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**CHANGING 'INDIGENOUS ENVIRONMENTAL LAW'  
IN THE CENTRAL MOLUCCAS:  
COMMUNAL REGULATION AND AND PRIVATIZATION OF SASI**

by

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## Changing "indigenous environmental law" in the Central Moluccas: Communal regulation and privatisation of Sasi<sup>1</sup>

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### Introduction

After decades of neglect of other concerns than those of rapid economic development, policy makers have come back to earth. The earth summit in Rio has marked the growing concern for sustainability. The rhetorics of responsible exploitation of the environment by now are universal. Likewise the concerns of ecologically oriented scientists and policy makers to translate rhetorics into valid policies have gained legitimacy. Engineers of different breed work on technologies for sustainable agriculture and industry. Social scientists and lawyers look for institutions and laws furthering ecologically responsible exploitation of the environment. Confronted with the magnitude of the transformation required, there is general interest in traditional environmental knowledge and technology, and in traditional environmental ethics and law to complement modern technological and legislative efforts. Resource management of indigenous people, not so long ago deemed obsolete, has gained respect, if not outright admiration (IUCN 1984, Richards 1985, Posey and Ballée 1989).

Like many other countries, Indonesia has vigorously stimulated the production of agricultural commodities, both food crops and cash crops. Economists have widely acclaimed its politics of agricultural modernization for the marked increase in productivity, but over the last decade concerns have risen on the sustainability of its modernized agriculture (Barbier 1989). Increased awareness of environmental problems attributed to uncontrolled resource management and exploitation has a.o. led to legislative activity for environmental protection (see Koesnadi 1983). It has also led to a somewhat ambiguous rediscovery of and renewed respect for traditional ways of environment management. There has come more appreciation of the ways in which traditional forest dwellers take care of their environment and their natural resources. Yet only if this suits the government; otherwise such measures may be regarded as inimical to economic development<sup>2</sup>. One could nearly say that a new variety of the noble savage has gained prominence. Traditional agriculturalists and horticulturalists tend to be romanticized as having a special bond with and appreciation for nature, quite different from the exploitative and materialist attitude so characteristic of western, bureaucratic capitalists economic domination of nature and natural resources.<sup>3</sup> Governments, NGOs and environment protection action groups therefore all take a renewed interest in such traditional forms of nature protection and control of resource exploitation. Such forms are seen as relevant for state policy and should, as far as possible, be strengthened, relied upon in government policies etc. (see World Bank 1982; IUCN 1984).

The Moluccan sasi is discussed as a prominent example of such a traditional institution in Indonesia. The etymology of the word sasi is unclear,<sup>4</sup> but its core meaning has always been a ban on the use of a specific piece of land, tree or sea during a certain period. Such a ban or taboo was publicly announced and was symbolized in sasi signs. Its

preventive and reactive sanctioning power was originally rooted in the belief that the ancestors or spirits would punish those who trespassed against sasi. Sasi could be imposed on forest areas or on specific crops; it could also be imposed on river inlets and parts of the sea. In general terms, sasi thus was "a periodic prohibition on the harvesting of of specified domesticated and non-domesticated land, tree and sea resources" (Ellen 1978), or "a traditional institution regulating the exploitation of natural resources and the environment" (Kriekhoff 1989:1). By academic writers and in international ecological consultancy work, for instance of the Environmental Management Development in Indonesia, sasi is discussed as a potentially powerful instrument for environment protecting and maintaining or creating sustainable exploitation of natural resources. From the perspective of government policy, sasi also seems to figure well as a traditional form of environmental law in full correspondence with the objectives stated in the Basic Law on Environmental Protection, according to which the utilization of natural resources shall be wisely controlled (art. 4 (b)), and where every person has the right and obligation to participate in the management of the living environment.<sup>5</sup> Last not least, the role of sasi is also discussed by Moluccan villagers, although in their discussions the value of sasi as a means of preventing theft and to restore discipline is more prominent than environmental concerns.

In this paper we want to examine the contemporary forms and functions of sasi and speculate on its potential role in environmental protection in the Central Moluccas in the future. In doing so, we shall look at the problems likely to be encountered by those who want to revitalize it or expand its present scope, whether as a local initiative of villagers or as an attempt to incorporate it into a governmentally controlled environmental policy. It is our conviction that such planning can only fruitfully depart from an understanding of the contemporary realities of sasi. Besides, we also need an understanding of the actual and potential environmental dangers in the region in order to assess the problems to which sasi might be a solution.

### **Agro-ecological problems**

From agronomic research it can be concluded that the major ecological problems lie in the protection of soil fertility and the prevention of erosion, especially in the steeper areas (see Flach and Luning 1983, Brouwer 1989, 1990). The Central Moluccas are comparatively poorly endowed with natural resources for agricultural production. Most of its soils are of low fertility and moreover susceptible to erosion. Rainfall is high, falling in a wetter (400 mm/month) and drier season (100 mm/month), but in increasingly erratic patterns. Most years, rainfall will be sufficient to ensure the year round cultivation of crops, but frequently (in the village of Hila statistically one out of five years) conditions are thus that either excessive rainfall leads to destruction of crops and may cause erosion, floods or landslides, or that prolonged dry periods may lead to serious loss of production and the death of trees. A large part of the soils is located in steep areas, which increases the danger of erosion. The same steepness of the area inhibits the possibility of irrigation. The area thus is not well suited for the permanent dryland cultivation of annual crops, a kind of agriculture that still is normative in many of the agrarian policies advocated by the Indonesian government.

Under the conditions of this natural environment and the region's long history of

integration in colonial and post-colonial economies and states, agricultural systems developed in which tree crops dominate over the production of annual crops.<sup>6</sup> In the wetter coastal areas of the islands mostly tree crop gardens (**dusun**) of sago palm are found, in the drier areas dusuns with a variety of tree crops, but more recently predominantly with a few cash crops, mainly clove. After the cultivation of annual crops in slash and burn gardens (**kebun**) these gardens were usually planted with trees and transformed into permanent tree crop gardens. Cash tree crops like clove, nutmeg and coconuts a source of cash (see Taale 1986, F. von Benda-Beckmann 1990). The exploitation of sago palms in dusun on wet soils, provided a reliable source of starch and food security. Proteins to a large extent are supplied by fishery. Depending on the terms of trade between their main cash crops and rice, which had to be imported, the population of the Central Moluccas over the centuries have either purchased a considerable part of their food through the market or have devoted more attention to the cultivation of food for subsistence.

In its (by now) traditional form of exploitation, production of both the wet sago dusuns and the older dry dusuns with a high variety of species have been sustainable. The dusuns would now be labelled agro-forestry systems. They were man-made forests with a high diversity of useful species, each occupying a specific ecological niche. Exploitation of these dusuns was based on an intimate knowledge of the crops to be exploited and their ecological environment. The exploitation of starch and spices has not exerted strong pressures on the soils. In the traditional extraction of sago starch, plant nutrients hardly are transported out of the dusun. Clove and nutmeg are products with a relatively high value per unit of weight and a relatively low yield per hectare; in comparison other cash crops, less nutrients have to be exported from the dusun (Brouwer 1990).

These sustainable components of the agricultural system increasingly have come under pressure. Commercialization and "rationalization" of agricultural production have increasingly led to monocropping of only a few cash tree crops, notably clove, and to a loss of species diversity, and have also made these dusun susceptible to the problems of maintaining soil fertility and prevention of erosion (Brouwer 1989). Prospective modernization of sago palm exploitation is likely to lead to degradation of soils and also pose problems in maintaining soil fertility in wet dusun (Brouwer 1990; see also F. von Benda-Beckmann 1990). Moreover, care has to be taken that with increasing pressure on land, marginal lands that should remain covered with forest are not exploited. Kebun are occasionally still left fallow after a few years to restore soil fertility, but, with growing pressure on land, permanent use of kebun for cultivation of annual crops is increasing. Prolonged intensive cultivation of annual crops in kebuns may only be sustainable with the use of green manuring or improved fallows, and with labour intensive adequate measures to check erosion.

### **Methodological assumptions**

For understanding and assessing the environmental aspects of *sasi*, we must look at the contemporary varieties of *sasi*, their operational record, the intended and unintended consequences of their functioning, and the various goals pursued by people and political institutions employing *sasi*. We need to distinguish the cultural-legal form, the cognitive

and normative schemes through which ecological knowledge and the social organisation of natural resource management were meaningfully expressed, and the social practices relating to those schemes, including social processes through which the schemes are maintained or changed.

We must also look back at its historical development for two reasons. First, the history of sasi reveals that the two major policy options at present considered by governments, i.e. governmentally controlled communal regulation and privatization of environmental management, have already occurred in the Moluccas at earlier times. Second, contemporary forms of sasi cannot be adequately understood unless seen as historically evolved in political, economic and cultural processes. Sasi has always been part of and shaped by the wider socio-political, cultural and religious organization of rural society. But sasi has undergone considerable change over the past 400 years. Roughly summarized, it has developed from a ritual protection of communal resources to a governmentally regulated regime of agro-ecological control of private and common resources, and from there to a largely commercialized and privatized means of theft prevention. However, shifts rarely meant that older ideas and practices of sasi were completely abandoned; they simply became less dominant, but remained part of the institution, to be taken up again when deemed convenient. Moreover, different people would use sasi for different purposes at the same time, depending on their position and on individual preference, and the use of sasi for one reason could have consequences, intended or not, in other respects. This is particularly important, because sasi is so closely associated with environment protection by its proponents. The fact that conservation is one of its potential purposes, does not mean that it is always and by everyone used for that purpose. It is even possible that environment protection was sometimes only an unintended consequence in a certain agro-ecological constellation, or that it was of minor importance for sasi practices. Analyses must take these possibilities seriously into consideration, if it is to be of any value for developing environment protection and sustainable exploitation of natural resources (see Persoon 1991: 116).

Stressing these points may seem superfluous, but government policies, as well as local initiatives often base their considerations upon the "traditional institution" in a rather context-less manner, looking for a fit between their policy objectives and the objectives and functions attributed to that traditional institution. However, what is regarded as traditional institution often is merely an abstract and summary indication of the common denominator of a wide variety of concrete and more complex institutionalized practices. Moreover, it is usually the institutionalized normative, and therefore idealized form rather than the actual practices which form the point of departure for future scenarios. The danger that such an approach is adopted towards sasi is quite realistic. Conceptualizing sasi as a "traditional institution regulating the exploitation of natural resources and the environment" (Kriekhoff 1989:1) may be a good abstract restatement of what sasi institutions had in common during their history, but it does not tell us much about actual sasi practices, and therefore may turn out to be a misleading starting point to analyse its potential contribution to resource management and environment protection.

Our description and analysis will therefore be presented against the background of four aspects, central to our enquiry, in which sasi is related to Moluccan social organization.

1. Cultural-religious aspects: Sasi is related to the more encompassing body of meaningful relations between people, the natural environment and gods, ancestors and spirits. The operational logic of the prohibition and the sanctioning powers behind it were largely rooted in the belief in spirits and ancestors, but it has also been combined with/transferred to the God of Islamic and Christian religions. Besides, sasi could also be used to appease the angered spirits or ancestors, called "religious sasi" by Volker (1925). Volker quotes as examples instances where misfortunes and accidents at sea or in the forest were seen as being caused by angered spirits and of nature. In order to appease the spirits' wrath, sasi was laid on the sea area, prohibiting boating and fishing, or the tree garden, which meant no work, no entering at all until it could be assumed that the spirits' anger had subsided (see Volker 1925:295).

2. Political and administrative aspects: Sasi requires organization. For some types, the village community as a whole decides on laying sasi; for other types individuals or kingroups of various size may take the decision. Sasi may be prescriptive or voluntary. It may concern the whole village territory, certain areas of specific crops. It may require animistic priests, Islamic or Christian religious functionaries, government officers or private persons to perform the necessary controlling tasks. Decision on monitoring and sanctioning sasi are closely related to political positions, both within the village and in relation to more encompassing political and administrative entities.

3. Economic aspects: Sasi is part of the economic system and of the property regime under which economic rights and duties and options were allocated. Sasi restricts exploitation of natural resources and it protected property rights. Monitoring and sanctioning sasi regulations may involve economic sanctions and management fees or what we would now call "eco-taxes". Depending on the property status of the resources, sasi influences harvesting and distributing common property resources of the village or smaller socio-economic units. It could be used to regulate exploitation that would be economically and ecologically sustainable.<sup>7</sup>

4. Ecological aspects: Sasi relates to the control of harvesting or collecting certain resources before they are physically mature or exist in a specified quantity in a certain location. Most authors stress that it was based upon local ecological knowledge about the cycle of growth in nature and of the processes of reproduction in the case of sea creatures (Cooley 1962:77). But the "environmental coverage" of sasi could vary, from harvest prohibition of single specified crops to general forest management and the prevention of soil degradation. In general terms, conservationist aspects are mentioned by several authors.

These various aspects were, and are, "packaged" in historically specific, and changing combinations. In such packages, the analytically distinguishable aspects are not always clearly differentiated in social norms and relations. Religious, administrative, economic and ecological aspects of sasi were closely interwoven. But each of these elements was intimately linked with and embedded in more encompassing structures. The rights, duties, sanctions related to sasi were part of a much wider set of property law. The authority and powers of local leaders, religious experts, family heads, individuals, and colonial officers with respect to the sasi complex were part of the wider political and administrative set-up in the region. Management fees for monitoring sasi and sanctions

on violating sasi rules were part of the economy of village officials. Sasi rules and practices were part of the local agro-economy and resource management, et cetera. Changes in the encompassing political, religious and economic structures and practices not directly connected with sasi are thus always likely to affect the form and practices of sasi itself.

We are well aware of the impossibility of reconstructing the whole range of practices throughout history. Even for such a relatively well-documented region as Ambon Lease, this can only crudely be done. But we hope to give as differentiated a picture as our fragmented material allows for, distinguishing between institutional levels and actual practices where possible, and paying due respect to the ambivalence in much of the material.

### **Pre-colonial and early colonial sasi**

In the Moluccas, the period between the 15th and 17th century was full of turmoil and dramatic political, economic and religious change. The northern Moluccan kingdom Ternate tried to expand its political influence and control over clove production and trade over the Central Moluccan islands Seram and Ambon Lease. Slavery was also an attractive trade. Portugal and the Dutch East Indies Company (VOC) joined the struggle for domination in the early and late 16th century respectively. For a long time none of the parties were successful and the outcome of the struggle was all but certain, until in the second half of the 17th century the Dutch finally managed to consolidate their position through a series of successful wars against the Portuguese and later against the local population. The region became part of the VOC empire. During this period, Islam, Roman Catholicism, and Protestant Christianity were introduced. With defeat of the Portuguese, Roman Catholicism more or less disappeared from the region as an important religious force and only remained in some Southern Moluccan islands and on Timor. The settlements and villages in the central Moluccas eventually became either Islamic or protestant. It is extremely difficult to get a clear picture of that period, in which for a period of more than a century and a half none of the parties managed to establish hegemony. Influences from all different kinds continued to shape Moluccan society, at different times, with different speed and with varying impact. They all left traces in the social-political organization, in language and culture and in religion. With the necessary caution, however, the following lines of change can be traced on the basis of early colonial literature and oral histories.

The original inhabitants on the islands of Ambon and Lease, in the literature usually referred to as Alifuru<sup>8</sup>, lived in small mountain villages, called *hena* or *aman*, which had no clear territorial demarcation. In order to be safe from slave raiding parties, but close enough for fishing, the settlements were situated in the mountains at some distance from the coast. The Alifuru economy was essentially one of horticulture, gathering and hunting. Bananas, sago, fruit trees, tubers and vegetables were the main sources of subsistence, besides fishing. Most of these crops were cultivated in slash and burn gardens (*kebun*) in a system of shifting cultivation. When gardens could no longer be used for annual crops, people often planted trees in them. Sago palms which have a 10 to 15 years growth cycle grew in more permanent tree gardens (*dusun*). Organized in

tribal groups (*uku*) consisting of clans (*lumah tau*), the most important leaders were the chieftain or king, *latu*, the heads of the *uku*, and the *mauwin*<sup>9</sup>, shaman, a magical-religious expert mediating between the people, nature and the world of the ancestors and spirits. In the course of the expansion of clove production from Ternate, via Hoamoal on Seram to the Central Moluccan islands in the early 16th century, immigrant groups, coming from the northern Moluccas and Java settled closer to the coast.<sup>10</sup> The newcomers gradually assumed political dominance on Ambon and were mainly engaged in the trade of cloves and slaves.

It is possible that the term *sasi* was introduced during this period of close and intensive contact, but it is equally possible that it dates from earlier back, since contacts with the northern Moluccan kingdoms had existed before. Nevertheless, *sasi* as an institution, though perhaps with a different name, is generally considered to have been an integral part of the Alifuru ways of protecting and controlling the exploitation of their natural resources. In this period it seems to have had the objectives of making clear that the trees or tree gardens were someone's property and to protect this property. The property owner could be an individual, a family or a clan. It could also be the whole village community, as in the case of wild growing fruit trees and resources in the uncultivated forest area which the families in an *aman* or *hena* regarded as their communal resources, as well as fishing resources in river inlets or the *meti*, the sea area lying dry during low tide. According to most interpretations of Ambonese history, it was the *mauwin*, probably in consultation with the *aman/hena* leaders, who was responsible for declaring *sasi* and putting up the *sasi* signs. We can only speculate to what extent harvest control, in the sense of optimisation of harvesting only ripe and mature fruit were an explicit objective in these times, as it became later common.<sup>11</sup> Neither is it known whether those engaged in declaring and guarding *sasi* were given any part of the harvest.<sup>12</sup>

Apart from communal *sasi*, another, more private<sup>13</sup> form of *sasi* was known. Such private *sasi* came close to, and usually involved putting up a *matakau*. *Matakau* means literally "red eyes".<sup>14</sup> It refers to a curse, as well as to a sign that something has been placed under a taboo, thus protecting it with the help of supernatural powers (Wessels 1986: 139). The curse can be spoken during an *adat* oath so that anyone violating the oath shall be punished by the ancestors and spirits.<sup>15</sup> Such curse can be used to protect property. In that case the physical sign, also called *matakau*, embodies the curses and thus becomes the actual guardian and protector. Some *matakau* signs represent quite vividly the punishment, like a grasshopper which will hop around in the stomach of the thief and make him suffer terrible cramps. Others are more abstract: Crossed bamboo poles, leading to deafness, or a bottle made of *gabah-gabah*, which will invoke lepra. *Matakau* both in the sense of curse and of the material signs are property of clans or clan-segments (*mata rumah*, Wessels 1986: 141).<sup>16</sup> In the animistic belief system of the Alifuru, both *sasi* and *matakau* express the transfer of one's own personality to an object, mostly a tree or a group of trees. Volker (1925:294) explains it as follows. Placing a sign, usually by attaching coconut leaves to a tree or group of trees, "particularized, distinguished [them] from other trees, other groups, as having become part of him who placed the sign. And bypassers acknowledged the sign, because they knew that the sign was part of someone else's personality and that violating that intimacy would cause severe magic."<sup>17</sup>

Two important developments were ultimately of decisive influence for the further



development. One is the introduction of Islam and protestant Christianity; the other was the establishment of the trade monopoly in cloves. We will discuss these two developments separately, though it should be kept in mind that they took place in the same period and side by side.

### Islam and Christianity

During the 15th and 16th century the two great religions, Islam first and Protestant Christianity about a century later, became firmly established. They had to arrange themselves with the animistic beliefs and practices of the Alifuru. Since the mauwin, the spiritual leaders, guarded over the relationship between the human and the spiritual world and played a central role in the management of natural resources, the attitude of the new religions greatly affected this management. The position of the mauwin generally declined (Riedel 1886: 45-46). However, the ways in which Christians and Muslims dealt with these problems were entirely different and as a result, developments in those villages that adopted Islam differed considerably from those in Protestant villages (see Bartels 1977, F. and K. von Benda-Beckmann 1988). In muslim villages, the relation between old and new religion already had developed in a rather unproblematic manner. Pre-Islamic beliefs and ritual practices (adat) were largely tolerated by the new religious officials once the supremacy of the belief in Allah was accepted, and the new religious hierarchy of the mosques with their Imam and Chatib were acknowledged. The old religion remained in the hands of the older, precolonial functionaries and became closely associated, or nearly identified with adat. The colonial literature suggests that mauwin continued to exist primarily in muslim villages (see Holleman 1923, Volker 1925). Christians on the other hand vigorously tried to suppress all traces of what they considered to be pagan superstitions. Belief in, and contact with the spirits and the ancestors, were banned. The placing of matakau signs were prohibited; effigies, holy stones, called **batu pemali**, etc. were burnt or destroyed. Also the mauwin were prosecuted. Attempts were made to transfer their functions to other functionaries, such as the **tuan tanah**, the lords of the land. But the Church was not completely successful in eradicating the old religion. There are cases in which the mauwin simply took on the appearance of **tuan tanah** to appease the church and the colonial government, but continued to exert its magical role.<sup>18</sup>

### Clove monopoly and incorporation in the Dutch colonial empire

The second crucial development, that ran parallel to the religious developments, was the establishment of the trade monopoly on cloves and the ensuing restructuring of Moluccan society. To maintain their monopoly, the Dutch rigorously prescribed and enforced production quota in the region. To this end, they designed a structure of settlement and government that allowed for sufficient control (see Knaap 1987; Krause-Katerla 1986).

After the Dutch East Indies Company took a foothold on the islands of Ambon Lease, the mountain villages were ordered to settle at the coast, in newly formed politico-territorial coastal villages, the **negeri**. In many parts of Ambon this resettlement did not happen without serious and long-lasting struggles. But the new village organisations in which Alifuru and immigrant settler groups were united under the leadership of the immigrant groups who negotiated with and fought against the Dutch, seem to have

been consolidated at the end of the 17th century. The territorial size and the social composition of the new villages only rarely corresponded with the earlier aman or hena. The population of aman or hena often descended into different negeri, and most negeri consisted of members from different aman and hena. The Dutch established a new political system in the villages, appointing a village head (**raja, orang kaya**) and heads of **soa**, newly formed associations of clans or tribal groups. The older positions of leaders of clans or tribal groups were to some extent incorporated into the new negeri governmental structure. Those who were not given a place in the new structure, remained representatives of the old adat. Functions relating to the old religion and to the land and nature remained in their hands, but their position was redefined in relation to the new negeri organisation. Although only very few details are known about gradual transformations of the internal political and religious organisations, a systematic reorganisation of older political and magico-religious functions and offices must have taken place everywhere.

There has been enormous variation in the way pre-colonial offices were incorporated in, related to, or excluded from new village governments, as there had been great variation in socio-political organization in pre-colonial times. The terms of various offices are still a testimony of the many political influences that gave shape to the emerging political structure. Old terms with a new content, new terms for old functions existed side by side and many offices combined old and new elements. The variation and ambivalence of many terms and offices make it especially difficult to get a clear picture of this period. In Hila for example, the village in which we did our main field research<sup>19</sup> the new village territory was divided up into twelve regions, for each of which there was a guardian, each with his own Alifuru title, but now called tuan tanah, who took care of the relations with the spiritual world and the ancestors. There was also one person who was said to be the king of the mountain, **raja di gunung**, the overall lord of the twelve tuan tanah. He was at the same time the war leader, **kapitan**, a term dating back to the contacts with the Portuguese in the 16th century, the office in all probability being much older.

Although the VOC regulated the production and harvest of clove in detail, there is little evidence that she was especially interested in sasi. Given the growth cycle of cloves - cloves have to be harvested within a brief period of less than a week's time - a periodic harvest prohibition was irrelevant and would have been something of an innovation anyway, since clove trees were a relatively new crop in the area. Matakau signs could have served as theft protection. But the mauwin's ritual role in resource management did not lend itself well for supporting the clove monopoly. As we have seen, he was treated with suspicion for religious reasons. Besides, the control of production and delivery of cloves asked for a much stronger and secular intermediary power structure, such as the village heads and the **kepala soa**, who became responsible for the production and delivery of cloves to the VOC, and who also received a share of the profit in the form of the **hasil** and **pitis-tax** (see Van Fraassen 1972; Knaap 1987).

It may well have been for these reasons that with respect to the management of other resources than cloves, the mauwin's function in sasi were neglected and that the Dutch directed their attention to other functionaries and other control mechanisms to support the forced cultivation of cloves and the clove trade monopoly. It was not until the 19th century that mention was made in the literature of officers connected with sasi, such as the tuan tanah, the lord of the land, or the **latu kewanno** or **kepala kewang**,

the lord of the forest. We cannot establish with certainty whether these officers already existed in pre-colonial times. Knaap, who did intensive archival research in the development in the second half of the 17th century, found that the archives of the Dutch East Indies Company mentioned neither *tuan tanah* nor *kepala kewang* (1987: 162). The first reference to what might have become the *kewang* appeared in 1675, where mention is made to a *bosmarinyo*, a forest herald (see Knaap 1987: 162, referring to Valentijn 1726: 14-16).<sup>20</sup> In the course of time *kapitan* or *tuan tanah* sometimes became *kewang*.<sup>21</sup> This seems to have happened in the village of Paperu on Saparua. In a statement by the *raja* in 1913, it is said (AB 24:314 ff.)

"Sasi has its beginnings when our ancestors still lived in the mountains (in the *negeri lama*). But its lords were two families, the family Luhukay with the title of *Latu Salisa*, ...and the family Pattipaway, with the title of *Tanuhua*, the guardian of the front and the backside of the village. When the village had not yet descended to the coast, they guarded over the order under the *raja*, and were known at these times as "*kapitan*", and below them were their followers. ... After the village moved to the coast to its present site, those two *kapitan* were installed as *kepala kewang*, and their followers became the *anak kewang*, and this has remained so until the present time. According to old custom, no persons from other families may be installed as *kapala kewang*; people from other families may not be chosen, one would be afraid of dying as a consequence."

Thus, in the long period between the 15th and early 19th century, the political and social organization of Moluccan society changed profoundly. The driving forces were the clove trade monopolies and incorporation in the colonial empire and the establishment of Islam and Protestant Christianity. Both developments strongly affected the organization and practices of *sasi*, even though it was not of central interest to the Dutch. This changed in the beginning of the 19th century, when *sasi* gained a prominent position as the centre-piece of village common resource management.

### **Sasi as centre-piece of village common resource management**

In the course of the 19th century the Dutch political and economic involvement in the Indonesian archipelago changed drastically. The VOC period had come to an end, and after the English interregnum (1798 to 1817) the Dutch Government assumed control over the former VOC empire, and expanding it through a series of wars throughout the century. Economically, the colonial system changed from an organization primarily concerned with trade to one of agricultural production. Control over land and labour rather than over trade and trade routes became the main concern of the government. Along with crop diversification and a more general interest in agriculture, this development brought substantial shifts in means, mode and scope of control. During the first half of the century, forced production and delivery of cash crops for the world market predominated, a system that had existed before for clove and nutmeg production in the Moluccas. After 1863 this so-called *cultuur stelsel* was gradually abolished. It was substituted on the one hand by a taxation system which replaced the earlier forms of

corvee labour. On the other hand, the colonial government increasingly assumed control and ownership rights through the agrarian legislation and the Domain Declaration of uncultivated areas in the 1870s. The nature of the indigenous land right systems received more attention, surveys of indigenous laws were held in most regions. The colonial government started to define rights to land more precisely than it had done before, because cultivation and agricultural development required legal control over land. Ultimately this accumulated in what would later be known as 'adat law', the Dutch systematized version of local rights and duties. The first roots of this system were laid down in the early 19th century through interpretations of local systems by administrative officials which were largely translated into administrative measures and regulations, but it would take a century before the system came into full bloom as a scholarly discipline. In the course of the 19th century the administrative apparatus also expanded both in numbers and in scope. Relationships between colonial government, village leadership and smaller social units were redefined and more clearly demarcated than they had been before. This huge reshaping of the colony took more than a century. Despite the general historical trends just mentioned, it was filled with internal contradiction and controversion. Measures that would be in the interest of agricultural development often ran counter to political goals and vice versa. Decisions often seemed to be taken, and sometimes actually were, in a totally haphazard way. For these reasons it is impossible to construct one single line of development.

There is hardly a Moluccan institution where this is more clearly the case than for *sasi* and, more generally, the management of natural resources other than cloves. *Sasi* was on the one hand a means of regulating natural resources and therefore potentially very important for horti- and agricultural production. On the other hand, it embodied the political village structure with all its ambivalence between pre-colonial and colonial leadership. Firmly rooted both in the horticultural/agricultural economy and in the social-political organization, it became the centre-piece of village common resource management, sometimes to be actively developed and supported by the colonial government, at other times severely suspected and suppressed, to be revitalized again at a later stage.

When the Dutch reestablished their authority in the Moluccas after the British interregnum, they swiftly regulated the village government in a much more systematic way than had been common during the VOC period. During the first half of the century, the colonial government generally favoured a strong village government with extensive and clearly defined rights and powers over the village population. The powers of the village head, the *kepala soa*, and the village council were more clearly circumscribed. The local government regulation of 1824<sup>22</sup> explicitly included the right to impose *sasi* as part of what was called the "autonomy" of the *negeri*. Paragraph 71 stated that "the village council, [*regentsraad*], consisting of the regent and *kepala soa*, decides on laying *sasi*" (see also Volker 1925: 301). The *kewang* and his *anak kewang* acted on the authority of the village council. The rights of the village (government) and other groups holding land or tree gardens were also more clearly demarcated. Krause-Katerla (1986:112) speaks of a 'land reform'. The *dati* lands, land that had been given by the VOC to kingroups as compensation for corvée labour in the early settlement time, were registered. The earlier rights of the pre-*negeri aman* and *hena* to their original area in the present village territory were officially superseded. The extent to which these older structures of

resource control could be maintained as an alternative to the rights of the negeri according to colonial adat law, depended on the individual history of the village and its relation to earlier aman and hena, and the actual powers and authority which the village government could exercise. In Christian villages which had much more intensive links with the colonial government, the actual control over the village territory, the **petuanan**, and the **dati** land system seems to have been much more firm than in Islamic villages.<sup>23</sup> Under the new political organisation, the village government was seen as holder of the right of avail, **beschikkingsrecht**, over the whole village territory, **petuanan**. It had the right and obligation to control management and exploitation of the natural resources of the village. The uncultivated forest resources were treated as property of the whole village, to be administered by the village government, and largely through the **kewang**. The right to exploit this territory economically, for instance by harvesting fruit trees, exploiting timber and rottan, could be, and often was auctioned to individuals or groups, from the own village or from other villages (see Holleman 1923:43).<sup>24</sup> Some villages also had **dusun negeri**, village tree gardens, to be exploited in a similar manner.

In these new systems of resource management based on far reaching powers of the village government, **sasi** played an important role. However, it became embedded in a much wider system of the regulation of the village economy and of law and order on village territory. In the **kewang** regulations (which in the later 9th century were written down in many villages<sup>25</sup>), the **kewang** became an office with far reaching economic and police powers. The exploitation of horticultural resources held by individuals or groups became subject to licensing. Making new gardens, especially by immigrant settlers, required the **kewang's** permission. Also felling sago palms or fruit trees needed the **kewang's** consent, and fishing with nets was also heavily restricted. The **kewang** was also to watch over good morals and conduct, could sanction parents who did not send their children to school, forbid villagers to go to the forest on (church) holidays, and sanction cursing. If villagers wanted to sell or lease trees or fishing nets to people from other villages, the **kewang** was to tax such transactions with 20% of the value. Exploitation of uncultivated village area, called **ewang** or **tanah negeri**, by strangers was also subject to a rigorous control and taxation system.<sup>26</sup> The **kewang** and his staff (**anak kewang**) had an own council, and were to set up a system of registration of licenses and accounting for the various collected fees in money or in kind.

Within this system of economic regulation, the institution of **sasi** and the **kewang** were radically transformed. **Sasi** was used for new objectives. Dominant were protection of property, maintenance of law and order on the village territory,<sup>27</sup> and last but certainly not least generation of a monetary income for the village, the leading village officials in particular. Crop and nature protection were also mentioned, but they seem to have been rather subject to more economic goals. Also the position of those who had the right to declare and sanction **sasi** had been radically transformed. The ritual, religious element in **sasi**, the particular spiritual expertise required had given way to a new bureaucratic economic regulation.<sup>28</sup> **Sasi** had become, as Volker (1925:295) called it "utilitarian".

Economic changes played a significant role in this development. Coconuts and nutmeg became the primary trees over which **sasi** was declared. In the 19th century, they had become the most important cash crops. In the 19th century, coconuts had become more important than cloves (see Taale 1988:95). Nutmeg, which until the end of the 18th century had only been produced on the Banda islands, had been brought to the

Ambon and Lease islands by the VOC, and production increased significantly by the middle of the century. Economic considerations for *sasi* therefore also changed. Volker mentions the advantages of bulk harvests which would bring better prices than piecemeal sales to Chinese traders (1925:300). Simultaneously, the protection of valuable trees against theft and intrusion became more important. The village governments often received 10% of the fruit and crops harvested under *sasi* restrictions. Beside the traditional sanctions on *sasi* violations such as *salele*, according to which the culprit was shamed by being forced to walk around the village carrying coconut leaves (Kriekhoff 1989:4), there were also elaborate systems of monetary fines for the violations of *sasi* restrictions.<sup>29</sup>

These changes were in the interests of both colonial and village government. The colonial government needed the support of the village governments to enforce the cultivation of cloves as long as the system of forced cultivation lasted. When clove prices on the world market decreased dramatically, forced cultivation and delivery of cloves became an increasing burden to the colonial government. The system was abolished in 1863 and replaced with a household tax. Village heads lost their income from *hasil* and *pitis* fees. The government, until then nearly exclusively interested in clove production, started to show concern with village welfare through a "wise" use of coconut palms, nutmeg trees and other forest resources, which would provide the villagers the necessary income to pay taxes. Depending on village governments for taxation, it remained interested in having a strong village government. Village governments took advantage of this additional support by the colonial government to strengthen their position against the social units that claimed far-reaching rights over parts of the village territory. They drew up *kewang* and *sasi* regulations and submitted them for ratification to the colonial administration. Volker, who drew attention to these regulations in 1921, pointed out that these did not signify any major substantive changes. Rather he concluded that the writing up signified a greater demand for legal security, which, on the other hand, simultaneously reflected that the institution no longer fully lived for the population and had lost its self-evidence (Volker 1925:293). He also suggested that the acknowledgement sought from the *controleur*, was not required given the autonomy of the villages as regulated in the Local Government Regulation of 1824. His interpretation was that by drawing on the authority of the colonial government, the power of the village government would be strengthened, and the deterrent force would be increased through the anxiety of government interference (Volker 1925:301). Illustrative is the explanation given by the Porto village government in 1870 as a post-scriptum to their *kewang* regulation:

"So we have aspired to lay down a *kewan*-regulation which should be a good regulation for our village. It is an attempt, in the first place, to counter the common (*biajasa*) practice, that one takes away what belongs to the other; to such an extent that often those who do not own much land or *dusun*, fare better than those who do own them, and that those who have not laboured to plant trees harvest more than those who did; so much that from time to time there is scarcity of food in the village, and that one unthinkingly fells trees without considering that the soils degrade. In the second place, an attempt is made to help the village to financial resources, so that, if there is sufficient money in the village treasury, the village can execute its own projects and the villagers who help doing so can

receive a small remuneration, and that there will be no discontent because villagers working for the village will receive some money for their services. We think that, if these regulations are maintained and no attempts are made to violate them, our village thus shall reward the good care of the Dutch government which likes to listen to the wishes of the population. We therefore politely ask the controleur to check this regulation and to show his consent by signing it" (AB 24:288).

The regulation shows with unusual clarity the various objectives and dilemmas of sasi. As an institution to manage the village's natural resources and to guarantee equitable distribution of communal products, which dated from long ago,<sup>30</sup> it had to accommodate a new objective, i.e. to provide the village government with an income. It also shows a keen awareness of the limits of local village authority and of the advantages of government support. It should be kept in mind that the village government probably was never fully accepted as the rightful authority over the village territory and always had to defend its position against claims from other social and political units that went back to pre-colonial times.

### The demise of the village sasi

In the late 19th century the attitude of the colonial government towards sasi changed. Had it been generally supportive of village regulations and the involvement of village governments in sasi, it now became more and more critical. The most critical view was taken by Resident Riedel, who in the 1880s took drastic measures and ordered abolition of kewang and sasi regulations, and of levying fines for violations of sasi.<sup>31</sup>

The reasons for abolishing these regulations were never explicitly stated. Thirty years later, commentators could only speculate on Riedel's motives.<sup>32</sup> An early 20th century government report points to the introduction of the head-tax introduced in 1864/68 and says: "Unfortunately these offices seem to have been abolished - possibly to have as few people as possible exempt from tax and corvee labour obligations."<sup>33</sup> Another reason may have been that village governments abused the wide reaching powers of control and sanctioning to easily to fill their private chests, as is hinted at by Riedel (1886:48). Given the rather severe restrictions and taxes on agricultural and horticultural activities of villagers it is probable that there was too much resentment of the population against this form of village resource management and the "untraditional" powers assumed by village governments and their kewangs. Riedel himself was, more than his contemporaries, aware of the pre-colonial land rights and the distortions that had taken place under colonial rule. The mauwin had been deliberately and in his view unjustly bereft of their role in sasi. The economic considerations of filling the village treasury and generating extra income for village officials may have become too dominating to his taste. Also, as is mentioned in some sources, sasi measures may have been too harsh for the poorer sections of the population, who could not bridge the often very long periods in which their own resources were closed to themselves by sasi prohibitions (see Cooley 1962:79).

There is another factor adding to the government's ambivalence, which has not

been mentioned by later colonial commentators, but which also may have played an important role, i.e. the agrarian laws and **domeinverklaringen**, issued in and after 1870.<sup>34</sup> The Dutch East Indies Government had extended the principle that all land on which others could not prove the right of ownership, was domain of the state with the Domain Declaration to Amboina in 1875.<sup>35</sup> It is not unlikely that in the 1880's, when these agrarian laws were prominently on the scene, the colonial officers attempted to curb the village rights as the most prominent manifestation of village control over the unexploited forest area and uncultivated territories, in order to demonstrate the superiority of the colonial state domain. In a letter of the Resident of Amboina from 1909 (AB 7:222), the practice of giving uncultivated village land to persons of the own or other villages for the collection of forest products, was seen as being contradictory with the government regulations. The Resident urged that the government keep forbidding such transactions in order to demonstrate that the government regulations were not just dead letters (see also Kriekhoff 1991:289).

This negative attitude towards sasi and resource management by village governments, however, did not last. Already 30 years later, government officials complained about the weakened position of the village heads and the abolition of the kewang regulations and attributes what they saw as "anarchic" streaks in the Ambonese population to the absence of strict village government control.<sup>36</sup> The government thus was caught between the scylla of too autonomous village governments which tended to disregard colonial overlordship, and the charybdis of a weak village government which could not enforce law and order nor take care of an economically profitable exploitation of village resources. In government reports it is repeatedly stated that abolition of sasi weakened the powers of the village government and the village resource management considerably. Also Holleman (1923:31) states that with the disappearance of the kewang institution the powers he exercised would fall back to to the village council.<sup>37</sup> A government report mentions that as a consequence, these powers had gone over to the regents and kepala soa, but they did not exercise these rights well in the interest of the village. It was complained that many village heads had lost much of their power and the communal right of the village was undermined by individuals and the heads of smaller groups (AB 25: 397). Thus in many villages, the population was reported to appropriate fruit- and other trees belonging to village tree gardens, the profit of which should flow into the village treasury. Mention is also made of villagers claiming such land or tree as the property of their ancestors, which is "completely contradictory to the dominant understanding" (AB 24: 398) and to the "traditional institutions" (**aloude instellingen** AB 24:400).

Lack of respect for and resistance to sasi regulations and kewang authority probably also reflected the persistence of older adat notions which envisaged the distribution of powers of control and exploitation of natural resources quite differently than they were seen in the colonial adat law doctrines and to those written down in kewang and sasi regulations.<sup>38</sup> The "completely contradictory" opinion mentioned in the government report may be no more than a reassertion of what in villages was conceived of as "adat". The "traditional institutions", mentioned in the government reports rather were the powers of the village government, artificially created by the colonial masters and declared to be "the Ambonese adat law".

It is however not clear what the effects of the abolition of the kewangship for village life actually were and to which extent the complaints of colonial civil servants



reflected the actual situations in the villages. Whatever the reasons for abolition of kewang and sasi regulations may have been, it certainly did not lead everywhere to a disappearance of kewangs and sasi practices. Nor did it keep villages from making new regulations. In the early 20th century, several villages had, or made new written sasi regulations not much different from those made before 1870.<sup>39</sup> The sasi regulation of Paperu from 1913 gives a good impression of villages' attempts to assume far-reaching control over its natural resources. Control was not confined to matters of tree protection and harvest regulation, but included extensive police powers, of the "saniri kewang", the kewang council. Sasi involved many aspects of village life and, according to the regulation, was to further the following objectives.<sup>40</sup>

1. All fruits and crops should be harvested at the proper time, specifically coconuts, kenari and pinang nuts, durian fruit "etc."
2. By harvest control of the kewang, property disputes among dati and pusaka members should be prevented.
3. The village land and harbour should be well used by the village population.
4. Obligation for replanting felled or dead trees, particularly coconut palms, but also clove and nutmeg trees.
5. To avoid women's accidents in the forest (women were prohibited to climb trees for harvesting).
6. To prevent or diminish the incidence of theft.

On the whole, the regulation greatly resembled those issued in the second half of the 19th century. We do not have much information about sasi practices and should realise that there must have been great variation. The relative significance of sasi probably varied strongly with the authority of the village head and the kewangs. In some areas, there may have been no sasi at all, whereas in other regions it was widely used and enforced rather strictly. In Paperu, for example, violations of the sasi regulations are reported to have been sanctioned systematically in the 1920s. People were fined even in cases when they had asked and received permission to harvest their own fruit, but had not waited to be accompanied by an anak kewan. The wife of a kepala kewang was fined even more harshly when she took an ananas belonging to herself without having asked permission. And in April 1922, five women were fined f0,10 each, because they had sold nasi kuning, a meal of which coconut is an essential ingredient, without having talked with the kepala kewang about the ways in which they had obtained the coconuts.<sup>41</sup>

### **Privatisation - sold and auctioned sasi**

Following the government interference in kewang and sasi regulations in the 1880s, a new type emerged, **sasi babalian** or **sasi lelang**, sold or auctioned sasi. In 1921, Volker gave the following description.

"A number of well-off villagers buy the sasi right at the "lelang negeri", for a certain period but never longer than one year. They buy the kepala kewang-ship

from the village and the right to the profits. The scope and length of the transfer is discussed at the meeting of the village council. The sasi holders get all police authority over the dusun which fall under sasi. They take care that the dusun remain in a good state, and they fine violators. The sasi holder receive the same right to the 10% of the harvest. Punishments: If sasi is violated by the tree owner himself, he pays the fine to the kewang. If someone else violates sasi, the fine is split between kewang and property owner" (AB 24:305).

In some villages, this sasi has developed differently. In addition to what has just been described as general pattern, the sasi holders also have to guarantee that the trees will have a reasonable yield and watch over vermin. In such villages, often as many as 2 to 5 men associate for buying sasi. According to the literature, this form only appears in some Islamic villages (see also Holleman 1923: 30f).

Volker first thought that auctioned sasi a completely new institution, but then attributed its emergence to the interference of colonial officers with kewang and sasi regulations. According to him, the name was changed, but its character also changed because kewangs were abolished. It therefore was not an altogether new figure, but should be regarded as an extension of village auctions in which exploitation rights of village dusun for a limited period of time were sold to private persons or groups of persons (Volker 1925:24; Holleman 1923). The question of whether or not sasi was to be imposed thus became increasingly subject to economic considerations, of the village government, to whom it was a source of income; of their subjects, who would potentially profit from services paid with the proceeds, and whose crops would be protected; and of the buyers, who would calculate their profit. They paid the price of the auction and had to perform the duties of a kewang, in return for 10% of the proceeds. Thus, sasi was commercialized and to a large extent privatized. While the village government retained the decision on the sale of the sasi right, execution and supervision of sasi was put into the hands of private persons. The 10% of the harvest which property owners had to give to the sasi holder had become a "management fee" rather than the earlier "eco-tax". Nevertheless, ruthless exploitation was not tolerated, given the obligation to keep the tree garden in good state. Notions of conservation and protection of natural resources remained associated with sasi.

### **Recent developments in sasi**

The same uncertainties that make it so difficult to reconstruct the past, pursue us when we try to get an impression about the more recent historical developments of kewang and sasi. The recent past and present are characterized by occasional declarations of sasi by auction and the emergence of a new type, church sasi.

In 1962, Cooley wrote that "now many villages have laid aside sasi altogether. As a part of the adat system, it seems completely doomed in the very near future. If conservation measures are required, a new form will be needed, probably that of enacted law; but to date there seems to have emerged no action in this direction" (Cooley 1962:80). Van Fraassen, who did research in 1971, mentions kewang and mauwen as "forgotten functionaries" (1972:191). Cooley and his respondents attributed the decline to the fact that "the people are no longer respectful of adat and therefore it

was impossible to police the sasi adequately. This reflects again the loss of respect of the villagers for the village government and its officers, including the kewang. Another reason was mentioned was that the sasi often worked too great a hardship on the poor and especially the widows, whose reserves were not sufficient to get them through the period of prohibition. Apparently the seasons were closed for more of the year than they were open in some cases. If this were general, it would call into question the earlier observation that the ancestors possessed a clear understanding of the processes of reproduction and the cycle of growth. Perhaps there were functions other than conservation which the sasi originally served, and since the reason for those functions no longer obtains, the adat tended to wither away." And he adds that sasi was adhered to when land was abundantly available and only started to fall in disuse when land became scarce (1962:79f).

Cooley's statements are more or less a repetition of earlier complaints by colonial officials after the turn of the century. The question is whether this was a "new decline", or simply a continuation of what had been going on before, or whether what appeared as a one-directional decline was in fact a manifestation of the ups and downs that had always been part of sasi, because it was hardly ever over a long period of time intensively practiced. Perhaps the notion of a stable social organization is more a stereotype projection of pre-colonial times than anything else. We do not know how stable village organization was in the turbulent period that preceded the colonial time. It may well have been less stable than one is led to believe. At any rate, the local government structure in Ambon Lease has been notoriously instable ever since the resettlement operation in the early colonial period. Many villages had over a long period of time no official raja and government was left to a soa head or someone else. A Dutch official making a trip along the northern coast in 1923, mentioned that in five of the ten villages he visited, there was no village head.<sup>42</sup> Absence of a raja usually means that no firm decisions in village matters are taken, or if taken, they cannot be enforced. The observation of Volker in 1923 "In Ureng, there is no regent, therefore chaos" (AB 24:355) is quite appropriate. This is still the case. Between 1985 and 1988, for instance, Hila and Kaitetu had no raja, the villages being governed by acting village heads imposed from the outside. Such an interregnum usually also means, that other officials, such as the imam and the kewang, will resign and there will be no new appointments until the new raja is installed. It will then depend on the then felt needs whether a kewang will be installed or not.

Nevertheless, the general picture is that in most villages, the kewang as a permanent village institution has disappeared, be it that perhaps it was not for the first time, and that sasi lelang is used irregularly, and for a few crops only. Thus, Kriekhoff, in her research in four villages on the southern coast of Seram, found that sasi was laid on coconuts. The objectives given for sasi were, on the one hand, theft prevention and protection of the harvest, on the other hand the raising of funds (1989:2). The kewang seems to have disappeared from the 1950s (1989:4). For Tulehu, Van Paassen also mentions the disappearance of kewang and sasi towards the end of the 1970s (1987: 41-43). Under the last village head, who was forced to resign in 1983, there had also been a kewang in Hila, who had become very unpopular extracting money from Butonese immigrants in exchange for permission to open vegetable gardens on village territory. The land in question was for the greater part claimed as property of clan-segments or groups of inheritors. In the resulting quarrels over his performance, the kewang

perferred to leave the village for Java (see F.von Benda-Beckmann and Taale 1992). In Hila, Kaitetu and Seith, sasi is not declared every year. In Hila, sasi lelang for coconuts had been a common feature in the 1970s and 1980s. In 1985, there was sasi, but in the years 1986 to 1988, no sasi had been declared. In Seith, 1985 and 1986 had sasi on nutmeg and coconuts. In Kaitetu, there were new initiatives for sasi in 1988.

Whether sasi is actually declared depends on a number of sometimes competing considerations. Sasi has to be declared by the village government, and there must be general support for a declaration affecting protected trees on the whole village territory. Whether village governments themselves can push sasi through will largely depend on their authority and the support they can mobilize.

Villagers weigh the disadvantages of restrictions imposed on their own property for a management fee of 10% against the advantages of theft control. The outcome depends on the expected harvest and prices, if the crops are meant to be sold. In 1986, for example, many people in Hila complained that it was hardly worth the effort to climb coconut palms for harvesting with the goal of economic profit, since copra prices were much too low. So why bother about sasi and pay an additional 10% of the harvest? When in 1988 many old coconut palms had suffered under the long and especially dry period, and the price for coconuts had risen again, sasi on coconuts was again discussed. However, no one took a clear initiative to have sasi declared.

The other factor that may influence their decision is the destination of the money received by the village. Experience has taught villagers that "village money" usually ends up in the pockets of some village government officials, and that no projects are really carried out. Much depends on the good name and record of the village government. Considering this all, the recent decline of sasi and disappearance of kewangs in the 1970s are probably no coincidence. In the 1970's, clove prices boomed, and villagers earned so much that they were hardly interested in coconuts and nutmeg, the potential candidates for sasi. But when prices for nutmeg rose in the mid-1980s, initiatives for revitalizing sasi for nutmeg followed suit.

Whether anyone wants to buy sasi is yet again a different matter and depends on economic calculations, in which such factors of size of harvest, and market prices, play a role, as well as an estimation of one's competence to perform the police tasks necessary to control the harvest yield and to prevent theft. If the latter is not sufficiently guaranteed, villagers will complain and may not be willing to pay their 10%. If too large a proportion of the harvest escapes the control of the sasi holder, his profits become too low.

Thus, the situation is favourable for sasi if all participants regard sasi sensible from their economic point of view, and if the expected abuse of the money by village officials can be avoided or at least minimized. This became evident again in the efforts to revitalize sasi in the neighbouring village of Kaitetu in 1988. In the late 1980s, nutmeg prices had risen considerably. After having stood in the shadow of the domineering cloves, nutmeg suddenly became the most interesting cash crop. Theft control assumed new economic importance and was mentioned as the main reason to revitalize sasi. Owners of nutmeg trees had been called together to decide to make sasi. They had decided that the money should go to the mosque, in the hope that the mosque and the connection of sasi to God would be more effective and would enhance credibility. However, in the end, due to "organizational problems", mosque sasi was not effectuated.

Today, sasi is rarely imposed uniformly on the whole village territory. In Hila and Seith, for example, the village territory is divided into three units, and sasi rights are auctioned for these distinct units. The person who buys the sasi right then becomes the kepala kewang; the persons he employs are called anak kewang. Often, the buyer is not an individual but a larger association, because they have the necessary manpower for supervision.<sup>43</sup> Thus in 1986, the village cooperative in Seith bought up sasi for one of the two sasi units. Newcomers in the field are football clubs, that are proliferating throughout the Moluccas. In Hila and Seith sasi was bought by a football club in 1985. The club manager became kepala kewang and the younger members took over the supervision. The club in Hila had bought its sasi right over Unit I for 225.000 rupiah. The club made copra of the 10% fee and sold it for 400.000 rupiah and the profit was used for the club.<sup>44</sup> Sasi prohibition is still announced, *tabaus*, by the village herald, *marinyo*. Although villagers seem to handle sasi flexibly, the obligation to give 10% of the harvest to the sasi holder generally seems to be adhered to. The sanction for breaking sasi is a fee of 1,000 rupiah per coconut which is given to the sasi holder. The club wanted to buy sasi again in 1986, but that year the village decided not to put up an auction.

In the same year, Unit II had been bought by a villager who worked as a policeman in Ambon city. Sasi was run by his family members in the village. The other unit, in the area of the settlements of the immigrant Butonese, had been bought by the subdistrict head's driver who had handed over the administration to Butonese in Mamua, the oldest Butonese settlement on Hila territory.

The village revenue is destined for "communal projects". In Seith, half of the sasi revenue should go into the village treasury, the other to be distributed to the soa heads. However, little materializes in terms of projects. As people in Seith said smilingly "you have to make a project fast, otherwise the money is gone". In Hila, we heard of no recent communal project at all. As we have seen, Kaitetu planned to sluice the revenues to the mosque, but nothing came of the sasi. People in Hila said that in the past, sasi had revenues had also been given to the mosque.

One more interesting recent development should be briefly mentioned, though we do not know how widespread it is. Kriekhoff (1989:5), when discussing sasi, was told that it was a good way to keep the youth from stealing their parents' property to buy cigarettes and alcohol. Also in Kaitetu, the hope of controlling unruly youth was explicitly mentioned as one of the reasons for sasi. But we know of no instance in which sasi was actually imposed for that particular purpose. Sasi as drug prevention would indeed be a novelty. It may go too far to consider it as an objective or function of sasi, but it does tell us what people think of when considering sasi. The youth pleaded for harsh physical sanctions and for maintenance of public shaming, *salele*. Whether they really favoured it or whether it simply was furthered in the enthusiasm of the discussions is difficult to say.

### Church sasi

The intention to find an alternative to the village government, assumedly ineffective in its sanctions and corrupt in its administration of the sasi revenue, also underlies the new sasi form which has emerged in Christian villages, church-sasi, *sasi gereja*. The earliest

report of church sasi is by Cooley in 1962, who attributed its emergence to the demise of village sasi, or sasi kewang, and to the reputedly more effective sasi management by the church (Cooley 1962:78f). More recent information is given by Wessels (1986, 1987:29) for Kaibobo on Seram. There, the church declared sasi, but only for coconuts, harvest being opened four times a year (1986:146). In earlier times sasi negeri in Kaibobo pertained to the total area, not just to specific crops. Nothing could be harvested, hunted, or collected. But the last sasi negeri had been in 1976. People explained this as the consequence of two developments: the passive acting of the village government, and the emergence of sasi gereja. According to Wessels' description (1986:141 ff), "if a person wants to prevent his coconuts from being stolen, he can approach the church administration to put his dusun under sasi. The members of the church council then will pray at his piring natsar and read out aloud the dusun owner's name at the Sunday service. Then it is made public in the church that the dusun is under sasi gereja. The trees are protected, and God will punish every thief." The owner will put a sasi sign at his dusun. Wessels stresses, that the new sasi has also a resemblance with matakau. It is individualized, for a certain dusun and a certain tree (1986:143). She also points out that the church takes quite towards sasi a different stance from matakau. It defies the magical pagan belief and the sanctions attached to matakau, while incorporating sasi. The church and God have taken over the roles of village government, ancestors and spirits (1986:145). In practice, however, church sasi has not replaced the matakau and Wessels gives several reasons why that is not the case. Matakau has advantages: it protects against **others**, while in the case of sasi the owner himself is also prohibited to harvest. Matakau is not bound to periods and can be used when needed (1986:147). She also mentions that people have demanded to have church sasi for sago in Kaibobo (1986:231). At first, the minister had agreed, but the sasi then led to disputes between different owners. Sago gardens usually are the property of a lineage or clan segment. Since the period of ripening, and consequently of sasi, takes 10 to 15 years, it would be difficult to ask sasi gereja for such a long period. The minister therefore decided not to agree to such a demand again. Wessels concludes that church sasi has proven to be only partially successful, because it rests on a voluntary basis. One of the most important functions has disappeared: a period of rest for nature (1986:145).

In 1988, there was a revival of sasi in the Christian enclave around Fort Amsterdam in Hila, the neighbourhood called Hila-Kristen. There sasi has been transferred to the church in a similar way as reported by Wessels. Sasi concerns nutmeg and kelapa. The introduction coincided with the rise of nutmeg prices and increasing incidences of theft of nutmeg. Hila Kristen has adopted the following procedure. Sasi is announced in the church by the minister. After the season has been closed, no more nutmeg or coconuts may be harvested. The ban is not complete; permission to harvest may be granted by the congregation of the church during the closed season. Every three months, sasi is open for a period of two weeks. The church is forwarded 10% of the total harvested in the open season.

Here again, and contrary to earlier forms of sasi and church sasi, participation is **voluntary**. Only five villagers participated, four of whom were members of the church council. Many villagers consider the sasi restrictions as too harsh because they do not have sufficient reserves in order to bridge the period of prohibition.

Notwithstanding its limitations, sasi gereja seems to be more effective than sasi

negeri. Sanctions are construed as the rage of god. Fines of the *sasi negeri* did not effectively protect against theft; and the sanctions emanating from the ancestors no longer seem to play a significant role by themselves. But people still believe in god, and the rage of god, who sees all and knows all, and who will punish those who break the prohibition of harvesting. It may well be that the fear of God's rage is supported by suppressed feelings of fear for the ancestors and spirits, which may not be expressed openly.

## Conclusions

The long history and the many transformations of *sasi* show us that to view *sasi* as a "traditional institution" is only partially true and is more likely to bring confusion than clarifying problems. It is true that the core notion of a periodic prohibition of harvesting certain crops or exploiting other natural resources dates back to precolonial times. However, as we have shown, the organization of *sasi*, its dominant goals and the sanctions attached to it have changed so much over time that it would be completely misleading to look at its original meaning and conclude from there to present or future practices. The objectives for laying *sasi* have changed from keeping a balance between nature, human beings and the spiritual world to economic gain and theft protection. Sanctions have changed from animistic beliefs and public shaming to policing and economic fines. In Christian villages, attempts are made to base the sanctioning force again in the spiritual world, but now in the Christian religion, which is opposed to *adat*. While communal and private *sasi* powers have always been known, both communal and private here refer to very different forms of *sasi* organization. The older communal *sasi* declared by the *mauwun* differs radically from the later dominant involvement of the village government and its officers in the colonial period. The later privatisation and commercialization of *sasi* in the form of *sasi babalian* or *lelang* are also a later development, though dating back nearly a hundred years. As forms of environmental management, they look astonishingly "modern" and resemble strongly forms of nature and environmental management which at present are considered in western European countries.<sup>45</sup> When they developed in the late 19th century, they were certainly more modern than any comparable forms of environmental management known in western European states.

The history also shows that there has been no simple, one directional line of development, but that changes have often been erratic and full of contradiction, reflecting the different and sometimes opposing interests of the colonial government, the village government and the village population and various kingroups. In the various phases in the past, the economic, cultural-religious, political-administrative and ecological element in *sasi* have been packaged in very different combinations, and they have always been part of the wider, contemporary, political, economic and cultural system. They have always been coloured by tradition, in the sense of historically earlier notions, and by *adat*. But certainly since the coming of the colonial systems, these packages have never been solely traditional or *adat* institutions.

The actual *sasi* practices have also varied considerably. The literature gives the impression that in nearly every period, including the present, *sasi* is thought to disappear, yet in a way it has shown a remarkable tenacity. We think that in a sense this is a

normal state of affairs, if we consider that *sasi* was not a continuous prohibition, but was always imposed intermittently whenever it was deemed necessary. This fits in very well with other features of the Moluccan agro-economy which have driven colonial officers and contemporary development experts to despair: people seem to decide on the spot what to do and to constantly move from one activity to another. Activities having lain dormant are taken up again when the situation seems to be favourable (see also Van Fraassen 1972; Taale 1989). The seemingly ad hoc character of their economic life has given the Ambonese the reputation of being lazy and irresponsible. However, such an opinion tends to neglect the fundamental dependence of the economic activities from the seasonality of the natural resources, the various different growth cycles and harvesting possibilities of subsistence and cash crop resources (see Van Fraassen 1972; Krause-Katela 1986). *Sasi* practices probably always remained part of such general ideas of economic life. Its different forms also represent combinations with these underlying conditions of economic life with the different organising economic principles in which the village economy functioned: a primary orientation on subsistence, a production oriented economy clothed in a government controlled plan economy, and, more recently, a privatized market oriented economy.

Of particular interest for our question whether *sasi* could play a major role in environmental protection is, of course, whether *sasi* was or still is a means of environmental protection. This raises two kinds of questions. First, in which ways and to what extent the actual measures of *sasi* practices were and are relevant to environmental problems. Secondly, we must ask whether the decisions to impose *sasi*, and the environmental coverage of *sasi* were influenced or dominated by ecological and environment protectionist considerations besides political, economic and religious elements.

Looking at the first question: The gravest problem is the protection of soil fertility and the prevention of erosion. The traditional forms of shifting cultivation and tree polycultures were well adapted to the ecological conditions (see van Fraassen 1972, Knaap 1987, Brouwer 1989). While it would be premature to say that shifting cultivation has ceased completely and given way to a more sedentary and intensive cultivation of garden crops, there clearly is a tendency to maintain vegetable gardens for longer periods, which threatens soil fertility. The problem has been aggravated through the expansion of the cultivation areas for cloves, population increase and the resultant increasing pressure on the available land. Villagers have been forced to make new gardens for vegetables and tree crops in the more hilly forest area, increasing the danger of erosion. Also, the tree gardens have increasingly become monocultural, a development urged upon the villagers by the government extension services. Intercropping and tree polycultures have diminished, which has negatively affected the biodiversity in the area (Brouwer 1989). Important measures to stop, retard or counter these trends detrimental to the environment would be to give more leeway again to intercropping and to establish controls on felling trees and replanting on cleared forest areas as well as on the selection of gardens sites in areas prone to erosion. In its present forms of bought or church *sasi* imposed on coconut palms and nutmeg trees, *sasi* could only have a very limited positive effect in these respects. Its use for environmental protection would require a considerable expansion of environmental control mechanisms, similar to those conceived in the first half of the 19th century. This would mean that the present system of property rights



would be affected, and that environmental and ecological considerations would have to overrule economic and political preferences.

With this we come to the second question. As we have seen, *sasi* probably never, and certainly not since the colonial period had one single objective. Notions of nature protection and ecologically responsible optimisation of resource exploitation have certainly played a role. But the development shows that and how these considerations have become dominated by political economic considerations by different interested parties. *Sasi* was always part of a wider political and economic context and it became therefore involved in the struggles for political power and autonomy, spiritual authority, and over rights to control and exploit natural resources. Since independence, this organisation has become even more complex with the coming of specialized bureaucracies also working at village level, which have taken over, or duplicated earlier forms of political, ecological and economic organization: the police, the village order personnel and various government services for agri- and horticulture, forestry and fisheries. These contexts always shaped, and will always shape both institutional form and practices. This does not mean, that ecological or environmental concerns have disappeared. Kriekhoff's discussions with with people in Seramese villages (1989) are a good example. People have a positive attitude towards *sasi*, support its revitalisation, do not only think in terms short-term economic gains but also in terms of "sustainability", both in ecological and social terms, in their awareness to maintain sufficient resources for their children, future generations. But these are attitudes, wishes. While not denying the motivational force such ideas can have, when it comes to actual decision making, such attitudes become merely one of many factors, and experience shows that noble wishes are crushed by short term economic and political interests. Those who follow environmental policy and practices in European industrialized states will easily recognize a familiar phenomenon.

As our historical account will have shown, this is not a recent development. We only can concur with Persoon's (1991:114) scepticism towards suggestions "that nature conservation and indigenous life-styles are generally synonymous" (see also Ellen 1986). There is no evidence that Ambonese environmental knowledge nor *sasi* were "consciously primarily used to keep the exploitation within its limits and to maintain the ecological balance" (Persoon 1991:116). The early 19th century period probably was the only one of wide ranging resource management, reaching much further than harvest control and theft prevention, where matters of soil degradation and sustainable resource management were on the agenda of colonial and village governments. But then it had little to do with indigenous life styles or environmental knowledge. The constraints the *kewang* regimes imposed on the villagers' rights, their unwillingness to accept this, and the subjection of worthy policy to economic and political power and abuse on the other led to the demise of village *sasi*. And environmental considerations disappeared at the background, only to come up again very recently.

At present, local environmental knowledge still is considerable, but decreasing rapidly. Many villagers have astonishingly little knowledge of parts of their environment and the technologies that were commonly used as shortly ago as their grandfathers' generation (see Brouwer 1989:25). General discrimination of such knowledge as "traditional" and "backward", modern school education, and replacement of local knowledge by government knowledge, for example through agricultural extension, and the transmission of western scientific knowledge have made it difficult to maintain such

knowledge. The absentee sasi holding government driver or policeman nor the Christian priest or the leader of the football club, who have taken over sasi have not been chosen for their environmental knowledge or their ecological concerns.

Such earlier knowledge cannot simply be revitalized if outsiders, state governments, ecologists and academics suddenly show greater respect and appreciation for it. Nor can ideal notions of sasi be moulded into a well functioning part of social organisation unless simultaneously the further political, economic and cultural context is remodelled as well. At the minimum, this would require trustworthy officers as controllers and a concurrence of interests of many different kinds of persons. The predominance of short term economic considerations and the distrust of state and village governmental officials would be the most important problems encountered. A reconstruction at the level of new rules or policy rhetoric will not be sufficient. Villagers have learnt by experience how imposed rules and rhetorics, how beautiful they may sound, may be translated into unfortunate practices. The most difficult task would be to convince people that it is worthwhile to make ecological factors an integral element in their social and economic calculations and shape the conditions under which this is possible. As we know from western industrialized countries, this is indeed a difficult task. In this respect, too, the situation on Ambon is as modern as can be.

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## NOTES

1. This article is a revised version of a paper presented to the 1992 Congress of the Commission on Folk Law and Legal Pluralism on "**Resources, rules and identity in state and unofficial laws**", Wellington, New Zealand, 27-30 August 1992. We thank Roy Ellen for his helpful comments on an earlier version of this paper.
2. The government's record for taking serious indigenous peoples in outer Indonesia and their culture has not always been that favourable. Its persistence in ignoring indigenous knowledge and law has been discussed by Dove (1983, 1986) as the "political economy of ignorance".
3. For a good critical review, see Persoon 1991; see also Ellen 1985.
4. Cooley 1962:77, Volker 1925. Riedel (1886:48) had derived it from "saksi", "witness" or "sign of interdiction", an interpretation opposed by Volker (1925:294) and not shared by other authors. Ellen (1978:232) gives no etymological explanation. Cooley mentions C. Geertz pointing out that the Javanese word sasi means moon or month. The most plausible explanation seems the one forwarded by Bartels (1977:65) that sasi is derived from northern Moluccan languages where it means "oath"; which may point to a Ternatan influence. In several Seramese dialects sasi means "to promise" or "to make a commitment".
5. Art. 6, section 1, Undang-Undang no. 4/1982; Ketentuan2 Pokok Pengelolaan Lingkungan Hidup; see also Koesnadi 1983).
6. Colonial officers and agronomists during the first half of this century have first presented a picture of Ambonese dusuns as an unordered mixture of plantings, due to the restrictions imposed on peasants by the "chaotic" adat law concerning land, and blocking proper progress in agriculture (AB 21 (1922): 53-59). Later, these very dusuns have been noted to be very sustainable (Vink 1941).
7. Ellen (1978:171) reports from the Nuaulu of inland Seram that the eventualities which call for sasi is when an annual crop is particularly poor or when demand seems excessive, in this way ensuring their availability in quantity and full maturity at a specified point in time in the future.
8. The word Alifuru has increasingly acquired a pejorative meaning, referring not merely to the original population of the Central Moluccan islands, but also to uncivilized, backward and wild people.
9. Sometimes called mauweng or upu mauweni. See Riedel 1886:45f.
10. See Manusama 1977, Knaap 1987, Taale 1988 with further references.
11. See Volker 1925:295; van Hoëvell 1875:205.

12. It is interesting to look at Ellen's (1978) account of contemporary *sasi* for the Nuauulu on Seram who have been much less affected by the political and economic changes during the last centuries. Among the Nuauulu, *sasi* is "normally a corporate village effort in order to prevent certain resources (or range of resources) being collected or thieved before they are physically mature or before they exist in a specified quantity in a particular locality. The inaugurations of *sasi* which Ellen witnessed were all with respect to coconut palms. Decision to erect a *sasi* sign is taken at a meeting of adult males at the request of the lord of the land. *Sasi* is enforced by expectation of ancestral displeasure on violation, and in the event of *sasi* being violated, individuals are required to pay a fine of a plate and five *depar* of *kain berang* (cloth) to the *tuan tanah* (*ia onate Matoke*) to offset ancestral retribution (Ellen, pers. comm., 1978:170). There is nothing said on "supervision" or a percentage of coconuts harvested after *sasi* was lifted. The "lord of the land" (*tuan tanah*) could proclaim *sasi*.

13. This form has often been translated as "individual *sasi*", but can better be expressed as "private" since it was also imposed in the name of larger groups (families or lineages), see Volker 1925; see also Wessels 1986, Kriekhoff 1989.

14. Volker (1925:302f) suggests another meaning: to lay in the grave, *mata* meaning dead in Moluccan language, *kaoe* or *keoe* meaning to lay down a dead person.

15. For examples of oaths, see Wessels 1986: 64.

16. *Sasi* must be distinguished from *matakau*, although this is sometimes difficult, especially since private *sasi* is often accompanied by placing a *matakau* (Volker 1921:294, see Kriekhoff 1989:3). But there are two major differences: In the first place, *matakau* only works against others than the person or group of persons who incur it, while *sasi*, including private *sasi*, puts the same restrictions on the owner of the land or trees placed under *sasi* as on others. Secondly, *sasi* seems to work more preventively, while *matakau* signs are usually placed when there is the suspicion that something wrong has already happened. Thus, *matakau* is also a reactive form of protection (see also Volker 1925:303).

17. For early reports on these and other aspects of animistic practices in agriculture, see Gijssels 1621(1987):45; Rumphius 1741 LII,CII:6.

18. See also Cooley 1962; Wessels 1986, 1987.

19. The research on which this paper is based was carried out in the context of a research project on "law and rural social security in developing countries" of the Department of Agrarian Law, Agricultural University Wageningen, and the Department of Social Sciences, Faculty of Law, Erasmus University Rotterdam. Field research was done by F. and K. von Benda-Beckmann in 1985 and 1986, and by A. Brouwer and T. Taale in 1997-88. The research took place under the auspices of LIPI and was sponsored by the Faculty of Law of Universitas Pattimura, Ambon.

20. Also Holleman (123:27) places the *kewang* in the very early Moluccan history.

21. Van Wouden (1935:82) identified the kewang with the tuan tanah. See also Van Fraassen 1972:195.
22. Staatsblad 1824, 19a.
23. See Holleman 1923, F. von Benda-Beckmann 1986, Kriekhoff 1991, F. von Benda-Beckmann and Taale 1992. In the second half of the 19th century, only Riedel seems to have pointed at the earlier, precolonial rights to land and trees.
24. The rent to be paid to the village government was normally calculated as one fourth of the overall profit. According to Holleman (1923:143, Note 3), the calculation was one part for the rent, one for labour cost, one for the effort (de moeite) and one for pure profit).
25. See the kewang regulations from Porto of 1870 in AB 24: 252-288, and of Ema of 1863 in AB 24: 289-292.
26. See the kewang regulation of Ema (1863) and Porto (1870).
27. A good example is the kewang regulation of Porto (1870).
28. One should be careful, however, to infer too drastic changes from the texts of these new kewang regulations. We must assume that in many instances the kewang was a person with ritual and religious knowledge, or that such persons were used for performing the necessary ritual acts.
29. See the sasi regulations published in AB 24.
30. See Volker 1925:295; Van Hoëvell 1875:205.
31. Volker 1925, see also AB 21:24: "**bij publicatie van Resident Riedel zijn de boeten betr. overtredingen afgeschaft. In de praktijk worden boeten nog hoogst zelden opgelegd en voldaan**". The kepala kewang-ship was also abolished, and the kewang regulations existing in several villages were invalidated. See also Holleman 1923: 30-31.
32. Volker could not see any reason for this measure (1925). In 1923, Hollemans writes (1923:27): "Half a century ago, this function still existed everywhere on the Ambonese islands, but now as consequence of direct or indirect administrative measures, it has disappeared nearly everywhere".
33. "**misschien wel teneinde zoo min mogelijk personen aan de belasting en de heerdiensten te onttrekken,**" AB 1925:396.
34. It is surprising that these colonial laws are not mentioned. Holleman, adat law expert and later successor of the illustrious Van Vollenhoven at the University of Leiden, at the time also resident and chairman of the landraad-court in Ambon, does not mention the subject in his excellent monograph on Ambonese land law (although he deals with other legislative colonial influences on the village government and the local court system



changed in 1882, see Holleman 1923:61). The village is consistently treated as the rightful holder of supreme rights, no reference to the colonial agrarian laws is made (see also 1923:148). A possible explanation may be that at that time, the doctrine of the right of avail, *beschikkingsrecht*, was no longer questioned by the local colonial officers. Holleman himself was a follower of what has become as the Adat Law School, which strongly opposed the domain declaration.

35. Staatsblad no.199a. See AB 7(1913):216. The policy was further developed in the *ordonnantie* of 8.12.1880 (Staatsblad 217), the **Regelen, volgens welke in de residentie Amboina verhuur van grond door inlanders aan niet-inlanders geschieden kan** (regulations according to which in the residency of Amboina letting land by indigenous people to non-indigenous people was prohibited).

36. See the excerpts from government reports of the years 1913-1920 in AB 24: 395-403. See also Volker 1925.

37. Another report says: "if the kewanship had been retained, we would not be faced with the situation that the dati-holders would expand the trees on their grounds without fore-knowledge of the village council" (AB 24:400).

38. In the late 19th century, apparently only Riedel (1886) still gave serious accounts of the pre-colonial adat rights system.

39. The sasi regulation of Paperu of 1913 however, gives the impression of being a normal village sasi regulation. It gives no hint that the kewang and anak kewang mentioned were those who had acquired sasi by auction or sale. See the sasi regulation of Siri-Sori of 1920, in AB 24: 306-310; the sasi regulation of Paperoe on Saparua 1913 in AB 24:314-323).

- 40.
- a. Segala boeah-boeahan diambil dengan temponja.
  - b. Soepaja perbantahan dalam doesoen, anak datti dan kepala datti anak poesaka dan kepala poesaka.
  - c. Soepaja tanah dan laboehan negeri terpelihara atau dipakai pendoedoek negeri sendiri.
  - d. Soepaja hal bertanaman dipertambah-tambahkan dan njamanja didjagai.
  - e. Soepaja tjelaka-tjelaka orang perempoean ditolak.
  - f. Soepaja segala hal mentjoeri dikoerangkan.

41. See the reported judgements of the "saniri kewang" of Paperu in 1922 in AB 24:324-325.

42. See AB 24: 354-358. See about village politics in the late 1960's, Van Fraassen 1972.

43. There are, however, examples in which a single person bought all sasi, such as in Hila in 1973.

44. The whole village sasi for was in 1973 sold for 175.000 rupiah. In 1984, it yielded nearly 500.000.

45. See for the Netherlands Walda 1992.