



Fig. 5: Generous Provider, Zwe Marie, and her aide, Bau Terese, of Medibli preparing rice for the festival bowl (*pwa*) (1985).

of invitations depend on the size and wealth of the sponsoring lineage households and the degree of cooperation obtainable from fellow villagers to house and feed the guests. The event may last for weeks and involve hundreds of guests.

If powerful masked characters are invited, a bull must be killed for the final feast.⁶ Cooking the head and presenting the cooked meat and rice are elaborated by ritual rules. Every lineage wants to have among the married-in women one who can "prepare the head of the bull."⁷ The responsibility is coveted by women as a sign of social skill and ritual authority. By taking the lead in preparing the head and generously supplying rice to accompany the meat, a woman builds her reputation (Fig. 5). The leading *klowainyno* of the large village of Keibli, Sohon Marie, had cooked for seventeen smaller feasts, before she became a *klowainyno* at a bull festival and was awarded the insignia (Adams 1989, 21: 165).

The *klowainyno*'s generosity is evidenced not only in the large quantities of rice she contributes to the festival meal but also in adding a sheep or goat to the meat supply. Other married-in

women, female kin from the *klowainyno*'s natal lineage, and friends add to the supply of rice. In providing meat, the *klowainyno* fulfills a role otherwise reserved for men. Although men will say that women cannot own animals, women receive sheep and goats as gifts, and have rightful claim on offspring of the animals that they look after. Thus to fulfill her tasks, the *klowainyno* needs helpful kin, friends, and a cooperative husband who will clear larger rice fields and allow her claim on sheep or goats.

Each titled woman possesses certain signs of her status. The degree of a woman's prestige is not simply indicated by her insignia; the scale and elaboration of her insignia add to her aura and prestige. The titled woman, the *klowainyno*, is identified by the possession of a pair of wooden bowls, the larger one (*pwa*), up to a meter in diameter, the other one half that size, used as a cover (Fig. 6). Her distinctive insignia is a large wooden spoon (*poloh*)⁸ (Fig. 7). These objects are

6 The sacrificial meat may be presented by an elder of the sponsoring lineage, by sons-in-law, by prosperous sons residing in distant cities, or by a household head from a linked lineage. Five sheep are considered equivalent to a bull. More recently the sacrificed animal is a ram or a goat.

7 If one were not available, a capable woman or a Generous Provider from another lineage could be invited.

8 Himmelheber (1965) photographed a Guéré woman appearing with a large ceremonial spoon as her insignia at a mask festival. Among the Dan, Himmelheber notes (1965: 174), this titled woman appears splendidly before the public. Leading her helpers who headload great bowls filled with cooked rice, she advances to the festival place. On this occasion she displays her special insignia of office, a large wooden spoon, up to 80 cm in length. She performs a dance and sings her own distinctive tune, gently swinging the spoon, as her helpers dance and sing her praises. Her fame spreads also by means of a competitive festival held