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Transformation of Exchange Valuables in Samoa

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This paper focuses on the categories of exchange valuables in the acculturation process in Western Samoa. There have been several reports on the male and female categories of valuables in Samoa since the last century. The male valuables were mainly food, such as pigs and taro, and tools and weapons, while the female valuables were mainly mats and bark cloths. Both types of valuables were exchanged between affines at certain rituals, male valuables being given by the male side to the female side and vice versa. In the acculturation process, especially in the process of the introduction of a market economy, the category of male valuables has changed significantly while that of female valuables has remained almost the same. Today, the former category is mainly composed of modern money and manufactured food products such as cartons of canned fish and kegs of salted meat. At the same time, the quality of woven mats, the most important category of female valuables, has worsened, probably because fewer women devote themselves to weaving mats even though the demand for mats to give in exchange for money has increased.

I make a detailed analysis of *sua*, the formal presentation of food, which is often observed in ceremonial exchanges today, in order to examine the effect of transformation of valuables on the exchange system. I also focus my analyses on the mechanism in which new goods are categorized in the duality of male and female valuables. There are certain ambiguous goods which might be categorized as both, and which are incorporated in the exchange system to complement its inconsistency and to provide new exquisite meaning to it. Thus, by incorporating new goods, the exchange system of Samoa is still effective in integrating the society, though it has been transformed in many ways.

Key words: Samoa; economic anthropology; ceremonial exchange; valuables; acculturation; gender.

Lévi-Strauss proposed the analysis of exchange of things, as well as exchange of women and of information, as a system of communication. Exchange of things as communication presumes that things have meanings. Although objects were originally given various meanings, those meanings are never at issue when we exchange things in the context of a market economy. A woman will hesitate before accepting a ring when she is offered it as a gift by a man whom she does not like. But the same woman would not wonder about the intentions of a male clerk when she buys a ring at a jewelry shop; she just buys the ring as a ring and nothing more. Thus, the market economy presupposes goods, or things without meanings, and money which mediates exchange of goods.

As it expands, the market economy gradually deprives things of meanings; it promotes the exchange of things free of context, nullifying the various restrictions

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that may define what kind of things should be given by whom to whom, in what circumstances. Observed from this perspective, the market economy is only halfway developed in Samoan society, not in the sense that the people lead semi-substantial lives, but in the sense that the gift exchange of things is still filled with meaning, and communication by exchange of valuables is one of the effective principles which integrate the society.

Reports on two categories of valuables in Samoa, male and female, date back to the previous century (Turner, 1884: 93; Stair, 1897: 173). These two categories of valuables were exchanged between descent groups in affinal relation on various occasions, especially at wedding ceremonies which would relate the groups involved. These reciprocal exchanges can be observed today in certain types of rituals called *fa'avelave*.

The exchange system today is not genuinely aboriginal but has been acculturated. And it is worth while to note that the exchange system itself has been continually active and even escalated with the modernization of the society and the development of a market economy. Although the market economy deprives things of meanings in Samoa as in other societies, modern money and manufactured goods which were brought from the West have been integrated into the *fa'avelave* system with its cultural meanings.

Y. Yamamoto and I have already discussed the Samoan exchange system itself (Yamamoto, Y. and M. Yamamoto, 1981, 1982). Here I will mainly focus on the categories of exchange valuables, which have been transformed drastically in the last hundred years. The aim of this paper is to discuss the mechanism by which things are deprived of and given meanings. After a brief description of the Samoan exchange system in general, I will examine the two categories of valuables and their transformation. I will then give a detailed analyses of *sua*, a formal presentation of food, which is often observed in ceremonial exchange today, in order to understand the effect of transformation of valuables on the exchange system. Then I will analyze the mechanism by which new goods are categorized in the dual opposition between male and female valuables. There are certain ambiguous goods which might be categorized as both, and what is interesting is that these goods are incorporated in the exchange system to complement its inconsistency and to provide new exquisite meanings to it.

Western Samoa, in which I have conducted field studies, is an independent country composed of two big islands and several small ones, with a population of 165,000 (in 1981). In the Samoan Archipelago, most islands are volcanic; high peaked mountains are located in the centers of islands and roads and villages along the coastlines. In most villages, people grow tuber crops and bananas on the slopes behind the settlements and catch fish and other marine resources. The similarity of every village in its products is characteristic of Samoa.

Though the Samoan people first met Europeans in 1722, close contact dates from 1830, when missionary activity began. Along with Christianity, manufactured goods such as steel tools and clothing materials were introduced into the society. Samoa was no longer a primitive society even in the last century, for the church was quite effective in introducing an education system, and almost all the people have been

was composed of mats and bark cloths which were traditionally made by women, whereas 'oloa was composed of food, canoes, and tools, which were concerned with male activities. These categories of valuables appear in matrimonial rituals, in which a bride's 'āiga presents tōga to a bridegroom's 'āiga and the latter gives 'oloa to the former. The division of activities by gender symbolizes and defines the category of valuables which people must give in recognizing the affinal relationship formed through the marrying couple. Inversely, the tōga/'oloa categorization of valuables in the ceremonial exchange system among kin groups organizes the division of activities by gender at the same time.

Today, it is only at the rituals called *fa'alavelave* that 'āiga in affinal relation exchange valuables. However, it seems that there were everyday exchanges between affines in the olden days. For example, the 'āiga of a husband sent 'oloa with his wife when she visited to her natal home, and her family sent back tōga with her when she returned to her husband (Krämer, 1902, Band I: 38, Band II: 91-94; Mead, 1930: 24).

It is quite remarkable that not only the two 'āiga that are or are in the process of becoming affinally related, but also many other affinal kin groups to the two presiding 'āiga performing the main exchange, are involved in the exchange. These days, rituals called *fa'alavelave* include many ceremonial exchanges, at which only one or two 'āiga preside. On such occasions, other affinal 'āiga contribute to the large collection of valuables for the presiding 'āiga.

The following are the rituals called *fa'alavelave* today:

- 1) Matrimonial ceremonies such as a wedding ceremony (*fa'aipoipoga*), a celebration for the first child of a couple (*nunu*), and a ceremony recognizing the union of a couple who already have lived together without a wedding (*fa'aioa*).²⁾ On each occasion, two 'āiga of the couple concerned exchange tōga and 'oloa.
- 2) The title inauguration ceremony, a ceremony which celebrates a person's assumption of a title. In the ceremony, the presiding 'āiga which gives a title name to one of its members must provide guest title holders (mainly orators) with food to eat on the spot and to bring home and also with a gift. When a high chief's title is given, the gift should include fine mats (*'ie tōga*).
- 3) A funeral for a title holder or his wife. In the case of a funeral for a high chief title holder, the presiding 'āiga must give food and fine mats to the orators presiding at the ceremony (follower orators for the 'āiga), and the mourning group of orators. Food is also prepared for the affinal kin groups which bring valuables to the presiding 'āiga. Recently not only high chiefs but common title-holders have come to have this kind of "heavy" funeral.
- 4) Church dedication ceremony (*fa'aulufalega*) and opening ceremony for a house (*umusāga*). This kind of ceremony is held when a building is completed; the carpenter and his working group are paid with tōga and 'oloa.

All these rituals are characterized by the fact that every ritual involves a large number of valuables and that the valuables are collected mainly through the kinship network. *Fa'alavelave* literally means "anything which interferes with normal life and calls for special activity," ranging from accidents to the above rituals (Milner, 1966: 103). But, interestingly, people sometimes call these rituals *fa'alavelave* and

able to read and write in the Samoan language since a few decades ago.

The archipelago was divided into two sections in the colonial struggle among the European powers in the late nineteenth century. Western Samoa was first administered by Germany and later by New Zealand after World War I, and became independent in 1962; eastern Samoa, with a population of 30,000, has been a U.S. Territory ever since its colonization.

Though the people started to obtain modern currency and manufactured goods by selling copra more than a hundred years ago, they lived mainly on products from their own plantations. However, the market economy has become indispensable since World War II. The degree of dependency on the market economy is different in Western and American Samoas. While the Western Samoans lead semi-substantial lives producing tuber crops and bananas, the American Samoans have been modernized and live in a cash economy.

Samoa has its own traditional chief system, which is characteristically based on territorial organization (Yamamoto, M., 1987). A village is composed of several loosely structured agnatic kin groups called *'āiga*, which are again composed of several households of extended family.¹⁾ An *'āiga* collectively owns several title names, plantation and housing lots, and it is managed under the leadership of the highest title holder. An *'āiga* is actually divided into several households, each of which is led by one or several patriarchal title holders called *matai*, who supervise household livelihood and organize household manpower, administering plantation and housing lots allotted by the leader of the *'āiga*. *'Āiga* and households are units for *fa'alavelave* or exchange between kin groups.

Every title holder meets in a village or district council of chiefs to represent his *'āiga* in decision-making for the territorial organization. A title holder performs the political role of either a chief (*ali'i*) or an orator or talking chief (*tulafale*), either of which role is inherent in the title name. A chief embodies chiefly dignity, while an orator takes the role of an executive, making formal speeches and food distributions on behalf of the chief. Villages and subdistricts are loosely integrated into a larger political organization, although chiefly titles are not ranked on a singular principle so that the ranking system of a territorial group in detail is often a subject of dispute. Nevertheless, political power is not centralized in the holder of a certain title name. And even when a prestigious title name of a village is genealogically related to other well-known title names outside the village, and possibly even to one of the paramount title names in all of Samoa, its holder reserves honor for that fact, but primarily tries to keep the independence of his *'āiga* and village from the influence of these high titles (Yamamoto, M., 1987).

Thus, in the Samoan chief system, which lacks centralized authority and decisive criteria in ranking title names, the competitive relation among chiefs is the main feature of the society like the Kwakiutl. Chiefs compete on every occasion, not only in the formal political activities of territorial organizations but also in *fa'alavelave*, ceremonial exchanges between kin groups.

Traditional Categories of Valuables in Ceremonial Exchanges

Tōga and *'oloa* are two traditional categories of valuables in Samoa. *Tōga*

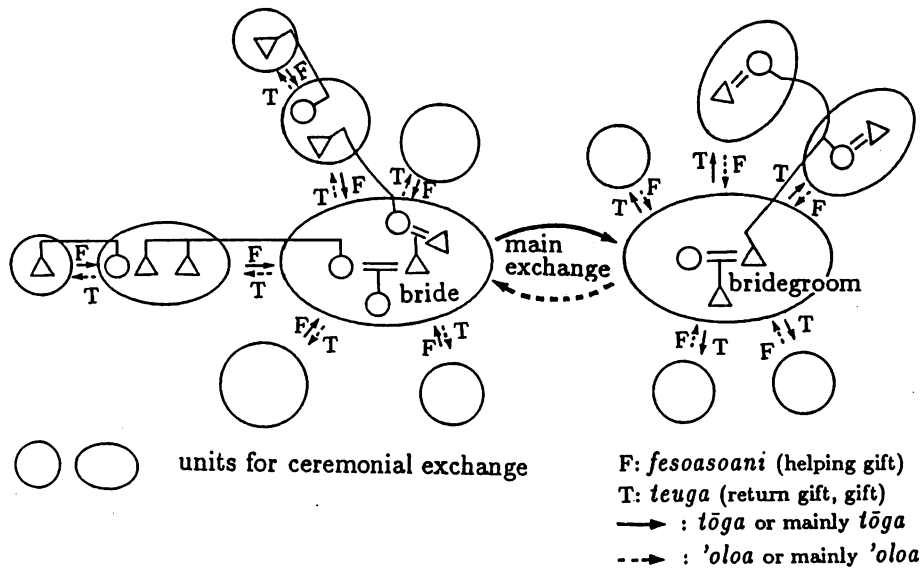


Figure 1. Ceremonial Exchange in Matrimonial Rituals.

sometimes do not. Church ministers who preside at wedding ceremonies and carpenters who are paid in the church dedication ceremonies never call them *fa'avelave*. The term only designates the phase of the ceremonial exchange among kin groups, never the whole ritual. One may not help being involved in a ritual and contributing to the collection of valuables if he is related to the presiding *'āiga*, and his everyday life is interfered (Yamamoto, Y. and M. Yamamoto, 1981: 165-167).

It is only recently that the term *fa'avelave* has begun to appear in written materials. I could not find the word in documents earlier than Grattan (1948). But most of the rituals called *fa'avelave* today have existed since early days. And it is confirmed by some reports that some of the rituals have involved many affinal *'āiga*. For example, Mead (1969: 27) writes:

“The division of all property into *toga* (dowry property), and *oloa* (bride price property) is preserved for all future exchange relationships between the two parties [Mead did not use the word *'āiga*] to a marriage. At ceremonial visits, the birth of children, and at death, the father’s family gives *oloa*, the mother’s family gives *toga*. When a girl marries, it is her mother’s family, especially the *matai* of her mother’s relationship group, against whom the levy is heaviest. When a boy marries the father and the households of the father’s sisters contribute most.”

And the *'oloa* (or *tōga*) which is gained in exchange for *tōga* (or *'oloa*) is distributed according to the contribution of collecting valuables (Mead, 1969: 136, 138). Figure 1 shows a model for exchange in matrimonial rituals. Most of the *tōga* of a bride is prepared by the *matai* of her mother’s *'āiga*, usually her mother’s brother, and the *'oloa* of a bridegroom by his father or the *'āiga* into which his father’s sisters are married. Therefore, not only the presiding *'āiga*—the *'āiga* to which the main

characters in the ritual belong—but other related *'āiga* are concerned in the asymmetrical exchange of valuables; thus, between every two *'āiga* in affinal relation, *tōga* flows from the *'āiga* of the female side to that of the male side and *'oloa* vice versa on various occasions.

Because other marriages as well as sexual relations are prohibited between the two affinal *'āiga* once the relationship has been initiated through a ceremony, the Samoan affinal relationships form networks. In this affinal network, each two affinal *'āiga* are theoretically related through only one asymmetrical relationship. As far as *fa'alavelave* today is concerned, an affinal *'āiga* gives a gift of valuables called *fesoasoani* (help) to the presiding *'āiga*, which then returns a gift called *teuga* (decoration). In most cases, the presiding *'āiga* gives the return gift smaller than the helping gift (usually the return gift is about 60% of the helping one on the average) and collect valuables in need. Helping gifts usually contain both *tōga* and *'oloa*, and thus differ from the main exchange at a wedding ceremony in which one side gives either *tōga* or *'oloa*. Nevertheless, the *tōga/'oloa* distinction in ceremonial exchange is preserved, the female side giving more *tōga* and the male side more *'oloa*. *Tōga* flows from the female side to the male side and *'oloa* flows in the other direction in general, though the flow of valuables may occasionally be reversed depending on the nature of the ceremony concerned (Fig. 2) (Yamamoto, Y. and M. Yamamoto, 1981).

Tōga and Its Transformation

Tōga is basically composed of fine mats, sleeping mats, floor mats, other types of mats, and bark cloths, all of which are made by women. Krämer adds fans, oil (palm oil), turmeric, combs, and baskets (Krämer, 1902: Band II: 90-91), and Mead glass skirts and dye (Mead, 1969: 74). These are all made by women, too. *Tōga* mainly consists of fine mats and sleeping mats nowadays.

Fine mats are hand-woven of strips of leaves called *lau'ie*, a kind of pandanus. Before they are woven, these leaves are dried under the sun, scraped, and stripped like threads. The mats are rectangular in shape; most of their longer sides are 2 m long, though some of them are 5-6 m. They are plain-woven diagonally and fringed on one of the longer edges. Traditionally they were ornamented with red feathers of the Fijian parrakeet (*Lorius solitarius*) (Hiroa, 1930: 275), but today colored chicken feathers are used. Fine mats are the most finely woven of the various kinds of mats; it takes at least one month, and sometimes more than a year, to finish a real one. Compared with other mats for everyday use, such as a sleeping mat which can be finished in a few days, they need a large amount of labor.

Fine mats are indispensable in ceremonial exchanges. The finest, prettiest, and largest mats are highly valued; their histories are also taken into consideration in their evaluation. Even if they are ragged, those which are old enough to have become glossy and amber-colored are much more valuable than new, ivory-colored ones. And those which have been exchanged on special historical occasions and rituals are so highly valued that they have their own names and their origin stories are told throughout the society. Unfortunately, the quality of today's fine mats is no longer as good as

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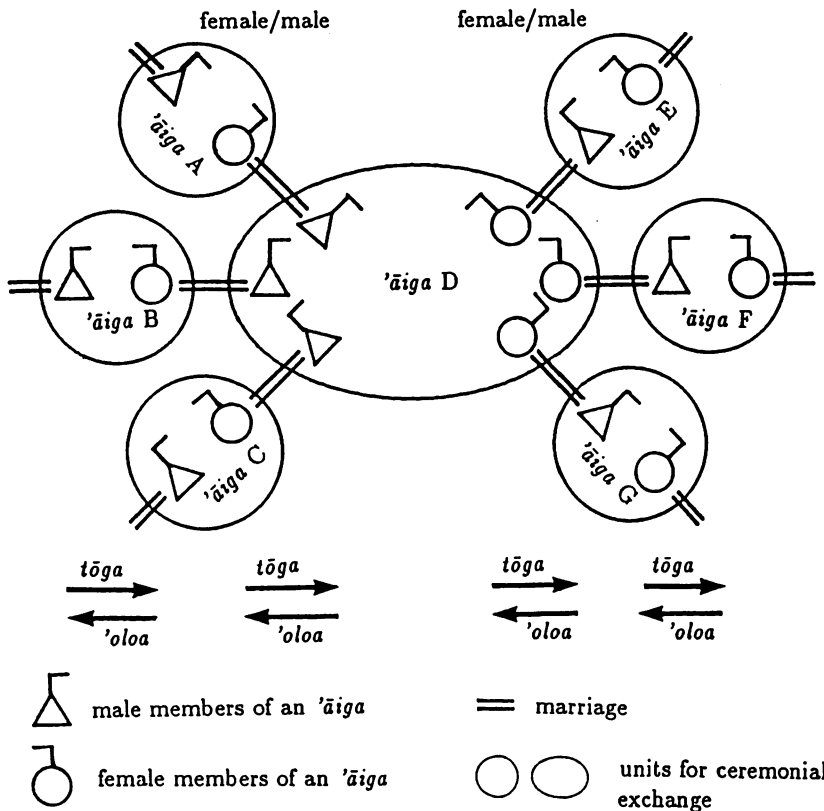


Figure 2. The Flow of Tōga/'Oloa Among 'Āiga Centered on 'Āiga D.

it once was. Nowadays women are so busy making fine mats that they spend only a few days or a week each finishing coarse ones. On the other hand, bark cloth is seldom made these days. Because today's fine mats are so coarse, good ones with stories and names are often kept by families and seldom used in ceremonies; this can probably be explained by Gresham's law.³⁾ High-ranking chiefs and men of influence often keep good fine mats which they obtain in ceremonies until the day when their daughters have their own wedding ceremonies.

Even in the olden days, people used bark cloth for their everyday life, and wore fine mats only when they performed certain roles on ceremonial occasions. Today people wear fine mats only on rare occasions, so they have little use value. Because fine mats were the medium for exchange on various occasions, observers of Samoan culture often described them as Samoan money. But in the sense that fine mats can be used as a medium of exchange only in particular contexts and can be given only to a particular person by a particular person, they are quite different from general-purpose money in a modern market context which mediates almost all transactions. Though the money economy has recently penetrated more and more into the society, fine mats have not been replaced by modern currency or tupe (cash), but are exchanged

with *tupe* which has come to be categorized as *'oloa* in ceremonies (see the detailed discussion in the next section). *Tupe* in ceremonial exchanges is not money but an exchange valuable—that is, things filled with meaning in the context of ritual, such as fine mats.

In the olden days, women had enough time to weave fine mats after their daughters and nieces became engaged. Although I seldom saw this practice in the late 1970s, I found some women weaving special large fine mats for their daughters and nieces preparing for their big wedding ceremonies in New Zealand when I made a field trip to Western Samoa in September 1989.⁴⁾ In addition, women sometimes weave fine mats not for a particular special purpose. Even today, especially in rural area of Western Samoa, we often find women gathered to weave fine mats. They weave for *fa'alavelave* even though they may not be sure when the occasions will take place.

As weaving fine mats is time-consuming, most *'āiga* are short of fine mats. The same mats are used in ceremonies again and again, circulating in the society. An *'āiga* gives away the fine mats which it receives. But the demand sometimes surpasses the supply. Recently, fine mats are being traded in the New Market and souvenir shops for tourists in the capital city of Apia in Western Samoa. However, selling fine mats is considered disgraceful, although buying fine mats is not disapproved of. At the same time, in villages, there is a custom called *totoma* by which people ask relatives or friends for fine mats. Most people make *totoma* if they are in urgent needs of fine mats. In making *totoma*, Samoans visit relatives or friends who are thought to possess many fine mats and ask for one or two. If they receive one or more mats, they must give a gift in return. In most cases, one pays at the normal exchange rate for fine mats in ceremonies. In the late 1970s this was 10 *tālā*⁵⁾ for one mat, and in the late 1980s it was 5 *tālā* for one.⁶⁾ It is easier to get mats by *totoma*, because on the market it costs at least 15 to 20 *tālā* in the late 1970s and 12 to 15 *tālā* in the late 1980s to buy one mat. If the mat giver in a *totoma* is a relative or close friend, an immediate return gift is not necessary, and sometimes some portion of the return gift in the ceremony concerned is given to the lender after the ceremony is over.

Sleeping mats are also used as *tōga* in matrimonial ceremonies and house and church dedication ceremonies, but not used in title inauguration ceremonies and funerals. They are not the main valuables in exchanges; though given in large numbers, they only add a small additional value to fine mats. Even today sleeping mats are practically used. It is interesting that most *'āiga* have many new sleeping mats just piled on beds, unlike fine mats, which they are always short of.

Bark cloth was used as clothing in the olden days, but does not have use value nowadays like fine mats. Bark cloths were one of the main items of *tōga* and seem to have been used as *tōga* among relatively low-ranked people. But today they are not much produced, nor do they remain important as *tōga*, though they are still important valuables among the neighbors of Tonga.

The above are all the *tōga* still used today among the items recorded as *tōga* over the last century.⁷⁾ The quality and utilization of *tōga* have changed, but the category itself has been little changed.

'*Oloa* and Its Transformation

Traditionally '*oloa* was property concerned with male activities, such as food, canoes, tools, and weapons. Western-manufactured goods (nails, knives, hatchets, etc.) had been included in this category when Stair stayed in Samoa for seven years in the 1840s (Stair, 1897: 173). Krämer reports that accessories and cloth imported from neighboring islands were in this category (Krämer, 1902: Band II: 90). Therefore, imported Western goods were naturally included in this category. In most cases, it was men who traded these items with the people of neighboring islands or with Europeans. The most important foods of the '*oloa* category were pigs, chickens, fish, taro, etc. Though both Krämer and Mead report that houses were included in '*oloa* (Krämer, 1902: Band II: 90; Mead, 1969: 74), it is probable that these houses were given to high-ranked new couples to live in by the '*āiga* of the bridegroom and that, therefore, they might be different from the '*oloa* proper, which should be given by the male side to the female side. Besides these items, the kava bowls, food bowls, cooking utensils, tatting instruments, fishing nets and hooks, headdresses, necklaces, etc., were also included in '*oloa* according to Krämer.

It is noteworthy that '*oloa* has been changed significantly while *tōga* has mostly remained the same. Even today, the word *tōga* signifies mats used in ceremonies, whereas the word '*oloa* denotes goods in general, especially imported goods sold at stores; *fale* '*oloa* means a house of goods or a store. Although valuables in the '*oloa* category are used in ceremonial exchange, they are called '*oloa* only on the occasion of a wedding ceremony. Moreover, the usage of the term '*oloa* is known only to a few Samoans well versed in traditional culture.

The composition of '*oloa* has also changed radically. Pigs are still an important item of the '*oloa*, but many new types of food, mostly manufactured, are used in ceremonies. They include kegs of salted meat: 45 *tālā* for a keg of regular size and 25 *tālā* for a small one in 1979, and 40 *tālā* for a keg of regular size in 1989; cartons of tinned fish (four-dozen cans per carton): 25 *tālā* for one carton in 1979 and 65 *tālā* in 1989 when used as a return gift, one carton might be divided into two); cans of corned beef: about 25 *tālā* for a six-pound and 16 *tālā* for a three-pound can in 1989; cartons of biscuits: 5 *tālā* for a ten-pound carton and 3 *tālā* for a five-pound carton in 1979, and 9 *tālā* and 4.5 *tālā*, respectively, in 1989; beef cattle (usually given raw): 200 *tālā* for a cow in 1979; pig (given cooked): 200-300 *tālā* for a large one in 1979 and 500-1,000 *tālā* in 1989. In rural villages, cattle are fed on the underbrush of coconut palm groves and often used for ceremonial exchanges.

The first two items mentioned above are most often given as substitutes for pigs. Since these items are food and were imported from the West or introduced by Europeans, it is no wonder that they have become categorized as '*oloa*. As they are substitutes for pigs, they cannot be given in the most formal parts of ceremonies unless they are accompanied by at least one pig. Distribution of a cooked pig among people is honorable but laborious work for an orator, because different ceremonial values and meanings are customarily accorded to each portion of a pig. An orator must be extremely careful to accomplish the task without offending anyone. On the other hand, it is not difficult at all to divide modern food, because only quantity is

of concern to people.

Another, and more important, change is that money has also been included in 'oloa. This is not strange at all because, first of all, modern currency was introduced to the society by the West, and secondly, it was men who obtained money through wage labor and sales of copra. Today money is the most important valuable in the 'oloa category, for when a matrimonial ceremony takes place, no other items are given by the bridegroom's side to the bride's side. On the other hand, in other ceremonial exchanges, food items are exchanged with *tōga*, and thus still have their symbolic value, although they are not called 'oloa any more. Other items in the 'oloa category mentioned by Krämer and his contemporaries, such as canoes, weapons, and tools, are no longer used as exchange valuables.

Money is different from other traditional valuables in that it is personally possessed and easily saved or loaned through the banking system. Therefore, the structure of Samoan ceremonial exchange has been much affected by the introduction of money. Those who have regular salaries, like government officials and office workers, often ask for advance payment or bank loans to finance the ceremonial exchanges of their own 'āiga. Emigrant Samoans living in New Zealand or the United States are asked to send money whenever their 'āiga have large ceremonial exchanges. Nowadays money is more and more important; if one has enough money it is easy to command a large quantity of 'oloa valuables by buying modern food like kegs of salted beef or cartons of tinned fish. Thus, when providing 'oloa for ceremonial exchanges, a presiding 'āiga does not necessarily need to mobilize a large kinship network when it has enough money.

Sua

A *sua* is a set of food and a fine mat or bark cloth which is ceremonially offered to a visitor, and is often observed in ceremonial exchanges today. When an affinal 'āiga gives a helping gift to an 'āiga presiding over a ritual, the latter 'āiga gives in return a combination of several traditionally named gifts, such as *sua*, *tōfā* (a fine mat given to a chief, when a chief is in the visiting group), *lafo* (fine mats or money given to an orator, when an orator is in the visiting group), *pāsese* (busfare, money), *fa'aoso* (food to take back home), etc. Among these, *sua* is the main return gift. *Sua* may be presented to the main visitors on other occasions than ceremonial exchanges, though in a more formalized procedure. Compared to these formal *sua*, *sua* as part of a ceremonial exchange, especially on the preparation sequence, is often presented in abridged style. Here we concentrate on the transformation of *sua*.

There are two kinds of *sua*. One is the daily meal served to a titled head of an 'āiga by an untitled man living under him, and the other is a specially prepared and cooked pig presented in the form of a tribute to and as a mark of respect for an honored guest (Milner, 1966: 217; Grattan, 1948: 97). The latter is *sua* in a ceremonial exchange.⁸⁾ Grattan explained that it is "a respectful food presentation to a distinguished visitor who is connected by blood to the particular family concerned. It has the double object of showing respect to the recipient and of demonstrating relationship to an important chief" (Grattan, 1948: 97). If the visiting party is large

in number, an official reception ceremony and another food presentation ceremony by the whole village will be held. Even in this case, if an *'āiga* of the village is related to the leading chiefs of the visiting party, it presents *sua* in addition to the presentation by the village. And when a high chief of a village wishes to show particular respect to a renown visitor, he may present *sua* even if he has no special blood connection to the visitor (Grattan, 1948: 97).

There are many detailed rules about the combination of items of *sua* as well as the way to serve them. *Sua* is composed of:

Item 1 (*vailolo*)⁹—A husked and pierced coconut, with a one- or two-*tālā* note rolled up and placed in the hole on the nut.

Item 2 (*fa'avevela* or *ta'isi*)—Slices of baked taro (with or without *'oto ma le sau*, coconut pudding).

Item 3 (*ta'apaepae*)—A roast chicken.

Item 4 (*sua tali sua*)—A roast pig.

Item 5 (*'ie o le mālō*)—A fine mat (very occasionally it may be replaced by a bark cloth, *ufi laulau*).

A set of these items is presented to the leader of the visiting party. First a woman (or sometimes a man) holds item 1 in both her (or his) hands and walks into the house to serve it respectfully to the main guest. Another woman (or man), following the first person, carries items 2 and 3 on a food mat and places it in front of the main guest. A man carries item 4 in a basket woven of green coconut leaves, walks around the house, and places the pig behind the main guest. When the pig is very large, it is carried on a litter made of twigs by four men. The last item is opened and carried by either a woman or man, who follows the person carrying items 2 and 3 and presents it to the main guest. The reaction of the visiting party to this presentation is initiated by an orator who accompanies the main guest. He removes the note in the hole of the coconut and drinks one mouthful of the juice, and then throws the coconut shell, hard enough to break it, on a stone outside the house. Then another orator or an untitled young man of the visiting party sitting outside the house stands up and yells out the names and numbers of all the items presented and the words of thanks in a high tone peculiar to the occasion. This action of acknowledgment is called *'ailao*.

The above is a description of the most formal *sua* today, which is not much different from the *sua* described by Hiroa (1930) or Grattan (1948). The main difference is that today a bank note is put in item 1, which seems to be a recent practice. Hiroa made his observation in the 1920s when item 5 was a bark cloth. In Grattan's observation in the 1940s, this item was either a fine mat or bark cloth, which was worn around the body of the first woman holding the coconut and presented with the coconut. Then, because of the shortage of bark cloths, the people started to present a small piece of bark cloth put in the hole of a coconut instead of presenting a whole bark cloth. Some of our informants confirmed that they had observed this way of presenting coconut and a bark cloth in former days. Later, a bank note took the place of the piece of bark cloth probably because of its similarity in shape. To supplement the replacement and show enough respect, people started to present a fine mat, which is much more abundant than bark cloth.

In a ceremony which I observed and in which the highest respect was paid, a woman who wore a bark cloth around her body, and held a husked coconut in her right hand and the hem of the bark cloth in the other, walked to and presented both items to the honored guest, while another woman proceeded with a fine mat to present after the roast pig was presented. The use of a bank note in *sua* is one of the two exceptional cases in which money is used in place of *tōga*. I will discuss this further in the next section. Today a teapot may sometimes be used instead of a coconut in Western Samoa, and a bottle of cola or a can of soda in American Samoa or in Samoan migrant societies in Hawaii. In these cases, bank notes are stuffed into the spout of the teapot, or the opened bottle or can. On occasions other than *sua* and on which snacks (tea and sandwiches or biscuits) are served to several guests, special porcelain cups and teapots with folded bank notes in their spouts are served to a few honored guests.

Among those items included in *sua*, only items 4 and 5, the pig and the fine mat, are important valuables, though the other items are necessary for *sua*. In ceremonial exchange today, a rather informal *sua* as a return gift to a visiting party is often composed of only a pig and a fine mat, or sometimes of only a pig. And the new type of *'oloa*, such as kegs of salted beef and cartons of tinned fish, often take the place of roast pigs. These new *'oloa* have several advantages: in the case of a pig only one must be presented, while in the case of these new items one can control the number of items to present from half a carton to several kegs and cartons; and those goods are easy to obtain if one has enough money. Thus, an informal *sua* is composed of only one pig (or a keg or half a carton), or sometimes even of only money—about 10 *tālā*. In this way, a presiding *'āiga* adjusts the amount of the return for a helping gift given by a visiting party.

The less formal a *sua* is, the less formal is the way to serve it. Ceremonial exchanges at the preparatory stage prior to the main exchange—in which many visiting parties give their helping gifts one by one to the presiding *'āiga*, which then presents a return gift appropriate to the helping one on the spot—look very business-like. An observer can never see any official “highest recognition” of *sua* in such a sequence. But it is important to a visiting party whether it receives any *sua* or not. It is generally said that if a visiting party brings a helping gift which includes fine mats, the party receives *sua*, while even if it brings much property without any fine mats; the party receives no *sua*.

The transformation of *sua* described above has something to do with the penetration of a money economy into this society. In former days, a bride's *'āiga*, which was helped by many affinal *'āiga* in collecting *tōga*, had to wait until the main exchange with the bridegroom's *'āiga* to make return gifts to the affines. But today, the bride's *'āiga* may collect cash by salary advance payments and bank loans, and buy new items of *'oloa* in advance so as to give return gifts immediately after receiving helping gifts from affines, even before the main exchange takes place. For they have prospect of receiving quite a large amount of money from the bridegroom's side in the main exchange with which to repay the loans (Yamamoto, Y. and M. Yamamoto, 1981: 131-135). In former days, the exchange between *'āiga* in affinal relation was balanced over a longer time span. But today, people try to make return gifts as soon

as possible, which has become possible because of the introduction of money. As these changes proceed, *sua* has come to constitute a part of the return gift. And *sua* in ceremonial exchange has been transformed from a formal presentation of food, minutely restricted to show the highest recognition to a guest, to a form of a return gift. It has been informalized in its composition as well as in the way it is presented.

Categorization and Ambiguity

Here I will examine in greater detail how new goods have been categorized into this *tōga*/*'oloa* opposition. First of all, *tōga*/*'oloa* opposition has something to do with male/female role divisions. The new goods brought by Europeans—mainly nails, knives, and other metal tools—were categorized as *'oloa* valuables, probably because it was Samoan men, not women, who met Europeans and obtained their goods. In other words, they were categorized as *'oloa* because of their proximity to the male domain. The implication here is that the categorization was mainly made by metonymy.

On the other hand, there is another way of categorizing goods on the basis of similarities of shape and use—that is, by metaphor. *Tōga* is mostly composed of clothing materials, while *'oloa* is food and tools. Thus, some of the new goods had the potential of being metaphorically categorized as *tōga*. Formerly this categorization by metaphor was consistent with the categorization based on gender. But as Europeans brought manufactured goods, an inconsistency between the metonymic and metaphoric ways of categorization appeared. Here I examine two cases of such inconsistency; one is manufactured clothing material, and the other is money.

'Ie Pālagi is manufactured cloth. It is metonymically *'oloa*-like because it was brought by Europeans; at the same time, it is metaphorically *tōga*-like because it is used in the same way as a bark cloth or a fine mat. Since these two features conflict, *'ie Pālagi* is ambiguous. Thus, Turner categorized it as *'oloa* (Turner, 1884: 93); Mead, as *tōga* (Mead, 1930: 74). It is not that either of the authors made a mistake but that an inconsistency is inherent in the Samoan system of categorization of *tōga*/*'oloa*.

Manufactured clothing materials are used in various ways in ritual today. For example, these are presented from close kins, neighbors, and friends to a dead in a funeral, and again distributed among women of the village after the burial. Or in an inauguration ceremony, a person taking a title wears many materials (which may be presented from his close kins) on his waist which a fine mat is already tied around. He distributes these materials among chiefs and orators of his village after the kava ceremony is finished. These materials are probably used as substitutes for fine mats.

On the other hand, there is an interesting usage of clothing material in a special way of presenting *sua*, which is practiced by some *'āiga* today. When affines related through the marriage of a male member of the *'āiga* (an affinal *'āiga* on the female side) come to visit, the *'āiga* may present *sua* including clothing material in place of a fine mat. In contrast, if the visiting group is affined through the marriage of a female member (an affinal *'āiga* on the male side), a *sua* including a fine mat is presented without hesitation. In the former case, the *'āiga* includes clothing material in the

place of a fine mat in *sua* in order to avoid the contradiction of *tōga* in the form of a fine mat presented from the male side to the female side, as clothing material is in a sense *'oloa*.

Secondly, money is usually used as *'oloa*, though two exceptional cases can be observed. One is the case of *lafo* presented to an orator. *Lafo* is one, two, or three mats given by a high chief to an orator as payment for his services like speech-making, distributing food, taking messages, or dancing at a feast.¹⁰⁾ Today, instead of fine mats, a chief may give money as *lafo* to an orator. This is the only exceptional case in which money may take the place of fine mats. This case may be explained thus: a chief/orator relationship is different in nature from the male/female opposition between affines in which the *tōga/'oloa* categorization is applied; moreover, today modern services are paid for in money generally. *Lafo* thus is a one-way flow of valuables from chiefs to orators. *Lafo* is, however, not necessarily given by a high chief to the orator under him. When two *'āiga* in affinal relation face each other in a ceremonial exchange, they give *lafo* to each other's orators instead of their own, and these *lafo* are considered a part of the gifts given to each other. In other words, both the visiting *'āiga* and the presiding *'āiga* set aside some portions of the valuables they give to each other, planning whether their *lafo* to the orators of the other side should be fine mats or money, and how many or how much should be given. The *lafo* given to orators will be their own share when the gift received is divided later on, although in most cases it is included in the gift to the party.

Today, in arranging gifts to a small affinal group in return for its help, the orator of the presiding *'āiga*, who is in charge of taking care of return gifts, sees whether the leader of the visiting group is a chief or an orator, and presents to the leader one fine mat of the return gift as *tōfā* (if the leader is a chief) or *lafo* (if the leader is an orator). In such a case, whether a fine mat is called *tōfā* or *lafo* seems to be depend merely on whether the receiver of the gift is a chief or an orator; but in the olden days, *tōfā*, an offering to a chief, must have been a flow of valuables totally different from *lafo*, a payment to an orator for his service. As the role of a high chief is to sit with dignity and not to work, he never receives a "payment," and his *tōfā* should be only one fine mat of good quality, while a *lafo* may include up to three fine mats or money with no limit.

Recently, a group on the male side gives money to the orators on the female side when large amounts of valuables are exchanged. Thus, on the occasion of a marriage exchange today, the *'āiga* of a bride gives fine mats as *lafo* to the orators of a bridegroom's *'āiga*, while the *'āiga* of the bridegroom gives money as *lafo* to those of the bride's. Here again, the recent arrangement that fine mats as *lafo* may be replaced by money functions in the rules of exchange of male/female valuables.

The other exception is a note folded and put in the hole of a coconut as a part of *sua*. It is no doubt that it replaced, probably metaphorically, a small piece of bark cloth formerly used in the same way. But the fact that the bark cloth offered as a part of *sua* was customarily given to the orator accompanying the high chief who was the receiver of the *sua* (Hiroa, 1930: 141; Grattan, 1948: 98) may be also related to this replacement. Even today, in a formal *sua*, the orator takes the coconut served in front of the high chief, takes the note in the hole of the nut, and puts it in his

pocket before he drinks the juice. This may parallel the recent arrangement of money replacing fine mats in *lafo* as a service charge.

Conclusion

The acculturation of the last hundred years has been the most drastic change that the Samoan society has ever experienced. Among these changes, the market economy seems to have had the greatest impact. In the process of the penetration of the market economy, the production system has changed as men prefer to be wage laborers rather than producers of tuber crops, and women prefer to be secretaries and teachers rather than weavers of fine mats. Besides, the chiefly ranking system has been generalized, although there used to be large differences not necessarily in power but in prestige among chiefly title holders.

The exchange system among kin groups, which is important in Samoan society as a system of communication of things, has never lost its basic character as a reciprocal exchange of *tōga*, female valuables, and *'oloa*, male valuables, although it has been more or less transformed with the advent of the market economy. The exchange system, which maintains the affinal network and regulates the rights of the descendants in affinal relations (as there are differences in claims among descendants of male and female members of an *'āiga*), is indispensable in a society with a competitive chief system.

Thus, the distinction between *tōga* and *'oloa* is followed in ceremonial exchanges, though the people involved are not necessarily aware of it. It should be noted that the symbolism of the male and female valuables reproduces itself by incorporating the categorization into the exchange system and providing new exquisite meanings for the system.

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Notes

- 1) People usually use the word 'āiga either for a household or for a kin group, though the former is more exactly called *pui'āiga*. Here, for convenience's sake, I use 'āiga to designate a kin group, while a household is signified by the word "household," when I need to distinguish the two concepts. Otherwise, I use the term as Samoans do.
- 2) Many Samoan couples have had no wedding ceremony, mainly because of their parents' disapproval of the marriage, though they have lived together for many years as husbands and wives. After a couple has led a stable life with a few children, families of both sides are likely to gather together and make small ceremonial exchange to recognize the couple. This exchange ceremony is called *fa'ailoa*, which, I think, is appropriately translated as "a ceremony recognizing the union of a couple."
- 3) Gresham's law is the principle that bad money will drive good money out of circulation.
- 4) The practice has been revived for several reasons. One reason is that elderly women have more time as families have become smaller because of the emigration of younger generations. Another is the tendency toward "emigration" of fine mats in return for money remittances.
- 5) Samoan dollars. One Samoan dollar was about equivalent to one U.S. dollar in 1979 and 1980 when I undertook the research on which this paper is based. After that, the Samoan dollar was devalued again and again to become stable at 0.45 U.S. dollar, which was the rate in 1989 when I visited last.
- 6) It is interesting that the exchange rate for a fine mat is devalued although the *tālā* has also been devalued. It probably has something to do with the demand for and supply of fine mats.
- 7) There is an exception which I observed. A carpenter was presented with many bottles of coconut oil at the opening ceremony of a new church.
- 8) The former *sua* is known to the people but seldom observed today. Probably because of this usage, the food given to a titled head or especially a chief is generally called *sua*, although the latter *sua* has the distinctive name *sua ta'i* or *sua taute*.
- 9) These Samoan words in parentheses are honorifics used in rituals.
- 10) Mead reports that bark cloth was used for this purpose (Mead, 1969: 77).

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