



Manggarai, Western Flores: The Traditional *dalu* Divisions (adapted from Coolhaas 1942)

wife-givers are the source of life for their wife-takers, and hence are "superior" and may have a special blessing, as well as cursing power over their wife-takers (see, e.g., Barnes 1974, Forth 1981, Fox 1980, Schulte-Nordholt 1971, Traube 1986). The terms used for wife-givers and wife-takers in Rembong also underscore that in a patrilineal context it is the children of the men who continue the descent group, and are thus "superior." The children of the women, on the other hand, are the offspring of women married out, and hence have an inferior status in relation to those who continue the line of descent. Bridewealth exchanges also reflect this status difference; wife-givers are the receivers of the "superior" or "masculine" gifts, often economically more valuable and plentiful, whereas the wife-takers are the receivers of "inferior" or "feminine" gifts. In Rembong *anak wina* give to their *anak rana* livestock, including buffalo, horses, goats, chickens, nowadays fairly large sums of money, coconuts, betel and areca, and traditionally short swords. They receive in return the black woven cloths,<sup>6</sup> that the Rembong

and some other groups in Manggarai weave,<sup>7</sup> rice, jewelry, and pigs.

This relationship of affinity is asymmetric and should not be reversed. In Rembong it is said that, to reverse the asymmetry is to "move around to the left" (*gheong sengker*), whereas normal things in life "move around to the right" (*gheong wanan*).<sup>8</sup>

6 In areas of Manggarai further to the west, even as close as Congkar (de Graaf 1985a, 1985b, 1986), these black cloths are part of the bridewealth given to the wife-givers, and not part of the return gifts. The Rembong thus have a more balanced exchange of marriage gifts than their western neighbors.

7 It seems, except for the *dalu* Todo, only Manggarai people living in the *dalu* of the northeastern part of Manggarai are weavers. The distinction between weavers and non-weavers in eastern Manggarai, and how this is explained cosmologically, will be dealt with in another paper.

8 The Rindi also view proper marriage as "movement to the right," while incest and adultery implies "movement to the left" (Forth 1981: 358), whereas among the Kedang, even though "travel to the right" is seen to be the normal movement of people through the life and death cycle, there does not seem to be any specific association of these ideas with marriage relations (Barnes 1974).