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Old track, old path

‘His sacred house and the place where he lived,’ wrote Armando Pinto Correa, an administrator of Portuguese Timor, when he visited Suai and met its ruler, ‘had the name Behali to indicate the origin of his family who were the royal house of Uai Hali [Wehali] in Dutch Timor’ (Correa 1934: 45). Through writing and display, the ruler of Suai remembered, declared and celebrated Wehali¹ as his origin. At the beginning of the twentieth century, the Portuguese increased taxes on the Timorese, which triggered violent conflict with local rulers, including those of Suai. The conflict forced many people from Suai to seek asylum across the border in West Timor. At the end of 1911, it was recorded that more than 2,000 East Timorese, including women and children, were granted asylum by the Dutch authorities and directed to settle around the southern coastal plain of West Timor, in the land of Wehali (La Lau 1912; Ormelling 1957: 184; Francillon 1967: 53).

On their arrival in Wehali, displaced people from the village of Suai (and Camenaça) took the action of their ruler further by naming their new settlement in West Timor Suai to remember their place of origin. Suai was once a quiet hamlet in the village of Kletek on the southern coast of West Timor. In 1999, hamlet residents hosted their brothers and sisters from the village of Suai Loro in East Timor, and many have stayed. With a growing population, the hamlet has now become a village with its own chief asserting Suai Loro origin; his descendants were displaced in 1911.

1 In formal speech, it is known as Wewiku-Wehali or Wesei-Wehali, but I choose to use the abbreviated form, Wehali.

Wandering around the village, you can hear the resounding of the waves of the Timor Sea, which is referred to as *Tasi Mane* ('male sea') in Tetun. You can appreciate the warm, friendly smiles of Timorese women as they chew their betel and areca nut on the verandahs of their stilt houses. As you walk barefoot along the leafy dirt road, you can feel the sandy, silty and clay soils massaging your feet—as if you were actually strolling through the village of Suai Loro. In all senses of lived experience, Suai village in Wehali is indeed a mirror of Suai Loro village in East Timor.²

Yet, there is another compelling element that has made Suai—and, more broadly, the land of Wehali—a favoured destination for displaced Tetun people from East Timor, and that is its cultural significance. As the head of Suai village (*kepala desa*) asked me when I met him in his office, 'Have you ever wondered why the East Timorese in this land of Wehali are considered returnees?' As he saw me smiling without any intention of responding, he continued: 'Because the Timorese came from one origin [*hun* in Wehali].' By way of further explanation, he said:

Our ancestors all came from Wehali. Some of them then went to the east and carried the sacred sword to protect themselves. They let the scabbard remain in the west. The East Timorese, as descendants of the swordbearer, will always look for their brothers and sisters in West Timor as descendants of the sheathbearer. That is why the East Timorese in Wehali are not refugees, because they are returning to the land of their ancestors, the land of the sheathbearer, the land of Wehali, our mother and our father [*ina no ama* in Wehali].

Later that day, the head invited me to his house and related the following expression (in the local language, Tetun) about the Wehali people meeting the East Timorese on their arrival in 1999:

<i>Ami mai hola hika nahon no leon</i>	We came back to the place where we belong
<i>Iha ina no ama Wesei Wehali</i>	To the mother and the father, Wesei Wehali
<i>Ami bitin luan kbonan luan</i>	The ones who hold and embrace us
<i>Atu hodi kous hola hiti hola</i>	To hold and embrace us
<i>Tan funu no ledó</i>	For it is war and conflict

2 Suai Loro has undergone significant recent landscape change for a planned gas refinery and hub.

<i>Hoi mai taka tan hoku tan</i>	That took us back to gather and
<i>ina Wehali ama Wesei</i>	reunite [with] mother Wehali
	and father Wesei
<i>Sera bitin sera kbonan.</i>	Please hold us and embrace us.

And the Wehali people replied:

<i>Surik nuan surik isin</i>	The sheath and the sword
<i>Modi isin lao mela knuan</i>	The sword went away,
	the scabbard remained
<i>Kodi isin mai kaknua ba</i>	The sword is reunited with
	the scabbard.

By emphasising Wehali as their mother and father, displaced East Timorese from Suai claimed Wehali as their ancestral land and understood their displacement as a journey of return to their land of origin. The previous displacement of East Timorese into the land of Wehali in 1911 was similarly perceived as a return to the land of their mother and father (Therik 2004: 49). This symbolic parentage category marks the pattern of relations between the incoming East Timorese and their hosts. In this ideology, Wehali is perceived:

as the trunk and other societies are its flower and fruit. As the trunk, Wehali is the source of life and therefore deserves to be called 'mother and father' (*ina no ama*) while other peripheral societies are its daughters (*funan* = flower) and sons (*klaut* = fruit). (Therik 2004: 82)

The political significance of this symbolic category is that, by perceiving themselves as returning children of Wehali, the East Timorese legitimise the authority of their host, but at the same time claim belonging to the place in which they have just arrived.

In contrast to the labelling processes I discussed in the previous chapter, here, I explore the way the East Timorese 'label' themselves. In this self-constructed identity, I examine East Timorese processes of resettlement in West Timor and their representation of such notions as origin, place and exchange. Origin is a very common motif in the construction of social identity by the Timorese people and this is often expressed through botanical metaphors. Among origin narratives of the Dengka people of the neighbouring island of Rote, for example:

We men here are like a tree with one trunk but three roots; the main root is our father of birth. The second root, our mother's brother of origin, the third root our mother's mother's brother of origin. As long as a person lives, these three roots cannot be done away with for they are our path of life. (Fox 1980b: 118)

In a similar vein, the Meto people of West Timor describe their founding/origin ancestor as the 'trunk' and their progeny as the 'twigs', 'tip' and 'flowers' (McWilliam 2009: 111). What is clear from these Timorese (and Austronesian) botanical metaphors is the idea that ancestral origin remains a significant feature of belonging.

Since the 1990s, the discussion of people, place and identity has been dominated by the view that, in the context of globalisation, or 'global space' (Gupta and Ferguson 1992), the idea that identity is defined by a physically demarcated territory has lost its significance. This is marked by what Appadurai (1990: 304–5) dubbed 'deterritorialised ethnicities', whereby identities are constructed through the experiences of a diaspora and imagined homelands and articulated through the media, separatist movements or nations without states. While I recognise the phenomenon of deterritorialisation in many displaced communities around the world, in the case of East Timorese in West Timor, I would argue that territorially based identity remains a significant modality of attachment. For the East Timorese, territory matters, and by this I am not referring so much to fixed physical boundaries. Rather, I prefer to think of the idea of territory as a series of interconnected places that form discursive/mythic ancestral pathways. In approaching this view, I am informed by Fox's *Poetic Power of Place* (2006c), in which it is argued that central features of emplacement and belonging among Timorese, and Austronesian societies in general, are the notions of origin, mobility and return. In the context of the East Timorese, a comparative analysis of *Land and Life in Timor-Leste* by McWilliam and Traube (2011: 5) offers a framework for the 'different ways that Timorese people assert attachments and claims to place and landscapes of memory and belonging in the contemporary world'.

I contend that East Timorese ideas of resettlement revolve around two seemingly contrary trends. One is the possibility of constructing and reconstructing a collective identity based on an origin narrative. As the above discussion has exemplified, Tetun-speaking people from Suai district in East Timor confirm and maintain their foundational ideology in Wehali and therefore articulate their experience of displacement as a process

of reconciliation and reunification rather than one of loss and separation. The second trend is the evident possibility of a hybrid identity based on the colonial experience, the independence struggle and integration within Indonesia. Yet despite attempts to incorporate Indonesian nationalist views of colonial oppression, many East Timorese in this area have imagined their colonial struggle as a process of reconnecting broken ancestral paths and revitalising an ancient political structure. These trends arguably serve as a disjuncture between the realities of Timorese ethnolinguistic mobility, on the one hand, and their official membership of and integration within the Indonesian (and Timor-Leste) nation-state, on the other. This disjuncture is illustrated in this chapter by a comparative discussion of three major ethnolinguistic groups—Tetun, Bunaq and Kemak—all of which experienced displacement and migration from East to West Timor. In drawing on case studies of different settlements in Belu and Malaka districts, I demonstrate the significance of the conception of origins, land and locality in the ‘reemplacement’ process among different East Timorese groups within the mythic ancestral land in West Timor.

The Tetun ‘returnees’

Among the Tetun-speaking people of Timor, their perspective of their collective origin has always revolved around the central position of Wehali. Wehali’s great influence on both sides of the island was documented as long ago as 1522 in the report of Antonio Pigafetta, who landed on the northern coast of Timor and wrote of the existence of four kings on the island, one of them the king of Oibich domain, representing the Wewiku-Wehali domain (Therik 2004: 49). While this depicts an image of the significant authority of Wehali, there is a considerable lack of consensus on the way this apical authority operated. Two major political disruptions that occurred within Wehali territory might have played a role in this situation. The first was reported in 1642, when the Portuguese *fidalgo* (nobleman) Francisco Fernández led a small troop of men from their newly established settlement and trading post in Lifau (present-day Oecussi) on the northern coast, across the island to attack the Wehali centre, burning it to the ground. This event was of major symbolic significance, with many constituent Timorese domains distancing themselves from Wehali and realigning their allegiances towards the Portuguese (Boxer 1947; Hägerdal 2012). Another account, however, demonstrated the restored power of Wehali following the destruction in

1642. In the so-called Contract of Paravicini signed in 1756 by the Dutch and the rulers of Timor and its surrounding islands (Roti, Savu, Sumba and Solor), a sovereign ruler of Wewiku-Wehali of Timor, Hiacijntoe Corea, signed on behalf of the Timorese population across 29 domains. In an attempt to trace the location of these domains, Therik (2004: 57) found that more than half are in present-day Timor-Leste, including Liquiçá, Manatuto, Kova Lima, Same, Bobonaro and Ermera. In other words, the putative realm of Wehali in the past extended over a large area of both West and East Timor.

Nearly three-and-a-half centuries later, in 1906, Wehali's authority was challenged again, this time by the Dutch. During their coercive pacification efforts in the western part of the island, the Dutch launched an extensive military campaign across the area and control was eventually assumed over Wehali territory. The Dutch established a military post in Besikama, 12 km west of Laran. These incursions on Wehali (Francillon 1980) challenged their hegemonic power on both sides of Timor. And, indeed, there has never been any official recognition of Wehali's central authority and not all Tetun speakers, let alone other East Timorese language groups, see their collective origins as being in Wehali (Kehi and Palmer 2012). Nevertheless, Wehali's influence across the island persists. This cannot be separated from the fact that, in early 2000, after the flood that swept across most of Wehali land and took the lives of many displaced East Timorese, elders and representatives from different East Timorese communities in West Timor offered their tribute to the Wehali sacred house of earth and sky (*ai lotuk*) in the village of Laran. For the East Timorese, the flood was more than a natural phenomenon; it was a symbolic assertion of Wehali's position as the land of origin that holds spiritual authority over the newly arrived East Timorese. The tributary ritual was performed to recognise and receive this spiritual authority and secure access to and accommodation into Wehali land.

The Tetun-speaking people of Suai origin are aware that Wehali's spiritual authority cannot be separated from its origin narrative, and they announce this by affirming Wehali as their land of origin. According to their version of origin narratives:

In the beginning, the entire world is covered with water. The first place to dry is Marlilu. In Marlilu, there were two brothers—namely, Loro Tuan Fatu Isin as the elder ('the flesh of the stone') and Loro Tuan Wehali as

the younger.³ One day they decided to have a competition to determine the rightful leader of the land. The competition was to grow paddy rice. As time went by, Loro Tuan Fatu Isin produced more rice than that of his brother, Loro Tuan Wehali.

Marlilu lies on high ground to the south of Betun. Its upland position is central to the Wehali origin narrative. In their mythical conception, Marlilu is Marlilu Haholek, 'the place where the first dry land emerged and the first human beings lived' (Therik 2004: 197). The Tetun of Suai recognised its importance and used Marlilu to claim a shared origin place as the Wehali people.

Loro Tuan Fatu Isin and Loro Tuan Wehali are dyadic symbols representing an important cultural model of unity among the Tetun people. But the narrative also concerns the nature of the relationship between the two and describes them as being in an oppositional, agonistic relationship with each other. As in other Austronesian societies, here, the classic rivalry of brothers is often articulated in the origin narrative and is central to the notions of order and precedence.⁴ Loro Tuan Fatu Isin managed to produce more paddy rice, legitimising precedence over Loro Tuan Wehali. The competition, however, was not yet resolved:

Both men also tried to keep birds away from their plants. Loro Tuan Wehali called the people to stand and hold hands around his rice plants but the birds were still able to eat the rice. Loro Tuan Fatu Isin only sat on the top of Marlilu hill and weaved his *tais* while singing Tetun chants. The birds did not even get close to his rice plants.

The way Loro Tuan Fatu Isin protected his paddy rice from the birds bolsters his claim for precedence over Loro Tuan Wehali. The narrative continues:

As the winner of the competition, Loro Tuan Fatu Isin was entitled to the leadership. However, to avoid conflict with his younger brother, he decided to delegate the leadership role to Loro Tuan Wehali and then went east to find new land to settle. As he was leaving, he took the sacred sword, leaving the scabbard in Wehali [*Taba Nuan Iha Wehali//Taba Isin Iha Lorosa'e*].

3 For the Wehali version, see Therik (2004: 49, 66, 84–99).

4 This rivalry between brothers is a classic origin narrative among the Austronesian people. See Fox and Sather (2006) for comparison.

Later, Loro Tuan Fatu Isin has three sons who rule over the entirety of East Timor. The eldest, Loro Mane Ikun, also known as Nai Loro Di Loli Taek Rai Litis, ruled over the eastern domains of Alas, Same, Viqueque, Los Palos, Baucau and Dili. The second son was Loro Mane Klaran, also known as Nai Loro Farata Rai Mia Nain, and he ruled the central domains of Zumalai, Cassa Ainaro, Ermera and Aileu. The youngest, Loro Manek Kawa'i, also known as Nai Loro Nubatak Suai Nain, ruled over Suai, Fatumean, Illiomar and Bobonaro.

The origin and ritual narratives generated by the Tetun people of Suai illustrate their displacement in the Wehali lands of West Timor in a different light. They consider displacement as a passage of reconciliation and reunification. The content of this origin narrative as well as its use as the basis for claiming belonging and authority vary according to whether it is told by the Tetun people of East Timorese origin or the local Tetun people of Wehali. In my discussions with Tetun *adat* (customary law) historians from Wehali, they expressed strong reservation with regard to the kin relationship between Loro Tuan Fatu Isin and Loro Tuan Wehali. In their version, Loro Tuan Fatu Isin did not originate from the land, but was an outsider. He was someone who 'came out from a fortress'. They also disagreed with the voluntary nature of Loro Tuan Fatu Isin's departure from Wehali land. For them, in contrast, Loro Tuan Fatu Isin was 'expelled' from the land because he dared to challenge the authority of Loro Tuan Wehali. As an ousted member of society, Loro Tuan Fatu Isin's existence should never have been acknowledged. In these terms, then, the Tetun in Wehali claimed their precedence over the return of the Tetun people from Suai who sought to revive their connection through Loro Tuan Fatu Isin.

In spite of this variation, both groups agree on the association of the complementary categories of sword and scabbard. In the Wehali version, political and spiritual centrality is defined because they are the holders of the sheath and therefore symbolically female. The sword is categorised as male and located in the periphery. These symbolic coordinates speak to order and authority in the land of Wehali. The male from the periphery functions as the protector (*makdakar*) of the female centre. In return, the female centre channels fertility and life to the periphery (Therik 2004: 76).

Tetun people from Suai share this idea of order and authority. They recognise that Wehali as female and sheathbearer is the place where peace and stability are maintained. Suai, as male and wielding the sword from the periphery, is the place where disputes and conflicts occur. Here, the

violent conflict that erupted in Suai is conceptualised in relation to the sword that was carried by their ancestor Loro Tuan Fatu Isin, when he left his homeland in Wehali. But the sword also represents the role and responsibilities of the bearer/defender of the periphery to protect their source of life in Wehali.

Taking this view into the context of historical and more recent East Timorese displacement and emplacement in Wehali land has been revelatory. The domain of Wanibesak in the present-day village of Lorotulus was carefully selected as the settlement location for the Tetun returnees from Suai in the early twentieth century due to this categorical purpose: to protect the central Wehali village of Laran from the threat of Meto warriors from the domains of Amanuban and Amanatun in the west. On the eastern side of Laran, the initial Tetun returnees were settled in the villages of Kamanasa, Kletek, Suai and Fahiluka with a similar purpose. The displacement of the Tetun people from Suai in 1999 follows this returnee trajectory set out by their predecessors.

History in the present among the Fohoterin origin

In 1999, about 500 households from the Fohoterin area of Suai arrived in Wehali. Unlike other places in West Timor, where displaced East Timorese were housed in temporary barracks, the displaced Tetun of Fohoterin origin knew exactly where to seek accommodation. Their destination was Sukabiwedik, a hamlet in the village of Kamanasa. Kamanasa comprises seven hamlets and, as the village of Suai, is named in remembrance of people from Camenaça in East Timor who took refuge in Wehali land during the anti-tax rebellion of 1911. Therik (2004: 85), in his observations of these events, wrote:

According to the oral history narrated in the area, the people of these hamlets were originally refugees from a Portuguese colony in the eastern part of Timor. Indeed the name of the village is often mentioned as Suai Kamanasa. The term Suai denotes a domain of origin in as much as the Kamanasa people claim that originally they came from Suai, a Tetun speaking area across the former international border between East and West Timor.

As expected, the local people welcomed their arrival. Thus, unlike other places, in Sukabiwedik, there were no camps. Instead, the displaced Tetun people of Fohoterin origin were accommodated in local people's houses. 'We come from one origin' is the common phrase used by local people to describe the basis of this support. It was this shared origin that also led locals to offer their land for the incoming East Timorese to settle. From the Wehali perspective, land is an appropriate gift from the female centre. The idea that land has a unifying influence among Tetun people is culturally encoded as an inevitable consequence of the symbolic representation of Wehali as the land of origin (*rai hun*). In Wehali, the concept of *rai hun* extends well beyond the areas around their ritual centre in the village of Laran. In another categorical sense, *rai hun* is perceived as the place of the light (*rai kroman*) and the earth itself (*rai klaran*) and therefore extends without limit (Therik 2004: 71; Fox 2006b: 247). In a complementary way, Suai is ritually expressed as the land of the darkness (*rai kukun*), the land of the dead (*rai matebian*). As the narrative goes:

<i>Wehali: Atu simu ema moris iha rai klaran</i>	Accept the living people in the bright land
<i>Suai: Atu simu ema mate rai kukun.</i>	Accept the dead people in the dark land.

The idea of unity between the Tetun people from Suai and the Tetun people of Wehali is also conceptualised in the symbolic representation of Wehali as Suai's source of prosperity. Another narrative about the living ritual of Nai Loro Nubatak, one of the sons of Loro Tuan Fatu Isin who ruled Suai, exemplifies this relationship:

One time during his leadership, Nai Loro Nubatak was very keen to make a ritual to offer thanks to God for the goodness extended upon the people of Suai. The essential instruments to conduct this ritual were betel and areca nut [*bua abut*]. Betel and areca nut, however, were not found in Suai area at that time so Nai Loro Nubatak made an appeal to Liurai Wehali to provide the seeds of betel from Wesei [*Takan Wesei Oan*] to be planted in Suai.

Liurai Wehali approved the request and gave the betel seeds delivered by a couple from Wehali. The name of the man was Klau Firak and the woman, Dahu Firak. This couple lived among the Suai people and together they planted the betel and areca nut in Weafou, Mota Masin and Wetaeboko.

Here, the ideology of unity between Suai and Wehali and the nature of their relationship are symbolically categorised as seedbed and plantation. As elsewhere in eastern Indonesia, in Wehali, betel and areca nut are the essential elements of ritual. The expression *Takan Wesei Oan* refers in ritual terms to the heir of the domain, the son of the *liurai*, the one who holds the authority. Thus, the association of Wehali as the source of betel and areca nut implies its central role in the ritual life of the Tetun people in Suai—symbolically, the source of life. As Wehali maintained spiritual authority, Suai is perceived as their cultivated land, the land that can grow and prosper. In this social paradox, Wehali as the centre becomes poor and Suai as the periphery becomes rich; Wehali becomes weak and Suai becomes strong (Fox 2006d; Therik 2004: 76–7).

Shared ideas of origin offer a crucial insight into Tetun people's understandings of displacement and emplacement. By revealing their origin, the Tetun people retrace the foundation of their existence with reference to the starting point of their ancestors' rite of passage that led them to their present situation. In this respect, origin serves as the basis for their claim as founders or first settlers and hence to entitlement by association. The shared recognition of Wehali as their land of origin, moreover, confirms an imagined unified identity as one people for the Tetun people from East Timor and West Timor. This, at the same time, legitimises the claim of the Tetun people from East Timor of belonging in West Timor by articulating their displacement culturally as a process of returning to one's land of origin.

Paths of return

The origin narrative depicts the Tetun people as returnees when they left Suai inside the East Timor border for the Wehali land on the western side. This does not mean they have completely detached themselves from Suai. For them, Wehali—with its representation as the mother and the father, the female and the centre, the land of origin and the earth—accommodates but does not constrain; Wehali embraces but does not confine; it receives but also gives away. The idea is based on a different narrative in Wehali, which conceptualises mobility as the key characteristic of the Tetun people. Mobility in Tetun narratives is categorised symbolically as the departure of Wehali's men to the land of the morning sun and the land of the setting sun. This is made explicit in the following segment:

DIVIDED LOYALTIES

Na'i Taek Malaka married Ho'ar Na'i Haholek and had six boys and one girl

The first born was Na'i Saku Mataus, then Na'i Bara Mataus, Na'i Ura Mataus, Na'i Meti Mataus, Na'i Neno Mataus, Na'i Leki Mataus.

The last born was a girl named Ho'ar Mataus, entitled Ho'ar Makbalin Balin Liurai [lit., the one who was in charge of appointing rulers or *liurai*]

Na'i Saku Mataus and Na'i Bara Mataus were given away to sit in the land of the rising sun

Na'i Ura Mataus and Meti Mataus were given away to sit in the land of the setting sun

Na'i Leki Mataus and Na'i Neno Mataus were left in Wehali

Ho'ar Mataus, the one who appointed the *liurai* sits in the house of the earth and sky to look after Wesci Wehali. (Therik 2004: 81–2)

While the Tetun people in Wehali depict the sending out of Na'i Saku Mataus and Na'i Bara Mataus to the eastern side of Timor, the Tetun people of Suai origin recount a slightly different version of this departure. For them:

Na'i Meti Mataus was sent out to lead the people of Suai Uma Rat.

Na'i Leki Mataus was sent to lead the people of Raimea Uma Loro.

Na'i Ura Mataus was sent to lead the people of Manufahi Oma Loro Rai Lor.

Na'i Suri Nurak was sent to lead the people of Suai Kamanasa.

Despite these differences, a shared ideology is found in the Wehali as female category sending away her men to rule the surrounding areas. For many Tetun people from Suai, moreover, the narrative serves as a foundation for their return to their land in Suai. And this is what happened to the displaced people of Fohoterin origin in Sukabiwedik in 1999. With the warm reception and gift of land from the Tetun people, one would expect the displaced people to eventually settle in Sukabiwedik. However, in late 1999, 400 households decided to return to Suai, followed by another 20 households between 2001 and 2003. At the time of writing, about 40 households remained in Sukabiwedik. For these returnees, Wehali has always been home, but another home should also be looked after. An elder in Kamanasa village once told me:

If everyone stays here, who is going to maintain the path of our ancestors and maintain the house and the land in Suai? You may not believe this, but in fact we encouraged them to go back for those purposes.

The Bunaq integration narrative

Like Tetun-speaking people from Suai, Bunaq-speaking people from East Timor have their own narrative to explain their origins and displacement. But while the Tetun considered the breakdown of their unity to be the result of internal disputes, the Bunaq emphasised the role of ‘outsiders’—the Dutch and Portuguese colonial powers specifically—as antagonistic forces that destroyed the unity of Timorese. Appadurai (1996: 183) has noted that ‘all locality building has a moment of colonization, a moment both historical and chronotypic’. For the Bunaq, this locality building is expressed in the story of the European colonisation of Timor, which transformed their identity from a shared origin into a shared colonial experience and struggle. It is this transformation that brings the Timorese into the realm of Indonesian nationalism. The following narrative, offered to me by the leader of the Bunaq people in Belu, the *loro* of Lamaknen, Ignasius Kali, was recited during the visit of El Tari, then governor of NTT, to the displaced Bunaq people in the camp at Sukabiren village in Belu district in early 1976. The narrative was spoken in Bunaq language in a form of parallel speech as follows:

<i>Meten no, habu no</i>	In the beginning and origin times
<i>Nai Giral Kere, Nai Gepal Owen</i>	The One-Eyed King and One Ear
<i>Pan hini hono, muk hini hati</i>	Created the sky, provided the land
<i>Gie ketemete, gie dairai</i>	Made goods and wares
<i>Mila lubu gutu, en lubu gutu</i>	With the lives of slaves and human beings
<i>Gini tetuk biel, gini nesan biel</i>	In their wholeness and perfection
<i>Homo dalas uwen, homo betak uwen</i>	In their pieces and incompleteness

DIVIDED LOYALTIES

<i>Siawa Mugiwa gene, Kanua Maliama gene</i>	From Siawa Mugiwa and Kanua Maliama
<i>Sinamutin gene, Malaka gene</i>	In Sinamutin and in Malaka
<i>Nei nei tata, nei nei bei</i>	Our male and female ancestors
<i>Biruk mo gie, ro meti gie</i>	With watercraft and boat
<i>Meti nagi man, mo dugun man</i>	Sail and dive approaching
<i>Riso none nere, teten no pir</i>	Into the land
<i>Riso gomo nobel, teten gemel nobel</i>	The uninhabited land
<i>Orel goi na pous, jon gio na pusen</i>	Apart from the monkeys and wild boars
<i>Dege rasa biel, dege sail beil</i>	So they clean the land and clear the land
<i>Hono ditimik, hono dalai</i>	To emplace and settle down

It is at this stage that the process of settlement in Timor began. Originating from the same ancestors, the mythical society grew and developed through various kinds of relationships. They also migrated to the eastern and western sides of the island, but always recognised each other as brothers and sisters. This segment of the narrative is as follows:

<i>Dege talik hoon, dege kait hoon</i>	They started to create relationships
<i>Talik kau kaa, kait hulo lep</i>	Elder//younger relationship, relationship of bamboo flute
<i>Talik malu ai, kait das arak</i>	Wife-givers and wife-takers relationship
<i>Talik guni sai, kait mil sai</i>	Connect to outside and release from within
<i>Talik dele rese, kait dele dene</i>	Relations are diverged and shared
<i>Dese hot taru, dese hot topa</i>	Share to the morning sun and to the setting sun
<i>Golo tama loi, gua res loi</i>	To stay and remain there
<i>Maligele ni, laktol ni</i>	Without a ditch, without a gulf
<i>Dege dubewiti, dege danaran</i>	And then identify themselves [in reference to their place of living]

<i>Lakulo Samoro gol, Lutarato Jopata gol</i>	Children of Lakulo, Samoro, Lutarato, Jopata
<i>Obulo Marobo gol, Sibiri Kailau gol</i>	Children of Oburo Marobo, Sabiri Kailau
<i>Ro Ikun Ro Wulan gol, Ton ba Ton wai gol</i>	Children of Ro Ikun Ro Wulan, Ton ba Ton wai
<i>Manuaman gol, Lakan gol</i>	Children of Manuaman Lakan
<i>Wesei gol, Wehali gol</i>	Children of Wesei Wehali
<i>Molo o Miomafo, Kupang Amarasi</i>	Children of Molo Miomafo, Kupang Amarasi
<i>Ambenu Amfoang, Nuba Taek Natu Taek</i>	Children of Ambenu Amfoang, Amanuban, Amanatun
<i>Sana Taek, Boki Taek, Ti Mau Sabu Mau</i>	People of Insana Beboki, Rote Sabu
<i>Hulo rese na bai, lep dene na bai</i>	These are our brothers and sisters, our youngers and elders
<i>Gasasi gaal ni, ganaran gaal ni</i>	For those who have not been mentioned
<i>Dagar na sala, tais na hone ...</i>	Please forgive us ...

Another sequence of the narrative concerns a new chapter of history, when the white men from across the sea arrived, conquering and eventually dividing Timorese society. The Portuguese established their first base on the island of Solor, north of Timor, in 1562. In 1641, they began their first military expedition into the interior of Timor. Over the next decade, until 1650s, they established a permanent port at Lifau (present-day Oecussi) on the northern coast of Timor. The Dutch made their first visit to Timor in 1613, but only 40 years later, in 1653, did they establish their permanent base in Kupang. In spite of these colonial encounters, Timor remained independent under the control of the so-called black Portuguese⁵ and their native allies for the next 200 years. As Fox (2003: 11) notes:

5 The black Portuguese were also known as the *topasses* of Timor—an ethnically mixed Portuguese group who dominated politics in Timor in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (see Boxer 1947; Hägerdal 2012).

[O]nly in the nineteenth century, through a process of relentless intrusions by military force, were the two colonial powers able to exert their influence on the interior of Timor. The Portuguese claimed to have pacified their territory by 1912, the Dutch theirs by 1915.

Timorese people from both sides of the island struggled to gain independence from their colonial oppressors. Yet only the west succeeded, by dispelling the Dutch. Success on the western side of Timor was then followed by the formation of the independent state of Indonesia. In this sense, Indonesia was inherently a transformation of the mythical ancestral paths in the western side of Timor. These lines of the narrative follow:

<i>Betak uwen teni, dalas uwen teni</i>	Then came the new chapter in our history
<i>En gira look, en giwi belis</i>	When the white people
<i>Portugal uwen, Olandes uwen</i>	The Portuguese and the Dutch
<i>Meti iti gie, mo noet gie</i>	From across the sea
<i>Nie pan no neti, nie muk no dege</i>	Conquered our land and sky
<i>Gopil neta ni, gebel a ni</i>	We were not able to fight back
<i>Nei nese none, nei nake</i>	They separated and divided us
<i>Waen ewi guju, waen ewi belis</i>	Into the black part and the white part
<i>Ewi guju Olandes, ewi belis</i>	West Timor to the Dutch and
<i>Portugal</i>	East Timor to the Portuguese
<i>Betak uwen teni, dalas uwen teni</i>	Then came the new chapter in our history
<i>Nei nei kau, nei nei kaa</i>	[When] our brothers and sisters
<i>Hot topa gene, hot halu gene</i>	On the western side [of Timor]
<i>En giwi belis, en Olandes</i>	Pushed and dispelled the Dutch
<i>Dege gesesu, dege gururu</i>	The white people, the coloniser
<i>Dege pan ukon, dege muk baru</i>	And governed themselves
<i>Pan gobewiti, muk ganaran</i>	And formed their own state
<i>Pan Indonesia, muk Indonesia</i>	Which was called Indonesia
<i>Det pan hota, det mugi gaul.</i>	An independent and sovereign one.

After the formation of Indonesia, the plight of those on the eastern side of Timor was revisited. Describing their suffering under Portuguese colonial rule, the narrative goes on to outline the option of self-determination offered by the Portuguese. Having claimed Indonesia as the transformation of their ancestral path, the narrative evokes an association with the Apodeti political party and declares the land in the east to be an integral part of Indonesia:

<i>Nei hot taru, nei hot sae</i>	We [the Timorese] on the eastern side
<i>En giwi belis, en Portugal</i>	The white people, the Portuguese
<i>Nai neje dina-dina, nei derik han-han</i>	Colonised and oppressed us
<i>Gopil beta ni, gebel a ni</i>	We were not able to fight them
<i>To uwen no, to tut no</i>	[But] some time ago, not long ago
<i>En giwi belis, en Portugal</i>	The white people, the Portuguese
<i>Nei nege wese, nei nege ne</i>	Separated us and divided us
<i>Nei nini poi, nei nini hek</i>	Asked us to make a choice and elect
<i>Niba teo na none, hik teo na gene</i>	Which way we are going to take
<i>Ata helekere, ata houla</i>	And we have agreed
<i>Nei dini kere, dini Apodeti</i>	We become one and become Apodeti
<i>Hiba kere poi, hik kere hek</i>	And uphold the foundational conviction
<i>Pan Indonesia, muk Indonesia</i>	The sky of Indonesia, the land of Indonesia
<i>Gutu na dini kere, gutu na dini uwen.</i>	Becoming one and only.

Finally, after declaring their intention to integrate within the Indonesian nation-state, the narrative returns to the continuing colonial oppression in East Timor. This was part of their attempt to emphasise their shared colonial experience and therefore legitimises their claim for integration within Indonesia. The concluding lines of the narrative are:

DIVIDED LOYALTIES

<i>En giwi belis, en Portugal</i>	The white people, the Portuguese
<i>Hola dotole, hila dakbilan</i>	Deluded themselves
<i>Dojul tebe belo, ipos tebe a</i>	Broke their promises
<i>Hila gimil wel, hila gotok sae</i>	And wreaked their anger
<i>Notol suli bilik, notol su lela</i>	They mobilised their armies
<i>Nete nesesu, niep nururu</i>	To fight us
<i>Ata nelelan, ata nawawu</i>	And confiscate our possessions
<i>Gopil heta ni, gebel a ni</i>	We were not able to fight them
<i>Baa gie na he, baa gie na los</i>	That was why we took refuge
<i>Pan Indonesia, muk Indonesia</i>	The sky of Indonesia, the land of Indonesia
<i>Nita dosun taa, nita dot es</i>	To protect and secure us
<i>Nei poi o si, nei nek o si</i>	And therefore we have chosen and decided
<i>Holo lep halolo, kau kaa halolo</i>	Based on our elder//younger relationship, a relationship by oath
<i>Nei mete hini toek, nei mete hini lal</i>	We declared today
<i>Nei nei pan, nei nei muk</i>	Our territory
<i>Hot sae gene, hot taru gene</i>	On the eastern side of Timor
<i>Pan Indonesia piu, muk Indonesia bital.</i>	Became an integrated part of Indonesia.

Just like the Tetun, the Bunaq people of East Timor articulate their displacement in West Timor as a process of reaffirming their origins. Moreover, they have additional sequences that lead to another possibility of identity based on colonial experience and their independent struggle. Politically, this implies an accommodation to Indonesian national identity, but culturally, the Bunaq imagine their belonging in Indonesia as the process of reconciling the broken ancestral paths as well as revitalising their mythic political order. In other words, displacement from East Timor to West Timor is inherently an expansion of traditional forms of alliance in the Indonesian part of Timor. Of course, not all Bunaq people in East Timor shared the origin and alliance narrative I have outlined here. It was the Bunaq of Aiasa domain in Bobonaro district who shared their origin and alliance narrative with the Bunaq of Lamaknen in Belu

district. In what follows, I illustrate how this shared origin and alliance facilitated the resettlement of the displaced Bunaq from Aiasa in a Bunaq village in West Timor in 1999.

Emplacement and alliance in Dirun

In September 1999, the displaced Bunaq people from Bobonaro arrived in Dirun, a predominantly Bunaq-speaking village and one of eight regions forming the traditional domain of Lamaknen. Dirun is 36 km east of Atambua, the capital of Belu district. On their arrival, the displaced Bunaq camped in a flat area of Weluli hamlet. While in this temporary site, the newly arrived Bunaq—under the coordinating efforts of Fernando Dos Santos—approached local Bunaq elders to discuss a potential location for their permanent settlement. The displaced Bunaq were recognised not as strangers or outsiders, but as family members. ‘We welcomed them in our land’, recalled Yohanes Lesu, the head of Dirun village, about the arrival of the displaced Bunaq from Bobonaro district in 1999. ‘We tried to find a place for them to stay here because they are our family.’ In explaining what he meant by family, Yohanes emphasised the rooted kinship categories that have always been upheld and embodied by the Bunaq people in building alliances: ‘In Bunaq, we call this relationship *malu-ai ba’a* [wife-giver//wife-taker]. They [the Bunaq from East Timor] were the wife-givers and we were the wife-takers and vice versa.’

After several negotiations, in 2004, the local Bunaq agreed to give away 2.5 hectares of land in the hamlet of Besak Lolo to become a permanent settlement for their Bunaq relatives from East Timor. This was formalised by a written agreement that was signed by the traditional elders as well as the elected village authorities. The agreement read as follows:

Based on the consensus between the village authorities and the traditional elders in Dirun, herewith we give away the village land in the hamlet of Besak Lolo to the displaced East Timorese who are temporarily camped in the hamlet of Weluli. We give away this land in sincerity and without any time limit.

As with the Tetun people, the Bunaq considered land not as a commodity, but as a catalyst for exchange and alliance building. Sharing land with displaced kin was viewed as an obligation; that is the way kin should be treated. In so doing, the local Bunaq also recognised the significance of mobility in their social life. As outlined in the later part of the agreement:

However, if [later on] the displaced people decide to return to East Timor or move somewhere else, the land should be given back to the community through the village authorities.

Although traditional elders and village as well as subdistrict authorities signed the agreement, it was not considered culturally legitimate until the act of commensality. As Yohanes explained:

The agreement is valid because after we signed it, we ate and drank together. We shared the local gin [*sopi*] to bind the agreement, which at the same time binds our relationship.

Currently there are about 600 Bunaq people from East Timor living among their fellow Bunaq of West Timor in the village of Dirun.

Cementing Kemak's new settlement

In contrast to the displaced Tetun and Bunaq who uphold the collective recognition of their shared foundational narrative and try to maintain their unity through their mythical ancestral paths, displaced Kemak stressed their origins in East Timor. A. D. M. Parera, a government officer who travelled around Belu district in the early 1960s, wrote:

When the Kemak people were displaced and emplaced in West Timor, [they] brought along their wives, children, livestock and ancestors' sacred regalia. Upon their arrival [in West Timor], they [acquired land on which to settle] and maintained their [distinct] social organisation, language and culture although they have married other people here. (Parera 1971: 56)

In this section, I contend that Kemak people conceive of their 'displacement' in West Timor not in terms of separation from their land of origin in East Timor, but as a process of cementing their new settlement in West Timor.

Just like their predecessors, the Kemak people who arrived in 1999 understand that access to land is crucial to their resettlement. While the Tetun and Bunaq did not recognise land as a commodity and therefore chose to undertake symbolic land exchange to maintain their ethnic unity, the Kemak, in their process of emplacement, chose a different path. From a Kemak cultural perspective, West Timor is not their land of origin and for this reason any attempt to build new settlements in the west should be undertaken with authority of ownership over the new land on which they settle. This is exemplified in the case of Kemak people from the villages

of Carabau and Cota Bo'ot in Bobonaro district. In 1999, they arrived at the hamlet of Siarai in the border village of Maunmutin, 52 km east of Atambua. The Kemak people in Siarai were originally from the Balibo area on the border. Mikael Berek, a Siarai elder, shared his story with Olkes Dadilado, an officer of CIS Timor, during his visit in 2005:⁶

In the past, there was this so-called War of Manufahi. Our ancestor named Sulis Leo Mali led some warriors from Siarai and joined the warriors of Carabau under the leadership of Dom Asa Mali to fight the people of Manufahi whose leader was known as Dom Boaventura. Sulis Leo Mali did not just fight for Carabau, but he also took a Carabau woman named Sose as his wife. When the war was coming to an end, Sulis took his wife and men back to Siarai. Halfway along the return journey, they rested to bake taro as their lunch. All of a sudden, a Manufahi warrior named Lulito came out of the bush ready to attack. Sulis and his men did not have a chance to grab their weapons and so they surrendered. But Sose's presence was not noticed by Lulito. She moved quietly to get the firewood that was still burning and stabbed Lulito. She hit him right in his chest and cut through to his heart. Lulito died instantly. Sulis stood up immediately and decapitated Lulito. They then took Lulito's head back to Carabao and celebrated their victory with parties for three nights long. The ruler of Carabao then gave horses and some of his men to accompany Sulis, his wife and his men back to Siarai. And that was how we [the people of Siarai] established a relationship with the people of Carabau. We are the male and they are the female. We are *mane heu* [*mane foun*: wife-takers] and they are *uma mane* [wife-givers]. (Dadilado 2005a: 3–4)

A kinship relation between the Siarai people and the Carabao people is expressed in their ritual language as *hosi Balibo–Marobol/to'o Carabao–Cota Bo'ot*. The expression points to the unity of people from Balibo–Marobo and people from Carabao–Cota Bo'ot. The displaced Kemak of Carabao and Cota Bo'ot origin who arrived in Siarai in 1999 recognised the significance of their kinship and union with the Siarai people. And, since early 2000, they have approached the local people for land for settlement and cultivation purposes. Organised by Abilio de Araujo, a retired army officer who acted on behalf of 105 households, the newly arrived Kemak initially secured land for cultivation, which they attained without any obligation to share the harvest with locals. All they were required to do was pay the annual land tax for the land under cultivation. In 2004, an agreement was reached with the Siarai people for a settlement site.

6 Dadilado wrote this story, which was published in the August 2005 edition of the *Lorosae Lian* bulletin.

For this site, each household agreed to contribute about IRD500,000 (A\$80) in the form of *bua malus* (betel nut). Betel nut from the new arrivals and land from the earlier settlers constituted a symbolic form of exchange between wife-takers and wife-givers. With land secured, the Indonesian Ministry of Public Works built 6 m x 6 m houses for 105 households. The site was later named (Carabao) Cota Bo'ot settlement to remember their place of origin in East Timor. There are currently nearly 500 East Timorese of Kemak Carabao–Cota Bo'ot origin living alongside their fellow Kemak in Siarai hamlet in West Timor.

About the same time, this ancestral alliance was also recognised in the neighbouring hamlet of Lesuaben in the village of Maumutin. In Lesuaben, about 1,000 newly arrived Kemak people from Bobonaro, Maliana, Cailaco and Balibo approached their Kemak kin and managed to secure land for a settlement. In a similar fashion, they used their position as wife-givers (*uma mane*) and were gifted 13 hectares of land by the Kemak, who considered them as wife-takers (*mane heu*). The land was exchanged for betel nut representing IRD500,000 (A\$80) submitted by each resettled household. An elder from Lesuaben commented on the exchange: 'In our tradition, they [the newcomer Kemak] should gift us the betel nut and the woven cloth. And in return we gave them the water buffaloes.' The Kemak newcomers and their Kemak kin agreed to modify the practice—which was usually undertaken in the context of marriage exchange—for settlement purposes. The betel nut is symbolically represented by money; the water buffalo is symbolically represented by land. After securing the land, the Kemak approached the government and two settlements (Derok Aitous and Derok Sosial) were built in Lesuaben in 2004. At the time of writing, over 900 newcomer Kemak in Derok Aitous and nearly 300 newcomer Kemak in Derok Sosial are living alongside their Kemak kin.

Similar land acquisition processes took place between newcomer Atsabe Kemak and their Kemak kin in Kabuna village on the outskirts of Atambua. In mid-February 2013, I visited Sali Magu, a resettlement area that housed about 500 Kemak households, mostly from the Atsabe district in East Timor. Initially inclined to name their new settlement 'Atsabe' in remembrance of their land of origin in Ermera, East Timor, after careful consideration, they agreed to identify the area as Sali Magu—a Kemak expression meaning 'handshake'. 'Sali Magu is not our origin land,' one of the elders explained, 'but it is part of our ancestral landscape.' An established Kemak group who migrated to West Timor in the early twentieth century owned land in Kabuna. The newly arrived Kemak used

this shared ethnic identity to purchase land on which to settle. Sali Magu resettlement site covers 13 hectares and is now one of the largest such areas for displaced Kemak in Belu district.



Plate 4.1 SALIMAGU Gallery, a cloth-weaving (*ikat*) business initiated by the Atsabe Kemak in Belu district

Source: Andrey Damaledo.

Conclusion

In the introduction to his discussion of Austronesian conceptions of land and territory, Reuter (2006: 14) argues:

no matter how much displacement they might experience, their relationship with the land, their place of origin and their place of residence are matters of utmost importance to all people, and no less so to a people on the move.

The corollary of this statement is the strong sense of attachment to a particular locality or homeland. For the Tetun and the Bunaq, their homeland is not bounded within a particular national territory. Rather, it is where their ancestors have undergone a mythical passage of kinship and alliance building. By deciding to settle among their kin who migrated to West Timor prior to 1999, the newly arrived Tetun and Bunaq perceived their displacement not as a single event but as a process of reconnecting ancestral pathways. As a process, mobility will always be celebrated and accommodated.

In contrast to the Tetun and the Bunaq, the history of Kemak displacement and resettlement in West Timor has been shaped by a distinctive origin narrative. Despite this apparent difference in the conceptualisation of origins, the Kemak share a common pattern of mobility-based identity with the Tetun and Bunaq. The Kemak's origin narrative 'demonstrates the significance of place and local geographic features in the formulations of group identity as well as in narrating complex histories of human migration and group relations' (Molnar 2011: 99). In one of their narratives, the Kemak of Atsabe claim their origin to be Darlau Mountain in East Timor, but the mobility of their ancestors has included parts of West Timor as well as the surrounding islands of Alor, Flores, Kisar and Ambon (Molnar 2011: 104). Considering West Timor as part of their ancestors' pathway, the Kemak's displacement in West Timor is not perceived as detachment from the homeland. Rather, it is a form of cementing their distinct identity in their ancestral pathways. Cementing their distinct identity in West Timor can only be undertaken when the Kemak have full ownership over their new settlements. This is why they insisted on paying off their new land rather than relying on kinship exchange mechanisms.



Plate 4.2 Atsabe Creative House, a computer and internet business initiated by the Atsabe Kemak in Belu district

Source: Andrey Damaledo.

Another factor that makes Tetun, Bunaq and Kemak displacement distinct is recognition of shared origin by the host community in West Timor, which has led to supportive resettlement processes. This understanding challenges two prevailing views about the East Timorese in Indonesia. First, it is conceptually problematic to label the East Timorese in West Timor 'refugees', 'ex-refugees' and/or 'new citizens' when in practice they are able to claim entitlement to the land of their habitual residence based on their origin narratives and traditional alliances. It is also problematic to confine East Timorese in West Timor to members of a single nation-state, when in fact their cultural identity is based on constant mobility across the border between Indonesia and Timor-Leste.

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