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« Payer les mots, acheter la moisson ». Réflexion sur des formes d'échange en Indonésie orientale (Lamaholot, Flores)

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“Paying in Words, Buying the Harvest.” Reflection on Forms of Exchange in Eastern Indonesia (eastern Flores, West Lamaholot, Indonesia)

« *Payer les mots, acheter la moisson* ». *Réflexion sur des formes d'échange en Indonésie orientale (Lamaholot, Flores)*

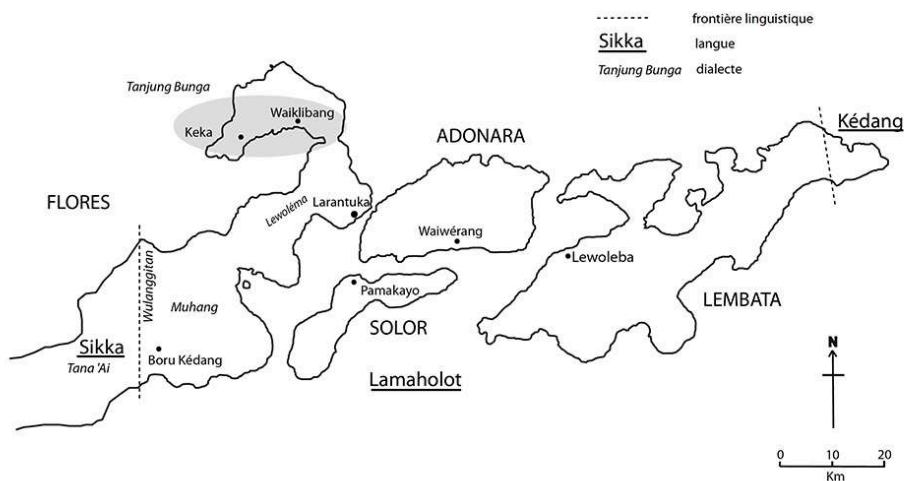
Dana Rappoport

- 1 In 2017, during fieldwork dedicated to the collection of harvest songs on the eastern tip of Flores Island in Indonesia, someone explained to me that with his poetic oration, he is “buying the harvest” (*hopé éhin bata wa'in*). From whom? “From them,” he says. The following week, during a reconciliation ritual, another tells me that by performing poems, “they are paying with words” (*paté koda*). A third adds that “they buy the words from them” (*hopé koda*). “Buying the harvest, paying with words, buying the words”: are these expressions the result of my rough translations of the Lamaholot language understood through the medium of Indonesian, or do they indicate a particular mode of transaction?¹
- 2 Since I began my visits in 2010 to the two villages where I conduct my research, the musical tradition has been fading away, however one form of ritual speech persists with vigour.² On various occasions, a speaker utters a rapid succession of dyadic sets (parallel lines), paired with bloody offerings. Called *tutu marin* (“to speak, to say”) or more rarely *bokan maran*,³ this ritual is described by those who perform it as a primary form of exchange between humans and spirits. It is an oratorical act that is sometimes considered a “purchase” (*hopé*), sometimes a “payment” (*paté*), sometimes a gift of food (*pau'*), perhaps all three at the same time, depending on the nature of the poem being performed. The motives and recipients of these poems are not easily identifiable, yet something passes from one group to another. What mode(s) of relationship are

manifested by this poetic ritual language which articulates a “costly” exchange although no money circulates? Specific to societies with an asymmetrical mode of alliance (common in the region),⁴ the most emblematic exchange relates to the matrimonial transaction. At the time of marriage, the bridegroom’s clan must pay the matrimonial compensation of one or more elephant tusks to the bride’s family, who in return will give valuable weavings, as well as a wife.⁵ Today, as elephant tusks are becoming scarce, people convert their value into currency or, more simply, into words. This mode of alliance generates many transfers of goods⁶ between the husband’s clan and the wife’s clan. The link between two families then constitutes a “pair” (*aget*) which implies lifelong reciprocal obligations, including the exchange of goods and words between the two families especially at harvests and funerals. The whole society is consubstantially woven by these “pairs,” dynamic links according to the agricultural season, and at times of death and weddings.

- 3 However, it is an exchange of another kind that constitutes the heart of our discussion here, the exchange that takes place between humans and the spirits. This exchange is named by terms commonly used in commercial transactions: “to pay” (*paté*)⁷ and “to buy” (*hopé*) are used interchangeably, whether it is a question of exchanging with the spirits or of paying for one’s shopping at the market.
- 4 Although converted to Catholicism several decades ago, the inhabitants of eastern Flores continue their ancestral practices relating to land, houses, alliances, and death. On these occasions, humans (*ata*) regularly address the spirits through the *tutu marin* ritual, an oratory act that provides keys to understanding the relationships between the two. This analysis focuses on two cases observed in 2017 and 2018 in two villages of 1500 inhabitants respectively and 15 km apart (Fig. 1): the “Purchase of the harvest” (in the village of Keka’, Waibao sub-district) and the “Payment of words” (in the village of Waiklibang, Ratulodong sub-district). The synthesis of these two events will shed light on the circuit of exchanges, the vocabulary used, and the nature of the goods transferred.

Fig. 1. The peninsula of Tanjung Bunga



Credit: Dana Rappoport

- 5 To understand what follows, a brief presentation of some elements of the social structure is necessary. Each village on the peninsula is organized into patrilineal clans, i.e., three to ten clans per village, which share a ceremonial domain (*lewo tana*), consisting of an inhabited space (*lewo* "village") and an uninhabited space (*tana* "domain"). The village is organized around a "big house" (*lango bélen*), a "temple" (*koko*) and one or two square dancing areas (*naman*) in front of each of these buildings. The uninhabited space includes the surrounding land, both cultivated (*duli pali*, ancestral sites) and uncultivated, including the forest, rivers, mountains, and seashore. The farmers use the forest and waterfront for hunting, harvesting, and fishing. They clear land, mark out fields, and cultivate rice and maize on the same plot of land before rotating every two to three years. The ceremonial domain⁸ unites a community of clans with a migratory narrative, a common territory, and a ritual calendar. The clans (*ama*, *suku*) are divided into two complementary groups: the sovereign clans (*ama raja tuan*) and the "support" clans (*suku nipa talé*).⁹

The *Tutu Marin* Ritual, A Means of Addressing the Spirits

- 6 The *tutu marin* ("to speak, to say") ritual consists of reciting a series of poems in verse, each paired with an animal offering (egg, chick, hen, pig, goat). *Tutu marin* refers to both a versified syntactic form and the ritual to which it gives rise. I call this form a "poem" because it is language ordered in pairs of octosyllables, without rhyme but obeying constraints of rhythm, harmony, and imagery, and intended to produce the pleasure characteristic of any aesthetic act (Schaeffer 2015: 251). The ritual requires at least one speaker, two assistants responsible for the animal offerings, and several spirit recipients. Performed on a variety of scales, it can mobilize an individual, a family, a clan, several clans, or all clans. It is both cyclical and occasional because it takes place at each periodic ritual (agrarian rites, for example), but also intermittent, because it is performed for the slightest problem that may arise unexpectedly, either in the private sphere (a departure or return from emigration within a clan, illness, death, a bad dream, a new motorcycle,¹⁰ etc.), or in the public sphere (in the event of a settlement of accounts, verbal transgressions, suspicious deaths, etc.). It can take place in private or public spaces, in houses, in open groves, at the "big field,"¹¹ at the "big house," at the temple as well as in some "dangerous" places (*duan' geraran*), in front of big trees or certain stones (Rappoport 2017).
- 7 At first glance, this ritual can be performed without seeking to right an explicit wrong. It is performed of each stage of the agrarian cycle to share food with the spirits. Even without a proven problem, it is carried out as a precaution, to neutralize a potential upset. To verify the ritual's efficacy, the clansmen will look for the presence or absence of gallbladders in the entrails of the animals, the absence of a gallbladder being interpreted as a bad sign.
- 8 Few in number—two or three per village—the ritual speakers are distinguished by exceptional talents, such as an infallible memory or a gift for psalmody. They attain their status as ritual speakers, or master poets (*todo bawa*, *sason rurén*, *tonga léba*)¹² by virtue of a combination of criteria: belonging to a sovereign clan, an excellent memory for narrative passages, elocutionary ability, advanced age, and innate equanimity. In

this peninsula, the art of ritual speech is reserved for the sovereign clans, and particularly but not exclusively for the Maran clan, whose very name means "to speak in line."

- 9 At the time of the performance, the ritual speaker prepares himself carefully: he puts on an elegant shirt, a ceremonial sarong, and a necklace (fig. 2). He opens each poem with a downward leap of a minor third, then declaims his poem in *recto tono* (a uniform pitch) and in such a rapid flow that his words are incomprehensible to non-specialists. He closes the poem in an iambic rhythm (a foot composed of an unaccented syllable followed by an accented one). The general atmosphere of the oration is solemn, intense, and calm.

Fig. 2. Storyteller, Ne' Suban Maran, Waiklibang, 29 April 2017



Photo: Dana Rappoport

- 10 As for the poems, the *tutu marin* declamation is composed of a series of six to ten poems of forty to seventy octosyllables each which follow one another in a fixed order, like a musical suite that can be modulated in several parts. While their sound form is similar, their content differs, in a tiny but crucial way, on a dozen lines only, the introductory and conclusive parts hardly varying from one poem to another.
- 11 Another surprising thing is that while the whole ritual takes place over an entire day, the heart of the ritual—the utterance of the poetic suite—lasts only about ten minutes. Before that, humans and spirits must come together. Some go to the cemetery in advance to call the spirits of the deceased. Others fetch the stone baskets (*guna déwa*),¹³ and still others prepare the offerings, collecting the eggs, chickens, and pig(s). Women prepare the rice intended for the collective lunch that will come afterwards. Only when everyone has gathered together can the ritual begin.
- 12 I participated in this ritual many times without ever giving it my full attention. Each time, I thought I was witnessing the same succession of gestures and words—the speaker seemed to be repeating the same thing eight times, and since he was not

singing, I was excluding this type of oral expression from my study which I reserved for researching the polyphonic singing specific to this region. What a surprise when I discovered in 2017 how wrong I had been: I realized that the ritual speaker's words changed with each poem, and that, by this very change, because these words "did" different things each time, one could understand the multiple intentions of this transaction with the spirits.

- 13 In 2017, the ritual took place several times, first at the beginning of the harvest in the village of Waibao, and then during a large "cleansing" ritual after a series of unexplained deaths in Ratulodong. In the following year, 2018, within a short period of time, the ritual took place four times: at a funeral ritual, at the settlement of a conflict between two clans (it was then performed twice within a week), and finally, at the start-up of Mikel Koten's new motorcycle (which was my motorcycle taxi). The frequency of the ritual is immediately surprising. Each time, the communication with the spirits was initiated in order to solve problems. What problems? How can poetic words alone solve anything? Is it a form of compensation to right wrongs? By analyzing two cases from neighboring municipalities, we can see the same process is being implemented: humans are transferring something(s) to the spirits.

"Buy the Harvest" (*hopé éhin*) (Waibao Village)

- 14 When I came to record the music of the rice harvest rituals of the village of Waibao in April 2017, I had to wait for the opening of the harvest for several weeks as it could not take place until after the Easter rituals. Then after Easter, I had to wait another two weeks for the harvest's preparatory rituals to be conducted during which, upon an invitation to the fields, I would discover "buying a harvest" from the spirits.
- 15 "Buying the harvest" takes place two weeks before the opening of the harvest, leaving time for each farmer and sovereign clan to carry out this ritual on their respective plot. Two rituals follow one another: *kajo talé* and *uten lakan*¹⁴—only the first will be discussed here. The *kajo talé* ("creeper vine") ritual, which lasts a whole day, consists of looking for suspicious signs in one's field, such as a fallen branch (*kajo*), a coiled vine (*talé*), the presence of an egg, a snake, a bees' or boar's nest, all of which are signs of discontent manifested by the spirits foretelling illnesses or social disorder."¹⁵ There is only one recourse to ward off these bad omens: appease the spirits by feeding them with blood and words through the *tutu marin* ritual.
- 16 For this purpose, the farmer invites three people: the representative of his clan, the "lord of the land,"¹⁶ and a ritual speaker. The farmer first makes a basket of offerings in which various elements are meticulously arranged. An egg is placed in each of four corners of a basket. Three of them, wrapped with cotton, are placed on handmade leaf plates. In the fourth corner, another egg is placed, without any support or cotton. In the center are placed two smaller woven baskets filled with cooked rice topped by an omelet (fig. 3). Each of the eggs placed on a leaf plate is accompanied by a small bamboo tube representing a container of palm wine.

Fig. 3. Eggs in the offering basket, Keka', April 20, 2017



Photo: Dana Rappoport

- 17 Next, accompanied by the three guests, the farmer leaves for his field carrying the offering basket and a pig. The offerings are presented in front of a small altar for the female rice divinity (Tono Wujo), represented by a cloth and a coconut. The orator begins by recounting a series of three poems (*tutu marin*). After the first poem, an egg is cracked, then replaced on its leaf plate in the basket, before being offered to a corner of the field. After the second poem, the same thing happens, the second egg being placed in the corner of the field opposite the first. Finally, the third poem is followed by the decapitation of a pig whose blood is used to anoint the coconut which is intended to refresh Tono Wujo. From the pig, several raw pieces are taken and put on a "skewer" (*bewelak*), which along with the cooked rice is placed in a bush (fig. 4). The rest of the pig is cooked at the field's shed. After feeding the spirits, a meal is prepared for only boys and young men. While sitting in a rectangle and eating rice, broth, and meat, the young men make a skewer of the cooked meat to take home (fig. 5). If the ritual is performed at the clan level and not at the level of a single family, the number of guests increases, and the meal is more animated.

Fig. 4. Skewer and rice offered to the spirits, Kons Brinu field, Keka', April 20, 2017



Photo: Dana Rappoport

Fig. 5. Lunch of pork kebabs, Keka', April 20, 2017



Photo: Dana Rappoport

18 The ritual offering is cleverly composed for the spirit recipients, who are never named. When I try to find out who they are, the answer is always the same: "they" are given the food. By dint of persistence, some names are eventually revealed. The offerings are for the spirits of the place—the eggs and the cotton are for the *bénakan'*, potentially harmful vengeful spirits (also called *Timu Warat* "East-West") and for the spirits of the mountain and the sea (*Ilé Harin*)¹⁷; the contents of the two small baskets with the omelet as well as the skewer of raw meat on cooked rice are offered to the spirits of those who have died in battle, fallen on this ground (*Paji Béda*)¹⁸ and to the land (*tana*). The egg without a plate is for "washing the mouth" (*ho'ok nuhu*) and sweeps away censorious words.

19 Ritual speaker Leo Koten (p.c., Keka', July 28, 2018) explained to me in Indonesian the purpose of these offerings:

Leo Koten: We do the ritual with *katupat* [rice cooked in leaves], eggs and cotton. We make little balls of cotton, with the egg, then we put it on the branch, with a prayer: we pay them a share so that they give us a result. We buy (ind. *bayar*) the produce (ind. *hasil*) from this land. It is certain that this land is dominated by the spirits (ind. *roh*) that govern it, so we buy the food that they give us to eat. We give them food [while telling them]: "Here is your share so that you give us luck (ind. *rezeki*); so that you give us crops."

DANA R.: What if there are no results?

Léo Koten: Everything is in the hands of nature (ind. *alam*). If there is no rain, there is no result, but we continue to do the ritual. We buy, not with money, but with the ritual, and this is certainly the legacy of our ancestors. And this ritual, no matter how simple, will not change.

20 Leo Koten expresses himself here in Indonesian, using the word "buy" three times (ind. *bayar*, *lamaholot*, *hopé*), a word that will be analyzed later in the article. However, let us mention now that buying from spirits differs from a common purchase both in its difficulty and in the very nature of the transfer.

21 This ritual transfer involves several parties: the farmer, the spirits and the young men who come to eat and make the skewers with the meat of the offering. In Keka' as in Waiklibang, there are many spirits: some are immobile under the earth, such as the dead by bloodshed in battle (*Paji Béda*, also called *Mei*, "blood"), others are nomadic, such as the spirits of the mountains, the sea, the East and the West (*Ilé Harin Timu Warat*), or the rice divinity, who is honored in all the agrarian rituals.¹⁹ The skewer draws attention: it is given twice, in raw form to the spirits of the villagers who died on the field and in cooked form to each young man. In the ritual discourse, the skewer is valorized: it connotes several pieces threaded on a single string, referring to the idea of a plurality united by a single link. In the poetic parlance, *welak* "skewer" is paired with *éket* "two in one": *Eket éka getun gesak/welak éka awé wat* ("The pair must not be broken, the skewer must not be divided" (Myth of the origin of rice, *Haman Opak Bélun*, ca. 2000-2001, recorded 2006). These two terms refer to two types of unity, the unity resulting from a plurality and the unity resulting from a binary. In short, *welak* designates a link that connects several things of the same nature, while *eket* designates two things that merge into one (two coconuts from a single stem, two singing voices that merge into one). In both cases, it is a question of uniting. By giving a skewer of meat to the spirits, the humans buy a new, albeit provisional, union guaranteeing them

the restoration, at least temporarily, of that which had been potentially weakened by the discontent of the spirits. As a result, the ritual is efficient not only for the farmer himself but also, by way of the skewers of meat brought back by the young men to their respective families, for other members of the clan.

- 22 The *kajo talé* ritual reveals several important things. First, it reveals that the land does not belong to its inhabitants. In this region, there is no landowner. Although the term "lord of the land" is often used, it is not in the sense of ownership, but in the sense of a hereditary prerogative to oversee the land. In cultivating plots of land, people say they are "taking" from the spirits that reside there: local spirits of the four corners of the field itself, the dead who bled on it and the earth itself. By righting a wrong to the spirits manifested by signs on the land, humans say they are avoiding a disastrous harvest or a series of diseases. They "buy the result of the harvest from them [the spirits]" (*hopé éhin bata wa'in*)²⁰ through gifts of words, eggs, pork skewers, palm wine and rice, to compensate for any wrong, and in the hopes of obtaining the most abundant harvest possible. What is surprising is that at the time of this ritual transfer, the humans are already assured that the harvest will be good since the rice is visibly abundant. Despite this, they persist in performing the ceremony at this moment as if to pay for what they are about to harvest while claiming to be repairing a disrupted order.
- 23 On the other hand, the *kajo talé* ritual also recalls the importance of the myth about rice's origin here. The populations of East Flores, who used to feed on vegetatively propagated plants such as taros, yams, and bananas, have only recently cultivated rice (for an estimated few hundred years). When it arrived from the West, rice cultivation changed their relationship with plants which explains the centrality of the myth in agrarian ritual practices. In the myth, Tono Wujo, called by several names (Besi Paré, Nogo Gunu, Nogo Ema), is a mythical girl whose body, when she is killed by one of her seven brothers, then transforms into rice and other edible plants. This myth is found throughout Southeast Asia in many variations"²¹ although in this region, while it is well known on the eastern tip of Flores and the western part of Solor (Kohl 2009; Rappoport 2014), it remains unknown on the neighboring islands of Lembata and Adonara where rice cultivation is absent. During the *kajo talé* rite, performed before a temporary altar which each farmer builds according to his wishes, the offering dedicated to the spirits directly benefits Tono Wujo, who is fed blood and coconut water.
- 24 Let us move from this first case study in the village of Keka' 15 km to the east to a neighbouring village, where the inhabitants speak the same language but with a slightly different accent and vocabulary. In this second village, Waiklibang, the same type of locutionary act is utilized but in a distinct context. To understand how the poetic declamation contributes to the human/spirit relationships in this second case, a thorough description is required.

"Paying for the Words" (*paté koda*) (Ratulodong Village)

- 25 In the neighboring village of Ratulodong, more often called Waiklibang, one of the poems of the *tutu marin* poetic suite is called "paying for the words" (*paté koda*). As a constituent of every *tutu marin* poetic suite, it is thus repeated at least once in each suite to "pay for the words to the ceremonial domain" (*paté koda lewo tana*), to compensate for any misdeed that may have offended the spirits. As in the previous case, the nature of the misdeed is not specified, and the *paté koda* poem is recited as a

preventive measure. However, in the case of an actual problem or open conflict, another "pay for the words" poem may be uttered to address a particular problem. This poem may be repeated a second or third time, if necessary, followed by a more substantial offering, this time for a curative purpose, both literally and figuratively. The value of the offering, proportional to the size of the problem, is chanted, in two dedicated lines, indicating whether it is an egg, a hen, a pig or a goat that is involved. Before describing the series of problems that the village of Waiklibang wished to resolve through the *tutu marin* ritual, it is important to remember that in this village, authority is divided between three sovereign clans (Maran, Kote and Liwun), and that the Maran clan (maran "ritual speaker"), guardian of the "big house," holds precedence.

A Case of Payment by Words

- 26 On Saturday, April 29, 2017, during a customary land purification ceremony, a conflict arose in Waiklibang. The villagers claimed it necessary to "pay for the words" (*paté koda*). The purification ceremony in question was prompted by a series of disturbances that occurred in the village over the past month, following nine successive deaths of middle-aged people. The elders began by searching for the causes of these deaths through the *seba' koda* ritual "search the words, search the problem." The expression itself suggests that these deaths are the result of improper or censorious words, which some people search for through divination (*seba' irak* "search for signs"). With tensions running high and accusations of witchcraft flying from all sides, a purification ritual was decided upon (*hamu lewo tana* "to cleanse the ceremonial domain").
- 27 On the morning of April 29, pick-ups travel up to the old village.²² Once inside the "big house," the ceremony brings together the leaders of the clans. The women have brought food and drink. When I arrive at the crowded house, the aged and prominent master poet, Bapa' Platin Maran, is reciting a series of poems (*tutu marin*). To his right, the three leaders²³ of the sovereign clans are seated on the altar,²⁴ in front of a large basket holding several boxes made of leaves. The orator is suddenly interrupted by loud voices from outside. The quarrel rapidly escalates to such an extent that I stop filming immediately, fearing a hand-to-hand fight. The master poet's sons, Andy and Eman, in deep disagreement with the direction of the proceedings, revolt. The elders had decided that morning to perform the *tutu marin* ritual for the purification of the village. However, the night before, a man dreamed that the life energy (*tuber manger*)²⁵ of Bapa' Platin himself had been taken away. The young people are furious: they demand that the dream be addressed first, and in the presence of the dreamer, who is not currently present. They then go so far as to insult the elder of the Kote clan, which moves the ceremonial domain's leader (Bapa' Ama Maran) to tears.
- 28 For fear of the irritation of the spirits caused by these explosive voices, the old men decide to recite another poetic suite because they want to "pay for the words" immediately. Tension is extremely high. There is a change of speaker: the master poet (Bapa' Platin) climbs back onto the altar platform while another speaker, Ne' Suban Maran, takes his place in front of it. The latter then recites a new series of poems to rectify what has just occurred in order to recover the vital energy, stolen by the spirits ("take the shadow body," *hodé' tuber manger*), of Bapa' Platin, and restoring his blood flow ("increase the blood," *potan mei*). Opposite Ne'Suban, a man holding an egg

crouches in front of a basket filled with more eggs. Frowning, the two sons listen to the recitation. Once the poetic suite has been performed, the ritual leaders of the three clans "feed" (*pau'*) the auxiliary spirits in the baskets before them on the altar. Directly afterwards, a divination is performed: a chicken's throat is slit, and the presence of a gallbladder (*keperu*) is sought, enabling the interpretation of the restoration of lost vitality. If there is no gallbladder, then chickens are sacrificed until one is found. After this suite of eight poems is performed in the "big house," another suite is performed outside, this time on the *nuba nara* ceremonial stones in the temple square. After this only, the clan representatives eat together in the temple. In total, three poetic sequences were performed partially or entirely that day of which I propose to analyze the second; that delivered in the house by Ne' Suban Maran to make amends for the anger of the young towards the old.

The Poetic Sequence and the Issues of Each Poem

- 29 Each *tutu marin* poetic suite is organized in the same manner: several poems are spoken at full speed, in a fixed order. The poems are linked one to the next, and the suite's composition is determined according to the issue it is addressing. Every *tutu marin* poetic suite contains a fixed base of six poems, each with a name. Others may be added depending on the problems to be solved, as was the case in the suite in question which was intended to repair three moral wrongs: the removal of Bapa' Platin's vitality, the strong words of the young towards the aged, and the crying of the ritual leader, Bapa' Ama Maran. It should be noted that several poems in the poetic suite describe a transfer, but only one of them is called "paying for the words."
- 30 Among the poems recited that day, 29 April 2017, the first (*hoak bake*, "free and replace") aims to rescue the vitality of the affected speaker (Bapa' Platin), taken by the spirits into a boat.²⁶ For this, tribute is given to the spirits who come to help themselves and leave well fed, as the poem formulates it. The second (*gurun gawak* "to shield and protect") consists of retrieving the vitality of the old speaker from the boat and putting it in a safe place. To do this, the auxiliary spirits are "fed" by way of the auxiliary stones (*guna déwa*).²⁷ The third and fourth poems consist of "paying for the words" (*paté koda*), in this case the words uttered against the speaker (Bapa' Platin) and then those which upset the ritual leader (Bapa' Ama Maran). A fifth poem invites the ritual leader to "swallow his tears" (*dokan soran nani loun*). In a sixth poem called "join and unify" (*hodik padak*),²⁸ the bodies [of all] are connected heart-to-heart in order to reinstate peace. After this poem, each person successively touches the same egg, a sign of the restoration of unity. In the seventh poem, all the actions of poems 1-6 are repeated. Finally, the eighth poem, "preserve and gather" (*agun aat*), restores and secures the vitality of the master poet, which has been damaged by the bad dream and by the intemperate words of the young.²⁹
- 31 Each poem thus has its own intention: to free the vital energy, to protect it, to pay for a transgression (the inappropriate words), to reconcile the group, to console, to restore the integrity of the vital energy. In the entire suite, only the poem "paying for the words," always in third position between *ho(w)ak baké* ("free replace") and *gurun gawak* ("shield and protect"), aims to compensate for a wrong. As mentioned above, the poem "paying for the words" can be repeated several times. On this day, two "pay for the words" poems were recited in a row, to compensate the spirits for two things: 1) the

ensorious words regarding the aged speaker (Bapa' Platin); 2) the words that made the ritual chief, Bapa' Ama Maran, cry.

- 32 While each poem in any sequence is necessary to understand the various transfers, for the purposes of this article, I present in full the first "pay for the words" poem that speaker Ne' Suban Maran delivered that day:

"Paying for the words" (Paté koda)

1.	<i>Réra wulan tana ékan</i>	Sun-Moon [and] Land-Earth ^a
2.	<i>Usu asa rein gamak</i>	Foundation of the origins
3.	<i>Oi knirék nulun walé</i>	Models of behavior
4.	<i>Polé ratu Réra wulan</i>	Summon Ratu [the] Sun-Moon
5.	<i>Majan Nini tana ékan</i>	Call Nini [the] Land-Earth ^b
6.	<i>Usu wahan pulo pito</i>	Our ancestors of 70 generations
7.	<i>Lodo hau asa wade'</i>	Deep in the layers
8.	<i>Pulo lema géré haka</i>	Above 50 levels ^c
9.	<i>Tobo pia lango maten</i>	Sitting in the house
10.	<i>Paé pia uli alé</i>	Take your place on the altar-bed
11.	<i>Ema' lau' Kajo Bala</i>	Mother downstream of Pole of Ivory ^d
12.	<i>Bapa' lau' Wato Tonu</i>	Father downstream of the Woman Stone
13.	<i>Hodé' hon dai kaé</i>	We call them, they are here
14.	<i>Suda palat géré kaé</i>	Assembled together
15.	<i>Tobo pia don tukan</i>	Sitting in the center of the hall ^e
16.	<i>Paé pia banak lolon kaé</i>	Currently seated in the center
17.	<i>Guna wuhun pulo kaé</i>	The ten Guna are here
18.	<i>Dewa wolo lema kaé</i>	The five Déwa have arrived ^f
19.	<i>Tobo tukan kaé</i>	Sit in the middle
20.	<i>Paé bawan kaé</i>	Take a seat in the center

21.	<i>Emá Lewo Bapa Tana</i>	Mother Village, Father Earth
22.	<i>Tewo bawo ua pédé</i>	Restore and recover
23.	<i>Guté nala sora telon</i>	Take a male egg
24.	<i>Pilé' nala wajo ratun</i>	Choose a female egg
25.	<i>Kaka goé pati pulo kaé</i>	My many elders
26.	<i>Ama goé béda lema kaé</i>	My many fathers
27.	<i>Kaka ari' talé keboté</i>	Brothers and sisters of the same placenta
28.	<i>Koda pai hiko doan</i>	The words have gone too far
29.	<i>Kirin pai liwa doan kaé</i>	The remarks have exceeded the limits
30.	<i>Guté nala sora telon</i>	Take a male egg
31.	<i>Pilé' nala wajo ratun</i>	Choose a female egg
32.	<i>Paté pai koda ra'i</i>	Pay their words
33.	<i>Hélo pai kirin ra'i</i>	Replace their remarks
34.	<i>Koda pé'é poan butun réra wulan</i>	These words in pieces rise to Sun-Moon
35.	<i>Kirin pé'é tewa ta'a tana ékan</i>	These remarks disappear from Land-Earth
36.	<i>Rusu ga'an tali tana</i>	The ugly is consumed by the earth
37.	<i>Malé edan rakun wato</i>	The wire is sharpened by the stone ^g
38.	<i>Ratu lodo he'en uli</i>	Ratu descends to approve the altar-bed
39.	<i>Nini gére bégan aran</i>	Nini climbs up to the granary ^h
40.	<i>Pitun ilu' luang kebak</i>	Spit out the saliva from their mouths
41.	<i>Hori kemi'é wai élan</i>	Mix it with bancoul nuts
42.	<i>Wua matan malu kolé béta kala</i>	By the areca nut and its stem
43.	<i>Nilu' néra ohon bohok</i>	Saliva anoints the hair

44.	<i>Pati goé pulo kaé</i>	My boys by the tens
45.	<i>Béda goé léma kaé</i>	My young men by fives
46.	<i>Tono jédo pulo kaé</i>	Girls by the tens
47.	<i>Wujo barek léma kaé</i>	Young women by fives
48.	<i>Kulit puna méi menu</i>	Skin is full of blood once again
49.	<i>Tutu Ratu moé naran doan</i>	Calling your name Ratu from afar
50.	<i>Marin Nini moé makén léla</i>	Repeating forever your name Nini
<p>a. They are two complementary pairs composed of a masculine element (Sun-Moon) and a feminine one (Land-Earth). <i>Ékan</i> designates the field, the surrounding lands.</p> <p>b. Ratu and Nini, names of the male and female ancestors, represented by wooden statuettes on the framework of the temple of the old village of Waiklibang.</p> <p>c. The missionary Paul Arndt (2003: 94) notes in the 1930s that the world is made up of 120 levels: 70 above the earth and 50 below. The sky carries the earth above it. Below the earth (level) of humans, on each lower level, there are lands, seas, mountains, animals, and humans.</p> <p>d. <i>Lau'</i>: towards the sea.</p> <p>e. <i>Don</i>: space of the big house defined by opaque leaf walls.</p> <p>f. <i>Guna déwa</i>: auxiliary spirits materialized by the stones in the baskets on the altar.</p> <p>g. This couplet means that words and problems disappear (<i>koda wahak</i>).</p> <p>h. In the "big house" of Waiklibang, on an elevated level, the rice granary is guarded by women.</p>		

Paté koda "Paying for the words," Ne' Suban Maran, Waiklibang, 29 April 2017, *Hamu lewo tana* ritual.

- 33 At the end of the poem, the assistant pierces an egg, then using the egg white soaks a candlenut and a small piece of cotton in the offering basket on the ground (fig. 6).

Fig. 6. The offering basket in front of the ritual speaker, Waiklibang, April 29, 2017



Photo: Dana Rappoport

- 34 The speaker continues with another poem called "paying for the words," a little longer than the previous one (15 lines more) but with almost identical contents. Then, using a chick and without separating the head from the body, the throat is incised to allow its blood to drain. The blood is immediately applied to the bancoul nut in the basket of eggs.
- 35 In the above poem, three parts can be distinguished: the gathering of humans and the spirits (lines 1-27), the payment and cure of the bodies (lines 28-43), and the restoration of harmony (lines 48-50).
- 36 Unintelligible at first glance, the stanza (group of lines) can be understood through ethnographic observation. The first 27 lines invite the spirits to sit with the humans. On the west side, the three ritual leaders of the ceremonial domain sit on the altar of the "big house" ("Mother Village Father Earth," lines 21-22). In front of them are baskets: in the largest, surrounded by precious cloth, are gathered five smaller baskets (fig. 7). One, narrow and circular, contains, in the form of areca nuts, the ancestors of the ceremonial domain (Ratu and Nini, lines 4-5) whom an elder went to call from the cemetery (*genahon*)³⁸; four small quadrangular baskets are filled with auxiliary stones (*guna déwa*) (lines 17-18); alongside the large basket, another contains a piece of wood (*kajo*) an attribute of the protection of the area. Finally, an elephant's tusk is in front of the large basket. In summary, the spirits of the deceased and the auxiliary spirits of the ceremonial domain are now present in the house, with the three ritual chiefs of the village sitting alongside a variety of spirits materialized by the baskets whose lids will be anointed with blood after the sacrifices of one or two white chickens. Standing around the altar platform inside the house, there are also the elders and those in training, men both old and young (around 25 to 27), a distinction representing the authority of the elders and the complementarity of the generations.

Fig. 7. The basket of auxiliary spirits, Waiklibang, April 29, 2017



Photo: Dana Rappoport

- 37 Lines 28 to 43 then state the aim of the poem: it is to “pay for the words” that have gone [too] “far” (*doan*), that have gone beyond the limits. Through the egg that will “pay” and “replace” the words (*paté hélo*), the words leave the earth and rise to heaven, an action approved by the ancestors. The following lines evoke the cure by applying bancoul nut chew to the foreheads of the young (lines 40-47), a way of restoring balance, the loss of which was represented by a lack of blood (“a skin full of blood again,” line 48). Finally, in the last three lines, harmony is restored and the name of the ancestral couple Ratu Nini is invoked.
- 38 The poem, which poses and then resolves a conflict, must ensure the restoration of the harmony of the bodies through words and fluids: the application of saliva (mixed with the nuts) on the foreheads of the young people makes it possible to re-establish the normal blood flow. (Saliva, egg white and blood are the principal fluids of the rituals of this peninsula). In fact, one of the clan leaders applies the bancoul nut chew mixed with egg white on the foreheads of the young people responsible for the censorious words.
- 39 As in the case of the “buying of the harvest,” at no point are the recipients of the payment named in the poem. Let us now look at the two cases described, the circuit of exchanges, the vocabulary used, and the nature of the goods transferred, in an effort to understand what is at work in this ritual.

Exchanging with the Spirits in the Tutu Marin Ritual

The Flow of Exchange

- 40 In the first case presented ("buying the harvest"), in response to unlucky signs in their fields, humans feed the spirits of the east and west and those of the soil (the fallen). The spirits are not the only recipients of the offerings since the rice divinity, Tono Wujo, materialized by a sarong and a coconut, is watered and fed. In addition, the young men of the clan carry home skewers of meat to more human recipients. The transfer takes place towards the spirits, but also towards other humans of the same clan. Perhaps those skewers represent a sign of union with the spirits?
- 41 In the second case ("paying for the words"), the village leaders choose an egg to pay for the excess words, and then apply a little bancoul nut mixed with saliva and egg white to the foreheads of the young people who have spoken aggressively. For whom is the egg ultimately intended? Although no one is named in this poem (located in third position in the suite), the first poem of the poetic suite mentions the recipients as "the spirits of the mountain, the sea, the east and the west."

<i>Ilé harin pulo kaé</i>	[Spirits of the] Mountains and Seas by ten(s) already
<i>Timu warat lema kaé</i>	[Spirits of] the East and the West by five already ^a
a. Lines 20-21, <i>howak baké</i> poem, first poem in the <i>tutu marin</i> poetic suite, Ne' Suban Maran, 2017.	

The two complementary lexical pairs (*ilé harin* and *timu warat*) correspond to the guardians of the ceremonial domain. The *nitun raé*, terrestrial spirits, roam upstream towards the mountains, while downstream towards the sea, is the *harin lau'* or marine spirits' realm. The spirits commonly called *Timu Warat* (East-West), or also *bénakan'*, avenging spirits, are found in the west (*warat baranusa*) and east (*timu pandosi*). At the end of this first poem, the various spirits collect their shares and head home to eat and drink.

- 42 But let us return to the egg in the poem "paying for the words," in the third and fourth sections of the suite. Bapa' Krowé explains to me that the egg is not intended for the spirits mentioned above. It is instead being offered to "those who live beside them in the village" (*lewo ha'ak kelik*),⁴⁰ that is, to the spirits of former customary leaders who protect the village and have been offended by the young people's brutal words towards their elders—a mark of disrespect. In the other poems of the suite, the intended recipients differ again, says Krowé. The reason so many poems are recited is because of the many spirits to be fed. When I asked who *these* recipients were, again, it was difficult to get answers. The key was finally found in 2018, just before I left for France, when I decided to follow the offering bearer involved in the ceremony to start the new motorcycle of Mikel (son of Bapa' Krowé, expert on ritual speech). After each poem, this man took the offerings to a different place about a hundred meters from the location of the performance. He delicately placed eggs and chicks on stones and hung the woven basket filled with cooked rice from a branch of a bush. By following him, I was able to establish the numerous recipients of a *tutu marin* ritual: village and domain spirits who live alongside humans (*lewo ha'ak kelik* and *lewo tana*), mountain spirits (*ilé wolo*), house spirits (*ela'*), land and sea spirits (*nitun* and *harin*), the "spirits of the east

and west" (*timu warat*), the spirits of the dead (*kewokot*), the ancestors above (*kaka bapa*), the fallen warriors (*mei*), the entities "Sun-Moon Land-Earth" (*Réra Wulan Tana Ekan*) and "Mother Sén Father Field" (*Ema Sén Ama Man*). While this list is specific to Waiklibang, the model of a plurality of invisibles applies to the entire Tanjung Bunga peninsula.

- 43 Several questions remain unanswered: why this plurality of recipients? Are they different for each poem? And is it the same type of transfer each time? The offerings differ for each class of spirits, but should they be considered as a group or not? Some eat raw food, others cooked, some like chicken, and others eggs. Bapa' Krowé thinks that through all these various spirits' names, it is the earth (*tana*) that is asking something of the humans. In the *tutu marin* ritual, the circuit of exchanges would therefore involve humans giving, through the intermediary of the spirits, to the earth at its request. In exchange for the words and blood, the spirits provide life to humans. This transfer is not conceived as a simple gift of food because it is demanded ("exigible" in French) by the spirits: if humans do nothing, they may die, fall ill and/or jeopardize the harmony of the ceremonial domain. Humans fear these sanctions and are ready to do anything to avoid such misfortune. In the *tutu marin* ritual, humans pay without being able to demand anything in return. The transfer that takes place here is a form of restitution, of compensation for a wrong caused, a transfer that is claimable ("exigible" in French) by the spirits without the return being so.

The Vocabulary of Exchange

- 44 Several syntagms are used to qualify the actions of transfer with the spirits: pay, buy, replace, feed, take one's share or give. It is important to return to these terms for a moment to clarify the nature of the exchanges. Let us first note that the word for exchange between humans (*gelu'*) is not used anywhere in the poetic suite, which indicates that the transactions with the spirits are not of the same order.
- 45 "Paying in words" (*paté koda*) is an expression peculiar to only one of the two villages in my study, in which "paying" is a matter of both everyday language and ritual language. It is a question of settling a debt by making a payment. In ritual poetry, it is coupled with the verb "to replace" (*hélo*). Thus, *paté hélo* forms a lexical pair (line 33) whose terms indicate that the censorious words are replaced by something else taking the place of the verbal infraction. In its place, what do we find? An egg, a hen, a pig, a goat and above all other words, carefully chosen, ordered and harmonious.
- 46 Two sayings that Bapa' Platin shared with me in 2018 allow us to grasp the semantic depth of *paté koda*. The first says:

<i>Paté koda hélo kirin</i>	Pay words, replace speech
<i>Koda wahak kirin labot</i>	Problems solved, words finished

Does this dyad elide the preposition, in which case the translation could be "pay [with] words, replace [with] speech," which would make speech the essence of the transferred good? This would show that one does not only pay for the censorious words, but that one pays *with* words, formulated as poetry. The ultimate meaning reveals that for them a problem is solved by the ritual word. *Koda* simultaneously means both words and

problems.⁴¹ This fundamental link between the two meanings does not make the translator's task easy.

47 Bapa' Platin Maran then shared a second dyad:

<i>Paté pai koda rain</i>	Pay here the censorious words
<i>Hélo pai kirin rain</i>	Replace here the censorious words

Once again, the same semantic pairs as in the previous couplet are found: *paté hélo* ("to pay, to replace") and *koda kirin* ("to speak words"), but this time in a different sense. This time, *koda* does not mean "problems" but "words." The poetic word plays precisely on the ambiguity: is it a question of paying for "censorious words" or paying "with words of value"? Mikel Koten explains to me that it is a question of "paying for something important with customary words that touch the hearts of the deities or ancestors," with words that are pleasing to the spirits.⁴²

48 Why "pay with words"? Some words are considered the cause of barren earth, disease, and death. "Paying in words" to the spirits, neutralizes such verbal infractions, responsible for most human misfortunes. In the *tutu marin* poetic suite, only the "paying for the words" poem has a compensation function. In the case of problem(s), one must first determine which words, and more broadly which actions, are the cause. As mentioned above, the ritual leaders meet to "search for the words" (*seba' koda*) or past wrongs in acts of the past or in more recent events, or the search can also be carried out through divination.⁴³ In the second case described, at the origin of the gathering of that famous Saturday, April 29, 2017, the upsurge of deaths in Waiklibang was explained by four reasons: one of them was that, during the recent placing of a banner at the entrance of the village, the phrase affixed to the banner was not in accordance with the ritual language, a fatal error probably responsible for the serial deaths. Other reasons were not necessarily related to language: some involved a breach of the ritual rule or a villager's bad dream.⁴⁴ In any case, and whatever the reasons, the "paying for the words" ritual was performed to negate censorial or harsh words, "heavy," "sharp," "angry" words that offend humans and the spirits. Bapa' Gradus Ojan, a clan leader, comments:

Illnesses come from the *Timu Warat-Ilé Harin* [East-West spirits—spirits of the mountains and the sea]. They are looking for food because we humans have spoken the words that appeal to them. So, they look for eggs and chicks. If we don't make a mistake with the words, they pass by without paying attention. It is for this that you have to be careful, otherwise you'll poison yourself. (Waiklibang, July 2018.)

49 The problem can even arise in silence: the words may not have been spoken but only thought. For example, when Mikel's new motorcycle was started, it was assumed that jealousy had motivated some negative thoughts. This was the reason Mikel and his father (the orator of the Koten clan) performed the *tutu marin* ritual. They wanted to nourish and recompense the spirits who had picked up these bad thoughts. Censorious words may also have been spoken in the distant past, in previous generations, or may have appeared in a bad dream, as Bapa' Platin mentions (a line says *Nuren' daten néda nalan* "Bad dream, offending dream"). Even unspoken, even unarticulated, one will have to pay.

Paying for the words is about all our faults, our mistakes for which we must repay, redeem, compensate, change (ind. *mengganti*) with eggs, chicks, or piglets that we

must offer to the *nitun*, *dewa* or other inhabitants of the earth. (Mikel Koten, personal communication, July 2018.)

- 50 In Keka', the neighboring village, instead of "paying for the words," the expression "wash the mouth" (*hoak nuhu*) is used. Here, illness is also a result of negative words heard by the spirits.

If someone is sick, then one performs the "wash the mouth" ritual in four locations using the words of the *tutu marin*. One goes to make offerings at the end of the road. Then one "washes the mouth" in front of the house. If a fault took place in the house, if one spoke badly, then one must erase, and make disappear [the faults]. So, one asks Sun-Moon Land-Earth for these words to disappear using an egg. Then, in the third location, one kills a chicken so that the house and the mouth "pierced" (ind. *bocor*) by the wrongdoing are repaired and their walls are solid once again, one sweeps everything clean, and one closes up the house so that they can no longer see nor hear anything. In the fourth location, one asks Sun-Moon Land-Earth that the sick person be cured, using *bancoul* nut chew. (Bapa' Kobus, p. c., Keka', July 2018.)

- 51 Another verb used in spirit communications is "buy" (*hopé*). We saw earlier how humans "buy the harvest" (*hopé ehin' bata wa'in*). The word "buy" (*hopé*) is common to everyday commerce as well as in relation to the spirits. However, trade between humans (called *hopé hélu'* "to buy exchange")⁴⁵ is distinguished from the exchange with spirits (called *hopé gérok* "to buy inside"),⁴⁶ which, in contrast, is only done with difficulty. Goods are literally brought "inside" (*gérok*) to the deceased (*kewokot*), to the land and sea spirits (*nitun harin*), to the sites close to the village (*duli pali*), and to the mountains (*ilé*), these terms designating both places and beings in the forms of beautiful snakes, birds, wild boars, and humans. The purchase is made by throwing "a share" (*witon boa*)⁴⁷ to them, at a specific place in the forest, while addressing them. In Waiklibang, only the sovereign clans "throw" (*witon boa*) while the support clans "bring" (*eten' kein*), the difference being whether or not poetry is present when offerings are presented.
- 52 Finally, in the transaction with the spirits, two other terms are used: "take his share" and "give." In the first poem of the suite, the spirits of the cardinal points (of the mountain and the sea, of the East and the West) come to "take their share and then go away." The idea of a share (*umen'*) is important in this society; everyone, including the spirits, is given a share:

<i>Pulo kaé hodé' umen'</i>	Ten have taken their share
<i>Pana peung léma kaé</i>	Five have gone
<i>Hemo' lamak gawé balik</i>	Touch their share of rice and go back ^a
<i>Gen mala turu diké</i>	Eat and sleep
<i>Menun mala loné saré</i>	Drink and rest on their pillow ^b
<p>a. <i>Lamak</i> "cooked rice." b. Poem <i>ho(w)ak baké</i>, lines 26-30, <i>tutu marin</i> poetic suite by Ne' Suban Maran, April 29, 2017.</p>	

In this extract from the poem, the terms used do not speak of nourishment (*pau*). The spirits, active agents, come by themselves to take their share. These lines emphasize the intentionality of certain spirits, which are more active, more aggressive, and more

dangerous than others, as evidenced by people's expressions of concern about them during interviews. Nourishment (*pau'*) is directed to ancestors (*kewokot*) and auxiliary spirits (*guna dewa* and *nuba nara*).

- 53 The term "giving" (*soron/nein*) appears only once in the poetic sequence when the humans feed the helper spirits from the baskets on the altar.

<i>Soron pai pulo umen' kaé</i>	The shares were given to ten
<i>Nein pai lema lamak kaé</i>	The shares were offered to five ^a
a. Poem <i>gurun gawak</i> , lines 21-22, <i>tutu marin</i> poetic suite by Ne' Suban Maran, April 29, 2017.	

- 54 In fact, they also nourish the *guna dewa*. Small oblong stones with extraordinary faculties, the *guna déwa* are regularly fed as part of a ceremonial meal once a year, at the harvest of the first corn, as well as at each ritual to which the *guna déwa* are invited (Rappoport 2021).
- 55 An examination of the vocabulary used to name transactions shows various modes of relationship and transfer between humans and invisibles: there are those who come to help themselves, those who receive goods and food considered as purchase or payment, those who are thrown things while speaking with care, those who are fed and those who receive gifts from humans.

The "Goods" Transferred

- 56 In a poetic suite, the transfer is twofold in its cost, involving expenditures in terms of animal sacrifice and of words. The notions of cost and expenditure are used here in an anthropological, not an economic, sense of unproductive expenditure characterized by the greatest possible loss giving the activity its true meaning (Bataille 1967 [1933]).⁵¹ Bataille reflects on the notion of expenditure ten years after M. Mauss in his "Essay on the Gift" (1999 [1923]) had approached destruction as a superior form of expenditure in archaic societies. The notion of expenditure mobilized here must be considered as a criterion of action on the collective: it benefits the group without producing anything other than an immaterial good.
- 57 Depending on the severity of the problem, six types of offerings are presented during the *tutu marin* ritual: egg, chick, hen, piglet, goat. In the ritual language, payment is expressed in a literary way as a male/female pair (see lines 23-24 of the above poem). The egg—the basic offering—is used to "liberate and replace," to "protect," to "pay for words," to "regain vitality" and preserve it, and to unite the community. All of these are non-synonymous terms that correspond to each of the poems in a sequence that aims to achieve, poem by poem, the reunification of the social body through addressing the spirits. The number of eggs in the basket depends on the matters to be resolved. If the words spoken were offensive, compensation is made with a chicken, a pig, or a goat. A subtle exchange is at work: the animal effects a transfer through its fluids. After the poem is spoken, if the offering is an egg, it is pierced and some of its egg white applied to the cotton and the bancoul nut of the offering basket. Through the egg white, the power of the auxiliary spirits (invited in the first twenty lines of each poem) penetrates the bancoul nut, which is then broken, mixed with the saliva of an elder, and applied to the foreheads of young men. This anointing brings freshness, peace, reconciliation, and

health. Similarly, if it is an animal that is slaughtered, then its blood is immediately applied to the bancoul nut. Through the bancoul nut, the blood is anointed on the foreheads of the participants. The transfer of benefits is thus done through the fluids (egg white, blood) that pass from the bodies of the animals to those of the humans. In the first case ("buying the harvest"), the cooked meat is given to young men who make skewers of the sacrificial pig. On other occasions, such as agrarian ones, through the *tutu marin* ritual participants' coconuts are anointed with blood. The coconuts are then taken to fields at the beginning of the agrarian cycle, the blood being considered a vector of fertility.

- 58 In addition to the fluids from animals or eggs, other things can be transferred to the spirits, such as valuable goods (ivory, cloth), called *niun rewot* "ivory sarong,"⁵² objects that are part of matrimonial compensation and subsequent exchanges, thus referring to the ideas of multiplication and abundance and perhaps even alliances with the spirits. In the first poem of the suite, these goods are called "golden jewel(s)" (*gumu lodan*), earring (*belaon*), ivory (*bala*); in addition, the term "shining" (*aba*) is used. In fact, during the ritual, an elephant tusk and a valuable sarong are placed on the altar platform, as if presented to the spirits. When an offering is "thrown" into the mountain, it is only a representation of a valuable object, a small piece of cloth or a bracelet to represent the ivory.
- 59 In some cases, the object of the exchange between human and spirits is a human life. The *nitun* spirit (in its human form) agrees to help a human but requires something in return. As explained to me: some have reasonable demands, others make cruel demands such as a human or a mating with a human, which is most often the case. The *nitun* do not demand objects. For example, if humans ask for water, scarce in this region, the *nitun* will ask for a child in exchange. They often take a life and leave an object in its place (a musical instrument, a flute, or a fiddle).⁵³
- 60 However, payment in eggs or animals is not enough, it must be associated with words spoken during the transaction. To the animal expense is added the verbal performance. The closing lines of each poem explicitly state:

Tutu <i>Ratu moé naran doan</i>	Calling your name Ratu from afar
Marin <i>Nini moé makén léla</i>	Repeating forever your name Nini

The lexical pair *tutu marin* is associated with the ancestral couple protecting the ceremonial domain, Ratu and Nini. It is about "saying" and "pronouncing" as if under the control of the ancestral couple. Bapa' Krowé explains to me that it is about paying with another language. The form of the words is carefully chosen so that the spirits experience great pleasure and a form of deference. By pleasing their ears, by speaking to them with finesse, they are appeased. This "other language" refers to the versified language that few people master because of its complexity, a language based on the coupling of lines (in twos or threes) from decoupled lexical pairs, each dyad or triad forming nevertheless a unity of meaning (for example in the dyad above, the *tutu marin* pair which means "to say to speak" is split in two inside the poetic flow). If this association is characteristic of many ritual languages of the Austronesian world (Fox 1988), here, lexical complementarity is brought to its height. In the west of the Indonesian archipelago, lexical parallelism proceeds by synonymy, but among the

Lamaholot, it functions both by parallelism and by lexical complementarity. This language, which is called "paired lines" (*kenahan' kenapén*), is distinguished by its several types of semantic complementarities that I have described elsewhere in more detail (Rappoport 2016). Ritual poetry consists of a large number of complementary pairs that are decoupled when performed in poetry. Added to this lexical complexity is the speed of speech, which impairs the intelligibility of the words although this is of no consequence as these words are for the spirits.

- 61 This verbal elocution is costly for those who produce it for several reasons. First, it is costly to speak in this way because of the effort of memorization and elocution, but above all, because an error in pronunciation can harm the whole community. Versified speech involves the relationship of humans to spirits who have the power to hurt and even kill. This idea returns to that of expensive signals described by the philosopher Jean-Marie Schaeffer in these terms:

We understand [as costly signals] any production of signals that contradicts the principle of economy that regulates vital activities in general. The production of high-cost signals is an activity that can be found in particular whenever humans want to enter into contact with spirits, or when they want to seduce, when they want to impose themselves on a rival, when they want to show their power or, on the contrary, their submission, when they are confronted with illness or death, in short, in the innumerable material and symbolic interactions in which our *Gestimmtheit* [emotions, emotional content] is at stake, as we are caught up in an interhuman and cosmic network that cannot be taken for granted. (Schaeffer 2004: 42.)

- 62 We have seen this here. Poetry is produced here to solve a problem which affects emotions. What do the humans hope for? In return for the animal and verbal offerings, they hope to appease the spirits, restoring order and avoiding their anger and, in the second village, obtaining their protection and a good harvest. Humans especially want to be able to count on these spirits, to trust them, says Bapa' Krowé. They obtain simultaneously the trust of the *nitun* spirits and the fertility of the earth (*ehin wa'in*). By buying peace after an offense, humans feel appeased, hopeful of regaining health, vital energy, and body integrity. This energetic restoration is visualized as skin flushing with blood.
- 63 In the first two poems of the 2017 poetic suite, named "liberate replace" (*howak baké*) and "shield and protect" (*gurun gawak*), animal offerings are exchanged for the life energy of Bapa' Platin. After the bad dream, the elders of the ceremonial domain "go" to negotiate in words the return of the vitality of the ritual speaker. The object of the transaction is therefore the very life force of the speaker. In exchange for an egg and payment for the extra words, the body of Bapa' Platin will be safe and sound. What is recovered is the wholeness of the body, flush with blood, "fresh from the toes to the top of the hair," "standing up," full of "air," with restored vitality (*tuber manger*). Finally, the benefit that results from these transfers is never materialized except by the very presence of the restored bodies and the palpable emotional well-being between the humans.

Sovereignty in Action

- 64 The *tutu marin* ritual brings into play some components of the sovereignty of the ceremonial domain. First of all, let us recall that the ritual speakers who address the

spirits are members of the sovereign clans. Of the many differences that distinguish sovereign clans from others,⁵⁴ the prerogative of ritual orality is one. Since singing and speaking in pairs are reserved for sovereign clans, it emerges that authority is inseparable from the mastery of formal speech and credited with a particular power: of obtaining, through the locutory act and an offering, some positive good for an individual or the group following a disturbance. Whether this "good" is in fact obtained is not the crucial point. The essential seems to lie in the relief of social tension by means of the poetic word.

- 65 When the problem concerns at least two clans, the poetry brings together the chiefs of the sovereign clans. Their authority is based on a link to the past: in each poem, as we have seen, the ancestors and the powers of the ceremonial domain (contained in the baskets of the altar) are invoked. However, the baskets are only filled with small stones, pieces of wood and areca nuts, which materialize the spirits, to whom all the clans attribute the capacity to protect. By inviting the spirits of the deceased, the auxiliary spirits, the ancestors, and the powers protecting the ceremonial domain, the sovereign clans assert their authority—the term "assert" being reiterated in the poems.
- 66 Moreover, a certain practice of authority is manifested in the spatial arrangement of human and non-human, visible and invisible: those who have the duty and the right to speak to the invisible are also those who have the duty and the right to nourish the land and the legitimacy to call the ancestors. The other clans (the *nipa' talé'* support clans) do not complain about this, but the contrary, as they feel they are protected by the sovereign clans. If the *tutu marin* ritual seems to regulate the social order in this way, its regular recurrence nevertheless manifests the repeated tensions and precarious balances between clans, often jealous and rivalrous. Rivalry can take root through dreaming. The harmony of the village can thus be jeopardized by dreams, their interpretation always taken seriously and validated by divination. Each dream that affects the body of a human being will be validated by divination, which may then designate a culprit, perhaps wrongly accused of witchcraft. The *tutu marin* ritual used to clear negativity in these cases as well, once again reinforces the "legitimacy" of the sovereign clan's authority.

Conclusion

- 67 The question was to identify modes of relationship at work in the *tutu marin* ritual. The two cases presented in this paper, namely, the "Purchase of the harvest" (*Hopé éhin*) and "Paying the words" (*Paté koda*), showed that restitution underpins the relational dynamic between humans and spirits: infractions, attributed to words (*koda*), jeopardize the harmony between humans and the spirits. To restore trust, humans pay with poetry and animal offerings to make peace with the spirits. The ritual has a double effect: it appeases offended spirits, who, in return, re-establish individuals' vital energy, and thus that of the community as a whole.
- 68 If the "Purchase of the harvest" corresponds more to a form of prophylaxis, "Paying for words" is probably more of a therapy of a quasi-endorcist nature.⁵⁵ The "Purchase of the harvest" reminds us that the earth does not belong to humans: it is inhabited by a variety of beings that must be reconciled so that humans can live in harmony. Parallel in terms of intended result, "Paying for the words" is a question of recovering

dissipated vitality from the spirits and returning it to the relevant bodies to ultimately recover the harmony of the physical and social body.

- 69 The study of the poems and ethnographic observation revealed a plurality of recipients with whom humans have diverse relationships. Some are potentially cruel creditors; they live alongside humans circulating in the ceremonial domain and their power is manifested in an ability to take revenge. They are distinguished from the auxiliary spirits (*guna déwa*). Materialized in the baskets of the altar by stones, pieces of wood or areca nuts these spirits are fed and protected by humans. The *tutu marin* ritual is the only time when these two categories of spirits—avengers and helpers—are summoned at the same time and given shares.
- 70 The transaction involves a ritual based on the recitation of a specially refined language. Costly in terms of time and energy, the poetry performance makes it possible to guarantee and re-establish an order, based on relations of authority and alliance between clans to which all the clans adhere; alliances that are often fragile and challenged at various levels of society. In a sense, the *tutu marin* ritual seems to play the role of a customary court whose judges are the spirits and whose barristers are the leaders of the sovereign clans. Society finds its maximum concretization of harmony when the saliva (*ilu'*)—resulting from several transfers (involving “paying with words,” the eggs, or blood)—is used to regulate the individual and collective tensions recovering the unity of the body and vitality (*tuber manger*).
- 71 The study of words in relation to gestures has revealed a conception of the relationship between the living and the spirits, based on a costly expenditure. Beyond this ritual, a next step in research would be to deepen the vocabulary of transfers, involving not only words but also bodies and linked to the settlement of transgressions, to see if all reparations are possible and according to what modalities. The particularity of the transfers studied here lies in the immateriality of the benefits produced by the poetic word.

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NOTES

1. On this peninsula, populated by about 10,000 inhabitants, people speak two or three languages of the Austronesian family: Lamaholot (mother tongue), Indonesian (national language taught in school) and finally Nagi (Malay dialect of Larantuka, capital of the department). In this article, all terms in italics are in Lamaholot except those preceded by ind., (Indonesian). The name Lamaholot, an exonym, refers to a linguistic group of about 200,000 people, which extends over several islands in East Indonesia (Flores, Solor, Adonara, Lembata).

2. The data for this article were collected in 2017 and 2018 in two villages on the Tanjung Bunga peninsula during missions conducted with support from the CNRS in partnership with my Indonesian counterpart, Ibu Pudentia MPSS (Asosiasi Tradisi Lisan). I thank the inhabitants for having trusted me by allowing me to attend all their rituals, and I salute Bapa' Krowé Koten and Bapa' Kobus Brinu, who helped me, with patience, to understand the *tutu marin* ritual. Finally, without the enthusiastic support of the editors of this issue, and without the invaluable proofreading of Cécile Barraud, Grégoire Schlemmer, and Philip Yampolsky, this article would not have been published in this form.

3. *Bokan Maran* means "to speak ritually (in verse)" before the slaughter of an animal, starting with a descending minor third.

4. In theory, men from clan A marry into clan B, who marry into clan C, who marry into clan A. This mode of alliance has been described by C. Lévi-Strauss as asymmetrical marriage or generalized exchange, in *Les structures élémentaires de la parenté* (1967 [1947]).

5. The matrimonial compensation is called "the price of the girl" (*tonu wélin*) or "the price of the ivory" (*wélin bala*) (Graham 1991: 154). *Wélin*, a noun that designates "the price" in an exchange of goods, is related to *beli*, an Austronesian Proto-Malayo-Polynesian root meaning "to buy, purchase, price, value, provision of marriage, bride price." *Austronesian Comparative Dictionary* online, <https://www.trussel2.com/>, 4/12/2020.

6. I use the term "transfer" in the sense defined by A. Testart (2001: 720) to designate "any transfer of property, whatever its nature, regardless of whether it is a gift or an exchange." See also the introduction by Emmanuel Pannier in this issue.
7. *Paté* may be related to *matay*, a Malayo-Polynesian proto-central-eastern root (PCEMP), meaning "money, payment, means of commercial exchange." We also find *maté* among the Tolai of Papua New Guinea, or *pata* for the 'Aré'Aré coins of the Solomon Islands (Austronesian Comparative Dictionary online).
8. "Ceremonial domain" is used for the translation of *lewo tana*, in reference to Douglas Lewis (1988: 32).
9. The *nipa talé* ("rope stake") clans have the mission of protecting the sovereign clans. They help them in decision-making (*gelekat gewajan* "help accompany"). They are on the front line in battles and ensure the stewardship of rituals.
10. The acquisition of a rare good likely to enrich its new owner (motorcycle, car) can trigger a proliferation of "hot words" (*koda platin*) in the neighborhood.
11. The "great field" (*man bélen*) is the ceremonial field of a sovereign clan which, during an agrarian season, will be the site of all agrarian rituals, the benefits of which will be appreciated by the entire community.
12. In Keka', the ritual speakers are called *tonga leba* ("looking up, looking down"), because they address the Sun-Moon (*Réra Wulan*) above and the Land-Earth (*Tana Ekan*) below.
13. *Guna déwa*, auxiliary spirits of the clans, materialized by oblong stones kept in baskets (Rappoport 2021).
14. *Uten Lakan* is to retain the divine state of the rice.
15. Note that the reason for individual illnesses or problems is also sought through divination (*irak*).
16. In Keka', the position of "masters of the land" (*tana pukén*) is given to the Koten clan.
17. *Ilé* means "hill, mountain," *harin* refers to the sea. The spirits of the mountain (*nitun*) and those of the sea (*harin*) form a group of spirits (*nitun harin*) composed of an indistinct plurality (Nong 2009). The *nitun*, spirits of the earth, are potentially harmful and live in "dangerous places" (*duan' geraran*) like large trees, stones, etc. They move around on land and can metamorphose into humans.
18. In the past, when the clans arrived in Keka', the land was occupied by the Paji whom they killed in battle. For several centuries, a spatial-political dualism determined the relationship between common territories in the region: space was divided between land under Paji or Demon control, terms referring to a mythical conflict between two brothers that generated rivalries for hundreds of years (Arndt 2002; Ruth Barnes 1987: 18; Robert Barnes 2005: 8).
19. *Hopé* "to buy," *éhin* "result," *wa'in* "water, liquid" (Pampus 2001); *éhin wa'in* means "the harvest, the result of the harvest." In Waiklibang, the expression differs as follows: *hopé éhin' gélu' wa'in* "to buy, to exchange the result of the harvest" or *hodé' éhin'* "to take, to receive the result."
20. In Waiklibang, they also "buy" from the *nin lagan* (*nin* "domain, region," *lagan* "support, prop"), resident local spirits, distinct from the *nitun* who are nomadic (Bapa' Krowé, p.c., 2018).

21. See, among others, Mabuchi (1964); Josselin de Jong (1965: 284); Friedberg (1980: 267); Lewis (1988); Hoskins (1989); Erb (1994); Barraud & Friedberg (1996). In Waiklibang, it is called *opak tutu ukut raran Tono Wujo* "account of Tono Wujo's path" (Rappoport 2014).
22. Since 1965 in Waiklibang and 1985 in Keka', at the behest of the Indonesian administration, the inhabitants have left their original villages to settle near the sea. The "old villages," now uninhabited, are nevertheless still used for non-Christian ritual practices.
23. The term *werada* refers to a bed-sized platform used as an altar during rituals.
24. Within each sovereign clan, authority is distributed in a tripartite manner: ritual chief (*madun mula*), speaker (*dei lau' tonga raé*) and executive chief (*péhen kaung kita*).
25. Everything that acts as a vessel enveloping life is endowed with a shadow-body (*tuber manger*). This notion encompasses vitality or life energy. Humans, animals, plants, earth, houses and even the auxiliary stones, *guna dewa*, have a *tuber manger* which vanishes at death. This *tuber manger* can also be stolen by *benakan'*, evil spirits, who carry the shadow-body away by boat across the sea. The abduction can itself lead to illness and even death.
26. *Nuren daten néda nalan* "by a bad dream, by a dream of offence," poem 1 (line 11). *Hoé pai kakak goé, baké pai ama goé*: "my elder is released, my elder is replaced" (poem 1, lines 22-23).
27. *Soron pai pulo umen kaé, nein pai lema lamak kaé* "They were given ten shares, they were given five shares of rice," poem 2 (lines 21-22).
28. *Hodik wékin dawa oné, ina puken wai matan* "Connecting bodies from within, roots to sources," poem 6 (lines 30-31).
29. *Tuber naé lau tena lodo da'i, manger naé tana péun béto* "his body that left in a boat arrives, his shadow is returned to earth," poem 8 (lines 29-30).
38. In Waiklibang, it is a matter of placing an areca nut on certain graves while making a small scraping noise which acts as an invitation to these deceased (*kewokot*) to participate in the ceremony.
40. *Lewo* "village," *ha'ak* "armpit," *kélik* "beside."
41. *Koda* "words, story, talk, incident"; *koda kirin* "to tell, problem, advice"; *seba' koda* "to look for the problem."
42. Ind. *Membayar sesuatu yang lebih dengan mengungkapkan kata-kata adat yang sangat berkenan di hati para dewa atau leluhur dalam sebuah upacara.*
43. Three types of divination (*seba' irak* "looking for signs") are practiced: measuring the hand on the body (*irak*), placing the yolk of an egg in water, rice placed in water. If the egg breaks or the rice floats, the answer to the question is positive.
44. A person had a dream that fourteen corpses were lying in the banyan tree in the center of the village.
45. *Gélu'* "to exchange"; *nélu'* "thing exchanged, exchange." *Moé hopé hélu' tega?* "Where did you buy that?"
46. For example, one says: *goé hopé gérok raé nitun* "I buy from the lands of the *nitun*."
47. *Witon* and *boa* both mean "to throw."

51. Georges Bataille (1967: 28) thus says: "Although it is always possible to contrast the diverse forms of expenditure, [unproductive expenditure] constitutes a whole characterized by the fact that in each case the emphasis is placed on the loss which must be as great as possible for the activity to take on its true meaning." (Translation by the author.)

52. *Niun* literally refers to the shining shard, a metonymy for ivory. *Rewot* refers to a cloth that falls in a fringe (Pampus 2001). A related (or identical?) term, *ni'un*, also signifies a hope of multiplication (ind. *menunggu menjadi banyak*, Pampus 2001).

53. In the neighbouring region of Wulanggitan, in Plué, I was told that a young man, having broken the string of a borrowed fiddle, had to offer his body to the *nitun* spirits in order to return the fiddle whole to his older brother. The fiddle was returned by the *nitun*, but the younger brother died.

54. These include: the duty to feed the earth, feed the stones, play the role of mediator, set the foundation stones of buildings, guard the ceremonial stones of the ceremonial domain, negotiate the matrimonial service, speak to the spirits, sing, manage the collective calendar, open and close the agrarian activities, summon the people for the agrarian work of the ceremonial field, organize great month-long celebrations, control the opening of plots, etc.

55. In the sense of the reintroduction of a vital principle into a body. The term "adorcist" was coined by Luc de Heusch (1962, 1971) in his analysis of trances in Africa and then taken up by other ethnologists studying possession, particularly in the shamanic trance. I prefer "endorcist" which indicates a recovery inside the body (the poem says "the skin fills up again" to indicate recovered vitality).

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