *kaba ki hange* feasts with large amounts of cooked food, the priest-chief might invoke as many as 25 different deities, even including those of other districts or clans. The important landholders Sa'engeika, Takiika, Sa'omoana, and Tuhamano all said that at lange feasts they had presented offerings to the district deities of other clans and even to those of Rennell.

It is hoped that the question of the position of deities in the ritual system can be dealt with in more detail in a subsequent publication. What has been said above may be sufficient to show that the Bellonese beliefs in district deities reflected unity as well as diversity. All the lineages of the Kaitu'u clan recognized Tehu'aingabenga as their prime district deity. The members of the two districts of this clan had different sets of deities who were the offspring of Tehu'aingabenga. Each lineage had instituted its own deities who were believed to be the particular protec-

tors of this lineage, but all lineages recognized deities of other lineages as true and real and in major rituals they were all presented with offerings.

As mentioned above the sons and grandsons of Tehu'aingabenga did not play any important role in the traditional tales. But their ritual position seems to tell something about their significance. The Bellonese asserted that one of the reasons why so many new lineages were created by segmentations in the generations 15–19 was that there was an increase in the population on Bellona. Land became scarce and people fought for it even with their own lineal kinsmen. The result was a number of furcations. As mentioned above, one main significance of the presence of these gods in the rituals was that offerings to the gods sanctifying the food was later presented to the guests. The guests were ordinarily affinal kinsmen of the person making the ritual feast, usually people of other lineages. If the population of Bellona increased, the number of a man's affines also increased. This again meant an augmentation of the number of persons to whom he was obligated to present ceremonial offerings at his feasts, and this called for additional deities by means of whose presence the offerings could be sacralized. Thus an increasing number of lineages and of individuals may in several ways have been connected with the instituting of additional deities. We cannot tell whether the traditions have any basis in historical reality, but we have a number of cases which seem to confirm a correlation of the social structure including a large number of patrilineal descent groups, and the alleged existence of a large number of district deities.

As yet we have not discussed the situation in the small Iho (Taupongi) clan in the western end of Bellona. This clan had an entirely different set of *ngasuenga* from that of the Kaitu'u clan in Ghongau and Matangi districts. According to the traditions (T66:11), this clan claimed Ekeitehua (Singano) as its prime district god when the first immigrators were on their way to Rennell and Bellona. Although considered a brother of Tehainga'atua and, as such, of the *'atua ngangi* class, Ekeitehua was nevertheless a benevolent deity of the same type as the rest of the district gods. The tradition according to which he was born out of a yam has been mentioned earlier; in this he contrasted in a remarkable way with the other Bellonese deities, none of whom were believed to have any specific connection with garden produce. He was also in another way different from the other gods. His abode *(nuku),* Mungingangi, was said to lie to the west, whereas the abodes of all other gods were to the east. When people of the Iho clan died they went westward to see the god in Mungingangi, whereas people of the Kaitu'u clan went eastward to the abodes of Tehainga'atua and Tehu'aingabenga.

Ekeitehua was married and had two wives, Moeanga (by whom he had no children) and Teungitaka, the mother of the remaining district gods of the Iho clan (Genealogy 15). The three lineages of this clan also had introduced different district gods (see Genealogy 9): Tangokona of Matabaingei lineage (Generation 13) instituted Teabaikatapu; Hu'aitebaka'eha of Tongomainge (Generation 15) instituted Baeika. When Sauhakapoi established itself as an independent lineage Sa'omoana Taupongi (Generation 21) instituted Tu'ukiteika as the district god of this lineage. The district Temanu (Genealogy 9) within the area of the Iho clan, now extinct, was said to have Sa'o'angaba as its district god.

As in the Kaitu'u clan, the members of the Iho clan were believed to have branched off in separate lineages each with its own district gods. The fact that the two clans on Bellona had entirely different sets of district gods is consistent with the general feeling of the clans as being separate social entities within the society. As shown in numerous texts, and also by other evidence which we hope to present later, the Kaitu'u and Iho clans were believed to have been at almost constant enmity for many generations. This antagonism still flourishes. (The most recent

violent example is the killing of a young man from the Kaitu'u clan in 1961. He was killed by a member of the Iho clan during a fight over land lying at the border line between the district of Ghongau and the district of the Iho clan.)

However, relations between the two clans were not solely bellicose. The Bellonese themselves said that the most important reason for peaceful cooperation between these two opponent groups was constant intermarriage. This attitude is found in T126:15. Being exogamous, the affinals *(hepotu'akinga)* of the Iho clan were always in the Kaitu'u clan, and also their matrilines *(hohonga 'anga)*. As an individual had his most important economic and social obligations outside his own lineage and with these two groups, it will be obvious that an extensive social and economic interaction took place between the two clans. Ritual activities were closely linked with the system of economic exchange. This meant that members of the two clans would frequently take part in each other's rituals, and receive their share of each other's distributions. On these occasions, people of one of the clans would sometimes, but not always, dedicate portions of the offering to the district gods of the other clan, and the portions would then be given to the worshippers of these district gods.

The relationship of the two clans was reflected in the religious conceptions. Both clans said that the district gods of the Kaitu'u clan and the district gods of the Iho clan were related to each other through intermarriage, the two groups of gods were affinals *(hepotu'akinga)* since Nguatinihenua, one of the important district gods of the Kaitu'u clan, had married a daughter, Ngeipau, of Ekeitehua, the prime district god of the Iho clan (Genealogy 15). This reflects the social relationship of the two clans to each other. Once again we see an example that Bellonese data confirm the hypothesis expressed by Firth (1964:258): "... religious beliefs are related, in content, form and expression, to the attempts of individuals to secure coherence in their universe of relations, both physical and social."

6.4. *The significance of district gods.* The Bellonese have apparently secured this coherence in their universe by sky gods *('atua ngangi)*, who were primarily concerned with the nature which surrounded them, and by district gods, who were closely related in their behavior and in the ritual relations of man to them, to man's social activities, and to interaction among individual members of society. Relations to the powers of nature were enforced by the belief that the controllers of these powers were man-like, and that man could therefore communicate with gods and induce his will upon them by presenting offerings to them, thereby placing them in a situation where they were obliged to repay with what they had to offer – food and health, to the person who had presented the offering. Their obligations were of a similar nature to that of man in his economic relations with other members of the society: a donation called for recompensation from the person to whom the gift was presented.

If the proceed further along this line we will see how the beliefs in supernaturals also in other ways reflected man's relationship to his surroundings. The organization of the world of the district gods to some extent correlated with the organization of the society.

At first glance it might seem paradoxical to hypothesize that the system of beliefs in a godly universe was subject to change when the social structure changed, and, on the other hand to suggest that these same beliefs backed up the existing social system. However, I do not think that these statements are contradictory as far as Bellonese society is concerned. In the social universe of the Bellonese there was a certain inertness sanctioned by the religious beliefs. In an analysis of Bellonese rituals we hope to show how the district gods through their mediums expressed their approval or disapproval of individual acts of mortals. When the deities dis-

approved of a certain act, be it an innovation in a ritual or an attempt to make an overly large presentation of gifts at a feast, the gods through their mediums announced their disapproval. Such disapproval was often construed by the Bellonese as deities' jealousy *('ita)* of man because man had tried to do something bigger and better than the gods. This system of godly approvals and disapprovals might be utilized by individuals or social groups to achieve a certain stability in the social structure. But, on the other hand, various factors might necessitate innovation and social change, such changes as the lifting of the taboo on marrying cross-cousins (T66:69), or the creation of new patrilineal descent groups by segmentation. These innovations were then religiously confirmed by the mediums or the priest-chiefs who claimed that they were approved by the deities, or by creating new deities as controllers of the new social structure. We have here a system of religious beliefs which was adjusted in accordance with social configurations.

It may perhaps be necessary to emphasize that the Bellonese material does not support such theories as those of Robertson Smith and Durkheim that the purpose of religion is to integrate society (Smith 1956:55, 265–66, Durkheim 1954:47). As for Bellona one might with equal rights postulate the contrary. The Bellonese beliefs in a multitude of deities who supported and protected the respective patrilineal descent groups, and who symbolized their independence of other social groups, is an example of religious beliefs which may have a disintegrating effect on the society as a whole. Also I think we should avoid using the term positive and negative functions of religion (Norbeck, 1961: 133–134). To speak of the system of district deities on Bellona as either positive or negative seems ethnocentric and hence without much scientific relevance. We should perhaps content ourselves with ascertaining that there was apparently a relation between Bellonese concepts of a host of supernaturals and their natural and social universe, and we may add that in the Bellonese system of beliefs there was a correlation between the changing world of the district gods and the changes taking place within the social system.

In the analysis of Bellonese rituals we hope to discuss the relations of gods and men in greater detail, but in concluding this section on the deities worshipped on Bellona we must mention one particular aspect which clearly shows the dichotomy of the Bellonese pantheon. It has been said earlier that the Bellonese had a system of mediumship which played an important role in the communication of deities and men. This mediumship was based on the belief that certain gods could enter mediums *(taaunga)* and use them as their mouthpieces, expressing their wills, thoughts, and activities, and making prophetic statements. Man, the Bellonese claimed, could be possessed by sky gods as well as by district gods. But possessions by sky gods were rare, and they were always said to cause madness *(unguhia)* in the person possessed. When I asked why a person became mad when possessed by a sky god, Sa'engeika said: "Because the sky gods are the outside gods, they are very dangerous and *tapu*." By the term "outside gods" he referred to the often mentioned technical fact that these gods were worshipped outside the houses. Another man present added: "They are very sacred indeed. If they possess a man he becomes *nga'ua* from their sacredness." *Nga'ua* was the technical term for the affliction of people who had touched sacred things or violated a taboo in other ways. The sacredness of the gods was too strong for them to endure.

The sky gods thus had no mediums. They merely entered *(ungu)* people and drove them mad *(unguhia;* literally entered [by a deity].) With the district gods the case was different. They were sometimes said to enter people, but usually were said to sit *(eke)* on their backs, shoulders, or heads and talk through their mouths. The person possessed by a district god was *eketia,* sat upon, while the person possessed by the sky god was *unguhia,* entered. The person who was *eketia* was a

medium of gods or, occasionally, of ancestors. He did not become mad, and this type of possession was considered good *(ngaoi)*. We should mention that some Bellonese in our discussions said that the medium was actually entered by the god who took his body as his vehicle. It could be seen from the fact that the medium talked as the god. "How could the deity sit on the back of the medium and yet talk through him?" This is an example of the private variations of concepts of the Bellonese. The main point in the distinction of the two types of possession is in this context that it shows that the sky gods were considered dangerous deities of a realm outside the social sphere, whereas the district gods belonged to the social sphere of humans. Their sacredness was less dangerous; they were mildly oriented towards humans, and they could use humans as their mouthpieces because they were more closely integrated into the social system.

CHAPTER 7. NON-WORSHIPPED GODS

It has been mentioned above how the Bellonese distinguished not only two types of worshipped gods, but also those presented with offerings and addressed in ritual formulas *('atua ngiua)* and those not worshipped *('atua he'e ngiua)*.

The technical term for these evil deities was *haka'apai* or short: *'apai*. They were, however, often referred to by other terms such as *haangiki* or *tama'aunge,* literally child-of-penis.

Like the gods worshipped, the non-worshipped gods were considered anthropomorphic, and, as will be seen below, they were also to some extent anthroposocial and anthropopsychic, to use once again the convenient terminology of Goode.

Most Bellonese said that no one had ever seen these gods, and that one knew of their existence only from the evil they created and from what the mediums told. However, some people who were mentally ill *(unguhia)* were believed to have seen the non-worshipped gods. Taupongi asserted that they were said to be like invisible humans, very small *(pukupuku),* malformed *(seu),* and with clubfeet *(ghau ongatou ba'e)*. This, however, seemed to be Taupongi's private elaborations of the concepts. In general people claimed that nobody knew what they looked like. A younger man—I failed to note his name—once ventured the idea that these evil gods looked like the Melanesians, but no one agreed. I asked whether the Bellonese thought that the Europeans were non-worshipped gods when they came to the islands, but people unanimously said no. Sa'engeika said that the Europeans were not considered gods because they were visible and looked like human beings; but Sa'engeika's father had said many years before that the Bellonese believed the first Europeans to be worshippers *(kainanga)* of the two dangerous gods in Ngabenga, Nguatupu'a and her brother. The power *('ao)* of the Europeans was thought to stem from the sacredness of these two gods. Sa'engeika's father had once been presented with steel axes by some Europeans. He left the axes in the ritual ground overnight, and next day he performed the *kaukau* ritual by pouring banana sap over them from a coconut shell, uttering a formula in which their dangerous sacredness was removed and the axes dedicated to Tehainga'atua.

The Bellonese had traditions of how the non-worshipped gods came to the islands. Sa'engeika explained the nature of the gods as follows:

1. Na 'atua he'e ngiua noko i Mungiki nei, noko mate ongatou ingoa te haka'apai. Ko Kaitango noko uta e Kaitu'u mai 'Ubea o sopo i Matahenua i Mungiki; noko he'e hengiu'aki. 2. Kae sopo a Ngaumatai'one, te 'atua ma'u mai 'Ubea, noko he'e hengiu'aki, ingoa ma'u te haka'apai. 3. Hai ma'u tena tama'ahine ia Tungi'one, noko he'e hengiu'aki; te haka'apai ma'u. Hai ma'u tena tama'ahine ia Ngau-

1. The gods not worshipped here on Bellona, their name was *haka'apai*. Kaitu'u brought Kaitango [in his canoe] from 'Ubea, and [Kaitango] went ashore at Matahenua on Bellona; [he] was not worshipped. 2. And Ngaumatai'one, another god from 'Ubea, went [also] ashore, [she] was not worshipped, [and] was also called a *haka'apai*. 3. [Ngaumatai'one] had her daughter, Tungi'one, who was not worshipped; also a *haka-'apai*. [Tungi'one] also had a daughter,

mataki'one; noko tapu kinai te anga i 'One. 4. Noko hai too'onga ia pengea ki tengatou masasaki ma te unguhia ia pengea. Na 'atua noko he'e ngiu ki na nganguenga ma te he'e ngiu ki hange, noko manga haka'apai i mouku ma tai.

Ngaumataki'one; the trail [leading inland] from 'One was sacred for her. 4. She behaved maliciously towards people, made them sick and drove people mad. The deities who were not worshipped in the temples and not worshipped in the houses were just *haka'apai* in the bush and at the coast.

Sa'engeika's statement expressed a general Bellonese belief. The non-worshipped gods were brought to Bellona from the traditional homeland of 'Ubea by the first settlers. Later they increased in number because some of the deities who were said to have been worshipped by extinct clans, such as Hu'aitekongo and Tepou worshipped by the Tongo clan, were included in this group when the clans died out. Also names of new evil deities were disclosed by mediums in specific situations.

Unexpected and unpleasant events, such as death or crop failure not attributable to previous violation of a taboo were often believed caused by these beings. It was characteristic of Bellonese conceptions that no event, be it good or bad, was seen as stemming from what we would call natural causes. Unusual events had a supernatural origin. Diseases were provoked by gods. After sickness and death there was rationalization. If the person himself or his kinsmen knew that he or she had recently violated a taboo, such as approaching a sacred area without proper ritual preparation, or touching a sacred object, the disease or death was explained as a result of the person being afflicted *(nga'ua* or *saahea)* by the god's sacredness *(tapu).* If no such event was evident the disease could be explained by saying either that it was due to the evil machinations of a non-worshipped deity, or by claiming that the gods liked the person so much that they wanted to steal his life-principle *(ma'ungi),* in order that he or she might come quickly to the abodes of the deities and stay with them. Accidents were explained in similar fashion. One did not stumble over a root or fall from a tree by pure accident. It was the act of the supernaturals, and the Bellonese had several ways of determining which gods had been involved. It might either be revealed by a medium or simply inferred from the locality in which an event took place. The non-worshipped deities were believed to have their special domains in the bush and at the coast. Some of them had come to Bellona with the first settlers (T66:26) and the places where they landed were forever haunted by the *'apai.* As mentioned by Sa'engeika above, one such place was the cliff trail from 'One bay on north Bellona. This was the landing place of Ngaumataki'one. Any accident occuring there would be the work of *'apai.* Temoa told that Sa'obaa of Matabaingei, younger brother to Tango'eha (Genealogy 9, Generation 20), once, when returning from a fishing trip, carried a basket of fish up inland along this road. Shortly afterwards he became sick, and he knew why: among the fish in his basket was a *hangamea* fish, which has a bright red color. It was generally known that one must not carry red fish up the 'One trail because red was a color desired very much by all deities, even *'apai.* If one carried something red in the places where the *'apai* stayed, one ran the risk that these gods would try to catch the person or make him sick or even kill him in order to get hold of the red object. This was what happened to Sa'obaa in about 1937; but he prayed to his district deity and was restored to health.

Other *'apai* were also connected with specific localities. According to Sa'engeika:

1. Na hai 'umu noko tapu kia Nge'obiongo. Noko tapu te kai a

1. The ovens were sacred for Nge'obiongo. It was forbidden for people to

pengea i te hai 'umu ma te seu na baakai o ngangana. 2. Ma te he'e baaghobu ai ma te he'e poopoo ai na ngima i na kengekenge 'anga i te me'a ngaa kaa 'ati ngongo ai a Nge'obiongo ki Tehu'aingabenga.

3. Ko Bangangabe noko tapu kinai na baasi'a ma na anga ki tai ma te anga tu'u ma na anga singa o na manaha, i te me'a ngaa noko hai too'onga a Bangangabe ki te hetukui o pengea i na anga, ngabea i na potu nga'akau o hetoki, ma te ha'asia i na hatu ma na potu me'a.

eat at the ovens, and to scatter firewood and to shout. 2. And [the people] did not make chopping noises there, and did not brush hands that were dirty, as Nge'obiongo would report accordingly to Tehu'aingabenga.

3. As for Bangangabe, the interior [of the bush] and the trails leading to the sea and the main trail and the bypaths to the homesteads were sacred for him, as Bangangabe would harm people walking to and fro on the trails, who were entangled in sticks [vines] and fell and were cut on stones and sticks.

If a man or woman violated the rules of behavior near the ovens and some harm fell upon him, this was the revenge of Nge'obiongo. This *'apai* was, however, merely considered Tehu'aingabenga's watchdog, because Tehu'aingabenga controlled the social universe. He was the house god and food preparation was one of his particular domains. He punished any breach of taboo in the homesteads, but protected the house against attacks from outside, be it of enemies or of diseases.

Not all Bellonese considered Nge'obiongo the guardsman of Tehu'aingabenga as did Sa'engaika, who had been a priest-chief and probably focused his attention more on the worshipped gods than did most younger men and most women. Other informants merely said that broken taboos concerning the ovens were punished by Nge'obiongo, "an *'apai* harming people." Their statements reflected less of a philosophy connecting the *'apai* with the worshipped deities. It should be added that informants agreed that Nge'obiongo punished women who were bad cooks. If partially cooked food was served because the oven had been opened too early this angered not only the men of the homestead who were to eat the food, but also the *'apai*. The Bellonese disliked raw or partially raw food, as this was said to poison the blood. A woman who scamped her kitchen work was subject not only to the anger of her husband, but also of the gods. Slovenliness was here sanctioned socially as well as religiously.

To appease Nge'obiongo, food was sometimes left in the oven for her. She was said to have been angry if all the food was taken to the house and no offering left for her. However, this offering seems to have been rare. Out of ten women asked, only one said that she had left food for the *'apai* in the oven at the large feasts. Others were scornful of the idea, and a male informant was chocked: "Do you think Nge'obiongo was a god whom one fed?"

The other *'apai* mentioned by Sa'engeika had a wide domain, namely all the trails of Bellona. If anything untoward happened to people walking on the trails it was most likely that Bangangabe was exercising his evil powers.

Tapuika told about the deities of the trails, but he did not mention their names:

1. Te nga'aa pange noko he'e lango ai na haahine hai tama, ma na tamangiki i anga tu'u, i te me'a ngaa te 'aso o 'atua, na ahenga ma na haka'apai i anga tu'u. 2. Kongaa ma'u na noho te mahoata

1. At sunset pregnant women and children did not walk on the main trail because it is the time of the deities, the arrivals [of the deities] and the *haka-'apai* on the main trail. 2. This is also the case with the early mornings, [they] are

e tapu o he'e lango ai na haahine hai tama ma na tamangiki i te me'a ngaa na 'aso lango ai na ahenga ma na haangiki i anga tu'u.

taboo and pregnant women and children do not walk about then because the gods arrive, and the *haangiki,* on the main trail.

Ahenga is the technical term for a group of worshipped deities arriving at Bellona. Tapuika's information was confirmed by a number of Bellonese. There was a general restriction on moving about at sunset and in the early morning. Only grown up males who were initiated and might perform rituals could walk on the trails in early mornings and evenings because they were protected by worshipped deities. Women and children were particularly subject to the evil acts of the *'apai* and were also in danger of contamination by the sacredness of the worshipped gods.

But how did the *'apai* actually manage to harm people? 'Aasia, about 17 years old in 1938, explained that his leg was once bruised by a branch, and he added: *"Noko anga te tama'aunge ki te nga'akau o taungia ai toku ba'e* (a child-of-a-member manifested himself as a tree and so injured my leg)." "Was the child-of-a-member in the branch?" I asked. "No!" said 'Aasia, and others added: "Just the sacredness of the deity was in the branch, (the deity) did not enter the wood *(noko manga iai te tapu o te 'atua, he'e mene ki te me'a).*" Others, however, said that it was actually the *'apai* that injured 'Aasia's leg "maybe it was the arm of the god." 'Aasia did not comment on this, and the discussion ended.

We shall later consider the Bellonese concepts of sacredness. This example may give a preliminary impression of the relative freedom to interpret acts according to one's personal beliefs. In the above case the injury was interpreted by some as being caused by the *tapu* of the deity, and by others as an almost physical act performed by the deity.

In spite of minor disagreements it was generally accepted that the *'apai* caused all manner of evil and never did good. Although I could not obtain any accounts of specific cases of *'apai* stealing life-principles *(ma'ungi),* it was generally said they did so. The Rennellese told Elbert (T110, T111) about the ill fate of Tahua of the Lake district on Rennell. Tahua (Genealogy 2, Generation 18) goes out to catch sharks. When he returns with his catch to the shore at Tuhugago on the south coast of the island, he wants to perform the usual fisherman's ritual on the beach. He looks for his ritual loincloth, a tapa dyed with turmeric, but cannot find it. An *'apai* by the name of Angabangu has stolen it. He has also taken possession of Tahua's *ma'ungi,* and Tahua becomes sick. The worshipped gods and Tahua's ancestors now help Tahua search for his lost life-principle, but in vain. However, Tahua's older brother Tegheta, who is dead, manages to get the dyed loincloth and the life-principle from Angabangu, presumably in the underworld, by giving Angabangu in exchange a necklace of flying-fox teeth. He brings the life-principle back to Tahua who recovers. The story ends when Tegheta, with the assistance of the district gods, manages to kill the mischievous deity in revenge, a most unusual statement, as gods were not normally considered beings who could be killed, and it was even difficult, if not impossible, to attack them. Teu'uhi, the sister of the district god of the Iho clan, Ekeitehua, was an *'apai* who possessed people and created madness. In T150 and T190 she possesses Sikohuti, the daughter of Tangaibasa (Genealogy 7, Generation 18). Tangaibasa plans to kill the goddess in revenge. Armed with the sacred spears of Tehu'aingabenga and the priestly staffs, he and his men go to Tetu'asibi at the western end of Bellona, where Teu'uhi is said to have her home. The men do not succeed in killing the goddess, but merely chase her away to her brother's home. The brother (Ekeitehua) is a district god and is therefore supposed to provide protection, but he merely reproaches her and tells her not to

go any more to Ghongau district and to remain in the western end of the island. The goddess then leaves Sikohuti who is straightway cured of her madness.

This story exemplifies another aspect of the *'apai*. They could not be appeased or mollified by rituals directed to them. One wishing to protect himself against the evil of these gods had to direct the ritual formulas to the worshipped deities. We, in our culture might ask why the Bellonese did not attempt rites to appease the *'apai*. I think that the answer must be that they did not because the *'apai* were considered the representatives of evil; and being empiricists the Bellonese probably knew that evil and misfortune could not always be avoided, they were simply a part of life that one had to live with, a law of nature like the growth of plants and the rising of the sun. But by attributing evil to a certain group of gods, one seemed to rationalize and channelize its dangers, classifying them, so to say. And life being a web of action and counteraction the Bellonese knew that the district gods might protect *(mangu)* man against evil just as they protected man by making food plants grow, by filling the ocean with food, and by giving children and good health to mankind. The *'apai* were the evils of life for which humans needed the protection of higher powers.

The belief that the gods were man's only defense against the dangers of the *'apai* (he cannot attack them directly) seemed firmly established in Bellonese thought. In the story about Tangaibasa (T190) gods set out to kill the *'apai,* not with ordinary spears and clubs, but with ceremonial weapons that were normally used only in rituals. And the beliefs become even clearer if we look at the ritual formula used to remove the dangers of the *'apai*. Sa'engeika told the *kaukau* formula that he had used to remove the *tapu* of the *'apai* from a garden or from the grave of an ancestor. He felled a banana tree of the type called *tai* and let the sap of the stalk drip into a half coconut shell. He then took the filled coconut shell to the place which had to be sacralized and pouring the water on the ground, he said:

Tungou. Teenei kia te koe, Te'angiki'atua. E hai ke hakatu'u hekau te kainanga o te makupuu i na kunga kenge nei; kae taungangahia na 'atua lapungu o te kunga kenge nei; kae ho'ou ai te niu a te kainanga o te makupuu ke ta'aki, e Tou Tapungao, ke hakatahia ki te bangitakungu, ka ke soihua ma te tanga na kunga kenge nei, ka ke tu'u te niu e te kainanga o te makupuu ke ho'ou ki Tou Tapungao.

Permit [us]. This is for you, Te'angiki-'atua. The worshipper of your grandson [Tehu'aingabenga] is beginning work in these earthly places; and [he] is frightened of gods emerging from these earthly places; and so the worshipper of your grandson makes the coconut shell libation anew, so as to make [you], The Sole of Your Foot, sweep away to the south [of the island], so as to free these earthly places from pests and sacredness, and the worshipper of your grandson will start the coconut shell libation anew for The Sole of Your Foot.

When the formula had been recited and the water emptied on the ground, the coconut shell was flung far away, and Sa'engeika began his garden work.

The formula needs explanations to be intelligible to the reader who here, for the first time in this book, meets the intricacies of Bellonese ritual language. The deity addressed is Tehainga'atua, whose second name is Te'angiki'atua (literally, The-Chief-of-Deities). *Tungou* (permit [us]) is a ritual term, an introductory phrase in formulas accompanying the presentation of an offering to a god. "The worshipper of your grandson" is the person performing the ritual, and the earthly places

are Bellona and its gardens. The deities emerging from the ground *('atua lapungu)* are the harmful *'apai,* who he fears will harm him when he begins digging his garden. The "coconut tree" *(niu)* is here the technical term for the ritual libation. Sa'engeika asks Tehainga'atua to remove the harmful *'apai* from the garden and sweep them to the south, which as explained on page 34, is considered the home of the *'apai. Soihua* means to be free of pests and of the diseases of man and of garden crops. *Tanga* means profane, free of *tapu,* here of the harmful sacredness of the *'apai.* The Sole of Your Foot is the humble way of addressing a worshipped deity.

Sa'engeika with this formula asked Tehainga'atua to remove the *'apai* from the area which he was about to dig because he feared that they would make him sick or would destroy the plants. The act accompanying the words, the pouring of water over the ground, was one generally used by the Bellonese when removing sacredness from an object or place (see N66:14).

When Sa'engeika had given this formula I asked other men how they performed such rituals. They all said that their procedure was identical to that just described. However, comparisons revealed that, like other ritual formulas, this one was not always recited in exactly the same way and that there was a certain freedom to make minor variations in phrasing.

It was characteristic of the Bellonese attitude that the formulas for removing the *'apai* from an object or a place were directed to Tehainga'atua. He, as a god of the powers beyond man's control but that surround him, was believed to control the *'apai.* There was general agreement as to the veracity of Temoa's statement that "Tehainga'atua is the *hakahua* (chief or controller) of the *'apai.*" Tehu'aingabenga and his family protected man in many ways but nevertheless they were believed to have only little direct control over the *'apai.* The Bellonese were, however, somewhat vague on this point. They asserted that the district deities protected *(ngahitaki)* their worshippers against the *'apai* and that they also had the power to restore the life or health of a man who had been attacked by the non-worshipped gods, and yet the Bellonese turned to the sky gods if they wished to free their land from the pests of these harmful gods. It might be because the sky gods were considered more powerful and in closer contact with the extraneous powers of the *'apai.* We shall see below that some of the *'apai* were considered Tehainga'atua's officers; but often the relationship of the worshipped and the non-worshipped gods seemed strained and fraught with conflict. Such stories as T14 and T15 exemplify this. In T14 the mischievous *'apai* Tangangoa steals Tehainga'atua's children, but Tehainga'atua and Tehu'aingabenga manage to chase him away. In T15 Tangangoa desires Tehu'aingabenga's wife. Tehu'aingabenga's son tries to kill him, but Tangangoa assumes the shape of a bird and flies away.

The *apai* were not only non-social, but also anti-social. In the formula used by Sa'engeika to avert the *'apai* this is indirectly exemplified. The *'apai* are called *'atua lapungu,* gods emerging from the ground, that is from the darkness of the underworld. The word *lapungu* was used about *'apai* only, and it was said to convey the same idea as *malubu,* to sprout, as plants. The word *malubu* was also the deprecatory term for persons born out of wedlock, a group of individuals with low social status because of having no patrilineal kinsmen. By calling such persons *malubu* one hinted that they had merely come out of the ground without ties to people on the island. Use of the word *malubu* was a deadly insult. The term *lapungu* about the *'apai* carried a similar nuance; they existed without having relatives. Takiika once characterized the *'apai* by saying that they were "merely creatures that roam around in the bush and at the coast. They have no home and no kinsfolk. They are evil beings." To the Bellonese there was probably little worse than being without kin. They talked with disapproval of mature men or women who had not

married and who lived alone without children or in-laws. When I told that it was not uncommon in European culture that people lived out their lives alone, and even were happy to do so, they characterized this as a miserable *(ta'ea)* thing.

Thus most *'apai* were creatures without kin. The only exceptions to this were some of the deities included in the genealogies of the worshipped gods but not worshipped and therefore classified as *'apai*. Also some *'apai* had children. In Sa'engeika's description above, Ngaumatai'one has a daughter, Tungi'one, and Tungi'one has a daughter, Ngaumataki'one, but we hear nothing of these gods being married. The kin ties of the *'apai* were never elaborated, and in this they contrasted markedly to the worshipped deities.

The beliefs in *'apai* seemed to be a field in which invention and personal interpretation could florish. The Bellonese sometimes disagreed as to whether a certain being was an *'apai,* a culture hero, or a human. In 1963 some informants said that Moesabengubengu and his wife Manusekeitapu (T1) were mortals and not *'apai*. In 1959 there was also disagreement about whether Tangangoa was an *'apai* or a culture hero. In 1962 informants discussed this problem again, and finally those who had earlier called him a culture hero said that they had been wrong in 1959. Tangangoa was a non-worshipped deity.

One type of *'apai* had the special function of guarding the graves of ancestors. Some Bellonese said that *'apai* were not born as humans are, but merely emerged from new graves of Bellonese. Sau'eha and Sa'engeika once discussed this group of *'apai*. Sau'eha said:

Nimaa mate te pengea o malanga ai te 'atua o nge'o i te takotonga o tapu kinai. Matataku ai ngaa i te me'a ngaa, nga'u ai te pengea i te nge'o e te 'atua i te takotonga.	When a person dies the deity emerges there and stands watch at the grave and [the grave] becomes sacred for it. This was frightening because a person may be afflicted by the deity standing watch at the grave.

All graves of worshipped ancestors were believed to have been watched over by one or more *'apai*. The Bellonese did not know the names of them all, nor did they know how many *'apai* there were. Sa'engeika said that there were "very many *'apai,* but we don't know their names." One could not walk up to a grave indiscriminately because the *'apai* guarding the place would afflict the intruder. One might ask why persons wished to approach graves. This concerned the Bellonese practice of demolishing burial places of ancestors of enemies. This could be done in two ways, either by performing the ritual called *kaukau* (see page 79) or by stealing the bones of the ancestor to use as spearheads (Birket-Smith, 1956, figure 16, h and i). The *kaukau* ritual was similar to the *niu* or coconut-shell ritual explained above. This ritual removed the sacredness of the grave. In the formula the practitioner asked Tehainga'atua to annihilate the spiritual self *('ata)* of the ancestor in the underworld (see page 104). The removal of the bones also resulted in the annihilation of the ancestor. In both cases it was said that by depriving an enemy group of its worshipped ancestors it became less powerful and an easy prey to attack. We shall deal with these concepts in Chapter 10. In the present context it is relevant to see that the function of the *'apai* coming out of the graves was to act as guards and to punish anyone who went to the grave with the purpose of violating it.

As mentioned above, the Bellonese said that not all the *'apai* were known by name, but that every grave was believed to be protected by an *'apai*. However, the names of *'apai* who guarded the graves of some of the most notable ancestors were known: the grave of Taupongi of the Hangekumi lineage (Plate 3, Generation

15) was guarded by an *'apai,* Taabasia. The grave of Teikangongo of the Hangekumi lineage (Plate 3, Generation 16) was guarded by Ta'akina. Ngaakei of Ghongau lineage (Plate 3, Generation 8) was buried in Ghongau homestead. The name of the site of his grave was Mata'aso. A medium, the Bellonese do not know who, had disclosed that the grave was guarded by a hundred *'apai* under the leadership of Masaki'ungu (Headache). Persons approaching the grave would get headaches, informants of Ghongau said, adding that "this is the reason why strangers did not go there." People who went there to perform the grave rituals *(hainga takotonga)* could not be harmed by the *'apai* because they were protected by the worshipped deities. It was only those who accidentally approached an ancestral grave or who went there to despoil it who were afflicted by the *'apai.*

The major domain of the *'apai* was the bush, the coast, and the fallow gardens. The Bellonese said that these gods could usually not approach the dwelling houses because they were protected by worshipped deities and ancestors. The *'apai* were outside the domain of human control. In the story of Ngata and 'Isoso (T19) we hear of an *'apai* who controls the forest. His name is Mata'u. Ngata cuts down a tree in the forest in order to make a canoe, but Mata'u and his grandson 'Isoso discover it, and after a fight 'Isoso tells Ngata to ask for permission from himself and Mata'u before cutting down trees. In the rituals dealing with canoe construction a short formula was used when the tree had been cut down. The purpose of this formula was to drive Mata'u out of the log.

The *'apai* were also connected with certain animals, especially inedible ones. Such birds as owls, ibis, sparrow hawks, eagles, swamp hens, and pheasant doves were said to have been occasional embodiments of *'apai.* No informants could, however, remember specific cases. Rats, skinks, social wasps, centipedes, and snakes could also be *'apai,* especially when these animals harmed people or crops. Several Bellonese reported that the giant monitor lizard *(hokai)* was often embodied by *'apai,* and that when they saw *hokai* behaving in an unusual way in the bush, for instance by approaching them instead of running away, or by jumping down from a tree close to them, they knew that it was an *'apai* who had assumed this shape. Monitor lizards were considered bad *(maase'i)* creatures, but snakes were worse. The god of snakes, Tehanonga, was an *'apai.* The wriggling body movements of snakes were considered particularly repulsive. I had many opportunities of observing the reaction of Bellonese to snakes, and it is interesting to note that some informants said that they would never dream of eating eels when they visited the Lake district on Rennell "because they were like snakes."

Flying foxes *(peka)* were also connected with an *'apai* named Titikanohimata. However, the flying fox was considered a great delicacy on Bellona. This may perhaps be correlated to ideas about Titikanohimata. Most informants seemed to think that this deity was worshipped by flying foxes. He was their god, and the Bellonese did not consider him a malicious *'apai.* Sa'engeika however said that Titikanohimata was the brother of the worshipped goddess Tehahine'angiki, and that he was worshipped. Only one man alive today, Sa'engeahe, had performed a minor ritual to this god before going out to catch flying foxes, but in spite of this Sa'engeahe said that Titikanohimata was an *'apai.* It is impossible to determine how widespread this ritual was in earlier generations, but all present-day elders except Sa'engeahe said that they had never performed it.

In the above review of the characteristics of the *'apai,* we have attempted to establish that this group of deities was antagonistic to the worshipped deities, and that they were generally considered creatures without kin, merely roaming round in the bush and at the coast. This statement needs some modifications. The Bellonese classification of deities was not a rigid system of beliefs. Some *'apai* were

considered the servants of Tehainga'atua. Such a one was Mahuike, the creator of earthquakes. In T21 we hear how he causes the ground to tremble because Tehainga'atua wants him to. But Tehu'aingabenga, the protector of man, attacks him and breaks his right arm. This was said to be the reason that earthquakes were rare and feeble on Bellona. In the same story appears another *'apai,* 'Amokese, the creator of darkness at day-time *(po'ao),* probably eclipses of the sun. He was believed to be another of Tehainga'atua's servants. Although there seemed to be a general feeling that the *'apai* and the worshipped deities fought each other, the sky gods were sometimes also believed to make use of the evil powers of the *'apai* when they wanted to harm people. As mentioned some *'apai* were considered kinsfolk of worshipped deities. This was the case with such *'apai* as Teu'uhi, sister of Ekeitehua and Titikanohimata, brother of Tehahine'angiki. Teu'uhi was even said to have a daughter, Tesikubai, but no husband. I asked the Bellonese why these relatives of worshipped gods were called *'apai,* and the answer was that it was because they were not worshipped and because they did harm. Some informants even said that such worshipped deities as Sikingimoemoe and Baabenga were *'apai.* They gave as their reason for classifying them as such that they were dangerous gods. Other informants denied this and said that the worshipped deities were never termed *'apai.*

From what has been described above we may conclude that the *'apai* were generally considered a group of harmful gods; that they could not usually be appeased by directing prayers or offerings to them; that they were non-social and antisocial; that they were usually without relatives and that they commonly lived in the wilderness of the bush, at the coast, and south of Bellona. But we may also conclude that although these characteristics constituted the nucleus of Bellonese beliefs concerning this group of deities, variations occurred. The border between the *'apai* and the worshipped deities was to some extent fluctuating, depending on the particular context. (That Baabenga and Sikingimoemoe by some informants were called *'apai* stems from the fact that the informants wanted to stress these gods as evildoers.) Variations of the beliefs concerning the general characteristics of the *'apai* were only slight, and it was found that they were not correlated with the social affiliations of the respective informants.

If we compare the concepts of the gods worshipped and of the *'apai,* we will see that the behavior of the worshipped deities was governed by some kind of social laws. Such laws were in several ways different from those of the society of men. The sky gods lived in incestuous marriages, but married they were; they had homesteads full of food and beautiful things, but homesteads they were; they had feasts and made distributions of offerings as humans did; but as for the *'apai* we do not hear that they were married or that they lived in homesteads and made feasts similar to those of humans.

In our analysis of the Bellonese concepts of gods we have shown the dichotomy of beliefs in worshipped and non-worshipped gods, and also the dichotomy of gods connected with nature and gods connected with social life. We have presented the Bellonese data on these beliefs along with our analysis. It will probably be obvious that what in the analysis appears as a neat and pat system of concepts is less so in the minds of the islanders. No single informant has ever supplied such a distinct bifurcation or verbalized it to such an extent. The purpose of our analysis has been to explicate what to the islanders was a latent dichotomization of their universe. We have endeavored to show that the Bellonese world seemed to have an "inside" life controlled by social laws. This world was one controlled by the district deities. There also appears to have been an "outside" world that was the realm of nature and uncontrollable forces. On the border between the outside and

the social world were the sky gods. They controlled the powers of nature, the power of growth of plants and of animals, and the power of creating *ma'ungi* (vitality and life) of humans. To this realm belonged also the *'apai* but these deities represented powers that were not controllable and not ritually approached by humans. They were powers of bush, coastal areas, and fallow gardens. The *'apai* were deities who on one hand carried out the orders of the sky gods by causing the harm and evil always present in this world. The Bellonese said that their world consisted of things that were bad *(maase'i)* and things that were good *(ngaoi)*. This might seem a commonplace philosophy to us, but what is not commonplace is the way these two facets of life were handled by the Bellonese.

CHAPTER 8. THE CULTURE HEROES *(KAKAI)*

We shall now briefly consider Bellonese concepts concerning a group of supernaturals whose social significance lies on quite a different level from that of the deities. These supernaturals are the so-called *kakai,* culture heroes.

They differed from the gods in that they were believed to have been humans *(pengea)* who lived in some remote and dim time and place, in 'Ubea (the traditional home island), on Rennell and Bellona, on other unknown islands, and in the sky. Unlike the deities the *kakai* were not immortal, in fact death came into this world with them. "They died long ago," declared Ma'itaki, "after them came the *hiti* (the traditional aborigines of Rennell and Bellona) and then man came." The *kakai* differed also from the deities in that they were not *tapu* (sacred), in that their power *('ao)* was less then that of the gods, and in that they did not engage in transformations. They resembled gods in that they were invisible, and in that they were neither idealized nor vilified. But most of all they were considered beings of a peculiar quality.

The prime significance of the traditions concerning the *kakai* seemed to be to explain the origin of various acts and objects in Bellonese life, but the *kakai* were themselves considered human beings who no longer existed. They were never the objects of ritualistic petitions, nor were they referred to in ritual formulas or symbolized in any ritual act, presumably "because they have been dead so long *(ngoa te mate)*" as the Bellonese expressed it.

We shall not here give a detailed analysis of the *kakai* traditions of Bellona, but merely touch those aspects which seem most obviously relevant for our understanding of the Bellonese world views.

As mentioned in Chapter 3 dealing with concepts of creation, the Bellonese had no traditions of an event or a unified series of events through which the world they lived in was created. The stories of the *kakai* constituted a somewhat disparate group of traditional tales that apparently aimed at explaining the origin of various aspects of Bellonese life.

The principal actors in these stories are the *kakai.* There are no Bellonese or Rennellese characters in the *kakai* stories, simply because there were no such individuals existing at the time that the *kakai* lived. Among the *kakai* we find beings who have striking resemblances to culture heroes in other parts of the Pacific. This framework of problems does, however, not concern the present study.

When the Bellonese child was old enough to be susceptible to influence from tales, kinsmen of the older generation, as the mother, father, uncle, or grandparent, would tell him stories about the *kakai.* When I asked on Bellona why these stories were told to children, I had not expected that the answer would be one which manifestly showed the explanatory character of these tales. Old Temoa said: "We tell stories to our children to teach them *(ako)* everything. We tell about the *kakai* so that they may know the origin of everything." Further questioning concerning these showed that Temoa's statement reflected an attitude generally shared.

Of all the *kakai,* Mautikitiki was the best known character. Stories about his adventures (some of which have an exceedingly humoristic flavor to the Bellonese)

are usually of an explanatory character. During my 1962 stay on Bellona I had the opportunity to discuss Mautikitiki with groups of Bellonese men and women, about ten in all. I asked them to tell me what the Mautikitiki stories collected by Elbert and me really meant. When I had given an abbreviated account of each of the stories, the people present named those features which they thought were the things "coming out" *(e'a)* of each particular tale. Their explanations do by no means constitute an analysis or a typological charter of the stories about Mautikitiki, but may reveal to some extent the Bellonese attitude towards these stories.

T31(A) is a story from Rennell that tells how Mautikitiki was born out of the feces of his father, 'Atanganga. When Mautikitiki has grown up he tricks his father by hiding his working loincloth, apparently every morning, and only after his father has searched a long time does he return it. Then Mautikitiki hides and watches his father do his garden work by magic, but the magic stops because Mautikitiki is spying. 'Atanganga is angry and kills his son by cutting him in two. Mautikitiki's sister mourns him and 'Atanganga restores his son to life by joining the two pieces together and putting ants on the parts, and so Mautikitiki gets up, alive. Mautikitiki now looks for a way to take revenge on his father. He tries to make waves destroy his house. With his two younger brothers he builds a canoe and goes fishing. His hook gets caught on something at the bottom of the sea. He hauls in the line and up comes an island, Rennell.

The Bellonese said that this story told of the origin of killing ('Atanganga kills his son), about the origin of the canoe (Mautikitiki's canoe was the first one to be built), and about the origin of Rennell. Some informants added that the story also told of the origin of Mautikitiki.

T32 tells how Mautikitiki is born of his father's feces, but that his body is stiff, his members cannot be bent. His father tells him to climb a tree and jump down from it. So he does, and breaks his legs and arms, and they become pliant. Everyone agreed that this was the origin of the joints of man's body members.

T33 is another version of the story of Mautikitiki's birth and about his being killed by his father. It also tells, in greater detail than T31, about the hauling up of Rennell, and it adds another feature: the story of how Mautikitiki and his younger brothers die when they are enmeshed by a Tridacna shell. Mautikitiki manages to open the shell, and the three dead *kakai* go to the sky where they remain in the stars of Orion's belt. All informants agreed that this was how death came into the world. Taupongi said: *"Teenaa te hakatu'u 'anga o te mamate 'anga o pengea, ko Mautikitiki ma ngu 'ona hai taina, ma te noho ai te mamate 'anga o pengea,* this is the origin of the dying of people, namely Mautikitiki and his two younger brothers, and the dying of people stems from this." See also T 34 (A,B).

T35(A,B) tells of Mautikitiki going to the coast and calling out the names of various fish. When they appear, Mautikitiki asks them what they have to offer. The *api* (minnow) has sharp teeth which can be used as razors. Mautikitiki throws the fish into the sea again and tells how it will be caught. The next fish is the *mangau,* another tiny fish that has a poisonous fin on its belly. The *mangau* is also thrown back into the sea, and Mautikitiki names the way it will be caught. The last fish to come is the shark, and it offers him its teeth as razors for hair. Mautikitiki urinates on it and sends it away with the remark that only its liver shall remain "on the reef." Informants said that this was the origin of the names of fish, and that Mautikitiki in these stories taught the uses of fish teeth and the ways to catch certain fish. They also explained that shark's meat smells and tasts badly because of Mautikitiki's urine. Only the liver does not have this putrid smell.

In T37, an extended version of T35(A,B), Mautikitiki tattoos the coconut crab with soot. When the tattoo is completed Mautikitiki heats the legs of the crab over

the fire, and they fall off because of the heat. In this tale when the shark comes up, Mautikitiki not only urinates on it, but he also sears its tail fin. Informants said that the coconut crab had only two large legs (claws) because Mautikitiki had made the rest fall off by holding them over the fire. They grew out again *(somo-somo)* but were only small. Mautikitiki's searing of the tail fin of the shark was the origin of the asymmetrical shape of that fin.

T39 is the story of the pulling up of Rennell, but relates that Mautikitiki catches a flounder on his hook. The flounder pulls the hook off. Mautikitiki becomes angry, stamps on the fish so that it becomes flat and pokes his bundle of spears into it. This was said to tell how the flounder became flat and full of bones. The bones were Mautikitiki's spears. See also T48.

T40, probably one of the most interesting of the stories about the *kakai,* tells about a group of *kakai* who from their home in the realm above the blue sky *(tu'aa ngangi)* come down to the earth to fish. Ngosi, another *kakai* living on earth, sees them, is frightened and hides in the mouth of the *ngatanga* fish. The visiting *kakai* catch this fish, and take it, together with Ngosi, back to the sky where they plan to eat him. He manages to escape by climbing a coconut tree and clinging to a falling coconut leaf. It begins to rain and Ngosi is washed back to the earth together with sprouts of the taro plant. These he plants in his garden. Mautikitiki happens to see the taro, and when Ngosi tells that they have come from the invisible sky, Mautikitiki suggests that the two shall go there to get food. They set off and reach the trail to the sky. It is, however, guarded by the sandpiper bird. Mautikitiki manages to catch the bird and he brings it with him to the home of the *kakai* in the heavens. In other (unpublished) versions of the story we learn that Ngosi, Mautikitiki, and the sandpiper sit down outside the house of the *kakai* in the sky. Mautikitiki waits vainly for them to present him with food. The day goes on. Now and again Mautikitiki asks the sandpiper where the sun stands. The sandpiper answers, each time naming a particular time of day. When it has become night Mautikitiki and Ngosi are angry with the *kakai* in the heavens and throw lice which they have brought with them into the eyes of the *kakai* so that they are momentarily blinded. Thereupon Mautikitiki and Ngosi snatch all the food plants in the house of the *kakai* and return to the earth. But while they are fleeing one of the *kakai* manages to open his eyes and look at them. He sees that Mautikitiki is about to run off with the giant dry-land taro and he takes hold of the leaves. Mautikitiki manages to bring only the root to the earth, and the leaves remain in the sky. The *saukaba* and the *ghabaghaghi* plantains are brought down to the earth by Mautikitiki, but as they want to return to the sky, their fruits are always pointing upwards instead of downwards.

The Bellonese informants said that this was the origin of food on Bellona *(teenei te hakatu'u 'anga o na me'a kai i Mungiki nei).* The leaves of the giant dry-land taro are bitter because they are still in the sky. The fruits of the *saukaba* plantain and the *ghabaghaghi* plantain turn upwards because they want to return. The informants also asserted that the time reckoning, that is the naming of various parts of the day, originates in the sandpiper's telling Mautikitiki the position of the sun.

T41(A,B) concerning the mysterious *ngosengose,* perhaps a giant sea slug, is considered very funny by the Bellonese. Two *kakai,* Kotu'akotu'a and her unnamed grandchild, catch a strange, sausage-like creature inside the reef, bring it home and build a house for it. But the creature grows and grows and finally emerges from the house and threatens to eat the two catchers. They run away to Mautikitiki's house. Mautikitiki hides them in a wooden bowl. The *ngosengose* arrives; his former captors in the wooden bowl are so frightened that they let wind. Mautikitiki

manages to kill the *ngosengose* by making it eat hot stones. When the *ngosengose* is about to die it tells Mautikitiki how he must bury it and attend its grave. He does as he is told and two coconut trees grow out of the grave and bear fruit. Mautikitiki climbs the trees to pluck the nuts, but they are empty. He then urinates on the coconuts and they are filled with water. The flesh of the coconut is, according to one informant, the mucus of Mautikitiki's penis. Informants agreed that this is the origin of coconuts.

T43 relates how Mautikitiki's daughter is born without body openings. Mautikitiki cuts her front with an adze and creates her vagina, but as he wants to pull his adze out, its head remains in the body of his daughter. Much embarassment was created when this story was discussed in the presence of some women. Some of the men present explained gently but firmly, and carefully avoiding any risqué words, that this story was not told in large gatherings, nor to children, but they added that everybody knows the story and the results of Mautikitiki's act, women's vagina and clitoris, the latter being Mautikitiki's adze.

T45 relates how various trees and reptiles flee when Mautikitiki clears his garden by burning. The trees and reptiles jump into the sea and become sea creatures. The only exception is the *heta'u* tree which remains standing on the brim of the coral cliff. This is the origin of the sea creatures mentioned in the story.

T46 is the story of how Mautikitiki and the swamp hen *(kangae)* rub fire on a fire-plow. The swamp hen tricks Mautikitiki who becomes so angry that he pokes the glowing fire stick into the beak of the bird. Informants said that the fire came out of it (this story or event), as well as the red beak of the mature swamp hen.

T49 tells how Mautikitiki winds sennit about his turtle-shell hook to catch *'atu* fish, a method invented by Mautikitiki but said to have been forgotten many generations ago.

A complete analysis is not given in this fragmentary inventory of the Mautikitiki tales, but, it is hoped, something will be seen of what some Bellonese informants considered important. There are, of course, many other motifs the analysis of which may reveal unconsciously held attitudes and values. What interests us here is that the Bellonese informants seemed to stress those motifs which are explanatory. This fits well with their intellectual attitude towards the *kakai.* One of the functions of the stories about them seems to have been to serve as a conceptual matrix for the origin of certain objects and acts in Bellonese society.

It is obvious that Mautikitiki was a creative hero of Bellona. The explanatory motifs in the stories about the other *kakai* are less obvious. The informants were less explicit as to the meaning *(ngaataki)* of some or all the other stories of the *kakai.*

Nobody could tell the meaning of the long story about the female *kakai,* Sina, whose husband is killed by a rival and goes to the underworld from where he is brought back to the world of light by Sina, who is aided by a mouse (T50[A,B]), except that this was how the *ngaupatabenua* tree got its red sap.

T51 concerns a love affair of Sina with a man who turns out to be a snake. This tale also was not considered explanatory. In T52(A,B) a *kakai* is tricked by a mischievous female *'apai,* who pushes the *kakai*'s wife, Sina, overboard and then impersonates her. In the happy ending of the story the man is finally reunited with his wife who gives birth to a daughter. The man takes her on his lap and the child micturates on him. Informants claimed that this was the origin of children urinating on their parents. It should be added that the Bellonese believe that if a man is urinated on by a child he will become weak-bodied.

T53 and T54 are clearly explanatory. In T53 Sina dyes with turmeric the fea-

thers of the white eye, honey eater, dove, and lory, and with soot the gray bird, *manu tangionge, kaangebu* dove, sparrow hawk, and starling. In T54, an extreme example of acculturation, Sina has a store and sells the birds sarongs and calicos, spears, needles, a fan, and other objects that they still wear.

In the remaining stories about the *kakai* we find other explanatory motifs. In T55 the blind *kakai,* Tobaka, rides a turtle and buries it when it dies. Another *kakai* by the name of Pungaghe and his companions dig the shell of the turtle out of the grave. Informants explained that this was the origin of making turtle-shell earrings *(kasanga)* and also of killing turtles with clubs made of *pungaghe* wood. The story itself does not mention earrings, but to the Bellonese it was obvious that Pungaghe wanted the turtle shell for earrings.

T56 concerns two *kakai,* Taumosi and Sabana, who kill a snake and eat it with the *baebae* bananas. The *baebae* bananas were short, but when eaten together with a snake they became long. This is said to be the reason why *baebae* bananas are so long.

In T57(A) another *kakai,* Kangokangonga'a wants to make a canoe. He asks a group of *kakai,* Ten and his nine younger brothers bearing the names One to Nine, for an adze. They all refuse except the youngest brother, One, who gives him his adze and Kangokangonga'a makes his canoe. The ten brothers want to make similar vehicles and ask Kangokangonga'a what kind of sennit he has used as a lashing. Kangokangonga'a deceives them by putting cord made of a weak vine over his strong sennit lashing, and telling the brothers that this is how he lashed his canoe. They all set out to sea. The canoes of Ten and his brothers fall to pieces because af the cord and the ten brothers turn into porpoises who leap after Kangokangonga'a. But Kangokangonga'a's canoe also falls apart and he floats in the ocean surrounded by the wreckage of his canoe. The stars now come down from the sky and pick up the various parts of the wrecked canoe and bring them to the sky, and they become constellations. Kangokangonga'a dies at sea. Informants said that this was the origin of porpoises (Ten and his younger brothers) and of the stars' constellations which are named for the various parts of Kangokangonga'a's canoe.

T58 is also a counting story. Ten and his younger brothers set out in their canoes to search for Sina's daughter, who has been stolen by Pingikoke, a male *kakai.* The ten brothers kill Pingikoke by letting him get drenched in a drizzling rain and they bring the daughter back to Sina. The daughter is in the canoe of the youngest brother, One, who is the last to land at the place where Sina lives. Sina becomes grateful to the ten *kakai* but decides that from now on all counting shall begin with one instead of with ten. In this story two motifs are considered explanatory. Drizzling rain got the name *te 'ua o Pingikoke* (Pingikoke's rain) because it was the rain from which Pingikoke died. The counting system begins with one because of Sina's decision.

T60 tells how a *kakai,* Momo'itooi, kills a cannibalistic culture hero 'Angokutume'a. One of the informants with whom this story was discussed said: "This was the end of cannibalism." He meant that since then cannibalism has not been practised on Rennell and Bellona. Another man present said: "It was only the black lands (the islands inhabited by Melanesians) who ate people." Cannibalism was looked upon with disgust by the Bellonese, but they claimed that there had actually been a few cannibals on Rennell (T116, T117) but that they were mad *(unguhia).*

T61 is one of the few *kakai* stories mentioning the gods. Hatumanoko is a god who has Lightning ('Uinga) as his deity. He goes on a fishing trip with the great gods, Nguatupu'a and her brother. They catch *'angongo* (small minnows). The two

deities grab Hatumanoko and eat him together with the minnows. The story ends with the statement that this is why the minnow is sacred for Nguatupu'a and her brother and cannot be eaten by children lest they be poisoned.

T62 is about Tetinomanu, both a *kakai* and a constellation, who makes hurricanes by lifting his arms. The district god, Tehu'aingabenga, breaks one of the *kakai*'s arms so that he can produce only weak storms. Informants explained that "this is the reason that Tetinomanu's storms are not hurricanes. Tehu'aingabenga protected his worshippers by breaking the *kakai*'s arm."

T64 tells about a male and female *kakai* whose sleeping places are far apart. The two sing songs to each other, expressing their desire to sleep together, and finally the male *kakai* moves to the bed of the female *kakai* and sleeps with her. The story itself does not directly reveal its point. In 1961 Taupongi explained that the two *kakai* are actually brother and sister and that this was the first example of incest. Later informants on Bellona confirmed that this was how incest *(ngetu)* came into this world.

The above review of traditions concerning the *kakai* is not an exhaustive analysis. We have obviously only considered what to the Bellonese was manifested as the most important: their explanatory function. It is certain that the *kakai* stories had other functions than that of structuralizing the explanations of various aspects of the culture. For instance they undoubtedly had educational importance by verbalizing certain moral values. Let us briefly mention some of the motifs relevant to this hypothesis: Disrespect for father is punished (T31[A,B], T33). It is improper to urinate on fire (T44). Evil is punished (T52). Older brother's generosity towards younger brother is good (T52). Parents affection towards children is strong (T52, T58). He who helps others is helped himself (T57[A,B,C]).

I shall not at this stage attempt an analysis of the total significance of the traditions concerning the *kakai*. One reason is that I am still uncertain as to what would be the most economical and yet penetrating method for analysis. What, for instance, could be said about the traditions that Mautikitiki was born out of his father's feces? We might commit ourselves to psychological explanations or we might claim that this was the Bellonese way to stress the importance of patrilineal descent. In both cases I would feel that I had entered the green swamps of anthropological guesswork. Other scholars may know the safe way through this landscape, and it would be interesting to watch their steps. I have here preferred to select one relevant aspect of the *kakai* traditions, an aspect which the Bellonese stress as particularly important and let them comment themselves.

In conclusion we can say that in general the Bellonese believed that the *kakai* were the first humans to exist; that they were creators and institutors of the life of mankind; that they had disappeared or been transformed into constellations long ago; and that no *kakai* had ritual significance.

It may also be added that the beliefs about the *kakai* were fairly uniform among all social groups on Bellona. The traditions were not instruments of verbalizing social conflicts, perhaps because of the Bellonese belief that the *kakai* were originators of mankind in general rather than that of any particular group. There were no traditions of the *kakai* being the direct ancestors of the Rennellese and Bellonese. On the contrary it was denied that this was the case. One informant said: *"Te kakai te ingoa o na me'a mu'a. Na kakai noko hakatu'u hai 'anga, kae mungi na hiti o kai lobo e kingatou ko ba'i me'a. Kakai* is the name of the first things. The *kakai* started the making of things, afterwards came the *hiti,* and they tried to eat everything [that the *kakai* had invented]."

In the next section we shall deal with the *hiti* mentioned above; here it will be sufficient to note that the *kakai* were considered a group of supernaturals believed

to have existed earlier in a chronological sense than the *hiti;* however neither the *hiti* nor the *kakai* were considered direct ancestors of present-day Bellonese. Some younger men who had speculated about this problem said that somehow there must be a genealogical connection between modern man on Bellona and the *kakai,* but that "nobody knows what this connection is." Older men on Bellona denied that such a connection existed. Having a firmer stand in the concepts of pre-Christian Bellona, they probably thought of descent in terms of genealogical descent such as it is traditionally known, and did not think further back. It seems as if genealogies to them was a fixed block, and what was inside this block, namely the 23 generations of people who were believed to have lived on Bellona, had no biological relations to anything outside it, be it the ancestors who lived in the traditional homeland of 'Ubea, the *kakai,* the *hiti,* or the deities. From talks with senior members of Bellonese society it was obvious that they considered man proper as beginning with Kaitu'u or Taupongi, the first immigrators. The *kakai* were known and it was recognized that there was something before Kaitu'u and Taupongi, something shaped by the *kakai,* but the traditions of the *kakai* apparently fulfilled the needs of the old people for an understanding what this "something" was.

CHAPTER 9. THE *HITI*

According to Bellonese traditions the voyagers coming from 'Ubea found Rennell and Bellona inhabited by a people called *hiti*. The general belief on Bellona was that the *hiti* were short people; their hair was very long and reached the soles of their feet (by some, claimed to reach only the waist); their skin was hairy, like the flying fox, but was light-brown (*Canoes*, page 200). The *hiti* and the new arrivals were said to have gotten along well for some time, but when Kaitu'u's mother's brother started teasing them by not sharing the doves he caught, he was killed by a group of *hiti*. This was the beginning of a long fight in which Kaitu'u revenged the death of his *tu'aatina* (mother's classificatory brother) and killed off all the *hiti* of both Rennell and Bellona (T66:36–56). During the period of peaceful co-existence the *hiti* were said to have taught numerous things to the new inhabitants of the islands. They taught them how to utilize the fruits of the now so important *ngeemungi* (Gnetum sp.?) tree; to catch flying fish with torches; to eat the *soi tea* (arrowroot); to climb with climbers (that is to attach a sling to the feet while climbing trees); to chew *mango* vines and pandanus keys; some informants said that the *hiti* also taught the Bellonese how to catch sharks, but others denied this.

Various features of the Bellonese landscape were attributed to the work of the *hiti*. The stone walls along the main trail in the eastern and western ends of the island (T75), the hilliness of the east end the lowness of the west end (T75); the distribution of fertile and relatively infertile soil on the island (T75). The quadrangular depression in the ground close to Angaiho (it may be an old taro patch or a water reservoir) (T73); the lack of lagoons on the south coast of Rennell (T74); the absence of *baghu* palms (a pandanus species), *ghasigho*, and *laghoghe* vines on the north coast of Rennell (T74); the shape of the caves in the coral cliff on the north side of Bellona at Tapuna and Sa'amoa (T66:52). Also, the stones at the coast at Nukugohia on Rennell were claimed to be *hiti* who had turned into stones (T76).

It was said to be characteristic of the *hiti* that they very often came in pairs, two men, or man and wife. The two *hiti* were commonly playing tricks upon each other, or the wife scolded her husband. Chapter 9 *(Canoes)* is devoted to the *hiti*.

There has not yet been any scholarly proof such as might be provided by archaeological digging, that Bellona has actually been populated before the arrival of the present-day inhabitants; Elbert (1962) has proposed that the two non-Polynesian phonemes /gh/ and /l/ may originate from an earlier population on Rennell and Bellona. Scholars interested in the historical aspect of the *hiti* problem may note the similarity of the Bellonese traditions to traditions elsewhere, for instance on Tikopia, where a people called *fiti-kai-kere* (Fiti Eaters of Earth) were said to have built stone walls (Firth 1961:40), apparently somewhat similar to those found on Bellona.

The traditions of the *hiti* had some likeness to the traditions of the *kakai:* they were explanatory, giving the origin of certain features in Bellonese culture and in

the landscape of the island. This, however, was only one aspect of Bellonese concepts concerning the *hiti*. Although it was generally said that Kaitu'u killed off the *hiti* on both islands, the Bellonese—and the Rennellese too—claimed that a few *hiti* continued to live long afterwards in remote bush areas, especially on Rennell with its enormous empty rock-strewn forests. T84 through T91 concern people who met *hiti* on both islands. Some made friends with them and exchanged gifts. The latest reported contact was about three generations ago (N91), but offerings to the *hiti* were placed on rocks until the acceptance of Christianity (N86). Now that Christianity has been introduced, the *hiti* are said to have disappeared entirely. Nobody seems to believe that they exist any longer. Some Bellonese thought that they had left the islands; others said that they had been annihilated in some supernatural way.

There was a marked difference between the *hiti* believed to have inhabited the island at the time of the arrival of the first settlers and those believed to have lived on Bellona immediately prior to the introduction of Christianity. Whereas the *hiti* with whom Kaitu'u fought were considered people, the *hiti* of the present century were considered supernaturals who could work wonders, turn into stones, and get food in miraculous ways. There is on Bellona some disagreement as to whether these bush-dwelling *hiti* were actually a kind of people or merely the spiritual self *('ata)* of those *hiti* whom Kaitu'u killed. I have witnessed several discussions concerning this, and I think that we may here have an example of a problem provoked by the anthropologist framing his questions in an ethnocentric way, thus forcing the informants to reason on a conceptual problem which would otherwise not have occurred. When I asked Sa'engeika whether the *hiti* were people *(pengea)* or spiritual selves *('ata),* he merely answered: "Who can know? They were *hiti,* that's all." When I persistently pointed out that they could do miracles, such as humans could not do even according to Bellonese beliefs, he said: "*Manga pau o konaa na noho,* they were just like that." That was all. While other elders adopted a similar attitude, younger persons at times engaged in speculations as to whether the *hiti* were human beings or spirits. Some, especially those who had had several years' training at mission schools, would venture the heretical theory that after all there had perhaps not been any real *hiti* after Kaitu'u had killed them. This standpoint was opposed by a majority of Bellonese, young and old, and their proof was usually to refer to the traditions about people who had really met the *hiti* or the stones.

The fact that some Bellonese claimed that one could meet *hiti* in the bush or at the seashore distinguished them from the *kakai.* The *kakai* had disappeared forever, but the *hiti* were still there, at least before 1939. They were not seen often, at least not in person. I have not been able to obtain stories about people who have seen a *hiti* other than those in *Canoes.* However, the *hiti* had supernatural abilities. Once they were seen they immediately turned into stones. On Bellona there were several stones in the bush called *hiti.* At the sides of the trail leading down to Ahanga from inland in the west stand two rounded coral rocks which were called *hiti.* The Bellonese said that these were the bodies of two *hiti,* a man and a wife, who had transformed themselves.

There was also another marked difference between the *hiti* and the *kakai.* The *hiti* stones were objects of minor rituals. All Bellonese males who were grown before the arrival of Christianity could tell about these rituals. When a man planned to go fishing or to hunt coconut crabs or flying foxes in the bush, he would secretly steal away without telling his plans to anyone. If he did, he would become *loghongia,* a which may best be translated by "tricked." The *hiti* would make

the fish, coconut crab, or flying fox disappear. When passing the *hiti* stones on his way to the coast, he would break off a small branch with leaves of a nearby *sungu* bush, go up to the stone, beat the top of it with the branch, and then utter the following formula:

Poghi ou mata, hiti maangie, tubi ke mangu. A'u te nga'aa mai bangiaghe, ngahi ou mata. Nimaa keu te nga'aa ki bangibo, ngahi ou mata, hiti. Ka ngo hakaika e koe te nga'esu o'ou, ke ngo angaa utu kinai kimatou, hoto makupuu.

[I] cover your eyes, generous *hiti,* cover to provide shelter. The sun comes from the east, protect your eyes. When the sun turns to the west, protect your eyes, *hiti.* And make your saliva full of fish, so that we, your lesser grandchildren, may drag food up there.

Takiika, Tapuika, and Sa'engeika provided this formula and explained that the *hiti*'s head was covered so that he would not *loghongi* (trick) the person going to get fish. At the same time the *hiti* was asked to produce fish from his saliva, the ocean. Sa'engeika said that the practitioner "put the branch on the head of the *hiti* and went to the coast and fished, and fish were easy for him to catch, and also octopus." The phrase *hoto makupuu* (lesser grandchildren) was merely words by which the reciter humbled himself *(hakami'ime'a ia te ia).* He was not at all a grandson of the *hiti.*

When the fisherman returned with this catch he placed a small fish on the "head" of the *hiti* as a token of his gratitude.

It has been difficult to find out how common this ritual was. Informants said that they did not do it always, but only "when they passed the stones going to the shore." It was done by women as well as by men.

This was the only type of offering made to the *hiti.*

To avert the trickery of the *hiti,* one might also play a trick on them. Temoa described this method, and enquiries showed it was not very common on Bellona. Sa'engeika had apparently never done it but only heard about it from others. Only few informants, including one woman, claimed that they had used this method of diverting the *hiti* mind from that of teasing hunters.

The method was the following. In the middle of the trail from the inhabited interior of the island were placed miniature leaf shelters, about 10 centimeters high, with entrances at one end only and facing away from the direction the fisherman or hunter was going. In the house one would put a miniature fireplow and a miniature firestick, some miniature firewood, and a puzzle plaited of coconut leaves which could not be separated. The following formula was recited:

Teenei tou pake, tou loghongi; noho iho ai mo ou loghongi, noho iho o noko hai ahi i au baakai ki te poo, na'e ko au e hano kau sopo ki mu'o.

This is your deceivement, your puzzle; sit down with your puzzles, sit down and just make fire with your fuel until night, and I will go on and enter [the area] in front [of your house].

The *hiti* was then expected to enter the house and become so occupied with making fire and solving the leaf-puzzle that he would forget to plague the hunter or fisherman. Temoa was absolutely sure that this had worked for him several times when he had tried it.

The *hiti,* then, like the *kakai,* were a means of explaining various aspects of

nature and of society. They, unlike the *kakai,* had an additional characteristic. They were the sources of strange sounds in the bush, or of strange shadows or light flashes that a lonely wanderer might meet in the wilderness. They were the supernaturals who made coconut crabs, flying fox, and fish in the sea vanish, so that the fisherman and the hunter came home empty-handed. Only vaguely did they provide success. The negative aspects of the *hiti* were stressed. The Bellonese talked more about them as the cause of unsuccessful fishing and hunting, than as providers. Yet they were considered only mildly evil. Serious accidents, such as falling from a cliff, were attributed to the non-worshipped gods, not to the *hiti.* The *hiti* seemed to have much in common with Scandinavian goblins (Danish, *nisser),* except that the goblins were less inventive and not the early inhabitants of Scandinavia.

CHAPTER 10. THE ANCESTORS

10.1. *Death and afterlife.* Another group of supernaturals was the ancestors. In the system of social and religious activities on Bellona they played a far greater part than the *hiti* and the *kakai.*

To understand the relation of the Bellonese to their ancestors, one first has to consider the complex of beliefs concerning death and the afterlife. The ritual aspects of this problem will not be discussed here, merely the underlying ideas.

Death was believed to have its cause in a wilful act carried out by a supernatural, commonly one of the deities, rarely a deceased ancestor, and never a *kakai* or a *hiti.* The exceptions to this rule were people who died of old age *(neneba o mate).* Age was not counted by years on Bellona. People were classified as belonging to age grades according to their physical and mental state. A person was said to be *neneba* when he was too old and weak to do any proper work or to care for himself. The term also implied approaching senility. A man or woman who died after having reached this stage was merely said to *oko,* a term which may be translated as "having reached fulfilment." This meant that he or she had simply come to an age where one could not live any longer. Young or middle-aged people who died were said to *mate tu'u ngua,* die half-way, that is before they had reached old age. Such persons were believed to have died because a supernatural had taken away their *ma'ungi* (life-principle). In *Canoes* and in a previous section of this book (6.2), we have seen examples. If a person was killed it was said that the killer had been assisted by Tehainga'atua, who was present during the killing and took away the man's life-principle.

Death in an accident or as a result of sickness might be attributed to breach of taboo and consequent *nga'ua* (affliction), or if no such breach was known, the man's death might have taken place because the gods liked him so much that they stole his life-principle so that he would live with them in their celestial homes.

The Bellonese said that the moment a person died his *'ata* left his body. No one believed that the *'ata* remained in the body even for a short while after death had occurred. All informants said that the reason a dead person lay still and did not move was that his *'ata* had left him. *'Ata* had several meanings, such as reflection, shadow, and that part of an individual which was believed to continue to live after the body had become immovable, had been buried and had decomposed. The *'ata* could move around freely, but was said to have its home *(manaha)* in the grave of the deceased. The word should not be confused with *ata,* which means to shine, as a torch or lamp.

One might translate *'ata* by "soul," were it not that this word is so loaded with Orphic and Christian concepts that one might read into it ideas which did not exist in Bellonese culture. I have therefore chosen the neutral term (rather dull, I admit) "spiritual self" as a translation for *'ata;* spiritual because invisible and yet considered something really existing, and self because the *'ata* of a person was believed to have retained the identity of the person.

Some Bellonese said that *'ata* was the same as *ma'ungi. Ma'ungi* was that intangible, yet so real principle which made man a living creature. *Ma'ungi* was what

made humans, plants, and animals grow and reproduce. Everything that grew and reproduced was said to be, or have, *ma'ungi*. Objects such as stones, houses, weapons, and water did not in themselves have *ma'ungi,* but under certain ritual circumstances might be penetrated with the *ma'ungi* of supernaturals. It should be added that in general the Bellonese did not seem to believe that a man's belongings were filled with his personal *ma'ungi* or *'ata.*

A man's *ma'ungi* might leave him when he dreamed, fainted, or died. In dreams one met kinsmen, friends, or strangers, often those who were deceased or lived in faraway places. When Taupongi was in Denmark in 1964–65, he used to tell about his dreams in the mornings. Once when he dreamed that he was back on Bellona, he said: "I'm surprised how fast the *ma'ungi* can travel. Much faster than an aeroplane. Last night I was on Bellona, and then I wake up. I'm in Denmark."

Many stories concern deities' theft of mortals' *ma'ungi* (see Chapter 5). If the *ma'ungi* was not recovered within a reasonable but never explicitly stated length of time, death occurred. When people of Bellona related their dreams, they often said that their *ma'ungi* had been traveling to various places.

Yet there was some confusion and interchangeability of the two terms, and it was probably more common to say that the *'ata,* rather than the *ma'ungi,* left the body in dreams. According to Sa'engeika, "*te 'ata te ma'ungi o te pengea mate,* the *'ata* is the life-principle of a dead person." This seemed to be the common idea among the Bellonese. When a person dreamed, fainted, or died, his *ma'ungi* left his body and became the *'ata.* There was, however, a tendency to prefer the term *'ata* when one talked about ancestors in their post-mortal existence. It should also be noted that the Bellonese said that animals and plants had *ma'ungi* but no *'ata;* the *ma'ungi* of plants and animals simply disappeared after death.

At death, the *'ata* of a human left the body and went to the coral reefs and breaking waves off the coast to dance to the beat of the sounding board, before leaving for the abodes of the gods. As previously mentioned, the *'ata* of the two clans went in different directions. The *'ata* of a person of the Kaitu'u clan went to the reef off the southeastern tip of the island *(matahenua). 'Ata* of people of the Iho clan went to the reef off the northwestern tip of the island *(te mungi te henua).* No informants claimed to have seen the dancing *'ata,* but several Bellonese said that they had heard human voices and the beating of the sounding board emerging from the sound of waves breaking on the reefs at both ends of the island. All informants accepted the belief that the *'ata* of people of the two clans left the island in different directions and went to different places. These beliefs seemed another means of stressing the difference between the two clans. Their members belonged to separate units and they remained separate even after death.

The *'ata* of people of the Kaitu'u clan first went to Manukatu'u, the home of Tehainga'atua, and from there proceeded to Nukuahea, the home of Tehu'aingabenga. The *'ata* of people of the Iho clan also first went to Manukatu'u, as they too worshipped Tehainga'atua, but from there to Mungingangi, the abode of their district god Ekeitehua. Some informants of the Iho clan, however, reversed the order of *'ata* wanderings, and said that their *'ata* first visited Ekeitehua, then Tehainga-'atua, and finally arrived, as guests, at the home of Tehu'aingabenga. The reason was that as the *'ata* of the Iho people left towards the west, they would first arrive at Mungingangi. Later they would go to Manukatu'u and Nukuahea to partake in the large feasts said by mediums to have taken place there. This variation in the beliefs did not seem socially significant, but merely an example of the comparative freedom of the individual to model his own beliefs concerning the afterlife.

Upon arrival at the homes of the deities, the *'ata* presented their hosts with offerings of necklaces – just as did the Bellonese paying formal visits to one another.

When the body was interred it was dressed in new tapa, sarong, and turban, plaited bracelets were put on the arms, the chest and head were powdered with turmeric, and necklaces of flying-fox teeth were hung around the neck. Occasionally the priestly staff was laid in the grave beside the body. Dressed in this way, the *'ata* was believed equipped for a formal visit to the gods. Apart from the turmeric powder the dressing was the same as that of the man paying a formal visit to another homestead.

The Bellonese traditions as to the fate of the deceased in the abodes of the deities were apparently not very elaborate. Temoa and Sa'engeika said that the district gods gave the deceased a place *(kunga)* to live in in their abodes, but other informants did not know anything about this. It was, however, the general belief that the deceased did not stay permanently in the abodes of the gods, but traveled between their graves and the homes of the deities. This concept was reflected in ritual practices.

Any idea of punishment or reward in life after death was absent in Bellonese beliefs. The afterlife knew no moral retributions. The head of a lineage *(hakahua)* remained *hakahua* in the world of the dead, and the servant remained servant when he died, as insignificant and unimportant as he was in life. Any breach of social norms in life on Bellona was not punished by the gods when one died, and social control was not exercised by direct reference to post-mortal punishment. Breach of social norms, such as for instance, greediness, stinginess, and incest, might cause a lowering of prestige on Bellona, but the Bellonese did not seem concerned about the possibility that this might also make them persons of lower prestige in their life after death. Violation of taboos might cause the anger of deities, who might punish the offender by sickness or death, but from that it did not follow that the *'ata* was also punished by the gods in the afterworld. The social sanction lay on the level of life in the world of light *(maangama nei),* that is, life on Bellona.

T146(A) and T162 relate the tradition about the water of chiefs, a lake in the underworld. If the *'ata* bathed in its waters it was rejuvenated and could either be born again as a child of mortals or it could live on in the world of the deities without growing old. Investigations showed that this was believed to have happened only to three persons, namely the deified ancestor, Tupaukiu, of the Tanga clan (T162), to a woman of the same clan, and to Tamua of the Iho clan (T146[A]). Takiika expressed the general Bellonese attitude towards this story as follows: "I have heard about the water of chiefs. It is a story of the old days when all the clans existed here on Bellona. None of our recent forefathers bathed in the water of chiefs. It is just a story."

The dead lived in the world of darkness *(poo'ungi),* that is below the surface of the ground, and they might at times travel through this darkness to the homes of the gods. They were the messengers of mortals, and they might ask for the god's favor on behalf of their living kinsmen. They were believed to travel back and forth *('aahua)* constantly between their graves and the homes of Tehu'aingabenga, Ekeitehua, and Tehainga'atua. In rituals they were asked to convey to the gods the wishes of living man for health, fertility, and good fortune. When Sa'engeika once explained the relation of the ancestors to the deities, he chose an example that he was sure I would understand. Comparing the deity to the High Commissioner of the Western Pacific, and the ancestors to living Bellonese, he said: "The High Commissioner lives in Honiara (the capital of the Solomon Islands), and the people live here on Bellona. They go to see the High Commissioner in Honiara and ask him for things to bring here to distribute among the people of the district."

The tasks which the Bellonese delegated to their deceased kinsmen were impor-

tant. Not in direct statement, but apparently always by implication, the ancestors were asked to request the assistance of the deities. In certain situations, however, as when wishing for a son or daugher, or when sick, people invoked the ancestors and directly asked them for assistance. Kaipua once verbalized this concept very well:

1. E noho aano i Nukuahea, hoki mai ki tona manaha i tona takotonga o kakai ai ki te hakapata i ona pengea. Nimaa ina ki tona pengea e masaki, mana'aki kinai o hakama'ungi. 2. Ka te pengea kaa tangamaangie kinai o kengi tona 'umanga o hai tokotonga i tona pengea. 3. O mangaohie ma'u ai te 'ata, ka ko ia ka ngo hai nga'a ki tona pengea i te hu'aikaui. 4. E kongaa na noho: e ngiu'aki e te 'ata na utunga noko hai nga'a kinai e tona pengea ma'ungi.

1. [The *ata*] stays in Nukuahea, [and then] returns here to his homestead in his grave and lives here to stay with his kinsfolk. When [the ancestor] sees that his kinsman is sick, [he] is successful with him and brings recovery. 2. And the person will show his gratitude towards him and dig his garden and make a grave ritual [*hai takotonga*] for his [deceased] kinsman. 3. And the *'ata* then is likewise grateful towards him, and he will give his [living] kinsman a large fish. 4. [It] is like this: the *'ata* gives recompensation for the food which his living kinsman has given him.

When a man wished for a son or a daughter *(nonoo tama),* he might in the same way address one of his ancestors. Usually he did not mention the gods in his formula, but all informants implied that the ancestors went to the home of Tehu-'aingabenga and asked for a child. This district deity then gave him one from the store house *(hange matinginga)* in Nukuahea. The *hange matinginga* was believed to be similar to the houses in which the Bellonese stored their garden crops before distribution or planting. Tehu'aingabenga took children from this house and gave them to ancestors who, in an unexplained way, planted them in the wombs of mothers. When one asked a Bellonese who had given him his children, he always mentioned the name of a dead kinsman, not of a deity. It was characteristic of the Bellonese attitude that in affairs which had direct bearing upon the continuation of the lineage either by making one of its members recover from a sickness or by the procreation of offspring, it was the ancestors who were first formally addressed in prayers and presented with offerings. The gods were only rarely mentioned until the child was consecrated about a week after its birth.

The Bellonese said that it was the ancestors who primarily protected *(ngahitaki)* their lineage and attended to the welfare of its members. In Kaipua's statement given above it is apparent that the Bellonese conceptualized their relations to the dead as a system of economic transactions. Offerings were given to the ancestors, who were grateful and paid back *(ngiu'aki)* with further assistance, or, as in Kaipua's example, with success in fishing.

The concept of ancestors as protectors of living kinsmen is also seen in the system of *angai. Angai* was the technical term for protection given by the ancestor to the house of a descendant. When a man built himself a new house he appealed to one of his ancestors to protect the house and its inhabitants against attacks from enemies or evil gods, and against sickness. During the first ritual with ceremonial distribution of cooked food in the new house, the owner presented an offering to one of his ancestors and addressed him with a formula requesting protection. Sa'engeika gave the formula as follows:

Tau me'a kai, toku tupuna, Teikangongo. Ko koe e angai i te ha-'itunga o tou 'aitu. Ke angai ai ma he 'inati ma'ungi ke onga tou noho 'anga, ka ke tuku saahenga i Te 'Aso Te Nga'akau o tou' aitu.

Your portion of food, my ancestor, Teikangongo. You are protecting the house of your deity. So do protect thereupon with a share of life so that your kinsmen may thrive and bestow affluence on The Offering Of The Staff belonging to your deity.

The ancestor was protecting the house of his own deity. *ha'itunga* was the ritual term for the house of the homestead, and was the place believed to belong especially to Tehu'aingabenga and the other district deities. Hence the first deity mentioned was Tehu'aingabenga. The ancestor was asked to protect the house with "a share of life *('inati ma'ungi).*" *Ma'ungi* here indicates good health, in contrast to sickness and death, to be given so that the *noho 'anga* might thrive *(onga). Noho 'anga,* in some contexts, meant a seat, but in rituals might refer to kinsmen, especially those of one's patrilineal descent group. (In everyday speech this lineage was referred to as the *manaha.*) Finally the ancestor was asked to bring fertility to the *panna* gardens of the worshipper, who used the ritual term The Offering Of The Staff for *panna.* (panna is a Solomon Islands word for a species of yam.) The garden was said to belong to the *'aitu.* From the text itself it is impossible to tell who this *'aitu* was. We have mentioned earlier that *'aitu* usually referred to district gods. From informants' explanations, and also from the context of other ritual formulas, we know that the gardens were believed to be under the control of Tehainga'atua. We also know that the sky gods, whose most prominent member was Tehainga-'atua, were considered *'aitu* in relation to ancestors, whereas they were termed *'atua* or *'atua ngangi* (sky god) when seen in relation to man. The *'aitu* referred to in the formula above is Tehainga'atua. Ambiguity such as this typifies the difficulties of analyzing ritual formulas without having an intimate knowledge of their context.

From what has been said above, it is obvious that ancestors were considered helpers and protectors of living man. But what happened if one's prayers to an ancestor proved fruitless? The reaction seemed to depend to some extent on the individual. It was generally stated that one would get angry with an ancestor who did not react to one's entreaties or recompensate one's offerings. Some informants reported that they had simply given up worshipping the ancestor who did not help them, either permanently or temporarily, and that they turned to other ancestors or to the gods with their requests. This attitude was in tune with the concept of the relationship to ancestors as similar to the relationship between living individuals, namely as one dependent on the exchange of goods or services.

From the above review of the concepts concerning the ancestral *'ata,* a western reader might infer that the ancestors were immortal. This was not the case. It was rather continuity of a certain degree which was the characteristic of the Bellonese spiritual self. The *'ata* did not live on in a permanent state of agelessness. Even the *'ata* grew old, as their living bearers would have grown old had they still been living on Bellona. And when the *'ata* had reached an age when it would be natural for them to "die," some of them actually disappeared. This part of Bellonese beliefs differed markedly from that of western societies. It centered about the key concepts of *maangi, 'unu,* and Hakanauua. In discussing these concepts we shall take as our starting point the explanation given by Temoa and Sa'engeika in 1963:

1. Na 'aamonga e mamate; boo, hakapata ki angatou 'atua; noho-

1. People of the lands die; [they] go and stay with their deities; live a long

noho kinai; tauiku; 'unu kongaa; nimaa tengaa maangi; hano o tu'u ki te sakanga a taangata; maangi a haahine o boo tutu'u ki teengaa sakanga. Boo o masongo ki te hatu paba; teengaa tena 'oti 'anga.

2. Nimaa hai ke 'unu, a'u a Tehainga'atua o 'unu na langa ngima, 'unu na langa ba'e, tau i te ungu, o'io'i, 'unu te kingi tauiku, kae sopo te pengea o tamatama hakahoki o ti'aki te kingi tauiku o noho i na nuku o hai ai na sa'amaatu'a.

time with them; grow old; some are pulled; then others are annihilated; men [about to be annihilated] go and stand on the perch; women are annihilated and go and stand on another perch. [They all] go and are erased on the rough stone; that is the end [of the spiritual self].

2. When [a man] is about to be pulled, Tehainga'atua comes and pulls his fingers and pulls his toes, grabs his head, shakes [it], pulls off the old skin, and the person appears having become young again, and the old skin is given up and [the person] stays in the abodes [of the deities] and in this way worshipped ancestors come into being.

If we translate this into everyday language we have an intelligible account of the Bellonese beliefs concerning the fate of the spiritual self after death. When people died they stayed for some time with the deities. Then they became old (that is, their spiritual selves became old), and some of them had their youth restored whereas others were annihilated. Those who were annihilated went and sat on a perch (a bent stick of the same type as that used as a seat for decoy pigeons during pigeon hunting. Birket-Smith 1956, Figure 40) in the underworld. Men sat on one perch and women on another perch. Then their *'ata* were crushed and erased on a rough stone, and that was the end of the annihilated ones.

When a person's youth was to be restored (after his *'ata* had grown old in the home of the gods), Tehainga'atua appeared and pulled the fingers and the toes of the man, grabbed his head and shook it so that the old skin fell off. The man then appeared as a youth, his old man's skin was discarded, and he now lived in the home of the gods and became a worshipped ancestor.

The information given by Sa'engeika and Temoa was richer in detail and more precise than the usual accounts of the fate of the *'ata* in the underworld. Often informants merely stated that by the act of Tehainga'atua, some people were annihilated. Even a number of older men, who were usually well acquainted with details of the religious beliefs, said that they did not know how and why this happened. Some merely knew of the rough stone on which the *'ata* were erased. Before Temoa and Sa'engeika jointly talked over this matter and dictated the account given above, they had both mentioned the details about the perches and the rough stone in other contexts; this knowledge seemed generally distributed among older Bellonese, and we may safely assume that it was not the special lore of any particular social group. One may conclude that some Bellonese had more interest in details concerning the fate of the *'ata* than had others, or that some informants had greater abilities in verbalizing their concepts.

Whereas not everyone knew exactly how the annihilation of the *'ata* of the deceased came about, no informants were ignorant about what happened to a spiritual self which had been erased. It fell down in the underworld where it merely lay among snakes and refuse *(penu)*. This dark place at the bottom of the world was in fact considered a huge refuse dump upon which all worthless things were piled. Its two names were Ngaangonga and Hakanauua, the last being most common. It was the home of obscure *'apai* about whom little was known. Some informants seemed to think that this place was identical with another locality in

the underworld called Nuku'apaingua (Home of the two 'apai), but nobody was certain. (For Rennellese traditions concerning the underworld see T23 and T24.) One might perhaps have suspected that traditions of the world of the annihilated *'ata* were so vague because conversion to Christianity had made the Bellonese forget their former beliefs. I doubt that this can be the case. There seems to be no reason why informants should remember so many details concerning other aspects of their old religion and at the same time forget the beliefs about what happened in the underworld. Also, the elaborate oral traditions still remembered would, directly or indirectly, have revealed something about these beliefs, even if informants were not able to give a coherent description of them. Rather than being an example of half forgotten beliefs, I think that the vagueness of the Bellonese as to what happened to the annihilated *'ata* is an example of their attitude towards the fate of the spiritual self in afterlife. Attention was focused on the ancestors who had not become annihilated, and whose *'ata* had been given specific assignments in the field of social activities. Annihilated spiritual selves were merely refuse *(penu),* inactive and worthless. Asked for statements concerning the exact character of these *'ata,* informants said that they were merely stupid *(amunoa),* without ability to think *(he'e tau tengeu'a),* inactive *(he'e hai hai 'anga),* and erased *(masongo).* The annihilation (this translation of the word *maangi* seems justified by the above statements) was thus an act whereby the spiritual self of a deceased person became socially insignificant and inactive.

It is in this connection worth noting that the Bellonese did not seem to be concerned with what happened to themselves after death. I occasionally asked them whether they thought it good to *maangi* or whether they would prefer a life in the homes of the deities and in the graves. Some acted puzzled at such a question and simply replied with the familiar term *maangongo,* which means "I don't know," but which also has a faint tinge of "I couldn't care less." Takiika, after some reflection, said that he would perhaps have preferred a life in the homes of the gods, but that this was irrelevant now. Everybody believed in God and nobody went to the homes of the old deities any longer. It was, however, obvious that he and others had never given this problem much thought. On the other hand, it was also obvious that the Bellonese were very concerned with the problem of what happened to their own kinsmen when they died. Who had been annihilated and who had not? Why had a person been annihilated?

These are exactly the questions that we ourselves must ask. It is not surprising that this especially interested the Bellonese. In their answers we have a key to an understanding of the position of ancestral beliefs in Bellonese religion.

10.2. *Annihilated ancestors.* The first question we shall ask is: Why did the *'ata* of some persons become annihilated after death? The Bellonese gave two main reasons for this: (1) Because they were not worshipped (presented with offerings and invoked) any longer. (2) Because they had been subject to the *kaukau* ritual, in which water had been poured from a coconut shell over their graves, thus desacralizing them.

The Bellonese said that some *'ata* were annihilated because they were female. In fact the fate of the female *'ata* posed some theoretical problems. Male informants had differing opinions. Some said that they thought that women's *'ata* did not *maangi* becuse they knew that some women invoked their female ancestors. Others said that they were ignorant as to whether female *'ata* became annihilated or not. Others again thought that some female *'ata* were annihilated and some were not. Further questioning seemed to show that there was no direct correspondence between a man's opinion and his status or social affiliations, but that it was rather an indication of a general lack of interest among men in this problem. Women

were more specific in their answers. It seemed to be the general belief that female *'ata* descended into Hakanauua when they reached old age. Women were never ritually worshipped on Bellona. No offerings were distributed at their graves. They were sometimes invoked by immediate female relatives of the deceased, daughters, sisters, or cousins, but these invocations stopped being given when it was believed that the *'ata* of the deceased had reached old age and thus had been annihilated.

The two reasons for annihilation given above were thus particularly relevant for spiritual selves of Bellonese men. Superficially, however, they seemed to present problems. The reason listed as (1) above seems circular. On the one hand the Bellonese claimed that ancestors were annihilated when they were not worshipped, and on the other hand one might hear Bellonese state that a certain ancestor was not worshipped because he had been annihilated. It is, however, not circular. If we look at the Bellonese data, the problem solves itself.

The spiritual selves who were believed to have been annihilated by the gods were the following: (1) Members of clans and lineages that were reported as having become extinct. (2) Members of the first seven generations of the Kaitu'u clan and of the first ten generations of the Iho clan (Genealogy 9 and Plate 3). (3) All persons not in a line of first-born sons *(hano 'anga)* and of the second or more generation above ego, who had not acquired high prestige. (4) Persons deliberately annihilated by the Bellonese by means of the ritual called *kaukau*. (5) Females of the second or more generation above ego.

As mentioned above, the Bellonese said that ancestors had been annihilated because "there were no people to invoke them *(he'e tau pengea ke songi kinai)*." The ancestors of extinct clans or lineages thus were annihilated because all their descendants had died out. The only exception to this was Tupaukiu, an ancestor of the Tanga clan, who was deified after his death (N162), and whose grave in Oa in Matangi district became a place to which the Bellonese went to pray for success *(noo kai)* on hunting and fishing expeditions.

It is of interest for our analysis that the earliest generations of Bellonese were not objects of worship at all. The Bellonese asserted that they had all been annihilated. During discussions the informants said that they were not worshipped, and had not been objects of worship for many generations, and that "only the generations immediately following these earliest ancestors *('atu mu'a)* worshipped them." The locations of many graves since the seventh generation of the Kaitu'u clan and the tenth generation of the Iho clan were remembered, but not earlier ones. Kaitu'u's grave was thought to be under a certain tree at Peka in Matangi district (T72); persons were not certain of this, and no rituals were ever performed there. The grave of the original Taupongi, the founder of the clan bearing his name, which is also known as the Iho clan, was not known. Some informants asserted that he might even have returned to 'Ubea before his death.

Informants joked about the first generations. One said: "They were just stones." Another said: "They were senile; very old, just refuse; we did not pray to them." The names of the ancestors immediately preceding Iho in the clan bearing his name were long forgotten, but were believed revealed by a medium two or three generations ago (Plate 3). One informant expressed his attitude towards the first ancestors by saying: "They were merely persons in the stories *(tangatupu'a)*," and this viewpoint was one generally agreed upon. Taupongi said that the first ancestors were "people between human beings and deities" and that not until the children of Teika'ungua (Plate 3, Generation 10) did they take the shape of human beings *(Canoes,* page 173).

The ancestors of the Kaitu'u and the Iho clan who at certain times had

established separate districts that subsequently died out were, like the ancestors of the extinct clans, believed to have been annihilated because they had no descendants to invoke them.

Ancestors of existing clans might have been annihilated because they were insignificant, or because they did not belong to a still existing lineage or sublineage. When I asked why a certain ancestor was not worshipped the typical answers were: "He was not a strong person," "there was no special event connected with him," "he was not strong in helping people of his lineage," "he was stupid," "just a minor person."

According to (4) on page 103 even people considered of importance to the Bellonese, such as those who were termed *hakahua* or who were members of the primogenital line of a patrilineal descent group, might, under certain circumstances, be annihilated by a ritual act called *kaukau* that was performed by a member of another lineage. This ritual consisted of emptying a half coconut shell of water over a grave and uttering the words *"Tungou! Teenei kia te koe, Te'angiki-'atua,* Permit [me]! This is for you, Te'angiki'atua [Tehainga'atua]." This ritual was also used to remove sacredness from places and objects. *Kaukau* is the everyday word for "wash" or "cleanse with water," and the concept was that the sacredness of places or objects over which the water was poured was washed away "to stay with the gods."

It was believed that when the *kaukau* rituals were performed over graves, their contents of *'ata* returned to Tehainga'atua who annihilated them. The Bellonese said that this was done over graves of ancestors of lineages that had died out, in order to prevent these ancestors from killing or harming *(tu'anaki)* people of other lineages. It was also claimed that this could be done secretly over graves of important ancestors of a lineage with which one was at enmity. A total of 24 informants were asked for further details about this, but no one could remember whether it had been done during the last several generations. 10 Bellonese, however, mentioned that a man by the name of Teika'ungua of Ghongau district had accidentally been annihilated by Te'ungutiange (Plate 3, Generation 15). Temoa and Tuhanuku (*Canoes,* page 50) each at different times furnished more details about this. They said that Te'ungutiange, while clearing the bush close to his homestead, performed the *kaukau* ritual over his garden plot in order to deprive the mischievous deities *('apai)* living there of their power to harm the crop. By accident he emptied the coconut shell near the grave of Teika'ungua. An unidentified medium later said that Teika'ungua had been dining with Tehu-'aingabenga in the underworld when the water of the *kaukau* began trickling down in front of them. Teika'ungua exclaimed: *"Taa!* (Oh dear!)" when he saw it, and Tehu'aingabenga said: *"Hinatu!* (Off you go!)" So Teika'ungua left and went to the perch and stood there and fell down into the underworld.

Whereas grown-up men and women could be subject to post-mortal annihilation by Tehainga'atua, there was general agreement among the informants that children were not annihilated. Some claimed ignorance about their post-mortal fate, but the majority said that the *'ata* of dead children returned to Nukuahea, the home of Tehu'aingabenga. Here they lived in the *hange matinginga* (house of offspring). It was believed that Tehu'aingabenga took *'ata* from this storehouse and gave them to worshipped ancestors who implanted them in the womb of mothers. Here they assumed human skin and became children who were born about eight months after the implantation had taken place, that is after the time when a mother realized that she was pregnant. (See page 27.)

It was also a general belief among the Bellonese that the *'ata* of deceased infants could be born again. After having returned to the "house of offspring," they might

once again be taken to Bellona and implanted in the womb of the woman who had earlier given birth to the child. Several such rebirths have been recorded.

Sa'engeika's father, Saungongo (Genealogy 6, Generation 20), asked his ancestor Saungongo (Genealogy 5, Generation 17) for a son. His wife gave birth to a son who died when he was about two years old. One month after his death she became pregnant again. Being in a state of mourning she did not want another child and intended to provoke an abortion by massaging *(kumikumi)* her abdomen. However, her mother managed to persuade her not to do so by saying that it was her dead son who was returning. The child was born, it was a son and he was named Sa'engeika. This story was told by Sa'engeika himself and also by Sa'omoana Taupongi.

Tauniu of the Baitanga lineage, a man about 55 years old, said that his firstborn son had died, and that a second son was born about a year after his death. He was named after the dead boy, because Tauniu believed that it was the *'ata* of his firstborn son who had returned from the abodes of the gods and assumed human skin *(hakakingi)* again.

Sa'engeahe said that he had lost two infant sons, but that one of them, Kaabei, had returned *(hoki mai)*.

Informants asserted that the belief in the rebirth of children was "merely a thought *(manga te tengeu'a)*" and that they "did not know for sure *(he'e na'a ngaoi)*." They were also uncertain as to whether children who died after having reached an age of two or three years could be reborn. No informant remembered any such cases, and everybody seemed absolutely certain that teenagers or grownups were never reborn.

It was also a general belief that rebirth took place only if the mother of the deceased child became pregnant shortly after her first child had died. Sa'engeika said: "If a person's child dies and a long time elapses, a year or more, and a new child appears it is said that it is another pregnancy *(te tina'e 'aatea)*. If only one or two months pass, it is said that the child is returning."

Some informants said that when the child was reborn it looked like the deceased child. Others, however, asserted that this was not always the case. It would always be of the same sex, and it was always born again by the same mother.

Death of infants was considered a punishment by the gods. Sa'omoana Taupongi's infant son died because he had once been carried down to Ahanga, the landing place on the north coast of Bellona. This place was believed to be haunted by the non-worshipped deities *('apai)* and his death was believed to be a result of the evil machinations of these deities. When the child died, Sa'omoana became angry with his ancestors for their carelessness in not protecting his son, and, in revenge, buried the boy in the grave of Tangokona (Genealogy 9, Generation 13), assuming that ancestors would be nauseated *(baaisaisa)* by the presence of a dead child. Sa'omoana said that he had no idea of what actually happened to his son's spiritual self *('ata)* but he assumed that it had returned to Manukatu'u.

10.3. *Worshipped ancestors.* We have now come to an end of the discussion of ancestors believed to have been annihilated, and we shall see which ancestors were actually considered to have survived as *sa'amaatu'a,* ancestors that were invoked.

Within the system of religious activities, the Bellonese distinguished the following types of relationships to worshipped ancestors:

1. Rituals at graves with invocations and presentations of offerings *(hainga takotonga)*.

2. Presentation of specific offerings *(putu)* during longer rituals in the homesteads such as *kaba ki hange* and *manga'e*.
3. Prayers to make one's wife give birth to a child *(nonoo tama)*.
4. Requests to an ancestor for protection *(angai)* of one's house.
5. Assumption of the role of an ancestor *(ta'otu'a)* by a priest-chief during the cycle of harvest—or other—rituals.
6. Possession by mediums *(taaunga)*.
7. Consecration of gardens, canoes, nets, fishhooks, and other implements to ancestors *(penapenaanga)*.
8. Prayers *(tu'ungu)* for good health and good fortune without presentation of offerings.
9. Invocation *(hetapa)* of the name of an ancestor during sudden danger.
10. Communication during dreams.

We shall consider which ancestors were involved in the religious activities listed above. Figure 9 shows ancestors invoked by 11 Bellonese men before the introduction of Christianity on the island. Being based on information given by these men as late as 1958 and 1965, it should naturally be treated with some caution. Although we may perhaps assume that it is fairly correct in the sense that the informants actually invoked the ancestors mentioned, we cannot be certain that an informant has not forgotten to mention one or more of those ancestors to whom he turned for support or to whom he presented offerings. This uncertainty makes it impossible to use the information as basis for an exhaustive statistical analysis, but it may give us a general impression of tendencies in the choice of worshipped ancestors.

(1) Rituals at graves were called *hainga takotonga*. They were most commonly performed when the actual harvest season with its elaborate cycles of rituals had come to an end. Their purpose was either to compensate for assistance believed to have been rendered by the ancestors to the performer of the ritual, or to implore an ancestor to protect or help his descendants in the future. An occasion for performing a grave ritual might, for example, be that a man had invoked a certain ancestor during a period of illness, promising that if he was restored to health he would present this ancestor with offerings at the grave. One might also perform a grave ritual and ask for an ancestor's protection during a coming voyage to Rennell.

The table shows that the prevailing principle was to perform rituals at the graves of one's male patrilineal ancestors. Rituals were never performed at graves of female kinsfolk, neither by men or women. No ancestors prior to Ngaakei (Plate 3, Generation 8) were invoked. We shall discuss the implications of this below. The table also shows that only rarely did a man perform rituals at graves of remote ancestors belonging to other districts. People of Matangi district did not worship ancestors prior to Tokahitumatu'a (Plate 3, Generation 11), who was believed to have branched off from Ghongau and founded his own district.

Although the prevailing principle was to perform rituals at graves of direct lineal ancestors, some exceptions occurred. The table shows that most of the informants also performed rituals at the graves of certain collateral kinsmen of recent generations. These were commonly important members of the patrilineal descent group *(manaha)* of the performer of the ritual. This was the case with Ma'itaki of the Iho clan (worshipped by Tamua and Sa'omoana), Tongaka of Ghongau (worshipped by Kaipua), Tehaibakiu of Hangekumi (worshipped by Topue), and Puipuihenua (worshipped by Takiika). A few cases were recorded of persons performing rituals at graves of kinsmen outside their patrilineal descent groups. Ta-

kiika and Ma'itaki both went to the graves of their mothers' fathers. Ma'itaki's reason was that, as a medium, he had been possessed by Tongaka during a dangerous voyage to Rennell, and he had therefore promised to bring offerings to his grave if he would lead them safely to land. Performance of rituals at graves of one's matrilineal kinsfolk was rare, and I have recorded no cases. There were no rules preventing such undertakings, but no Bellonese could remember anyone who had done it. Some informants told how they had occasionally accompanied kinsmen and friends to the graves of people who happened to belong to their own matriline, but they said that matrilineal ancestors were of no specific importance. Several informants explained that a man's matrilineal ancestors were "the important thing of living *(te hu'aime'a o te ma'ungi 'anga).*" By this they meant that matrilineal kinsmen were of importance as a means of establishing kin ties to living members of the society, but of little or no importance as worshipped ancestors.

The table also seems to show that men of high prestige in Bellona society performed more grave rituals than younger or less important men. This was the case with two informants, Sa'engeika and Sa'omoana, who were both considered important *hakahua* on the island. The third *hakahua* in the table, Takiika, was somewhat younger than the two others, and this may account for the fact that he had performed fewer grave rituals.

(2) Food offerings were presented during larger rituals in homesteads and temples. Heaps of food were laid out on the ritual grounds, dedicated ceremonially to deities and to ancestors, and later distributed among the participants. The number of heaps depended on the size of the feast and on the number of guests present. Men making large distributions would dedicate heaps to a greater number of ancestors. A discussion of the actual system of distributions of rituals will be made in a subsequent volume. It should, however, be mentioned that, like offerings presented at ancestral graves, the Bellonese considered offerings presented during rituals to be compensation for services rendered by ancestors to their living descendants. This system of transactions is discussed in Chapter 11.

The table shows that no informant made offerings to ancestors of districts other than his own. If the table is compared with Bellonese genealogies, it is seen that persons presented with offerings were usually deceased kinsmen of one's own patrilineal descent group *(manaha),* or remote lineal ancestors of patrilineages from which one's own *manaha* was believed to have branched off.

(3) As mentioned, a man prayed to his ancestors that his wife might give birth to a child. The ancestor was believed to forward the request to Tehu'aingabenga, who would give him a child to bring to Bellona and implant in the womb of the woman. The majority of informants declared that it was taboo to request Tehu-'aingabenga directly for a child, but nevertheless some informants stated that they had done so. Sa'engeika had invoked his ancestors for sons, but they had all died as infants. He finally turned to Tehu'aingabenga, but with no result. "The god was stingy *(noko beka te 'atua),*" Sa'engeika said. Tekapini also invoked the great district god in hopes that he might send him a son, but in vain.

The Bellonese said that ancestors were asked for children in order to make their own patrilineage continue rather than die out *(hiti).* Usually men first prayed for a son and later for daughters. Ancestors were said to have been asked to send a daughter in order that a man could secure his ties to other patrilineal groups through his daughters' prospective marriages. In both cases the concern was the welfare of the patrilineal descent group. It was considered important that it continue *(hanohano)* and it was also important that its members have affinal ties *(hepotu'akinga)* to other patrilineages. The importance of the principle of patrilineality is confirmed by the table. Except for Kaipua, who reported that he had

asked his mother's sister's son, Tongaka, for a son, all informants seemed to have directed their requests for children to deceased members of their own patrilineal descent group or to other ancestors to whom they could trace patrilineal ties. The Bellonese stated that nothing prevented a man from asking kinsmen other than those of his own lineage for children, but that one would usually ask such ancestors first. If one's entreaties proved unsuccessful one might turn to other kinsmen. Sa-'engeika reported that he had asked a son of his two patrilineal ancestors, Tei-kangongo and Saungongo of Tongaba and Hangekumi lineages. Unsuccessful requests to kinsmen (he never specified whom) of his own patrilineal descent group, Ngikobaka, made him turn to these two important forefathers. Saungongo presented him with two sons, but both died as infants.

The table seems to confirm more general and abstract information given by the Bellonese. Kinsmen who were requested to provide children were those of one's own patrilineal descent group rather than more remote ancestors.

(4) When a man had built a new living house, he would, as mentioned above, invoke one of his dead kinsmen and ask him to protect its inhabitants. The prevailing principle was to ask patrilineal ancestors or members of one's patrilineal descent group for protection, but informants said that many people asked ancestors of other lineages or even complete strangers to protect their house, especially if these had proved to be good protectors on other occasions. This was the case with Tepuke of Matangi district, who was asked by Ma'itaki to protect his house even though he was only a very remote kinsman.

(5) During periods when a priest-chief was in office, and especially when he was to perform the harvest rituals, he would invoke a certain ancestor and ask him to assist him and act as his spokesman when he directed his prayers to the deities. The ancestor was believed to manifest himself in the priest-chief, and it was his words which came from the priest-chief's mouth. The spiritual self of the ancestor was believed to sit in front of the priest-chief and lean *(loghoni)* against him during the rites. The Bellonese believed that the sacredness of the ancestor manifested itself in the priest-chief. The technical term for the ancestor in this function was *ta'otu'a*. The table shows that the ancestor acting as *ta'otu'a* was of the priest-chief's patriline, and, as in grave rituals and rituals in homesteads, the ancestors involved were mostly founders of patrilineal descent groups. In contrast to the individuals privately requesting children from ancestors, rituals were communal affairs in which the unity of the descent groups of a subclan was stressed. The ancestors who spoke through the mouths of the priest-chiefs conveyed the wishes of the district as a whole, rather than that of a particular patrilineal descent group. It is therefore only natural that remote ancestors shared by a larger number of descent groups acted as *ta'otu'a* in rituals. In fact the Bellonese stated that more immediate forefathers usually acted as *ta'otu'a* when smaller rituals were performed, but that remote forefathers were appointed *ta'otu'a* at large ritual feasts with participants from many patrilineal descent groups within the district.

(6) Of he 11 persons whose data are shown in the table, only four had been possessed as mediums, three by ancestors of the patriline, and one by his mother's father. Further investigation showed that a man might be possessed by any Bellonese ancestor of lineages still existing, but that it was most common for a medium to be possessed by his own patrilineal ancestors. Ancestors of extinct lineages did not possess people. The reaon given for this was that they had been subject to the *kaukau* ritual and had thus been annihilated. The Bellonese stated that if a person had been possessed by an ancestor of an extinct lineage, this would have made him crazy *(unguhia)*.

(7) Gardens, fishing nets and lines, poles for catching flying foxes (Birket-Smith

1956:80), and canoes were dedicated ceremonially *(penapena)* to certain patrilineal kinsmen in order that these might provide success in fishing, hunting, and gardening. A group of informants explained that gardens were dedicated to an ancestor in order that he might protect them against harmful animals (birds and insects), and also make the crops live and florish *(e penapena te 'umanga ki te sa'amaatu'a ke nge'o e ia ki na manu e songo i na 'umanga; ke ma'ungi na me'a).*

Dedications seem to have been made to more or less the same ancestors and agnatic kinsmen as those presented with offerings at graves and during rituals in the homestead. Only rarely were gardens and fishing and hunting gear dedicated to ancestors other than those to whom one could trace agnatic links. The Bellonese generally disapproved of dedications being made to strangers *(pengea 'aatea).* Temoa told how he once wanted to dedicate his gardens to his mother's brother, Tongaka, of Matangi district, but Taaika, a younger brother of Tango'eha (Genealogy 9, Generation 20) and a classificatory brother of Temoa, stopped him and said that it was bad behavior *(tautau maase'i)* to dedicate gardens to people of another place. Temoa submitted and instead dedicated his gardens to 'Utakiu (Genealogy 9, Generation 17) his father's father's father's brother.

(8–9) The principles of praying to ancestors for good health and good fortune and of invocations to ancestors during sudden danger without presenting offerings, were closely tied in with those of offerings at graves and at rituals in the homesteads. Such prayers and invocations were usually made at a time when a man had nothing to offer but when the necessity for supernatural assistance was nevertheless immediate, for example during sudden illness, in fights, or during danger at sea. The invocations were usually accompanied by promises to present offerings to the invoked ancestor at a later time, either at his grave or during a ritual distribution of food in the homestead.

(10) Ancestors might appear in a person's dreams. Some informants told how their forefathers had talked to them and promised them a son, a daughter, a large fish, or had blamed them for a breach of a taboo or for negligence in rituals. It is, of course, most unlikely that informants should remember all their dreams of pre-Christian days so many years after they had taken place. The information given in column 10 of the table should therefore be considered, if not inaccurate, then insufficient. Most informants stressed dreams about meeting agnatic kinsmen, but they also said that in dreams one might meet and talk to any man or woman. The belief was that in dreams one's spiritual self left the body and traveled in the underworld, and when waking up it returned to the body.

From what has been said above it may be seen that the most important principle determining a man's choice of ancestors to be invoked was the genealogical links which he, according to the traditions, had with them. A man would first turn to his agnatic kinsmen, that is members of his patrilineal descent group *(manaha)* and to his patrilineal ancestors. As a constant fission of lineages was claimed to have taken place, a person would, at some point in his genealogy, have ties to patrilineal descent groups other than the one to which he currently belonged. It we examine the genealogies of the Kaitu'u clan (Plate 3 and Genealogies 4,5,6 and 7) we see that members of the lineages of Matangi district and of Ghongau district were believed to share all ancestors from the first immigrant, Kaitu'u, down to Teika'ungua of Generation 10. The first seven generations, from Kaitu'u to Tongohanga are only significant for an understanding of our present problem in a negative way, namely in that they were not worshipped by the present generation of Bellonese, and in that they were believed to have been annihilated. The earliest ancestor recognized as a worshipped *sa'amaatu'a* was Ngaakei.

It we consider the districts' ancestors, we see that Matangi district did not wor-

ship any ancestors prior to Tokahitumatu'a (Plate 3, Generation 11), whereas Ghongau district worshipped the ancestors as far back as Ngaakei of Generation 8. Ngaakei was believed to be the great grandfather of Tokahitumatu'a in the patriline, and he, his son, and his grandson were thus also direct patrilineal ancestors of people of Matangi district. Why, may we ask, did Matangi district not worship Ngaakei, his son, and his grandson? The answer given by people of Matangi (and by all others of Bellona for that matter) was that Tokahitumatu'a broke away *(babae)* from Ghongau district and established his own district *(kanomanaha)* of which he was considered the originator *(takalana)*. By not including earlier ancestors shared with people of Ghongau, in their system of religious activities, people of Matangi demonstrated their status as an independent and separate social group, a *kakai 'anga*.

This may seem like a triviality, but I do not think it is so. If we proceed with our analysis along these lines, we shall be able to understand at least one important side of the interaction with ancestral supernaturals in the religious system of Bellona.

A question that will logically follow from the one asked above is: If Matangi did not worship any ancestors of generations older than that of Tokahitumatu'a, why, then, did Ghongau worship them? Why did Ghongau acknowledge ancestors shared with Matangi? The Bellonese answer to this was that Ngaakei was the founder of the oldest patrilineal descent group in Ghongau district, namely the one called Ghongau (T227[A,B]), and that Tokahitumatu'a broke away from Ghongau and founded his own district, not the other way round. Ngaakei was, the Bellonese say, the first real member of the Ghongau descent group.

We may now ask: Why did no one worship the generations preceding Ngaakei? The Bellonese answer here was that "they lived in different homesteads all over Bellona, and their homesteads were not those of the patrilineal descent groups of today. According to traditions, Kaitu'u lived in Peka; the home of the three Ngatonga was not known; Taupongi lived in a place called Tekoba; Manu lived in Kongopeko; Tongohanga lived in Mataiho. None of these places were considered of particular importance in the years prior to 1938. The segmentations of Bellonese society into those lineages which are recognized today began with the descendants of Ngaakei. We might add that it does not concern us here whether Bellonese traditions were based on actual historical events or not. We can only suggest that these traditions had some significance for the Bellonese of 1938. (In fact, they have a similar significance for the Bellonese of today. It is hoped that we shall be able to deal with his problem in a subsequent publication.) The structure of these quasi-historical—or mythical if one prefers this word—traditions must be as it is because it is relevant for Bellonese society.

From what has been said above we may see that there was an important correlation between the selection of deceased kinsfolk for worshipping and the traditions concerning the formation of districts. The members of the various districts of Bellona did not worship the same ancestors. To this we can add that the earliest ancestors, who were of no significance as regards the present-day segmentation of the society, were not worshipped, but that ancestors who were believed to have played a specific role in the foundation of districts and patrilineal descent groups were considered of particular importance. This seems to be a strong indicator of at least one of the effects of the worship of ancestors. This may come out even clearer if we examine Ghongau district in more detail. From the point of view of ancestral ties Matangi district does not present any specific problems. All members of this district recognized all descendants of Teikangongo (Plate 3, Generation 12) as their ancestors. (The lineage of Taumako, which was claimed to have descended from Teikangongo's brother, Makiu, was extinct, and none of its members were

worshipped by the present-day people of Matangi.) It should also be borne in mind that Matangi was an exogamous kin group. The reason given for this was that its people "had a single lineage."

In the subclan of Ghongau the situation was different. Its members all invoked ancestors to which the founders of their respective patrilineal descent groups could trace direct lineal kin ties. As mentioned, informants said that the more remote ancestors were only invoked or presented with offerings on more important occasions, such as during large harvest rituals in which a considerable number of people from Ghongau and from other districts participated. In smaller rituals performed more privately by a limited number of people belonging to the same patrilineal descent group *(manaha),* it was commonly only the ancestors of this particular lineage who were invoked.

The people of Ngango district considered themselves members of a different clan descending from a different immigrant. Like Matangi it was an exogamous unit, and in spite of the fact that it consisted of three different patrilineal descent groups, they recognized the same *sa'amaatu'a* and worshipped them unitedly. An examination of the genealogy of this clan shows that its patrilineal descent groups had become divided only recently. The lineage of Matabaingei was about to die out in Generation 19 and was carried on by two men from Tongomainge lineage. The people of Matabaingei and of the lineage of Sauhakapoi (not shown in Plate 3) thus traced their ancestry to forefathers of Matabaingei as well as of Tongomainge.

The general picture emerging from this analysis is that agnatic kinsmen were of prime importance in the system of religious beliefs and actions, that particular importance was attached to those ancestors who were believed to have established new patrilineal descent groups, and that on occasions when communal rituals were made in which members of several of the lineages of the district participated, common ancestors were invoked and presented with offerings. However, particular importance was attached to ancestors belonging to one's own patrilineal descent group. Within this group one might also invoke deceased collateral kinsmen, particularly if they were recognized as great men *(hakahua)* of the lineage. The Bellonese expressed the importance of ancestors belonging to their own patrilineal descent group *(manaha)* by saying that ancestors particularly assisted people of their own *manaha (hu'aibaasiko na pengea o te manaha).* Affiliation to ancestors of one's matriline, of one's mother's patrilineal descent group, or of any other descent group was considered of secondary importance by all informants. They were supernaturals to whom one would usually only turn for support if invocations of those of one's own patrilineal descent group had failed.

In functionalists' studies of small scale societies it has not been uncommon to emphasize the role of religious beliefs and practices in promoting social cohesion within the society. On Bellona the unity of a clan was apparently sanctioned by reference to the oral traditions of descendance from the same man among the original immigrants. The traditions, however, also stressed the difference of the two clans by claiming that they had descended from two different men who came to Bellona at the same time. When we examine ritual practices in connection with the beliefs in ancestral supernaturals, we see how each patrilineal descent group tended to emphasize the diversity of these groups, each by worshipping its own particular set of ancestors and we also see how ancestors who were claimed to have lived on Bellona prior to the formations of the present-day lineages, were not worshipped at all. Although the social cohesion of a Bellonese district might be stressed on more formal occasions by invoking the common ancestors, daily ritual invocations were often directed to ancestors of one's own patrilineal descent group.

It seems that the Bellonese institution of ancestral worship was a system which

could be operated so as to sanction various types of group affiliation in various situations. If the needs were for stressing the unity of the patrilineal descent group, in contrast to other social groups (for instance during minor rituals, when asking for a child, or at times when protection against attacks from members of other groups was needed), deceased kinsmen of one's patrilineal descent group were invoked. When the emphasis was on the unity of large groups (during larger community rites), a larger number of ancestors was invoked, including those shared with other patrilineal descent groups.

We have dealt rather extensively with the problem of the relationship of forms of ancestral worship to the social system of Bellona because it seems to be a rather important aspect of the Bellonese religion. We have seen that the manifest (in the use of the terms latent and manifest I follow Merton 1964: Part I) reason for worshipping deceased kinsmen is that they were considered intermediaries between the deities and living men. The Bellonese said that they prayed to the ancestors because "they are the people who pray to the deities *(ngasuenga),* the people who stay with the district deities, and they pray (to them) for life for living people, and they pray for gifts of food and fish to the living people *(konaa na pengea e songi ki na ngasuenga, na pengea e taha ki na ngasuenga o taku e kingatou te ma'ungi ki na pengea ma'ungi, taku e kingatou na tonu ki na pengea ma'ungi)."*

As mentioned the ancestral worships could be operated in a number of ways. Their latent effect might be the initiation or perpetuation of specific social relationships. By including or excluding the ancestral protectors of certain lineages in the rituals a Bellonese could initiate or perpetuate relations of unity as well as of disunity between the social group to which he belonged and those of others.

In his Frazer lecture at Cambridge, Firth (1955) presents a number of general statements concerning the problem of ancestral beliefs. (1) In most primitive societies continuity rather than immortality is assumed. (2) As a rule the fate of the soul is not associated with any concepts of rewards or punishments after death. The doctrine of retribution on a moral basis is generally lacking. (3) Like many people who belong to the more sophisticated religious systems, members of most of the primitive communities have no great *concern* about the fate of their own souls. Their ideas may be formulated in terms of a general problem of knowledge. Each individual does not worry in advance about the personal problems of his future life. (4) Primitive beliefs about the fate of the soul are usually not polarized, as they are in the great religions. The field is more open. Not uncommonly, there is wide variation of belief, or at least of statement, about the possible fate of the soul, even in a single community. (5) Primitive eschatology is dynamic with plenty of social interaction. Unlike the western view in which the departed soul is effectively depersonalized in favor of group dependence upon the divine, the primitive gives the departed soul a field of concrete social activities.

If these statements are reconsidered in the view of our analysis of the material from Bellona, it will appear that Firth's points are confirmed by this material. Had the data been collected two decades earlier we would have had an even more elaborate body af cases; but I am convinced that they would have presented an even stronger support of Firth's hypotheses.

CHAPTER 11. MAN AND SUPERNATURALS

11.1. *The supernaturals. An outline.* The purpose of the previous discussion of the supernaturals has been to present a detailed picture of the *dramatis personae* involved in the Bellonese religious activities. The beliefs concerning a host of supernatural beings were an important part of the ordered and meaningful system, which in its totality formed the individual's conception of the world he lived in, and these beliefs were closely integrated with the system of social activities.

For analytical purposes, however, a distinction between concepts and social activities seems useful. Geertz has advocated the view that anthropologists might "attempt to distinguish analytically between the cultural and social aspects of human life, and to treat them as independently variable yet mutually interdependent factors." (1957:33.) He uses the term cultural aspects for what we have above called the ordered and meaningful conception of the world, and he has in a convincing way shown the advantages of this distinction in attempts to analyse social and cultural processes.

In this chapter we shall summarize the Bellonese views of supernaturals, and we shall briefly consider how these beings were integrated in the Bellonese world view and how they were related to the system of social activities.

The data of the previous chapters concerning supernaturals may be summarized in a chart (Figure 10) giving the outlines of these beliefs. The formulation and classification is to some extent ours. (Needless to say, the Bellonese themselves did not explain their deities as anthropomorphic, anthroposocial, or anthropopsychic. There terms are our translations of their beliefs.) The chart presents only those characteristics of the supernaturals which were manifestly expressed by the Bellonese themselves.

In the previous chapters we have endeavored to show that the beliefs in supernaturals also had latent effects. They were important as a means for the individual to adjust himself to the ecological situation and to the present social order. It was a system which could be operated so as to facilitate the individual's adaptation to his surroundings and to some extent it also supplied a principle for the organization of the entire society.

11.2. *Relations to nature.* Let us, with this in mind and on a basis of the data presented in the previous chapters, consider the world from the point of view of the Bellonese individual, and attempt a translation of how he structuralized his world and how these structures were utilized by him.

The Bellonese lived in a fairly static ecological milieu. He did not live in lands with extreme variations in nature and climate. His world was the two islands, Rennell and Bellona. There he did not experience extreme seasonal changes, but lived in a fairly well-balanced world where food was only rarely scarce and where gardens yielded a rich crop to anyone who knew how to cultivate them properly; this was supplemented by a rich harvest from the seas, or less abundant harvesting of wild plants. Yet disaster could strike. Hurricanes, thunderstorms with violent downpours, or insects might suddenly, and at unpredictable times, destroy crops and cause a shortage of food on the island. Also the vast ocean had its dangers. To

be caught in a storm at sea usually meant disaster. The Bellonese canoes were frail and could hardly withstand powerful attacks from the huge waves of the Pacific.

The Bellonese world was filled with forces much stronger than those of man. These forces were at the same time a blessing and a danger. They provided fertility but they also caused death. They were the sources of food, but also of the violent storms that might destroy the crops or prevent fishing trips.

The belief in sky gods supplied an organizing principle for those powers of the universe which were beyond man's direct control. Empirically, these powers were in many ways non-human; they appeared to be strong and strange, and strength and strangeness were essential characteristics of their controllers, the sky gods. Unlike that of man, the kinship system of these gods was vague, and their behavior was inverted human behavior. They lived in incestuous marriages and they were inclined towards cannibalism. Forces controlling man's non-human surroundings had qualities different from those of man. Yet in order that man could communicate with them, they must be anthropomorphic, anthroposocial, and anthropopsychic. And communication was essential.

In order to induce these forces to provide food and security, man had to perform transactions with them. Just as social relations were enforced in the social universe by man's transactions with his fellow man, universal relations were secured by transactions with the powers controlling nature's forces. Communication with natural forces was possible only if the natural forces resembled man. The sky gods had this likeness, communication was possible, and took place in the rituals.

Such dealings with the supernaturals might succeed or fail. The sky gods might present their human counterparts with rich crops and fishing luck. They might also make the seas calm and stop storms and heavy rainfall. They might bring success in fights by assisting in killing enemies while the gods' worshippers remained unharmed. All this they would do if they were presented with ample offerings and if taboos were not violated.

But even if man kept the taboos and presented the sky gods with elaborate offerings, he might be caught by disaster. In life there were misfortunes which could not be avoided by offerings to the gods. Even the gardens of a faithful worshipper might be spoiled by attacks by insects, the worshipper might die in fights, and even the priest-chief might become sick and die. Such misfortunes which did not seem to have their roots in a breach of religious or other taboos, or in negligence in performing rituals, might be explained as caused by the non-worshipped deities, the *'apai*. These deities, who lived outside the social order in the bush and at the coast, and with little or no kin, only brought harm to humans. They could not be appeased by direct appeals (prayers and rituals), but at times could be reached by appeals to the sky gods. The beliefs in these *'apai* seem to be the Bellonese channelization and rationalization of inevitable and otherwise inexplicable misfortunes which always threatened man's life.

11.3. *Social relations*. Supernatural assistance was needed not only in man's confrontation with the powers of nature, but also with his fellow men. Although often fraught with conflicts and strain, social interaction was perhaps considered less dangerous than the relations to the immense forces of nature. Social relations were of an entirely different order, and so were the supernatural powers connected with this aspect of life. The district gods were the social gods of Bellona. Unlike the sky gods they provided man with offspring in order that life might be perpetuated, they protected him against the dangers of nature, disease, accidents, and death, and against his enemies. They acted as intermediaries between man and the sky gods, and they conveyed messages from the sphere of deities through mediums.

Their close relations to the social life of man was apparently accentuated by their alleged similarity to humans. They led a social life, and the great district god, Tehu-'aingabenga, was married to a semihuman girl, of whom the remaining district deities were descendants. They were instituted by ancestors of different patrilineal descent groups, whose protectors they were. This seems to indicate that the beliefs concerning these deities to some extent served as a symbolic charter for the social relations of the Bellonese, especially in that they formed a conceptual basis for the performance of transactions with the supernatural powers connected with specific social groups. Offerings were presented to certain deities, who were obliged to present goods and services in return. Once given to the gods, the offerings became penetrated by their sacredness and they thus achieved an extraordinary economic value. When redistributed among the participants in the ritual, one phase of economic exchange was carried out. The web of transactions between god, man, and fellow man initiated and confirmed social relations, and the transactions could be performed so as to meet the demands for initiation and confirmation of a variety of such relations. In smaller household rituals, with only few participants, only a limited number of district deities were invoked and presented with offerings. On more formal occasions such as the important feasts in which a man distributed the entire harvest of the year, a whole range of district gods were assumed to be present and to receive portions of the harvest. These portions were then redistributed among members of a large number of lineages who were thus tied together in a network of ritually sanctioned economic obligations.

According to Bellonese traditions, the beliefs in district deities were of a dynamic nature. The number of gods increased with the furcation of the society into more and more patrilineal descent groups. It would, therefore, seem unjust to claim that the ritual transactions with these deities latently resulted in the preservation of an existing social order.

In this connection it might be worthwhile to consider once again the difference between sky gods and districts gods. The sky gods constituted a fairly static group of supernaturals. The Bellonese did not institute new gods of this group after they had been invoked by the first immigrants during their voyage to Rennell and Bellona. The sky gods were the representatives of the ecological milieu of the Bellonese. This milieu was static; no great changes took place in the natural surroundings and the supernaturals controlling these powers were not subject to changes either. Transactions with these forces were uniform no matter which social group one belonged to. Not so the district deities. This group of gods was connected with society and its organization. When this organization changed, the system of transactions between social groups changed too, and the supernatural forces involved in this system necessarily changed in step with it.

11.4. *Ancestors.* Ancestors were divided into two groups, namely, those believed to have been annihilated by an act of the deities or by the deities through the agency of humans, and those serving as *sa'amaatu'a.* The *sa'amaatu'a* (worshipped ancestors) acted as intermediaries between gods and humans. They had their homes in the graves of the homesteads and traveled to the homes of the gods to convey the wishes for children, health, fertility, and good fortune for their patrilineal descendants. In this way they bridged the gap between the sacred gods and the human world. Their degree of sacredness was believed to be between that of the gods and the profane human being. An analysis of which ancestors were considered important as protectors and messengers shows that the founders of particular patrilineal descent groups or other prominent members *(hakahua)* of these groups were in the focus of attention, while the rest was left to oblivion. We have endeavored to show that the belief in ancestors latently supplied a conceptual principle for the main-

	Supernaturals worshipped		
	Gods		Ancestors
GENERAL TERMS	*'atua ngangi* Sky gods	*ngasuenga* District gods	*sa'amaatu'a* Worshipped ancestors
GENEALOGICAL POSITION	At the apex of gods' genealogy	Descendants of sky gods	Ancestors of present-day Bellonese; not related to other supernaturals
HOMES	Manukatu'u beyond the eastern horizon	Nukuahea beyond the eastern horizon (Mungingangi beyond the western horizon)	In the abodes of the worshipped gods; in graves at their original homesteads
PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS	Anthropomorphic, anthroposocial, and anthropopsychic. Invisible to humans except when embodied in animals, mediums, or sacred objects:		
	Behave contrary to social norms of the Bellonese	Behave according to social norms of the Bellonese	
PLACES OF CONTACT WITH HUMANS			
Ritually	Mostly in temples and in the ritual grounds of homesteads	Mostly in houses and in the ritual grounds of temples	At graves, in living houses, and in the ritual grounds of temples
Casually	Anywhere	Anywhere	Anywhere
TYPES OF CONTACT WITH HUMANS	Rituals; possessing people thus creating madness; fearsome, cannibalistic (eating people's life-principles); donators of fertility of gardens, fish, cast away canoes; embodied in animals and sacred objects	Rituals; possessing mediums; controllers and protectors of cultivated plants; donators of crops and children; protectors of man against evil; embodied in animals and sacred objects	Rituals; posessing mediums; intermediaries between gods and people; embodied in animals
GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS	Controllers of the island and of storms, thunder, and other natural phenomena; closely connected with the non-social environment	Controllers of humans and of cultivation of plants; protectors of specific patrilineal descent groups; closely connected with social behavior	Protectors and helpers of man, especially of members of those patrilineal descent groups of which they are considered originators

Figure 10: The Bellonese supernaturals.

Supernaturals not worshipped

Ancestors	Others		Gods
pengea maangi Annihilated ancestors	*kakai* Culture heroes	*hiti* Aborigines of Rennell & Bellona	*'apai* Non-worshipped gods
Ancestors of present-day Bellonese; not related to other supernaturals	Not related to men or other supernaturals	Not related to men or other supernaturals	Most of them not related to other supernaturals
In the underworld, but only as refuse	Formerly in unknown lands and on Rennell and Bellona, but do not exist now	In the bush and at the coast	In the sky, the underground, the bush, and the ocean south of Bellona
Refuse; non-existing	Anthropomorphic, but not anthroposocial or anthropopsychic; communication with man impossible	Anthropomorphic, anthropopsychic, anthroposocial	Anthropomorphic, anthropopsychic, anthroposocial
None	None		None
None	None	In the bush and at the coast	Anywhere
None	None	Minor rites when fishing and hunting to avert mischief; often embodied in stones	Malignant; spoiling gardens and houses; creating sickness or death; possessing people thus creating madness
None	Characters in oral traditions only; creators of various aspects of life; models for certain moral values	Creators of various aspects of culture and of sites in landscape; timid; small people with long hair	Evil gods whose acts could only be averted through the assistance of worshipped gods; some *'apai* were considered helpers of the sky gods

tenance of the unity of the patrilineal descent group, and also for economic transactions which might initiate or perpetuate relations of unity or disunity with other lineages.

11.5. *Origins and explanations.* The beliefs in supernaturals not only provided the Bellonese with a conceptual charter for his transactions with the surrounding world, but to some extent also with a set of explanations of how the world came to be as it is.

The culture heroes *(kakai)* were believed to have been the creators af various aspects of life. The creation had long been completed. Death had come into this world, body members of humans were pliant, women had their private parts, food plants grew in the gardens, there were sharks on the reef, and coconuts filled with water in the trees. The Bellonese said that the culture heroes were "merely something in the stories," but the beliefs in the former existence of such beings seems to have provided the Bellonese with an explanation of the origin of important aspects of Bellonese life.

They did not serve as a complete charter, however. Many aspects were left unexplained. This is understandable because the Bellonese had no tradition of completeness. They did not share the Euro-american tradition that everything must be explained in detail. Every plant or star need not be named, not every god needed a father and a mother. Some aspects of life and culture, the circulation of blood, the nature of gravity, or grammar, did not need an explanation at all. Thus there was no complete theory of evolution, and there was only little interest in how this world had come to be as it was.

The *hiti* were believed to constitute the original population on Bellona. Like the culture heroes, the *hiti* were creators and teachers, and like the non-worshipped gods they served as explanation for mysterious and otherwise inexplicable sounds in the bush and of bad luck in fishing and hunting coconut crabs or flying foxes, but they were mainly talked of as characters in the stories about the old days.

It will be obvious that our analysis has been far from exhaustive. We have endeavored to point out some of the correlates between Bellonese social organization and religious beliefs. The fact that particular weight has been placed on this aspect of Bellonese religion does not indicate an intention to deny the extreme significance of other elements such as the emotional and aesthetic values of religious beliefs. An analysis of such aspects, however, lies outside the aim of this study.

11.6. *Transactions.* For an evalution of religious beliefs and their relations to the social activities on Bellona, it may be of particular importance to consider in more detail the relations of humans to those supernaturals who were worshipped.

During recent years a number of particularly promising models for the study of human behavior have been suggested. Homans (1958) has proposed a refinement of the old theory of social behavior as an exchange of goods, material and non-material. (Later in 1962 Homans elaborated this view.) As early as in 1925 Mauss worked along similar lines. Barth (n.d.) has drawn attention to the analytical importance of concentrating our interests on the processes of transaction in interpersonal relations, and he has in a convincing way shown that it may thereby be possible to create logically consistent models of observable logical processes according to the rules of strategy. In two remarkable essays, Stanner (1958 and 1959) has applied a similar model to the study of religion. He sees sacrifice as a gainful interaction between men and their divinities. Stanner rightly prefers to talk of transactions rather than of interactions because it "compels one to deal at all times with what I have called the natural triad of person-object-person." Stanner distinguishes transitive (two-sided) and intransitive (one-sided and symbolical) transactions and he places the religious sacrifice in the latter category: "Where ac-

tivities are made up of transitive operations human intentions are actually transferred, and can be shown to be transferred, to the objects of the activities. The activities we call technical are functional because the operations are transitive. We plant crops to grow food: to eat the yield is the proof and demonstration of transitivity. But there are innumerable objects of life—among them sometimes the most longed-for and highly-prized—of which no proof or demonstrations of the outcome of our best efforts is, or seems, possible. If we pursue such objects then we have to proceed in hope, belief, or faith." (1959: 124–125). A distinction between transitive and intransitive transactions may have its merits on the analytical level. It is, however, important to bear in mind that the duplicity is anthropological ethnocentrism. The Bellonese of course viewed ritual transactions as distinctly transitive, and it would be surprising if this is not the case in all societies. The Bellonese had had ample proof of what was gained by carrying out sacrificial transactions with the supernaturals: fish were led into nets and onto hooks by them; the deities made yam, taro, and bananas grow in the gardens; children were planted in mothers' wombs by ancestors. To the Bellonese this was definite proof that extraneous powers were at work. All these acts were beyond man's abilities, and they appeared as a result of man's transactions with supernatural forces.

In these transactions there was believed to be a gain on both sides. Even the deities gained from the rituals. In many contexts the gods expressed their extreme gratitude for offerings presented to them. This is revealed not only in rituals in which certain religious officials spoke on behalf of the gods, but also in the stories. An example may be found in the story about Ngiuika, who composes a song (T219) to Tehainga'atua. The god becomes so grateful that he pays back with a turtle and a canoe with travelers from overseas (T218).

That the Bellonese themselves visualized the relationship to the deities as one of transactions is seen clearly in the general term for offerings and rituals. To make an offer to the deities is called *ngiu,* a word which means to return and to reciprocate. The term for rituals is *hengiu'akinga; he . . . 'aki* being a marker of plurality and reciprocity and *-nga* being a nominalizing suffix, the word literally means a plurality of reciprocities.

In the present book we have not concerned ourselves with the actual operations carried on within the system of transactions, but only with two of the "corners" in Stanner's triad, namely person-person, that is man and supernaturals.

For an understanding of the Bellonese views of supernaturals it seems expedient to see them in the light of a model which considers human behavior processes of transactions.

For these processes to work there must be two or more poles between which the transactions can take place. The mechanisms operating at each pole must somehow be in rapport with those at the other to make communication and transactions possible. This must also be the case where the transactions take place between humans and the powers outside their society. Interaction between man and his fellow men may present few problems in connection with the question of personnel as such, but these problems become pertinent in an analysis of how man deals with his non-human surroundings.

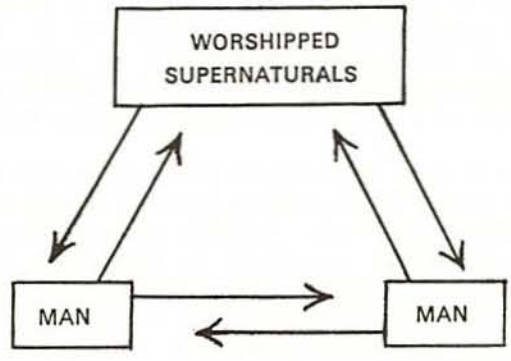
The Bellonese supernaturals had so much similarity to humans that man could communicate with them and exchange with them both material and non-material goods. Yet they were different from man in that they had powers to do things which man could not do himself. The worshipped deities and the worshipped ancestors of the Bellonese were considered an *alter* being in possession of goods that could be obtained by humans through a process of exchange. These goods were life, fertility and security, and the goods given in exchange were various kinds of

foods and objects which were ceremoniously presented to the supernaturals in rituals. Once presented to the deities or ancestors, and claimed their possession, they were distributed among the human participants in the ritual. Having been owned by the deities, the offerings had become sacred *(tapu);* they had been transformed by being penetrated by the supernatural powers. In Stanner's words: "The sacrifice having been received, or being supposed to have been received is returned to the offerers with its nature now transformed and as yield or fruit of sacrifice it is then shared between those who sustained the loss of the sacrificial object. That loss has been requited by a gain, but of an unlike kind, the margin of gain being a motive of the total act" (1959:109–10).

This system of reciprocity is also seen clearly in other situations. The gods would punish a man who did not present offerings or they would simply stop protecting him. This reaction had its exact counterpart in the field of daily social activities on Bellona. To forget or purposely neglect to present a guest with a share when food was distributed was a grave offense which called for retaliation. The neglected person would feel humiliated *(pa'a)* and become angry *('ika'ika),* and he would either start a fight or compensate by inviting the offender to a feast in which he purposely neglected to present him with part of the distributed food.

The relation of man to gods also in another way resembled relations between humans. It was not one of complete submission. If a deity was believed to have harmed a worshipper, counteraction might be carried out. One might either swear against the gods by calling them obscene names or in other ways humiliate them, or one might use violence. The goddess Sikingimoemoe stole Sengeika's brother (page 60) and Sengeika retaliated by destroying the sacred objects of the goddess. Gods killed P.'s wife, and P. took revenge by neglecting to present them with offerings (page 55.)

Thus the supernaturals not only constituted the organizing forces for the world which surrounded the individual, but also enabled the individual to perform certain transactions with powers greater than his own and these were patterned after his own relations with his fellows. This system of transactions may in its simplest form be illustrated as follows



The constant flow of goods and services between these three groups bound together the persons involved in a set of mutual obligations.

At first glance one might perhaps receive the impression that the illustration merely supports the Durkheimian theory that the religion of a tribe helps hold the tribe together; but if we keep in mind that the transactions may be of various kinds, ranging from obligations to kill or harm to lavish exchanges of gifts, it will be obvious that the model does not show that the three groups involved in these

mutual obligations are bound together. Moreover, the men and supernaturals symbolized by the three boxes were not constantly the same. The system might be operated according to specific situations. We have shown how the supernaturals invoked differed according to the demands of the performers of the rituals. The illustration thus does not show a fixed, static situation in which an equilibrium exists and in which the reciprocity is balanced, but a system within which transactions take place and which may be operated so as to fulfill existing needs.

In the present study we have not endeavored to analyse the operations which take place within this system. This can only be done through an analysis of the ritual acts. Our aim has been to demonstrate the contents of the boxes in the illustration and to show how the Bellonese beliefs were organized.

Reciprocity between man, gods, and ancestors was, however, only one aspect of the relationship to supernaturals. There were supernaturals with whom no transactions took place, namely the culture heroes and the *'apai*.

The culture heroes had participated in the creation of the world, but they were believed no longer to exist, and communication with them was therefore not possible. This seems to fit neatly into the Bellonese world-view. What the culture heroes had created had been given its final form, once and for all, and there seemed no reason why the Bellonese should enter into transactions with the creators now that the world existed in its final shape. The culture heroes had created things basic to human society, and they were not likely to change with changes in the social order. Man's concern was that these things and these human relations continued to exist, but this was a matter concerning the relationship between man and the deities who controlled them, not the relationship between man and culture heroes.

Nor with the *'apai* were there exchanges. The *'apai* had nothing good to offer, but only acts which tended to disrupt human life. Offerings to them were of no help. From a Bellonese point of view this seems a completely rational way of explaining unavoidable misfortunes. The Bellonese knew from experience that bad luck sometimes fell upon a man in spite of the fact that he had duly presented the gods and ancestors with offerings and avoided any breach of taboos. The world had distress and disaster built into it which could not be avoided by any transactional operations.

In the present analysis we have only sporadically discussed the relations of religious beliefs to social control.

We have seen that beliefs in supernaturals constituted a system which furnished a conceptual basis for transactions which might be carried out so as to enforce social relations.

We have also seen that certain aspects of morale were enforced by reference to the behavior of gods and to religious taboos. But religious beliefs did not furnish the Bellonese with a complete charter of norms for moral behavior, and the breaches of behavioral norms were not believed punished in a post-mortal existence.

Bellonese beliefs, however, supplied norms for a system of transactions within the three boxes shown above. Analyses of how social control was enforced on Bellona, and of how conflicts were solved, might be carried out in the light of the actual transactional operations taking place within the society, but they cannot be made on the basis of the present discussion which has only been concerned with a presentation of the supernaturals acting in this transactional play.

Our review of the beliefs concerning supernaturals has come to an end. We have done little more than point to the correlation of these beliefs with the relationship of the Bellonese to the world which surrounds him. We have not answered such basic questions as why the Bellonese has religious beliefs at all, or why he seems to

conform to the norms of the religion. Many other basic questions have not been answered. Perhaps some readers will wonder whether any relevant questions at all have been answered about the nature of a human society.

Let us, therefore, conclude this study with a quotation which may console, if not the readers then at least the present author. In his book on religion among the primitives, Goode (1951:33) says: "Perhaps we should for a while confine our empirical researches to the causal interrelationships between various behavior patterns within the society. We can then learn which patterns are less, or more, connected with one another, and how they are related. With an increasing body of such data, we can discover which groups of patterns are more closely connected than others, as against others which are more peripheral. Our present research tools seem as yet incapable of solving the research design problems needed to demonstrate exactly what are the requirements for societal maintenance, or what are the alternative activities which can have such functions. The approach suggested is that we become skeptical of even the causal interrelationships, and especially their societal contribution, until we can demonstrate clearly the steps of the causal process. Each attempt at demonstration, including the present one, is worthy of consideration as an approximation, but we must be aware of our own limitations."

APPENDIX: THE SACRED AND THE PROFANE. A SURVEY OF SOME BELLONESE CONCEPTS

Throughout this book frequent reference has been made to sacredness or profaneness of supernaturals, humans, places, and objects. As these are key concepts for an understanding of religious beliefs on Bellona we shall here attempt a contextualized description of some of the Bellonese terms for sacred and profane, presenting a number of Bellonese utterances and explanations concerning these concepts and through an analysis attempt to extract the precise meaning of these terms.

Similar approaches, yet far more exhaustive and conclusive than the present, have been made by Firth (1940) in his study of *mana* on Tikopia, and by Johansen (1954, 1958) in his analyses of Maori religion.

The word *tapu* is frequently used of persons and objects connected with the religious sphere. We shall consider some utterances in which this word is used.

Gods and worshipped ancestors were said to be *tapu: "Na 'atua noko tapu, tapu ma'u na sa'amaatu'a; te tapu e tasi ma ta'a na 'atua,* the gods were *tapu,* the worshipped ancestors were also *tapu;* the *tapu* was the same as that of the gods." *Tapu* appears here preceded by a verbal particle *(noko)* as well as by a nominal particle *(te).* The Bellonese conceive of *a tapu* as well as to *be tapu.* In the sentence given above it is said that the *tapu* of the gods is the same as that of the ancestors. This might seem an indication that ancestors and gods were equally *tapu.* The following statement by Kaipua will, however, illustrate that this is not the case: *"Na 'atua noko hu'aitapu, ka manga mi'itapu na sa'amaatu'a,* the gods were very *tapu,* and the worshipped ancestors were a little *tapu.* This may seem to be a contradiction of the first sentence, but it is not. In the first sentence reference is to the quality of *tapu,* in the next to the degree. *Tapu* of worshipped supernaturals is the same thing but there may be more or less of it.

Tapu has a connotation of sacredness, or, if one prefers Radcliffe-Brown's term, ritual value (1952:139). Ma'itaki said: *"Tehainga'atua e na'a a pengea manga sehu i te ngangi kae tena tapu manga i te nganguenga,* people know that Tehainga'atua travels in the sky, but his *tapu* is in the temples." This concept was expanded by Saungongo who said: *"E tapu te nganguenga i te e iai te 'ata o Tehainga'atua ma te 'esi'esi ai a pengea o he'e maasoko te boo kinai,* the temple is *tapu* because the spiritual self of Tehainga'atua is in it, and people are careful there and do not approach it [the temple] indiscriminately." Saungongo also said: *"E tapu te takotonga i te e iai te 'ata o te sa'amaatu'a,* the grave is *tapu* because the spiritual self of the ancestor is in it."

These statements reveal the duplicity of the concept. *Tapu* is connected with the presence of supernaturals, and in the last utterance by Saungongo a connotation of restrictions seems to emerge.

Consider the following sentences given by various informants as an explanation of certain religious concepts: *"Te baka'atua e hungu i te ngenga, e hakatino kinai a Tehu'aingabenga; te tapu o te 'atua e i te pengea ngiu 'atua,* the *baka'atua* [a religious official] is anointed with turmeric, Tehu'aingabenga manifests himself in him; the *tapu* of the deity is in the person performing a ritual."

Tapu is here the sacredness of the deity.

"Te tapu o te 'atua e hano ki te toe penu, manga kai ai na maatu'a, the *tapu* of

the deity is transferred [from the god] to the remaining refuse, only the land holders eat from it." *Toe penu* (remaining refuse) is a ritual term for a certain part of the offering that has been dedicated to Tehainga'atua and is ready for re-distribution among the participants in the ritual. *Tapu* is in this sentence obviously a term for the sacredness transferred from the deity to the offering, but avoidance is also implied, only the (male) land holders, that is people who have been initiated as priest-chiefs, are allowed to eat of the *tapu* food.

The apparent ambiguity is even clearer when we consider utterances containing the phrase . . . *tapu ki* . . . or . . . *tapu kia* . . . : ". . . *ma te tapu ai na 'angongo kia Nguatupu'a ma tona tunga'ane o he'e kai ai na tamangiki* . . ., . . . and the *'angongo* fish were *tapu* for Nguatupu'a and her brother, and so children did not eat [them]" (T61:6.) The reason for the *tapu* is that the two gods have eaten *'angongo* fish. In this context *tapu* might be translated "restricted for" or "the exclusive possession of." This is also the case in this sentence: "*Te bao noko tapu kia Mata'u,* the forest was *tapu* for Mata'u." (T19) Mata'u is the non-worshipped god who controls the forest.

"*Na pengea ngiu 'atua noko tapu ki na 'atua,* people performing rituals were *tapu* for the deities." This was also expressed more specifically: "*Te 'atua noko hakatino ki te pengea ngiu 'atua, he'e ungu kinai, manga iai te tapu o te 'atua, e anga ki te pengea,* the god manifested himself in the person performing rituals, did not enter him, the *tapu* of the god was in him, [the god] appeared as the person." The consequence of this was that restrictions were laid on men who performed rituals. They must avoid certain things and acts. They were only allowed to eat foods which were classified as *'inati* or *angatonu.* (See 4.2.) They could not sleep under a dirty mat or tapa or with their head on the floor. They could not make fire or approach the kitchen house (in fact this was forbidden for any grown man.) They could not go to the places normally used as lavatories but had to defecate in the gardens. They could not swear or use obscene words or scold. The Bellonese gave as a reason for these restrictions that the religious officials were *tapu* for *(tapu ki)* the gods, and that the gods would become nauseated *(baaisaisa)* from their contact with unclean things. On the other hand the *tapu* of the performers of rituals also worked the opposite way. During the period when rites were performed the priest-chiefs must avoid intercourse with their wives. No one could touch their hair. This list of avoidances is far from exhaustive but may serve as an indication of the concepts. As for the latter restrictions, the Bellonese said that sexual intercourse and the touching of hair was forbidden because intimate relations with a *tapu* person would cause affliction *(nga'u).*

Sacredness and restriction was on Bellona, as in many other cultures, two sides of the same relationship. The Bellonese said that the priest-chief was *tapu,* but they also said that it was *tapu* for a priest-chief of the temples to make fire *(noko tapu ki na tunihenua o na nganguenga te hai ahi). Tapu* here obviously means forbidden, but the phrase . . . *tapu ki (kia)* . . . is used both to indicate a close connection with the sphere of the supernaturals, and also a restriction.

A curious example of how a European may be bewildered by the apparent ambiguity in the use of the term *tapu* may be found in the following statements by Sa'engeika. During a discussion of the rituals for planting tubers in the gardens he explained that the planter "*hai tona kupu ngiu 'atua ke tapu te 'umanga,* recited his ritual formulas to make the garden *tapu.*" A little later he said: "*He'e tapu na 'umanga, haka'esi'esi i te hakapupungu ke hai te manga'e,* gardens were not *tapu,* just subject to circumspection because a *manga'e* offering was to be made (from their crop)."

Sa'engeika did not contradict himself. In the first sentence he used the word *tapu*

to indicate that the crop of the garden was made restricted for the gods. It could only be used for one purpose, namely offerings to these gods. In the second sentence he explained that the tubers were not to be avoided in themselves. They just had to be treated with care because they were reserved for the deities.

Not only the worshipped deities and ancestors were *tapu*. Even the *'apai* had this characteristic. Takiika explained that *"te tapu o na 'apai noko i Ahanga,* the *tapu* of the *'apai* was in Ahanga (the beach on the north coast of Bellona)." Another informant said that people could become mad *(unguhia)* from the *tapu* of these deities. He also said that the *tapu* of the *'apai* was a bad thing *(te me'a maase'i)*. As for other uses of the word *tapu* in connection with *'apai,* see Chapter 7.

We have mentioned above that the temple was penetrated by the *tapu* of Tehainga'atua. Like temples, sacred objects were considered *tapu*. Sa'engeika explained: *"Te ma'ungitehenua te hakatino o Tehainga'atua, e tapu te 'oso kinai ma te moe i tena ngango. Nimaa 'oso kinai he pengea, nga'ua,* the *ma'ungitehenua* pole [see page 75] was the embodiment of Tehainga'atua, it was *tapu* to touch it or to sleep under it. If a person touched it he would become afflicted." The ritual mats, tapas, spears, and other objects were also *tapu*. Only the religious officials who were themselves *tapu* could touch them. Temoa explained about the sacred paddle used in rituals and belonging to Tehainga'atua that after it had been carved *"manga hakapupungu ki te 'atua o hai ai tona sua, tapu kinai,* it was proclaimed as for the god who thus got his paddle, *tapu* for him."

Tapu could also be used in a profane sense: *"Te mouku manga tapu ki te pengea e pata ai tona manaha,* the bush is *tapu* for the person whose homestead lies close to it." This was said in explaining that a man owned the bush behind his homestead and that he had the first right to pick fruits, gather wild tubers, collect firewood, and fell trees there. I was a little doubtful whether this use of the word was an innovation, introduced after the old religious taboos had been lifted when Christianity was accepted. All my informants assured that the word was used in the same sense before 1938.

But whereas a thing or place might be *tapu* for *(tapu ki)* a man, the Bellonese would never talk of *te tapu* (the *tapu*) of a mortal, unless they wanted to indicate that the man was imbued with the *tapu* of deities. Under normal circumstances there was no such thing as a man's or a woman's *tapu*. In a group discussion with a number of older and younger Bellonese I asked whether one could say that the *tapu* of a man could be transferred to the objects owned by him. They all said that "this is not the talk of Bellona here. A man has no *tapu* that can go anywhere, but a thing may be *tapu* for him." I then asked whether one could say that the *'ata* (spiritual self) of a man was embodied in his possessions. Most of the people present said that this was not the case. One man, however, said that "maybe it was so; but I don't know for sure." However, under certain circumstances there seems to have been a belief of a close connection between a man and his belongings, namely when the owner was dead. In T125(A,B) Tehoakimatu'a is bitten by a shark during a voyage from Rennell to Bellona. Before he dies he sets his *baukianga* fighting club afloat in the hope that it may drift to Bellona as a sign that he has died at sea. When people find it at the coast they take the club and *"hakaingoa te tino o Tehoakimatu'a o tanu i Ghongau,* called it Tehoakimatu'a's body and buried it in Ghongau." (T125[B].) When a man died at sea it was common procedure to make a grave for him and bury some of his most precious belongings, his priestly staff or his weapons, in it, and perform grave rituals at the place in the same way as rituals were made at graves in which bodies were interred. Puia explained that the *ma'ungi* of the dead person was in the grave. Others said that it was the *'ata,* but that this was the same as the *ma'ungi*.

In Bellonese, *tapu* had the connotation of "restricted for," "the exclusive possession of," and "something which calls for avoidance or care," and when used in connection with supernaturals it also carries the meaning of "sacredness." We shall discuss this in more detail below.

As mentioned there were various degrees of *tapu*. Throughout the preceding chapters we have seen that the sky gods were considered the most *tapu*. Less *tapu* were the district gods. The *tapu* of worshipped ancestors was less than that of the district gods. The culture heroes were not considered *tapu*, and the *hiti* were said to be only *mi'itapu* (a little *tapu*). These beliefs penetrated all religious activities on Bellona and they come out clearly in the rituals. Every object, place, or act connected with the sky gods called for the utmost care. People were said to "*mataku ki te tapu o na 'atua ngangi*, fear the *tapu* of the sky gods."

The sacredness of the two sky gods in Ngabenga was so strong as to have an almost physical quality. In T1(A):11 are two roads, one walked on by mortals and the other by the two sky gods of Ngabenga. The first road is cold, the other is warm (N1[A]:11). A similar concept is found in T50(C):1. (In T50[B]:11 the order is reversed.) Informants explained that the heat of the road was due to the *tapu* of the two deities, which they compared to the warmth of a seat on which a person has just been sitting.

In rituals the offerings presented to the sky gods were *hu'aitapu* (very *tapu*) but not warm. When these offerings were to be distributed among the guests they were first desacralized gradually by declaring them the possession of the district deities, and finally the possession of the ancestors in order "to diminish the *tapu*." An example may be found in the ritual formula used in connection with the distribution of offerings during garden work. After the food had been converted from *angatonu* to *'inati* (see page 39) the priest-chief addressed the ancestor and said:

Tuiaika'one! Te 'inati o tou 'aitu 'amo. Toake ia te koe, ke noho kia te koe tona taputapu, na'e ku singi ai ngiunga ki tou 'aitu 'amo.	Tuiaika'one [honorific term of address to worshipped ancestors]! [Here is] the sacred share belonging to your deity-carried-on-shoulders [Tehu'aingabenga]. It is lifted up for you so that its little *tapu* may stay with you, because the offering of it to your deity-carried-on-the-shoulders has come to an end.

In this formula the priest-chief desacralizes the food by asking the ancestor to keep the *tapu* of the offering. The idea is that the food thereby becomes not-*tapu*, or profane *(tanga)*, and people may eat of it. *Taputapu* is a diminutive form of *tapu*. The food is first very sacred from being the possession of the sky gods. It is then handed over to the district gods whereby it becomes less sacred. Then it is dedicated to the ancestors and becomes even less sacred. Finally this sacredness is stripped off the food by the formula given above, and it is now *tanga* (profane) and fit for human consumption.

Violation of a supernatural *tapu* resulted in affliction *(nga'u)*. Sa'engeika explained that *nga'u* was "*te tapu o te hakatahinga*, the *tapu* of a [ritual] feast." Only people who were initiated as priests could recite the ritual formulas or handle the sacred objects. If anyone else did so he would become sick or die from the *tapu*. Consequently sacred words, acts, or objects had to be handled with care. Sa'engeika said: "'*Esi'esi a pengea ki te nganguenga i te me'a ngaa e tapu*, people treat the temple carefully because it is *tapu*." *'Esi'esi* is the common word for avoidance. A group of former priest-chiefs explained that the word was especially

used about one's relations to things which were *tapu* for the deities *(hu'aihai ki na me'a tapu ki na 'atua)* but that people also *'esi'esi* other things: "*'Esi'esi ma'u a pengea o he'e kai i na me'a pingo,* people also avoided eating things with a bad smell."

Tapu was thus an indicator of the exclusiveness of a certain sphere. A place or object might be *tapu* for a man. In Bellonese this could mean both that it was his private property and that others had little or no rights to use it. The word might also be used to indicate a social or ritual barrier between a person and an object. The incompatibility of these two points of view is only apparent. To the Bellonese they were two sides of the same thing, and from the context in which the word is used it will be obvious whether avoidance or exclusive possession is stressed.

Although *tapu* was used about restrictions in the daily sphere of life, it seems to have been most commonly connected with man's relationship to the supernaturals. Violation of the *tapu* of the supernatural sphere was dangerous, and we may ask why this was so. What was it that made things, places, or words connected with the gods so dangerous? The Bellonese answer is that it was the power or strength *('ao)* of the deities. *'Ao* means unusual abilities or power. A man might have *'ao,* but this did not necessarily have anything to do with the gods. *'Ao 'atua* (power of the gods) was something special. The Bellonese defined this power as thunder *(hatutingi),* lightning *('uinga),* power to perform miracles *(tanganga),* and the sacredness of the temples *(te tapu o na nganguenga).* In T30 thunder and lightning were shown to be sacred for Tehainga'atua, and in Chapter 5 we have shown that these natural forces were controlled by the sky gods. *Tanganga* is a term covering acts which needed power different from that possessed by humans. Supernaturals had the ability to perform *tanganga* (T21:2 and 7), humans not. *Tanganga* were usually violent acts, such as earthquakes, or violent storms, or miraculous acts. 'Isoso's lifting up of the *ghaimenga* tree cut down by Ngata (T19) was referred to as *tanganga.*

The sacredness of the temples was a result of supernatural *'ao.* It was also *'ao* that made it possible for the deities and ancestors to give and take lives of humans, to make gardens prosper or die, to fill the ocean with fish and to make them bite on hooks and be caught in nets. It is only natural that a power as strong as that of the deities called for extraordinary carefulness. A man did not go to the house of another man without observing certain behavioral norms for fear that the violation of such norms might bring revenge; likewise people did not go indiscriminately to temples for fear of the revenge of the deities. This revenge was stronger than that available for humans, because the power of supernaturals was greater.

Because gods possessed this power they could give life to man and plants, but life *(ma'ungi)* did not in itself contain any of the godly power. There was, however, a Bellonese tradition about something called *te 'ao mai matangi* (the power coming from the east). The earliest ancestors were believed to have had this power. Temoa said: "*E hakatu'u i te boo mai 'anga a maatu'a mai 'Ubea, he'e na'a e au na 'atu e 'oti kinai, te 'atu e iai a Tehoakimatu'a po si'ai,* it began with [our] ancestors' arrival from 'Ubea, I do not know the generation in which it ended. whether in the generation of Tehoakimatu'a or not." Temoa further explained that "*te to'a noko manga i nga'aso noko kongaa na noho: noko he'e hai ngata'a kinai ni hai 'anga. Te to'a nei, te 'ao o na 'atua,* this strength only existed in the old days, and was as follows: no act was difficult for it. This strength was the power of the deities." Sanga'eha gave an example of this power: Taamongi, a man living on Rennell in Generation 9 possessed the power of the gods. He once carried one hundred coconuts in his hands from Niupani on the southwest coast of Rennell to the temple called Manga'e near Hatangua, an arduous 15 miles' walk. "But in later generations

people were different," Sanga'eha said, "the power of the deities had come to an end."

It was firmly denied by the Bellonese that a man's unusual strength, power, intelligence or good looks, were due to the power of the gods. The gods were not believed to have favored particular persons of later generations with extraordinary abilities: "*Te to'a manga hano i te pengea,* strength depends on the in individual; *te 'ingo'ingo he'e na'a he pengea po te me'a mai hea,* no one knows where intelligence comes from." Persons of high social status were not believed to be more *tapu* than others, and the *tapu* of a priest-chief did not make him physically stronger or more intelligent that others; nor did it bestow upon him powers to create miracles. In recent generations a person's skills were not attributed to his relations to supernaturals.

The common Polynesian concept of a particular *mana* connected with chieftainship seemed absent. The word *mana* or *manamana* existed in the language of Rennell and Bellona, but only as a poetic term for thunder (T97:1 and 23; T70:2). In the rituals the officials entered the *tapu* sphere, and on behalf of their kinsmen they requested good health, security, and fertility from certain supernaturals. Man and gods both being *tapu* created an equality that was necessary for the performance of transaction between the two spheres. If man had been profane and only the gods *tapu,* the power of the deities would have afflicted the performers of the rituals and resulted in sickness or death.

In concluding the rituals the priest-chief and other officials recited a formula in which deities and ancestors were asked to remove the *tapu* and make the performers *taungaasu'u,* a word meaning to be free of disease as well as of *tapu,* and in the latter sense to be identical with *tanga,* profane.

In a subsequent analysis of Bellonese rituals we hope to discuss the concepts of sacred and profane in more detail.

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