



1. Ethnographic Background

The Eastern Tetum are one of three sub-groups into which the Tetum can be divided. The other two sub-groups are the Northern Tetum and the Southern Tetum, and the population of the three combined is about 200,000. The northern and southern sub-groups live in the central areas of Timor, the largest of the Lesser Sunda Islands, and the Eastern Tetum are located in the eastern part of the island.

The stories transcribed here were collected in Caraubalo principedom, which is in Viqueque *concelho* ('district'), and its 1966 population was 2,042. All but 160 of the principedom inhabitants are Tetum speakers, and reside in six villages. Four are of the commoner estate, and two (Mane Hat and Mamulak) are aristocratic. This seventh village (Sira Oan) is inhabited by persons of the Makassai culture, but they are part of the same political system which binds the other villages into the principedom unit. Ideally, property descends in the patrilineal line, and this principle of order regulates the formation of social groups. These are clans and lineages. Post-marital residence for male ego is patrilocal, so that in theory clans should be localized entities. Commoner villages, indeed, each consist of a single clan, and Mane Hat and Mamulak

consent. An earlier award made by the Frederick Soddy Trust also contributed to the productivity of my fieldwork, and to members of the Trust go my sincerest thanks. Finally, I take pleasure in thanking my kind friends and colleagues, Professor BARBARA WARD and Dr. RODNEY NEEDHAM, who gave so freely of their time in helping me make sense of my Tetum information.