

## DOMINANT CULTURAL ATTITUDES

The dominant note in Samoan society is its prevailing social emphasis. All of a Samoan's interest, all of his emotion, is centered upon his relationship to his fellows within an elaborate and cherished social pattern. As the circle of the kava ring gives special importance and emphasis to all that lies within it and relegates to an outer limbo of ceremonial unimportance those who stay on the outside and take no part, so the social structure reduces to inferiority all those activities, attitudes, and relationships which do not fall within its magic circle. It is the final standard of reference; individual work and play, individual religious activity, art, and personal relationships have never been admitted and receive scant attention from the society. If the individual tapa maker makes strong, wide tapa, they have value as units of exchange in the reciprocity between chief and talking chief, but the patterning of the tapas is without significance and Samoa has developed no important style of tapa design. A man must be tattooed in a certain definite fashion; the design is sufficiently flexible to allow distinctions of rank to be made between each set of youths who are being tattooed. On one occasion it will be two chiefs' sons, and four talking chiefs' sons, all of different rank; on another, one chief's, one high talking chief's and one talking chief's. The tattooing designs are varied to meet this one social demand, and in all other respects remain remarkably monotonous. Priest and medium, midwife and mediciner flourish meagerly outside the circle. All attempts at a development of personality along other than social lines, not merely socially approved but socially active lines, wither in the chilly atmosphere of negligent disapproval.

A study of the discrepancies within the general emphasis is as convincing as taking account of the consistencies. Scraps of old attitudes; remnants of a different culture, which was once theirs, or with which they once came in contact, contrast with the prevailing attitudes. Such a contrasting bit is the tapu against women's touching a bonito canoe. This one prohibition is the only echo of attitudes which in the Marquesas forbade women to bathe in a lake on which canoes floated, and in New Zealand, required a special ceremony to make canoes safe for women. It has no place in Samoan conception, in which neither men nor women are important in themselves, but only when they are translated into the social scheme. The entrance into a kava ceremony of a woman who had no title to be present might completely invalidate a communal undertaking, but her essential female potency is logically unallowable.

These tapus, these practices, which Samoa shares with Polynesian cultures in which individual qualities are inherent from birth and not a result of

tapu, small unassimilated lumps in an otherwise consistent smoothness. But if they are important they are usually reinterpreted. The most striking instance of this is probably in the treatment of the Tama Paia, the son of the Tui Manua, who is not necessarily the first born as in other parts of Polynesia, but the child born after the Tui Manua has received his title. Rigid tapus and elaborate etiquette surround the child whose life began after his father became sacred. Blood is not permitted to tell unless it receives a social license to do so.

Coupled with the feeling that those things done within the pattern are important and deserving of endless ritual respect, goes a complementary feeling that those things done alone are at least suspect, if not downright wrong. The expectant mother, the young chief, the bride-to-be, must never be alone. Any one whose conduct is of importance to other people must be sheltered from solitude because no one would conceivably wish to be alone unless on evil bent. This attitude militated against the development of individual communion with the supernatural, against any premium upon strictly esoteric information, against the development of secretly cherished magic formulas. And because it is always deeds which are most public, while motives are least accessible to exhibitionistic explicitness, the social premium discourages any interest in motivations. For any attempt to fathom an individual disgruntlement or lack of cooperation, they substitute a blanket concept *musu* (unwillingness) that does not look beyond the expressed disinclination for subjective causes. Not only is personality thus conceived in terms of its end results upon other people, but all expression of emotion, fear, love, anger, is classified as caused or uncaused. Those who love or hate or fear without cause (*fua*) are those whose behavior is socially unintelligible. One who is afraid of the channel ghost, who takes up his station at night to guard the village is simply said to be afraid. Women who cower before the sight of a seven months' foetus would be said to "fear causelessly" (*fefe fua*). The reference is never to individual experience or individual tastes, but always to the pattern.

Two other attitudes towards individuals further illustrate this attitude. Individuals are said to have *mafaufau* (judgment) or lack of it. Judgment is a quality which Samoans conceive to develop just as skill in swimming or facility with oratorical phrases must be developed. The child is born without it and as the social pattern impinges more and more upon its developing consciousness, it acquires judgment—judgment about etiquette, about matters of sex, about participation in group activities. Some people have more judgment than others; some are quicker in the social perceptions. Others never quite perfect a harmony between their individual tendencies and the pattern requirements and are simply known to be "slow" or "stupid."

attempt to give them judgment by discipline or exhortation. Violent breaches of the pattern are vindictively punished. The man who steals may be made to sit for half a day in the sun, tossing a sting-ray fish in his bare hands. Such measures, though vaguely glimpsed as deterrent, are not believed to be educational in any positive fashion. A man may steal no more, but his essential lack of judgment will remain the same.

This picture of an ideal pattern to which each individual approximates as best he may is a curiously static one. It is as if membership in society were a matter of being the proper height and breadth to fit into a particular pigeon hole. The tall, broad individual when he had attained his girth, was popped into his proper pigeon hole, the meager occupied lesser pigeon holes, and the social failures who did not develop girth and height enough for any real place in the pattern were all left together on a big shelf at the base of the structure. Occasionally they fell out altogether and they were then roundly punished to keep them from venturing again so near the edge. The duty of society was to provide food for growth, but who grew and who did not, was never its concern.

In a society in which the chief's eldest son invariably succeeds to office, education becomes vitally important. This particular child and no other must be trained to discharge, at least passably, the duties of his position. But where any boy from a descent group may hold the title, society can afford to sit back and let diverse humanity develop without giving undue thought to individual idiosyncracies. Those who lack judgment, "listen with difficulty," (another inborn trait over which eyebrows are raised helplessly), "learn with difficulty," "speak with difficulty"; will not be selected for important posts. This essentially static conception, this presentation of a fixed framework to each generation, might have strong advantages in setting a high standard as a goal to the energies and ambitions of the young. But there is another social attitude which serves to militate against these advantages. Lack of judgment, lack of skill, lack of good temper, lack of memory, lack of amenableness, are all temperamental defects for which no individual is to be blamed. They are not, properly speaking, sins, but only blemishes, like a twisted spine or an impediment of speech. But there is one sin which Samoa recognizes, a sin which can be committed by the merest babe or the oldest matai, a sin for which the individual is held strictly accountable, for which he may be chastised to his soul's good. This great sin is precocity. The attitude is spoken of as *fia sili* (wishing to be higher than one should). The outward and visible sign of this desire is known as *tautala lai titi* (talking above one's age). To go faster than one's age mates or one's fellows of equal rank, is unforgivable. So not only are individuals conceived of as having capacities that are responsive neither to social pressure nor to the dictates

of their own ambitions, but the speed with which these inherent capacities may be permitted to manifest themselves is fixed. All haste is unseemly, unpleasing, abominable, whether in the young boy who marries too early or the low talking chief who tries to shoulder himself forward in the fono. That a man should reach his full stature slowly, with due deliberation and caution, pausing on the way to master all the implications of each step—this is the course of the admirable. The result is inevitable: a discounting of all the virtues of the precocious, speed of thought, rapidity of development, an ability to take short cuts, to run through things, to initiate new enterprises, to follow new lines of thought, to branch away from a pattern which has not become too intrinsic a part of one's nature. Those who, undeterred, might have reached the highest niche before half of their potentialities were exhausted, are naggingly kept at a slower pace, only permitted to reach that niche after their best energies are dissipated. And the laggard is coddled to the most complete fulfillment which his little natural gift will allow.

By this emphasis upon conformity to the all important social structure, I do not mean here the attempt of a society to make all those within it conform to all its ways of thought and behavior. The phenomenon of social pressure and its absolute determination in shaping the individuals within its bounds has been remarked too often to need laboring here. I mean to stress rather the particular implication in the lives of individuals of a particular kind of social pattern. As the Winnebago culture forced its children to blacken their faces and fast for a blessing, goaded them into a search for special experience often beyond any natural inclination in the individual child, so the Samoan emphasis upon social blessedness within an elaborate, impersonal structure influences every aspect of the Samoans' lives.

There is a distinction between the stressed and the unstressed, the formal and the informal which dominates all attitudes towards work. Work is that kind of activity which supports the social structure and therefore may not be taken lightly. But it is not felt to be a heavy and irksome load. Grumbling is not directed at work but at the accidental and unexpected tribulations of life, the hurt pig, or the cracked kava bowl. And village labor performed in groups is surrounded by an air of pomp and sanctimoniousness. The smallest mischance to the kava or the communal oven requires an expiatory kava ceremony; a disaster to the family oven does not matter. The larger the number of individuals formally engaged in an undertaking and the higher their rank, the more solemn becomes the occasion, the more fatal is a false step. So any gathering of the fono has a quiet solemnity about it and a group of lively boys become grave when dubbed the aumaga.

In their personal relations the pattern is as dominant a force. Society demands that love and hate should defer to certain rigid categories; to meet

these demands all personal preferences, all vivid appreciation of one personality as opposed to another must be avoided. The large heterogenous households which early accustom the child to expect to receive its emotional rewards from many different hands, the brother and sister tapu, the segregation of the sexes before puberty, all serve to provide a diffuse emotional background. The social patterning of personal relationships has to contend with no deeply channeled emotions; it has simply to state more definitely the unseemliness of all feeling which cuts across the pattern or distorts an ordered adjustment to the pattern. A man who seduces his neighbor's wife will simply have to settle with his neighbor. The society is not interested. But the manaia who wishes to marry a girl of no rank or the lively youth without prospects who aspires to the hand of the taupou is showing a shocking disregard of the framework of his society. Sex relations are not regarded as important; a formal stratified society could not maintain itself upon any such shifting sand of personal preferences. Sex activity is regarded as play; as long as it remains informal, casual, meaningless, society smiles. But a relationship which becomes sufficiently important to a pair of lovers to make them elope and disregard the wishes of their descent group, is a disgraceful affair, unseemly in its intensity. Those who care greatly in love or friendship, who flout any social convention for a private, unsanctioned whim, are the social misfits in Samoa. Great love, great ambition, extravagant personal loyalty, all are at a discount. If the talking chief's wife asks for her baby, the chief's wife must give it to her, and in the folklore the mother who regrets her consent to adoption is described swimming uselessly, foolishly, after the departing canoe. Personal relationships if allowed scope would rival the social relationships, and undermine their sanctions. And so that difference of affect for which the casual upbringing of the children paves the way, is set firmly by the society. The weight of social scorn and disapproval is never upon those who have been unwilling to pay higher prices, but always upon those who care greatly. Their conduct is branded as *mataga* (awkward).

In its arrogant demand upon all of one's attention and allegiance, the Manuan social structure which has no room for individualism has also no room for the gods. As an old chief once phrased it, "The people of old had two great gods, Tagaloa and the village, and the village was the greater of the two." The Polynesian pantheon has not flourished in Samoa. In Manua it has received shortest shift of all. Sina, the goddess of the moon, figures in stories of the origin of fine mats, but she had no place in a pantheon. "I think," said one Samoan to me, and one who did not question the truth of tales about Tagaloa, "that in the old days, all chiefs must have named their daughter Sina." Pili and Pava play a part as culture heroes,

and is the patron of all carpenters, is mentioned in the courtesy phrases to carpenters. Tagaloa, who assumed the prerogatives of the Sun only to delegate them forever to Tui Manua and virtually to retire from human affairs, was the only god of importance. And his main use was as sanction of the established importance of the Tui Manua. The kava ceremonial honored the king far more than it served any god. A deity which had established such a thoroughly satisfactory pattern of existence was not conceived as further interested.

The formal relationship between the society and its deity, as between the household and its family god, might be characterised as one of dignified avoidance. Certain rules had been laid down, certain old tapus still held supernatural sanction; if man, careless of fitting behavior, transgressed these rules, he must make amends. Life in this world was glimpsed as only occasionally precarious; observance of the rules of the social life brought blessedness in its train. There was no concept of good or bad luck, impersonal, unearned beneficence or malevolence of providence, such as plays such a strong role with us. Rather there was deserved blessedness and deserved misfortune, neither one was arbitrary, both were functions of man's way of life. Walking gravely within his given paths, man no more hoped for special concessions from the gods than he feared special unmotivated onslaughts. On the edges of this dignified formal relationship with a fairly uninterested heaven, were the difficulties introduced by local spirits and ghosts. But these were never taken official notice of; the man who angered a spirit would suffer the spirit's malicious revenge. But this was guerilla warfare on the borders of good society; neither Tagaloa nor the fono deigned to take any notice of it.

Chiefly concerned then with their social pattern, the Samoans have time for little else. Pondering upon the exigencies of ordered society, they take small interest in the world of the supernatural, nor are they puzzled and perplexed by the world of natural phenomena. The wavering line which divides the animate from the inanimate, the personal from the impersonal, borders their field of attention instead of threading its way among their preoccupations. For an interest in the intractability of material, the unaccountable tendency of wood to split or gardens to languish, they have substituted an interest in the personnel of carpentering or gardening parties. It is not that they have a clearer knowledge of the properties of material things than the Maori, who must perform long rituals to remove the sacredness from a tree which they wish to cut down. Occasional particular tapus, explicit beliefs in some animate phenomenon, attest to their typical untrained confusion. But their all inclusive social formula gives them no acceptable basis of interest in the mysterious properties of material things or natural phenomena. As the development of a human personality may be expressed in terms of choices

made between many interests in an effort to bring all parts of one's character within one coherent picture, so a culture like Samoa may be envisaged also. A diffuse cultural equipment which drew from attitudes widely distributed in the Pacific has been reshaped to an individual people's emphasis. White civilization, on coming in contact with a primitive people, may teach them that material things must not be regarded animistically or that their gods are false. So the adult's world takes the varied conceptions of the child, pooh-poohs its rituals, ridicules its tapus and insists upon an acceptance of the findings of science. But without definite pedagogic discipline, many children will make some of these selections for themselves in terms of their own temperaments; one child will spend all his strength striving to control the world by means of formulas; another will devote himself to a careful investigation of the properties of material things or the principles of mechanics; a third will throw all his energies in establishing social rapport with his fellows. So human societies, left to themselves, will select parts of their heritage for elaboration, and the original choice will gain in impetus from generation to generation until a coherent individual culture has been developed. A strong religious interest, a premium upon aberrant individual gifts, a permission to love without social sanction and give without stint to that which is loved; all these would disturb the nice balance of Samoan society and so are outlawed. Samoa may be said to have a formal social personality, to be a devotee of a careful observance of all the decreed amenities.

## BIRTH, CHILDHOOD, ADOLESCENCE

Samoan girls marry between eighteen to twenty-two years of age, so that they are strong and mature at the birth of their first children. Pregnancy is recognized by the cessation of menstruation, brownness and swelling of the breasts, weariness, headaches, and nausea. The midwives knew of no cases of menstruation during pregnancy but of many cases where a woman did not menstruate between pregnancies. As a result, they say that some women are not sure they are pregnant (*to* or *ma'i a tagata*) for four or five months. Morning sickness is believed to appear about a month after pregnancy and is said to last from a week to a month. It is not very frequent. Pregnancy is never believed to follow upon one occasion of intercourse; intercourse ten or fifteen times is believed to be essential. The usual explanation of the rarity of conception among unmarried girls who are leading promiscuous lives is that there was not a prolonged relationship with any one lover. Without any knowledge of birth control measures, the infrequency of pregnancy in the unmarried woman is puzzling. Abortion is procured by massage and by pressure exerted on the woman's side by the foot of another. Kava is also believed to be an abortive drug if chewed in large quantities. The physician in charge of the Samoan hospital reported no cases of illness following unsuccessful or partial abortion.

Nursing during pregnancy is a matter of dispute. Some women refuse to wean a child unless it is at least seven months old. Others regard this as perverse and selfindulgent conduct on the part of the mother. Heavy work is recognized as dangerous to the health of the expectant mother and is discouraged.

Labor pains may be a day apart at first. Pains on the right side are said to mean a boy, on the left side a girl. No significance is attached to foot, head, or buttock presentation, nor to birth with a caul. The caul is broken with the midwife's fingers.

The birth takes place upon a piece of bark cloth which has usually been specially prepared for the occasion. Three positions of delivery are recognized: kneeling, lying on the back, and sitting squatting on one of the logs (about two feet long and seven inches in diameter) which stand between the house posts. The last is the preferred position. The birth of the first child is always regarded as the most difficult and the birth of a girl believed to produce harder labor than the birth of a boy.

The cord (*pito*) may not be cut until the after-birth (*fale fale* or *fanua*) has come away. The midwife gives her first attention to the child, sucking out its eyes and nose, and licking its face clean. A crying child is welcomed as crying is believed to be a sign of strength. If the afterbirth has not come

away by the time this cleansing of the child is completed, the midwife massages the mother. The cord is cut with a piece of bamboo, and the navel bound up with a piece of white tapa. The child is then bathed in warm water, wrapped in white bark cloth, and laid on a pile of fresh baby mats. While the midwife and mother of the father bathe the baby, the mother's mother and her female relatives bathe her. The mother is expected to keep her arms crossed tightly until the cord falls off.

The child is fed with coconut juice and sugar cane juice from a piece of white bark cloth which has been soaked in the liquid. It is not nursed for the first twenty-four to thirty-six hours. If milk is tardy in appearing, the midwife massages the mother's breasts.

In western Samoa the midwife tested the mother's milk by drawing off a little into a coconut cup and heating with two hot stones. If the milk coagulates she pronounces it poisonous. Sometimes a god would order delayed weaning for a child. Such children were called the god's "bananas" (123 p. 80).

#### CEREMONIES AND OBSERVANCES CONNECTED WITH BIRTH

The expectant mother is forbidden to:

- (1) eat while walking about, or her child will be a runaway;
- (2) drink from a full coconut before someone else has sipped from it, or her child will gulp and not swallow its milk;
- (3) eat the heart (*o'o*) of a coconut before it fills the shell, or the child will loosen in her womb and she will miscarry;
- (4) eat hot food, or the child will be blistered;
- (5) cut off a piece of meat, one end of which is held between the teeth, or the child will have a hare-lip;
- (6) to do anything in secret or alone. She may neither eat nor walk nor sleep by herself; nor may she and her husband eat alone with the blinds of the house lowered. These prohibitions are based upon the theory that anything done alone is necessarily something shameful or disgraceful. Food eaten in private is presumably stolen. And all evil behavior will damage the child's health. The mother is permitted to witness any kind of scene, even autopsy or post-mortem Caesarian operations.

If a woman dies during pregnancy, the foetus is removed after the body has been placed in the grave. A longitudinal cut is made in the abdomen, and the foetus removed, wrapped in tapa and buried beside the mother. This is based upon the belief that otherwise the child would be born in the grave, and return as a ghost to vex its relatives. They also believe that unless an

people had such horror of an undeveloped foetus that formerly it was often simply thrown into the bush or cast into the sea. (See Tregear, 121, p. 50.)

Neither the tapa upon which the delivery took place nor the wooden bowl which held the water used in washing mother and child were thrown away, or thereby rendered unfit for other uses. The piece of bamboo with which the cord was cut, and the placenta were burned or buried. The cord was placed in some spot designed to exert a favorable influence upon the child's skill in industrial pursuits. If the baby was a girl, the cord was buried beneath a paper mulberry tree, or a hala bush, to ensure her skill in tapa making, or mat plaiting. [In western Samoa, the cord was cut on a tapa board, if the child was a girl; on a club, to ensure his bravery, if a boy]. (See 123, p. 79.) The cord of a boy was buried beneath a taro plant, for agricultural skill, or thrown into the sea to ensure his skill as a fisherman. Today the cord is often placed in the thatch of the church to ensure the future piety of the new born child.

Trees were occasionally planted for new born children, though this does not seem to have been a common practice. Such trees were designated by the child's name, as Fa'a tama Ulu (the breadfruit tree of Fa'a tama).

Twins (*masaga*) were believed to be the consequence of eating paired bananas. There were no superstitions connected with them.

A dream of an octopus meant that a woman was pregnant.

The birth of the first child was regarded as much more important than any subsequent birth. Ceremonies did not vary in respect to sex; a girl's birth was celebrated with the same pomp as a boy's. This may be due to the fact that the birth feast is regarded as the mother's feast, rather than as the child's feast. A greater emphasis upon a first birth is one of the few Samoan remnants of the prestige of the first born. If the mother is of high rank, especially if she has been a taupou, she is expected to return to her own village for the birth of a first child. The *toga-olao* (gift-giving reciprocity) set up at marriage, continues for the birth of each child, but the largest exchange takes place for the first born. As soon as a woman's pregnancy is known, her husband's relatives bring her presents of food. This official recognition of her condition is followed by a very substantial gift (*s'i s'i tama*) when she sets out for her own village. In addition to the property exchanged at the birth feast itself, the mother takes a gift of *toga* (*fa'a ulu fale*) back to her husband's relatives if she is returning to his home. If the couple are living with the mother's parents, the husband's relatives are supposed to visit her, bringing the initial gifts, and to provide food for the birth feast. She, in turn, bearing gifts from her relatives, takes the child to show it to its father's relatives. The birth feast in families of rank is called a *fai lele* more commonly simply an *'aiga fiafia o se tamatiti fou* (feast of a new baby).

Only one child of high rank was born while I was in Manua, this was the daughter born to Tufele, high chief of Fitiuta, and his wife Puniloa, a woman of high rank from Upolu. The child, if a boy, would have been possible heir to half a dozen titles: the Tufele title, the matai name of Leota which Tufele's mother held, and to several titles of lesser importance. For this occasion, the mother of Tufele, accompanied by a taupou and two talking chiefs, and the mother and brother and talking chiefs of Tufele's wife, came from Upolu. The exchange of property included twelve fine mats among the *toga* and twenty-nine pieces of tapa.

For later born children in families of importance there are smaller feasts. In humbler households a small festive meal without any considerable exchange of property marks the event. The birth of a child was formerly cried out in front of the house by the father or by the talking chief of a chief.

#### FUNCTIONS OF RELATIVES

The mother's female relatives care for her, and the father's relatives care for the child. No one whom the mother calls *tuagane* (male sibling of a woman) can be present, nor can the father be present if any woman whom he calls *tuafafine* (female sibling of a man) is assisting. Different relatives may give the child names but the official name is the name bestowed by a member of the father's paternal line.

#### CARE AND FEEDING OF THE CHILD

The baby is nursed until it is from fifteen to twenty months old, unless the mother's milk fails or she becomes pregnant. Weaning is not accomplished gradually. When a woman decides to wean her child she rubs lemon or lime juice in her breasts to make them bitter to the taste. The child is fed from birth with sugar cane juice. By the time it is a month old, it is also being fed papaya which the mother masticates first and feeds to the child on her finger.

Children were formerly bathed in a suds made from the leaves of the *fisoa* plant (*Colubrina asiatica*), and plentifully anointed with coconut oil.

Von Bulow (8, p. 72) speaks of anointing a new born child with tumeric, in western Samoa.

Very tiny babies are carried in the arms, but as soon as they are able to hold their heads up, they are carried astride the hip, usually the left hip, so that the mother's right arm is free. Children's heads were formerly flattened slightly, it is said, by surrounding them with three flat, smooth stones. As long as a child is at the breast, it sleeps on its mother's arm. After weaning, it sleeps with some woman or older girl in the household.

connection, or in the family of a talking chief for the child of a chief. The wet nurse is rewarded with a fine mat. If no wet nurse is to be found, the child is fed on coconut milk, believed to be an excellent substitute for mother's milk.

#### ADOPTION

Children were frequently informally adopted at birth. Any child after the first born might be requested for adoption but the request could be refused except from the wife of a talking chief, who could ask for the child of a chief and whom it would be exceedingly impolitic to refuse. An adopted child, or a child to whom one had given one's name, was known as *tamafai* (made child). There was no formal ceremony of adoption and an adopted child seldom severed all connection with its real parents. It is interesting that in western Samoa a child was frequently adopted by its paternal aunt and was regarded as *toga* for which *oloa* was given in return. The reciprocity thus set up continued as long as the child lived (123, p. 83). This, like the other economic relationships between aunts and nephews and nieces is reminiscent of the Marquesas (9, p. 83).

The flexibility of the kinship terminology permitted the inclusion of a mother and a foster mother in the term *tinā*. Blood relationship was remembered even when the adopted child became the heir of his adopted father. But adoption was of all shades of finality, from the new born baby taken forever from its mother's arms and carried away to another island, to the casual presence of a relative's child in the household. From the time they could run about, children were permitted to, and often did, show their preference for relatives other than their parents, by going to live with them.

#### CHILDHOOD

To my detailed discussion of the dynamics of education in Manua, little need be added here. Feasts marking "the sitting" and "the creeping," the "standing," and the "walking" of the child, as recorded for western Samoa (123, p. 82), are not known now in Manua where a child is ceremonially ignored until old enough to enter the aualuma or the aumaga. Neither circumcision nor first menstruation are marked by any ceremonial observances. In western Samoa a small feast accompanied both (67, pp. 62-63), but Turner's description (123, p. 81) suggests as casual an occasion as in Manua.

#### CIRCUMCISION

Two, four, or six little boys (always an even number) about eleven or twelve years of age sought out an older man skilled in circumcision, and he performed the operation, while an assistant blindfolded the patient with his hands. A boy companion in circumcision was called a *aga*. The talking

chief whose son acted as *soa* to a chief's son received the customary *lafo*. In Fitiuta there was a tradition that the son of Tufele must be circumcised alone with only "a knife as his *soa*."

The Samoan method of circumcision differs somewhat from the classic method practiced by the Semitic peoples. The Samoans do not sever the prepuce from the penis, but merely slit it with a piece of bamboo.

#### FORMAL RECOGNITION BY THE COMMUNITY

##### THE AUMAGA

Villages vary in the age at which a boy will be admitted into the aumaga. Admission is never granted before a boy has attained enough strength to do the work of a man. Traditionally an untattooed boy could not make the kava, and the present division of the aumaga in Tau is into the tattooed and the untattooed, aumaga muli, "last." This suggests a formal rearrangement to meet the gradual postponement or evasion of tattooing. Until a boy enters the aumaga he is known as a *tama* (boy) distinguished from a little boy under ten or eleven years of age (*tamatiti*) by the omission of the suffix meaning little. A *tama* works for his household but takes no part in village affairs. He goes fishing with other boys of the same age, makes love at the peril of being mocked as presumptuous, bullies the younger boys. A school boy is considered to be a *tama*, and the existence of the pastor's boarding schools—those in each village and the large boarding schools which prepare for the ministry—is prolonging this period of social minority.

When a boy is old enough to enter the aumaga his matai takes him to the aumaga in council assembled, presenting them either with a large kava root or a handsome present of food which will vary according to the rank of the boy. He remains a member of this group until he obtains a title. Marriage makes little difference. In the formal attention paid by the group to a visiting taupou, he continues to participate if he lives on after marriage in his old village. A married *tau le'a le'a* does, however, draw back somewhat into the household life again, while almost all the energies of the unmarried *tau le'a le'a* are concentrated in village activities. Sometimes a group of unmarried men sleep together in an empty guest house.

##### THE AUALUMA

Entrance into the aualuma is a much less important matter, more distinction between a big girl and a little girl than any felt difference in social status. Important families would send a present of food to the house of the taupou and then a feast would be held as a recognition that another young

Inasmuch as an aualuma comprises also the wives of untitled men, it forms the social counterpart of the aumaga. But to these are added widows and divorced wives. The widow of a matai might be included in the *fale tama'i ta'i*, only if she were some highly respected woman who had for years played a prominent role in the women's affairs of a village. It is probable that the inclusion of older women has at its root the idea of chaperonage. One or more elderly widows slept with the girls and thus freed the wives of the talking chiefs from this duty. The custom in which a group of girls slept with the taupou seems to be the original function of the aualuma. In this form it is found in Tonga (49), and in Mangaia (4, vol. 1, p. 453).

##### TITLED YOUTH

A girl was made taupou or a boy a manaia through a ceremony called *fa'atu'uiga* (p. 64). The taupou and the girls of a household of high rank were carefully chaperoned, allowed few intimates, and taught to apply themselves diligently to handicrafts. Aside from the extra ceremonial duties devolving upon a manaia, the life of a chief's son differed very slightly from the life of his contemporaries. The possessor of a manaia title, or a talking chief's designated heir who was then called a *suli*, was exempted in some slight measure from anxious competition for a title on the one hand, and a fear of rebuke for precocity upon the other. Set aside (*mamalu*; that is, sanctioned-by-wealth-given-away), they were singled out a little from the small tribulations and the more care-free amusements of their fellows.

## COURTSHIP, MARRIAGE AND MATURITY

Although every woman married, or at least bore a child; and although marital status was explicit in the nomenclature *teine* (girl), *fafine* (a woman), age rather than marriage was the determining feature in industrial and ceremonial life, unless either husband or wife moved to another village. About a fourth of the marriages in a Manua village were extravillage; in about half of these residence was matrilineal. The change of residence was most decisive when it was the man who moved to a strange village; he seldom became thoroughly assimilated in the life of the aumaga. Very often he received the title which was the usual bait to a matrilineal residence, and drew even further apart from the men whom he had never learned to know well. For a woman, with a much slighter stake in village life, this fact of residence made very little difference.

The chief's daughter was guarded carefully, especially in the case of the taupou. For other young people a fair amount of sex experimentation was permitted. Marriage was regarded as a social-economic matter, seldom grounded upon special affection. But a tradition of love making that united extravagant protestation with a slight regard for personality and no premium upon fidelity left the actual conduct of proposals in the hands of the young men. Marriages were not formally initiated by the parents whose consent, however, was absolutely essential. Their consent depended upon a parity of economic and social status.

When a young man decided to marry, he called upon the girl, accompanied by his *soa* and bearing a *tauga* (the essential ceremonial food gift). Acceptance of the gift was taken as encouragement of his attentions. His *soa* pleaded his cause, night after night, while he sat afar off and said very little to his intended bride. After his suit was approved he might go to sleep in the girl's house and consummation of the marriage sometimes preceded the validation of the contract by the traditional exchange of property. No marriage in which property had not been exchanged by the families was regarded as legal. It was called *avaga* (elopement). If parents pursued and recovered an eloping daughter they shaved her head in punishment.

Upon this very simple courtship and betrothal pattern, there were two elaborations, the ceremonial court which the whole aumaga paid to a visiting taupou and the courtship of a taupou by a manaia or a chief.

The ceremonial court of the aumaga—called "*o le mua*," or "*o le 'aiava*"—was a mere pretty gesture of hospitality, and carried no more serious emphasis. Each *taule'ale'a* brought a ceremonial gift (*tauga*)—usually an offering of fish—in a small palm basket (*maile*). Gathering at a distance from the house where the visitor was lodged, they would advance, shouting

"*mua, mua*," beating on the small slit drums, beating sticks together, and yodeling. Entering the guest house, the food offerings (usually preceded by the inevitable coconut) would be presented, and the evening spent in the recital of *solos*, singing and dancing. The visiting taupou and the manaia would sit in the front of the house. When the taupou danced, sons of talking chiefs would dance beside her and her talking chief would *lafo* to them.

The courtship of a taupou by a titled man is called *o le ao moega*. The party making proposals arrived in the day time, envoys of the chief bringing handsome presents to the talking chiefs of the taupou. Sometimes several such parties would pay their addresses at once to some much sought after taupou. If the marriage was agreeable to the talking chiefs, the chosen suitor appeared bringing many pigs. A feast was held, the date of the marriage determined upon, and the bridegroom went home to plant many fields of taro, raise pigs and chickens, and collect man-made articles for the bride price. He left in the household of his bride one or two talking chiefs, to represent him in his absence and watch over his intended bride. These talking chiefs worked for the household of the taupou and received many tapas as gifts. If the conduct of the taupou displeased them in any way, they would report it to their principal. The whole village of the taupou set about making fine mats and tapa for the dowry. The *soa* who acted for his friend, the talking chief who acted for his chief, were each well rewarded with presents.

It was during this period that an unwilling bride would elope if possible. Attempted elopement with the taupou of another village was a favorite feat with young men of rank. If the bridegroom were a man of high rank, it was not a cause of quarrel between the villages, but rather one count against the losing village in a game of friendly rivalry.

The marriage ceremony consisted of two parts: the defloration ceremony (*o le fa'a masei'au*); and the interchange of property. Both of these ceremonies were of course much more elaborate for people of rank, and the defloration ceremony was usually dispensed with by poor families.

For the taupou the defloration ceremony took place in the *malae* or in the guest house. On the day of the ceremony, her whole village and the village of the bridegroom were assembled, as an important marriage in which the entire village was concerned was always made the occasion for a malaga. The girl, dressed in a fine mat, oiled, and adorned with flowers and shells, lay upon a high bed made of a great pile of mats. A great, highly patterned piece of tapa was spread over her. The chief talking chief of the bridegroom (in humbler marriages some older male relative of the bridegroom) wrapped his first and second fingers with fresh tapa and took the tokens of virginity with his hand. When the girl proved to be a virgin, her father and the



the aualuma all rushed upon her enthusiastically and the mother of the bridegroom wept over her, saying that she had brought great honor to their house.

Meanwhile the talking chief went the circle of the assembled matai permitting each one to examine his fingers. The extra blood was caught on a long piece of white tapa, specially prepared for the occasion, which was hung up outside the house for all to see. If the girl proved not to be a virgin, she was set upon by the women of her village and severely beaten or even killed. But this only happened if she concealed the fact. If she confessed to having lost her virginity the old women cannily substituted a bowl of chicken's blood and the ceremony proceeded without any one knowing of the family's shame. With true Samoan courtesy in compromise, the talking chief of the husband connived also at the deception.

Afterwards the marriage was consummated on the spot behind a large tapa curtain. The *fa'a mase'au* was an essential part of the marriage of a girl of rank and it was regarded as quite a feather in the cap of the poorer families if it was possible to display a blood stained banner at a daughter's marriage. As daughters of men of low rank were not so carefully chaperoned as the taupou, the pious imposture was often impossible; the neighborhood knew too much about the girl's prenuptial love affairs.

In the second part of the ceremony—the exchange of property—the two sides to the marriage gathered on opposite sides of the *malae*. The talking chief of the bridegroom first presented the *oloa*, beginning with pigs. Each pig was called by some fanciful title, "the lady's girdle," or "the dress of the lady." Today the names of foreign goods are used so that a large porker may be euphemistically dubbed a "kerosene lamp." The women of the bride's village marched in solemn procession, each wearing a fine mat. These were presented with long and flowery speeches in which the history of each mat, the name of its maker, the exchanges in which it had played a part, were recorded. As a part of the exchange, the bride takes off the fine mat which she has worn and presents it to her husband's family or talking chiefs, who present her with another costume.

Alternatively, the whole village of the taupou may proceed to the bridegroom's village and present the *toga* there; this is called a *nunu*.

An evening of dancing concludes the ceremony. In the husband's village, if he is high chief, a new house will have been built to receive the newly married pair. On their homecoming a second feast will be held, provided by the talking chiefs, who have profited heavily from the *toga*. The talking chiefs will recite the finest *solos* they know, in honor of the chief's new wife. In the old days when polygamy was frequent, a chief's marriages were a series of feasts for his village.

pregnancies and confinements. She might marry several times, each time with less pomp and circumstance. Each time she took the status of her husband. If he were a member of the fono she met with the wives of matais, otherwise she sat outside the house. The peak of her life was reached with the birth of her first child.

A man's life continued to mount toward a climax until he received a title. When his relatives had chosen him as a matai, and the fono had approved their choice, he went and sat outside the fono, until he was ceremonially called in and given his kava with the matais. A few days later he provided a large feast for the fono and, if he were a high chief, made a gift to the talking chiefs. He might now carry a fly flap and sit among chiefs. A man might hold several titles in a life time, so that the climax of importance might not be reached until near old age. Very old men usually resigned their titles to their sons, and shorn of prestige, too decrepit to fish or go inland to the plantation, they sat and rolled sennit in the sun, tyrannized over by the old women of the household.

As the marriage exchange is theoretically exactly equal, divorce involves no repayment of bride price or dowry. A marriage is terminated at the wish of either partner. The woman returns to her own relatives, usually taking her young children with her. The only restriction upon remarriage was the fear of the wrath of a man of higher rank, should a man of lower rank marry his cast off wife.