

By accompanying women's titled activities with artistic objects and effects, wide public attention is drawn to the event, heightening its impact on more than the participants themselves.

Because this set of titles was previously unknown in the ethnographic literature, and because of the flexibility of practice that is characteristic of Canton Boo, the titles can be better understood following a description of specific examples. Although I discussed and observed titled performances in other cantons of Wè/Guééré people, the following descriptions of the titled tasks are based on those I encountered in Canton Boo and, where indicated, in the neighboring Canton Neao. Insofar as feasible, each example will include references to the six features outlined above as characteristic of formal, public titles for Wè/Guééré women.

a) Titles Complementary to Men's Titles

Two of the formal public titles obviously arise from the spheres of labor specifically assigned to women. One is entitled the *kloaponyno*, which I gloss as Expert Planter. *Kloa* is the wooden staff tipped with an iron blade (see Fig. 3) used to poke a hole in the earth for rice seeds; *po* "to put," *nyno* "woman" (sometimes pronounced *gloa*, because in Canton Boo /g/ alternates with /k/). For the second title, everyone agreed that *klowainyno* means Generous Provider. *Klowa* is the Boo term for one of the three stones of the hearth (*klueh*)

where cooking is done. People did not hesitate to discuss these activities and to identify these titleholders.

These two titles are complementary to two men's titles in the realm of men's work: the Champion Bushcutter and the Great Warrior (see below).

1) *Kloaponyno*, Expert Planter

The Expert Planter is an energetic woman who can sow rice seed rapidly and who can attract a group of wives from her husband's lineage and other female friends in her village to work with her (Fig. 3). She and her aides are invited to plant the fields of others. It is through a woman's own drive that she builds up a reputation for speedy work and organizing ability. The title is not dependent on the husband's or his family's status. None of the four Expert Planters I met were wives of big men. Ordinarily fields are planted by a group of wives from a large lineage or from a section of a village, working together on each one's field in turn. Ceremonial planting by the *kloaponyno* is, because of the cost, sponsored only by households who, during a particular season, have more cleared land than ready labor and who welcome an occasion to display their generosity. There is no fixed patron-client relationship. Each season, the woman responds to the invitations she receives; these come from communities nearby or distant, not through kinship but according to her



Fig. 3: Sowing rice seed led by Expert Planter, Kan Juliette (with headdress, usually removed), from Medibli village (1985).