

A JOURNAL OF  
PAPUA NEW GUINEA  
AFFAIRS, IDEAS  
AND THE ARTS

VOL. IV NO. 1,  
MARCH, 1983

# BIKMAUS

CROSSING THE FLOODED SIPI  
Ambrose Waiyin  
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Photographs by students of the National Arts School

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a poem by Rex Okona  
THE GREEN RIVER ADVENTURE  
a poem by Paulias Matane  
THREE YEARS OLD DEAD: WHY?  
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STUDY OF THE OK TEDI PROJECT  
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by Andrew Strathern  
OF BODY AND SOUL — AMONG THE EIPO OF IRIAN JAYA  
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PUNISHMENT CELL  
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Vol. IV, No. 1, March, 1983

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CROSSING  
FLOODED

All around us everything  
the continuous sound of  
the sago patch. A few  
sound of the fire was a  
greedily devouring the d  
My brother was with m  
on a log-like seasaw sing  
was higher than the res  
could see everything to  
village. Then just betwe  
we were I could hear  
calling. Had his voice b  
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"Come on you two  
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They said we died at o  
need for anyone to di  
the common rules. Ne



# CROSSING THE FLOODED SIPI

Ambrose Waiyin

p. 1 All around us everything was silent except for  
p. 35 the continuous sound of the beating of sago from  
p. 42 the sago patch. A few metres away, the rattling  
p. 43 sound of the fire was assisted by a gust of wind  
p. 47 greedily devouring the dead leaves and branches.  
p. 56 My brother was with my mother. I was swinging  
p. 66 on a log-like seasaw singing and yelling. This area  
p. 78 was higher than the rest of the landscape and I  
could see everything to the north towards the  
village. Then just between the village and where  
we were I could hear the voice of my uncle  
calling. Had his voice been audible it would have  
been heard rising parallel to a breadfruit tree  
under which he had his garden. He was departing  
for home and therefore wished us to depart also.

p. 82 In response to his call, my father bellowed  
p. 84 across to my mother reminding her of her slow  
p. 87 habits. The sun had almost completed its axis.  
After tying the sago, firewood, dry bamboo and  
fresh bamboo, bananas and other garden  
produce, she powerfully lifted her rather heavy  
load onto her back, and supported by her left  
foot and right knee, stood up and staggered along  
followed by the two of us and our father carrying  
only his bow and arrows and his stringbag.

"Come on you two, hurry up. We can't get  
home late. This is Sunday, a time for the bigman  
to rest. When he rests he does not keep an eye on  
us and therefore evil ones can hurt us. This is  
what the missionary told me."

However our bigmen also said the same thing.  
They said we died at our own cost. There was no  
need for anyone to die young if they abided by  
the common rules. No one takes away your life

except you yourself. Every law that you break  
and every offence that you commit is being  
recorded by your dead relatives and your gods. If  
your record is very bad they simply call you  
away. So you break your time yourself because  
they are too ashamed to leave you here.

Many accidents have happened to our people.  
I can still recall one very clearly. A woman had  
fallen from a breadfruit tree and broken her  
hipbones. We were still at Fongal.

"How! No! We were at the old site,"  
interrupted my mother as if reading my thoughts.  
"We were still in the houses with the new born  
babies. I was with you Ambri. This other woman  
had given birth on Friday night, while I gave  
birth the following Saturday morning. That was  
about two months after the Mission Procession.  
So that is why you must help the husband of this  
poor woman who broke her hipbones when you  
grow up. Without her help I would have died of  
hunger. Anyway both of us were warming  
ourselves in the sun when this other poor woman  
approached us with some food. After handing us  
food, she started to climb the breadfruit tree  
beside her house. She accidentally stepped on a dry  
branch which broke and she fell with it."

"And I was going to Lumi to enroll the baby on  
the Mission Roll," continued father.

Beneath the tall trees and the thick canopy of  
bamboo leaves, the weary family of four tiptoed  
hurriedly towards a clearing where the surround-  
ings were flooded by the golden moonlight. No  
sooner had they reached the clearing when the  
two naked kids rushed to take the lead as the  
village was only a couple of metres away and the  
noise of the other kids was more than inviting.  
Leaving their parents behind, the two youths  
raced into the village to join the noisy gang.

The game being played was a favourite  
moonlight game called Pig and Hunter. In this  
game the wild pig chosen from among the herd  
would sleep. The hunter would then go out to  
hunt it. The pig must be speared in the fatal spot.  
Everyone in the gang knew it. If the spear missed  
that spot the pig would chase the hunters. The  
end of the game came when a hunter speared the  
pig at the right spot. The pig would then die and  
the hunter who killed the pig would then be the  
pig and so the game would proceed. There were  
about a score of hunters on this particular night.  
The noise was maddening. They shouted, yelled,  
laughed, screamed and made all sorts of noise.  
There was hardly anything else that could be



heard.

Then all of a sudden the noise ceased. This was followed by a yell from the direction where the two youths had just joined the gang.

"Ambrie! Wefiyil! You two just wait for me. I'll come and see you with my stick," yelled my father. Upon hearing this we retreated obediently to the house. Then furious, he continued, "You two bags of bones. Play! Play! Always play. How many times have I told you to settle down? You think you will know skul? You think you will know ABC and numbers? Never! You will know nothing just like your bigmen. These big Lau'um men. How many have tried to cross the Sipi to Lumi to be christened and educated? Many. How many are still christians? How many can hold work? None! Nobody will cross the flooded Sipi. You need good strong walking sticks to cross. Furthermore, those who have tried without walking sticks have failed and even lost their lives."

In a way he was correct because later on three of us were selected to attend a day Primary T school in Lumi. During the first term holidays that year one of our colleagues died. He died to pay for his uncle's bad social standing. His paternal uncle and my maternal uncle used to claim property and part of the land of other people.

The old man's lecture was cut short by the call which echoed across the valley from another village called Boruim situated on another ridge to the north about 20 minutes walk away. After detecting the message he continued.

"You see the priest, Father, is coming to our village tomorrow, to take the names of the boys to go to school at Lumi. It will be the first time to take the children from villages as far away as Lau'um. He is going to pick out the best three from each village. Lau'um is first. Now Ambri, if you are selected you will not go far if you do not settle down and do as you are told. Remember how many Lau'um and Boruim men have tried to cross the flooded Sipi and have not made it to the other side?"

"This is because they did not carry out the instructions the Father gave them. When the first missionary appeared in Maui Flopu Wape, the news reached us and everyone went; men, women and children. The bell rang and we went into a *haus lotu* (church) and this is what we were told. 'Now you must turn away from your wicked ways. You must turn away from your

false gods. You must not kill one another. You must not steal. You must not tell bad jokes. You must not perform traditional singsings, you must not perform ceremonies of any sort. If you want to have a successful hunt, you must pray. If you want your garden to produce more crops, you must pray. You must burn all your old houses with sinful artifacts. Anything associated with sorcery or killing must be burnt. I want you all to think about the bad things that you might have done and renounce them now.' In fact when we went there we were told previously to bring with us the samples of our artifacts. So when the mass was ended, we gathered around our artifacts while they were being blessed and then burnt them right before our eyes."

"When we returned we were very frightened. We thought if we did not listen to the father then something bad might happen to us. For instance, an earthquake might occur. Thus we built small houses in the bush and we moved all our riches there."

"Some of the men now who were boys at that time were selected to go to school there and then and were sent to Vanimo to do more schooling. They were baptised and given christian names. They could say prayers and they were given white bread to eat. They were also given *kruse* (crucifix) and *mental* (medal) and told to set good examples by following the new, imposed rules. But during Christmas when they returned home, they were refilled again with their old customs and traditions. There was no room in their heads for the new ideas as they went back to their old ways."

It was only round about 5 o'clock the following morning but the whole village was fully awake. Pigs were grunting, men were calling one another, mothers were shouting at their children who were screaming in rage at the touch of icy cold water; for at an hour as early as this, the water seemed close to freezing point. Scenes such as these were characteristic of all villages at the coming of Europeans; both the Administration and the Missions alike. The whole village had to be at its best. The environment spotless; the grass cut, the village swept and houses and latrines cleaned. The social environment must be similar. New dresses, new laplaps, new shorts, new shirts for the men, women, children and even the aged except the disabled.

The crying, shouting and going to a stop when the morning bell moved towards the *haus lotu*. The bell was rung everyone rushed to occupy the seats furthest away from the altar. I did just that when to my dismay, I was signalled to take the seats, closest to the altar.

Soundlessly the multitude of priests, as he began to dress, beginning with the thin ones; large overall and then slid them over it. Turning around he began.

"In nomine patri et filio et spiritu introibo et alter et ei... ad emendationem meam." The mass in my language only the saints at the altar knew, and then as the gospel sermon was over he began, "I know the objective of my coming. School I am getting rid of all girls and will replace them with boys. I am taking three students from Boruim, three from Wiliwili Talpiti."

At this moment all was quiet even an eyeblink. All ears were listening and interpreting the way.

I began to recall all the stories about the priests. They are spirits of dead relatives. They are in the cemetery talking to the dead. It is common among the simple-minded that these priests have false eyes and can take out their teeth and put them in. In fact this particular priest can do anything. Certainly no living being can.

The rumour had it also that Carmel had come across a priest who was a spirit of a newly-dead villager. I thought, I had to be close to them, called fathers, brothers, sisters and women. What would I do if I saw them? Besides I had not even learnt to read.

Suddenly I stole a look over my shoulder to where my mother was. The few women were sitting on the ground. It bent downwards to the ground. My mother's weight would have had little to the impact. She was



The crying, shouting and grunting soon came to a stop when the morning angelus was rung. Then in response to the bell the whole village moved towards the *haus lotu*. When the second bell was rung everyone rushed there in order to occupy the seats furthest away from the opposite sex. I did just that when to my surprise and dismay, I was signalled to take one of the front seats, closest to the altar.

Soundlessly the multitude sat gazing at the priest, as he began to dress with many clothes beginning with the thin ones and ending with a large overall and then slid the hood backward over it. Turning around he began the mass.

"In nomine patri et filio et spiritu santo... amen introibo et alter et ei... adeim qui leti figat yufe tude meiam." The mass proceeded with the language only the saints and our ancestors knew, and then as the gospel ended and the sermon was over he began, "You all probably know the objective of my coming here. At Lumi School I am getting rid of all the big boys and girls and will replace them with the younger ones. I am taking three students from each village. Three boys will be picked from Lau'um, three from Boruim, three from Wilikili and three from Talpipi.

At this moment all was quiet. There was not even an eyeblink. All ears were opened. Everyone was listening and interpreting things in their own way.

I began to recall all the stories I had heard about the priests. They are supposed to be the spirits of dead relatives. They spent hours at the cemetery talking to the dead. This rumour was common among the simple-minded. Some of these priests have false eyes and false teeth. They can take out their teeth and put them back again. In fact this particular priest can take out his teeth. Certainly no living being can do this.

The rumour had it also that a man from Carmel had come across a priest entertaining the spirit of a newly-dead villager. To go to school, I thought, I had to be close to these strange people called fathers, brothers, sisters and laymen and women. What would I do if I were chosen? Besides I had not even learnt to sleep by myself.

Suddenly I stole a look over my left shoulder to where my mother was. The form she and other women were sitting on was weaker than others so it bent downwards to the breaking point. My mother's weight would have contributed very little to the impact. She was thin and slim and

would not have been more than 140 cm in height. She was in her mid-thirties then.

She too by the look on her face, was deep in thought. What could she be thinking about? Would she be proud to hear that her son was to be one of the three candidates? Certainly that would have been the last thing on her mind. Could she be thinking that she might be one child less? If that prophecy held water, then what about her joy, happiness and pride that she often expressed about her two sons?

"These sons of mine," she once said, "are the midposts of the house." They would build her a house, make her a garden and hunt for her. They would comfort her on their laps when she was dying. They would hold her in their hands and put her into the hole where she would lie peacefully and watch over them in the distance."

"These are the names of the three boys that have been selected from Lau'um. The first boy is the son of Komiti. Second boy is the son of the Medical. Third on my list is Ambri, the son of the Tultul Waiyin. These boys will get ready and leave by Saturday. If I come into Lumi on Sunday and they are not there, I will send a policeman to fetch them."

When the mass came to an end I made for the door in the hope of running away. Soon I was brought to a dead stop by a yell from my rather delighted father.

"Where do you think you are going bighead? The priest wants to see the three boys."

Old Peter, my father, was such a controversial character in our family scene and in the village in general. He was all for the idea that I should be selected. Old Peter was a straightforward peace-loving man. He wanted everyone in the village to be of one mind and body. If this was done then there would be *bisnis* (economic development), children would be knowledgeable, and there would be no sickness and death in the village. In his *tultul* days he was most feared. If there was any bad word spoken or any misconduct the guilty one was sure of punishment. He made sure it was hard labour.

I can still recall an incident that happened during the *singsing*. I was only a small boy then, and would have been about six. On that *singsing* (devil fish day) one of my uncles, Kumio, wore a devil fish head-dress. According to custom many women dancers would dance with him putting on peculiar acts to express their gratitude for any good deeds this man had done for them, for



example, giving them garden produce, or killing many pigs for the village. Relatives, both from within the village and without, would perform such acts. A distant grandmother, Yebil, was overjoyed and overacted during the singsing by taking off her grass skirt, thus exposing herself. By custom this act was as pure as milk. For my father as a *tutul*, this was an old time act, and it was a disgrace and an impure act. He called the singsing off and chased the woman with a spade to give her a punishment.

No one in the whole of Lau'um was as boastful and proud as old Waiyin when it came to discussing important customs and village affairs. No one could beat his social standing. He was by heritage the leader in Lau'um. All others were only recent arrivals. He could even prove this because oral testimony had it that his great-great-great-grandfather Ouke claimed the land through the founder of the village named Lau'um. Any decisions concerning important village matters had to be made in consultation with him. There was more to his heritage than Ouke. Our clan the Fongal Clan was a prime clan. Our clan evolved from Malkau Ninke, 'the son of Hawk'. The story of Malkau Ninke embodied the origin of our clan.

"Never must you forget that, wherever you are and whatever you do," my father once told me. Then he went on and told me the legend.

The word Malkau means a brown hawk which was usually seen flying above the sago palms. The story told how the village of Tingali came into existence. Tingali was the original place where the Lau'um people came from. This place is about three kilometres west from the town of Lumi. The place now has two large stones which according to the legend, are the trees that the Malkau used to build the home for Malkau Ninke. Below the ridge where the big stones are, grow many sago palms. This story also explains the reason why there are many sago palms.

Once upon a time in a place called Youngite, north-east of Tingali near Youliwape, there lived at Fau'uf, two brothers. Early one morning the younger brother took his bow and arrows and went to watch for the birds in a small house he built on a tree. The small house was called Tinkiofo. The tree he built the house on is called Wafu. After waiting there impatiently for some hours he began to see many birds flocking in.

Soon the tree was alive with birds of all kinds. The branches began to bend. For the Malkau Ninke it was a great time. Then he started shooting them. There was not one single shot which missed except for the very last of the arrows which hit the wife of his elder brother who was washing sago. The woman died standing up the instant the arrow hit her.

When his last arrow was fired the hunter climbed down and began to collect the dead birds. After collecting the birds he began to search for his last arrow. He looked everywhere in the vicinity but could not find it. Then he began to go out a little further towards the sago patch where his brother's wife was. To his surprise he saw her standing motionlessly with the arrow in her. Quickly he ran home to report the incident to his elder brother.

Although the elder brother was quite sad about the death of his wife, he told his younger brother that it was his responsibility to see that the dead woman was treated according to their customs. The young man then went to his house to put away the birds and went down and fetched the dead woman's body. After he had brought the corpse of his in-law, he went to the bush and cut some sticks to build the bed so that he could roast the corpse of the dead woman. When the bed was ready and the dead body seated, he made a fire underneath and began roasting her. Early in the first night when the young man was busy at his job, her spirit made her first appearance. She requested a fire. The man gave her some fire, but she went and put it out and came for another one. The young man upon the second request gave her another one. The spirit put out the fire once again and returned for another one. This continued for sometime. The man began to feel frightened, but then he thought of an idea. He had the birds there. They might help him.

He went out bravely into the dark and cut down a banana called *balu* and collected some sugar-cane. With the sugar-cane he made a bed. On the sugar-cane bed he placed the dead birds and began to bring them to life by opening their eyes with the sap of the banana and some plants. When all the birds came round he paid them the shell money so that they could help him. After giving all the birds the shell money he gave the *kundu* to Tirmaul, the green parrot. The young man then sat on the sugar-cane bed while all the birds sat all around him. When all the birds were ready, the Tirmaul gave a signal with the *kundu*.

The birds flew in the air carrying Ninke away. While the birds flew in the air, the dead woman's friends followed on underneath.

It is commonly believed in Lau'um that dead people always avenge their living relatives do not. Most of magicians as well as murderers die early age. If by some means they escape because they have chewed plants, then one of the relatives must avenge the consequences.

There were a number of spirits who made a long night journey. They made Semnire Faibu near Tefungu. They took off for Yauli Wape. From Yauli Wape they flew to Mlanu Alol at Wakoi trying to escape the dead woman's spirits who were following right behind them. The dead woman and her dead husband went to Mlanu Alol, the birds and then to Yemnu. From Yemnu they flew to Filau'uf at Tepale, Tipiouo at Boruim. From Boruim they flew again, but as it was beginning to dawn they landed on a tree called Yelu at Tepale. The young man on the branch departed.

Perhaps for oral historians' it could be an allusion to a migration journey as can be seen starting from the north-west from Sissano. These people could have been searching for sago trees. In the village of Nuku from the original site there were sago trees. The places mentioned were made are all high geographical places. In addition, the places or the villages mentioned by this relationship. In fact they are the Lau'um people.

Early next morning, Malkau Ninke's spirit came to her surprise she saw an unfortunate man. She asked him what had happened the previous night. Then leaving him to go back to the places where the man had made the stops and collected the spirits from each stopping point. She told him to go to the tree where the man was and build a complete new home. The man then built a new home. The man's name was Malkau Ninke.

Malkau Ninke is not a special man. He has another name



The birds flew in the air carrying the Malkau Ninke away. While the birds and the young man flew in the air, the dead woman and her spirit friends followed on underneath.

It is commonly believed in our tribe that the dead people always avenge themselves even if the living relatives do not. Most of the sorcerers and magicians as well as murderers usually die at an early age. If by some means they become immune because they have chewed certain crawling plants, then one of the relatives will face the consequences.

There were a number of stops made in the long night journey. They made their first stop at Semnire Faibu near Tefungu. From there they took off for Yauli Wape. From Yauli Wape they flew to Mlanu Alol at Wakoite. They were all trying to escape the dead woman and the other spirits who were following right behind. When the dead woman and her dead counterparts got to Mlanu Alol, the birds and the young man flew to Yemnu. From Yemnu they flew to Nakil, Filau'uf at Tepale, Tipiouo at Taute, Barum at Boruim. From Barum they flew to Younite again, but as it was beginning to be dawn they landed on a tree called Yelu at Tinkali. The birds left the young man on the branch of this tree and departed.

Perhaps for oral historians' interest, this flight could be an allusion to a migration route. The journey as can be seen started from Tefungu which was the route where migration from the north-west from Sissano Pass was possible. These people could have been sago-eaters out in search of sago trees. In the villages south towards Nuku from the original site there were little or no sago trees. The places mentioned where stops were made are all high geographical points. In addition, the places or the villages are now bound by this relationship. In fact they are all related to the Lau'um people.

Early next morning, Malkau was looking for insects when to her surprise she came across this unfortunate man. She asked him who he was. He told her all that had happened to him the previous night. Then leaving him there, she flew back to the places where the man and the bird made the stops and collected the soil samples from each stopping point. She took these back to the tree where the man was and built him a complete new home. The man then became a Malkau Ninke.

Malkau Ninke is not a specific name for this man. He has another name but we are not

allowed to know it because if we do, our children will not live. In order to feed the adopted son, the hawk went to and from Sabte, a village to the east, to steal sago from women. This went on for sometime until the Sabte people became aware of what was going on. One day, a man went to watch for the sago. Not long afterwards, he saw this bird come sweeping down to sit on the *bangal* of the sago next to a bamboo container of sago; and as it began to pull at one, the man shot an arrow at her. Despite the pain, the hawk carried the sago back to Tingali. But the hawk died before reaching Tingali and therefore dropped the bamboo of sago at Fibre'alu, a valley between Wape'uf and Otimingi. The result is that there are now many sago trees in this valley. These originally belonged to Lau'um and Otimingis, but are now used by Wape'uf and Lumi.

The procedure required in the construction of the Tilai was firstly that a Tilai tree with many branches, is planted or hung in the centre of the house. Some magic leaves, stones or roots are fastened onto the post with special sap. Then there would be a special singsing held usually at night. During the day the participants would go out hunting to test the power of the Tilai. During or before the singsing, the urine of a powerful spirit or a number of spirits would be sprinkled onto the Tilai to empower it. The urine refers to the water from a spring coming out of the side of a mountain or from a swamp, that is, water from a strange spring near the area where a spirit dwells.

The four of them set to work. When the Tilai was almost constructed, Malkau Ninke told the elder brother of the Pai brothers to go down to a place called Yimbril and fetch the urine of a spirit called Weni, or Weni Nambes, so that they could use it to sprinkle the Tilai. While the Pai man was down at Yimbril, the Malkau Ninke finished off what was left to be done and waited for the Pai man to return. The Malkau Ninke waited for a while and called for him. The Pai man replied some distance down the valley. The Malkau Ninke waited another hour and then called for the Pai man again. This time the Pai man replied just a few metres up the hill. Upon hearing this, the Malkau Ninke went into the house and prepared himself to transform into a spirit while keeping watch for his friend. As soon as the Pai man put one of his legs into the house the Malkau Ninke metamorphosed himself and



mysteriously entered the Tilai. The Pai man stood there open-mouthed, gazing at the moving Tilai.

"Hey brother! What have you done with yourself? You were the one that brought us here in the first place. Why do you spoil yourself like that?"

Confused and puzzled about this, the Pai man became unconscious and fell into a deep sleep. The Tingali man appeared in his dream and told him his secret name. The secret name had economic connotations; and children and women were not supposed to know it.

In terms of oral history, presumably the episode tries to explain the origin of Lau'um Wapeltei clan, or the prime clan of Lau'um. The Malkau Ninke could have been an allusion to a hunter-leader travelling with his group of sago-eaters as symbolised by the birds. This group of people went off south in search of sago but because they could not find many there, they returned to their old site, but found this place at Tingali. Malkau is often referred to as old gentlewoman. She could have represented an original tribe that may have accommodated the newcomers.

When the Malkau died of spear wounds, the Malkau Ninke continued living by himself. Then one day he died to look for grubs at the bush called Elpu'uf in Otimingi.

After felling the tree he began cutting the chips. While doing this they did not fly away from him but instead they ended up hitting him. Being puzzled about this the man ceased cutting and began to search the surroundings for a possible cause.

Finally, to his surprise, he came across a family of four hidden in the bush watching him. The family, comprising a mother and her three sons, all came from Pai Village in Kaiaitem to the north past Tefungu. When asked for what reason the family had come that way, the Pai family replied that they had come for the same tree. After quarrelling over the tree for sometime they came to a compromise and put to work at the tree together. When they had finished the whole tree they retreated to a of lunch of grubs and sago which was brought by the Pai family. After the meal the Tingali man gave the Pai family his share of the grubs, and after bidding farewell they all departed. The Pai family went north to Pai while the Tingali man took the opposite direction towards Tingali. The family went for some distance but the track led them back again to the

Tingali man. This man was responsible for hiding their way. When he saw the family, he pretended to be surprised and asked why they had returned. The parties then said goodbye for the second time and parted. The Pai family went for some distance and then came across the same man again. This went on and on until it was getting very dark. The Tingali man then told the mother and her three children to accompany him to his home at Tingali because it was closer. So the Pai family went with the Tingali man.

In Lau'um there are four clans. The pioneer clan is Fongal. This is believed to have originated from Malkau Ninke. The next clan is the Taucite; also known as Pai Taucite. This clan evolves from the four brothers of Pai who were brought to Tingali by the Malkau Ninke or the Tingali man. The third Lau'um clan is called Kurbate. This clan consists of two sub-clans. The Lumi sub-clan Oute, comprises those people who originated from Lumi Village while the other sub-clan, Oute, comprises those people who originated from Oute Village. Oute Village is east of Lau'um past Lumi town. The final Lau'um clan is Saiwete. This is made up of two sub-clans again; one came from Klebu'uf near Lumi and the other clan came from Sapte near Oute. These villages are situated in north and east near the Torricelli Foothills.

The Malkau Ninke and the other three Pai brothers stayed happily together for a long time. Then one day the Malkau Ninke told the three cousin brothers that they must help him to construct a Tilai and to perform a *singsing* for hunting purposes. The Tilai is a special post planted in the middle of the house. In the days long gone, this was considered the most vital part of the house. If the Tilai was properly constructed then the household would be much blessed. The family members would have access to things such as economic prosperity, successful hunting and fruitful harvests.

The procedure required in the construction of the Tilai was firstly that a Tilai tree with many branches, is planted or hung in the centre of the house. Some magic leaves, stones or roots are fastened onto the post with special sap. Then there would be a special singsing held usually at night. During the day the participants would go out hunting to test the power of the Tilai. During or before the singing, the urine of a powerful spirit or a number of spirits would be sprinkled onto the Tilai to empower it. The urine refers to

the water from a spring coming from a mountain or from a swamp, or a strange spring near the dwells.

The four of them set to work. The Tilai was almost constructed, but the elder brother of the Pai brothers, the brother-in-law called Yimbril and the brother-in-law called Weni, or Weni Nambu, used it to sprinkle the Tilai. Weni went down at Yimbril, the Malkau Ninke, what was left to be done at the Tilai. The Malkau Ninke went to the Tilai while and called for him. The Malkau Ninke waited another hour for the Pai man again. This time the Pai man came just a few metres up the hill. The Malkau Ninke went to the Tilai and prepared himself to transform. The Malkau Ninke kept watch for his friend. The Malkau Ninke put one of his legs on the Tilai. The Malkau Ninke metamorphosed. The Malkau Ninke mysteriously entered the Tilai there open-mouthed, gazing at the Tilai.

"Hey brother! What have you done with yourself? You were the one that brought us here in the first place. Why do you spoil yourself like that?"

Confused and puzzled about this, the Pai man became unconscious and fell into a deep sleep. The Tingali man appeared in his dream and told him his secret name. The secret name had economic connotations; and children and women were not supposed to know it.

The transfiguration of the Tilai could have been an allusion to a furtive spirit. The Tilai could have been the origin of the Tilai quite common in the tribe during such deep sleeps. The Tilai people of the unknown world. The Tilai self-hypnotist would have had access to many things, both, social, economic and political. One such appearance was the father. The spirit of his father showed him the tree that he used. My father used the bark of the Tilai to work.

The Pai brothers remained at the Tilai while. The elder brother of the Pai brothers ill-treated the younger one. The Tilai often given less food. Some



the water from a spring coming out of the side of a mountain or from a swamp, that is, water from a strange spring near the area where a spirit dwells.

The four of them set to work. When the Tilai was almost constructed, Malkau Ninke told the elder brother of the Pai brothers to go down to a place called Yimbril and fetch the urine of a spirit called Weni, or Weni Nambes, so that they could use it to sprinkle the Tilai. While the Pai man was down at Yimbril, the Malkau Ninke finished off what was left to be done and waited for the Pai man to return. The Malkau Ninke waited for a while and called for him. The Pai man replied some distance down the valley. The Malkau Ninke waited another hour and then called for the Pai man again. This time the Pai man replied just a few metres up the hill. Upon hearing this, the Malkau Ninke went into the house and prepared himself to transform into a spirit while keeping watch for his friend. As soon as the Pai man put one of his legs into the house the Malkau Ninke metamorphosed himself and mysteriously entered the Tilai. The Pai man stood there open-mouthed, gazing at the moving Tilai.

"Hey brother! What have you done with yourself? You were the one that brought us here in the first place. Why do you spoil yourself like that?"

Confused and puzzled about this, the Pai man became unconscious and fell into a deep sleep. The Tingali man appeared in his dream and told him his secret name. The secret name had economic connotations; and children and women were not supposed to know it.

The transfiguration of the Malkau could have been an allusion to a further migration. This could have been the original tribe. Hypnosis is quite common in the tribe. It is believed that during such deep sleeps one encounters the people of the unknown world. After recovery, the self-hypnotist would have much knowledge as he would have access to many secret names with both, social, economic and political connotations. One such appearance occurred to my father. The spirit of his cousin brother Kumoi showed him the tree that can cure any sickness. My father used the bark of this tree and it worked.

The Pai brothers remained at Tingali for a while. The elder brother and his wife began to ill-treat the younger one. The young man was often given less food. Sometimes he would be

given nothing. However the wife was usually more sympathetic. She would give her brother-in-law some food, but when she was discovered, the husband would be very furious. The poor man noticed all this and was very sad. He then began to think of a way of running away from the married couple. Finally an idea struck him. He thought of running away to some village west of Tingali. He thought of travelling via the river Sipi; however, not on foot as he was afraid of being attacked by humans and spirits. A safer way would be to travel on a log.

One day he went in search of a suitable tree that he could hollow. He soon found a *karamut* tree in the bush of Youngite called Tenke-tipe. He felled it and set to work. When he had hollowed it out and shaped it like a *karamut*, he dragged it to Nanu-eripil near Kengeli at Lumi.

The distance between this place Nanu and Tingali is about 3 kilometres. The reason for leaving the *karamut* here was because there is a small stream which is a tributary of the Sipi. Where this tributary meets the Sipi river there is a gorge where the water passes between narrow cliffs for the distance of approximately 120 metres. The place is called Yimbril, or Narif Passage. On the embankment opposite the conjunction of this tributary, called Meri at this point, is the strange spring called Weni Wita Nambes, or the Urine of the Spirit called Wita, which was fetched by the elder brother earlier in the story.

After leaving the *karamut*, the young man returned to Tingali. At Tingali the man set to work preparing for the long journey. When the day arrived the young man took all his necessary possessions and went back to the *karamut*. He put all his possessions inside the *karamut* and dragged it down to the stream named Olu. After entering the *karamut* he magically sealed it and began his long journey downstream until he came to the Sipi river where he fell under the mercy of its meandering currents. His journey came to an end when his float came to a stop at the section of the river owned by the Tupum people.

That afternoon when the elder brother and his wife returned, they discovered the farewell signs left by the young man. On the fireplace the young man had left his footprints stamped with the red stain of the betelnut, with a taboo croton planted through the middle of his footprints. The sign illustrated the young man's departure forever.



The elder brother's wife was the only one worried about her brother-in-law but was soon quietened down by her angry husband.

The mode of travel by *karamut* is strange. The *karamut* is normally used for transmitting messages over fair distances. However it could have symbolised the journey by the river that could have been common in those days. Another major feature of the story is that the younger brother was the one that moved and not the older brother. In this tribe the elder brother is considered more important and usually succeeds his father.

The *karamut* remained at Tapam. One fine day the young girls from Tapam were out fishing. The girls soon came across the spot where there were many large logs and rubbish. One of the young girls suddenly felt ill. While the other girls were busy catching fish the sick one sat on one of the logs. This happened to be the *karamut*. However when she sat on it the man inside mysteriously had sexual intercourse with her through the log. Being conscious of what was happening the girl remained rooted to the log. When the brief love affair was over the girl told the others she was getting worse and that they should return home; she kept the incident secret.

That night when she slept, the Aif-ninke, or the *karamut* son, appeared to her in a dream and told her who he was and the strange log she sat on was his home, the *karamut*. In the dream the man-spirit also told the girl to tell her father to tell the village people to drag the log and place it near her father's house. The girl was also told that when she became pregnant she should advise her father to pretend to admit he, the father, was responsible, at least for the time being. The girl interpreted all that was heard to her father. The father then told the people to drag the log to his house. When the log was near the house the man would come out secretly and have sexual intercourse with his fiancée. Not only did the man have sex with the girl but also would secretly leave dead animals, like pigs and cassowaries for the family. This went on for sometime. Then the man thought that this would arouse too much curiosity, so he told the girl to tell her father to tell the people to hold a singsing in which he could publicise himself. The man told the girl that the people should build a shed and fence it with coconut fronds. They must also construct a devil fish, or a large head-dress for him. After that they should drag the *karamut* into this temporary

shed.

The people did what was said and soon all was ready. The *singsing* called Tuai began. The man came out of his secret dwelling and taught the group of men inside the shed the songs and the rhythm of the introduced *singsing*. The song went on for days and weeks.

One night back in Tingali the wife of the elder brother was disturbed by the faint sound of the *karamut* echoing far, far way towards the west. She thought that she detected a familiar beat of the sound. To be more certain, she went outside and began to listen more carefully.

"Certainly that is the rhythm of our song Tuai all right. That must be my brother-in-law. He must have been received by these people."

The woman was anxious about her brother-in-law, so she set to work preparing for the journey. She would do this secretly so as not to arouse any suspicion in her husband. One day after everything was packed, she pretended that she was sick. The husband then went off to the garden without her. When he was gone she departed after leaving behind the farewell signs. The woman then began her long journey westward, keeping up with the sound of the drumming. To be sure of the right direction the woman would climb up a tree to listen to the sound.

One evening after a long journey the woman arrived at Tupum Village. She hid herself in a banana patch close to the arena. While she was resting and regaining strength, the sound of the *karamut* began, louder than ever. Out of the fenced shed called Talu the Aif Ninke appeared with the head-dress of the devil fish. Joyfully the woman sprang out from her concealment with the crotons in her hands and danced with her brother-in-law. During the *singsing* the woman mentioned how it all happened, why this strange man came to where he was and how unhappy she was when he disappeared. In her song she expressed how broken-hearted she was when she heard the beat of the *karamut* and understood its implication. The whole village became alive when they saw this stranger and understood what it all meant. The people then were aware of where the man was from.

As the *singsing* went on, there was a competition among young girls as to who was to wed the young man. The young man had one wife already. The man knew what was going on, so as soon as it was dawning he transformed himself

into the Aif Ninke again and p into the river and floated into the house *tambaran*, or Yau N is responsible for stunted gro someone whispers her name t young person will not grow woman.

The song Tuai is usually p animals. It is also performed made and also during the time is being dragged to the villag Tuai is performed, it is hope the *karamut* travels long dista clear messages. The wife of following the husband's youn that elder brothers' wives i always sympathetic to their b younger brothers are norma being economically and socia

As was mentioned earlier, t in the Pai family. The younge to Tupum while the three re The descendants of these w space at Tingali was not enoi down to Nai'uf. At Nai'uf the to grow even faster. The peop for a long time.

Then one day they had a bi Nounau's excreta. It happen relatives had a lot of pigs. On was called Nounau and one called Nolibil. However this r the excreta that the pigs left man in the village always did really bored with the dirty job the owner of the pig went to who used to get rid of the pi excreta, made a small hole in it there. One day when it was excreta was washed down on This insulted the owner of the to investigate who had cause broke out between the owne The rest of the village then j brothers joined forces and younger ones. The elder t descendants of the elder Pa younger brothers were the c other two younger Pai broth

When the fight ended th wealth between themselves a The elder brothers moved to



into the Aif Ninke again and pushed the *karamut* into the river and floated into the Sepik River. The woman transformed herself into the spirit of the house *tambaran*, or Yau Nimo. This goddess is responsible for stunted growth in children. If someone whispers her name to a youngster that young person will not grow up into a man or woman.

The song Tuai is usually performed to attract animals. It is also performed when a *karamut* is made and also during the time when the *karamut* is being dragged to the village. When the song Tuai is performed, it is hoped that the sound of the *karamut* travels long distances and transmits clear messages. The wife of the elder brother following the husband's younger brother shows that elder brothers' wives in this society are always sympathetic to their brother-in-laws. The younger brothers are normally considered as being economically and socially important.

As was mentioned earlier, there were four sons in the Pai family. The youngest of the four went to Tupum while the three remained at Tingali. The descendants of these were many and the space at Tingali was not enough so they moved down to Nai'uf. At Nai'uf the population began to grow even faster. The people remained as one for a long time.

Then one day they had a big fight over the pig Nounau's excreta. It happened that one of the relatives had a lot of pigs. One of the female pigs was called Nounau and one of the males was called Nolibil. However this man never got rid of the excreta that the pigs left in the village. One man in the village always did this and he became really bored with the dirty job. So one day when the owner of the pig went to the bush, the man who used to get rid of the pig's excreta got the excreta, made a small hole in the roof and placed it there. One day when it was raining heavily the excreta was washed down onto the dining area. This insulted the owner of the pig so he went out to investigate who had caused this. A fight then broke out between the owner and the accused. The rest of the village then joined in. The elder brothers joined forces and fought with the younger ones. The elder brothers were the descendants of the elder Pai brother and the younger brothers were the descendants of the other two younger Pai brothers.

When the fight ended the clan divided the wealth between themselves and then dispersed. The elder brothers moved to Karaite towards the

north east near Fatima. The village is about some 30-40 kilometres away from Lau'um. The immediate group moved to Tepale where some advanced to Wiop in Kamnum, southwest of Lau'um. The third of remained at Nai'uf and later on moved to Lau'um. The last lot moved down to Otimingi about 5 kilometres north of Nai'uf.

The third lot that remained at Nai'uf stayed there for sometime peacefully until one day a new strange tribe called the Wape appeared from Tairiri near another place called Klelpuf, a village about 3 kilometres south of the town of Lumi. This tribe came and settled at what is now Wape'uf. The village is situated on a ridge with not much flat land and also in the midst of many villages. They could not expand much because to the north about 5 kilometres away they shared the border with Otimingi. To the south about the same distance, they shared a border with Mutuluf, and to the north and northeast, they shared the borders with Klelp'uf, Maui and Lumi. When they came down west they shared a border with us; but in fact they had no border with the Nai'uf people at all as the land they made their home on, belonged rightly to the Otimingi and the Lau'um. The peace-loving, outnumbered Nai'uf people had hard times with the new tribes and often there were fierce battles between the two tribes. Eventually a Lau'um warrior was injured so the tribe moved to a place called Yungo Wape and settled at Merefeme'uf; but the blood-thirsty Wape kept on following them. At Merefene'uf they had a big battle. By then the Lau'um people were getting less in numbers. They also had less bows and arrows. That was one of the reasons why they had also chosen this site because there was only one track that the enemy had access to and they would have to climb a narrow steep ridge called Pale You. One day, early in the morning, men, women and children set to work. The men broke firewood, collected stones and sharpened additional bows and arrows, while the women and children carried water in long bamboo poles. When all the requirements were brought they all worked at heating stones and water.

When the heating was going on the Wape warriors let out their war cries to signal their attack. Upon hearing this the able Lau'um warriors let out their war cries in reply and set out to meet them. When the Wape heard the reply they rushed towards their enemy. The



Lau'um knew that they were outnumbered and therefore had no hope of retaliating. While these outnumbered Lau'um warriors were out to hold the enemy, the rest of the Lau'um people doubled their efforts in heating up the stones and water and completing the bows and arrows. When the stones were red hot, water steaming and bows and arrows completed, they signalled their warriors. On the message the Lau'um warriors pretended to be furious as they made their advance. The fight with words was on, in which the Lau'um used any provocative language they could think of. The angry and furious Wape rushed out and chased the Lau'um. When the Wape reached the Sipi River the Lau'um had made their ascent to the village and began to beat their *karamuts* and yell war songs. This bewildered the maddened Wape warriors who ran hand and foot up the narrow mountain track. For the Lau'um it was a high time. They had nothing to fear except to keep the fire going.

Up the steep narrow track the Wape warriors came like army ants not knowing that they were marching into hell. When the Lau'um spies saw the last group coming up and the first group were a few metres from the summit, the Lau'um bowmen greeted them with a shower of arrows. The Wape in response let out the wild war cries and advanced only to be greeted with red hot stones and steaming hot water. Stone after stone after stone was rolled down the drain-like track followed by bamboo after bamboo after bamboo after bamboo of steaming hot water. The battle-field then looked like a dyke covered with molten rock and lava. When the surviving Wape warriors saw this they rolled down the hilly track back where they came from.

The Lau'um remained at Merefene'uf for a time and then a man by the name of Wilei moved to Fongal and made a camp there. The land that Lau'um now stands on belonged to an extinct tribe called Yafeito. The Yafeito either were all killed by the Wilkili, or were in exile except for one woman by the name of Yeyau.

One day during the devil-fish *singsing*, Wilei carried the devil-fish. Wilei's mother was the sister-in-law of Yeyau, the only survivor of Yafeito. During the *singsing* the Yafeito's only survivor danced with Wilei and in her song promised Wilei to be the new landlord of the deserted Yafeito land including Lau'um. So after the *singsing* Wilei gave shell money to Yeyau as payment for the land his aunty promised him.

Then the Lau'um moved from Merefene'uf to Lau'um. So that is how we ended up here.

It was a Sunday evening in January 1961. The hot tropical sun was just beginning to send back its last rays as if to say goodbye when our four half-naked shadowy figures crossed the Nanu creek towards the Mission Station at Lumi. Leading the way was a bald elderly man. He was no other than Murai the mission *shut boi*, or the hunter. Murai had returned to the station with a supply of meat. Murai was given the job because of his size and experience. He was tall and muscular. Before the war, Murai had been to many plantations. He also worked on the goldfields at Bulolo and Wau. In these places he had hunted for the *mastas*.

After him we followed in deep silence. Every step was taken with great caution for fear of the whiteman's massive pigs. I had often heard stories about how vigilant and sensitive these *pulumukaus* or cattle were. They came with law and *nupela pasin*. These animals could tell whether one had done something wrong or not. If one was guilty one would be attacked. At the Mission Station we were greeted by the Supervisor of the school. It was six sharp. Over yonder past the airstrip near the Government District Office was a long line of what seemed like galley slaves marching towards the western portion of the airstrip. They were the prisoners being marched to their cells. We came to a dead stop and stood motionless as the police sergeant drilled his subordinates followed by the lowering of the Australian flag. When all was in motion again, Austin the cook *boi*, marched past the three of us to a building which resembled a copra drier, except for the black ropes which connected it to the surrounding building. Soon there was a noise followed by black smoke. Astounded we were taking stock of everything rather fast in the few remaining minutes of the pale daylight.

Firstly, there was a huge building with many rooms built on top of one another. There was a tall box in the corner which was always cold inside. Right above us were many plates with silver balls. I was gazing at one when all of a sudden the bright light came on which gave me a shake and made me almost dash for the door. I certainly would have had I been by myself. The Brother was issuing some rations for the *shut boi*. The rations comprised a quarter bag rice, some

tins of fish, a wrapped *brus*, tot newspaper. After issuing the ration *boi*, we were given a dirty broken to use the building which was convent as our new home. That was the beginning of the end of my

The first lonely night spent was such a strange experience. No youths of our age left on our own thing; sorcery, magic, *tambaran* become of us if any of us became have had not the slightest idea of needed for the sickness. In fact have happened to us that night. from Lumi could have easily just the old tattered roof, or through floor made of broken *limbum* and any of us. Such wild, frightening winding and rewinding in my mind drew on. In addition, the cold in Simoro Mountains came sweep the hollow *bangal* walls. My two and I were forced to sit up and beg the complete darkness for the *bar* fire.

The long shivering night became as it began to dawn. Everything Towards the north-east the Mountains began to undress as to express nature's beauty of the early day. Simultaneously the huge church to send out its monotonous cries. other things had to be got accustomed to the bell we made for or the stream, to have the first view down the hill was the second tear. "Come on! Hurry up you kids! lessons has just gone."

Without delay we made for the find to our surprise that the whole parade. Being so shy a kid, I felt my feet were no longer able to carry quiet. Those shining bright eyes were focusing on the head teacher us. I began to tremble but ran for refuge behind my two colleagues. told to join class one. The assembly to attention as the flag was raised Save the Queen", the national Anthem. Then after a brief inspection of the assembly was dispersed to classes. bigger than the one at Lau'um. at least thirty strange kids, both male



tins of fish, a wrapped *brus*, tobacco and some newspaper. After issuing the rations to the *shut boi*, we were given a dirty broken lantern and told to use the building which was the Sister's old convent as our new home. That day was to mark the beginning of the end of my family ties.

The first lonely night spent with other youths was such a strange experience. Never before were youths of our age left on our own in fear of everything; sorcery, magic, *tambarans*. What would become of us if any of us became ill? We would have had not the slightest idea of what cure was needed for the sickness. In fact anything could have happened to us that night. The *tambarans* from Lumi could have easily jumped through the old tattered roof, or through the holes in the floor made of broken *limbum* and fled away with any of us. Such wild, frightening thoughts kept winding and rewinding in my mind as the night drew on. In addition, the cold icy winds from Simoro Mountains came sweeping in through the hollow *bangal* walls. My two companions and I were forced to sit up and began searching in the complete darkness for the *bangal* to light the fire.

The long shivering night became even worse as it began to dawn. Everything became visible. Towards the north-east the great Simoro Mountains began to undress as it were, and to express nature's beauty of the early hours of the day. Simultaneously the huge church bell began to send out its monotonous cries. This sound like other things had to be got accustomed to. In responding to the bell we made for the sago *wara*, or the stream, to have the first wash. Strolling down the hill was the second teacher in charge.

"Come on! Hurry up you kids! The bell for the lessons has just gone."

Without delay we made for the station only to find to our surprise that the whole school was on parade. Being so shy a kid, I felt that my shaking feet were no longer able to carry me. All was quiet. Those shining bright eyes that previously were focusing on the head teacher, were now on us. I began to tremble but ran quickly to take refuge behind my two colleagues. We were soon told to join class one. The assembly was brought to attention as the flag was raised while "God Save the Queen", the national Anthem was sung. Then after a brief inspection of cleanliness the assembly was dispersed to classes. The class was bigger than the one at Lau'um. There were at least thirty strange kids, both male and female.

They had funny names previously unknown to us. At Lau'um we had used slates and crayon to do lessons, but here they were using books and pencils and they even used English. As I was taking note of all this the teacher entered and all were on their feet in a chorus to say, "Good morning".

No sooner had the good mornings been exchanged than our teacher began the enrollment.

"Stand up the new kids from Lau'um," the teacher said. No response. "Stand up the newcomers!" repeated the teacher louder than before.

"Yeio-yile!" applauded the class.

Turning to the eldest of my companions the teacher asked, "Wanem nem bilong yu?"

The teacher grinned at the sound of the name. Someone began to imitate the sound made by a *goura* bird.

"Coop! Coop!" There went another peal of laughter at the name Wilbe, because in the dialect the *goura* bird is called Wilbe.

After the teacher had enrolled everyone the arithmetic lesson began. Firstly we recited the addition tables, "One-and-one are two. Two-and-two are four," and so on. Then we recited the minus. "One-minus-one is nought. Two-minus one is one." The funny thing about it was that the sound was dragged on in such a way that if you heard it from outside it sounded like a *singsing*. It was better that way because if it was done individually for the first time there would have been many teardrops rather than learning by imitating the pattern. This method of learning was most enjoyable to us all. The most unenjoyable part was evaluation. It was okay by writing it down but reciting it individually was most unpleasant; at least for the beginners like the three of us anyway. Nowadays it does not matter whether one makes a mistake or not, but at that time it meant a blistered hand or buttocks. However, that was, I would say, harsh and most effective learning.

Formal education in those days was most precious. It was a fire that was needed to brighten up the darkness. It was also regarded as a kind of magic that made Europeans what they were. To be able to obtain this, one ought to be obedient, one ought to have a clear conscience and be free of all social sins. That was what my father meant by achieving life's success with the aid of walking sticks. I really thought bad about those teachers



for beating us with a cane for every wrong we did. But were they really bad? Of course not. Without corporal punishment, perhaps we would not have been able to have our own politicians, public servants and other such educated people to carry our country through to this stage. The low level of education is now of public concern. Could it be that our education was one which was forced, and that the present education is one of free choice?

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It was a Friday afternoon in August 1962 when my father and mother came in to take me and my young brother home. The parents had unusually brought a lot of pig meat with them. Pig meat was never consumed on ordinary days. Now mass pig-killing was taking place. On air also was news about general cleaning of the villages. In addition, there was also talk about buying new plates, new cups, new spoons and new everything. No one should use old things any more. There was to be peace and brotherly love among everyone. There should be no stealing, no disobedience, no hatred and no fighting. It was of the utmost importance to follow all of the ten commandments. Should anyone dare to divert from this new code of behaviour he was only inviting trouble for himself, his village and the society.

The presence of these things reminded me of a story that I heard that seemed to show that history does repeat itself. The story was told to me by my mother about an occasion that took place during her teenage years.

"It was the time of Senge-Wapuno, or time of eating pig meat and taro," she had said. "Had they not done that they would have all perished. What actually happened was that your *tumbuna*, your father's elder brother, on his way to the bush Kiriwolom had a chance meeting of a water spirit called Kilfene. The Kilfene, or the Kulfom, are water spirits whose homes are in the lakes or around water. If these water spirits are offended they will bring storm and floods in which they will hurt the offender. During the encounter with the water spirit, Yari was put into a deep sleep in which he was told the secret name of the water spirit."

"Immediately after the incident the sun stopped shining even though it was only in the early part of the day. It began to darken. The wind had also stopped blowing. For the birds

that day were strangely quiet as they returned to their nests and were replaced by the haunting noises of insects and worms. Everyone in the village became suspicious and was expecting those hunters who had left early in the morning to return with some strange explanation. While awaiting the return of an uncle who was the only hunter who had left the village that morning, they began to check if any menstruating woman, or women had just given birth, might have gone near pools of water, streams, rivers or even near any damp places. These water spirits were highly sensitive at such impurities including sexual conduct. After much checking and cross-checking, Yari arrived and let on about the dangerous and frightening occurrence."

"Without delay many pigs were slaughtered while brave men who had gardens nearby rushed for garden produce, such as taro, yams and bananas. The same water spirit had re-appeared to a number of enlightened Walis men in the village; outlining the action in which the victim was going to be pulled down into the ground. That night was exceptionally long, starless, stormy and cold and impregnated with many strange sounds made by frightening insects. The colourless roof above leaked and down came the rain. The night was most fearful. Children, women and some men of weak courage clung onto the braver ones. The whole multitude sat in silence while the enlightened ones among the Walis acted as the communicators between the seen and unseen, interpreting in all tongues the events to the frightened masses. The victim became insane, escaped their grip and went towards a pool of water in the centre of the village. The Walis men rushed forward and took his hands. A tug-of-war began between the Walis men and the victim. Your *tumbuna* was almost pulled down except for your other *tumbuna* and your *kandere* Lukei who had pulled him out. Then as it was dawning, a coconut was brought and split open and the croton planted on the spot in the centre of the village where the pool of water was. The secret water spirit's name was announced publicly and was told to disappear. Even in bright daylight the following morning, the scene in the village was most frightening. The pool of water in the centre of the village soon attracted crowds from villages near and far."

The meaning behind the mass pig-killing and new order in the village as I later understood was; that there was a man from San Kamap in the east

who was told by his dead parents of earning wealth, curing and despoiling people everywhere in response to representatives to this particular given similar powers of. However it was not really necessary to go and get direct power from superman as power could also indirectly through those who had known this man previously; as long as they were willing to follow the codes outlined. The whole Wape community to west and north to south had at least one or two such representatives inspired one in each village.

In Lau'um the incident took place at the beginning of the week our parents came to take us home. My father was in fact he had encountered this. Important nature would never have occurred in important villages. It had to be members of the families who are the pillars of the village and land.

After returning the tools to their charge and saying "happy holidays" we set out westwards towards the coast almost six p.m. when we made camp. When we at last set foot on the coast at Oliongo Hill, the sun was fast disappearing behind Timeni and the Villages. Between where I stood and the disappearing and the first set of *figus* tree standing as though with the intention to make an entry to the village one had to go down low. The *figus* is of no real use but a hindrance, whereas during the journey that was the door that the whole village relied upon for safety from outside attacks. A spirit that made its home here was the first missionary to the village, he brought holy water and chased him away; and then he would return to his old home in the form of a goanna and enjoy the morning and afternoon sunlight. On my journey, my head was thick and dark with the existence of all these fantasies. Then the instant I stepped out of the roof of the *figus*, I picked up a scene of a newly-ironed shirt, followed by a man with a cigarette such as I used to smell in the Pilots smoking while awaiting the plane and unloading at Lumi. To me it was a moment of transition into an un-



who was told by his dead parents the new powers of earning wealth, curing and destruction. Many people everywhere in response to this had sent representatives to this particular village to be given similar powers of enlightenment. However it was not really necessary for everyone to go and get direct power from the so called superman as power could also be passed on indirectly through those who had got power from this man previously; as long as the whole village was willing to follow the codes of behaviour outlined. The whole Wape community from east to west and north to south had by that time at least one or two such representatives of the inspired one in each village.

In Lau'um the incident took place during the beginning of the week our parents had come to take us home. My father was in fact the one who had encountered this. Important things of this nature would never have occurred to less important villages. It had to begin with the members of the families who are the true owners of the village and land.

After returning the tools to the Brother-in-charge and saying "happy holidays" to teachers we set out westwards towards home. It was almost six p.m. when we made a final ascent. When we at last set foot on the summit of Oliongo Hill, the sun was faster than us. It disappeared behind Timeni and Kalingom Villages. Between where I stood watching the sun disappearing and the first set of houses was a *figus* tree standing as though with parted legs. To make an entry to the village one had to bend right down low. The *figus* is of no real importance now but a hindrance, whereas during the olden days that was the door that the whole village depended upon for safety from outside attacks. The main spirit that made its home here was called Ser, but the first missionary to the village had sprinkled holy water and chased him away; although now and then he would return to his old residence in the form of a goanna and enjoy the early morning and afternoon sunlight. All along the journey, my head was thick and deep in thought of the existence of all these fantasies about this new order. Then the instant I stepped under the roof of the *figus*, I picked up a scent like that of a newly-ironed shirt, followed by the smell of a cigarette such as I used to smell the Mission Pilots smoking while awaiting the plane's loading and unloading at Lumi. To me that was the moment of transition into an unknown world.

Then I began to have the feeling of inner happiness. For me then there were two worlds. The world of the seen and the unseen. On entering the circuit of the first clan, Olionga, it was like being transported into the world of the unseen where only those who had been through the same experience would understand. It seemed as though I was watching a strange film.

As I reached my house, this rather strange experience overtook me. In my mind's eye I encountered thousands of unfamiliar figures which I might describe one by one as an elderly man would name those that fit the descriptions. The whole village was there with the menfolk surrounding me, while the women and children were kept in another house some distance away in case some secret spirit names might be announced that would effect young children so as to cause stunted growth. For women, if they hear important secret names they might become valueless. For older boys like Francis Wilbe and others who knew how to write, that was a practical writing exercise. They were in an exclusive group being able to write down those names considered valuable.

The evening drew on the gradually turned into a fireless, and except for the narrator, a speechless night. The whole village was there now at Fongal. All were taken by the spiritually-oriented atmosphere. It was not easy to avoid wild imaginings and fantasies. The unseen spirits were thought quite unavoidable. Those who were nearly converted, or were already converted could see them or imagine them in their mind's eye; even footsteps and the sound of coins were thought to mean something. In every house, prior to coming for that strange gathering, owners had had tables set up with the best of the food for the dead relatives, hoping to find money on the tables upon their return. How many were fortunate that night and the following nights remained a question. One thing quite obvious was that the audience grew smaller and smaller each night.

Dad's small *haus boi* had had similiar arrangements made, consisting of a small wooden table on which was spread a red handkerchief the size of a teatowel. Upon the table was a newly-bought plate containing *kaukau* and pig-meat well cooked in coconut milk. On both sides of the plate of food stood two bottles containing hibiscus flowers. There was some noise in this small *haus* at one stage so I went to investigate.



There was nothing in the room except two small male and female rats which ran out as I made my appearance. The two rats of course were taken to be my two grandparents. These parents of my father would not touch his food and have anything in return because previously he had had arguments with his uncle and he had not straightened that out. What he should have done was given his uncle some shell money first.

Some clansmen like my uncle had a reputation for chasing after those unseen people and claiming that he got money from them. I can still recall one such night as we were sitting, waiting. This uncle of mine had filled up a dish with some coins that added up to a sum of K15.20. Where he got it from remained a mystery. Of course he could have used his own money. The other inexplicable deed was locating the lost pipe of his elder brother many years before. The pipe had been lost for about four years. Naubi had told us that the spirit of his dead brother had led him to the place where he had left this pipe. When he returned with the pipe my father had claimed it partly as the memory of his cousin-brother and partly because the pipe was my father's and he gave it to his cousin-brother as a present. It was not my father's policy to be chasing after unseen people for their property, so I left my ancestor rats in peace and returned to the anxiously-waiting crowd. Any news was welcome and accepted without question and later on told and retold until everyone knew about it.

There was no sign of material goods that night; perhaps two morals were learned. Firstly there must be peace at all times, smooth relationships and right attitudes towards one's maternal kin, both immediate and distant. Any quarrels should be settled by presents and 'cup of tea' or a party. Should you fail to fulfil your obligations then misfortunes would always be on your side. These dramatic events took place a decade or two ago now. However their effects are still felt by those who went through them. There are those who still consider the events as mysterious and those who think of them as just acting and regard the performers as dreamers. As a participant and an educated one now, I will not blame any of those groups, nor do I blame myself for the part I played. I would consider it a mere effect of social and economic change. An attempt made by a simple man to adapt to many strange concepts, two of which were christianity and the modern cash economy.

One does not have to flip back many pages to discover the actual truth, as prior to the arrival of the christian missions to the area, the Wape and other people of Lumi district had many spirits. There were as many principle goddesses and gods as there were clans and there were as many gods and goddesses as there were families. Though their gods were many in number they had common objectives. They protected members against diseases, tribal wars and thefts. They punished wrong doers. They sent blessings to those who asked for success in various achievements, social, economic and political. They were and are represented by various symbols and totems such as birds, stone, rocks, mountains, animals and reptiles. Others live in rivers, water and mountains. Our principal god in the Fong clan is Yari the snake. He is the god of finance responsible for shell money. He is also responsible for coughs and colds. Anyone who falls victim to this disease knows where to get treatment.

The earliest missionary into the area was Father Temis. He was soon followed by fellow missionaries. Although christianity was introduced into this area round about the mid-forties and early fifties, there were not many converts until the sixties due to various reasons; the obvious ones being reluctance by the people to change their values and concepts, plus difficulties with language and geographical locations. Due to lack of understanding christianity was introduced into the Wape social system in the raw from its previous context. Thus this input was bound to cause many changes. During that transition, many goods as well as tradition itself were destroyed, even some of the previous walking-stick values. What else would these people have done if there was a better and shorter cut to life's success? So long as tradition remained fruitful they would cling firmly on to it; otherwise rejection comes fast.

The bible, rosary beads and holy water were a better magic. These were considered a much more effective means of achieving the aims of their previous gods and goddesses. Without question these enthusiastic materialists set out to destroy anything that would hinder the use of the introduced values. And thus a big campaign for repentance was on. Those who knew a little Pidgin and were able to recite a few basic prayers such as the Our Father, Hail Mary and the Act of Contrition, had their sins heard by the priest,

while those hindered by the language would recall their sins and simulate small knots on *tangets* and cast them into streams. These would then be followed by pig-killings for big feasts and Christmas, New Year and Easter on which these occasions took place. Those days would consist of high spirits and big processions as the beginning of christian singings. These attracted large crowds who usually accompanied the services and *singsings*, given to the converts, godparents and any lucky attendants. Those were *bigpela hamamas*, and christianity in the Melanesian sense was *tru*. The christian seed was, as it were, well protected. If one were to receive the next christian festive season of practical christian; and obviously the houses were always full; everyone was happy and responsible were always high up.

Then came the period when christianity was as full. It seemed as though a wolf in sheep's clothing while the shepherd was away was it that the sheep had fled in search of pastures elsewhere? This happened in the early sixties when new missionaries, Mission to Many Lands, moved into the area and its influence. Many villages left the Roman Catholics, to follow the new mission. Competition was on between the two communities to get as many converts as possible. The conflict that there were even smaller sub-groups created within the society. The rivalry between the two rivals and the competition between the villages; as well as between the mission groups. There was hatred everywhere.

I can still recall the incident at Boruim Village between the mission groups. The village was situated about 300 metres. After ascending the hill were greeted by the villagers. The remaining Catholics while the new mission into the *Tala Tala* Mission. At this group at that time. Upon the priest left me and others behind in the village without a single word. Seeing the priest, remained in the village and the priest were left to



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while those hindered by the language difficulty would recall their sins and simultaneously tie small knots on *tangets* and cast them into the streams. These would then be followed by mass pig-killings for big feasts and celebrations. Christmas, New Year and Easter were big days on which these occasions took place. They were, not surprisingly, most happy and enjoyable days. Those days would consist of high Latin masses and big processions as the beginnings or endings of christian singsings. These attracted huge crowds who usually accompanied new converts. After the services and *singsings*, presents were given to the converts, godparents and sometimes any lucky attendants. Those were the days of *bigpela hamamas*, and christianity in the Wape and the Melanesian sense was *trupela lotu*. The christian seed was, as it were, well-cultivated and protected. If one were to receive presents during the next christian festive season one had to be a practical christian; and obviously the churches were always full; everyone was happy and those responsible were always high up on the ladder.

Then came the period when churches were not as full. It seemed as though a wolf had eaten some of the sheep while the shepherd was fast asleep, or was it that the sheep had fled in search of greener pastures elsewhere? This happened around about the early sixties when new mission, the Christian Mission to Many Lands, moved as it expanded its influence. Many villages left the *Bobi*, or the Roman Catholics, to follow the *Tala Tala*. A big competition was on between the two christian communities to get as many Wape as their converts as possible. The conflicts were so great that there were even smaller subsocial systems created within the society. There was conflict between the two rivals and there was conflict between the villages; as well as between villages and mission groups. There was confusion and hatred everywhere.

I can still recall the incident that happened at Boruim Village between the members of the rival groups. The village was situated at an elevation of about 300 metres. After ascending this hill we were greeted by the villagers. They were a group of remaining Catholics while the others had given into the *Tala Tala* Mission. A pastor was with this group at that time. Upon hearing this, the priest left me and others behind and made for the village without a single word. The crowd when seeing the priest, remained in silence while the pastor and the priest were left to call each other

names. The villagers were expecting the cold war to turn into a hot one, and watched to see how the white men fought. However for the concerned ones, they were forming oppositions on their respective sides.

With the presence of the two groups, they were to use new techniques. They opened up more new stations, put up new schools and aidposts, and built airstrips. Education and economic development were the new priorities. The Roman Catholics had the advantage over the other in that regard because they had more manpower due to a longer period of influence and therefore had a greater output of catechists, store boys and cookboys, as well as dedicated Christian Catholics.

Villagers were taught about *sosaities* to be formed to set up *bisnises* such as *panis kakaruk* and *panis kau* trade stores. These businesses were all associated with the concept of christianity introduced earlier; that is, that the code of behaviour introduced previously must be closely followed and adhered to. Some people even went on to mention that the cattle were like human beings as they came from Sydney, or *em ples tudak*. Any misconduct would lead to them being sick and therefore unsuccessful in business. By about 1963, there were many Mission Day Schools with classes from prep. up to standard three. To cater for advancement in education, primary boarding schools were opened up on some of the Mission Stations such as at Fatima, Gauliwape and Karaitem for the Roman Catholic and Ankakunak for the C.M.M.L.

The only Junior High School in the West Sepik at that time was operated by the Roman Catholics at Vanimo but that was transhipped over Seleio Island in Aitape; on the coast where the Mission had, and still has its headquarters. The High School had grades six and seven at first. The C.M.M.L. on the other hand sent most of its selected students to Kaindi, the Government School in Wewak, to do grades four, five and six, and later on proceed to Brandi High School, also a government run high school. The schools in Wewak by consensus seemed more attractive than those in Aitape. Many parents would encourage their children to attend preparatory classes or schools that would enable them to go to schools in Wewak. Of those who were selected for the junior high school in Aitape, many were reluctant. Some of the students who went soon ran away or never returned after the



first year. These students had to walk to and from the school during Christmas Vacations, while it was the opposite for those who went to Wewak. Besides the travelling difficulties, many students were influenced by their conservative relatives who had not yet changed their attitudes towards sorcery, magic and *sanguma*.

While the so-called competition between the two christian missions was progressing, the villagers especially the half-literates such as the catechists, began to sense something improper in the system. The two missions were furious about one another, yet they were white and spoke the same language. They even taught about the same God yet used different names. The Roman Catholics called him Jesus and the C.M.M.L. called him *Jisas*. The story about him was exactly the same; however, the C.M.M.L. did not believe in saints and assumption. Previously also some missionary personnel had tried to accommodate themselves to the local culture too quickly. For instance, one of the pioneer priests named himself after an important villager from Maui Village. This man had died many years ago. Coincidentally this priest happened to possess similar bodily features to the dead man. One can imagine what thoughts were in the minds of the simple-minded people of those times. So the competition between the same groups of people, their premature adaption to local concepts, reintroduction of traditions disregarded previously and the people's association of religious concepts to business concepts formed thick clouds in the minds of the people; many people then were pushed out of christianity rather than pulled into it. They didn't run away but began adjusting themselves to these conditions. This led to many cargo-cult waves which I will term as adjustment movements.

In Fatima to the north east of Lumi where one of the Roman Catholic Mission Stations was situated, the society had two businesses, of poultry and cattle. The chickens and cows were imported which contributed to more confusion than from where they originated. Incidentally the businesses both failed due to mismanagement. At the same time, some of the villagers were believed to have fallen into the hands of the new mission. The villagers' explanation for the failure of the poultry and cattle business was that this was due to the latter. The priest who initiated the project unfortunately had bad health and was transferred

out. To the people's stream of thoughts, Father became ill because the business failed and this was their fault because the villagers were disobedient. *Bisnis* was seen as a personified thing that needs no skillful management. As long as it was there it would flourish if the people acted according to Christian principles.

In Lumi a similar idea was introduced. Every villager who was a Catholic was taxed 50 toea per head as a contribution to the society to be named the Lumi Cooperative which was later changed to Lumi Naui Industry, but presently called Mau Industry. As misleading as it was, the society, or cooperative, or industry, was to run a cattle project and later a trade store. A few years later people began to complain about their 50 toea in spite of the warning against such misconduct. The business almost fell down. At the same time the priest who initiated the project had a mental breakdown and had to be transferred.

These two priests were good people who wanted to show us the right direction but many of us were still not of one mind. Therefore, those who sent these people with the *bisnis* had been made sick for our misconduct. That was the general conclusion people had about the failure of all the attempted business activities. This had happened to the people in other parts of the country and other people in other countries with a low level of technology and whose culture was religiously-centred. These people acted curiously when confronted with an influx of material goods such as processed goods, machinery and money. They seemed to appear out of the blue. One thing they knew too well. That was that the priest spent hours at the cemetery. This to the people was the contact the priest had with the dead to arrange for the goods and money they needed. By about 1961 things had got out of hand in this area. There were adjustment movements everywhere. The critics would say it was the fault of the missionaries, but on the other hand how else would one have started, taking into account the conditions of those times?

It was a day's walk to Lumi. On the Sunday evening of January 1963, I set off sadly with my family towards Nai'uf about two hours walk away, after saying farewell to a gathering multitude of friends and relatives. There at Nai'uf

we camped for the last night. The following morning at the soon morning birds, mother was first as she set about doing her usual duty up was my old father, who in his fast with a betelnut, began the last word of advice.

"Well I have nothing else new. All that is necessary I have told. Watch out for what you eat do sago that you will eat there is a coastal swamp sago is of a different you eat it mixed with forbidden as cassowary meat, or the flesh you will be sick. You will hurt your stomach. Be careful with bits of food you eat, and never leave them. The coastal people are great sorcerers. The worst tribes to watch out for are the Yakamu. The coastal rivers are full of *masalai*, man-eating crocodiles. Aitape and I know every spot there."

"From the descriptions I gathered the school is situated near a big river. That river is dangerous for its current and the crocodiles. But crocodiles will never harm an innocent nor will any other harm, for that is you as long as you avoid bad customs and listen to your elders. You will return home surely. Avoid the worst things. Don't steal and never argue. These are the things that I tell you very quickly. If you follow you have nothing to worry about. Your life will not be shortened. That was the way of the *bigmen* now. They always fought with other people to win themselves. Because of this many died. They died young too. Your young too for the same reason. Be a survivor of that generation; only calm, cool and straight."

"I can recall two occasions: narrow escapes that proved my survival. One of these happened to me during my time as a carrier boy for A.N.G. Village in Wewak. It was in the evening we were cooking our food, some thought to take with us the following morning. To our surprise, cannon shells hit the house, blasting off the roof. We fled. Thinking about the food left



we camped for the last night as a family. The following morning at the sound of the first morning birds, mother was first to be heard as she set about doing her usual duties. The next up was my old father, who after breaking his fast with a betelnut, began to give me his last word of advice.

"Well I have nothing else new to advise you. All that is necessary I have told you all along. Watch out for what you eat down there. The sago that you will eat there is bad sago. The coastal swamp sago is of a different species and if you eat it mixed with forbidden food, such as cassowary meat, or the flesh of huge fish, you will be sick. You will have a swollen stomach. Be careful with bits and pieces of food you eat, and never leave them lying around. The coastal people are great sorcerers. The two worst tribes to watch out for are the Maioi and the Yakamu. The coastal rivers are infested with *masalai*, man-eating crocodiles. I have been to Aitape and I know every spot there."

"From the descriptions I gather your new school is situated near a big river called Raiyo. That river is dangerous for its fast-moving current and the crocodiles. However, these crocodiles will never harm an innocent being, nor will any other harm, for that matter, come to you as long as you avoid bad things. Follow your customs and listen to your teachers and you will return home surely. Women are the worst things. Don't steal and never fight or even argue. These are the things that will bring harm to you very quickly. If you follow your customs, you have nothing to worry about and your life will not be shortened. That was why our clan has no *bigmen* now. They always quarrelled and fought with other people as well as with themselves. Because of this many of them have died. They died young too. Your uncle Yaril died young too for the same reason. I am the only survivor of that generation; only because I am calm, cool and straight."

"I can recall two occasions where I had narrow escapes that proved my innocence. One of these happened to me during the war when I was a carrier boy for A.N.G.A.U. at Saurei Village in Wewak. It was in the evening. We were cooking our food, some to eat and some to take with us the following morning. To our surprise, cannon shells hit the house we were in, blasting off the roof. We fled immediately. Thinking about the food left behind, I stole

back only to be greeted with another lot of shells. I quickly made a dive. As soon as I dived, the third lot blew up at the seat of my boot. Blinded and filled with horror, I staggered with what I could grab."

"The second one happened to me when I was back home after the war. Our tribal war between the Taute was coming close to an end. I used to share a house with my elder brother, your uncle. One day I was hungry. I was preparing a fire to cook sago. As I stood up to fetch firewood from above, I heard the taut sound of the string of a bow and miraculously I dived. The deadly arrow whistled passed me and landed on the back wall. Breathlessly I lay on the floor."

"That time the Lau'um people were the most feared and blood-thirsty people in the West Wape region. They were fierce in open face-to-face fights as well as in secret war. These commonly-feared men are now walking the streets of the dead, yet their names ring in the ears of many of those who knew them and became common topics in discussions about the past. They were only young men in their 20s during the forties, but none are living to be called grandparents by their son's children."

"The first arrow war between Taute and Lau'um where these warriors were involved, began not so long ago over a bride-price. A girl from Lau'um was to be paid for by the Taute for their tribesmen. This took place in Yolowalu Tsi. The Lau'um were unsatisfied with the amount of bride price, so a Lau'um man speared one of the Taute men on the leg. Everyone fled for their lives. The Lau'um chased the Taute down to Wofkuno Orou to the Lapu, stream towards their home. That was the beginning of the Lau'um-Taute tribal war. That was to go on until 1945."

"That evening a certain Lau'um man remained at Taute hiding amongst the banana trees. A certain young woman, forgetting about the incident, was on her way to the cliff to dump the rubbish. The unseen, nameless Lau'um warrior took careful aim and let fly an arrow which landed on what it was seeking; the heart. The unfortunate lady gave out but one yell and fell down dead. The murderer took to the bush towards his destination."

"In response to this the Taute yelled their war cries and took off after the man but were soon restricted by the darkness, and gave up the chase. On his arrival the murderer of the young



Taute lady reported the news and the *karamuts* were beaten in conveying the victorious message. The following morning the Lau'um left early to go and meet the Taute on the road, knowing they would come for their revenge. The Lau'um went as far as Timelefu'uf, a part of the bush belonging to Taute about 2 kilometres from the first village of Mifu. There, they were greeted by a maternal relative who started to distribute lime and betelnuts to them conscious, or unconscious of the armed men in the bushes. A man from Lau'um who was the true distant relative of this Taute entertainer was the last to arrive. When he saw what was happening he was suspicious. Knowing that it was a trick, and rather than risking the lives of his fellow countrymen, he speared his Taute relative. The Taute let out the war cries and appeared, but the Lau'um were then prepared and rushed at them."

"After the attack many on both sides were injured. No more open battles took place after that one, but when all was forgotten, a Taute man came again to avenge the dead woman. If I were not innocent, I would have fallen victim to that man. A clean person has less chance of retaining dirt, goes the saying. What I have just told you is not just something from the past. The story has a lot for us to learn," my father concluded.

After breakfast it was almost daybreak. The youthful morning was alive with birds as they flew heavily from tree to tree quenching their thirst with morning dewdrops. There was not a speck of mist anywhere. Anything that could be seen with the naked eye was in full view. The great mountain range to the west at whose feet the mighty Sepik River lazily flows, stood watching. To the east, the great mountain of Simoro stood almost naked, or at least so it appeared in those few early hours. Mount Kapore stood to the north awaiting to be the first to see the mission plane appear from Aitape, further due north.

There was one feature in this picturesque view that seemed most predominant. That was a village on a ridge to the west. In this village, standing out above all and telling of a mountain village, was an Erima tree near which were the onlookers from Fongal Village. This was the village that had nursed and bred me for the past eleven years, hoping that one day I would play a reciprocal role.

After another glance at this scenery, I picked

up my knapsack and sadly led the procession towards the rising sun, to be in time for the plane.

At Lumi my three comrades had their luggage and themselves weighed already and were anxiously awaiting me. Then it was my turn to have myself and the luggage weighed. The parents of the three other kids were gathering around the eldest of the four, and were advising and passing on the parental responsibilities to him.

The leader of the group was a youthful character, short, sturdy and aggressive. The next in age was listening eagerly and after every conclusion, nodded his head with parted lips. One was my age and both of us listened but would forget anyway.

"The plane will be due in at any moment now," said the Brother.

By now more and more villagers from the nearby villages of Otimingi, Maui, Klebu'uf and Wapu'uf dribbled in. Among those joining the pool of people were half naked school boys from Fatima, Yaluwape and Karaitem. There seemed to be a change in things here, for among the new arrivals were some who seemed to stand out against the others. These people had *laplaps*, *nambas*, neck chains with crucifixes on them and cleaner bodies. They were also conversing in English. They were, as I learned afterwards, the Seleo boys. These boys were attending a junior high school on Seleo Island in Aitape. Their *laplaps* were red with white crosses.

While they were conversing with the Brother in a language unfamiliar to most of the bystanders, and arguing about the fight to Aitape that day, the crowd began directing their voices north towards the plane as it made its appearance over the distant hills above the headwaters of the Sipi River. As soon as it had landed, the list of passengers was read aloud, announcing the four Lumi boys. The four of us responded immediately and boarded the aircraft. The crowd of friends and relatives began to move inwards to locate us and to bid us farewell.

"All clear," said the pilot.

The plane shook as the single propellor began to turn slowly at first, then faster and faster until it moved the plane along the strip and glided into the mountain breeze towards the destination where only it and the pilot knew.

What an experience to be in the rather intestineless stomach of that strange noisy thing

with an artificial umbilical cord to our laps! There was not a single movement even if the noisy thing. The plane did shake at certain points. The plane met the sea breeze. After a while of another big shake, which left us the pilot pointed to what seemed a roof building.

"That," he murmured, "is the

"How come it is white?" enquired

"Nogat, em solwara bruk lor the pilot.

"Westap arerer bilong em?" voice.

"Hei! No end," I thought to myself and how come it is very strange remembered what my father had

"Life will not go on like this forever. Later we will all disappear. One of the natural disasters is going to erupt in our world and its miseries; whether it be a quake where the earth will open up and the sky will lower itself down on us in between. Another possibility is that fire might destroy us. The most possible, and most frightening possibility is that everyone might be eaten up by the dead people. But what about the living? Yes, there might one day be a flood that will cover the whole surface of the earth and will drift the *binatang*, or sago grass.

"It will be during these natural disasters the sheep will be separated from the flock. You were born I enrolled your name in the Mission register. Father had told me about what might happen to this world. A good christian could survive. For that one day there might be a big storm, the West Trade Wind. The sea will rise and level and cover up all places. Our mountains will become islands. It happens everyone will be madly looking for survival. The father said I could survive. The secret is if you use your rosary and your cross. Simply hang onto your cross. If by chance you grab a drifting log, you can drift and at the same time pray. You will be saved by being on an island or some dry land where you will be saved. And of course, if you have a boat you will sink like other bad people. It will be too heavy to swim."



with an artificial umbilical cord tightly tied over our laps! There was not a single chance of any movement even if the noisy thing relaxed or not. The plane did shake at certain points when the plane met the sea breeze. After a few minutes of another big shake, which left us all breathless, the pilot pointed to what seemed to be an iron roof building.

"That," he murmured, "is the solwara sea."

"How come it is white?" enquired someone.

"Nogat, em solwara bruk long rif," replied the pilot.

"Westap arerer bilong em?" said another voice.

"Hei! No end," I thought to myself. "No end, and how come it is very strong?" Then I remembered what my father had once told me.

"Life will not go on like this forever. Sometime later we will all disappear. One of the following natural disasters is going to end the present world and its miseries; whether there be a big quake where the earth will open up and everyone will fall in, or when the earth will move up and the sky will lower itself down and squeeze us in between. Another possible disaster might be that fire might destroy us all. The other most possible, and most frightening one, would be that everyone might be eaten by the spirits of the dead people. But what about the sea? Oh yes, there might one day be a flood that will cover the whole surface of the earth and human beings will drift the *binatang*, or sago grubs."

"It will be during these natural disasters that the sheep will be separated from the goats. When you were born I enrolled your name on the Mission register. Father had told me a story about what might happen to this world and how a good christian could survive. Father told me that one day there might be a big *Talio* North West Trade Wind. The sea will rise above its level and cover up all places. Only the highest mountains will become islands. When that happens everyone will be madly struggling for survival. The father said I could be a survivor. The secret is if you use your rosary beads and your cross. Simply hang onto your rosary and if by chance you grab a drifting log or a plank, you can drift and at the same time say your prayers. You will be saved by being directed to an island or some dry land where you can be saved. And of course, if you have been a bad man you will sink like other bad people, as you will be too heavy to swim."

All these thoughts were rewinding in my mind when all of a sudden the plane began to drop. Immediately I held my breath and bit my teeth as I firmly held onto the seat. The swampy environment rolled beneath us as more and more sago palms came up to meet us. The pilot skilfully guided the obedient craft to the grassy strip which was approaching us at a swinging pace. I used to be told by those who had been in aeroplanes before that the best thing one can do at landings and take offs, is to close one's eyes and hold one's breath. That in fact was exactly what we all did at that fatal moment. If my father had been beside me he would have suggested a better alternative; that is, take out rosary beads or better still, say an act of contrition with closed eyes. In fact I do the latter more often nowadays unconsciously, at take-offs and landings. Thank goodness we did not cease breathing all the way as the plane's wheels touched onto the grassy surface beneath and taxied gracefully towards a huge open building which sheltered the plane from bad weather.

The environment being surveyed now, was very strange. Firstly there was a massive building where back home there would not have been any land big enough to accommodate it. For miles around there was nothing more predominant, nothing higher or more peculiar than it. The flat terrain was covered repetitively with sago palms and *kunai* grass. Towards the east and north and south-east direction, the coconut palms gave some colour to the environment. To add to the complete strangeness, an unending roar of what was interpreted as a huge flood was heard. The noise, as was later understood, was the noise of leaping waves.

"Kalop long car," said the priest in charge and the planner of the newly-established school, after taking stock of the new arrivals.

When everyone had boarded, the engine gave a kick and the object thrust forward and headed toward the direction where the unending noise was approaching. The good old bomb screamed mercilessly north, then turned south very close to the shores of this great mass of water which reappeared occasionally between spaces in rows and rows and rows of coconuts, and eventually hid behind the rocky hills which stood as barriers between sea and land. At the end of the longest ride ever made on a moving vehicle, the landrover pulled up at the entrance of a small building near a large clearing. This



was going to be our new home for eight long years. As our vehicle came to a stop, a European Missionary appeared and was conversing with the driver about the new arrivals. The place did not appear like a school as there were no buildings, classrooms, dormitories or anything that goes to make up a school. In fact there were nine odd buildings. Firstly one building was occupied by this European. About 30 metres away was a power house. Another 30 metres or so to the west four uncompleted buildings which were later to be two dormitory assembly halls and a classroom. Behind the two dormitories, half-hidden in the tall *kunai* grass was a mobile kitchen. Opposite the power house due south, about 40 metres away, was a scale-house. Apart from these few odd buildings, the rest of the place consisted of stumps, logs, a few newly-burnt patches here and there and canes and *mimose*, grass and mosquitoes and frogs and water. Hoi boi! Water, water, water, water everywhere. Just as well they called it *Wara* Plate and not *Wara* Cup.

The sound of frogs was most deafening, especially at night after a shower of rain. This portion of the landscape, this part of the ecosystem, this natural environment was one day to be completely modified to fit a master plan, to be changed to an artificial environment, a school. Who was going to modify this? The fact was there were no workmen.

"The Nukus, Karaitem, Ningil and the Yalawapaw will probably be in this afternoon," said the driver. "I'll drop them in as they show up." With that he took off in the same direction.

"You are all Lumi, ha!" the teacher said as he turned towards us. "I guess you have had a good look at the place from here. It is rough and there is more to be done. You will work very hard and you will be very tough men when all is done. Onkertei isn't it? Many Nambis boys and some more bush boys will be in tomorrow and on Monday we will get started, but in the meantime you can retire to the dormitory."

The first night out at this place was yet another mere dream. The previous lonely night at Lumi two years ago, was bad in the sense that I was without my family. This time it was without those with whom I had grown up with and knew so well. This time it was with the kids I only knew by name as well as those I hardly knew. As was found out later, the Wape made up

the largest tribal group in the school yet we used different variations in our language and habits and that I found totally strange. There were other tribal groups such as the Nuku, Sissano, Arop, Malol, Sera, Lemieng, Yahamul, Ulua and Vanimio. Most of the kids from other groups were bigger and older than us, such as Otto, Herman, and Andrias. What if these kids tried to beat us up? If they did we would have been helpless. However this new place was not the place for that. It was a place to get to know many people and to be friends.

At Lumi the three of us had slept in one small room, whereas here, the room was large and open with two large lockable doors and sixteen large windows with flywire to keep out the blood-thirsty mosquitoes. The noise pollution was endless and it would continue on like that while water was still lying around. The croaking noise of frogs was more than frightening and it seemed to come from all directions both near and far. To add to the already polluted air, heavy rain began to pour down lightly. When the lights in the dormitory went out, occasionally the whole room would be illuminated with lightning. This light was then followed by the loud banging of thunder on the roof. As the lightning struck, bodies large and small could be seen covered and lined neatly across the hard concrete surface with legs pulled right up to join with their chins. When seen from distance they looked rather like Egyptian mummies.

We four new arrivals lay in such a way that the two elder kids were on either side with the younger ones in the centre. Such a dark, stormy night seemed to attract ghosts and *sangumas*. These used to flee with small kids but if they were in the middle there was little chance of their doing so. That night and the following few nights were most frightening.

Little by little the students came in all forms of transport, some by plane, some by canoes, some even by tractors, while others came on foot. The first assembly took place on Monday of February 1963 where all the students, the two teachers and the supervisor gathered in the dormitory. Many things were discussed after the names of students for each grade were read out. We had no knowledge of many of the things discussed. Such concepts like prefects, dormitory captains, class captains and elections were all new to us. They were, as we found out later, necessary to the smooth running of the school. In fact in the

school of those days, prefects turned out to be very useful magistrates and peace officers as the means of establishing and maintaining relationships between different tribal groups.

The assembly was followed by an introduction which took place in the dormitory with two nuns as teachers. The small grade threes walked, crawled and crawled, headed by a nun addressed as Mother. The grade fours were headed by a Sister.

These were the days now gone by in my memories. They were days of hard work, days of never-ending work from dawn to dusk, in and day-out, Monday to Saturday and Sunday mornings at times. Work! Work! Cutting, clearing, burning, dragging logs, stumps, digging drains, carting gravel, cooking, and of course, doing housework. They were bad days, or were they? I think it will be a beginning to all things, I suppose I will not walk before crawling. In actual fact these days will always be remembered by those who had created what is now only a school. The school is now the monument, which was involved in its foundation, reflects the past good, bad, enjoyable and unenjoyable. For out of what used to be nothing but a jungle, is now one of the cornerstones of the country; a provincial high school. The High School is annually turning out a large number of the country's manpower to be utilized in the developing country. Some of the school leavers are now doctors, teachers, nurses, pilots, soldiers, to indicate but a few. These days of what was toil and trouble, have turned out to be more fruitful than first thought. Therefore, a credit to the initiators and pioneers. For those so consciously and successfully in that tradition of life, of a more traditional lifestyle like my dad, he made it to the other side of that part of the world and to have done so, one had undoubtedly consciously or unconsciously aided in the walking sticks.

"Now you have almost come to the end of your school life," our grade ten teacher said. "You will be out on your own to put in what you have learnt. This world," he said, "is wide, misty and rough. So do not be afraid because you are among the educated elite. The world is going to accept you wherever you go. You are not all going to go out as young Yangailu Labourers. You are all



school of those days, prefects turned out to be very useful magistrates and peace officers, as well as the means of establishing and cementing relationships between different tribal groups.

The assembly was followed by a brief introduction which took place in the classrooms with two nuns as teachers. The small half-naked grade threes walked, crawled and marched, headed by a nun addressed as Mother, while the grade fours were headed by a Sister.

These were the days now gone by with vivid memories. They were days of hardship and turmoil, days of never-ending work parades day-in and day-out, Monday to Saturdays and even Sunday mornings at times. Work! Work! Work! Cutting, clearing, burning, dragging logs, digging stumps, digging drains, carting gravel, spreading gravel, cooking, and of course, doing homework. They were bad days, or were they? There has to be a beginning to all things, I suppose. One does not walk before crawling. In actual fact, those days will always be remembered by those of us who had created what is now only history. The school is now the monument, which for those involved in its foundation, reflects the events both of the past good, bad enjoyable and unenjoyable. For out of what used to be nothing but swamp and jungle, is now one of the corner stones of the country; a provincial high school. St. Ignatius High School is annually turning out some of the country's manpower to be utilized in this rapidly-developing country. Some of the school's graduates are now doctors, teachers, nurses, lecturers, pilots, soldiers, to indicate but a few. So those days of what was toil and moil, have in fact turned out to be more fruitful than fruitless, and therefore, a credit to the initiators planners and pioneers. For those so consciously following successfully in that tradition of life, or even in a more traditional lifestyle like my dad, one had made it to the other side of that part of the river; and to have done so, one had undoubtedly been consciously or unconsciously aided by the walking sticks.

"Now you have almost come to the end of your school life," our grade ten teacher once said. "You will be out on your own to put into practice what you have learnt. This world," he continued, is wide, misty and rough. So do not think that because you are among the educated elite that the world is going to accept you wherever you go. You are not all going to go out as a group of young Yangailu Labourers. You are all going out

as individuals to take your place among others swarming around less aimlessly, or aimlessly, depending on who you are. You will definitely float around aimlessly if you don't now decide on what your destination is; and set your directions right. If you don't, you will be like a lost ship in the dark stormy sea. Like this ship, you will be tossed around and will drift at the mercy of the wind and waves until you run aground on an isolated reef somewhere, and finally become washed onto some strange shore all broken up into tiny bits and pieces. Don't get me wrong, this is not a prediction of what is going to happen to any of you, nor is it a prophecy. I hope not! However, the chance is there, and it is up to you to avoid them. The life that you are going to face is new and strange. It is completely unlike that which your parents and their parents have been brought up in, but they have gone through the process that catered for them for that life; life in the village. Likewise, you have been prepared for this new life in your eight years at school. Of course it all depends on your careers. For those who advanced, you will need further training in preparing for them. Yet some things will still be difficult. For instance, you will be making decisions, many of which will be new and challenging. However, these and other problems can be solved if you are responsible and use your common sense.

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Responsibility and commonsense; these certainly must be the new walking-sticks that one has to use to cross another part of the river of life. Though these may be different concepts, they bear one basic logic when comparing them to those my father always referred to. That is, if one is to be successful in life, one had to stick to the principles of life by conforming to the social norms. As has been the case in the Wape society, such norms, values and morals and the corner stones upon which this society is built.

There are numerous testimonies of such cases. There is a testimony that I was told by my friend while I was undertaking a brief oral history course at the University of Papua New Guinea. This oral testimony tells about the reasons why a clan in a village called Taute, a village about 10 kilometres south of my village, became extinct.

Once upon a time in the village of Taute, there was a young girl and a young boy who were fond of one another, so they used to have sexual



intercourse. After this love affair, the young man used to tell of his sexual behaviour with this girl to other young men in the single house. The story soon went around until everyone in the village, including the girl heard about it. The girl became very ashamed. She decided on a plan to get even with the young man.

One day she went into the bush and picked a ball-like fruit the size of the tennis ball. On it she stuck some sago nails and brought it home. That night the same young man called in at her house. Before inviting the young man in, the girl carefully adjusted the thorned ball in herself. When the young man entered, he asked the girl to undress herself, but the girl told him to have intercourse with her grass skirt on for a change. That they did. The outcome was that the young man ended up with broken nails all over his penis. Soon afterwards the injured man had a very big swelling. This made him spend a lot of time in the house.

The young man had a married brother. For a while the wife of the elder brother used to send food to the young man. This continued for some time until the elder brother and his wife became suspicious. One day the wife of the elder brother sent her son to investigate the matter. When the boy had learnt from his uncle all he could, he informed his mother about the situation. Upon hearing this, the wife of the elder brother made plans to cure the young man.

Early one morning the injured man was requested to come out and sit in the sun. When he was brought out and seated in the sun, the woman pretended to stir sago and she set herself to work. Firstly she boiled water in the bamboo. When the woman was about to pour water onto the sago in the wooden pot, the young man was told to move closer to warm himself near the fire. When he was near the fire the woman began to stir the sago sitting down exposing her genitals. When the injured man saw this he was deeply aroused and thus had a huge erection. The swollen penis burst and let out the puss and blood. The elder brother's wife then nursed the young man. The young man afterwards thanked his brother's wife for the help. However, he did not forget about the girl who did that to him.

One fine day during the breadfruit season, the young man went to his breadfruit trees beside the Sipi River. There he climbed up, picked some and started to cook them. While he was busy cooking, he saw some young girls coming up

stream. When the young girls were closer, he noticed that the girl who hurt him previously was among them. As the girl approached him, the young man invited them to join him. After the feast of breadfruit, the girls continued their journey upstream. The young man's girlfriend purposely left behind her armband. On their way up the girl told the other girls that she had left the armband and that she wanted to return for it. When the young man saw the armband, he knew the girl had purposely left it, and would return for it. This was his chance to take revenge.

Not long afterwards the girl returned. When he saw her coming, he quickly thought of a plan. He quickly took ripe breadfruit and covered it with hot ash. When the girl arrived she pretended to ask the young man if he had seen the armband. The young man said he had not and so they joined forces to search for it. After a long and tiring search they sat down. They were both fond of one another and began to have oral sex. Then the young man told his lover to lie down. The young man pretended to have sexual intercourse with the girl, but instead of his penis, the young man inserted the hot breadfruit flesh into the girl's vagina, with the other hand over the victim's mouth. When the girl was dead he dug a hole under the old, fallen sago and buried the corpse.

In the village the family of the missing girl were searching for her everywhere but with no luck. The group of girls were asked her whereabouts, but they said that the girl had left them to go back and fetch her missing armband. The young man was asked, but he denied seeing the girl. After sometime, the family almost completely forgot about the girl.

Not long after the breadfruit incident the village people decided to have a big *singsing*. At these particular *singsings* an opportunity is given to composers to try out their new compositions which usually have hidden meanings. These songs were based on brave deeds. For this young man it was his chance to put on his new composition. So he went along to perform it. The young man then sang his new song. The brother of the missing girl was in the audience. After listening to the song, he worked out the meaning of the song and related it to his sister. Sadly the young boy left the audience and quickly went to his house to inform his father about the chant. The two of them then returned to the *singsing* to learn more about it. When satisfied that they had learnt the true meaning behind the song, they

went home and thought of a way to avenge the death of their relative.

Their chance came during the next *singsing*. The father of the young man who had been approached the young man who was involved in the crime and asked him to go on. The young man agreed. The following day the two set off to a part of the river where fish were plentiful. The young man brought with him his nephew and brother. The threesome arrived at the selected spot and began work preparing the poison rope, a bamboo razor. The young man dived with the solution. The young man was unaware that his brother was already in the water. When the young man came up, the girl's brother grabbed him and started to cut him into pieces.

The nephew of the young man was also in the water. He was not there for his uncle, but there seemed to be something wrong with him. He asked what might have happened to him. Not long afterwards the young man was found with dirt and blood floating downstream. The nephew knew that the man must have been responsible for the delay of his uncle. He chased the man downstream but he was not there. The man who had invited the young man to the *singsing* had already left while his young nephew was still there. He cried all the time and reported the incident to his father. Days, weeks and months went by but the family almost forgot about the late nephew.

Then came another dry season. The village was planning for a much bigger *singsing* which was to be hosted by the brother of the murdered man. An invitation was sent to relatives and extended relatives of the village, both near and far. In preparation the celebration finally began. The dancing groups and observers far began to pour in. The night-long feasting was on.

The site for the dancing and feasting was on a large tree with many branches. The brother who hosted the *singsing* advised his friends not to climb up the tree when the dancing began. The others however did, not knowing the danger. The long night drew on and the dancing and feasting went on. The *singsing* became more and more night dancers drove the *singsing* was out of control. The



went home and thought of a way to avenge the death of their relative.

Their chance came during the next dry season. The father of the young murdered girl approached the young man who was suspected of the crime and asked him to go on a fishing trip. The young man agreed. The following day was fine so the two set off to a part of a river where fish were plentiful. The young man was careful and brought with him his nephew. When the threesome arrived at the selected spot, they set to work preparing the poison rope, after which the young man dived with the solution to kill the fish. The young man was unaware that the girl's brother was already in the water armed with a bamboo razor. When the young man went into the water, the girl's brother grabbed hold of him and started to cut him into pieces.

The nephew of the young man waited a long time for his uncle, but there seemed to be no sign of him, so he asked what might have become of him. Not long afterwards the young nephew saw dirt and blood floating downstream. The young nephew knew that the man must have been responsible for the delay of his uncle, so he chased the man downstream but soon lost sight of him. The man who had invited the young man had already left while his young nephew was downstream. So when the boy returned, there was no one there. He cried all the way home and reported the incident to his father. The family cried and destroyed part of the family's property. Days, weeks and months went by and soon the family almost forgot about the latest death.

Then came another dry season. The village was planning for a much bigger festivity. This *singsing* was to be hosted by the clan of the murdered man. An invitation was extended to relatives and extended relatives of neighbouring villages, both near and far. After much preparation the celebration finally eventuated. The dancing groups and observers from near and far began to pour in. The night-long *singsing* and feasting was on.

The site for the dancing and feasting was up on a large tree with many branches. The man who hosted the *singsing* advised his visitors and friends not to climb up the tree where the fun was. The others however did, not knowing what was going on. The long night drew on. They ate, sang and danced. The *singsing* became enormous as more and more night dancers dribbled in. The *singsing* was out of control. The dancers went

mad. The tree became like a bent bow with the weight of the people and began to bend towards a huge lake. Seeing this, the brother of the murdered young man went for his sharpest stone axe and gave a mighty swing, sending the tree into the lake with each and every singer. So that was the fair, or unfair reward of the non-conformists in that society.

The end result of course, is that there is no continuity of this clan. I suppose this is because the clan as a social system cannot function if there is a leak in the system. For every system to function all parts or elements must perform their special role in a normal way, so as to arrive at the expected end which is its goal, or function.

A plant as a physical system is comprised of elements, or parts, such as roots, trunk, branches and leaves. All of these parts must work together to keep the plant alive so as to reproduce flowers, fruit and seeds. Reproduction is the function of any living system. For the plant to perform its function well, it has to conform to the rules of nature simply by having access to sufficient water, nutrients, air and light. The society as a social system had parts, and these parts must work cooperatively to perform a function.

The elements of a society as a social system are people, their values, norms and sanctions, and their function is the continuity of the society as a system. Some social systems are luckier than others, in the sense that there is a continuity in that social system, or subsocial system, for instance, a clan. Many are not so lucky. In the Wape social system, the subsocial systems which normally do not function are the clans. Various explanations like the one told earlier are given.

The Lau'um Wapeltei clan, or the prime clan of Lau'um is Fongal. This, my subclan, is to some extent a near-extinct clan. When the clan first came from Nai'uf, they were many in number but because of tribal warfare and clan disputes, many members died. Most members of the clan, however, did not procreate. As a general pattern in the clan, the Fongal clan members did not, do not and will not have more than three children. This is because we evolved from a bird called *malkau*, or hawk. As birds do not have many eggs, neither do we. Other subordinate clans will procreate in great numbers and sooner or later they will be the successors. This is because they evolved from other animals which have many youngsters. Besides, the members of those clans are passive and easy going. They conform to the



society and clan norms.

"But we are the land owners," my uncle, the only survivor of his generation in my clan, once said. "I suppose my cousins, your fathers, have told you the reasons why there are not many people in our clan. There is no need for repetition. Most important, however, is that you must all be fully-educated about land, sago trees and other important clan property. Do not let them cheat you of them. It is good that not all of you are formally educated, because if you are, you will all scatter throughout the country and before you know where you are, land and property will all be gone. It would have been the right way around if you and your brother were at home because then you would be the heads. Even so, you are still the heads. Besides you are much more knowledgeable than your cousin-brothers."

"Hang on to two kinds of knowledge, your modern knowledge and your knowledge of the past. I do not know much about modern knowledge, but as for the other, never quarrel among yourselves, never sulk, never touch wives of others, be honest, cooperate with one another, share everything properly with each other, don't get angry with others or among yourselves. Many good wives have children, look after them and bring them up. I as your father's cousin-brother, am the only survivor of our clan's generation. Your father and I were the only peace loving and decent men in our clan. Your father died two years ago of old age and now I am the only one left. I don't know what he looked like when he died. In fact I had forgotten all about you all as well."

"I left you and your cousins when you were all small kids. You would not have been more than seven when I left way back in 1957 to come to Buka. My son would have been two years your senior. And your cousin-sister could hardly walk. After being here for a couple of years, I heard news about the deaths of your aunty, my wife, your uncles and later all our cousin-sisters and sisters. The sad news of their deaths troubled my heart deeply. I drew away and burnt my belongings in respect to them each time I received word of their death as I could not go and see them before their burial. After twenty years I had forgotten you all. I did not believe that there would have been any of you surviving as there had been no one to nurse you all. But now my heart rejoices to see you and your brother here as an example of our small clan's existence."

So that was it. My uncle and dad had lived through to an old age due to being honest, responsible, peace-loving and conforming to the society's norms. These social virtues are certainly worth observing. They are essential for success in all walks of life but they need courage, endurance and exercise of will. The christian term for it is self-denial; for those with thoughtful minds, a desire for wisdom. Honesty makes one become trust-worthy and so does responsibility. By being peaceful, calm and friendly one has many friends and no enemies; there is no danger to one's life. Happiness and harmony are the fruits of the above virtues.

Even though I do not in anyway resemble my dad, or my uncles, I am indebted to them, especially my father for showing me these walking-sticks to use in crossing the life's floods which I was almost halfway through. Up until now I no doubt have found them most helpful. One had to be taught these rules in theory, and most importantly, practice. They were well taught to me and I in turn was prepared to learn. Firstly, I had no choice as these truths were forced on me. If any were neglected, severe corporal punishment followed as a reinforcement. Sometimes too, I would be told of examples of misfortunes that had befallen those who neglected these truths.

In the village I was considered most obedient, well-behaved and attentive during formal and informal discussions. At the community school at Lumi my father was always praised for his solid training. For me, the reward was a place in high school. There, these concepts were reintroduced and enforced. For me the concepts of spelling were new but not the ideology. I found no problem living up to them. The rewards for me then, were being a class captain for three years at high school and being presented with many examination prizes. In addition, after grade 10 I was one of the only two successful candidates at Goroka Teachers College. After completion of training I was the first ex-student from that high school to become a high school teacher and one of the first three from the Wape tribe. Had I listened to my father and my teachers, I would have survived those years.

Parents have a special mechanism planted in their hearts to automatically command them to protect the young when confronted with any possible danger. My father would never let me go anywhere near the Sipi River myself with other

young boys for the fear of floods, made sick by evil spirits, the fish and and of course of drowning. I was near water in his company. Then I was on the sand admiring the glistening numerous variety of stones and they played on them. All the lizards and stones were all brown like the stones were tattered wood and logs. I suppose a good example of nature's law of the fittest. After playing on the sand begin to play in the shallowest part. The next time he took me there I was a little deeper. The next trip I would be on the other side. Each time I swam, responsible for myself. If I became tired of the water, I had to make a fast decision to swim to the nearest embankment.

Each time I had filled in the school-leaver's form I put down Goroka Teachers College as my first choice. My second choice was Agricultural College and third was Teachers College; then St Benedict's College. Each time the priest in charge and guidance had advised me against that choice. Not that my results were bad, college had a bad reputation. This was a carefree life where sex was practised. Premarital relationship is against the principles. No! I would not go to Teachers College.

My third school-leaver's form I filled in and I was given the fourth one and I had to think over the matter thoroughly and choose my first choice. My final first choice was Teachers College one again; and so the decision was made. I suppose that I had to face the decision. When the reply came back it had been accepted and I was one of the two ex-students.

The open travel warrants were issued. We had to pass our first test by arrangement. That we did on the 27th. My comrade and I boarded a Douglas DC-3 plane and set out eastward towards the border of Wewak.

After spending a week in Wewak at the Ansett Fokker Friendship plane, a brief touchdown at Madang, we took off towards the snow-capped mountains. It was such a huge aeroplane for the first time. The take off is more of a nightmare. The shot up towards the sky like a huge



young boys for the fear of floods, fear of being made sick by evil spirits, the fish and water spirits; and of course of drowning. I was only allowed near water in his company. Then I would play on the sand admiring the glistening sand, the numerous variety of stones and the lizards that played on them. All the lizards I saw on the stones were all brown like the stones, and there were tattered wood and logs. I suppose they were a good example of nature's law of the survival of the fittest. After playing on the sand, I would then begin to play in the shallowest part of the river. The next time he took me there I would go in a little deeper. The next trip I would swim to the other side. Each time I swam, I had to be responsible for myself. If I became exhausted in the water, I had to make a fast decision; that is to swim to the nearest embankment.

Each time I had filled in the school-leavers' form I put down Goroka Teachers College as my first choice. My second choice was Vudal Agricultural College and third was Kaindi Teachers College; then St Benedicts Teachers College. Each time the priest in charge of career and guidance had advised me against the first choice. Not that my results were bad, but the college had a bad reputation. This college had a carefree life where sex was practised freely. Premarital relationship is against christian principles. No! I would not go to Goroka Teachers College.

My third school-leaver's form had been torn and I was given the fourth one and was told to think over the matter thoroughly and I changed my first choice. My final first choice was the same one again; and so the decision was mine. I suppose that I had to face the consequences. When the reply came back it had been successful and I was one of the two ex-students accepted.

The open travel warrants were sent to us. We had to pass our first test by arranging our own bookings. That we did on the 27th of January. My comrade and I boarded a Douglas Airways plane and set out eastward towards the rising sun bound for Wewak.

After spending a week in Wewak we boarded the Ansett Fokker Friendship plane and after a brief touchdown at Madang, we took off again towards the snow-capped mountains. Being in such a huge aeroplane for the first time was a nightmare. The take off is more breathtaking than it is in smaller planes. The massive thing shot up towards the sky like a huge arrow and

then travelled amidst the clouds. Our flight between Wewak and Madang was comfortable and the scenery for most parts was visible. The plane kept to the coast and the sea would frequently appear through patches of fog. The air within was warm.

The second part of our flight between Madang and Goroka was shockingly bad. Firstly we were awoken by a sudden climb which was necessary for the plane to be level with the highest location. Later it was announced that we were travelling at an altitude of approximately 12 thousand feet about sea level. I was fortunate to be sitting next to the window but unfortunate to see nothing. All that the naked eye could see was just thick fog and mist. Fog of all colours, and of all shapes, the most frightening fog which seemed to darken the interior of the plane and made everybody think that any moment would be their last.

At that fatal moment the plane made a downward plunge which was followed by a sweet calm announcement that all seat belts were to be fastened and cigarettes were to be extinguished as we were then approaching Goroka Airport. No sooner had the announcement been made than the plane began to descend.

As I gazed out through my window I could see the township of Goroka below neatly arranged as if it had been drawn on cardboard. As the plane landed and the huge engines cut out, my companion and I crawled out and walked helplessly to a terminal where an unwelcoming crowd of warriors were aimlessly awaiting. Their appearance was most frightening. They were all very dirty. Men wore leaves instead of lapels and head-dresses on their heads. Others had dirty long hair. Women had long string bags hanging from their heads down to their legs and wore grass skirts. After awaiting anxiously for half-an-hour, a huge bus pulled up with the sign of Goroka Teachers College on it. Immediately we rushed into it with our small handbags.

Life at the college was quite advanced. It was quite different to any life I had come into contact with before. It was both the flood and the sea that my father and my guidance teacher had referred to; a real time of trial. One friend for instance, had a girl from Korifegu there. He once spent the night with her after attending a movie. He was lucky to escape from this experience unharmed, for as he said, he almost received an axe.

Each afternoon during my days of misconduct, I would go into town and sit around



in the trade stores and try my luck on these girls. Sure enough there were girls hanging loose around for that purpose, but how would I start?

"Oh damn it," I thought, "what would happen if I hit the wrong girl and she spread the news? Forget it, I will go to the hotel and get myself dizzy instead. No women, so try wine."

I would give up all girls and join the anti-girl group. The aim of this group was to get drunk, see films and throw stones at boys and their girlfriends if they made fools of themselves by embracing in public, which was commonplace. In fact at this stage, we succeeded in chasing couples from the big blue bus.

There was no point in having a girlfriend from another province if she would not fit in with my village life. It did not seem right also to have a girlfriend just for a trial marriage. This happened to many students who started up these relationships. Some broke up with sorrowful tears after the graduation ceremonies because one or the other had to leave. For those who were fortunate to be in the same year and graduated together they also broke up at the place of work because one of them found out what the other was really like.

As for me, I found out that neither the college nor the town girls were for me. In the first term of the third year, my friend was called to appear before the college Assessment Committee. They advised him to make some improvement. In the second term he made no improvement. He was informed that his results did not indicate his ability to graduate and that he should try some other field. My poor friend was one of the many others who were lost in this part of the sea of life.

Not that I was not in the same tide. I tried to be like everyone else. Firstly I tried to be nice to the college girls especially those in my group. Unfortunately I always found some fault in those that came my way. I did not seem to have enough weight financially to support any of these girls, or to attract any. All the girls wanted was money for sustenance. They wanted money for paint for their fingernails, money to pay for long jeans, money to be up with the tide. Of course there was a danger in spending too much money on these girls, especially if one became too close to them. What would happen if one took things beyond the limit? I had heard of a lot about pregnant girls and about their boyfriends who were responsible for the pregnancies. I certainly would not have held myself together with the presence of a

female. I would have approached them in such a way that they probably would not have liked to see me again. I always thought very hard about making friends with college girls, but how would I start? Where would I begin? What would her *wantoks* say about us?

"Oh forget the college girls," I had once said. "They are too expensive."

Some of the boys who had failed to get any college girls had tried local girls. I thought about joining the anti-college girl group whose aim it was to get drunk and beat up nonconforming college people who normally covered themselves with *lalaps*, standing, sitting or lying down in public places. This was not a good idea either because we were only inviting trouble even though our victims may have acted badly. Getting drunk on your own was just as bad because that was how bad habits began. These were short-term objectives. I had to have something to look forward to on a weekend. There were also long-term objectives.

The long-term objective for any college student at that stage was to achieve a diploma. A diploma was a submerged island in that rough sea in life that we were all heading for. To get there we had to grab a drifting log. We had to act responsibly. After discovering my poor performance and not getting good results, I knew it was my own fault because I was not concentrating on my studies. Similarly it would be inhuman for one not to be thinking and planning for a human partner. Some people used to say, any man who has no feeling for the opposite sex is denying the rights given to him by the bigman above. What a meaningless and solitary life one would live if one received a diploma, became a successful teacher, got good pay and spent it all on himself! Some people have been, and are like that but this was certainly not for me. There were many good girls back home who would make good wives.

There were two girls from Maui. Unfortunately both were pregnant. It would not be fair to become involved with either of them as I had had no premarital sex at this stage. Another girl to be considered was also pretty. It would be nice to have her because she was also attending a community-school teachers college. I wondered if she would prefer anyone from the secondary teachers' college at Goroka after hearing stories about the life led by the students at this particular college? She did have a lot in common with me,

such as being educated and she was from the same tribe. However, she was very different. Every letter that I received from her was full with requests for presents! Envelopes, stamps, neckchains, money and so on. These demands would then be followed by sweet love terms and phrases such as 'sweetheart, how I miss you'. I began to wonder if I was the only person receiving such declarations from her. Certainly I was not, for in fact I was not missing her.

I can still remember the evening when I received the real facts for myself. It happened on my way to a dance hall in the evening. To my surprise I received a letter on the back followed by "Wee! Wee!" effect was not painful, and quite surprising. I danced with her only once and she was gone. How could she have missed me? I knew so many people?

"Oh damn it! Forget about her. I will try a grade ten girl back at school."

The reply that I received from her was willing if I was. Certainly I was not as good as she, but I soon learnt that I was not. This I did very gradually and my decision to do so was unfair on my part. I knew enough about her. I knew she would mean to break away from me. She showed this many times in her letters. I was married now. I still had had no idea of this aspect of life.

To hell with demanding letters. I would not miss out on obtaining a diploma. There were many fish in the sea and I must equip myself with necessary fishing gear and bait. I graduated with a diploma. I was not a successful fisherman. There were many people who had run after people like me and I was standing. This then would be my chance to successfully complete my course and obtain a diploma.

To be able to achieve this I had to switch off all other switches and I did. No more excessive drinking, no more aimless wandering around town aimlessly, no more dances and no more dances. Time for me to draw up new timetable for my homework and assignments then.



such as being educated and she came from the same tribe. However, she was very demanding. Every letter that I received from her was filled with requests for presents! Envelopes, biros, stamps, neckchains, money and wrist watches. These demands would then be supported by sweet love terms and phrases such as, 'darling sweetheart, how I miss you'. I began to wonder if I was the only person receiving such love declarations from her. Certainly I was not being missed, for in fact I was not missing her.

I can still remember the evening that I found out the real facts for myself. It happened as I was on my way to a dance hall in Wewak that evening. To my surprise I received a mighty slap on the back followed by "Wee! You ah!" The effect was not painful, and quite stirring so I took her to the dance. The turning point came when I danced with her only once and she danced with many. How could she have missed me when she knew so many people?

"Oh damn it! Forget about her," I thought. "I will try a grade ten girl back at the old high school."

The reply that I received from her was that she was willing if I was. Certainly I was more willing than she, but I soon learnt that she also had a boyfriend and so I broke my relationship with her. This I did very gradually and I suppose the decision to do so was unfair on my part. I did not know enough about her. I knew that she did not mean to break away from me because she showed this many times in her actions. She is married now. I still had had no success as yet in this aspect of life.

To hell with demanding educated girls. I would not miss out on obtaining a future partner. There were many fish in the sea, and it was fun catching them. First I must equip myself with the necessary fishing gear and bait. If I successfully graduated with a diploma I would have the necessary bait. There were many cases where girls had run after people like me with such social standing. This then would be my goal; I would successfully complete my course and obtain a diploma.

To be able to achieve this I would have to switch off all other switches and leave on but one. No more excessive drinking, no more wandering around town aimlessly, no more weekend movies and no more dances. Time for repentance. I would draw up new timetables and have my homework and assignments thoroughly done.

That is what I did for those remaining two years until the graduation day in November 1973. As I write these pages in this chapter of my life, I can now see that although I deviated a little, I clung to my general principles.

For instance, there was an incident that happened to me at Gumine in the Chimbu Province. I was one of the census team members that had been sent to that location. After being briefed at Gumine Station we were sent to the Solnomane area. I spent the first night there in the house-*kiap*. We were busy the following day. When the woman councillor rang the bell, people by the hundreds began to pour in from every direction. At first we could not make out where the people were coming from as there was no sign of any settlements. They seemed to have appeared from the *kunai* grass. Each person that came, man, woman and child, brought their contribution of food and firewood. By the time the last person entered the village, there was a huge pile of food and firewood. I must admit that never in my life before had I come across such obedient and cooperative and friendly people. This was back in 1971 when there were not so many educated bigheads around.

Girls were plentiful. This part of P.N.G. was a real paradise. There were a variety of bare-breasted girls in paradise plumes and decorated faces that provided the taste that was contrary to that found back at the college. They were born free. Sex to them was normal. Even the parents of these girls expressed their appreciation to any young man who spent a night or two with their daughter.

We were all referred to as *kiaps* during the day but at night the so called *kiaps* ended up in the round house singing "Waia! Waia!" and rubbing noses with red masked girls, after which they paired off to go and spend the night on the *kunai* grass underneath the *kunai* grass roof. This would then be followed by soft whispers mingled with feminine giggles. These girls knew how to protect themselves for they wore thick grass skirts folded between their legs making our job laborious. All that was needed was patience. My feelings afterwards were a mixture of guilt and encouragement, especially as I had come from a social system that recognises such actions as bad or even as evil.

Premarital sex is seen in my society as illegal as well as evil. Any young man who tried to associate himself with a girl by seeing her secretly,



would certainly expect physical action from the girl's relatives, for any young man who actually had sexual intercourse with a girl prior to marriage must marry the girl involved. There are of course many side effects to such social misconduct too. For instance, any misfortune could befall on any of the two accomplices, or if they avoid such happenings, then one of the relatives of either families would pay for their misdeeds.

"Would anything happen to me? What about my family," I pondered, "will anything happen to them back home? If anything did happen to me or any of my relatives, my secret acts would be traced back to this social misconduct. The christian philosophy on the other hand states that anyone who has premarital sex would not settle down and have a peaceful and successful marriage.

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Being a highschool teacher is one of, or even the toughest, careers that one can take on in this day and age. Three walking sticks are essential. Responsibility, honesty and trust.

After graduating from the college I returned to my old school where I was a student four years ago. There were still many of my teachers who would now be my workmates. There were also final year students who were my schoolmates previously but now would be my students. To add onto the list of difficulties, the female students were of marriageable age in almost every class, the majority being grade tens. I was a young teacher with only four years experience ahead of them. This was yet another period of trial. Another part of the flooded river, yet to be crossed. Thank goodness it was not something that was quite new to me. Back at the college we had been told about such problems and how to avoid them.

In my case the solution to my first and second problem was to adapt to my new environment. For instance, I practised calling my old teachers by their names instead of their occupational names such as Brother or Sister. I did not do this well as I was accustomed to calling them by their occupational names. It seemed to me that they deserved their title no matter how close I became to them. What about the social distance felt between myself and the kids, especially the grade tens? Firstly I had to maintain leadership at all cost. I had to show them that I was their

teacher. I had been granted the parental responsibility for each and every child whether big or small, male or female. When that attitude became fixed and confirmed in my head, I found it difficult to deviate from it.

Of course it did not mean that I was only a teacher and that there was no time for adjustment. I sat around with my elder students as well as my *wantoks* and told stories, cracked jokes, ate, and played with them, keeping in mind that I was a ringleader and not a gang-member. Some teachers had put themselves down by lowering their position too much. They joked about certain grade ten girls whom they may have been fond of and certain girls would develop a liking for the teacher. That only caused friction between teacher and student, and led to lack of respect from the students.

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I now ask you to join me in an experience I had some years later.

"Excuse me Mr Headmaster, what did the Acting Provincial Superintendent of Education say about my posting for 1981?"

"Negative Ambrose."

"What! After spending all of my holidays walking the distance of three kilometres to and from the Education Office here in Buka trying to contact him?"

Everytime I had rung him he only told me to wait. Other teachers had not applied for any position. They did not look a bit concerned and most of them were in acting positions just like myself with the exception that I was more senior, on acting level two subject master.

"How come they are staying on? Ha! Headmaster could you ring up Central Sorting Unit and investigate the relevant vacant positions elsewhere? Hell, I'm doing the inspectors' job." I also asked myself softly if this was the responsibility of the headmaster.

"I'm sorry the telephone is engaged."

"Never mind them. Could you give the regional inspector a call?"

"Well, I suppose I should. The inspector said that he could not care anymore. He has had enough of you. In addition, he said that according to the teaching service regulations you are to leave your place of residence within twenty four hours from now, and said that was a command!"

That was an impossible dream. "He must

be kidding. I'll have to speak to

"Hello," the inspector was not. "Oh is that you Sir? This is the have heard my name? What, is first direct call but indirectly there been hundreds of calls." I had been and recontacting the Provincial Superintendent since the beginning of the holidays.

"Have you moved out of the

"Sir, but this decision is rather and impossible. The facts are Sir, another province. I am married and I have no friends here to stay.

"Well you see, the distance between you is so far that I can do nothing. However, you must evacuate the area in now immediately. I'll check with the master tomorrow. Goodbye."

"Gosh! What shall I do?" I had only K60.00 in the bank. That was in two weeks at the rate we were it. Furthermore, we did not have to stay with. Even so, I hated *wantoks*. I wondered what they think about their exteacher and living off a *wantok* after the lessons on poverty and malnutrition centres. When a *wantok* has to living off him as parasites, he sold money to meet all his requirements.

"What is the result?" enquired master.

"I just don't know how to make a decision. Can you help me and

"I am sorry; that is your own decision. In any case, I can't lend school didn't you apply for a temporary

"Sir, I have been with the department seven years and had more con department." Furthermore, the decision whatsoever that I would such a drastic situation. According Provincial Superintendent I was not up any temporary position until formally released from teaching submitted the application for pay yet. I did not think I should without pay. I thought that I should leave with pay because I had when this had happened. I was okay but since I was in a foreign without friends and with a family



be kidding. I'll have to speak to him myself."

"Hello," the inspector was now on the line. "Oh is that you Sir? This is the first time you have heard my name? What, it might be the first direct call but indirectly there must have been hundreds of calls." I had been contacting and recontacting the Provincial Education Superintendent since the beginning of the holidays.

"Have you moved out of that house?"

"Sir, but this decision is rather rash, irrational and impossible. The facts are Sir, that I am from another province. I am married with a kid and I have no friends here to shelter us."

"Well you see, the distance between me and you is so far that I can do nothing to help you. However, you must evacuate that house you are in now immediately. I'll check with the headmaster tomorrow. Goodbye."

"Gosh! What shall I do?" I thought. We had only K60.00 in the bank. That would be finished in two weeks at the rate we were spending it. Furthermore, we did not have any *wantoks* to stay with. Even so, I hated to stay with *wantoks*. I wondered what the students would think about their exteacher and subject master living off a *wantok* after the social science lessons on poverty and malnutrition in urban centres. When a *wantok* has too many people living off him as parasites, he seldom has enough money to meet all his requirements.

"What is the result?" enquired the headmaster.

"I just don't know how to believe such a decision. Can you help me and my family?"

"I am sorry; that is your own responsibility. In any case, I can't lend school funds. Why didn't you apply for a temporary job?"

"Sir, I have been with the department for seven years and had more confidence in the department." Furthermore, there was no indication whatsoever that I would be placed in such a drastic situation. According to the Acting Provincial Superintendent I was not able to take up any temporary position until I had been formally released from teaching. I had even submitted the application for leave without pay yet. I did not think I should apply for leave without pay. I thought that I should apply for leave with pay because I had been at home when this had happened. I would have been okay but since I was in a foreign province without friends and with a family, it was more

than I could swallow.

The headmaster was as uncooperative as he had always been. There was no use in talking things over with him. I hardly saw him anyway. He worked during public service hours and helped students and staff within that time span. The students who had complaints had to see the duty-teacher after hours even if their mate was at the point of dying.

It was very hard for me to understand this particular headmaster. One thing was quite clear. He was a typical colonialist, or imperialist. His attitude indicated this. It had been a common subject discussed by the national staff members. My inspection report had also indicated this. He had written it in such haste and with such little thought that it did not in anyway resemble his usual thorough report. It was later admitted that the report was written a couple of hours prior to the inspector's arrival. The inspector had changed the itinerary to one day earlier than was scheduled. He had made a clever trick, but had failed to thoroughly check on the results of it. There were contradictions in every sentence. The admission for such an unfounded report was that the inspector had arrived too soon.

During an interview with another inspector in his presence, I was asked for any comments about the headmaster's report and my response was, "Well Sir, firstly I would like to question what was meant by superior performance? Secondly, the lack of initiative."

Prior to my coming to this high school there had not been a single programme for Social Science. There was no indication of meetings. No sign of assistance being given to a new Social Science teacher. The Social Science Office was well organised and a filing system kept and all records maintained. This had been brought up to scratch. Informally I had helped others teaching in my subject area. I was always well-dressed and punctual. Did not this provide a good model for junior staff and students a superior performance in setting up things using one's original idea and initiative? I had also been in this high school for only four months.

Such new ideas, initiative or innovation will not flourish if they are not being cultivated by getting approval and support from the headmaster. But the headmaster and the deputy had shown no interest and there was no lead



in this anyway. Some staff members wanted to try out their new ideas, and they were the very people who opposed them.

An Indian teacher in the school had the initiative to build a fish pond. He did this with a few boys, and when the hole had been dug, the headmaster was approached for some bags of cement, but there was no response. In fact the hole is still there. This same teacher was assigned as an assessment teacher. The assessment was previously looked after by the deputy headmaster. They were so badly organised that this rather dedicated man, with a helpful hand from his wife, rectified everything and brought them up to a professional standard. There was no assessment committee, otherwise the burden would have been a lot easier. His hard work received no word of appreciation.

My brother, a high school teacher, had been pushed out of his position also in the same province. Because of that, he had come to pass the remaining year with me. He could not be reinstated because he had written to the Teaching Service Commission about the malpractices of certain headmasters. Although he had done the right thing, in the right direction, he was penalised for this so-called, wrong attitude towards his seniors.

Everybody in the Department of Education talks about punctuality. Inspectors in their visits to schools would emphasise this to the children. I would like to take my class for a visit to an education office on an unexpected visit. The constitution, or one part of the constitution, says that every citizen has the right to develop himself, or herself, to the fullest and that there should not be any domination of any kind.

Another part of the same constitution states that every person has the right to express his opinion, using any available mass media; this is called freedom of expression. One must draw his own conclusion. I would rather that these had been written in the heads of the people who wrote the constitution, rather than in expensive books.

Many people in this particular location had accused my younger brother for my displacement in this high school because the headmaster and my brother were not on good terms with one another, and because I was sheltering my brother. How could I have disowned my

blood brother, even if it had been an unprofessional action?

The two of us were in the same boat; no longer wanted by the department as the schools were over-staffed. Because we had been displaced, we had to evacuate the house by mid-day that day. Our only hope was to go to our uncle, a plantation labourer who lived twenty kilometres away. The school lacked transport and the only means of transport available to us was the headmaster's truck which he rented for school services, and he wouldn't be of much help. The police were more sympathetic and offered us their vehicle to transport us out to the plantation.

Our uncle left our village way back in 1956, twenty five years ago and had been on a plantation ever since. For almost a quarter of a century he had worked for a private European planter, both as a house-boy and a boss-boy. He had now retired without a single toea and was living on the plantation at his own expense. Fortunately, being such a good worker, he had asked for a piece of land on which he had grown a few cocoa trees. They were now his only means of income to support his family of three. Had he been in a government department, he would have received a pension as a reward for his good service to the country. However, he was a labourer who worked for his money, part of which went to the government for present-day development. As he grew older our uncle did not like the company of others on the plantation compound. He asked for permission to erect his own camp outside the compound. This was due to the fact that there were many males who did not respect privacy.

The plantation comprised labourers who came from many parts of the country although the majority came from Simbai, Jimi in the Western Highlands, and the Sandaun Province. During the time that these people had been away from their homes, they had left behind their customs and social sanctions. Being temporarily not bound by such social controls, and in order to satisfy their urges, they went after any female that was available. Unfortunately the females of this particular location were not very trustworthy as they normally had one legal husband and another secret one. The secret husband was a financial supporter and a means of secret additional sexual enjoyment. For the women of this social system it was quite normal,

but problems arose when the two were either a red skin male, a man w Bougainvillean, and Bougainvillea

Because of the lack of disciplinary sexual attitudes there, adultery practised. My uncle had married a wife who had a polyandrous attitude and with another plantation labourer. The national constitution had failed to protect the rights of its citizens and had all many levels of government who become both confused and in community government's implementation regulations and punishments on them were ineffective due to the mass of the plantation from a variety of sources. Two possible alternatives could solve this situation, either Community Government could be abolishing Community Government reintroducing the Local Government system.

This was not a good place for us to last for a week there and had to quickly. We had to visit the Provincial Office and talk things over with the Provincial Superintendent for Education then how were we to get the unfinancial. One solution was to visit the road for any government vehicle. That we did, and drove back in again.

Upon our arrival at Arawa, I went to the receptionist desk to see if I could speak with the Acting Provincial Superintendent.

"Yes, what do you want to see?"

"My posting for 1981."

"Hang on; I'll see if he is not busy. He may go in now."

"Hello!" said the Superintendent. He indicated the visitors chair. "Now which of you is Ambrose? Which is his brother?"

"I am Ambrose Waiyin the elder."

"I am enquiring because there is a confusion about your names. There was a delay in appointing one of you to the post. Last year we were short of tea. This year the pendulum has swung around. Just hang on while I give you a Sorting Unit a call. I'll ring up and make further enquiries about vacancies." He began conversing with



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Because of the lack of discipline and free  
sexual attitudes there, adultery was freely  
practised. My uncle had married twice. His first  
wife had a polyandrous attitude and she had fled  
with another plantation labourer. While the  
national constitution had failed to protect the  
rights of its citizens and had allowed for too  
many levels of government whose roles have  
become both confused and irrelevant, the  
community government's implementations of  
regulations and punishments on the plantation  
were ineffective due to the mass of individuals on  
the plantation from a variety of social groupings.  
Two possible alternatives could be offered to  
solve this situation, either a Plantation  
Community Government could be formed, or by  
abolishing Community Governments and  
reintroducing the Local Government Council  
system.

This was not a good place for us. We could not  
last for a week there and had to do something  
quickly. We had to visit the Provincial Education  
Office and talk things over with the Acting  
Provincial Superintendent for Education. But  
then how were we to get there? We were  
unfinancial. One solution was to wait around on  
the road for any government vehicle to come by.  
That we did, and drove back in the police car  
again.

Upon our arrival at Arawa, I enquired at the  
receptionist desk to see if I could have a word  
with the Acting Provincial Superintendent.

"Yes, what do you want to see him about?"

"My posting for 1981."

"Hang on; I'll see if he is not busy... Okay, you  
may go in now."

"Hello!" said the Superintendent, smiling as  
he indicated the visitors chair. "Do sit down.  
Now which of you is Ambrose Waiyin, and  
which is his brother?"

"I am Ambrose Waiyin the elder brother."

"I am enquiring because there has been some  
confusion about your names. This is causing a  
delay in appointing one of you to a position. You  
see last year we were short of teachers, but this  
year the pendulum has swung the other way  
around. Just hang on while I give the Central  
Sorting Unit a call. I'll ring up my *wantok* and  
make further enquiries about any possible  
vacancies." He began conversing with his *wantok*

in his own language.

"God," I thought, "I hope he is not telling his  
*wantok* not to find me a position because I am  
the brother of the one who had reported their  
*wantok* to the Teaching Services Commission for  
malpractices. Had I been a Buka I would not  
have undergone such misery; I was a red skin."

"Well, he said he will try but he cannot  
promise you anything definite and I am sorry I  
can't help you either."

"Any possibility of offering me an office job,  
because I have a family to care for?"

"Sorry there is no office work but there maybe  
jobs around the town such as shop assistant, but  
again you can't take on any work yet until you  
have been formally released from your duties."

"But how long will that take? As far as I know  
this process is very slow, and I have not even a  
toea left. What about this alternative? Could we  
be repatriated back to our province where we  
could be protected? At present we are residing  
with our uncle on a plantation. Although we have  
reported our whereabouts to the police prior to  
our departure, our lives are not safe. These  
plantations have the reputation of being breeding  
grounds for tribal conflict and lawlessness."

"Well for that you will have to get approval  
from the Teaching Services Commission first to  
allow you the privilege as a teacher."

"What is he talking about?" I wondered. "I am  
still a teacher and by applying for leave without  
pay it will only allow me a brief discontinuity of  
12 months until I reapply again when the  
Education Gazette comes out in July 1982."

"Sir, my final request now. Can you help me  
with transport to get back to Tinputz, because I  
had to get a lift here."

"Sorry, we haven't got enough vehicles."

"Sir, but how can I get back?"

"See if you can find other government vehicles  
that may be going your way. Is that all? My  
vehicle has arrived and I've got to go for lunch."

Now everybody I had approached was useless.  
They could not help me with a simple thing like  
providing transport for me to get back to the  
plantation. Just a fortnight ago the Director for  
Education in his new year message to teachers  
had outlined the theme of education for the year  
as helpfulness. Do unto others as you would like  
others to do unto you. For the past seven years I  
had worked to the best of my ability for the  
department and what was happening to me now  
did not show me that they had any gratitude for



what I had done. I was tempted to ask the Acting Provincial Superintendent of Education about the philosophy of this years' educational theme, but that would only mean more words and less action.

Outside the office my younger brother asked me about the outcome. Everything for us now seemed negative. I had been told to apply for leave without pay. It all seemed crazy and rather mysterious.

"Previously you were not accepted back even though you had been absent for a term due to circumstances beyond your control. You had explained to them why you had missed your flight and that the only possible flight was within four weeks. By that time you had exhausted your passbook. I had to sell a radio to send you part of the money to get your new airticket to return to the North Solomons Province. After all that trouble you had to come here only to be refused a teaching position that you had a legal right to; and there a Bougainvillean arrived a term later than you, and was admitted. This is all very interesting," I concluded.

"Yes," my brother said. "I was then told that any officer who arrives three weeks after the commencement of duties without a valid reason will not be reinstated. That guy arrived two terms later and was reinstated. What interests me still, is how all the Bougainvillean teachers back at Hutjena are all staying on acting positions, and they never applied. There were two nuns that were also displaced but have since been reinstated. When I was awaiting a decision in Buka, one teacher had asked me where I would go, and I told her that I had no idea as yet. You know what she said? She said 'Had I known that you did not have a position, I would have told my wantok in the selection committee.' But what was the use of applying?"

Every decision made so far had been unfair, biased, illogical and irrational. For instance, these nuns were Sisters belonging to a congregation and were without a teaching position. This would not have made the slightest difference to them as they would be supported by the congregation. The inspector at Buka had also told me that the headmaster of Hutjena High School had called a meeting with handpicked school board members to send a submission for an expatriate to take up an unfilled position there. The inspector asked, why an expatriate and not one of us had been chosen for the

position. Nationals were suppose to be given first priority. There was certainly no logic in all of this. Certainly the two of us had not come seeking work, nor had we come here on contract to a plantation. We had come as local permanent officers confident in ourselves, our employer and our professions. And here we were being denied and deceived and left to die on the streets of Bougainville.

Only six months ago this province had a great demand for teachers but now it had a surplus of teachers. I wondered what they were doing in the Education Office. I was quite aware that my brother had sent copies of his correspondence to the Teaching Services Commission to me, about the malpractice of certain dignitaries. One at Buin Provincial High School; and the other, as my brother put it, was right under my nose then. My brother had taken the initiative to try to help wipe the slate clean before it became too scribbled on. He had gone through the right channels only to find that the channels had become his trap which almost paralyzed his career.

"Because of your wrong attitudes towards your seniors, which is an offence against the Teaching Service Act, you are now considered as a dismissed officer," was the reply he received from the Teaching Services Commission. How was such a conclusion reached? Where was the evidence that showed that my brother was wrong, apart from the teaching act which many hundreds of others, including myself, had not the slightest knowledge about.

An act, or a law is something that should be adhered to. However, one would have to be shortsighted if he jumped to conclusions and punished a person who may have breached it unknowingly. Killing for instance, is illegal in every country, but still some people kill others and not every killer gets the same punishment. All punishment is based on the circumstances surrounding the crime. To kill a person who kills another during self-defence is unfair.

It is not uncommon for teachers to receive blame these days. Teachers have been blamed for the low level in education. Wouldn't bad leadership be one of the major reasons why the standards are falling in education? Children need to be disciplined to some extent. They need direction, they need to be cared for and they need a friendly atmosphere to grow up in. They need to some extent, an extension of family and

community climate in the school.

Teachers, especially junior teachers, need explicit directions and support from the authorities to maintain these social controls in the school system. Unless there are strict controls, control and direct the present school system. drop in the low standard of education. continue simply because children learn by themselves, whether for a

One of the facts about education is that children imitate their elders and what they see. What have we got for them to imitate? that we care for them they will do for themselves.

Thus this brother of mine had been deceived and saw; unlike the others who look at the situation and see because they were too scared to speak up. pointed and placed before an elephant. their honesty. My brother could not give an explanation of refusal in his career.

What then became of me? I had been in a plantation, a place for people with no education. As I sat dreamily in the dusk, people joked about this high school. serving the customers of parents and the students joined in.

"Why have you left your good job and do this dirty job?" some would ask. have you taken on the shopkeeping?

"For my family's survival," I said.

"Weren't you our Social Studies Master? Many students in our class should have stayed on because of their new teacher."

"Well I suppose the department thought that I am any good."

Why did I have to go through all this? of my reports had been both promising. The report that I received after a year of teaching had said that I was a good teacher. I had also been given the title of master and this report had said I had organised the sport efficiently.

For two years I was in charge of the Science Department, and had been promoted to a level two position which I quite honestly deserved. I had always been a senior and carried out their instructions. I had attended many in-service courses which were helpful in my duties to the class. I was one of the five na



community climate in the school.

Teachers, especially junior teachers, need explicit directions and support from their leaders to maintain these social controls within the school system. Unless there are strict measures to control and direct the present school children, a drop in the low standard of education will continue simply because children do not want to learn by themselves, whether for a gain or a loss.

One of the facts about education is that the children imitate their elders and peer group. What have we got for them to imitate? If we show that we care for them they will care for themselves.

Thus this brother of mine had the eyes to see and saw; unlike the others who looked but didn't see because they were too scared of being pinpointed and placed before an electric chair for their honesty. My brother could vividly see the explanation of refusal in his career.

What then became of me? I had ended up on a plantation, a place for people without qualifications. As I sat dreamily in the dusty trade store, people joked about this high school teacher serving the customers of parents of students and the students joined in.

"Why have you left your good job to come and do this dirty job?" some would ask. "Why have you taken on the shopkeeper's job?"

"For my family's survival," I simply replied.

"Weren't you our Social Science Subject Master? Many students in our class said that you should have stayed on because they don't like their new teacher."

"Well I suppose the department does not think that I am any good."

Why did I have to go through this agony? All of my reports had been both positive and promising. The report that I received in my first year of teaching had said that I was a promising teacher. I had also been given the role of Sports-master and this report had said that I had organised the sport efficiently.

For two years I was in charge of the Social Science Department, and had become eligible for a level two position which I quite rightly and honestly deserved. I had always respected my seniors and carried out their instructions. I had attended many in-service courses which had been helpful in my duties to the classes that I had taught. I was one of the five nationals on the

Social Science Committee partly responsible for the present grade seven, eight and nine Social Science Revised Course. I had conducted an in-service course for my subject area. All along, I had always abided by those basic principles of life, those walking sticks, for they are the source of success in life. Why had this vacuum like a coma occurred in this aspect of my life? Had I been too honest with myself in this walk of life?

After awaiting the decision from the Teaching Service Commission for six months without avail, and after being tired of living on loans and crabs, my brother left that location to come and pass the remaining tiresome months with me. Ever since he had come to see us he never had a good full night's sleep; he was always restless. Perhaps sleeping pills would do wonders for him but he was workless. I was not of much help either because I had no surplus money. One night he woke up screaming. When asked what the matter was, he said that he saw our dead father chasing him. In order to calm him I had told him that should not be a surprise under the circumstances. The old man, until his lonely death, had requested him to go home to see him, or if not, then to send him some money but he had failed to do that.

Being concerned about the continuation of our prime clan, the old man had gone as far as paying the bride price for a girl whom he wanted my brother to marry. However, he had refused to marry this girl. He had also failed to turn up for the after-death ceremony that I conducted by myself. In addition, the two of us had not paid for the death of our father by giving a sum of money to all our distant relatives. According to custom, if we failed to do this we would encounter bad luck of one kind or another.

On our way to our new postings we had run into a fight between us and one of the rascal gangs in Wewak. The three of us had gone up to the Wewak Hotel up the hill to pass the afternoon. After a few drinks, a noisy mob entered and carried on next to where we were sitting and talking with a friend from home. Purposely one of the gang members knocked over my bottle of beer. My brother without hesitation sprung at him. This drew the rest of the gang's attention who rushed at him. When seeing that there were too many for him, my brother and another friend and I joined forces and retaliated.

As we joined in many more came to the assistance of our enemies outnumbering us one



to four. I told my friends to disperse and take to the bushes for refuge in the darkness. I ran through barbed wire scratching my leg. The spot I was heading for was a playing field. It was quite illuminated by the street light. So as to avoid being seen, I dashed for a *laulau* tree and climbed up to the very top hiding in the darkest part. When all was quiet, I climbed down and headed for the house where I joined the other two. That was the first misfortune that occurred to the two of us.

I left my brother at Wewak to catch a plane while I accompanied our mother, sister, our nephew and nieces to Madang. Our brother-in-law and his small son had been to a plantation in Madang and had sent word for the rest of his family to join him. Our poor mum was too lonely to have remained behind and had requested us to take her with us. That we did, hoping that I would return for her later in the year when I had settled down at Dregerhafen High School in Finschhafen.

It did not turn out that way. I was told I had to be transferred to Buka. I was dissatisfied with the position at Dregerhafen High School. My level two subject master's position was given away even though I had previously been granted a level two position. I was not allowed any other level two position even though there were a number of these vacant. Later when I enquired about not being given a level two position at Dregerhafen, I was amazed to learn from the headmaster that he was told my eligibility was in question. I was inspected by three inspectors and they said that everything that had been said about me was true in every respect.

If an officer is not performing well, the department should tell him that he is not fit and therefore should find greener pastures in another paddock. It is unfair to let officers unconsciously and laboriously work for the department to the best of their ability and then command them at short notice to start running as they are no longer needed. Even worse, or even more unfair is when an officer is placed in another province. What a burden for an unfortunate married officer when the department does not even return a word of thanks.

"You are commanded to leave that house within twenty four hours," I had been told by an

inspector even though it had been impossible for me to find shelter.

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"This is a cruel world," my career and guidance teacher once told us in grade ten, "you will all be criticised. People will criticise you for almost everything. They'll criticise what you wear, your work, habits, diet and religion. You have to be more sensitive and be flexible. Usually the one thing being criticised is doing the right thing. The easiest thing to do is to do bad things. There are a number of wrongdoers. Although the number of good people are less than wrongdoers, they always end up the winners in the end. Always be on your guard and weigh your criticisms and make adjustments if need be. Stand by your standards if your conscience tells you that you are right."

"What then is the reward for a common righteous man?" I wondered. There were many people like that but only a few had got their names in history books. Others have returned with no reference. But if they had been honest and good they most certainly would have been more respected. Respect was their immediate reward. I certainly have been respected by children and their parents. They had seen and they had believed in me.

Immediate regard comes in many forms. Some people have become successful robbers, burglars, political leaders, chieftains and bureaucrats. These people to some extent are respected. The different is that their respect is short-lasting and thinly-felt by their subjects because in most cases the respect is forced and therefore rather artificial. Such respect is gained by people who have achieved social standing through malpractice and exploitation of others in the community. They care little for humanity while on the other hand, more natural and deeply-felt respect is gained by people who are more concerned for humanity. This respect is gained through sheer honesty and from respect for their fellow man.

This was the traditional means of achieving social, political and religious leadership in Papua New Guinea. It was the just, fair and honest way, and would be my way in the future.

Photogr