THE RELIGION OF THE MANDOBO

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It may be advisable to preface the following account of the *religion* of the Mandobo[1] with a short definition of what we mean by this term, since it is a matter of course that such an account will be partly determined by the author's personal views of the matter.

When we speak of a person's *religion*, we mean his acceptance of the *ties* with values that are absolute to him. He considers such values as absolute realities. In the same spirit terms like *ties with the real* or with *real reality* are applied. We use the term *religious* in a more comprehensive sense of the word so as to cover all the ways in which a person expresses his assent to these realities that are absolute to him. Or we may say: everything is *sacral* in a person's life when it manifests his ties with the realities that are absolute to him. Everything that does not bring out these ties is non-religious, non-sacral, profane.

There are two things that are always seen in connection with absolute realities: on the one hand *life* (to exist and to persist in one's own being) and on the other *social intercourse* (to be with one's fellow-men). Or, in rather obsolescent terms, it is of absolute value for a person to be an individual and a social being. Nowadays we rather avoid this dichotomy and prefer to say: it is of absolute value for a man to be a *person.*

Consequently, a person's religiousness may be determined if you know his views of the sense of *life* and of *social intercourse.* In any life there are moments when a man acts profanely, i. e. when he experiences and furthers his existence and intercourse without giving expression to what makes them absolutely valuable, and there are moments when he does see their absolute values, namely when he acts in a sacral or religious way.

It is typical of absolute values that they are ambivalent. By their attractiveness they absorb the entire personal being, but at the same time they inspire deep awe. This is called the *fascinosum* and the *horrendum* of the *sacrum.* The same ambivalence is characteristic of life and social intercourse. Existing and persisting in one's being are a *fascinosum* for everybody and at the same time a *horrendum.* Social intercourse also has its fascination and is something awful as well.

These aspects of the absolute are echoed in the great variety of man's responses to the absolute. We mention three of them which are of importance here: magic, science and religion[2]. They affect a man's life and his human relations. In all three the fascinating and the awe-inspiring elements are recognized in everybody's existence and intercourse with their fellow-men.

Science applies itself to the study of life and human relations, but only in so far as they force themselves on the searching mind as phenomena, and in so far as they make possible a knowledge of absolute values expressing themselves

[1] A tribe on the upper Digul in South-Western Irian (New Guinea), where the author has worked as a missionary and ethnologist from 1961 to 1967.

[2] See Bronislaw Malinowski, *Magic, Science and Religion.* — Garden City, New York (Doubleday and Co.), 1955.

in these phenomena. Science as such does not reach beyond its research and its views. It is not concerned with a man's ties with these absolute values. It leaves this ground to *magic and religion.* Science will describe what the fascination and the awfulness of life and social intercourse consist of, but it drops its object *man* as soon as the fascinosum and horrendum imply a *person's ties.* But at that very moment *magic and religion* start doing their work. That is why science and technics are grouped among the profane activities of man, whereas *magic and religion* are grouped among the sacral ones. Here we pass from the field of knowledge to the field of *faith.*

The field of the sacral in which *magic and religion* function — we still leave the terms somewhat vague on purpose — is constituted by everything that expresses a person's ties with what he regards as absolute values. It is the field in which answers are given to the meaning of existence, answers to the *why* of contacts with one's fellow-men, i. e. in so far as these answers make a particular course of action obligatory. The fascinosum and the horrendum call for a response from man. Generally, the responses are separated into two categories: we speak of *magic* or of *religious* acts. By this distinction we denote that the responses express either an attitude of dependence on absolute values or an attitude of self-dependence. The first attitude characterizes the religious man, the second the man who thinks in terms of magic.

We shall now apply this distinction to the two absolute values mentioned above, viz. life and social intercourse. Every man can act profanely with or without scientific insight. He can also act sacrally, i. e. in virtue of the ties with the absolute which he experiences and to which he assents. In the latter case, to exist and the desire to persist in his being are realities to him which he experiences against a background of *real reality.* His existence is part of this reality. He opposes himself to it as to *the other.* The question is whether this man sees his individuality as equal in power over against the whole and thinks he can keep his individuality well-balanced in as far as he is concerned or whether he sees his individuality as a power in the whole in which he may be able to secure a place for himself but for which he will not be a match in the end. In the first case, we think of those who assume that there is a *communion de vie* embracing all and everything; in the second case, we think of those who believe that there is a similar relationship between the individual and *the other* as there is between the finite and the infinite.

It seems to us that the terms *magic* and *religion* cannot be used univoquely as regards these two points-of-view. In the one that acknowledges a *communion de vie* (a kind of pantheism, if one likes) the *self-dependence* is a datum within the greater whole. Then there is no question of magic or religion, at least not in the usual meaning given above. In the second case, in which the existence of the finite and the infinite is acknowledged, the finite may try to control (*magic*) or it may submit to the supreme power (*religion*).

Parallel to this, we can deal with the other absolute value, social intercourse. Man can regard himself in relation to his fellow man as being in a *communion de vie.* Then he will feel himself to be a self-dependent individual who has to play the game in preserving the balance. He may also see himself as the finite over against the greater whole. In the first case again, there would be no question of magic and religion, but only of good and evil as regards the balance to be preserved. In the second case, magic and religion are possible

as well as good and evil; we then distinguish black magic and black religion from white magic and white religion.

After this rather theoretical introduction, we shall apply our views to *religion* in the so-called primitive cultures. The question may be asked, whether what are commonly called magical practices are indeed *magical* practices. May not primitive people think that the powers necessary are bestowed on them or that they have come into their own in a legal way? Is it not likely that their activities do not imply a *hold on the divine* but that they are only "a clumsy start of their technical hold on the world" [3].

Indeed, it seems to us that the relations of primitive people to *higher powers* bear some resemblance to — perhaps we may say *are derived* from — their relations to their fellow man. In those relations their reactions depend first of all on *what they know*, i. e. on the knowledge of man which they have acquired through education and experience and also on their courage to run risks in those relations. Primitive people are never quite sure of what they know or are capable of doing themselves, nor of what others know and can do. They make a trial, which implies that they accept their own limitations. And again, in their social intercourse, there may be moments when apparently their wishes can only be gratified by making a humble request, by using blackmail or by coercion.

When we apply this to their relations to *higher powers*, we find the following reactions resembling those mentioned above. First, there is a reaction resulting from the traditional myths and rites. There is no general answer to the question in how far we can speak of *knowledge* rather than of *belief* in such cases. Each case ought to be considered in its own light. Secondly, there is also a form of reacting which is simply a test of what one can afford oneself — and this is considered lawful — because one is not sure of one's own power and of the measure in which the *higher powers* allow themselves to be influenced. Finally, a point may be reached when one pins one's faith to a humble prayer or an attempt at coercion, even though in the latter case one knows that one does not know one's place. Only with these ways of behaving do the reactions appear which we have called *magic* and *religion*.

I. Religiousness among the Mandobo — General Considerations

Before stating the results of our ethnological investigations, we want to say a few words in general about *religiousness* among the Mandobo.

During the years 1961—1967 when we were in regular contact with them, it became clear from talks about their *adat* that practically nobody knew the whole of all the regulations and certainly not their entire background. It was not because of the age of our younger informants nor because of the conditions of life of the older people themselves that some of them knew only this, some only that. They constantly referred to *the older people*, not because they wanted to evade an answer to a question, but because it was their conviction that if *the older people could* not be sure of the right answers, nobody could.

[3] P. SCHOONENBERG, De Kerk en de niet-christelijke godsdiensten: *Het Missiewerk 44* (Nijmegen 1965) 157.

This demeanour of our informants was itself an expression of an attitude to the sacral, viz. that they recognized the seriousness of the ordinance of their institutions in which their people had lived from time immemorial, though in uncertainty. There is respect for tradition and for the accumulation of insight and experience of *the older people.* The Mandobo sees the ordering of his life as an ordinance regulated by tradition. For his own generation it is moored in the wisdom of the prominent members of his tribe who are supposed to know its foundations. This attitude reveals on the one hand the need of some absolute mainstay in the past and on the other hand its confirmation in the relative certainty of older fellow tribesmen.

When we premise uncertainty about their own adat as characteristic and point out that the following attempt at a systematic description of the religion of the Mandobo is based entirely on our personal experiences, it will no doubt become apparent that our account is anything but conclusive in that it shows various currents and information hardly suitable to form one coherent whole. We hope, however, that it will also become clear in this effort as a synthesis that there are some great lines which throw light on the cultural pattern as such and that in this pattern *religion* serves as a link. For a Mandobo can only think of the preservation of life in terms of the preservation of his own adat. His adat was established by tribesmen of primeval times. It is preserved by him and passed on to posterity. We already said that their existence stands or falls with their recognition or denial of the given order. Their response, however, is not primarily an act of obedience to the law-givers; it is first and foremost an assent under the penalty of *to be or not to be*, under the existential necessity of a man's existence and persistence in his own being in communication with the stream of life.

We shall first illustrate this *communion de vie* by drawing a parallel and then we shall add some further remarks.

The attitude of mind of the Mandobo — especially when their religious background is concerned — is comparable to the vegetative life in the forests as they experience it. Their convictions are like most trees which have neither widely spread branches nor deep roots. In their forests you see a few mighty giants here and there. Indeed, the forest as a whole is very imposing, but all the trees have to support each other to keep the whole erect. All the trees seek the light and bear their own fruit. They are rooted in the same soil. One common vitality makes them grow, and they all subsist on it. One tree dies after another, and they are replaced by saplings which start growing in their turn so as to reach their full height.

This is not a metaphor of some Mandobo. It is a form of expressing the experience one gains while living among these people and questioning them. They live in and with the things of their environs without differentiating them in the strict categories which we cannot

do without. Yet, when saying this, we do not go all the way with those who think that people like the Mandobo hardly distinguish themselves from their fellow man and from nature. This is the other extreme. It is our opinion that whenever it is useful they do see and formulate distinctions, but they prefer to *lose themselves in the crowd.* They rather react as parts of a whole. They prefer to keep in the background and remain in hiding. They rather live in harmony with others in a whole that apparently shows no clear structure. This holds good for individual as well as for social life. Of course, one can give all sorts of names to the ties with nature and with the group. One can say that the numinous is experienced among them. This may be stronger with them than with us, but it should not be suggested that contrasts will not appear at certain moments. Even if a Mandobo thinks that a man may change into an animal or an animal into a man, even if he is not sure whether a being is lodged in a stone or turns into the stone itself, yet he is fully aware of not being an animal and of not being able to get into a stone. He knows that the sacral and the profane are different things and he has words for them.

As to the vagueness of their thoughts and feelings, a thing frequently ascribed to primitive people, we want to point out in connection with the Mandobo that they, at least their leaders, often surprise you with their clear thoughts and formulations of fine distinctions. And this is the case not only when they discuss their economic or social interests but also when religious matters are concerned. Not every sacral place or act is equally *sacred* to them, not every rite equally important: Food-laws and moral laws are not on the same level; not all stories are indiscriminately important.

For a better understanding of the religious aspects of the Mandobo culture it is necessary to say something about their typical way of reacting.

While examining their language, Father Drabbe [4] ascertained that the language of this tribe is akin to that of the Awju living west of the Mandobo. I myself have been able to ascertain that the socio-economic structure of the Mandobo culture is strikingly like that of the Muju, a tribe living east of the Mandobo. These facts suggest that the two neighbouring tribes have influenced the Mandobo.

We were struck by a characteristic difference between the Muju and the Mandobo. The Mandobo (and the Awju) have stronger emotional ties with their kinsmen. If you say of the Muju that they are individualists and unimaginative realists, you should say of the Mandobo that they too have these qualities, but that they have another quality

[4] Concerning the linguistic studies of Fr. Drabbe, M.S.C., see: J. Boelaars, *The Linguistic Position of South-Western New Guinea*, Leiden (E. J. Brill), 1950, pp. X—XI and J. Boelaars, South-Western Irian, Missionary Activities 1905—1966: *Euntes docete* (Rome 1968).

as well. They will never act without consulting their family (especially in accordance with the *'mon-ranggen' relations*) [5]. Thus, every decision of the individual is supported by those who are also responsible. Consequently, a Mandobo will talk longer about some point, but afterwards he will not waver. He will stick to the decision they have made collectively. Every case is therefore a collective one in which each Mandobo always has all his relations behind him. In our opinion, this partly confirms the experience of outsiders that the Mandobo can be particularly troublesome, unmanageable and very crafty in having his way, even making use of sabotage and collective passive resistance.

A second impression we got as regards the differences between the Muju and the Mandobo is the following. The Mandobo seem to react to life in a more light-hearted, playful way than the Muju. Their attitude towards taboos is less strict. They break through them much more easily and do not demand obedience to them with the strictness you find among the Muju. For instance, the place of a pig feast seems less sacral; sacral arrows, etc., are prepared less seriously. The regulations concerning the building of the feast-house (*etot, atambon*) are talked of with great indifference. The feast is in a village, where everybody is allowed to walk along the road: In recent times the old food laws are ignored more easily. We are inclined to say that the Mandobo live up to a Muju adat in an Awju setting.

It is also typical that, although among the Muju and the Mandobo the cultural ideal is the same, viz. to be powerful through wealth, a Mandobo is never individually wealthy. He wants to be the rich man good to his relatives. Thus the Mandobo avoids being isolated whereas a Muju does not mind this.

As to the sacral, the Mandobo make a choice. Certain places, words and acts show clearly that their life and intercourse are tied up with absolute values. But we should remember that they experience the higher values of common things in the particular and give expression to their experiences in that way. We ascertained the sincerest respect for their adat among the older generation. It is only with reluctance, if not in constant resistance, that they allow themselves to be carried along to a more modern world by the younger generation. They are by no means sure that the new-fangled forms of living guarantee better ties with life than their own old customs do. Their rites and ceremonies had a redeeming influence on their ordinary entangled life. Wherever the contact with life was disturbed, some form of intervention was required to restore communication.

Contact with the sacral demands care, preparation and initiation. The presentation of myths and rites is permitted only in special circumstances. In this connection it is important that there should always be a primeval event standing as a model and that it is reproduced in a stereotyped procedure. Repetition is so important because it upholds the standard,

[5] See p. 35.

establishes what is regarded as normal and strengthens the ties with the absolute.

In the opening passage, we said that it would be possible to ascertain a person's religiousness from his ideas about life and intercourse with his neighbours. We shall now try to do this with regard to the Mandobo. In the second section, we shall see how carefully he frames his life in relation to the *cosmos*. In section three, we shall discuss the way in which he sacralizes his life and social intercourse. After dealing with this so-called cosmic and humanizing religiousness, we shall pose the problem if there is any occasion to speak of the religion of the Mandobo in connection with the history of salvation.

II. Cosmic Religiousness

The original settlements of the Mandobo consisted of a number of pile-dwellings erected close together in a clearing in the forest. They called such a settlement a mbütüp. The same word is also used to denote a single pile-dwelling. A man's mbütüp is one of his most valuable possessions. His home is his castle. He has his house, his garden, his family and next of kin, his pigs and dogs in this spot of light in the dark forest. Not far away from it he has his acreage of sago and his fishing-water. All this forms his capital which enables him to provide for himself.

Does he regard this capital as *sacral* property? We have not found that he sees his small community as a microcosmos over against a macrocosmos. Nor did we find that the order of the one and that of the other were ever seen in comparison. The settlement is rather a point of junction in the network of relations, although this image is not used by them either. Still, the care of each part in this whole has a kind of sacral accompaniment which we shall summarize here.

When laying out the garden, the man calls to the plants he is going to grow. While planting, he addresses himself to heaven and earth to make sure of a good crop. The pile-dwelling is constructed in imitation of the way in which it was done by a much honoured ancestor, called Waèmbon. By making use of certain plants and lianas, they hope to obtain plenty of tobacco and game. There is also a special little rite for the furtherance of the breeding of pigs. The importance of the pig appears from the sacral meal when the taboo-pig is consumed and from the pig-market feast with its special ceremonies (see below).

In the house the fire and the roasting of food are of the greatest importance. Fire originates in the vaginas of Waèmbon's wives, who also teach him how to roast food. If somebody burns himself, lightning is invoked.

Round such a settlement there are woods on all sides. There are the sagos and the streamlets where the natives go fishing. There live the

animals, large and small, which they try to catch. The woods as a whole are contrasted with the village as the dark with the light. We have not found any contrast between settlement and woods as between world and underworld.

Remarkable trees are the *ambot,* the *kimit* and the *mojong* which play their parts at the dawn of the earth and of man. The *kimit* also has its function in the ceremonies of the pig feast and it is also mentioned at the death of an old person. The *waringin* is regarded as one of the dwelling-places of the shades. The *tenot* (Indonesian: genemu) and the wild ginger-tree (Indonesian: halia) are used regularly in various *magic* practices.

The sky is like a vault over the settlement. In it the sun and the moon do their work. There are plenty of stars. They are addressed whenever it may be useful in everyday life. The Mandobo have their story about the origin of this whole *Kouritiwé,* heaven-earth. On good authority the earth was placed on a piece of wood drifting in the ancient waters. The earth extended and covered the water. The piece of wood was seen as a penis, but it is not said in so many words that the earth formed the female body. He who gave the command to the bird *Mbéktanop* and put the earth in its hands is the *itiwé-nati,* the earth-father, called Tomalüp. Not only the origin of the earth but also its maintenance is attributed to Tomalüp. They say that Tomalüp carries the root-knot or the supporting surface of the whole on his shoulder. They fear he may drop the earth (when there is an earthquake he changes shoulders), and it may fall back into the ancient waters and vanish.

There are many other things intended to further good intercourse with nature, such as queer stones, the so-called *ketpon*-places, cowrie-shells, fire, smoke, the knuckle-greeting, the hummingwood, etc. We shall see them again in the following section. Completeness is out of the question and not our aim.

Summarizing, we can say that the sacral accompaniment of life with respect to the surrounding powers implies the invocation of heaven, earth, sun, moon, stars, the sunset glow and lightning; the invocation of Tomalüp, Waèmbon, Aiwat, spirits of the forest and shades (the souls of the departed) and the giving of little presents to them; an appeal to the roads, the animals to be caught and the crops to be planted, the use of certain words, acts and objects; the imitation of examples from ancient stories, the belief in omens and dreams and the settling of feuds. An exceptional power is ascribed to certain higher beings, to particular trees, plants, animals, places, rivers and stones in accordance with what is told about them in stories of the origin of things. In the whole sacral accompaniment the power of words plays an important part as a means of invocation or evocation.

For the present we can say with regard to this data that when we inquired about the origin of the power of words in their various formulas,

Andejop and L. Wokurop declared on several occasions that the words used as invocations and evocations, whether accompanied by acts or not, are simply expressions of a human longing for the *Natiop Konenin*, the great father, called Tomalüp, who by his power might be able to bring about what is asked for. Desires of direct importance for life are made known to the sun, the moon, the stars, the earth and heaven, to the big rivers, the shades and the spirits. Certain places may be important and certain occasions may be the most suitable moments, but at the back of all these there is always Tomalüp. This figure, it seems to us, is not put on a level with figures like Ngirimut-Waèmbon or Aiwat. In so many words, the chiefs of Wakeriop, Andejop and Mop, declared that the invocation of *Kour-itiwé* (heaven-earth) was addressed to Tomalüp, the *itiwé-nati*, the earth-father himself. It was a surprise for us to hear it said that Tomalüp carries the earth on his shoulder.

We should like to distinguish two related aspects in this cosmic religiousness. There is religion at the horizontal level of the surrounding world in which the *little presents* are to be placed. At the same time, there is a religiousness rising from the depth of the past high above this surrounding world — a vertical religiousness, if you like, having its source in and its direction to the figure of Tomalüp. He speaks the first word, the instruction given to Mbéktanop to make the earth, and to him man returns, as we shall see in the following section. He supports the whole order.

III. Humanizing Religiousness

Just as we came across certain data in the description of the *mbutüp* (the original settlement) and could not say if they were symbols of the sacral, so we find in the lives of people certain relationships which are to a Mandobo unshakable and absolute. We do not know whether they regard these relations as reflections of relations between higher powers or of those between the higher powers and the people themselves. By way of example there is the autocratic attitude of a paterfamilias in his family living in his pile-dwelling and on his patch of ground. He is a small god almighty. Other examples include the relation between ego and his mother's brother on the one hand and his sister's son on the other (*mon-ranggen*) — a little trinity; the fact that the sons stay with the fathers and the daughters are married off elsewhere; the right of primogeniture; the levirate; sororal polygyny and the cross-cousin marriage. Some of these are mentioned explicitly in the stories of the origin, such as Waèmbon in his lonely pile-dwelling, the cross-cousin marriage and sororal polygyny. But we do not find such grounds for the fact that fathers and sons stay together.

The exchange of presents within the family as well as within the wider circle of kinsmen is certainly something sacral in the life of every Mandobo. Repayment with good or evil — which everybody has to

decide for himself — is more than a self-evident condition not to lose one's life. Retribution is a most serious business to which one is entitled and obliged.

After mentioning these more general points, we shall now follow the course of a man's life in order to see how the chief events are accompanied with sacral acts and words.

The first covering of a boy's genitals is a small ceremony, the meaning of which seems to be that this covering is a matter of life and death. Children may not see "the place of our origin". Revealing the secret of man and woman (to speak about it with others in an unfavourable way) is punishable by death. The child born of intercourse between father and daughter or mother and son will not live long, and the garden will remain barren. The adultery of *Mbeten-Komanop* committed within his family must be paid for with life. The blood of menstruation and childbirth may drive away fish, prevent the growth of vegetables and cause a dry cough and emaciation; but the blood of the first menstruation after the marriage is a pledge to the man that his hunt will be successful.

All this shows that procreation is surrounded with respect and care. We think we can see one recurring pattern in the regulations of the various procreation-rites. It is as follows: 1. You are to observe a number of food-laws. — 2. You are to avoid water, you should certainly not touch it, sometimes even not drink it. — 3. You shall sit down on the sheath of a nibung leaf. — 4. You take food you have not cooked yourself and you eat it out of leaves without touching the food with your hands; the leaves are preserved. — 5. You step on a raised platform and while you are on it, the leaves mentioned are burnt under it, so that you are enveloped by the smoke. — 6. You plant vegetables. — 7. You prepare food for kinsmen but do not eat it yourself. — 8. Under the guidance of older people you are again admitted to the water and to prohibited victuals.

We saw this pattern more or less complete at the first covering of a boy's genitals, at a wedding, at the first menstruation after the marriage and at the birth of a baby. The purpose is — this is repeated in all sorts of variations — to make the persons in question industrious and to prevent their becoming lazy. Taking pains is a proof of being in good health, of vitality, and a pledge of the maintenance of one's relations. The neglect of these regulations is sanctioned by emaciation, dry cough and death. This pattern points positively to a special care of life and social intercourse, negatively it points to defence against all that can endanger life.

To account for the rise of these practices they refer to the instructions given by *Kowamup,* the first sacral pig. Kowamup was the man who was turned into a pig after stealing. His *tirambon* (the throat), prescribed the food-laws to be observed particularly by those who are going to be

married. Contravention of these food regulations by young people from youth up to their marriage will stick dirt (*mbun*) to their bodies. If they should touch water with their hands or feet, the dirt of their bodies would get into the water and it might affect some sacred fishes. Those fishes are the *anggenat*, the *tiwi* and the *oknget*. It might cause people's emaciation, etc. That is why the candidates step on the raised platform (*ran-toé*, i. e. the platform for women), and submit to a sweating cure by burning the leaves mentioned above. In this way they are cleansed. By way of illustration, Mop, one of the chiefs of Wakeriop, told that Kowamup had also prescribed for a person who was getting thin that water be brought to the boil by throwing red-hot stones into it so that its vapors might cleanse the patient.

However, relations are also seen with primeval events. Marriage is seen as connected with the genesis of the world and of man. The first coition after the marriage takes place after pronouncing words reminiscent of the primeval event when Mbéktanop placed earth on a piece of wood erected like a penis. Whether ascent on to the raised platform staying on it till leaves and scraps of food have been burnt under it and descent with seeds in one's hands is also a repetition of the story of the creation of man or not was not quite clear to our informants from Wakeriop. Just as once Tomalüp made man on the *Kimit*-tree and drew him towards him, while below his unsuccessful experiments were being burnt, (and he repeated this with woman on the *Mojong*-tree) so all impurities are burnt under the man and the woman who are going to beget offspring. This suggestion of ours found no response among them. They said they simply observed the instructions of Kowamup in this ceremony. Later on in the conversation, however, they returned to the subject and said the *Kimit-Kon*, the earth on the *Kimit*-tree (and *Mojong-Kon*), was the real story of the origin of man. Andejop then declared that in the course of time the old and new had been blended (*Kowamup*). This was all the more remarkable because quite independently a Muju told us the same later on. He said that they too had an old and a new testament, viz. the stories of the origin of things and the stories about *Kamberap* (Muju for Kowamup).

The avoidance of all water at this critical moment in a man's life can also be accounted for if we start from the idea in primeval times that the water absorbed the unsuccessful experiments of man-making and retained the sacral elements.

The other ceremonies grouped round this central purification serve to bring home to the new family the idea that they are incorporated in the greater whole of the two families, which demands their industry and diligence.

We would like to add a thought derived from investigations made by C. VAN DER LINDEN M.S.C. regarding the Muju-marriage. His opinion about the avoidance of water offers insight into other motives. Van

der Linden refers to a myth of which we give the following short summary. Komot (one of the so-called higher beings) finds a stone in the top of a sago tree. In it lodges Trioknaat, a *ranggen* of Komot (ranggen is *sister's son*) [6]. He takes the stone home. When later on Komot has gone for a walk with his family, Trioknaat comes out of the stone and eats all the food in the house. This happens more than once. Then somebody secretly stays behind and discovers the offence. Komot's wives demand he remove the stone. The stone itself tells Komot to throw it into the water, but at the same time it announces that from then on it will waylay all women who are in menstruation or who are with child.

In this story the fact is important that Trioknaat is Komot's *ranggen*, for the son of his sister is the most suitable bridegroom for Komot's daughter. At every marriage the danger arises that the bridegroom's family will afterwards continue their visits to the bride's parents and will eat all the food in their house. A violent removal, however, would not be for the good of the bride given in marriage. This then would be the reason for avoiding water.

The ceremonies in connection with marriage, menstruation and childbearing mentioned above are performed only at the marriage with the first wife, at the first menstruation and with the first child. The second wife is admitted only if the first approves of her coming. She is below the first, and thus for her the creation of the earth and of man is not reenacted. So, even though on the whole the two wives may seem to be on a level, in the *religious* accompaniment they are not of equal value.

A woman's pregnancy is caused by Tomalüp sending her a seed of the *tree of life*. He also fixes the length of life. That there is a tie with the hereafter is confirmed by the information about the practice that the life line of Tomalüp with people is severed by burning it when a child cries too much.

In the stories about the origin of things taken down by Father Drabbe, the soul of the child of the first two people proceeds from the *etigit*-liana. The baby, especially if it is a beautiful one, is surrounded with great care.

In warding off disease and death, and wrecking vengeance on those who are supposed to be guilty of them, they make use of a person's *katét* (scraps of food, finger-nails, hair, etc.) and also of sacral names, of small presents to the shades and spirits (too many to mention here). The only thing we want to determine is that in the opinion of the Mandobo the process of life and contact with one's fellow man can be influenced by means of them.

The influence of blessings and curses is based on a belief in the power of certain words and acts to frighten the other person's soul, so that it flies away, or propitiate it, so that it works with great power. If it has fled, it is necessary to reassure the *frightened person*. Only on payment

[6] See p. 35.

of a fine can the soul be inclined to return. The importance of frightening is derived from the story of Watümerop. He is very attractive to women because of the splendid colour of his skin. This is the reason why he is murdered. His soul returns to his house. His body is sent after it. This frightens him so much that he is the first to depart forever and he announces that from now on all people shall die. Murder in revenge, in so far as it is a secret murder which exploits a person's fear, has just this effect because of this belief. The tie between soul and body is apparently subject to the influence of words and practices.

The origin of a natural death is also explained in Watümerop's story. The Mandobo thinks that the soul returns to Tomalüp along the same way — the *Kimit-Kon-Kawi* — by which man enters the world. There are *two ways* for the departed soul: the one to Tomalüp's house and the other to the fire and the hound of hell. This resembles the christian idea too strikingly not to suspect the possibility of an *insertion,* even though our informants doggedly denied this. L. Wokurop, a teacher, declared that for the average Mandobo good and evil are retributed on earth.

Besides this idea of a return to Tomalüp, there is the general conviction that the shades are present in all sorts of places. They are the *kuguj,* who are feared, invoked and given presents.

After this short survey of the sacral accompaniment of daily life, we shall now just touch on the celebration of the pig market feast and partaking of the sacral pig. The celebration of a pig feast is a participation in life through which the cultural ideal of a Mandobo reaches its greatest development. To become well-to-do by entering into relations with other persons or strengthening relations and availing oneself of them to do business is for him flow of life and a strong furtherance of the right course of things. The *sacrality* of the feast as a whole is difficult to demonstrate, but the practices which aim at the furtherance of the circulation of money (cowrie shells) point in that direction.

The building of the feast-house and after that of the small *front-room,* the setting up of the cages for the pigs, the preparation of the sacral arrows, the *ketmon*-dance, surprising the children with the dripping of the pig, the showy way of walking about with big pieces of pork, the exchange of the pieces bought, the nocturnal dance and the trade — all these facets create an atmosphere in which life in all its relations is strengthened. And we should not forget that a particular origin is ascribed to the cowrie shell and that, among other things by its form this shell has the power to attract other shells. It dominates the trade in pigs and women, and it enables a man to buy an assassin.

The eating of the sacral pig takes the form of a repetition of Kowamup's first meal. We should remember that it was Ngou (Tomalüp) who celebrated the very first pig feast, during which Kowamup turned into a pig. Then Kowamup organized the life of the Mandobo in the shape

of Throat and Hummingwood. The sacral came into existence and perished. The first participation of boys in this meal forms part of the celebration. Afterwards the knowledge of the laws and regulations of the tribe is imparted to them.

Summarizing again, we may say that the origin of man and of the life of every individual is attributed to Tomalüp. The genitals, the blood in so far as it plays a part in procreation, the water in so far as it plays a part in procreation, fire, smoke, food laws, nursery stock — all get sacral meanings.

Procreation is surrounded with ceremonies. The warding off of disease, revenge and retaliation are accompanied with practices which are based on a belief in the influence of formulas and practices, especially those referring to the ties between soul and body. These formulas (blessings and curses) are partly passed on by tradition and partly they are personal discoveries. A blessing derives its ultimate power from Tomalüp; a curse derives its psychical power from the physical violence that is feared because of the strength of the groups of relatives on whom the speaker can rely to carry out his threats.

Social intercourse gets its sacral accompaniment from the directions about taboos which were promulgated by Kowamup. Obedience to these directions safeguards the vital powers of each individual and the effectiveness of his social connections. Moreover, it is important to imitate the behaviour of Ngirimut-Waèmbon, Mbeten-Komanop and Watümerop.

It seems to us that the relation between the Tomalüp figure and the Kowamup figure is this. Tomalüp is at the beginning and end of a man's life; he is an outsider as to the interplay of powers in this world which he called forth and perpetuates. Kowamup is human. When spellbound he assumes a particular form of exceptional authority. When he feels enchanted, he becomes angry. He feels he is going to turn into a pig, but eventually he submits. He regulates all that happens to him himself, also his death and his consumption. He regulates positively how and on what he is going to live, viz. sacral pigs and sacral fishes, and negatively what people have to refrain from at his order so as to live long and responsibly. However, when he thinks he can claim human sacrifices, he is killed once and for all.

In connection with these two figures we would rather speak of two forms of religiousness manifesting themselves simultaneously: one horizontal, regulated and sanctioned by Kowamup, the other vertical, arising from Tomalüp and sanctioned by him.

We should like to add to this distinction what was mentioned at the end of section two. It seems to us that the horizontal religiousness arises from the experience of a *communion de vie* which is considered to exist between man and the world about him. The vertical religiosity arises from the acceptance of the existence of a relation between the finite and the infinite.

Further, the vertical religiousness, seems to have been modelled on the horizontal. The *communion de vie* which expresses itself in forms derived from social life — claims, appeals, attempts to influence, giving presents, pointing to great examples — seems to have something to do with the relation between man and Tomalüp.

Finally, we shall say something about the *morality* of the Mandobo since morality is tied up with the religious views of a man in our western thinking.

According to the description we gave, the Mandobo experiences his ties with the values that are absolute to him in two ways. He feels that there is an interplay of powers between himself, his fellow man and the surrounding world. In it his self-preservation, first as an individual and secondly as a member of a group of relatives, is the purpose of his life and salvation. All that serves this purpose is taken to be good, all that hinders it is bad. Moreover, he experiences that not all that seems to be directly efficacious for his aims will turn out to be so in the end. Some means may be used to his disadvantage. Horizontally, his moral attitude resolves itself into adherence to the last seven commandments as we know them. However for practical purposes, his self-interest and ability at secrecy will induce him to theft, murder and adultery, but the teacher L. Wokurop assured us that he knows that he is wrong and he is afraid of being found out, because he would not be able to account for them.

Besides, he feels that he is vertically dependent on higher powers. They come to him from primeval times but are still powerful. His experience shows itself in his firm conviction that a man who leads a good life will live to a great age. Still, we have not been able to ascertain that the honour of Tomalüp or of other figures ever was the guiding principle. The Mandobo live to exist and to persist, but not with a view to maintaining the ordinance or to honouring its originators. The idea simply does not seem to have occurred to them. There is no question of any responsibility to Tomalüp. The idea that life on earth might be of influence on life hereafter could, if desired, be derived from the story of the *two ways*. It seems to us, however, that it is too uncertain that this story is indigenous enough to be taken as a starting point. The expression of the feelings of a dying man who has lived well makes it clear to us that he is sure of being happy with Tomalüp in the world to come. The expression, however, of the feelings of a dying man who has lived badly, shows that he is by no means as sure that he will be unhappy in the hereafter.

IV. The Religion of the Mandobo and the History of Salvation

We have defined *religion* taken in the full sense of the word, as a man's ties with what to him are absolute values, absolute realities, absolute entities. We have traced these ties of the Mandobo by asking

ourselves if it appears from his relations with his fellow man that he sees his life and social intercourse in connection with absolute values... and what exactly these values are. These investigations resulted in our conviction that a Mandobo regards both a *communion de vie* and a *higher being* as realities on which his life and intercourse, i. e. his life in accordance with his adat is based. It is quite possible that in this his assent *he* is bent rather on his personal well-being than on the honour of these absolute realities. Anyhow, the assent is unmistakable. We are even inclined to say that this *communion de vie* represents an absolute value for him, because the infinite power of the higher being is realized in it.

Let us pose the following questions. Does the religiousness described above suggest that a Mandobo thinks himself more or less personally addressed by the higher (supreme) being that thus enters into his personal history or into the history of his tribe? Is it possible to speak of a *revelation*? Is it his experience that the absolute draws near to him not only in the mighty whole of nature (cosmic religiousness) or in the typical ordinance of his own adat (humanizing religiousness) but also approaches him as a being, speaking to him as one person speaks to another? Is this experience so definite that a Mandobo responds not only in an act of hope, but in an act of surrender, based on the expectation of a personal salvation consisting in the contact with this supreme being?

As regards all of this, he certainly entertains a hope that it will be gracious to him. Whoever lives in the right relation with it will live up to an old age and will persist in his being. But is there perhaps more? Is there a certainty based on faith that he will persist in his own being because there really is Somebody who will sustain him? Is there faith in this sense?

In the preceding section we said that, in our opinion, the ordinary intercourse among people provides the forms of which a Mandobo also makes use in his contact with higher beings. Here we may ask: does a Mandobo appear to have an experience of the beneficial power of another person urging him to surrender himself to that person, which is more than only setting his hopes on him? Does he experience an *expectancy*, because the other's being means something to him personally that gives him this trustful certainty? Formulated negatively, one could put the question in this way: are there cases in which somebody's refusal to assist him disappoints a Mandobo most deeply, because he had not expected this refusal from this or that person? In how far is he sensitive to being hurt and how fierce is his revenge in such a case?

To find this out we considered those relations in the life of a Mandobo in which we may expect the closest ties with another person: the relations between husband and wife, between parents and children and the *monranggen* relation[7].

[7] See p. 35.

In our regular contact with the Mandobo, we were struck by the others. But it is always the *bad* cases that are told to a priest. If, however, we think of the description of the husband-wife relation — provided the description given us by the teacher L. Wokurop is correct — we cannot but say that there is indeed real tenderness among the Mandobo. Also in the parent-child relation, it is clear that there are two sides to the coin. There are cases where the parents only seem to exploit their children to their own profit. This becomes poignantly clear when a father forces his daughter to marry too young because he wants to use the bride's price for his own purposes. On the other hand, we hear of *the good child* that was taught by a *wise* father how to lead a good life. The sharing of the stuffed sago in a family may point to sincerest mutual affection. It is also noteworthy that the relations between a *mon* and a *ranggen* may form ties strong enough to make them stand up for each other in perilous circumstances. But again, people say that an assassin can be found among such relatives, for only in the relationship with the next of kin are the emotions strong enough to proceed to murderous action, e. g., when the breaking of ties by one of the parties is a great disappointment to the other.

Therefore, we should not want to deny there are Mandobos who combine a strong individualism with a strong group consciousness, a personal appeal and a corresponding surrender.

The question is, however, whether they appear to take up a similar attitude towards higher powers and especially towards the supreme being. Again, our answer is given in the form of a distinction. In our opinion, the average Mandobo is too much occupied with the usual cares of his existence and his social intercourse. The wrong done to him, illness and death, marriage-regulations, claims, the celebration of less important festivities, the preparations for a pig market feast are all added to his cares for daily sustenance. All this fills his mind and heart. Besides, as has already been said, the majority have no certainty, no definite knowledge, no firm conviction as to what tradition teaches them. They do have the vague certainty that their salvation lies in their assent to the Mandobo ordinance, but not everybody is aware of a connection between the *communion de vie* and the belief in a personal supreme being. Still, we think that such a conviction is present in the minds of some elderly, talented and wise people. The fact that such people, when they are hurt in their honour or possessions, do things of which they disapprove in theory need not be contradictory to their fundamental attitude.

Their sincere belief in their tradition, their certainty that they will *return to Tomalüp* are, we think, expressions of a belief in some ordinance and in a supreme being that reveals itself to the Mandobo in their (mythological) history and in the course of their personal life. The belief

of this *elite* is a safeguard that others too participate in this belief in their own way.

Finally, let us try to sum up our thoughts. The difficulties are so immense that no formulation will suffice in itself. The reader will have some impression from what we have already said and from the few lines that follow at least as to how things are in our opinion.

It seems to us that the Mandobo — some more than others — is aware of standing before and deriving his existence from a higher power. This power is a reality which becomes a being to whom one can address oneself: in oneself, in one's fellow man, in shades and spirits and in Tomalüp. There is a personal relation. This living reality created the earth, man, the land and the Mandobo himself. It maintains the entire ordinance. It is his salvation to assent to this reality by means of interplay with powers and other beings. Where he is powerful himself, he acts himself . . . where he lacks the power, he hopes, asks, accepts and expects his salvation. It may be true that not every Mandobo is bent on the honour or the happiness of Tomalüp, but he realizes that Tomalüp is bent on man's honour and happiness, and that he makes use of the Mandobo ordinance. Even the man who does not live up to his adat still hopes and is not convinced that complete annihilation in the hereafter is in store for him.