



THE AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL UNIVERSITY

Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies

State **Society** *and*
Governance *in* **Melanesia**

NARRATIVES OF GOVERNMENT AND CHURCH AMONG THE IMYAN OF PAPUA/ IRIAN JAYA, INDONESIA

Government agents, foreign corporations and aid agents coming into contact with people such as the Imyan described in this paper, should not assume that they can ease their way by having an understanding of "Papuan values" or even something as specific as "Imyan traditional values". The values of the Imyan are dynamic and under stress. They are products of the recent past, particular Imyan perceptions of who they were, and who they might be. Moreover, they are shaped through increasing discrepancies between Imyan experiences and expectations that show no sign of abating. This paper illustrates that understanding the Imyan entails not only knowing that these Papuan people encountered Protestantism, Dutch colonialism and an attempted absorption into the Indonesian state, but also being aware of Imyan understandings, adaptation, and assessment of those 'experiences and teachings.

INTRODUCTION

Around the same time as the commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the proclamation of Indonesia's independence (17 August 1995) Imyan speakers in the village of Haha (Teminabuan district, south western Bird's Head or Kepala Burung, Papua / Irian Jaya) commemorated the 48th anniversary of the arrival of their missionary hero.' At that time, the Imyan had experienced some 34 years of New Order administration and 25 years of *Repelita* (Five-year Development Plans). The government stressed national independence as a national victory and local civil servants regularly gave speeches about the spectacular social and economic advancements (*pembangunan*)^z of Indonesia's New Order government. They stressed that the goal of the development plans is to bring welfare and industrial take off, Imyan on the other hand appeared to be convinced that it was more important to dwell upon the moral and Christian achievements that had occurred since the Gospel was brought to them.

The Imyan, numbering more than twelve hundred, are the Imyan-Tehit speakers of the north western part of the administrative subdistrict of Teminabuan. The subdistrict has a relatively dense population of about nine

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The contribution of AusAID to this series is acknowledged with appreciation.

thousand people, of which some fifteen hundred are Buginese and Butonese from south Sulawesi and about two hundred Javanese transmigrants. The Imyan live in the villages of Sasenek and Sodrofoyo, nestled in the lush green hills in the north western part of the subdistrict, and the villages of Haha, Tofot, and Woloin to the south. The southern villages are located near the swampy mangrove tidal flats of the upper Seremuk River. While the northern Imyan cultivate a variety of tubers, bananas, and peppers, the people living near the coast mainly harvest sago. Together with the Yatfle, Sawyat, and several Maybrat groups, the Imyan consider themselves *Nasfa*, people of the hills. The *Nasfa* share a tradition of male initiation called *wuon*, a ritual central to concepts of social relations, identity, power and wealth. Imyan are tied together in a so-called *sorsorat* customary network of collaboration and ritual practices centred on *wuon*. These practices are now defunct due to missionary activity and government interference, but in their reflections on past, present and future identities many Imyan hold *wuon* and *sorsorat* central.

Considering commemorations of pioneer missionaries who have become 'heroes' of a local Christian mythology among people of the D'Entrecasteaux Archipelago and Epi islanders in central Vanuatu, Young (1997) shows the extent to which national narratives are interwoven in Melanesian Christian celebrations. Re-enactments of the arrival of the heroes appear most significantly as narratives that people tell to themselves to make or remake their local identity. Young concludes that 'if commemorations of missionary heroes can be construed in any way as 'narrating the nation' then they are in a markedly Christian key' (1997: 124).

In another investigation of narratives of nation, Clark (1997: 71) characterises Papua New Guinea Highlanders' worldview as "Melanesian Gothic" to indicate the extent to which contemporary Melanesian worlds are 'based on the Bible and its laws, morality and millennial prophecies'. Clark points out that in contrast to pre-nationalistic Europe, these worlds also comprise 'a universe in which computers, videos, Toyotas, and international flights are observable and available (if not to all!)' (1997: 71). It is in this world that Highlanders imagine the state and the government, and new forms of consciousness arise. For Huh people, as Clark notices, these new forms of consciousness are as yet precursors

not to nationalism, 'but merely to a form of ethnicity which unites Huli-an unity which was once expressed in the mythology and rituals of ground fertility ... - in potential opposition to the state' (1997: 89).

In Papua, the landing of the first missionaries on Mansinam Island in the Cenderawasih Bay in 1855 (see Kamma 1976: 53) is throughout the territory celebrated as a nationalist event. People emphasise that these missionaries blessed the land of the Papuans to become God's chosen land, reaffirming its ancient sacredness. Experiencing a history of harsh oppression, countless violations of human rights, and rampant exploitation of natural resources, many Papuans tend to relate the event to the glorification of Papua or their own territory as a Christian land opposed to Indonesia's Islamic majority (Timmer 2000a: 53-54). The Imyan case that I discuss in this paper shows that such Imyan unity is not only an instance of Melanesian Gothicism, but that it also leads to local political struggles that either strengthen or undermine positions of individuals and descent groups. Debates about village leadership, reflecting both local histories and people's reactions to the worlds of the church and the government mark the social conditions in which millenarian critique arises and the cultural forms it takes.

Imyan messianic stories stress the excellence of the Imyan past in terms of a completion (cf, Mimica 1988); the biblical end of all things appears as a restoration of the ancient unity between the sky and the earth. Their millennial narratives heap criticism on ineffective church rituals belonging to *gereja* (church, Christianity) that fail to deliver material and spiritual goods, as well as on the government (*pemerintah*) whose promises of development do not easily materialise. These stories indicate that Imyan attach growing importance to finding effective ritual means to restore completion of which a free West Papuan state with Jesus Christ as its President forms a part.

To understand the meaning of these stories it is necessary to look closely some recent shifts in the field of Imyan cultural domains or traditions of knowledge. I focus on the tradition of the religious that has taken on local notions since Imyan encountered mission Christianity, condemning 'traditional religion' and bringing new forms of guilt and fear in terms of sin and the fate of sinners. These notions have developed into a discrete realm of the religious that Imyan gloss as *gereja*. *Gereja* comprises

ideas and practices related to a clear church organisation, fixed Christian rituals, and a body of knowledge contained in a single book, the Bible. The most significant aspect of the *gereja* tradition of knowledge is that many Imyan tend to take seriously the widespread rumours that materialisation of The Revelation of St John the Divine is imminent. Imyan scenarios of the end of all things not only suggest that tomorrow will not be a continuation of today, but they are also moral messages about Imyan people's own community.

The other tradition that I discuss in this paper is *pemerintah*, which, among other meanings, comprises local ideas about the state ideologies of *pembangunan* that classify Imyan as second-class citizens, particularly in the context of development projects. In many respects, *pembangunan* condenses ideas about the state' and provides a discursive framework for conceptualising and managing relationships with the government.' The *pembangunan policy* as it is executed most profoundly through the implementation of development projects takes hold and manifests itself in the local setting in terms of lack of sociality. The sociality that people feel is lacking relates to ideas about a coherent and pleasant companionable group. Imyan seek a society united in purpose and with all people at ease with each other. Besides criticising themselves for lacking this sociality, they blame the government for placing them as unequal subjects in the modern world. The latter mentioned critique assumes forms that relate to feelings of dependence or inevitable threat from outside.' As *pembangunan* promises wealth and a better future, it gives shape to Imyan desires that are believed to be hard to realise because of the community's shortcomings. These beliefs sprout from a particular dynamic of negotiating difference that is triggered by decades of insults from government agents and condemnations by missionaries and present-day church leaders. Both the *pemerintah* and *gereja* traditions trace their origins to outside influences but have developed distinctively in interaction with each other and with existing 'traditional' traditions of knowledge. In this complex dynamic of cultural practices of Imyan villagers in the context of local and global power relations, *gereja* and *pemerintah* have become specific conceptions of modes of activity.

In the field of competing ontologies, a newer tradition called *agama* ('religion') is becoming increasingly powerful as it opposes or supports the other traditions and is mainly

perceived and lived by Imyan as a cosmology that positions them in a personal, local, sacred (and largely secret or hidden) world. *Agama* in fact belongs to the church but is perceived as originally Imyan. *Agama* is a pillar of the Pancasila state ideology and belongs to the New Order policy that promotes a double conversion. Indonesians must declare membership to one of the five religions recognised by the government - Buddhism, Catholicism, Hindu-Bali, Islam, or Protestantism - and pledge allegiance as a citizen of the Indonesian State. As laid down in the first principle of Pancasila all citizens are expected to believe in a singular God (*Tuhan Yang Maha Esa*).¹ If people convert to one of these five religions, they fulfil one of the main duties of every Indonesian citizen. The policy is especially designed for 'underdeveloped primitive peoples' in out-of-the-way places (*masyarakat terasing*, see Koentjaraningrat 1993). These peoples have yet to accept religion (*belum beragama*) because they still hold 'superstitions' (*kepercayaan*). Not surprisingly, most indigenous people in the province of Papua are considered *belum beragama*. Effectively opposing and undermining this classification, Imyan say that their 'traditional' religion, in combination with another religion that is also marginal in Indonesian, is *agama*. Perhaps even more powerful the fact that the Imyan *agama* arouses expectations for the Millennium.

What millenarianism among Imyan shares with Melanesian cargo cults, cargo movements, or Melanesian religion in general, is a 'keen awareness of limitation, a refusal of self-satisfied tendencies to cultural inertia' (Jorgensen 1994: 130). In the Imyan case, this keen awareness is reflected in questions of renewal and redirection of group life values: a concern over deterioration of morals which obstruct the building of a good Christian community that is prepared for Christ's coming (and related prosperity or cargo'). Imyan expect the cargo to come when their relationship with the dead is restored after Jesus has inaugurated the Kingdom on Earth, that is, when they sky and the earth become one and Imyan can again engage in direct exchange with sky deities and the dead. Imyan stories of power and divine forebears begin at the beginning of things and end at the end of time; godlike forebears maintained close relations with the other worlds of power and end with the return of Jesus Christ at the end of time.'

Below I address the question of human cultural practice in the context of the above mentioned power relations in order

to discover the social conditions in which millenarian critique arises and the cultural forms it takes. I discuss Imyan peoples' reaction to Indonesian development projects and a village-based struggle for power highlighting the use of traditions of knowledge traceable to recently introduced institutions (government and church) in order to exemplify the way millenarian critique leads to the emergence of *agama*. In conclusion, I discuss the extent to which critique of their society can or may become effective in transforming social life.

MUNGBEANS AND AUTONOMY

In 1996, the government implemented a new project within the framework of a national IDT program for 'underdeveloped villages' aiming to reduce the 'social and economic disparity' of Haha villagers whose lives were considered *teninggal parah* ('seriously left behind by progress')." The new project consisted of the production of mungbeans (*kacang ijo*) as a cash crop in Imyan villages. After several information and instruction sessions, Haha villagers had slowly and with little complaint begun to work for the project. The beans to be used as sowing seeds were provided free by the government. If this initial phase was successful, it was planned that they would then continue using a part of the initial harvest as seeds or buy new beans in the town of Teminabuan using the funds provided by the IDT program.

After two days of instruction by two Ambonese men from the department of agriculture of the district government, some twenty men and fifteen women worked for four days to prepare a garden for the mungbeans. When the garden was ready, the villagers collected two ten kilo bags of bean seeds from town, cleared the garden, planted the beans and regularly weeded the new crops for two months. Right from the beginning, some villagers were critical of the project, saying that it would never last long because of the time-consuming work needed to get a good harvest.

When, after a month, the garden promised a good yield, others began to add that it would be virtually impossible to find an outlet for the product because Javanese immigrants in the district had already been selling beans for years. Haha villagers would only be able to compete with them if they lowered the price to such a level that no one would be motivated to carry the heavy loads to town. During these discussions, everybody seemed to have forgotten

that the government controls the co-operative that pays a fixed price for the beans and that also the church co-operative had decided to add ten percent to this price.¹

People started expressing serious doubts about the project after a prayer session at Amos Mejefat's house. As head and clergyman of the village, Amos (49) used this session to remind people about the promises made to them and that those working in the mungbean-garden should continue trying to finish the job, collect the money and thus set an example to others. After a severe speech he tried to motivate them by suggesting that they set up a competition with surrounding villages that were also engaged in the IDT beans project. His attempt to keep a close watch on the fulfilment of the project, as he was told to do as representative of the government, did not do any good.

The harvesting took three days and when the beans were dry, put in bags, and readied for transportation, nobody felt like carrying the heavy loads to town (a 15 kilometre walk through a muddy forest). People gathered in the empty garden to discuss the matter. Amos was also present and told the people that the hard work required to carry the bags did not provide an acceptable excuse, particularly not for the government officials in Teminabuan who would show up the next week to evaluate the progress of the project. Yuwel Mejefat (48) stood up and explained that it was not the hard work, but that people found it ridiculous to sell the beautiful product to the Indonesians:

Why should we sell this stuff for little money to people who already have enough money to feed their children? Why feed the Indonesians in town and in the city of Sorong? We get very little money in return and stay hungry. If we collect the money then we have to walk back to town, buy beans, and rice at the market, thereby enriching the outsiders [*pendatang*]. With their big salaries the government employees will buy the beans and feed their children. Forget about this project and feed the beans to your family. We have already eaten about a quarter of the harvest and our children love it. Over the past week, my children have eaten beans every morning and they feel healthy. They do not fall asleep in class, as they tend to do when they only get some cold sago jelly for breakfast. Therefore, we should not feed the

Indonesians but ourselves instead.¹⁰

Yuwel's brief for keeping the consumption of mungbeans for the Imyan themselves met with wide approval. It was clearly not the time for Amos to deny Yuwel's argument and he walked home murmuring about *pemerintah* and *pembangunan*. When I visited him a few hours later he told me that he would not support the now widespread enthusiasm for making new gardens to get more beans.

It may sound all right that all villagers should enjoy this good new food, but it does not make sense. We should be concerned with work, *pembangunan*, and God. Read St. John 6: 27 where it says, 'Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life'. As long as Jesus' Kingdom is not here we should serve the government [*pemerintah*] which is also given by God. Yes, but as you whites know and the villagers will probably never understand, working for the government will be rewarded by God. *Pembangunan* also includes becoming good Christians. Just consuming the beans, will not get you anywhere.

When others also joined the discussion, Yuwel again put emphasis on the threat of government harassment and warned villagers that they might not get any *pembangunan* support in the future. In an attempt to satisfy the government with the progress that he was attempting to bring about in the village he simply forbade the sowing of mungbeans. During the session of the IDT-inspection-team a few weeks later, Amos had to really pull out the stops to explain to the officials in front of the villagers that the mungbean project was too time-consuming. Haha villagers already had too much on their mind: harvesting sago to feed their families, getting their children to school, attending church services, hosting prayer services at their houses, and meeting obligations such as marriage payments and paying fines. None of the villagers wanted to let Amos down in front of the officials. Showing such deep-rooted discontent amongst them in front of the powerful outsiders was simply not done. The conclusion of the leader of the IDT team was typical: Imyan villagers are too lazy to plant and harvest mungbeans and too dumb to understand that they would get **pembangunan** by merely selling beans at the market in Teminabuan. The Imyan villages would remain backward, no matter how great the efforts of the Indonesian government.)

The villagers' renunciation of selling mungbeans to Indonesians and their emphasis on the importance of consumption for their own physical and mental strength should first be seen as a negation of *pembangunan*. It is an example of a tendency towards closure, a negation of the confusing outsiders, a turning away from the separate world of Indonesians who come to I myan land to ventilate insults or to execute policies that culturally and economically deprive Papuans. Drawing on *pembangunan* cases elsewhere in Indonesia, Li illustrates that 'the separation of state and society produced through the exercise of planning enabled a community to find new and stronger ways to define "itself and contest state plans that threatened to appropriate crucial resources' (1999: 316). Li clearly shows that this capacity for action or agency is not constituted outside but within the framework of state and society. In that respect *pembangunan* (and *pemerintah*) should be seen as a terrain of struggle, as the routine and intimate compromises through which relations of domination are lived.

The Imyan case indicates the level of compliance achieved at the local level and shows that development involves complex cultural work at the interface between development projects and those they target. The majority of-villagers tend to see work not as a moral duty in *gereja* or *pemerintah* terms, but rather as an important contribution to the building up of self. In line with the traditional domestic mode of production, local consumption of the mungbeans is seen as solidifying the foundations, autonomy, and individuality of Imyan society (compare Maclean 1994). The foundations of society are strengthened because work invested in the new good product, like any work performed for local production, is seen as the basis of human sociality. This is most clearly expressed in Imyan people's critique of recent changes in co-operation and communal work, and shifts toward increasing individuality.

If critique of the government and the church is widespread in the village of Haha, we still need to explore the reasons for the marked difference between the majority's withdrawal into autonomy and Amos' self-representation as someone who supports the power and promises of the government. What were Amos' reasons for taking a position against his own people and does he in fact suggest that compliance with the rules of *pemerintah* will bring prosperity and wealth? A few months later, there were several

individuals planting mungbeans in their gardens. They did not discuss this with Amos and told me that they wanted to produce something that is good for the society. In later collisions with villagers about other things such as the collection of money for the upcoming Christmas celebration, Amos and others who supported him continued to reiterate pemerintah and gereja dogmas to safeguard their position. The way they incorporate these new institutions in their lives suggests that the New Order and Christian doctrines are largely convincing to them. What is most obvious though is the way their appeal to gereja and pemerintah is integral to their involvement in local politics, as I discuss below.

COMPETING ONTOLOGIES

People's reaction to the actual practice of pembangunan and the villagers' emphasis on local production and autonomy, brought about confusion and ontological dilemmas. In expressing the perceived disordered condition, Imyan distinguish between six traditions of knowledge: adat ('custom' or the bygone order), wuon (lore and imagery related to the now defunct male initiation cult), lait (pervasive death-dealing evil powers), gereja (church and mission), pemerintah (colonial and post-colonial governments, modern world, Pancasila state ideology, media, school), and agama (cosmology informed by both mission Christianity and local myths and ideas about sky deities).

In people's talk, there are connections between Imyans' own past and the meanings of the present-day Indonesian State and its ideology, or between the church and the wuon lore. These connections appear to reflect the fact that apparently different traditions of knowledge can assume similar contextual meanings, allowing alternation between different worlds of meaning and possibility. In many instances, this alternation highlights a widespread and recurrently expressed concern with knowledge, in particular the powerful knowledge that was possessed by ritual leaders and employed during wuon rituals.

Wuon was a ritual central to conceptions of social relations, identity, and power and wealth. The idea of cargo or blessing (berkat) appears to be central in Imyan ideas about the powers of wuon and the sky beings (ni mlasa). During rituals, a sky deity named Klen Tadyi takes the ritual leaders and the novices in a flying canoe (kma sene) to the other world where ni mlasa dwell. To ensure a safe return, the canoe is

tied to a large tree with a rope. Once contact is made with ni mlasa, the initiators and the novices bargain for the riches hidden in the forest, the waters and the palace of the sultan at Tidore (see Timmer 2000a, 2000b). Through the offering of gifts of cloth (kain timur) the initiators conciliate the ni mlasa who control these riches or could bring them to the palace.

Imyan exploit their contact with sky beings in a number of ways. For example, they can prepare all the fish in a river for easy capture by non-initiated men, women, and children. In the fishing ritual, still performed in the 1960s, the ritual leaders positioned themselves at the headwaters in preparation for a competitive struggle with Klen Tadyi. Others stood downstream along the banks of the river waiting for the loud sound of Klen Tadyi indicating his surrender to the ritual leaders. Klen Tadyi then prepared the catch for collection by cutting the fish tails and tying the shrimp feelers together to make neat bundles. Soon after they heard the sound, the people would see this yield float to the surface.

Ritual leaders can also ask Klen Tadyi to gather pigs in the forest for later retrieval. The pigs always have one ear cut off. Similarly, during the wuon initiation ritual, Klen Tadyi bestowed aid and gifts to novices in the flying boat. Klen Tadyi guided the boat to places where initiates could gather game for the initiation house. All natural riches that Klen Tadyi controls and gives to man are seen as berkat of 'cargo', or 'blessing'. Similarly, Juillerat (1996: 536) reports recent Yafar (West Sepik) exegeses of myths which 'did not need much touching up to identify European goods with game, a scarce product in a subsistence economy.' Imyan arrive at analogous conclusions as Yafar in maintaining that western 'cargo' is originally part of their cultural heritage.

The parallels that Imyan establish between Christian lore and wuon are apparent if we realise that for them both doctrines are complex interplays of secrecy and sight. The teachers and novices depart into the woods to obey the sky beings of which Klen Tadyi, together with Bitik, is the most important. During their encounters with the sky beings, the lay people who have stayed behind only hear the spirits' voices. Only upon the return of the novices to the public grounds do the people get visible evidence of the presence and workings of the sky deities. Of these, the signs drawn with chalk on the torsos of the newly initiated men are the most significant; they are seen as the signatures of Klen Tadyi and remind people of the first time that Klen Tadyi left his mark on the body j

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Below I address the question of human cultural practice in the context of the above mentioned power relations in order

to discover the social conditions in which millenarian critique arises and the cultural forms it takes. I discuss Imyan peoples' reaction to Indonesian development projects and a village-based struggle for power highlighting the use of traditions of knowledge traceable to recently introduced institutions (government and church) in order to exemplify the way millenarian critique leads to the emergence of *agama*. In conclusion, I discuss the extent to which critique of their society can or may become effective in transforming social life.

MUNGBEANS AND AUTONOMY

In 1996, the government implemented a new project within the framework of a national IDT program for 'underdeveloped villages' aiming to reduce the 'social and economic disparity' of Haha villagers whose lives were considered *teninggalparah* ('seriously left behind by progress')." The new project consisted of the production of mungbeans (*kacang ijo*) as a cash crop in Imyan villages. After several information and instruction sessions, Haha villagers had slowly and with little complaint begun to work for the project. The beans to be used as sowing seeds were provided free by the government. If this initial phase was successful, it was planned that they would then continue using a part of the initial harvest as seeds or buy new beans in the town of Teminabuan using the funds provided by the IDT program.

After two days of instruction by two Ambonese men from the department of agriculture of the district government, some twenty men and fifteen women worked for four days to prepare a garden for the mungbeans. When the garden was ready, the villagers collected two ten kilo bags of bean seeds from town, cleared the garden, planted the beans and regularly weeded the new crops for two months. Right from the beginning, some villagers were critical of the project, saying that it would never last long because of the time-consuming work needed to get a good harvest.

When, after a month, the garden promised a good yield, others began to add that it would be virtually impossible to find an outlet for the product because Javanese immigrants in the district had already been selling beans for years. Haha villagers would only be able to compete with them if they lowered the price to such a level that no one would be motivated to carry the heavy loads to town. During these discussions, everybody seemed to have forgotten

that the government controls the co-operative that pays a fixed price for the beans and that also the church co-operative had decided to add ten percent to this price . . .

People started expressing serious doubts about the project after a prayer session at Amos Mejefat's house. As head and clergyman of the village, Amos (49) used this session to remind people about the promises made to them and that those working in the mungbean-garden should continue trying to finish the job, collect the money and thus set an example to others. After a severe speech he tried to motivate them by suggesting that they set up a competition with surrounding villages that were also engaged in the IDT beans project. His attempt to keep a close watch on the fulfilment of the project, as he was told to do as representative of the government, did not do any good.

The harvesting took three days and when the beans were dry, put in bags, and readied for transportation, nobody felt like carrying the heavy loads to town (a 15 kilometre walk through a muddy forest). People gathered in the empty garden to discuss the matter. Amos was also present and told the people that the hard work required to carry the bags did not provide an acceptable excuse, particularly not for the government officials in Teminabuan who would show up the next week to evaluate the progress of the project. Yuwel Mejefat (48) stood up and explained that it was not the hard work, but that people found it ridiculous to sell the beautiful product to the Indonesians:

Why should we sell this stuff for little money to people who already have enough money to feed their children? Why feed the Indonesians in town and in the city of Sorong? We get very little money in return and stay hungry. If we collect the money then we have to walk back to town, buy beans, and rice at the market, thereby enriching the outsiders [*pendataig*]. With their big salaries the government employees will buy the beans and feed their children. Forget about this project and feed the beans to your family. We have already eaten about a quarter of the harvest and our children love it. Over the past week, my children have eaten beans every morning and they feel healthy. They do not fall asleep in class, as they tend to do when they only get some cold sago jelly for breakfast. Therefore, we should not feed the

Indonesians but ourselves instead. ¹⁰

Yuwel's brief for keeping the consumption of mungbeans for the Imyan themselves met with wide approval. It was clearly not the time for Amos to deny Yuwel's argument and he walked home murmuring about *pemerintah* and *pembangunan*. When I visited him a few hours later he told me that he would not support the now widespread enthusiasm for making new gardens to get more beans.

It may sound all right that all villagers should enjoy this good new food, but it does not make sense. We should be concerned with work, *pembangunan*, and God. Read St. John 6: 27 where it says, 'Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life'. As long as Jesus' Kingdom is not here we should serve the government [*pemerintah*] which is also given by God. Yes, but as you whites know and the villagers will probably never understand, working for the government will be rewarded by God. *Pembangunan* also includes becoming good Christians. Just consuming the beans, will not get you anywhere.

When others also joined the discussion, Yuwel again put emphasis on the threat of government harassment and warned villagers that they might not get any *pembangunan* support in the future. In an attempt to satisfy the government with the progress that he was attempting to bring about in the village he simply forbade the sowing of mungbeans. During the session of the IDT-inspection-team a few weeks later, Amos had to really pull out the stops to explain to the officials in front of the villagers that the mungbean project was too time-consuming. Haha villagers already had too much on their mind: harvesting sago to feed their families, getting their children to school, attending church services, hosting prayer services at their houses, and meeting obligations such as marriage payments and paying fines. None of the villagers wanted to let Amos down in front of the officials. Showing such deeprooted discontent amongst them in front of the powerful outsiders was simply not done. The conclusion of the leader of the IDT team was typical: Imyan villagers are too lazy to plant and harvest mungbeans and too dumb to understand that they would get *pembangunan* by merely selling beans at the market in Teminabuan. The Imyan villages would remain backward, no matter how great the efforts of the Indonesian government.)

The villagers' renunciation of selling mungbeans to Indonesians and their emphasis on the importance of consumption for their own physical and mental strength should first be seen as a negation of *opembangunan*. It is an example of a tendency towards closure, a negation of the confusing outsiders, a turning away from the separate world of Indonesians who come to Imyan land to ventilate insults or to execute policies that culturally and economically deprive Papuans. Drawing on *pembangunan* cases elsewhere in Indonesia, Li illustrates that 'the separation of state and society produced through the exercise of planning enabled a community to find new and stronger ways to define "itself and contest state plans that threatened to appropriate crucial resources' (1999: 316). Li clearly shows that this capacity for action or agency is not constituted outside but within the framework of state and society. In that respect *pembangunan* (and *pemerintah*) should be seen as a terrain of struggle, as the routine and intimate compromises through which relations of domination are lived.

The Imyan case indicates the level of compliance achieved at the local level and shows that development involves complex cultural work at the interface between development projects and those they target. The majority of villagers tend to see work not as a moral duty in *gereja* or *pemerintah* terms, but rather as an important contribution to the building up of self. In line with the traditional domestic mode of production, local consumption of the mungbeans is seen as solidifying the foundations, autonomy, and individuality of Imyan society (compare Maclean 1994). The foundations of society are strengthened because work invested in the new good product, like any work performed for local production, is seen as the basis of human sociality. This is most clearly expressed in Imyan people's critique of recent changes in co-operation and communal work, and shifts toward increasing individuality.

If critique of the government and the church is widespread in the village of Haha, we still need to explore the reasons for the marked difference between the majority's withdrawal into autonomy and Amos' self-representation as someone who supports the power and promises of the government. What were Amos' reasons for taking a position against his own people and does he in fact suggest that compliance with the rules of *opemerintah* will bring prosperity and wealth? A few months later, there were several

individuals planting mungbeans in their gardens. They did not discuss this with Amos and told me that they wanted to produce something that is good for the society. In later collisions with villagers about other things such as the collection of money for the upcoming Christmas celebration, Amos and others who supported him continued to reiterate pemerintah and gereja dogmas to safeguard their position. The way they incorporate these new institutions in their lives suggests that the New Order and Christian doctrines are largely convincing to them. What is most obvious though is the way their appeal to gereja and pemerintah is integral to their involvement in local politics, as I discuss below.

COMPETING ONTOLOGIES

People's reaction to the actual practice of pembangunan and the villagers' emphasis on local production and autonomy, brought about confusion and ontological dilemmas. In expressing the perceived disordered condition, Imyan distinguish between six traditions of knowledge: adat ('custom' or the bygone order), wuon (lore and imagery related to the now defunct male initiation cult), lait (pervasive death-dealing evil powers), gereja (church and mission), pemerintah (colonial and post-colonial governments, modern world, Pancasila state ideology, media, school), and agama (cosmology informed by both mission Christianity and local myths and ideas about sky deities).

In people's talk, there are connections between Imyan's own past and the meanings of the present-day Indonesian State and its ideology, or between the church and the wuon lore. These connections appear to reflect the fact that apparently different traditions of knowledge can assume similar contextual meanings, allowing alternation between different worlds of meaning and possibility. In many instances, this alternation highlights a widespread and recurrently expressed concern with knowledge, in particular the powerful knowledge that was possessed by ritual leaders and employed during wuon rituals.

Wuon was a ritual central to conceptions of social relations, identity, and power and wealth. The idea of cargo or blessing (berkat) appears to be central in Imyan ideas about the powers of wuon and the sky beings (ni mlasa). During rituals, a sky deity named Klen Tadyi takes the ritual leaders and the novices in a flying canoe (kma sene) to the other world where ni mlasa dwell. To ensure a safe return, the canoe is

tied to a large tree with a rope. Once contact is made with ni mlasa, the initiators and the novices bargain for the riches hidden in the forest, the waters and the palace of the sultan at Tidore (see Timmer 2000a, 2000b). Through the offering of gifts of cloth (kain timur) the initiators conciliate the ni mlasa who control these riches or could bring them to the palace.

Imyan exploit their contact with sky beings in a number of ways. For example, they can prepare all the fish in a river for easy capture by non-initiated men, women, and children. In the fishing ritual, still performed in the 1960s, the ritual leaders positioned themselves at the headwaters in preparation for a competitive struggle with Klen Tadyi. Others stood downstream along the banks of the river waiting for the loud sound of Klen Tadyi indicating his surrender to the ritual leaders. Klen Tadyi then prepared the catch for collection by cutting the fish tails and tying the shrimp feelers together to make neat bundles. Soon after they heard the sound, the people would see this yield float to the surface.

Ritual leaders can also ask Klen Tadyi to gather pigs in the forest for later retrieval. The pigs always have one ear cut off. Similarly, during the wuon initiation ritual, Klen Tadyi bestowed aid and gifts to novices in the flying boat. Klen Tadyi guided the boat to places where initiates could gather game for the initiation house. All natural riches that Klen Tadyi controls and gives to man are seen as berkat of 'cargo', or 'blessing'. Similarly, Juillerat (1996: 536) reports recent Yafar (West Sepik) exegeses of myths which 'did not need much touching up to identify European goods with game, a scarce product in a subsistence economy.' Imyan arrive at analogous conclusions as Yafar in maintaining that western 'cargo' is originally part of their cultural heritage.

The parallels that Imyan establish between Christian lore and wuon are apparent if we realise that for them both doctrines are complex interplays of secrecy and sight. The teachers and novices depart into the woods to obey the sky beings of which Klen Tadyi, together with Bitik, is the most important. During their encounters with the sky beings, the lay people who have stayed behind only hear the spirits' voices. Only upon the return of the novices to the public grounds do the people get visible evidence of the presence and workings of the sky deities. Of these, the signs drawn with chalk on the torsos of the newly initiated men are the most significant; they are seen as the signatures of Klen Tadyi and remind people of the first time that Klen Tadyi left his mark on the body

