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Editor: Ulli Beier, P.O. Box 1144, Boroko, T.P.N.G.

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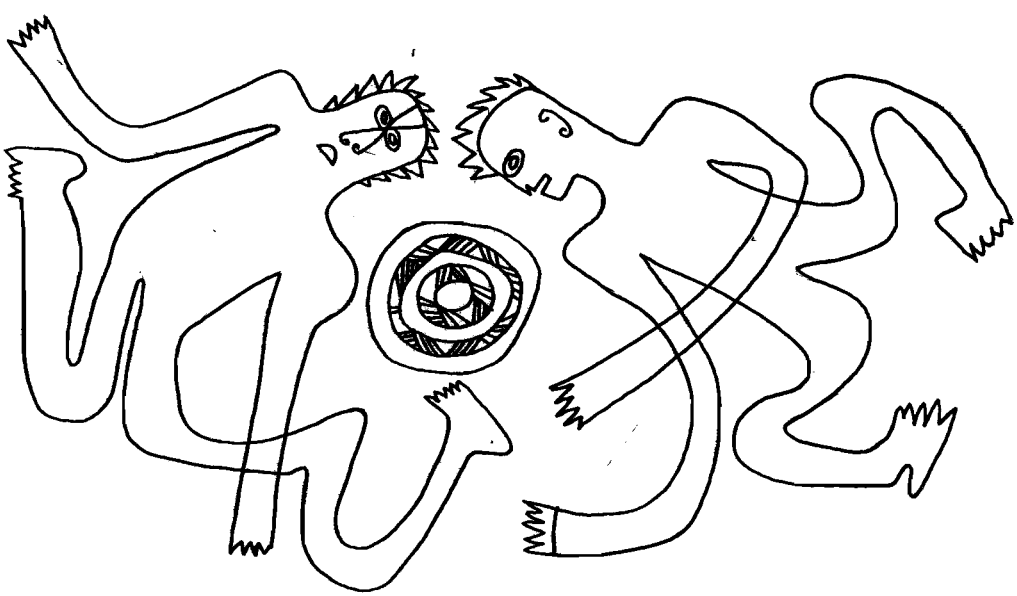

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CONTRIBUTORS TO THIS ISSUE:

P. Chakravarthi is a lecturer in the Department of English, University of Papua New Guinea. ('Rupadashi' is a Bengali verse form.)

Marjorie Crocombe, a Cook Islander, was born on Rarotonga. She is the author of *The Works of Ta'unga*, and has taught Pacific History at Administrative College and Teachers College in Port Moresby.

John Kadiba is a student at the University of Papua New Guinea. He contributed an autobiographical piece to the pilot issue of *Kovave*.

Don Laycock is a linguist at the Research School of Pacific Studies of the Australian National University.

Peter Lus is a Member of the Territory House of Assembly for Maprik.

Gerald Moore teaches African Literature at the University of Sussex.

Kumalau Tawali is a student at the University of Papua New Guinea.

John Waiko is a student at the University of Papua New Guinea at present working on a book of Binadere folktales.

BUIN SONGS

translated by Don Laycock

There are many songs in New Guinea and its surrounding islands. Some of the most beautiful come from Buin, at the southern tip of Bougainville Island, and a selection are presented here in translation.
The traditional songs of Buin include dance songs, ritual songs, pig-carrying songs; lullabies, laments, and satirical songs about relations with the opposite sex. Of these songs, the most highly-developed category is that of the lament, a highly formalized elegy that mourns the death of a relative or a friend. But it is the last group of songs, the satirical songs, that provide the model for the songs now sung at parties, to hillbilly tunes and the accompaniment of guitars. The traditional songs may be a little more direct in their sexual imagery, but a comparison of them with the modern guitar songs at least shows that some aspects of human behaviour have changed little in modern Buin.

PEMPAM

TRADITIONAL DANCE SONG

O all you spirit men, I, the red parrot, ask you
what wrong have we done you, that you are angry?
If you bear a grudge, take up the long barbed spear,
and I, the red parrot, will fight with you.
Thus I make my boast to you!

O my daughter, I, the scented fern, cry for you,
lest, when I hide myself in death, you should be afraid.
Here in the men's house Irupioro, you must break my spear
and count my ropes of shells. If you thus think of me,
I shall be pleased with you in the place that I have gone to.

O my old woman, now what shall I, the red parrot, give you,
to make you weep for me? I fetched you the white shells,
and gave them to you, and you carried them in your basket.
But when they were dirty, you threw away my gift!
Now I, the casuarina tree, am angry with you.

LAMENT FOR A WIFE

TRADITIONAL SONG

O my wife, my little one, who has stolen you?
Perhaps it was Mirum.
I am only joking about Mirum, and he is not angry.
But he is a man who can tell you about my wife,
about how she looked after him, her cousin,
a man with many barbed spears,
a rat with many barbed spears,
who steals things in the villages.

O my wife, my little one, now you must get up
for I have something to tell you:
if the child cries for his mother, what will his father do?
But I am just teasing you;
I shall look after him, in a man's fashion.

O my wife, my little one, who has stolen you?
Perhaps it was Kanarogi.
But Kanarogi is not angry.
He is a man who can tell you about my wife,
about how she looked after him, her cousin,
a man with many clubs and axes,
and a killer of his kinsmen.

LAMENT FOR A HUSBAND

TRADITIONAL SONG

O my hornbill husband, you have a bad smell,
and when Kaaeko comes and smells you
he will take you to Panirai, and your spirit will enter a pig.
He'll make you like a curly-tailed pig,
and at dawn you will cry for food.
You will sing out for yams,
the food of the living.

LAMENT OF A SICK MAN

TRADITIONAL SONG

O all my kinsmen, I, the carpenter, am in this place
where they beset me with thermometers
and measure my sickness with a glass.
I wash myself in tears,
the carpenter from Rapaku, a man with no brothers.

Young girl, what has your sister taught you,
that you two should make fun of me?
You don't know me, the jewsharp player,
the man that makes the songs to scratch all the women.
Well, it won't be long before the lament for me
reaches even to your village of Morono,
and my cousin Kaarai will blow a whistle
for all to gather in sorrow in his northern village.

KAPATORO

MODERN GUITAR SONG

This girl Kapatoro thinks to herself 'A man will marry me';
but she sways as she walks, and I think none will take her.
They all say 'You are no good; your ways are bad.'
They all say Kapatoro's ways are no good;
I heard them all say that she wanted two dollars.

YOU'RE TOO OLD FOR ME

MODERN GUITAR SONG

This one is keen, she's dying for it,
she thinks she is a young girl; but I say
'You're no good to me, a man of Pugitamo.
Well, I know what you need; it's fire, for cremating you!
Yes, you lose; you're as old as my grandmother!'

SONG FOR A TRAINEE NURSE

MODERN GUITAR SONG

So you think you'll go off to the north, and leave this place behind,
because you don't want to give your hand?
I heard them all say you want to become a nurse,
but I ask you, what will you do if you go and get educated?
I say that nobody ever saw you achieve anything before.

ROGER'S BOY

MODERN GUITAR SONG

O Piou, what do you ask of me, the boy that works for Roger?
Perhaps you think, 'He'll marry me now, this Roger's boy.'
When last we met on the road, you said 'Get off your bike.'
I said 'I can't, the sun has risen', but you said 'I don't care.'
I said 'I'll lose my job', but you said 'I don't care;
Boy of Roger, my cousin, my love, if they fire you I'll be happy,
For then I think you'll marry me, my boy that works for Roger!'
But it's no use waiting for that; go home to your distant village.
O my Piou, why are you so expensive? Perhaps even six hundred pounds!
I tell you, if I had the money I would buy you;
Yes, if I could find the money, I would surely buy you.

MY LOVER WORKS FOR THE CSIRO

MODERN GUITAR SONG

'Now leave off, my father is angry;
he beats me, because you come and make me tired.
O man, what kind of thing are you, that makes me laugh so much?
O, they will see us, and your master will fire you!'
'O woman, if they fire me I shall be happy,
for one day the flood will come and drown me
as I hunt the sandpiper that hides by the water's edge.'

TAX

by John Kadiba

THE SUN had descended and darkness had spread over the isolated village of Itai. Koteni lit the hurricane lamp and placed it on the pandanus mat in the centre of the living room, where Koro, her husband, sat in the darkness smoking his tobacco—the home-made *lugu* leaves. Koteni sat down opposite her husband. She looked at him briefly, then sat staring at the lamp. There was quiet in the room. The smoke from Koro's *lugu* rose up and filled the room with its aroma. They seemed overwhelmed by the silence and they were both thinking. What were they thinking of? Their recent marriage? The child in Koteni's belly? The night before them? Or tomorrow? Next year? Koro broke the silence at last.

'Koteni,' he called gently, but she was still busy with her own thoughts. After a while she looked up:

'Did you call me?' she asked.

'Yes, . . . what were you thinking about?'

'Nothing,' she smiled. Then she added 'I was thinking back to that first night, when I came to you and asked you for betel nut.'

'Forget those past moonlit nights. We are already living together. I have been thinking and worrying about how to get some stones for the tax payment next moon.'

'It is no lying.' Koteni was surprised. 'Next moon! And those who will not pay their tax will be taken to the dark house. Last time the *gavana* gave chance to those who did not give their stones.' She was frightened by the terrible thought of the tax. The patrol officer usually visited the village every six months.

'I have thought of a way,' Koro said. 'You stay in the village and look after the house and weed the garden. I will go to work at Mamai. Your uncle, who runs the tractor at the European place, said that the master pays tax for his workmen. If I work, my master will pay mine, and I will put together enough stones for your payment.'

'That is a good way,' said the wife, 'but what work are you going to do? You have not gone to any European place. You will not know your work.'

'That is not lying. Perhaps I will try. Other young men like me have gone to work and they try. I think I will try and work in a house. Your uncle told me that a new white man and his wife and two children have just come to Mamai. They are looking for someone to work for them. I must go soon, before another person goes to work for them.' His wife looked at him for a while and said:

'That is good. The village is not far. You can come at weekends. I think that is a good way. You must go tomorrow.'

The next day Koro was at the rubber plantation making enquiries. 'Where is the new master's house?' he asked a tapper. The tapper showed him the direction in which the house stood—a typical white house. He walked up a hill following a footpath that led through the rubber trees. As he approached the house his heart started to beat. He thought hard and tried to recall a few English words he had picked up from the village people who had been to work before. He tried to gather a few words to say to the master. As he approached one of the two children saw him and yelled at his parents:

'Mummy! Daddy!'

'What is it, Michael?'

'There's a native coming up the path.'

The parents came to the door. Ruth, the younger child, came out of the other room to see what was going on. They watched the approaching, timid native.

'Why isn't he looking straight?' Ruth asked.

'We don't know,' her parents said, laughing.

Koro tried to avoid looking at the family so that his shy face might not become so obvious to them. All his life he had never felt so uneasy. He had never talked to white people before. Of course, he had seen the patrol officers in the village, but he had never talked to them. He felt like running away. Only the thought of the tax money fought hard against his fear and shyness. He must try and get this work. Mr Jones stepped forward. His solid face, his big body, his height were rather overpowering. Koro's heart beat faster. He tried to gather a few words—English words.

'What do you want, boy?'

'Master ... me ... me want to work for houseboy for you.'

'Have you worked as a boy before?'

'No master, me no work before.'

'Oh, I see.'

Mrs Jones came to join her husband.

'What does he say, love?'

'He wants to be our houseboy.'

'Oh, that's beaut. Somebody at last!'

'Yes, but he says he's never worked as a houseboy before.'

'Oh hell, a lot of good he will be to us!'

'Yes, but you know how difficult it is to find anybody in this God-forsaken place. Can't you teach him?'

'Oh well, I suppose I'll have to.'

They talked a little more among themselves. At last Mr Jones turned to Koro, who had been listening, puzzled, all this time.

'All right, boy. We will give you a try. Now first you go to the labour compound and find a place to sleep. You come back by three o'clock. Understand?'

'Yes, master. Me go now, me find sleep place, me come back three klok, afternoon.'

'That's right.'

A week later Koro returned to the village to see his wife. He had earned five shillings, just the right amount for his wife's tax. He had saved some of his rations—meat, sugar, tobacco, rice, wheatmeal—to take home. He was filled with pleasure when he anticipated the joy of his wife and the admiration of the villagers. He would give something to his wife and distribute the rest among friends and relatives. He would hold his head upright and prove himself a big man. Koro passed through the village and entered his house.

Words were passed from house to house that Koteni's husband had returned home for the weekend and that he had brought a bag of something. Guessing what was in the bag, friends and relatives soon crowded into the house. Some came with a sincere desire to hear about their friend's new work. Many were merely hoping for a share in the contents of the bag. The proud wife soon placed cooked food before them. She opened tins of corned beef and spooned it on top of the steaming rice. She made tea, poured it into mugs and placed them before the relatives. Koro brought out tobacco and distributed it among them. They ate, they drank, they smoked and they talked.

'I eat this food because of you, nephew,' said Koro's uncle. 'This is different food. My bones pain me of eating the same thing again and again. This night is a change.' And he pulled the plate of rice closer towards him. Koro looked flattered.

'Your uncle dies of eating, look at his stomach,' said Koro's aunt and everybody laughed.

'What work are you doing at the European place?'

'I work in a white man's house,' said Koro with confidence.

'And all these ant eggs*, this cane, this sago and this smoke, did you buy all these?'

'Buy them? No, aunt. Do you think white people have to go far to look for food? They don't work for it. All is ready at their hands. There's a special place where all the food is kept. And there you'll see bags and bags of white man's sago, of ants eggs, of smoke and of cane. If you work for them, that is it, they just give you. You know these white men, they are not to be made fun of,' Koro said, getting excited.

*Ant eggs: the local term for rice.

'Children! Are the whites human beings, or what?'

'Tell us about this white man you are working for.'

'White man. He is a white man, and you know white man—he is not short of things. He has one wife and two children, one is a boy, one is a girl. You know whites, they are not to be made fun of. All things are ready at their hands. Sitting things—their house is full of them. Would they sit on mats like us? No!'

Everybody listened with wonder and Koro enjoyed being the centre of attraction. 'Things different, different, in the white man's house there are plenty. Things that talk and sing . . . what are their names? One is called radio, one is called. . . . ' He could not remember.

'You said those things talk?'

'Yes, they are small boxes, but people sing and talk inside. You can sometimes hear them laugh. Just like real human beings laughing and talking.'

'Koh! They aren't people these whites.' Everybody laughed and they looked at each other.

'Not people, these whites,' Koro repeated. 'That's right. They are never short of food. Not like us. They don't go and look for it. Food just comes. They write what they want on bits of paper and send them away. Then food just comes.'

'Yoh!' The crowd was murmuring with astonishment. Someone was heard saying:

'If I was like them, I wouldn't go to the garden any more, but sleep all day long in the hut.'

'Not to mention their wearing things,' Koro continued. 'Every day they wear clean clothes!'

'Children, that is why they live on the earth. They do not miss things.'

'They keep meat and food in this thing for many days. It is like a box and very cold inside. It can turn water into clear stones. But when you put them outside they become water again. If you hold these water stones in your hands they make your palms numb.'

'Nephew, is it true what they say that the white people do not let their children sleep with them in their sleeping room?'

'Why do you want to know, you are silly,' the man's wife interjected, and everybody laughed. Koro wondered whether he should deny the disgraceful practice of the whites, or whether he should admit the truth. In the end he said, 'That is true,' and all the young girls giggled. 'These white people's ways are different. I cannot see some of their doings. Although they do not allow their children to sleep with them, the father and mother put their mouths together in front of their children, and even in front of me, in the middle of the day!' The young girls shrieked with laughter and ran away from the gathering. The older people laughed, but tried to control themselves.

'In front of their children and you?' and everybody burst out laughing again.

'What is the difference? If they do that why don't they let their children see them sleep together at night?'

They continued to talk about the white man, his greatness and his strange ways. Koro told them of a drinking party on Friday night.

'On the night of the fifth day, my house white people brought some friends and they drank water almost the whole night . . . . '

'Drank water the whole night?'

'Yes, you know, the white man's bitter water, they call it beer. Children! You should see them that night. They drank and drank and drank. They talked and laughed and talked and laughed. Some of them sang songs and some of them danced. When they talked they did not say their words well, and when they got up they did not walk straight.' People shook their heads.

'Why do they walk like that?'

'The bitter water. You think it is fun. It can turn your brain around. These whites like it and they entertain their friends with it.'

There was quiet for a while. The people smoked and chewed betel nut. The room was filled with the pungent aroma of the tobacco and the people were perspiring from chewing betel nut.

'What is your real work in the house?' Koro's sister asked.

'I wash clothes, tidy their sleeping place, sweep the floor and on Saturday I rub the floor with some fat—like hard coconut oil. It makes the floor shine. I also cook food sometimes. I put spoons, plates and cups on the *walateva*. Do you think this is a woman's job? Do you think you can do this work?'

'Who knows that work?' his sister laughed.

'Do you wash that white woman's clothes?' asked Koro's mother.

'Yes, she is a white woman and she cannot do hard work with her hands.'

'They have no shame, these white women. Would your sister or your wife ever let you wash their clothes?'

By now the food had been eaten and only a few sticks of tobacco were left lying on the mat. The evening had progressed fast, unnoticed. The strength of the conversation had died down.

'Let us go,' said Koro's uncle. 'We leave our nephew and his wife to rest, for he must go back tomorrow.' One by one the people went home, looking forward to Koro's future weekend visits.

It was the third day of the week. Koteni was sweeping the dry leaves around the house. The afternoon was dry and still, and the smoke from the rubbish heap which Koteni had set fire to rose above the village. The village people were having their afternoon meal or they were smoking *lugu* and conversing about their gardens. Koteni finished sweeping and put the broom away. She took a bucket, some coconut oil and went to the river. She washed herself and made her body shine with oil. Her young body looked heavy with the load she was carrying. She would be brought to labour with her first child in two or three weeks and already her parents began to make charms to protect it from evil spirits. When she had finished washing herself, Koteni put the bucket on her head, supporting it with one arm and walked back to the house. She was surprised to see her husband sitting on the verandah, leaning against the wall.

Koro had entered the village walking alone behind the houses rather than through the street. People had observed him and they knew that something had gone wrong.

Koteni put the bucket of water away and went to her husband who kept quiet. 'You?' she asked. Koro said nothing. She sat down and looked worried. After a while she said, 'Are you going to say a word?'

'Have you some remainder of food left? My stomach is empty.' Koro continued to stare into mid air. Koteni brought a bowl of sweet potatoes, some taro and a few bananas and put it before him. Then she brought half a coconut shell with some coconut milk and poured it over the food. The dish did not look inviting. There was no fish, prawn or pig's meat to go with it. But then Koteni was a woman and could not be expected to fish or hunt.

Meanwhile visitors arrived. Koro's parents came, his friends and other relatives. Koro's mother brought a dish of food, with cooked yams, taro, corn, leaves and some pig meat. The visitors began to talk among themselves.

'This is not his coming day.' Koro sat eating quietly.

'You say some words. Why have you come on this day? Have you run away? Say words!' Koro's mother said. She was upset by his silence.

'Let him eat first. Give him time,' said Koro's uncle. They chewed betel nut and smoked *lugu*, watching Koro eat. When he had finished, Koteni took the dish away and his uncle said:

'Nephew, why have you come on this day's afternoon?' Koro knew that he must answer now. He could refuse his wife, his mother, his sisters, but not his uncle. He would disgrace himself, if he did not say something now.

'They finished me,' he said slowly.

'Finished you?' His uncle looked surprised. 'For what wrong have they . . . . '

'What wrong have you done, my son?' his mother burst in anxiously. 'Tell me you aren't going to the dark house. Tell me what

you have done to bring black people* to take you away. Say words!'

'Mother, what have I done to go to the dark house?'

'Then tell us why you are here.'

'These white people can put you into the dark house for very small wrongs,' his uncle said.

'Uncle, I did no wrong. I was just blamed by the white woman and she finished me.'

'What did she blame you for?'

'Their children broke the thing with which they see their faces. This thing stands at the sleeping room of their father and mother. And you know the white children. They can break their bones in playing. Those evil children. They broke the face-seeing thing. And the evil children who would die of telling lies, told their mother that I broke it, while I swept the sleeping room. I wish they would die, those evil, bone breaking children.' Koro paused a while, then continued: 'Their mother came and poured out words after words. Who knows what she said. But it is her tongue that poured out strong words. Then she finished me.'

'These white people are like that,' someone said. 'If you do a little wrong, they finish you. They do not give you time to say your words.'

'Why did you not tell her that you did not break it?' Koro's sister asked.

'You go and talk to her. You will have the strength to stand her words,' Koro said ironically.

'What did her husband say?' Koro's uncle wanted to know.

*Black people: the local term for 'policeman', because of the dark uniform worn by them.

'He said nothing to me, because his wife did not give him time to talk. He is not like his wife, but his wife always beats him, when they talk.'

'So he did not say words when she finished you?'

'He said some words, but he himself is not strong to stop his wife's mouth.'

'If I were him I would see that evil woman and land the palm of my hand on her mouth.'

At last the people were satisfied. They had the full story. One by one they went home. Dusk was falling fast. Koro's mother was the last to leave.

'Koro, it is good you have come back. Look at your wife and think of what is in her stomach. Your own child will come soon. If you were still working, who would fish for your wife? Your father is getting old. So it is good that you came. The white people are different from us. When you came last weekend, you told us of all the things they have. You admired them then. Would you talk like that again now? No, son. Stay, look after your wife, fish for her, hunt for her . . . but there is no moon tonight, so I better go now.'

The evening was completely dark. Not even stars could be seen. Koteni got up and took the hurricane lamp from the wall and lit it. She placed it in the centre of the mat. The night was black and still and seemed much too calm for the unrest in their minds. Koro leaned against the wall thinking. Koteni stared at the lamp, busy with her own thoughts. Koro thought of the whites and then of the tax. 'Tax . . . tax . . . where will I get the stones to pay?'

ISLAND LIFE

by Kumalau Tawali

'FATHER, LOOK! What is that thing appearing between Lou and Baluan? Is it a very big fire? It is sending up thick smoke!' I asked.

'It could be the Baluan people burning their bush. But in all my life I have never seen their smoke from here, not even when the wind is dead and the sea is oiled.'

'But Father, the smoke is rising up from the midst of the sea. I can see from here that it is not close to any of these islands.'

We kept watching all afternoon, until it got quite dark. But the smoke did not seem to disappear. In fact it became redder and stars shot up from it in all directions. Everybody in the village became alarmed. They had never seen anything like it before.

It was not until many years later—at school—that I found out that what I had seen was called a submarine volcano.

There were not many such dramatic events in my early childhood. In the years before I was sent to school, we lived a leisurely life on the island. We children could indulge in games almost as much as we liked.

'Eh! awa nat! yota kala chemak!' I used to say to my friends. (Hey, boys, let's go and play *chemak*.) *'Ekila yota!'* they answered and we all set out for Kopal. Sometimes in our excitement we forgot to bring an axe or a knife. Suddenly somebody would say 'Eh, you are all walking. And did anybody bring a knife?' Then we would all agree to send the smallest boy. 'Kusuman, go home and get your mother's knife.' The smallest one showed little enthusiasm, but the bigger ones would say again, 'Would you, Kusuman? If you don't we will send you home. And if you don't listen, we will beat you.'

For the game of *chemak* we made two targets, ten yards apart. We made spears from sharpened bamboo or from straight sticks. We all stood at one end and shot at the other target. Then we moved over to the other side and shot at the first target. Whoever hit the target most times was the winner. Sometimes we divided ourselves into groups, competing against each other. There was a great deal of arguing during the game. 'Look at your spear, Molean, it is not on the target. It is just hanging on this bit here.' Molean would get angry. 'But that bit is part of the target, therefore my spear is on the target.'

Sometimes such arguments led to fights, but when the group as a whole felt that one boy was in the wrong, they would force him to 'finish' from the game.

On moonlit nights we would play 'hide and seek' or *tatapol*, a game designed to discover strength. It was played like this: a cylindrical piece of wood was placed between two boys, who were sitting down face to face. They stretched out their legs, the soles of their feet meeting. The referee held the stick exactly above the place where their feet met. Then he counted, keeping his left hand on the stick, *'Esi, elua, etalo!'* Then they pulled. For a while they would keep the balance, but in the end the loser would be pulled up in the air. 'He won because he is heavier than me!' the loser would say. 'If it were strength to strength, oh! he wouldn't be a man who is hard to pull.'

When we felt less energetic, we would sit in the moonshine and sing:

Moon eh! moon,
Eh! moon.
Moon shine,
shine on Langepi,
Langepi the place of crabs
place of crabs
Looking for a home.

Or else we would play at riddles. 'There is a man,' somebody would begin. 'This man always laughs, day and night, when the wind is blowing. Who is he?' There would be silence, then somebody would shout the answer, *'Awei!'* And others would shout 'Yes, yes, that is right. That person is the wave.' 'There is a man. He is not strong, he is not important, but he can tell anybody to do what he wants. Who is he?' All sorts of answers would be produced until someone hit on the right one—'Urine!' Everybody was eager to ask his own riddle. 'One man. This man can tell you to go to bed anytime. Even if you don't like to, or even if you are the strongest man in the world.' 'Sickness!'

In the midst of our enjoyment our mothers would start calling us home. 'Kanawi oh!' And the boys recognizing their mothers' voices would run home. Shutting an ear to one's mother would mean several slaps on the back.

'This child!' Mother would say when I got home. 'You have just had your bath a little while ago, and why did you have to dirty yourself again like that!'

Sometimes I got my own way by crying. To stop me from crying they would say, 'Kanawi, if you stop crying we will take you to Grandmother and she will tell you stories.'

'Grandmother,' I would plead, 'tell me the story of Chinggui.' And she would begin, *'Chinggui, chinggui a i ti kol e i.'* And Grandmother would tell me about Chinggui who carved the wonderful *garamut* drum out of a giant's thigh bone. She would tell me about chief Lapayap who died trying to steal Chinggui's drum. I heard about the chief of Loi who brought mosquitoes to his village, because he thought that his people were lazy and slept too much, and about the chief of Mbuli, who died of shame, because a giant had taken his penis away while he slept, and had replaced it with his own monstrous penis.

I worried Grandmother with many questions. 'Niasim, where is Chinggui's place? Was Pandrilei a man? Or was he a bird and a man at the same time?' In the end, I would fall asleep during one of her stories.

On calm days, when the tide was low I would look for the other boys to fish on the reef.

'Litau, all the other boys, where are they? The reef will soon be dry, would you like to go fishing during the low tide today?' 'Yes, yes, I am for that! My father fixed my canoe and made me a new spear yesterday.'

'If the other boys don't come, can we go in your canoe? I also have a new spear.'

'Oh yes. My canoe was made for fishing. It is for both of us.'

When there were many boys, we made fish traps by erecting stone barriers. We were always excited when we reached the reef. When the tide had gone out really far and the sea was very smooth we thought of nothing but spearing fish. Then a soft south-east breeze would begin to blow.

'Wind is coming,' said Litau.

'Yes, the high tide will soon be coming in.'

The sun was already starting towards the west when we brought our fish home. Usually Grandmother smoked my fish, to be kept and sold at market later.

I mostly came home hungry from these fishing trips. We all had to sit down properly to eat. Usually I talked too much during meals and my grandfather would say 'That is too much talking, Kanawi. Which mouth will you eat with and which mouth will you talk with? When you are eating, keep quiet. In that way you can digest your food properly.' If we did not sit properly, especially if it was one of the girls, Grandmother would say 'Pailep, why don't you sit straight? Why are you leaning to one side? Have you got a boil?'

At meal times, when they had us all together, our grandparents did much of their reprimanding.

'When your father and mother tell you to do something, obey them. If you see things belonging to others lying about—don't take them. If other people have things, don't go and ask for them. Let them give it to you by their own wish. If you ask for things people start gossiping about you.'

After the meal we all washed our hands. My mother was calling me. Grandmother said 'Kanawi, your mother is calling. She said your father is going fishing. Would you like to go with him?'

'Yes, yes, Niasim.'

'Mbupa, where are you going now?'

'We are going to Chapou. We are going to hook *ndra*.'

'Mbupa, did you bring my small fishing line and rod?'

'Yes, I did. Can't you see it lying across the outrigger?'

It was a fine day. The sun was setting over the horizon and we were going to fish overnight. The clouds on the horizon took different shapes. Some looked like fish, others like mountains. Some looked like sword fish, others like far away hills. Looking at the horizon made me curious.

'Father, is the horizon where the edge of the world is? Because my eyes can't see any further than where the horizon is. Is there something there preventing my eyes from seeing further? Does the sea stretch all the way to the end of the world?'

My father did not say much. He was busy calculating our position, because at night it was difficult to find the reef.

'Where is Rabaul? I think Rabaul is at the back of the horizon. What did you do, when your ship reached the horizon? Did you make a hole through the horizon?'

'Mbupa, Manus is very big. I think it is the biggest place in the world. Can't you see the high mountains over there, Mount Chapomu and Mount Moru? They are high. Can't you see where the arm of the land disappears into the horizon? But still there is more land beyond that. And still you said that Rabaul is much much bigger. I find it hard to see.'

'Yes, Rabaul is much much bigger and longer and there are other places which are much bigger than Rabaul,' my father said.

'I thought Manus is the only place in the world, because I can't see other places. And the moon. Was the moon shining over Rabaul?'

'Yes, I saw it, the way you see it here.'

'Father, I can't believe that. Because here in Manus we have our own moon, and in Rabaul there is a different moon. All other places have their own moons. Because the moon is shining directly above us now. And it can't be doing the same above Rabaul.'

'No, there is only one moon. The word of Lapan says that. When I was in the mission, the Pater told me.'

'Lapan. Who is he?'

'God's spirit. That is what the book Tambu says.'

'Where is his place? The people in the house Lotu always say, he lives up in heaven. Where is heaven?'

'Nobody in this place ground knows where heaven is, or what heaven is like.'

'Father, I think it is up in the clouds. And I think it has trees and rocks and fish, just as we have here.' And then I asked him again, 'Is it true that when we die our spirit leaves us and goes up to heaven?'

'Yes,' Father said, 'it is true.' By now it was quite dark.

'Father, how can we find the reef in this darkness?' I wanted to know.

'Can you see Point Pili there?' He pointed towards it. 'When you see that it is partly hidden by Chapompou, then you will know that we have arrived near the reef.'

I kept watching, while he paddled us. The regular splashing noise in the water suggested the rhythm and energy of his work. The point of Peli got nearer and nearer to Chapompou. Then it was partly hidden.

'Father, Chapompou has partly hidden the point of Peli!'

'Has it?' said Father.

'Uh!' I answered.

'Then look around near the canoe, we should be near the reef now.' I looked around for awhile.

'Father, it's there, just beyond the outrigger.'

My father lowered the anchor, which was a stone weighing about ten pounds, at the end of some fifty fathoms of split cane. Then he came up to the platform and built a *karuka* shelter, to prevent me from getting cold in the sea breeze.

'Kanawi, would you like to use your small line now, or do you want to sleep?'

'I want to fish, Father,' I answered when part of his words were still in his mouth.

'*Wian.* Good. But you better be careful. When a small fish is caught on your line, you better pull it in quickly, before a bigger fish eats it. I am expecting kingfish, groupers and barracouda to come up tonight.'

He sat down and lit the Coleman lamp. He tied it in the front of the canoe. He put a bait on the line and lowered it.

'Very soon the glimmer of the lamp will attract small fish.' While he was talking, the line began to twitch in his hand. 'It's on,' said Father. 'I think it's a big fish. It must be a kingfish, judging by the way it shoots from side to side. You better keep your eyes looking —because kingfish usually jump up.'

He dragged and the fish dragged. At one stage he nearly finished the eighty fathoms of line. After a long struggle, the big fish gave up. Slowly he came nearer the surface.

'Kanawi, get the spear and be ready to harpoon it,' said Father. 'Now! Shoot it!' I could not possibly miss the large target. The spear struck the fish between the eyes. Father pulled it aboard.

'Father, you were right, it is a kingfish!' I said admiringly.

Then he lowered the line into the sea again. This time he caught a barracouda worth about five sagoes! After that he hooked a smaller barracouda, and then another and another. And then a grouper of the kind known as *koei.*

I wanted to stay awake until dawn, but my eyes didn't like to. 'Father, my eyes are heavy, I want to sleep. Is it close to daybreak now?'

'No, not yet. It is the middle of the night. You see that stingray star there?' I looked up and saw a cluster of stars vaguely resembling a stingray. 'When it's over Mount Chapomu, morning will be near. Also, the coming of dawn is signalled by three morning stars. They are called *apatal.* One comes up first. Then the second. When the third one appears, day will break,' he said.

'What about the cocks, that crow in the morning?' I asked.

'The appearance of the three stars is greeted by the crowing of the cocks: the first cock-crow, the second cock-crow and the third cock-crow.' His last words seemed far away. I was joining death's brother.

My first really disturbing experience in life came when my aunt Kerata died and my mother went to mourn over her. It was the first time that I saw what a dead person looked like. Kerata looked as if she was sleeping. It was a peaceful sleep, I thought, and I wondered what death was. 'Is it good? Is it painful? How would one feel when one was just about to die?' Nobody seemed to know what death felt like, but at first I could not imagine that death was a bad thing. It was only when I heard my grandmother crying, that I began to have some notion of the pain death could cause. Grandmother was wailing:

Lomot, I am mad.
Lomot, what will I do.
Lomot, where will I go.
Lomot you are burning my body,
Lomot you are burning my heart.
Lomot?
Oh! Lomot.
Lomot, Lomot, oh.

These sad songs, I thought. What did they mean? That death is no good? That death is frightening? I concluded that men hated death, but that death loved man, that's why he always came.

The next day they buried Kerata's body.

'Ina, what did Aunt Kerata die of?'

'Shh! This child. Your mouth is very big,' she said angrily.

'Ina, please tell me,' I pleaded.

'They said she was killed by magic. They said an Usiai man wanted to marry her, but she didn't like. So he killed her with magic,' Mother said softly.

I wondered why my uncle Posangat had not been able to help her. We all knew that Posangat possessed magic. Was his magic not strong enough in this case? But I did not dare to ask.

We sometimes went to Posangat with different sicknesses. There was the day when my elder sister suddenly developed a swollen leg. The swelling increased and the pain increased. She cried in the night. My mother cried for her and did not know what to do. My sister had not been hit by anything. My father said: 'I am going to see Posangat. He has magic that can kill other magic. I will tell him to come.'

Posangat looked at my sister's swollen leg and nodded his head. 'She must have stepped over somebody's ginger. The ginger magic was probably protecting some crop the owner was growing. But it's all right. Keep your neck straight.' Then he took out a piece of ginger from his bag and he started chewing it. He added betel nut and pepper and finally he added lime. The mixture made a beautiful crimson lump in his mouth. Then he held the leg in one hand and spat the mixture all over it. Then he went to the door and threw out both his arms. You could hear the joints cracking! Then he came back smiling. 'It's finished. Tomorrow the swelling will go down.' Next day her leg was better. Within three days she was completely well.

This was a powerful experience, that embedded itself deep in my belief.

I did not see many manifestations of traditional Manus culture. Christianity had already superseded the old beliefs, when I was a child. Initiation rites and masked dances had been abolished. There were some occasions, however, when my people still appealed directly to the ancestors, rather than to God.

I remember the day my father came back with a large haul of fish from an overnight fishing expedition. He divided the fish into two piles. One pile was to be smoked by Grandmother. 'And this pile is for Aunt Nialau. She is making her son's *Chani* ceremony tonight.'

'*Chani* ceremony?' I said. 'What is that?'

'Oh, you wait and see it tonight.'

I could hardly eat with excitement, when Grandfather was calling me to eat.

'Kanawi, you come. Come eat. Can't you see your stomach going towards your back? Sit down. Um! Um! Now eat properly. Last night you went out fishing. Nights are cold. Don't go too often to fish at night with your father. It will spoil your body.' I was Grandfather's favourite child.

Evening came and the little village of Chalol was alive with noise. Noise of children playing in the moonlight, of women scraping coconuts for the evening meal, of young men joking with each other on the beach.

'Stay in the house, Kanawi,' Mother said, 'and see your cousin's *Chani* ceremony.' Mother was a very strict woman. She wanted to equip me with the best of knowledge and good manners. She wanted me to grow up and be like my father: independent and prosperous.

Aunt Nialau and her son Kichani came into my father's house. Mother was at the door to greet them. Nialau's husband followed with his relatives, carrying food: sago stew, fried sago mixed with coconut oil, boiled fish, mashed taro, sweet potatoes, betel nut, and pepper leaves. When everybody had arrived, my mother took a special dish of mashed taro and coconut oil and placed it before Payap and Nialangis. Everybody became silent.

Aunt Nialau touched her son's shoulder, motioning him to move closer to Payap. Payap took a deep breath and with a sigh of confidence, he began:

'You listen, ancestors,
You great ancestors,
This is Kichani, the son of Nalo.

He is leaving us, and going to another land.
You great ancestors, Pondros,
Pwisi, Pisiol, Changol,
This is your taro.
This is the taro of Pondros,
This is the taro of Pwisi,
This is the taro of Pisiol,
This is the taro of Changol.'

Then his wife Nialangis spoke:

'I am now going to give your taro,
I am going to give your taro to the son of Nalo.
And I call upon you, great ancestors,
May your spirit dwell on this taro,
May this taro be your true spirit,
And when he eats it, may he eat your good qualities
And when he grows up to be a man
May these good qualities grow up too.'

Then she fed him with a lump, the size of an egg, much too big for Kichani's small mouth.

'Eat it Kichani,
This is the spirit of your ancestors,
And may this make you strong
In what you are going to do.
May it make you like your ancestors,
Strong and full of energy.'

So this is *Chani,* I said to myself. Will they ever make it for me?

It was not until many years later that they made the ceremony for me. The occasion was my leaving Manus to attend the university in Port Moresby. Thus the *Chani,* for me, marked the end of the island way of life.

POEMS WRITTEN BY SCHOOL STUDENTS

Note: These poems were written by students attending a Creative Writing Course held at Rabaul in November 1968. The course was organized by the Department of Education and was run by Ulli Beier with Norma Dean and Murray Russel. Jacob Simet is a student of Rabaul High School. Herman Talingapua and Mathias Kauri are students of St Paul's Teachers College.

HIDDEN POWER

Slowly the moon climbs
along its silvery path
over Kumbu mountain.
Palm trees cast the shadows
of their rough bodies
across my path,
their wombs
heavy with sago.
Avoiding the wind,
coconut trees bend low.
Leleki baskets
hang from the roof of the men's house
pregnant with secrets
and power.
But I,
the 'modern man',
complete with suit,
despatch case and transistor set,
shall never know
what hidden happiness or strength
is tied up in these baskets.
My age and 'learning' notwithstanding,
I am excluded.
Uninitiated,
condemned to sleep with women,
unfit to carry shield and spear.

Herman Talingapua

THE OLD BREADFRUIT TREE

When she was young she was a great friend.
Everybody liked her for her fruits.
She would give you fruit before you could count ten.
But now she is old, bearing not much fruit.
She is no longer a friend.
Hearing she was going to be cut down
She bore a small fruit.

Jacob Simet

THE SEA

When the sea sleeps,
it is very smooth, like glass,
like Chinese silk or linen,
but when touched it glitters,
like transparent, broken glass.
Passengers on a ship enjoy it,
when they see the reflection of the boat
in a glorious mirror.

But when the sea awakes,
I paddle my outrigger canoe,
back to the safety of the land.
It roars like a dying pig,
with a spear stuck in its back,
surrounded by savage dogs and men.
The waves hit against the shore
like an angry python trying to swallow a dog.

Mathias Kauri

NATIVE CHRISTMAS

December the month of continued activities.
Men, women and children
are busy making and mending
their Christmas Togeanga.
Not that they have nothing to wear for the festival,
but who will make the one with
the most and richest designs?

Leaves of untouched *Diri* are
ripped out of their mother
and the dull tree stands there as if
death had descended on it of a sudden.
The leaves are soaked in salty sea
and left in there weighed down by heavy stones
awaiting their resurrection.

Giggling girls with laughing mothers
are working side by side nakedly
in the warm and lovely sea of Makiri.
Shining breasts are dancing with
the rhythm of the browny hands at work
cleaning and wringing
the limp leaves softened by the sea.

Men and boys cut their way through the bush
noisily digging for yellow clay,
chewing bark and spitting juice,
mixing the clay in coconut shells.
Men dive willingly for coral and boys
canoe them back to the shore
where they are burnt into white ashes.

Old *pupus* dip coconut fibres in ochre,
in red, in charcoal black and white.
They paint the young men's cheekbones, their noses
and foreheads. They crown the hair with feathers
of pigeon, cock and parrot, with green wings
of beetles. They all join big big *hamamas*
to entertain the white priest's *Tubuku*.

Herman Talingapua

MATUPIT VOLCANO

In the morning she awakes like a copra dryer.
She starts to give out her white smoke
and makes the air dryer.
Her sulphuric smell fills up the atmosphere;
You think it's horrible
I think it's lovely.

Jacob Simet

DAY DREAM

I perspire under the fruitless mango tree.
Its shade is not enough to protect me
from the blazing heat of the merciless sun.
The stifling breeze blows
through the steaming kunai grass.
My shirt sticks to my body uncomfortably.

Aggressively I think of the burden
of school rules and regulations
of lining up, confinement and insipid food
and the harsh clanging of ringing bells,
calling me to more dull work like
cleaning up the old fashioned library.

And I remember the singing of
the running stream, the laughing of children
and chatter of old women
and yellow mango juice dripping, dripping from
my mouth. And at night father comes home
with red glittering fish dangling from his hand.

Herman Talingapua

MY HEAD IS AS BLACK AS THE SOIL OF OUR COUNTRY

by Peter Lus

AT ONE STAGE in Manus, I was made to start from the bottom where labourers got up at six o'clock in the morning to cut grass. One day, those of us who were involved held a meeting for a strike, because we did not like this idea of getting up very early to work at six o'clock. At the meeting the foreman asked each one of us to prepare an argument that was suitable to present on behalf of the group to the patrol officer. Everybody was ordered to keep quiet while each person gave his little talk starting from the first house. Eventually it came to be the turn of those of us who lived in the third house. These were only the Wewak, Maprik, Aitape and Lumi people. We were called upon; it was our turn. I looked at the men who sat there making no attempt to say a word.

I got up and said, 'My name is Lus and I am going to try to express my opinion.' At that time I only had one name which was Lus. I got the name Peter after I had come home. Well, I got up and said, 'I am Lus. When I was at Rabaul I observed that the people who worked for the government got up at about seven or eight o'clock to start work. Here we are getting up very early at six o'clock like a lot of prisoners. We go to work at six o'clock, have a spell at eight o'clock and then back to work. This to me is improper.'

Everybody including the foreman said, 'The other arguments are not suitable. You will be the one to talk with the kiap.'

The next morning, we, the whole five hundred of us, slept in. No one got up at six o'clock to cut grass. We slept in, each one in his own bed. The authorities came, but no one paid any attention to them. We all sat back. They became annoyed about this, and went to Lorengau to bring the kiap. The kiap with some police came by the government's boat. As soon as we saw the clerk, we knew straight away that they were going to deal with our trouble, so we went and had our ablutions and got dressed, in preparation, in case we were expelled or sent home. The clerk came and called us to appear before the kiap. I carried some forms to sit on and we all gathered and sat before the kiap for a court case. They asked us, 'Who has something to say?'

I said, 'I have.'

'What is your name?' I was asked.

'My name is Lus.' I also gave them my father's name.

'Where do you come from?'

'I come from Maprik,' I said.

'You are the one who influenced these people, are you?'

I said 'I did not influence them, but we are not your gang of prisoners.' At that time I was slender. I was not as fat as I am now.

The kiap asked me 'What sort of a man are you?' As soon as he took a moment to sit, some of the men closed in towards him and others scattered around. He said, 'What are you trying to do?'

I said, 'We have a matter to settle.'

He said, 'What is it?'

The others said, 'Lus has to present all that.'

He told us to wait.

I said to him, 'We want to talk to you now.'

Then he said, 'You go and stand outside, the others can come in.'

The others went in and he said to them 'Now let us hear the case.' He said to them, 'If you refuse to get up at six o'clock in the morning,

you will have to get up at five o'clock in the morning to cut grass until six o'clock in the afternoon.'

I overheard him from outside and called out, 'Hey, who told you that? I tell you, don't you dare do that to us.'

This patrol officer was at Maprik before. He said, 'Lus, keep quiet.' He slapped me across my mouth and again said, 'You keep quiet and listen to what I say.'

I said, 'Yes, but you must listen to what I have to say too. You are absolutely wrong.'

He then said to me, 'Lus, you are going to jail.'

I said, 'All right, I can go to jail; now what about all this crowd here.'

He said, 'Do you want to go to jail?'

The crowd yelled out at him, 'We all want to go to jail.'

Some of them said, 'Yes, if you put Lus in jail, we want to go to jail too.'

He said, 'Oh, no, we only have a small jail.'

We said to him, 'If you have a small jail, then you can accommodate some of us in your own house.'

He said, 'No, my wife and I are using the house.'

We said, 'If you want to put us in jail, we must sleep in your house.'

Then he said, 'I am going to expel you all and send you back to your homes.'

I said, 'You can send us home. I have yams and taros at home. Do you think we are poor at home?'

The others said, 'If you send Lus home, we must go home too.'

He said, 'Who is going to pay all your plane fares?'

I said, 'You will.' I pointed my finger at him. 'You will have to pay the plane fares. I wanted to go back to Rabaul but you insisted at Maprik and now I am here. You have to pay the fare yourself. If you prefer to, you may send us to our homes by ship.'

He was silent.

I said to him again, 'It was not my intention to come here. I wanted to go to Rabaul.'

The others yelled at him, 'You pay the fares.'

There were fifteen hundred of us altogether—domestic servants, labourers and many others. They said, 'You yourself are to pay the plane fares for everyone of us.'

He was silent. After a while he said, 'Right, now you shall all begin work at 8.15 a.m. to 12 noon and from 12.45 p.m. to 3.00 p.m. each day.'

Again I said, 'Forget it. If they'd rather go home, let them go.' This was the first time I had ever spoken out against Europeans. It was my experience in the Navy that gave me the confidence in political argument. Anyway, from then on we were working by the new working timetable.

Note: This is an extract from a short autobiography by Peter Lus, who is a member of the House of Assembly in Port Moresby. The autobiography was spoken on tape by Peter Lus and transcribed by Rabbie Namaliu. The translation was made by Mrs Hilan Pora-Schmidt.

THREE TALES FROM MANUS

by Kumalau Tawali

CHINGGUI

CHINGGUI LIVED ALONE. His father and mother, the two had died. He had no brothers or sisters, therefore he lived by himself in his home. He lived in his home and he went out to walk in the bush.

One day, when he was walking in the bush, he saw a breadfruit tree, which belonged to a giant. He saw the breadfruit tree and climbed it. As he was climbing the tree he shook the branches and one of the breadfruit leaves fell on the ground in front of the giant's house. When the giant saw it, he came out and questioned the leaf. 'What dropped you? Did the wind drop you?' The leaf did nothing. And the giant asked again, 'Did a bird drop you?' Again the leaf did nothing. He said, 'No? If it was not a bird, did a man drop you?' At once the leaf jumped up and down.

So the giant went walking. He went, went, went to where the breadfruit tree stood. He walked, walked, walked until he arrived there. When he looked up, he saw Chinggui in the tree. Then the giant said, 'Chinggui, is this breadfruit tree yours or whose?'

Chinggui replied, 'No, this breadfruit tree is not mine. But I just saw it and climbed it.'

And the giant asked again, 'And whom did you ask?' Thus he was getting angry at the man up there. He said to Chinggui, 'You climb down!'

While climbing down, Chinggui kept an overripe breadfruit in his hand. He climbed down, until he came to the branch that was nearest to the ground. And while the giant was looking up at him, he threw the breadfruit and it came down and splashed all over the giant's eyes and face.

Thus, while the giant was still wiping the breadfruit from his face, Chinggui climbed down and gathered his breadfruit. But while Chinggui was still gathering his breadfruit, the giant had cleared his eyes and they fought.

They fought and fought, until Chinggui killed the giant. Then Chinggui opened his chest and took out the heart and roasted it over the fire. But when the heart would not burst noisily Chinggui said, 'Oh! So this is the last of all the giants in this area?' Then he cut up the giant and he took two of his ribs and he took his large thigh bone. And he carved the thigh bone into a *garamut* drum and he cleaned the ribs and used them as sticks to beat the *garamut*.

Then he carried them home and he beat his drum. The sound of the drum ran to every place and the people heard it. And far away, chief Lapayap heard it and he said, 'Oh, I want that drum to be beaten during my feast.' And he said to his people, 'My people, we are going to get that drum, which is crying in the distant land, to come and be beaten during my feast.'

So they went out to the sea and they sailed and sailed and came to the land of Chinggui. But Chinggui was not at home. He had gone to the bush and he had hidden the drum under the house, among the rubbish. Lapayap and his men searched and searched and could not

find it. But just as they were about to leave, Lapayap went under the house, and when he shifted the rubbish, he found the *garamut*. They carried it to their canoe. And when the sails were hoisted and they were sailing out onto the sea, Lapayap took out the drum and beat it.

When the cry of the drum was carried to Chinggui, he exclaimed 'Oh! Who is that beating my drum?' He came running to the house through the bush. He looked among the rubbish, but found nothing. Then he quickly ran down to the beach, but when he got there, Lapayap had sailed far away.

Chinggui stayed at home and thought for a long, long time about his *garamut*. He thought about a plan with which to go and get it back. Then he cooked a pot of stew and called all the birds. He called the eagles. The eagles came and Chinggui said, 'Eagles, if you fly and get my drum from Lapayap, I will give you this pot of stew.'

But the eagles said, 'No, we can't go and take it.'

Chinggui then called the skylarks. When the skylarks came he said, 'Skylarks, if you can fly and get my *garamut* from Lapayap, I will give you this pot of stew.'

But the skylarks said, 'No, we cannot go and get your drum.'

Finally he called the swallows. When the swallows came he said to them, 'Swallows, if you fly and get my *garamut*, I will give you this pot of stew.'

Then the swallows said, 'We will not eat your stew now. We must try first. If we succeed in bringing back your drum, then we can eat your stew.'

Then, just before they flew away, they said to Chinggui, 'You must watch the eastern horizon. If you see us coming together, it means that we have taken the *garamut*. But if you see us flying singly, it means we could not get it.'

Then they flew. They flew and flew until they reached the home of Lapayap. When Lapayap saw them, he welcomed them. 'Yes, you have come.'

And the chief of the swallows said, 'Yes, we have come and we want to dance.'

When the swallows were dancing, their chief went to Lapayap and asked him whether he could beat the little drum that sent so much noise to far places. Lapayap allowed him to beat the *garamut*. So he beat the drum, and the swallows danced. They danced all through the night, but when the dawn came, the chief of the swallows seized the drum and they all flew away with it.

When Chinggui looked across the eastern horizon he saw the swallows all flying together, and he was very very glad. The swallows came and gave him his drum, and Chinggui gave them the pot of stew and they ate it. After that, they flew away.

Then Chinggui took out his drum and beat it. When he beat it, the cry of the *garamut* was carried to Lapayap and he moaned, 'Mmmmmm . . . that is the drum! I must go and take it back.'

This time he sailed without his people. When he arrived, Chinggui was not at home. So Lapayap left his canoe floating near the beach and went to Chinggui's house to fetch the drum. This time Chinggui had not hidden the drum, so it was very easy for Lapayap to find it. Lapayap was so happy, that he started to beat the drum on his way to the beach. When Chinggui heard the cry of his *garamut*, he came running. He ran straight to the beach.

When he arrived there, he saw Lapayap carrying the *garamut*. He said to him, 'Lapayap! Is that *garamut* yours?'

Lapayap said 'No. But why do you ask?' So they quarrelled and quarrelled and they fought and fought for a long time. They fought until they were exhausted. In the end Chinggui killed Lapayap. Then Chinggui carried Lapayap's body and placed it in the canoe. He took the *garamut* and tied it to Lapayap's chest. He fastened the two sails and hoisted them. Finally he fastened the steer to the stern of the canoe. And when the soft south-east wind came blowing, he spoke to the body of Lapayap. 'I would have given you that drum, if you had asked me for it. But now, since you

fought bravely for it . . . take it to your home, so it may be beaten at your funeral. I now call upon the south-east wind to sail your body home to your people.'

Thus Chinggui let go the canoe and it sailed, and it reached Lapayap's home. When the people saw it they said, 'Lapayap has come.' But when they went aboard they found Lapayap dead. So the *garamut* he had wanted to beat for his feast was beaten for his funeral.

THE CHIEF OF LOI

THERE WAS A CHIEF at Loi. He used to see that his people slept long every morning and would not get up until the sun had risen to the highest point in the sky.

And the chief said to himself, 'This is not good before my eyes. What will happen, if enemies decide to attack our village?' So he said to himself, 'I will go to Mbuiar.' So he tied his hair, put the cowrie shell on his penis, picked up his basket, and with his axe in his right hand he set out.

He climbed mountains upon mountains, and crossed river after river. He arrived in Mbuiar on the evening of the third day.

The chief of Mbuiar was chewing betel nut on his verandah, when the chief of Loi arrived. The chief of Loi said, 'Oh! I have come.'

And the chief of Mbuiar said, 'Yes, you have come. And what do you want, my cousin? What is in your neck, that made you undertake this perilous journey?'

And the chief of Loi replied, 'My cousin, I have come to you all this way, on a very important matter. But let's not talk about it now. My hunger is eating me.'

So the chief of Mbuiar told his wives to cook food. Then they ate. After the meal they were chewing betel nut and they began to talk. 'And now, my cousin, tell me what is in your neck, that brought you all the way to my home,' asked the chief of Mbuiar.

'I have come to ask for nothing. All I want is to get some mosquitoes from you,' said the chief of Loi.

At this the chief of Mbuiar bit his finger and said with great surprise, 'Oh, my grandfather! Is that what you came for, all this way? What is the matter with you? I thought you came to get something good. But you came for mosquitoes. My place is the home of mosquitoes. And it is well known, everywhere, for this.'

So that evening the chief of Mbuiar went behind the house and he filled two bamboo containers with mosquitoes. Then he came back to the house. He said to the chief of Loi, 'Tonight you can sleep in my house. And tomorrow, very early in the morning, you can set out.' So they slept.

The next morning, after they had taken their meal, the chief of Mbuiar farewelled his cousin, the chief of Loi. He said, 'I thought you came all the way up here for something good, but you came for mosquitoes. So now take these two bamboo containers. They are filled with mosquitoes.'

The chief of Loi thanked the chief of Mbuiar

and set on his way, carrying the two bamboo containers with him. On the way he climbed mountains upon mountains and crossed river after river. When he came to Patu, he dropped one of the bamboo containers. That is why, until today, there are many mosquitoes at Patu.

However, he continued his journey and on the evening of the third day arrived in Loi. As he was nearing the village, he heard his people laughing and joking as they were preparing their evening meal. He said to himself, 'Ah you may laugh now, but tonight you won't go to sleep.'

As soon as it was dark, the chief went behind the house and opened the remaining bamboo container and let the mosquitoes fly out. That night the people kept hitting their backs, until the day broke. And with the first light of day they crept out of their huts, scratching their legs. When the chief saw that, he felt very pleased.

That is why today Loi has more mosquitoes than any other place on Manus.

THE LAPAN OF MBULI

THE CHIEF OF MBULI lived in his home. One night, when he saw that the moon was good, he said, 'Ah! I would like to go for a walk!' So he tied his hair, put the cowrie shell on his penis, carried his axe and set on his way. He walked, walked, walked until he felt sleepy. Then he lay down under a tree and slept.

But he did not know this: there was a giant, who also saw that the moon was good, and he decided to walk too. So he walked and walked until he came and saw the chief sleeping under the tree.

When he looked at the chief he saw the cowrie shell on his penis and he said, 'Oh, that thing is good.' And he cautiously took the chief's penis and replaced it with his own. The giant's penis, unfortunately, was very long. So whenever he walked about, he coiled it round a stick, and carried it on his shoulder.

The chief was asleep and knew nothing of all this. But when, towards morning, he woke up, he saw that his penis was gone and that instead there was the giant's penis. The chief was very, very sad.

But it was impossible for him to find out where his own penis had gone. So he coiled the long penis round a stick and carried it on his shoulder, and walked home. He decided not to go home during the day, because he was ashamed of his penis. He waited until it was dark. Then, when he was sure that no one was around, he slowly entered his cousin's house.

When his cousin saw him, he said, 'You

have come, my cousin. What is in your neck, now?'

And the chief replied, 'A very bad and shameful thing has happened to me. Last night, when I was walking in the forest, I fell asleep under a tree. And something came and took my own penis and replaced it with his own.'

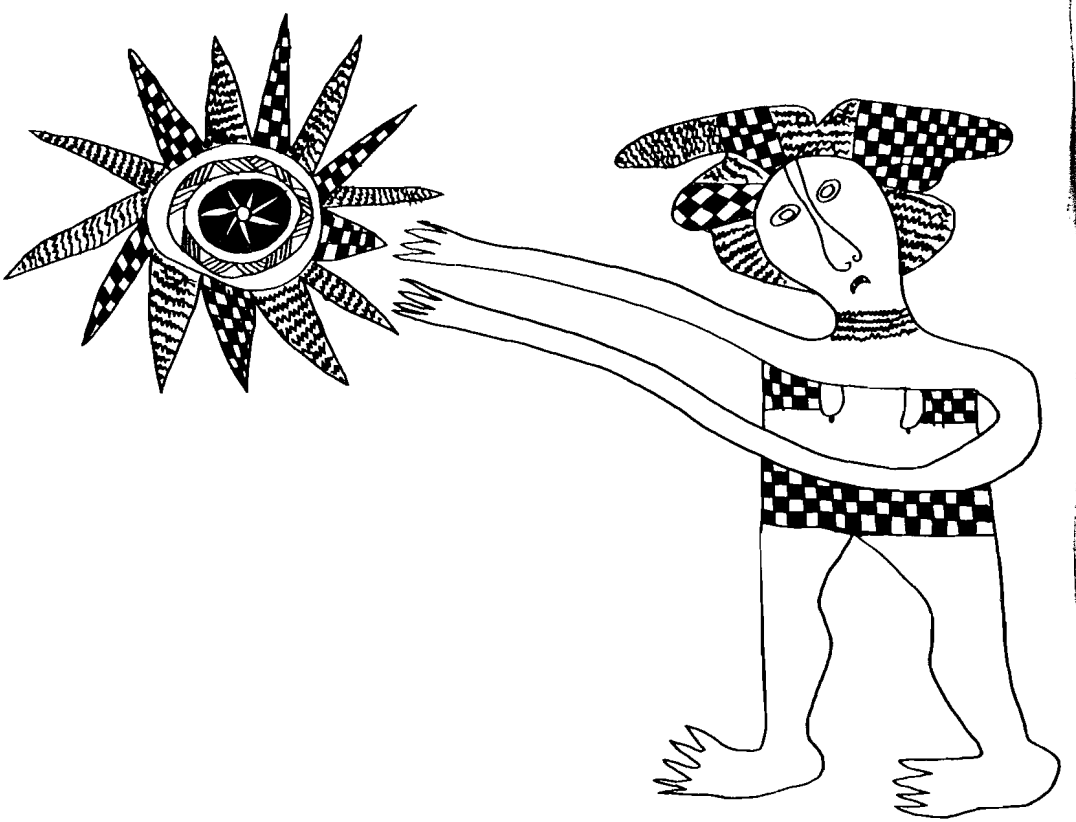
Then the cousin asked, 'What shall I do with this matter?'

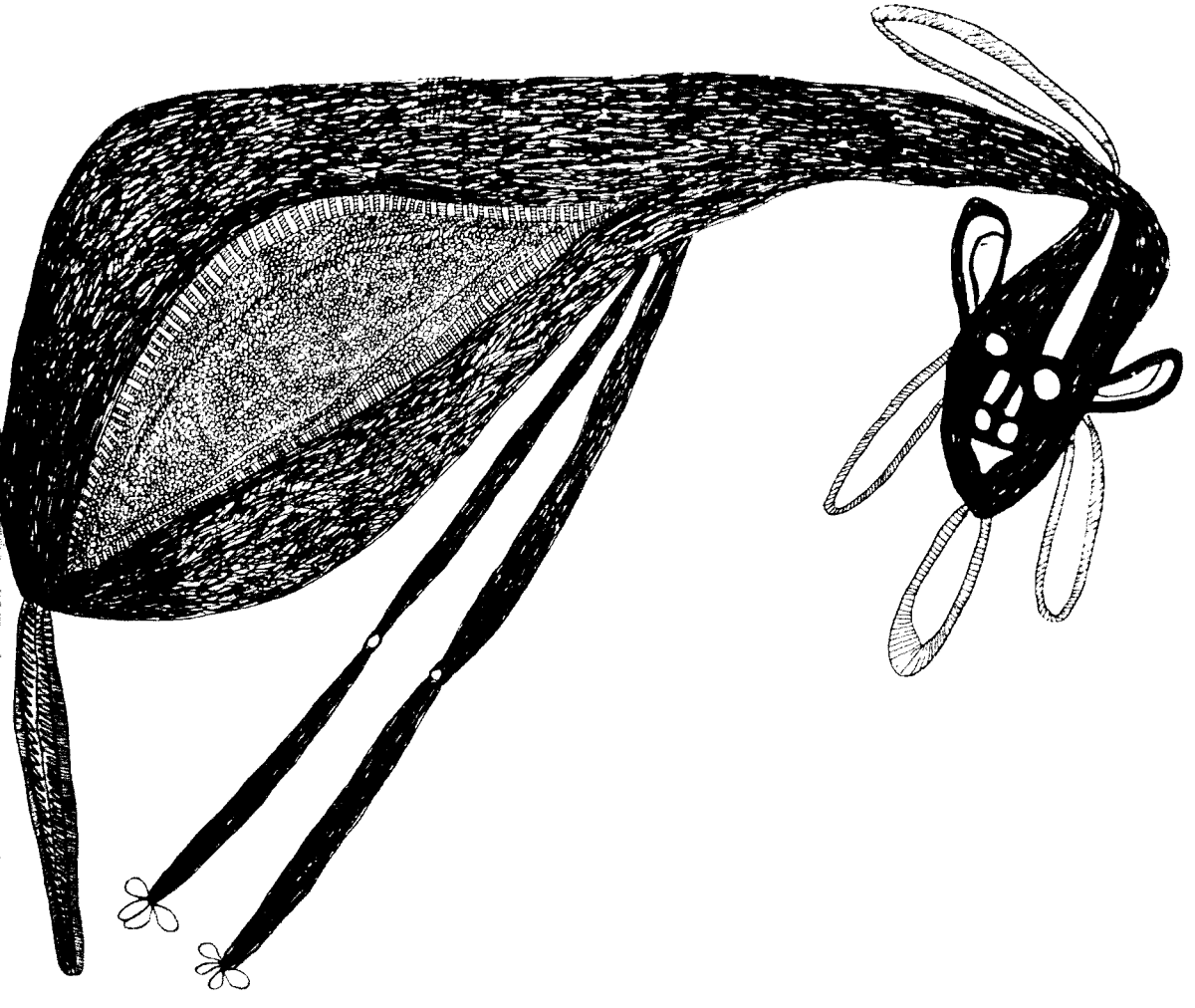
And the chief replied, 'I want you to kill me, so we don't have to bear the shame of this.'

But the cousin said, 'What! How shall I, your very cousin, kill you! No! I cannot do that.'

So the chief hid in his cousin's place, and for a while all went well. Unfortunately, at night, this long penis used to go out by himself to sleep with the wives of other men. Eventually, some of them became pregnant. When the chief heard this, he was greatly ashamed.

Then he called his cousin for the second time. And when his cousin refused once more to kill him, the chief said, 'I am your cousin and your chief. I have power over you, because I am the chief, and I have power over you, because my mother has power over you. So I command you to do what I tell you.' Then, sadly, the cousin took out his war axe and they walked. They walked and walked, until they were a great distance from Mbuli. And there, under a *chipo* tree, the cousin killed the chief. And thus ends the story of the chief of Mbuli.





AKIS FIVE DRAWINGS

I Wallaby
II Snek slip i stap, orait wanpela rat em i slip antap, orait wanpela pikinini muruk slip daunbelo
III Cassowary
IV A forest spirit and his children
V Ting ting bilong mi—imaginary creatures

'OLAI SONGS

Once there was a crab and a sea slug;
they both started fighting in the night.
Then one of them said:
'Let us stop fighting for a while,
I've seen the warship from America!'
When the warship approached,
they stood very still, very still
without making a noise.
Then the sailors came
and they stood beside them
and the captain said:
'What were you doing, when we came
sailing into the harbour?
For we could see you from afar!'
Then both got up and said:
'Nothing, sir!'
But the captain replied:
'When we come back you must tell us
what you were doing.
Because we could see very well
that something happened between you.'

translated by Dorah Nerius

Jump up and dance, dance To Cabang,
jump up higher and dance in silence.
There are no drums to beat
so no one will hear you,
there are no drums to beat
so no one will hear you.

translated by James Kaputin

Ia Magit, you are mad
with a sweet feeling
in your heart this afternoon.
Sister, you never stop thinking
about my brother—
who was killed by the diesel machine.

translated by Mark Vaniu and Jacob Simet

I am To Laitiat. I am here at the hospital.
I am in a bad way here.
A bamboo has burst in my stomach.
My brother Tourakanga, my uncle Tiaman,
a bamboo has burst in my stomach.

translated by Mark Vaniu and Jacob Simet

EARTHQUAKE

It started in the early morning here
and the *guria* woke up.
We were surprised and miserable and crying.
Do not destroy our land!
He that did not worship, he named God.
God laughed.

composed by Councillor To Vuna:
translated by Murray Russel

NERO

by Marjorie Crocombe

I REMEMBER three successive houses in which the old man lived. They were all built by my brothers. Bill usually made the first move to build a new house or re-thatch an old one, but the other boys did the manual work. At times Jimmy and Archer took it upon themselves to cut fresh coconut fronds to re-thatch the roof but only after Mama had goaded them into it for she did not like the old man living in a dilapidated house. People would talk.

The first house I remember had a thatched roof, walls of hibiscus sticks, and a concrete floor. It was built a few yards from the main house with a stone path connecting the two. The first of its two rooms contained a home-made bed, and a mattress and pillow which Mama and the girls had made from kapok which grew on our land. The only furnishings were an old blanket or two. The pillow rested on piles of ancient books. The other room was the 'office' where he kept a conglomeration of bits and pieces and a desk with many drawers. There he sat and wrote his diary, read books or just smoked and stared into space. Mostly he just stared into space.

From his chair he looked out through the window, a shutter-like affair made of plaited coconut leaves on a frame. When it was fine the old man kept it open but when wet or windy he let it down. At night the window and the two doors were always shut and 'locked' with pieces of wire.

If he went out during the day he always shut the doors, largely to keep us children out, for he was obsessed by the crazy notion that we would pry in his desk, read his writing or take his things. It was also to keep Mama out, for whenever the old man forgot to shut the doors, she would grab her broom of coconut ribs and hurriedly sweep out weeks of accumulated cigarette butts, paper, dust from the floor and sawdust from the thousands of wood-boring insects which chewed relentlessly at the hibiscus rafters and the thatch, raining fine dust down from the myriad holes in which they lived. When Mama finished her chores she'd forget to replace a chair here, a lump of iron there, or a book somewhere else. The clean, swept look of the sand patch at the doorway told the old man all—Mama had been in his 'bug-walk', as he called his house, and his imagination would run riot. What had been removed? What had been burnt? What had been mislaid? All hell would break loose then, though Mama got wise to it and she would sneak off before the old buggar returned. There was never a 'thank you', but just plain, boorish, buggar-and-damn language in return for her attempts at cleaning his house. Indeed it was a good idea that he lived in a house on his own for at least peace was possible for the rest of us.

Ena and I used to have to take his meals to his house, but cups of tea he got for himself from the family teapot which sat on the side of the wood stove. It always had tea in it and even if it was cold he would drink it, sugarless, but laced with milk from the family cow. It was the midday dinner that we were particularly responsible for. We used to argue as to whose turn it was to take his dinner, for if it happened to be a bad day for his temper we made doubly sure not to be around his house unnecessarily. Not only did he sometimes refuse to eat whatever you had the misfortune to place before him but you sometimes got caught in a vituperative blast on whatever was

annoying him. It could be 'that bloody, goddamned, crazy woman' (Mama or Teupoko), or 'Oh, you can't teach the bloody Maori' or some similar phrase.

There was an art in escaping this blasting. When it was my turn to take his meal, I would walk to the door of the 'bug-walk', cough a little to announce my entrance, knock and walk in. I'd plonk the plate of taro, bully beef, coconut sauce and taro leaves on his desk where he sat most of the day, reading and writing, mending a broken spring, tinkering with some apparently useless bit of equipment, or just puffing at a cigarette and watching the smoke whirl its way out the window. I'd make an excuse about rushing to the toilet and hurry off leaving him to broil in his wrath. If you happened to be caught in the web, however, you just had to sit and take it or stand and pretend you were listening. It was wise never to say a word either of disapproval or approval for his anger simply made him numb to reason. When there was a halt in the flow of words you left quickly before he began again on another tack.

'Euipaanga meitaki to teia ra?' (Was it a good meeting today?) the family would ask on my return. Sometimes I would say *'Kua vera tikai te pani a Tatane!'* (Satan's pot is really burning hot!) Or *'Kua anuanu mai te pani'* (The pot is cooling down a bit.) Then I'd begin eating and we would talk and laugh over our dinner, but if the old man appeared at the door of his house we'd shut up for fear that he would think that we were laughing at him. We may well have been, though we did have other things to talk about. *'Tera ake a Nero'*, (Here comes Nero) someone would whisper and we would eat in silence, our eyes glancing surreptitiously at him as he made his way to the kitchen with his empty plate or dumped it on our table without a word. And the simple action of putting down his plate often communicated to us his mood—a heavy thump meant I'm still mad as hell with you and everything else but a lingering one accompanied by a sigh, meant that life wasn't too bad, things will come out right soon.

If he was really angry, he would by-pass the verandah where we ate and go round the front of the house and leave his plate in the kitchen, wash his tin mug at the outside tap and go back to the 'bug-walk' the way he came. Sometimes he would speak to no one for days, even a couple of weeks. We didn't try to talk to him at these times for it never got anyone anywhere. We got used to those periods of silence and as he lived on his own he didn't get in our way and we made sure we did not get in his until he decided to be sociable again. I think he suffered more than we did for we had our own company and plenty to do in the gardens or the beach, whereas he was on his own most of the time. Although he had friends in the village he did not visit them when he was in a bad mood. Everything and everyone was committed to hell when he was angry.

It was for this reason that one of the boys nick-named him Nero. They had seen a film about the Nero of history, and the name stuck. At first we dared not refer to him by this name when he was present, but over the years he became Nero to all the family and to everyone in the village as well. Mama, by the same token, was called Popaea and it became a term of endearment.

When he started to thaw and wanted to talk to someone he would go to see Willie Browne or Tommy Kinnahan further up the road, or go to the village store. He would come back to the inevitable tune of 'Damn bloody liar that W. P. Browne', or 'That blasted Yank, the whining bitch' (Kinnahan was an Irishman with an American wife). There would be no more visiting in that direction for a while, and back he would roost in his 'bug-walk'. From time to time every one of his so-called 'cobbers' was liable to get the full treatment just as we did at home.

There were times when his good friend Wes Graham, the Education Officer for the Cook Islands, got the full blast. Wes would visit him in the weekends or on other days if he happened to be passing after a visit to the village school. We lived on the hill and had a clear view of anyone coming. When a European visitor was

sighted we would warn the others and rush into the bush for we were shy of *papaa* (Europeans). We just had time to pat the cushions on the chairs on the verandah and straighten the table-cloth. Everything had already been patted and straightened early in the morning, but for a *papaa* it all had to be patted and straightened again for Mama's sake. Then one of us would run and tell the old man that a visitor was on the way up the hill. As soon as Wes started to climb the hill he began calling out in his nasal twang, 'Is anybody home?' That was when we hid in the bushes and watched the proceedings.

If the old man was in a good mood he would call out 'Yes, you blasted low-down cow of a schoolteacher! Come on up.' While Wes puffed his way up the hill the banter would fly between them until they met half-way up the path. They would shake hands and stroll up and sit on the chairs on the verandah. There they would talk for minutes or for hours, depending mainly on the old man's temper. When the wind was right for his temper there would be much talk, laughter and slapping of thighs and it was good to see and hear this happy scene from our peep-hole in the bushes. We would carefully watch the ways of the *papaa*, how they threw their hands in the air, how they laughed and made their words tumble out like water from a waterfall. But when the old man was liverish, the scene was somewhat different. The conversation might go something like this:

Wes: 'Good morning, good morning.'
Old man: 'Who the hell said it was good morning. I don't want to waste my time talking to a fucking *papaa* schoolteacher.'

Wes would attempt to pass this off as a joke but he knew the old man well enough to sense that it was not a propitious day for a talk.

Wes: 'And how are you?'
Old man: 'Sick as bloody hell of all you bloody *papaa* teaching these Maoris those crazy things at school.'
Wes: 'Oh, come on Hosking. What . . . . '
Old man: 'Come on your bloody self . . . . '

'Tera puaka ruaine', murmured Mama to us from the flower garden. *'Kare takiri aia e kea atu i tana tuatua.'* (That stupid old pig, giving no thought to what he says.) We felt ashamed at the way the old man spoke to the *papaa* schoolteacher.

Wes sometimes wore down the old man's defences and after a cold beginning the conversation would warm up. We could not hear what was being said once their voices fell to normal volume. Later, a peal of laughter and the scraping of chairs and the crunch of leather-soled shoes on the gritty concrete floor told us that the talk was coming to an end. 'Well, Hosking,' Wes would say, 'It's been an interesting morning and thank you for your advice.' We couldn't hear the old man's reply. The two men would step off the verandah, down one step on to the path which was lined on both sides by amaryllis lilies imported from Hawaii. They'd follow the path downhill towards the beach road where Wes parked his car. The old man would stop half-way down the hill and shove a hand in his pocket. Out would come a tin of Bear's tobacco with rice paper and a box of matches inside it. He'd roll a cigarette as he watched Wes climb into his car. As Wes backed on the main road he'd wave and toot and the old man would wave back, then strike a match and light his cigarette. He'd stand there smoking pensively and scratching his backside.

If Wes had told him something of interest then those of us who happened to be around would be told about it. Anything to the detriment of the government was a preoccupation of his and he would tell it with relish, expanding here and there to make it really exciting. Usually in the evenings when we gathered around the old wood stove in the kitchen we would hear all that Wes told him that day.

Those evenings by the old Shacblock wood

stove were delightful, especially when everyone including the old man was in a good mood. It was at those times that he would tell of his adventures in New Zealand where he was born, in South Africa when he served in the Boer War, or in Rarotonga in the early days. There were plenty of stories about Scotland where he made a false start in a career in medicine, or the U.S.A. where he went to study dentistry. Such terms as Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, the siege of Mafeking, Kaffirs, mealies and squareheads were familiar words to me from as far back as I can remember. He could weave a long and amusing tale and many a night was spent telling us of his adventures. The repetition did not seem to matter then for we had plenty of time and nothing much to do before bed. Alas, when there was a cold war on, it chilled everything in the household and he remained in his 'bug-walk' most of the day, coming out only for the everlasting cups of tea. But when he was really mad not even a cup of tea was welcome and food was absolutely damned. It did not bother us too much when he went into these periods of silence for they happened so frequently that we came to know the symptoms and patterns and that things eventually got back to normal for a while before the next onset.

The periods of silence bothered Mama though for she never liked anyone to go hungry and often sent us to peep and see if Nero was still alive. I suppose we too felt a little at ease just to see him going to the little tin-roofed toilet hidden in the *kapaie* trees behind our house. Plenty of times he threatened to shoot himself with his rifle, but in fact he never went so far as to take the weapon from its rack on the verandah.

The most usual remedy to bring life back to normal was a packet of Bear's tobacco from the local store, for when Nero ran out of smokes he became irritable in the extreme, and everything seemed to aggravate him. Before long another period of silence descended on us all. Bill was the only member of the family earning money at that time and it fell to him to buy the old man's tobacco and all the other things for our household. Even later on when the boys got jobs they still left it to poor Bill to support the old man because Bill was the *mataiapo,* the eldest in the family. Sometimes it would be days before Bill noticed that the old man was not talking to anyone then he would give Ena or me some money to buy tobacco from the store. The old man was too humiliated by his poverty to ever ask for money. It really depended on Bill's wife Teupoko or on Mama to ask Bill for tobacco money for the old man, but there were many demands on his paltry wage and often there was no money available. It was awful to watch the onset of a depression caused by lack of smokes.

When I came from the store I would unload the basket of bread, bully beef, sugar, matches and that emblem of peace, Bear's tobacco. Then I would be sent to the 'bug-walk' with the tobacco. The picture of the old man was invariably the same when he was 'out of contact'. He would be entrenched in the home-made chair which he had hacked out of bully beef cases, but it was finished complete with side panels and a footrest. I would find him staring into space, fingers in a V-shape under his chin and the very devil of a scowl on his face. I would knock on the door, walk in and place the tobacco on his desk. Acceptance was usually instantaneous and he would start talking about anything just for the sake of talking. He would open the packet of tobacco and roll a cigarette. In a few minutes he would be puffing away and talking as though nothing had happened. My feelings then would be quite ambivalent. One minute I felt sorry for him and next I would be thinking that he brought all his woes upon himself because he would not work as a dentist for the government any more. He could never work under anybody so he didn't work at all. 'You bloody lazy old ass,' I would think to myself. 'Just sit, and sit, and sit until doomsday—and with all those brains and degrees and diplomas .... What a waste!' I think I began to hate from those early years because the hard times we had need not have come about if he had set about to earn a little money.

Besides having to keep the old man and the rest of us, Bill also paid our annual school fees of four shillings per child. There was Jimmy, Archer, Ena and me to pay for. Although he never quibbled about it we knew he was short so we tried to earn the necessary money ourselves. Mama, Ena and I cleared various pieces of land and planted them with tomatoes for export to New Zealand during the winter season. Archer and Jimmy did the same on separate plots. The few shillings that we got helped to pay our school fees and to buy new clothes and shoes for Sunday school. But these ventures into improving our financial situation never made any impression on the old man. He was so unbendingly stuck on doing nothing physically except roaming around the place smoking, pottering in the flower garden, cross-breeding this amaryllis to that one and getting more and more indolent, though no less vocal on things horticultural and otherwise. It was as well that he did not come near us in our tomato patch for there would only have been trouble between him and Mama. The old man knew his horticulture and tropical agriculture all right, but a dozen diplomas did not impress those who were trying to earn some money while he sat on his bum smoking endlessly and spouting knowledge.

We did not doubt that the old man was an intellectual. He read books on all subjects and spoke knowledgeably about all sorts of things. He spoke the Maori language well. He knew much of the history of the island of Rarotonga and he had collected a wealth of stories about the island on which he lived. All this impressed us greatly at times, but when one's tummy is hungry these things become less important. I think it was the fact that he was physically so fit and mentally so talented that grated on our nerves as he lazed his life away.

Although he earned no money for our keep he had a flair for inventing various gadgets for his own use. His 'bug-walk' harboured an agglomeration of these gadgets made from bits of string, wood, wire, shells and a host of other material he had picked up here and there for use some other day. We all thought them crazy contraptions though some of them did turn out to be useful.

I see him now sitting on the doorstep of his hut, wearing a pair of khaki trousers with a hole in the seat and another at the right knee. In his hands is an empty salmon tin. He rips open the lid and scratches the label off with his fingers and throws it on the ground. He pulls out a pair of pliers from a pile of junk and with expert hands catches each jagged edge left by the hasty tin-opener and bends it inwards until he has gone right round the top where the lid once hung.

Now he picks up a small hammer and lays the tin sideways on a stone we used as a step. He carefully hammers the top of the tin till each jag is smoothened out. Another hammering, another look, another feel, and the thing is ready for the next stage. A handle would give extra finesse to his work of art, so the old man pulls out a tarnished piece of brass from a pile in the corner, wipes away the dust of many years, and begins hammering one end to bend it like a question mark with no dot. He examines it carefully, fits it against the waiting salmon tin, hammers it a bit more and at last seems satisfied for he stops and feels around for his tobacco in his right trouser pocket. In a few moments a wisp of smoke curls up and is carried away by the breeze. He sits and puffs and contemplates the tin, the bit of brass and a random scatter of other junk. Ah, heavenly, soothing Bear's tobacco.

Another feel, another glance and he pulls out a heavy, long-handled piece of iron with a triangular bump on its head.

We used to call this weapon *auri tapou* but the old man called it a soldering iron and he used to heat it red-hot in the kitchen grate.

Mama was sitting on a stool in front of the stove when Nero entered the kitchen. She sat with a towel wrapped around her shoulders for she had just recovered from a bout of asthma. She was still wheezy and could not walk far, and she sat watching the pot of taro cooking on the old wood stove. The old man saw the fire burning brightly and jiggled the

flaming wood with the poker, and shoved the soldering iron into the embers. After making sure it would not fall out he went out again without saying a word to Mama. She did not speak to him either though she thought plenty.

'Teia tangata puapinga kore. Pou ua te a'o i te angaanga kanga e te kai avaava,' (That useless good for nothing. Wasting time on fruitless tasks and puffing tobacco) she said to the soldering iron which stuck out of the grate. It was not really in the way nor was it obstructing the pot of taro but when one has been exposed to emotional tension, near hunger and unnecessary want, one can find reasons for anything. The soldering iron represented the old man's indolence and his preoccupation with irrelevancies, and it made Mama mad. What with getting over a bout of asthma, and having nothing to go with her pot of taro to make the meal interesting she was feeling a bit vindictive. She got up suddenly and the unexpected call upon her limited energy made her wheeze and cough. She lunged at the soldering iron and shoved it into the fire as far as it would go. Too far, of course, for the hottest part was towards the front of the grate but she had pushed the head past the centre of heat. Then she stalked out, for she sensed that there would be trouble if she hung around. I too disappeared smartly through the hedge and took up a regular lookout position in the bamboo bushes a few yards from the kitchen.

'God damn the bloody ass,' canted the old man as he got back to the kitchen. 'Why can't they leave the fucking thing alone?' Silence. There was no one about upon whom he could vent his wrath, but as always he suspected Mama. He grabbed the handle of the iron, jiggled it violently, and inserted the head back into the centre of the grate. His teeth ground on his cigarette holder, and smoke poured from his nostrils. He was angry. This time he sat down on the raised slab of concrete which was part of the floor of Bill's house adjoining the kitchen. He'd watch the bloody thing heat up for himself and woe betide the person who came to disturb him.

I spied Mama on the other side of the hedge weeding the flower garden. 'Don't go near the kitchen,' I cautioned. *'Kua vera ta pani a Nero.'* (Nero's pot is burning hot.)

'I don't care,' she replied. *'Pou ua te taime i teia ruaine kope'*. (The lazy old buggar. Just wasting his time.)

I saw the old man returning to the 'bug-walk' with his red-hot iron and I knew that a fight of acid words had been avoided this time, though tension could always be stored up for another day. Today, fortunately, some of it was being expended on the empty salmon tin.

Now he holds a piece of lead near the bottom edge of the brass handle and presses the point of the soldering iron onto it. The old man places the handle carefully against the tin and the molten lead solders the two together. And lo it is finished! A drinking mug has been born! There was no money to buy an enamel one from the store. Even if there had been the product would never have given the satisfaction of one he made himself. Why, even poor Mama was happy.

FOUR RUPADASHIS

by Prithvindra Chakravarthi

you

your body wrapped in the sun like a sari
your hair darkened by the earth's womb
your eyes lined by distant shores, shadowed by cloudy afternoons
your finger raised against the obstinate presence of time

forests tremble, shadows shatter on blunt surfaces
doorways, shut out the weeping storm; a trap is laid
drawn with lime on the ground and charged with incantations
then soaked red with blood, lumps of straw are stuffed in the hollow figure—

it is you who remains awake through the ages
that have thickened and matted your hair so endearingly

buffaloheaded

was it a buffalo that was roaming about
spearing the ground with his crooked horns
did the hard ground crack

the scratches resembled a drawing
was it an alpona pattern? or a victory flag? or a sign
intended to be somebody's address

the deepcut lines on the surface rolled into time
only to fall off again like broken days
covered with thick dust, the buffaloheaded soul
dragged the weight of his body, nodding his crooked horns

she

one day, casting her shadow on the water
she stretched her legs on the bank of the lake
she dipped into the water and cried loudly
next day she dried and warmed up her clock

she looked around, opening her opaque eyes:
the burning sun entered into her bushy hair
and soon slipped away like a frustrated clown
opening her toothless mouth she shot a big laughter

'if the sleep filled eyes sink deeper into my creased face
I won't even see the clown, the clown, the clown . . . .

she again

she built sandcastles in the bed of a dried up creek
she wept, filling the moat with tears
the basketload of hair, filled with sweat, pressed hard on her head
the lice, who had been living there for ages, were horrified

on a market day she settled down on the roof of an abandoned house
she looked below: a juggler was spinning himself on a long bamboo pole
suddenly he jumped to the roof and drowned the woman in surprise
like a rusty clock, her heart stopped to beat

young lice came forth from the eggs that were hidden under knots and dandruff
to meet an army of worms on the battlefield of carrion

AKIS AND KAUWAGI

Two Highland Artists

by Ulli Beier

IT IS MUCH TOO EARLY to speak of contemporary art in New Guinea. While the traditional art styles are dying a quick death, some of the less sophisticated craftsmen have been organized by the tourist trade, while the more sophisticated Papuans and New Guineans tend to be feebly derivative of European landscape painting.

Two artists from the highlands, Akis and Kauwagi, show in their different ways that it is possible now for New Guineans to create personal images, neither derived from tradition, nor emasculated by European 'teaching'.

Akis comes from the Simbai valley. His people, the Maring, were first contacted in 1956. Akis saw aeroplanes overhead before he ever saw a white man. But his vivid mind was immediately stimulated when contact came. Akis was one of the first men in his village to know Europeans intimately. He worked as a linguistic informant for Ann and Roy Rappaport, and when they left the village he decided to see more of the world and he signed up as a labourer and worked for two years in Angoram and Madang. Since January 1968, Akis has been working as an interpreter for another anthropologist, Miss Georgeda Bick.

Akis's artistic career began almost by chance. Georgeda Bick brought Akis to Moresby in January 1969 for a six weeks stay. Akis had made some little drawings to explain different shield designs. Georgeda Bick felt that these were more than mere interpreter's illustrations and scribbles. She showed the work to Professor Bulmer and Georgina Beier who both thought that there was potential talent. Given new materials and having been introduced to some new techniques by Georgina Beier, Akis blossomed out into feverish creative activity. Within his very short stay in Moresby he produced some forty drawings and several batiks.

Akis draws the world of the bush in the Simbai valley. Cassowaries, wallabies, lizards, bandicoots and snakes are his favourite subjects. People occur less often, and they tend to be indistinguishable from his representations of spirits. Sometimes he draws imaginary creatures, 'Ting ting bilong mi, tasol.' His earlier drawings tended to be simple representations of single animals or men. Later he made complex compositions with elaborate titles: 'Wanpela meri em i karim tupela pikinini pinis, nau em i gat bel gen.' Or: 'Rat i dai, orait spirit bilong em i stap, orait narapela rat i kam slip antap,' and 'Snek slip i stap, orait wanpela rat em i slip antap orait wanpela pikinini muruk slip daunbilo.'

Akis's animals are clearly drawn by a man who has intimate knowledge of them. The typical stance of the cassowary and swift movement of the wallaby are closely observed. But Akis makes no attempt to be realistic. He is fully aware that a wallaby has four legs, but he draws only two—the mighty sweep of the hindlegs is what matters to him. The dangling little forelegs are unimportant, and would only destroy his superb basic shape. Similarly the fingers on the hands and feet of rats and lizards are frankly used as a decorative design, it does not matter to Akis whether he

draws five or seven fingers on one hand. In his later drawings the bodies of animals are broken up into arbitrary patterns.

The delicate line, the freshness of vision, owe nothing to the artistic traditions of the Simbai valley. Unburdened by rigid conventions and uninhibited by Western education, Akis creates his poetic vision of the forest.

Kauwagi is a Chimbu from the Eastern Highlands. He has been a labourer in Port Moresby for several years. It never occurred to him to make drawings, until he saw Akis's exhibition at the University of Papua and New Guinea. A couple of months after Akis had returned to Simbai, Kauwagi sent us a drawing through one of his 'wantoks'. It was a coloured pencil drawing of flowers and animals —clearly copied from a school book. It did not look too promising, except that there was a tiny insect on the page, the only drawing he had clearly invented. So we sent for him.

For a week he brought copies every day and Georgina Beier told him that nothing could be done for him at all until he started inventing. Then suddenly he found it. First he came with large sheets of intricately drawn insects. They were drawings based on an intimate knowledge of insects, but he elaborated on them freely, clearly enjoying the process of inventing creatures that were more bizarre and more uncanny than nature. Soon he began to draw people: people playing football, boxing, riding horses. It was evident that he had seen cowboy films, but he transformed the world of Hollywood cowboys into formalized, archaic friezes. His figures were drawn in fluid outline and his sheets showed a strong sense of design and composition. Movement was what interested him most.

Kauwagi represents people running, falling, standing on their heads, jumping. To create the sense of rhythmic movement he elongates arms and legs, twists them into all kinds of shapes, overriding even the most basic laws of anatomy. The joyful defiance of gravity gives his work a kind of circus atmosphere—even though Kauwagi is ignorant of jugglers, trapeze artists or acrobats. The lightness and fluidity of line, the simplified formulas he invents for faces, remind one occasionally of Matisse. But then there are his surrealist animals—his insects, and a kind of all purpose animal that serves both as horse and as bush creature—which add another powerful dimension.

The world of Kauwagi is less poetic and aesthetic than the forest vision of Akis. Kauwagi's work derives much of its impetus from the turbulent life of the city. It is a world of vigorous, sometimes violent movement, into which the surrealist animals intrude like creatures from another planet.

Note: See the work of Akis on pages 31 to 34 and that of Kauwagi as vignettes throughout this issue.

THE UNEXPECTED HAWK

A play by John Waiko

CHARACTERS

COUNCILLOR
1st MAN
2nd MAN
3rd MAN
MOTHER
SON
OLD MAN
KIAP
DISTRICT COMMISSIONER
POLICEMAN
CORPORAL
SERGEANT BARIGI
VILLAGERS, POLICEMEN, CARRIERS

SCENE I

A village singsing. Singing and drumming are heard before the lights fade in on a husband and wife who represent the 'owners of the pig' in the traditional play.

The pig, a mask, and the piglets, a group of dancers, are hidden in a hut, which represents the pig's nest. The woman discovers the nest and shouts 'Paimabuie! Paimabuie!' *The piglets in the hut answer with soft rumbling of drums. Exit husband and wife to fetch their daughters. Two daughters enter with a wooden bowl containing pig's food. The pig comes out to eat the food and the piglets come out and dance.*

The singsing is interrupted by the entry of a policeman who orders the dance to stop. The dancers are angry and irritated, but they gather around the policeman, eager to hear what he has to say. A village councillor goes to shake hands with him. The policeman speaks gently to the councillor and the murmur dies down.

POLICEMAN: *(to councillor)* I am sorry to stop your dance, but I have bad news to tell you—kiap is sleeping at Tatana tonight; and he has sent me to tell you that he will arrive here tomorrow.

(Councillor is too surprised to answer but shakes his head.)

POLICEMAN: *(to villagers.)* My people, I have very bad news to tell you: kiap is sleeping at Tatana and he will come here tomorrow: let me tell you, kiap is very bad. He is putting people in his bad house for small things. At Tatana, before I left, kiap put Bebeda, the big man, in the bad house, for not removing the ashes and betel nut waste in front of his house.

1ST MAN: Which Bebeda did you say? Not the big man of Tatana—it must be his small namesake.

POLICEMAN: Yes! The chief of Tatana!

1ST MAN: It cannot be Bebeda! He is sitting down in his village, because he is a big man. How did the kiap act like that?

POLICEMAN: To the kiap there is no difference between a big man and an ordinary man. They do not know a chief or a magic man. They do not know who is a wise man or a foolish man in the village. They think we are all the same bush kanakas.

2ND MAN: We get no benefit from his many visits. But he steals our men and women from us. Why is he coming down? To put the big man in his bad house? I cannot understand these kiaps. They come like a strong wind and break down the tallest trees, that protect the short ones. Bebeda was like the tallest tree, protecting the small ones under his armpit. Now this bad kiap has removed this big shade, for the sun to beat the rest of us.

POLICEMAN: Yes, you are sorry for Bebeda—but this kiap does not care. He puts the big man into his bad house, like a pig. I warn you, Bebeda is a big man, but he became like a small child in the eyes of the kiap—I am afraid these same evil eyes will fall on this village. The road between Tatana and this village is bad: the grass is as tall as trees. It is thick and bushy. Several creeks have no logs to walk across them—the broken logs are rotting in the water . . . .

COUNCILLOR: *(pointing to policeman and addressing his people)* This man has come on our bad road and walked through the water, because there were no logs . . . we must cut the grass, cut new logs and clean our village . . . .

3RD MAN: But how can we finish all that work and prepare for the bad man who is coming tomorrow? Why is he coming at such short notice and why doesn't he leave us alone?

POLICEMAN: If you want to stay outside his bad house, you do what I say: or you will be locked up like a herd of foolish pigs. *(While the policeman is speaking the carrier picks up his bag.)* But I must leave. The kiap ordered me to return immediately. Goodbye.

COUNCILLOR: Go well.

(The villagers are confused and anxious. Reluctantly they take off their feathers and carry their drums away. The women hurry home, but the elder men remain behind.)

COUNCILLOR: My stomach is biting and my intestines are rising, because the bad man is coming so suddenly. What is behind his coming?

2ND MAN: I am afraid, and I say his coming is like a hawk coming to catch a rat. It is common for the hawk to look for rats, but it is unusual for the rat to know when the hawk is coming.

3RD MAN: Why is Bebeda in the bad house? I would have thought that the kiap was coming to collect money or get some more young men and take them away to work. But Bebeda is in the bad house and we do not know how long he is going to sleep, eat and drink like a pig.

SCENE II

A woman is seen sweeping the village. Her young son is cutting firewood a little further away. She calls him.

MOTHER: Kanena! You come here!

SON: Let me first finish cutting this wood.

MOTHER: Never mind the wood. You come here.

SON: The sun is not up to go to the garden! What urgent talk is this? *(He drops his axe and walks over to the mother.)*

MOTHER: My son. You listen. Many years ago, I lost your father, my only husband. A kiap came. He came suddenly, without warning. He took our young men away. Those who had no wives, and those who had only one or two children. Your father was taken to carry the white man's cargo, and he never came back. I have experienced this sudden visit of kiaps. I am afraid. It is not good for you to stay here today. Go to your uncle's village. Stay with him there. Count seven days—then you return.

SON: But Mother! The kiap is coming to call out everybody's name in the book, to see if we all live here. What will you say, if my name is called and there is no answer?

MOTHER: Oh no! Kiap is not coming to call out names today, because he is coming very suddenly. He is coming to get more men. You must go to your uncle. But when you return, don't come on the same road. Take the small track across the hill. They don't know that one.

SON: But they say that kiap is coming to take children to school. So I want to stay here and go to school. If I go to school, I will find out where my father is. If he is dead, I will bring his bones back to bury them here. If I go to school, I will find out why these kiaps treat us badly like this.

MOTHER: If you go to school, they will teach you their own bad ways. I do not want you to grow up like them. No, you must go away today. Kiap will not take me, because I am old. They do not want old people. Kanena! You look like your father, my only husband. I'll die, if they take you away.

SON: But you see, Mother: school is not like mosquito to fly to me. We don't go to the bush to get mosquitoes to bite us, but they themselves come to our house and find us and eat our blood. Therefore, I have to go and find the school and eat their wisdom there.

MOTHER: But he is not coming today to collect children for school. He gives us long notice when he comes for that. But today he comes suddenly and so I think he is coming to collect men.

SON: All right Mother, I'll go to Uncle's village. Stay well, and I will return in seven days.

MOTHER: Go well, son. *(calling after him as he leaves the stage)* And don't forget to take the narrow track across the hill, when you return!

(She looks in the direction in which he has gone for a while. As she turns in the other direction she sees the policeman, who is still off stage.)

MOTHER: Councillor! Councillor! They are coming.

(Councillor enters, followed by others. Somebody beats a drum to call the people. Policeman and four carriers enter. Councillor is ready to salute, but then sees that the kiap is not among them. Councillor points to some shade and the carriers set up a table and chair for him.)

COUNCILLOR: Where is the *man?* How far behind?

POLICEMAN: The man is coming. He follows close behind.

(The councillor watches the road on which the kiap will be coming. Then his eye catches two figures coming up the hill. He is tense with expectation. Kiap enters, a policeman a few steps behind. The councillor salutes the kiap and steps forward to hand over the village book.)

COUNCILLOR: Good morning sir! The village book, sir.

KIAP: *(Answers the salute very casually. Waves aside the book.)* Never mind that, now.

(They do not talk to each other but the councillor motions the kiap to the place that has been prepared.)

KIAP: Get everybody here. Quick. I have an important message to give to you and your people.

(Kiap sits down. Councillor steps forward, faces villagers.)

COUNCILLOR: O tribesmen, Babena, Sirida, Tatari. Kiap refuses to take my book: he says nothing to me, but asks you all to come. All come and sit around here and hear his words.

(Men, women and children come and sit around the kiap's table.)

KIAP: Are all your people here?

COUNCILLOR: Yesou—yessa masta.

KIAP: I want you all to listen carefully, to what the government has to tell you. Before the government came to this place, you were all fighting with your neighbours and killing each other. Now we have brought you peace. Now the government wants to bring more good things to you, and wants to help you to leave behind the savage life of your forefathers. The government wants you to enjoy the benefits of education and health services. The government wants to help you to plant cash crops like coffee, so that you will earn money and you will be able to buy steel axes, decent clothes and build better houses. You will—*(He suddenly realizes that the audience is not fully with him and that they do not understand what he is driving at.)* You will—em, you, you will be able to do many more good things. But if you want to have all these good things the government is promising you, you cannot go on living in this isolated place. We cannot build a road to every miserable group of huts in this forest here. We cannot bring a school to a bunch of fifty people. Therefore the government is telling you—*(He raises his voice)*—that you must all move together. You must all form one very big village. The government has chosen Tabaida village to be the new centre. *(murmurs from the villagers)* And I have been asked to tell you, that you must all move to Tabaida and build your new houses there!

(There is confused shouting from all the villagers. Anxiety and anguish are mixed with anger.)

KIAP: *(to councillor)* Have you got anything to say?

COUNCILLOR: *(with emotion)* We cannot move this village. This is our land. Claimed by the forefathers of Babena, Sirida and Tatari. Our fathers lived and died here. Their sweat and blood fell on this land. Their sweat and blood are the strength and wealth of this land, and we want our own sweat and our blood to be spilled here for our children. We cannot give our strength to other villages and other people's land.

1ST MAN: We make our gardens on our own land, we hunt in our own hunting grounds, where spirits and ancestors know us well. Our fathers owned this land, this village and the spirits before we were born. We can never move to the big village. If we move, our ancestors will turn against us, and we will lose all our land, hunting grounds and gardens. If our ancestors are against us, they'll let us die, one by one.

KIAP: *(who has been getting more and more impatient)* All this talk about ancestors is a lot of superstition. Your ancestors did not help you to fight the white man did they? They did not help you to make steel axes and guns. The government is stronger than your ancestors. And if the government says you move, then you move!

2ND MAN: The people in Tabaida were always our enemies; since the time of our ancestors we have been fighting each other. They fought against us and died. Our men waged bitter war against them and many were killed. Their blood fell here. We cannot move into their village like women. We are men with penis and testicles.

KIAP: Tribal warfare was stopped ten years ago! This area is pacified. Any more talk like that from you and I *kalabus* the lot of you!

1ST MAN: You do not understand us. You are like a floating log, on the river without any roots. We are like snags in the water. We watch you floating past, wherever the currents lead you. You fail to look down into the water to see our roots embedded in the mud.

COUNCILLOR: We ask you these two questions: if we move to the bigger village, where are we going to get our coconuts, betel nuts and mustard? Where are we to collect firewood, find clay for pots? On whose ground? Where will we make garden, cut sago, where will be our hunting grounds? In the forest of our enemies? And again: if we leave this place, will not other tribes come and claim this land with everything on it? All these coconuts, bananas, betel nuts—the forest and all its wild pigs; we had to fight before we could claim them. And we will go on fighting to keep it. We were brought up fighting, fighting is like food to us. But you kiaps, you put us in the bad house, when we fight and treat us like pigs and dogs. We will not move this village!

KIAP: *(jumping to his feet angrily)* Now that's enough from you! One word more, and I'll have you arrested. 'Bad house' my foot. Now you are a councillor! You are supposed to explain the wishes of the government to the people—instead you stir up trouble! I'll have your badge removed!

Now listen, all of you. No more of your bloody ancestor talk. You listen to the government—and you better do what you are told. Now I am warning you: I am giving you two weeks! Not a day more. In two weeks time I'll visit the big village, and God help you, if you haven't moved by then! *(under his breath)* I'll make them call on their ancestors yet. Constable!

POLICEMAN: Yessa masta!

KIAP: Get the carriers to pack up and follow me at once! Corporal, you come with me now!

CORPORAL: } *(simultaneously)* Yessah!
POLICEMAN: }

(The kiap stomps off, followed by corporal. The policeman hurries on the carriers and they scamper off.)

COUNCILLOR: O tribesmen, Babena, Sirida and Tatari, what are we to do? I thought we would live and die like our fathers—my stomach is biting me, because the kiap told us to leave this village.

1ST MAN: No matter what the kiap says, I will not leave my land and my village. I am determined to go to the bad house and I am equally determined to stay in this village—I will die here, in Yawata, and my children will bury me here.

2ND MAN: We must not stand up quickly and go to the big village. If we decide to go, we must make feast for our ancestors and say 'stay well' to them, before we go. Maybe they can forgive us.

1ST MAN: We must not go. If we go, our ancestors will think that we are not men, but women, without penis and testicles. But I know what we can do: that bad man kiap will not live in the big village, he cannot check on us every day. Therefore we will build some houses in the big village, and when he comes on a visit we will go and meet him there. But we will continue to live here, as we have always done. In this way we shall not lose our lands, our ancestors and our spirits.

(Everybody shouts approval, some clap their hands.)

COUNCILLOR: Yes! This is it! We will tell the kiap that we moved to the big village and we will pretend to live there. He will never find out!

(Lights fade out on general agreement and shouts of joy and relief.)

SCENE III

(District Office. District Commissioner behind a desk, writing. Enter KIAP.)

KIAP: Good morning, sir.

D.C.: O hallo, Larry. When did you get back from that patrol?

KIAP: Late last night, sir. One of the bridges was down again, that held us up quite a bit.

D.C.: Well, well, well. And how are things at Tabaida, everybody settling in all right?

KIAP: Oh yes, everything according to plan. They've all moved into the big village.

D.C.: Oh, good. Well, that will cut down on your patrolling duties quite a bit.

KIAP: Thank God for that. I certainly don't mind the bush and I certainly want to do my bit—but one does feel a bit of a fool if one has to walk three whole days and then one meets a scruffy little village of some forty people at the end.

D.C.: You're telling me! I've done it often enough myself. And not even any taxes one can get out of them after all that. And hardly any men to spare for labour. Damn it! They'll never get civilized, if they don't come crawling out of the bush.

KIAP: I guess some time or other they *will* get a school and an aid post at that big village, and all the other things I promised them?

D.C.: Well, I suppose they will in the end. But right now I don't see them getting anything. Where the hell is the money going to come from? This is a depressed area, and it's administration policy to develop the districts with natural resources first.

KIAP: Oh, it's just as well. I am sure they don't even *want* schools and all that. No matter what you do for them they'll always remain the same bush kanakas at heart.

D.C.: To be honest I *prefer* them to remain bush kanakas. Some of those coastal people are getting too damn bighead for their own bloody good.

KIAP: Yes, they go to school for a few years and they think they've become Europeans.

D.C.: Yes, I am afraid I prefer this lot here to the mission boys on the coast.—That reminds me, what about that reticent lot from Yawata village? The ones who didn't want to move?

KIAP: No fear. They've all moved, and not a further word was said. They are all as docile as lambs. They are pretty easy to deal with really, as long as you don't take any nonsense from them.

D.C.: No more ancestor stories from them?

KIAP: Ha, ha! I told them to send their bloody ancestors to hell! I said the government is a lot stronger than your ancestors!

(Policeman knocks)

D.C.: What's the matter now?

POLICEMAN: One councillor from Tabaida coming to see you, sah!

D.C.: *(surprised)* From Tabaida?

KIAP: Well, I am damned! He must have followed almost directly behind me! Why the hell couldn't he talk to me when I was there, the damned old fool. *(to policeman)* Tell him to get lost!

D.C.: No, you'd better wait a minute. I am not so sure we should let him go. He might have something interesting to tell us. *(to policeman)* Send him in!

POLICEMAN: Yessah!

(Exit policeman and re-enter immediately with the man from Tabaida. The old man salutes clumsily, but the kiap is impatient to find out why he has come.)

KIAP: What do you want? I hope you haven't come to bother me with trifling matters.

OLD MAN: Sah! I come to talk one very important thing. You see sah, these Yawata people are great liars. They tell lies like women, that is why our forefathers have always been fighting them.

KIAP: Come to the point! What are you here for?

OLD MAN: You see, Yawata people are like wallabies: at night the wallaby sleeps under the buttress roots of a tree. He shuts his eyes in order not to see the fireflies which frighten him. And he says to himself: 'Tomorrow I will cut *gusi* trees and I will build myself a house.' But when morning comes, he forgets what he said at night, because he is too busy eating wild fruit.

KIAP: *(furious)* For Christ's sake! Stop telling us all that rubbish.

D.C.: *(to kiap)* Don't disturb him now. Let him take his time. This is their way of speaking, they can't help it, these old kanakas. But I'm sure he'll come out with something pretty interesting.

KIAP: *(to old man)* All right, all right, you talk finish.

OLD MAN: Those Yawata people are building small houses in our village. Small like pigs' huts. But they are like women. They lie. They built the houses to deceive you and they are not doing what they promised to do.

KIAP: What??? You mean to say they have not moved completely?

OLD MAN: Oh no! They are hard people. They have not moved at all! As soon as you left Tabaida they all returned to Yawata leaving us their empty pig houses.

KIAP: Well, I'm damned!

D.C.: I told you he had something to say.

KIAP: Well—what now?

D.C.: Let's dismiss the old man first. *(shouts)* Sergeant Barigi!
(Enter sergeant.)
Take the old man away and give him some tobacco and salt.

SERGEANT: Yessah.
(He leads the old man away.)

D.C.: Well, there is only one thing to do now: move them by force. Government authority has been openly defied. Swift punishment is called for in such a case.

KIAP: What shall I do? Burn the whole place down?

D.C.: It may not be necessary. Take them by surprise. Arrest the leaders. The others will quickly give in.

KIAP: I'd better set out at once, before they get warned.

D.C.: Yes, do that. Take Sergeant Barigi. He is reliable and he knows how to deal with the fellows.

SCENE IV

(Enter carriers with cargo and one policeman. Kiap's voice from off stage.)

KIAP: Stop! All right . . . .
(enter kiap with more police)
Put the cargo down here. Start fixing up my tent.
(to the police sergeant.) Sergeant!

SERGEANT: Yessah!

KIAP: We are only a few hundred yards from Yawata here. Take six men. Move up quietly.

Make straight for the councillor's house and arrest him. If you take him by surprise, there will be no resistance. Also get the other two ringleaders . . . those talkative fellows . . . I can't remember their names right now. . . .

SERGEANT: You mean Bandei and Gegera, sah.

KIAP: That's right. They are the ones. Get the three of them handcuffed and bring them straight here.

SERGEANT: *(salutes)* Yessah!

(The sergeant utters a command and marches his men off. The carriers busy themselves with the tent. The kiap sits down, gets out a small flask of whisky and has a sip.)

KIAP: Those goddam kanakas. Trying to be too clever by half! I'll teach them a lesson! Making me trek all the way up here again.

Sometimes I don't know what we are doing up here. We try to teach them to live like decent human beings. We build roads for them. Bring them schools. And with our money too! But you think they appreciate it? Not on their lives. They'd rather stay the savages they've always been. Maybe we should just leave them alone. Let them eat each other! They'll never learn. They don't want to be civilized.

My God! And they *are* a primitive lot up here. Couple of years ago they didn't even know what a prison was! Well that's *one* thing I am going to teach them now! I'll make them pay for this! Who do they think they are?

(Shouts off stage, as police approach with the three prisoners.)

SERGEANT: *(salutes)* The prisoners are here, sah!

KIAP: O.K. I'll deal with them in a minute. Have those bloody kanakas started moving up there?

SERGEANT: Sorry, sah! The people say they cannot move.

KIAP: They say WHAT???

SERGEANT: They refuse to move, sah. They say that their ancestors. . . .

KIAP: To hell with their bloody ancestors! Now get back there, sergeant, with all your men. Get back there at once and burn the goddam place down!

SERGEANT: Burn it, sah? But I can't. . . .

KIAP: Can't what! If I say burn, you burn! You go back there and burn that village and make sure that not one house remains. Not one! Do you understand?

SERGEANT: Yessah!

KIAP: Then what are you waiting for? Get off!

SERGEANT: Yessah! *(Utters command and leads his men off.)*

KIAP: *(Turns to prisoners.)* Very clever of you, wasn't it? But if you think you can fool the government, you are mistaken. I'll get you six months in *kalabus* at the very least! *(Steps up to the councillor.)* Now just what did you think you were trying to do? *(Councillor is silent.)*

KIAP: You were trying to get a laugh at my expense, weren't you? *(Slaps him.)* It's my turn to laugh! Bastard!

(Shots heard in the distance. Shouts. Screams. Soon the red glimmer of a distant fire flickers on the stage. The three prisoners chatter excitedly in place talk.)

COUNCILLOR: Kaende edo gido awa adu tonana!

1ST MAN: Buro eiwa ro ere mi kaena gae eni?

2ND MAN: Kaena mata wa engo eiaro itana te te ta.

COUNCILLOR: Awara, kaen embo eiwa dano betaina.

KIAP: *(Swings round at them.)* Shut up you fellows! No private conversations here! *(Enter sergeant and policeman.)*

SERGEANT: *(salutes)* The village is burning, sah.

KIAP: Every house?

SERGEANT: Every house! The people are leaving, sah. They are moving to the big village.

KIAP: Good. So there is a way of making them see sense, is there? O.K. Carriers! Pick up your cargo. Sergeant! March off the prisoners. Straight back to the patrol post. Come on everybody. Quick time!

(They march off.

Short pause. Then a mourning song is heard behind stage and one by one the people enter.)

SONG: Embo wotena vitae, enu
Yarei igi bodena
Mai bamia, doiano
Awane—
Junegi tu mi doiano
Aware—

(There is shouting off stage. Then one by one the people appear. The women are wailing. The men carry some belongings. The children are frightened. Kanena's mother enters. She puts down her string bags and sits down near them. The last refugee enters and is surprised to see the woman sitting down by herself.)

OLD MAN: Mother of Kanena! Go well, you cannot stay here. We are forced to leave this village against our own wish. Your husband was taken away years ago. Who will protect you now?

MOTHER: Don't ask me to forsake my son. I sent him to his uncle's place, so that the kiap would not take him away. I am not going to move from here—until I see his face.

OLD MAN: But you cannot stay here—because I am going to tell the spirits and ancestors that we are leaving.

MOTHER: All the spirits know me—what harm can they do to me? But if you speak to them, tell them that we cannot understand what has happened today. That we cannot understand the thinking of these white men. We see their actions but they make no sense.

OLD MAN: Oh ancestors,
Spirits of Babena, Sirida and Tatari,
O mighty, brave, courageous fathers!
Do not turn away from us,
Do not abandon us,
Do not blame us,
Do not leave us to die.
Stay with us,
Rescue us,
Follow us.
We are leaving the village,
This place of honour and wealth;
We cannot understand that we are going,
We cannot understand what we are doing.
It is not your wish
It is not our own desire
But we are leaving,
We are going,

We are rushing
Away from this land.
But our village,
Our land, bananas, coconuts, betel nuts,
Our hunting grounds and your dwelling
We leave them in your care.
O ancestors and spirits,
Kill, revenge, hit, punish our enemies who descend
like sweeping water to claim our land.
O ancestors and spirits
Go before us, go before us to the big village, and help
us to settle down among our enemies.
O ancestors and spirits
We could not make the feast of 'stay well' and 'go well',
We are rushing, driven to an unknown future.
Stay well, stay well!
(The man goes over to the woman to comfort her. But she bows her head and weeps.)

OLD MAN: Must you stay?

MOTHER: I cannot move until I see my son.

OLD MAN: Stay well then.

MOTHER: Go well.

(The man picks up his belongings and leaves.)

MOTHER: Once the sky was going to fall down on the earth. All men and women would have been crushed—but one small child foresaw the event, and the disaster was avoided. Kanena was right, when he said, he must find the root of this disaster that kiaps bring . . . but who will be my staff to lean on, when Kanena leaves me?
(As she is saying this, Kanena enters. The mother weeps passionately as she is reminded of her husband. Kanena looks around in dismay, as if he is not sure that he is in the right village.)

MOTHER: Kanena, come to me!

SON: What was done to us will last for ever! How can this disaster ever be undone?

MOTHER: Kanena! We have a saying, that once one of the legs of the sky was about to break. Only one small child noticed it and revealed it to everybody. That is why the sky is still living away from the earth. . . .

SON: That is so . . . but. . . .

MOTHER: I did not want you to go to school until today. I did not want you to learn to live like white people. I did not want you to learn to act like kiaps. But you have seen what happened to us today. . . .

SON: Why do they treat us like this?

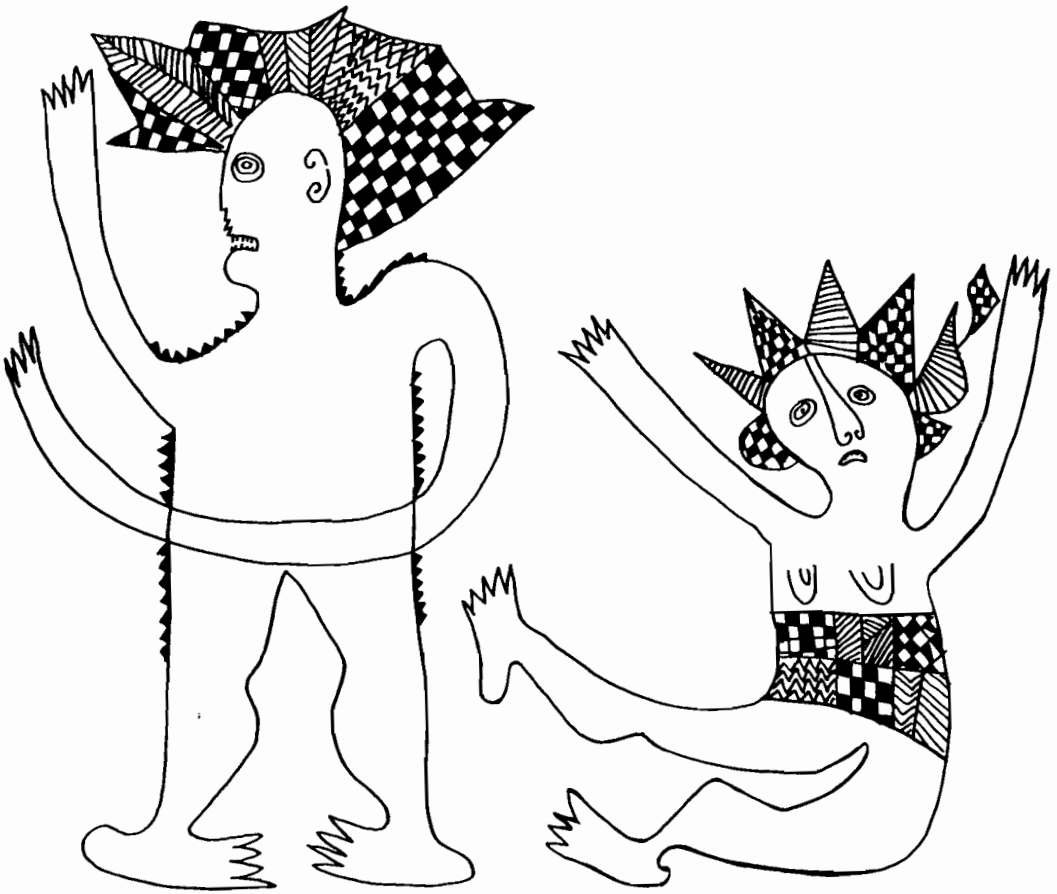
MOTHER: No one knows why. We do not understand them, and they do not try to understand us.
But every tree has its roots deep down in the ground. Even *their* actions must have roots. I want you to go to school, so that you can dig out the roots. Do not hesitate to uproot their tree and drink their wisdom.

SON: But who will look after you when I go to school?

MOTHER: I am not a stone to live always. But I want you to make sure that, before I die, you return with the secret.

SON: Yes, mother, I will go. I will dig the root. I will not give up, until I dig up the root—even if it will take me to Popondetta—even if it will take me to Moresby. I must dig up the tree, roots and all. I must learn how to plant the seed and I must return with the secret and plant it here.

END



BOOK REVIEW

Kiki: Ten Thousand Years in a Lifetime, *by Albert Maori Kiki. Cheshire* $3.50.

THE IMMEDIATE IMPRESSION made by this book is one of vigour and independence of mind. Mr Maori Kiki seems to have been able to pass right through the colonial experience, from his remote village childhood to public life in a nearly-independent New Guinea, without acquiring a trace of a 'colonial mentality'. He takes the white world very much as he finds it; intolerant of the slightest bullying or condescension, he is ready to respond warmly to any sign of genuine human interest or love of his country. If New Guinea has many young leaders as pungent and clear-headed as Maori Kiki she will be fortunate indeed.

Maori Kiki spent his childhood with a nomadic hunting and farming group wandering the forested hills of the upper Pulari River. These were his mother's people and it was from them, perhaps, that he learnt to be so positively and unapologetically himself. In her youth, his mother had been twice widowed, for this was a land of constant warfare, and had borne two children. She had thus no prospect of remarriage within the group, which sensibly restricted its population to what the environment could support. To marry outside the group was simply undreamt of. Consisting of only some thirty people, such a group had not even trade relations outside the clan, let alone intermarriage. Contact with other clans consisted of perpetual desultory warfare, the 'payback' of a society where only blood can pay for blood.

To this village came suddenly the white patrol officer with his black constable, a travelled man from the coastal villages of Orokolo. When the constable blew his whistle for the usual village census, the mourning widow stayed in her hut as custom demanded. But the peremptory second blast brought her out and with astonishing boldness of mind she planted herself next to the strange constable, the only man present who might recognize her existence as a woman. He did so, and in this way was Maori Kiki born. Raised and initiated in his mother's clan, he then left for Orokolo to study the ways of his father. Although this was a community in much greater contact with the outer world, complete with school, missionary and trading-store, yet he was just in time to go through one of the last ceremonies of initiation into the *maupa eravo*, or young men's house. Here he absorbed the fundamental ideals of communal labour and responsibility and prepared himself for the great *Kovave* festival when the young initiates wear all the masks and ornaments given them by their uncles. This was the climax of his traditional upbringing, but already the old festivals and ceremonies were dying, the *eravos* being burnt and the beautiful masks thrown out to rot in the courtyards. So Maori Kiki never completed the last stage of his initiation into the *hehe eravo*, the house of the grown men, nor saw that institution functioning as it had done down the centuries. The finger of modernity was stretched out to snatch him and soon he was bearing the frequent and pointless beatings which seem to mark every mission boyhood from Ghana to Port Moresby. Neither of his parents were Christians and he himself was candidly uninterested in this strange religion, yet he was flogged every Sunday if he failed to produce the whole family in church. Thus

was the God of Love introduced to New Guinea.

There follow the years of his early wandering and education, in which he was constantly encouraged and assisted by one man, Albert Speer. But for this, he might well have returned to his forest village in disgust, taking with him the two beautiful sisters who wanted to marry him. But the process, once begun, led him to study medicine in the Fijis, community development in Buka Island and politics in the gradually awakening capital, Port Moresby. Working successively as an assistant pathologist, welfare assistant, patrol officer and secretary of the Pangu Pati, he hurled himself into each activity with evident energy, intelligence and concern for justice. He describes with equal gusto the great three-day fight between the Kerema people and the Army in Moresby market and his proud arrival in Samoa as a black V.I.P. at the independence celebrations: 'I strutted across the tarmac swinging my arms like a white man.'

In the later chapters Maori Kiki traces the main lines of conflict between an Administration adhering to the doctrine of 'equal development' and the growing educated class in New Guinea. To the widespread practice of segregation was added the continued uncertainty in Canberra itself as to the future of the country. Was this to be united and independent in the near future, as Mr Kiki and his Pangu Pati urged, or to be kept in a gradually relaxing tutelage until it became the seventh Australian state at some remote date? In discussing these issues he makes use of documents in a way that might seem naive but for the light which they cast upon the antiquated assumptions still ruling in Papua-New Guinea until today. Indeed, the departure of Mr Hasluck seems to have brought about a considerable reaction in Administration policies as recently as 1964.

Of all these issues Maori Kiki writes with the same passion, humour and intelligence which mark the story of his childhood and upbringing in a world that seems much more than thirty years away. His book will win new friends for a talented people who have been for too long the property of the missionary, the anthropologist and the policeman.

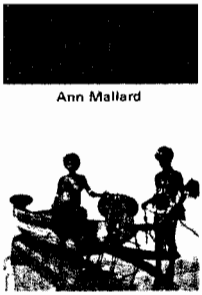
GERALD MOORE

BILONG BOI

A novel by
Keith R. Pickard

$4.20

Written by a man who lives in Papua New Guinea this book reflects his knowledge of the Territory and depicts life there as it is today. Set mainly in a small Papua New Guinea town, it deals with the interplay of race and sex in a mixed community. The excitement in the plot is due partly to the reality of the situations, partly to the candid way in which they are described.

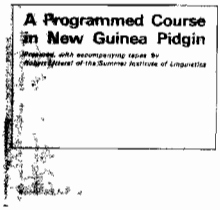


A TRAVELLER'S GUIDE TO PAPUA NEW GUINEA

by *Ann E. Mallard*

$4.95

This is Papua New Guinea's first complete travel guide. It will give an answer to every question on travel both to and within the Territory, living conditions for the tourist, conditions of entry, and so on. In a closer look at each district it discusses the history of the area, the people, the Native artifacts available, the flora and fauna.

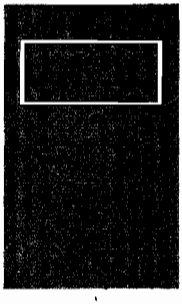


A PROGRAMMED COURSE IN NEW GUINEA PIDGIN

by *R. Litteral*
(Summer Institute of Linguistics)

$2.95 (book)
$13.50 (set of tapes)

A text accompanied by two 5 inch double track tapes with over two hours playing time provides a programmed instruction course. Without the aid of a teacher, the student is able to learn the basic language patterns and so can progress to a full understanding and use of the language.



AN INTRODUCTION TO NEW GUINEA PIDGIN

by *Father F. Mihalic*

85c

This book consists of an English/Pidgin dictionary section containing both words and phrases and an explanatory introduction. In effect, it emerges as a quick course in New Guinea Pidgin for those who want only to master the basic language patterns.

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