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**20c**

**New Guinea Writing** — Number 4, September 1971

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• **Back Cover photo: Famous Mekeo poet and translator, Allan Natachee.**

# Editorial

*We have tried to take a "middle course" in this Fourth Number of our magazine, by giving you — our thousands of keen readers all over Papua New Guinea and overseas — a wide selection of stories and poems. Some of them are about life in the cities, some about life in the villages. Some are based on traditional legends and customs, and some talk about the impact of Western society and culture on the urban and rural communities of our country.*

*Once again, our creative writers and artists come from many districts — including Bougainville, Central, East Sepik, Gulf, Manus, Milne Bay, New Ireland, Northern, and Western Highlands — and we have even printed, for the first time in "New Guinea Writing", a story by a student from the British Solomons.*

★ ★ ★

*The results of the Second Annual Literature Bureau Play and Poetry Competitions will be announced through the national press and radio on October 1st. This year the panels of judges have had to read over 400 poems and 40 plays — in English and Pidgin — and their first impressions are that the quality of the entries is much higher than last year's. (If you don't win — keep trying!)*

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*You will notice that we have used a much better paper in this issue — and we had hoped also to have had more pages and some illustrations in colour. But we will need some more funds and subscriptions before we can do that!*

★ ★ ★

*Unfortunately, this will probably be my last issue as Editor of "New Guinea Writing". However, I will look forward to seeing the work of our emerging national writers in future issues of the magazine, and I am staying in Papua New Guinea myself to continue to assist and advise you, as much as I can.*

*When you are sending your contributions for the next issues of "New Guinea Writing", address your letters like this: The Director, D.I.E.S., P.O. Box 2312, Konedobu.*

*Yours sincerely,*

*Donald Maynard*

# The Tourist

Aloysius Aita

He was sitting on the steps of one of the big stores in Moresby.

The clink of coins on the counter or the cash-register could be heard from the interior of the store. Well dressed people were moving up and down the steps. The afternoon air was saturated with the noisy roar of the city, and the man in blue was just moving onto the tiny white dot in the middle of the street to control the traffic at this peak hour of the day. Looking past the policeman, he could see the hustle and bustle of the vendors.

Kila was a "tourist", in a sense. He had left his wife and children to come down and find a job in town. He was in his late twenties. Stoutly built, he was dressed in a pair of black shorts and a red singlet. They were dirty, and a few holes could be seen here and there on the singlet. He had been wearing them since his arrival in town a week ago and he did not have an extra pair to change into.

The smell of food from a nearby cafe awakened Kila's appetite and he remembered that he was hungry. He felt in his pocket and discovered that he had only a two-dollar note left. "Better go without food today", he told himself. Tightening the belt around his waist, he sat back and planned his next move.

A group of children passed by. A few made faces at Kila and began to giggle teasingly. Kila felt like giving each of them a good smacking but he let them go.

Slowly Kila got to his feet. He walked up the street, examining the variety of alluring goods displayed behind the transparent walls. He wished to have some of them but knew that all the wealth he had was a mere two-dollar note. As he neared the intersection, he could hear a radio from a nearby building giving noon time signals. No wonder the traffic was heavy!

Noticing a traffic hold-up, Kila walked briskly across the street, passing just in front of an elderly couple who seemed annoyed by the jam. Just as he reached the other side, the traffic was on the move again.

The heat of the afternoon sun beat down mercilessly on Kila. The atmosphere reminded Kila of the cool rivers and creeks with their icy waterfalls at home and he wished to be back there, far from the scorching heat and the noisy city traffic. But he knew that he could not go back now. He had to find work before he finished his little cash.

Kila made his way to a row of stores. To do this, he had to recross the street when the traffic was at a standstill, in obedience to the signal of the police officer at the intersection. Kila walked into a store and, having made a choice of a drink, paid for it and went out again. As he left, Kila wondered how long the cash he had would last him.

Coming out onto the street again, Kila looked up and down the road. The traffic was less heavy now and he managed to cross to the other side. There, he paused and decided on his next destination. He had been turned down five times when he had asked for a job, since his arrival the previous week. He had been refused again that morning but he wanted to try elsewhere. If he was not accepted. . . Well, he would decide.

There was a PMV coming up the street and Kila decided to take it. He put out his hand and the driver pulled to the side further up. Kila hurried up and named his destination. The driver shook his head and continued on up the street, while Kila stood there, waiting for another PMV. A few minutes later another PMV came up. Kila hailed it and named his destination. This time the driver nodded his head in assent and Kila climbed onto the back. Soon they were winding up the main highway. A couple of times the driver stopped to pick up more passengers.

When they were nearing Four Mile, Kila gave a few taps on the roof of the truck and the driver pulled to the side. Kila jumped down, paid his ten cents fare and walked away. As he walked down the street, he looked with interest at the different houses with their plots of ground. Some seemed well cared for while the others looked bushy. Kila picked out the bushiest of them all and decided to ask for work there.

He paused at the gate and debated on whether to try it or not. The thought of the meagre one dollar and eighty cents in his pocket made him decide on the affirmative. With little hope of success, Kila approached the huge edifice and knocked on the front door. The radio which was blaring away was turned down and he heard footsteps approaching the door. Next moment the door swung inward and he was facing the owner of the house.

She was a woman in her middle or late twenties, wearing an impeccably cut skirt and blouse. She looked at Kila critically before asking him:

"What do you want?"

Kila had never been to school but from his earlier attempts at finding work he had heard that question often and knew what it meant.

"I am looking for work," he told her.

"Where are you from?" she asked him.

That inevitable question again! This very question had been asked at each of the places he had applied for a job. He had answered truthfully and the result had always been a refusal. "No job!" That was the answer he always received. Now he thought of lying, but the words of his dead mother: "Son, always be truthful!" quickly dispelled the idea from his head.

"I am from Goilala", he told her, and waited for her reaction.

"How long have you been in town?" she asked him.

Kila quickly recalled the day of his arrival in town.

"One week", he told her.

"If you are willing to work for a week's wages of $7 plus rations and sleeping quarters, I could employ you", she told him.

Kila felt all the weight lifting off his chest. He had been accepted just at the right moment, but he was happy for something else. He had been accepted in spite of his being a Goilala. That was all he wanted: that someone should trust him and employ him.

"I am willing to work for that", he told her. "But can you please tell me how many people are already working here and where are they from?"

He was thinking of the numerous brawls which broke out between the different tribal groups in the town. He did not want to get involved in any fights.

"I had only one employee", she told him. "He was not satisfied with the wages here and walked out last week".

She led him round the back of the house to the employee's quarters. It was a one-bedroom house. It was strewn with empty meat-tins and old beer bottles. Cobwebs dominated the corners of the room and the floor seemed never to have been swept at all. In one corner of the room stood what had been the late employee's bed. The wires which once suspended the mosquito net had been cut and the mosquito net could not be seen anywhere. In another corner stood a table covered with more rubbish. Near the table was a three-legged chair. Kila's observations were interrupted by the woman's voice:

"This is a mess, but I expect you to make it comfortable for yourself. As I am going out soon to visit some friends and won't be back till late, you can clean your room and have the rest of the day off. You can start work tomorrow".

Kila could still not believe his ears. Fate had thrown him into the hands of this exceptional lady. All his wantoks who had come to town before him were still searching for jobs. The fact that they were Goilalas made it hard for them to find jobs. Yet this woman had accepted him blindly. Well, he would show her what a real Goilala was made of. It was only a few drunkards who spoiled the name of his tribe.

Kila asked for some tools to fix his room. She went into her house and returned presently with a key.

"This is the key of the tool-shed", she told him. "All the tools are in there. You can keep the key as you will be using the tool-shed".

Kila went to the shed, opened it and picked out the tools he wanted. He made his way back to his future house and started cleaning and repairing it. Soon he heard the car start and when he went to the door he saw the woman driving away.

By four o'clock his room was in a serviceable condition. He went to the tool-shed again and found a grass-knife. He sharpened it on a grinder he found in the room, went outside and started cutting the grass. By half past five, he had cut the whole yard. Now it only remained to be raked. He had his shower, went outside and surveyed the work he had done. She had told him to start work the next day but he had started already. That was what he was like: a man of generosity.

He wondered if she would be pleased with what he had done.

★ ★ ★

The five line illustrations in this issue, which are based on traditional canoe and mask designs, were drawn by

Nelson Pokari Nicholas.

# How Man First Appeared On Buka

Moses Havini

Like the popular Western theory of evolution, where the first man eventually evolved from a cell in the sea, the Buka people have their own version of how man first appeared on the island of Buka.

Many, many years ago when the world was still very young there gradually evolved from the pouch of the *ubana* or Uban palm two male babies — the first two living beings ever to appear on our island. The *ubana* palm, which is something like a banana tree, has a pouch from which the main leaf stems. If you look carefully into the water contained there, you will see hundreds of tiny living things moving all the time. Those are the tiny living "cells" which eventually formed the first men in our story.

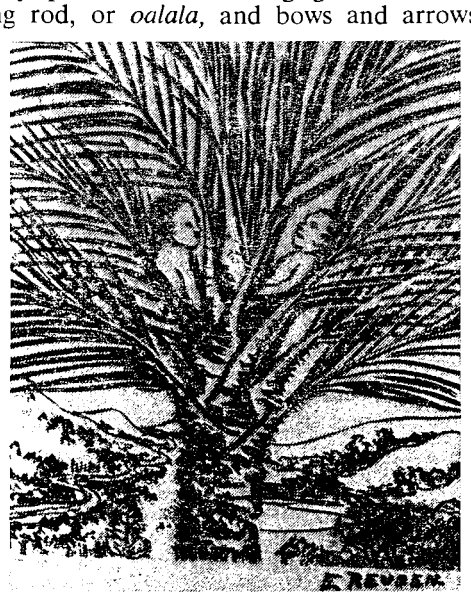
The two babies went through normal baby stages and soon grew up to be strong young men. Unaware of their surroundings the two young men decided to explore beyond their little world in the jungle. They wandered in a westerly direction and discovered the sea. They also found many rivers, inlets and creeks. But one of their favourite rivers was the Kikitong River. This is in the Soloso area, the inland part of Buka. It is very wide, deep, high banked and flows straight into Karola Bay and out to the blue Pacific Ocean.

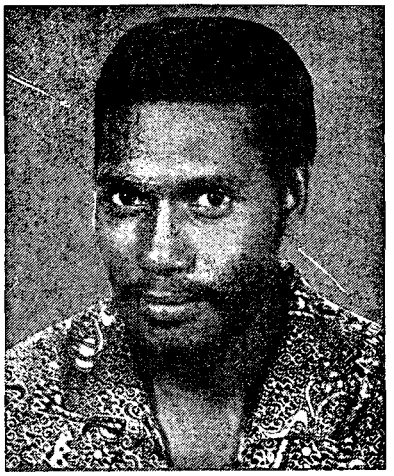
One fine day the two men decided to go fishing.

The first man said: "Let's go to the sea and fish there. There are plenty of shells and we can also walk around on the reef".

But the second man said: "No, we must not go there because our blood is not accustomed to the spirits of the seas yet". So, instead of going to the sea, they decided to go to their favourite river.

They packed their fishing gear which included a fishing rod, or *oalala,* and bows and arrows. They





walked down to the river and arrived there in the middle of the day. Immediately they started to fish.

The day seemed to have been a very good day for them for they caught many fish. Most of them were river fish, but they also caught a few sea fish which had travelled upstream.

After fishing for some time, under some irresistible impulse, one of them plunged into the river and almost instantaneously the demon or *lilihani* (masalai) of the river turned the young man's phallus or sex organ into a female sex organ. So flabbergasted were they by the process of examining the conversion of the young man's phallus, that the two of them unfortunately ended up in an act of sexual intercourse, little knowing what its consequences would be.

Three months had gone by, when one day they noticed a bulge in the stomach of the bewitched. Upon seeing this malformation they became very confused. It was all nightmare for the remaining months. The stomach of the bewitched continued to protrude outwards and she became very big like the swelling sea. She was to burst out now at any moment, and what would come of it, they did not have the faintest clue.

Suddenly she felt something kicking. Twisting, writhing and breathing heavily, she forced out something. A baby was born to them. They were so stunned, but indeed they had already learnt the art of reproduction. They became the first family unit on the island of Buka.

Some time later a baby girl was born. Another boy and girl were born. The first and second married each other and started one of the first tribes, the Nakaripa tribe. The third and the fourth married each other and started the second tribe, the Naboen tribe. The first born of the Nakaripa and Naboen married each other and started another small tribe called the Nason. Yet another marriage outside the Nason, and they started another tribe called the Natasi.

When these tribes eventually became big, they started to move away from each other. They settled in their respective and well-chosen areas but not outside of Soloso.

Friction between them flared up and the first of the tribal wars began on Buka Island.

The Nakaripa and the Naboen became the dominant tribes of them all. However, in the years of tribal wars that followed, the Naboen finally defeated the Nakaripa. The Naboen had superior strength in archery, jungle tactics and the many other skills of fighting. The Nakaripa, on the contrary, had grown lazy and did not bother to advance themselves. Another factor that contributed to the victory of the Naboen was their powerful magic, or *hihilu*.

The worst kind of magic, which mesmerized its victims, was black magic. Yet another kind was that which blurred the vision of the enemy, so that the Naboens moved among the Nakaripas like wild spirits, slaughtering them. By conquest, then, the Naboens became the new leaders of all the people of Buka.

The Naboens, before long, introduced new forms of culture, and established the first traditional institutions on Buka. They were the first to build the *juhana* or men's ceremonial house. In front of the *juhana* they installed a huge totem or *kesa,* which was a sign of power and paramountcy in the whole of Buka.

The *juhana* was the institution where all important decisions were executed. Secret or strategic considerations were all discussed in the *juhana*. Women and children were not allowed within the proximity of this sacred institution. All important feasts, or *kinalala*, were performed in front of the *juhana,* but even then the women and children were not allowed to trespass upon the sacred grounds. Traditional sing sings, the *kohe* and *kuma,* were performed in front of the *juhana,* with the women always in the background.

This new "civilization" had been going on for some generations, but soon they became over-populated. Besides the problem of over-population, all resources in the areas where they had settled became exhausted. And so they immigrated from their headquarters, called Punein, in the centre of Soloso. They began to move towards the north, west, south and east coasts of the island.

When they came to the coast, they got into their dug-out canoes and rafts and paddled in a northerly direction. They occupied the existing islands of Saposa, Taiof, Petaj, Pororana, Majugan, Hitou and many other small ones. They also proceeded up the coast and set led at Limanmanu, Limankoa, Lontis, Tanreke, Hanahan, Hahalis and other areas along the east and west coast. The late-comers proceeded onto the islands of Nissan and Caterts, some seventy miles north of the main island of Buka.

Even though these different tribes stayed away from their main headquarters in Soloso, they still occasionally returned there. If one of their members died they would bring him back to Soloso, to be buried in their common burial ground.

As told to me by one of the last cannibals still living in the Soloso area, this legend explains the evolution of man on the island of Buka. It also explains the beginning of the different tribes on Buka, their cultures and traditions.

Today, the different places mentioned in this legend are now occupied by the people whose ancestors first got there. The Naboen tribe is still the most dominant and biggest on Buka.

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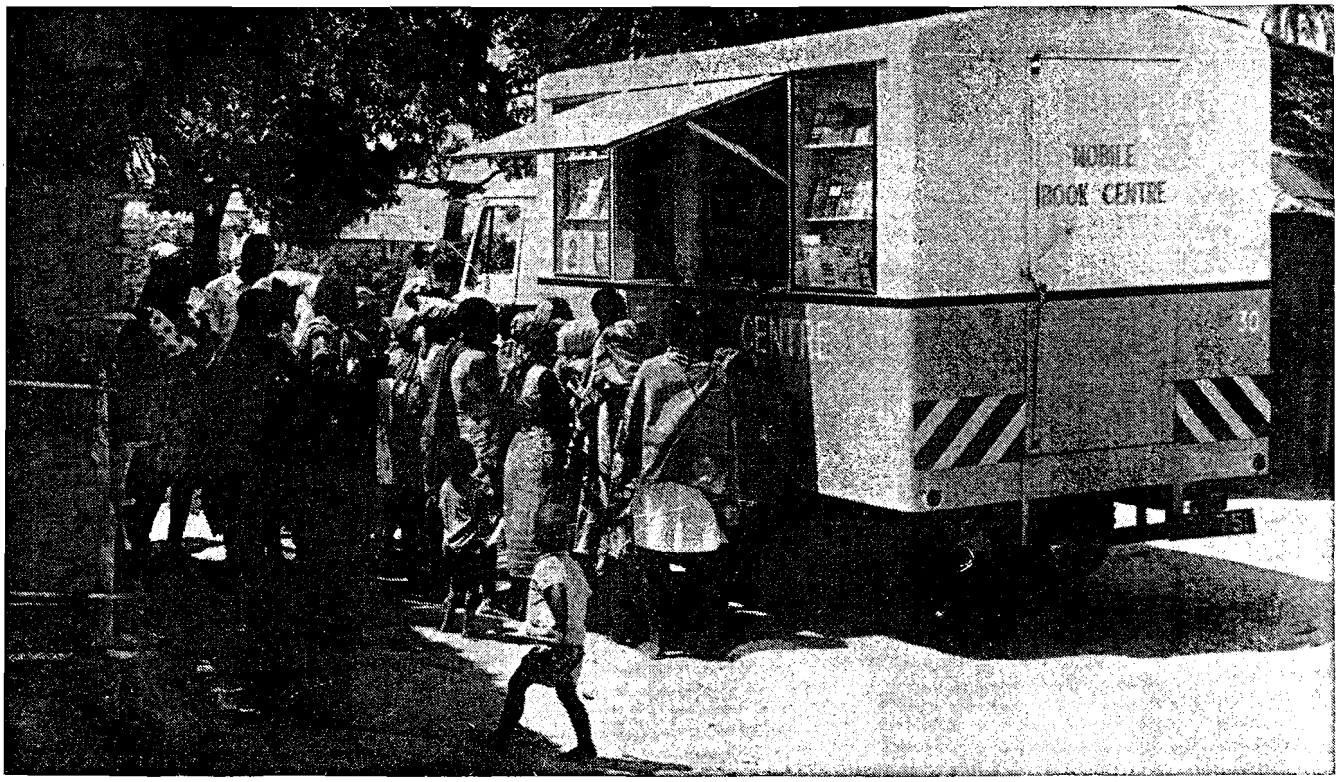
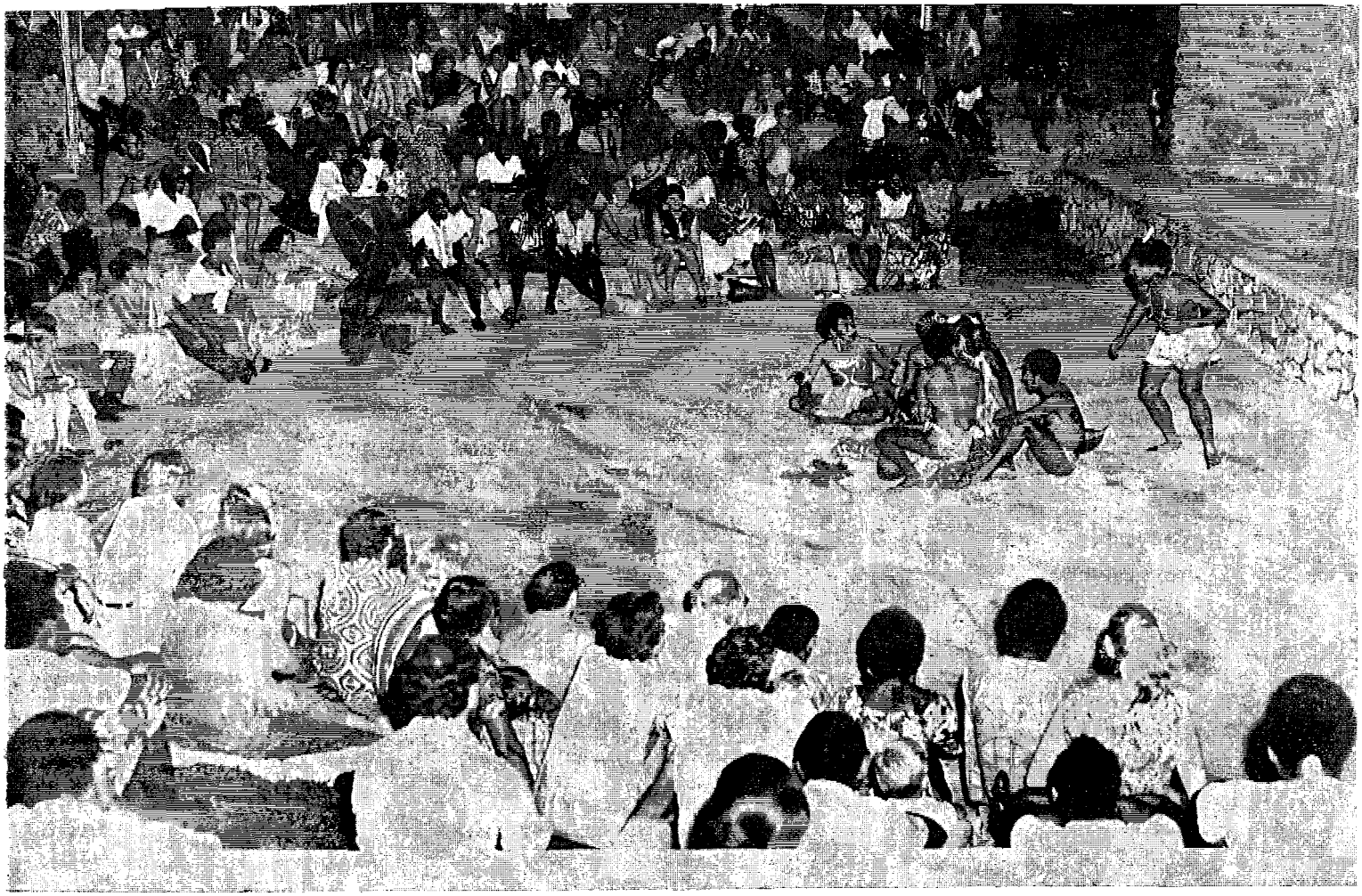



● *A Mobile Book Centre brings books and magazines to a village in Tanzania. (Photo: UNESCO/Eric Schwab)*



● *A big crowd watched Arthur Jawodimbari's play, "The Sun", at the new outdoor theatre at the University, during the first Niugini Arts Festival. "The Sun" won first prize in last year's Literature Bureau Play Competition.*

# Dubo Rides In A Car

Arthur Jawodimbari

The sun was just sending out its white rays over the light brown, greyish hills and the birds were singing softly when Dubo woke up from his sleep. It was his first morning in the outskirts of Port Moresby. He had never been to town before.

Outside the house Dubo's younger brother, Mamo, Aike his cousin, and Boke his nephew were sitting down chatting and cooking some food. Dubo could smell the fresh meat being fried and his saliva flowed instinctively.

Dubo was startled when his nephew entered the house, partly because he was thinking of the food that was being cooked and partly because he was thinking about the ride in his cousin's car from the airport to the labour compound.

"Uncle, do you want to sit near the fire?" Boke asked.

"Yes, nephew, I'll be coming out soon", Dubo replied.

Dubo came out and sat next to his cousin who was busy frying some fresh meat. Aike looked up and greeted him, "May morning be good to you, cousin. Did you sleep well?"

"Oh, cousin I slept very well. I did not like to get off that soft bed of yours". Dubo looked round at the workshop and the residential houses with eagerness. "This is a very big place", he put in.

"Cousin, this place is nothing compared to Boroko and the Port Moresby town", Aike remarked. "Perhaps we will take you out for a drive after breakfast".

Dubo was delighted and he stared into the dying embers of the fire, ignoring a plate of food that was set before him.

"Eat your food, it is getting cold", urged Mamo.

Dubo ate for a while and then pushed his plate of food in front of Boke. Boke shifted the plate of food onto the old cupboard.

"Uncle, have your wash and change into those clothes I left on my table", Boke put in. "Here, no one wears old clothes".

Dubo was about to slip into the shower room when Mamo came out of the house with bathing soap and a towel. Mamo held out soap and towel and said, "Have a good wash with this bathing soap, and here is a towel to wipe your body".

Dubo hesitated, and then slipped into the shower room a bit confused.

When Dubo came out of the shower his brother, cousin and nephew were all dressed up, wearing white socks and shoes.

Mamo cracked a joke as Dubo was dressing. Thus he said, "You are very slow, like an old woman! In the town, time is precious. I bet you would be sacked on the first day of your employment".

When Dubo came out all dressed up his cousin gave him a pair of sandals. "Wear these sandals cousin, we might bring you into some of the big shops down town", said Aike. As soon as he put on the sandals, he climbed into the car and sat next to his cousin who was going to drive.

Dubo grasped the seat as his cousin reversed the the car. He looked back at the storm-drain behind them.

"Cousin, we are going backwards. Please cousin, please, drive it forward!" Dubo pleaded.

"Keep quiet, our cousin knows what he is doing", shouted Mamo from the back of the car.

Aike drove the car onto the main road and started speeding up while Dubo gripped the seat firmly, digging his head down into the seat.

"Uncle, sit up and see the place", Boke put in.

"When we get out of the car", Dubo replied.

Dubo closed his eyes and sat like a piece of wood while his cousin was over-taking another car. At the sharp corner, a public bus swayed out of the other road and Dubo's heart jumped up. Dubo was yelling out, "Cousin, stop, stop!"

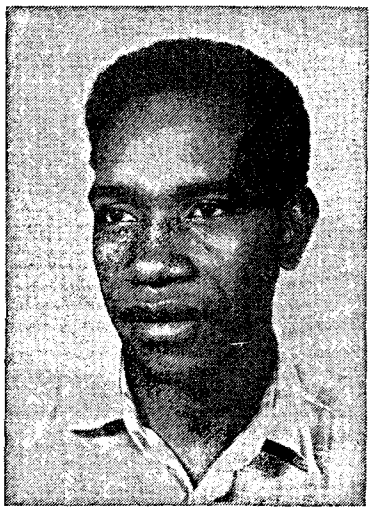
As the bus cleared past them, Dubo gave a sigh of relief and mumbled, "Young people, this is how you travel in the town!"

On the main highway, the car was going at fifty miles per hour. They were passing very many big trucks. Dubo was nervous and was sweating away like a small child.

"Cousin, son of my father's sister, slow down, there are lots of cars and trucks coming towards us".

Aike tapped on Dubo's shoulder with his left hand and said, "Cousin, on this road, no one is supposed to slow down. I am not drunk, so I'll drive you round safely".

"Do not bother our cousin, he has been driving for the last twelve years", Mamo cut in.



Aike parked his car outside his sister's house and opened the other side of the car for Dubo. Dubo got out of the car looking miserable. Aike yelled out, "Joyce, our cousin is here!"

Joyce rushed out, dragging her half naked small boy named Greg. She hugged Dubo whose eyes were filled with tears. In tears also, Joyce told Greg that uncle had come all the way from home where his grandparents are. She repeated every now and then: "Greg, uncle, this is uncle, he came from the village".

Joyce dried her tears and asked her brother where they were taking Dubo. Aike told her that they were just taking him for a ride.

"Let him sleep here, then, and come to church with us", said Joyce.

"Alright", said Mamo.

"We got church at our compound, God is everywhere", said Boke.

Dubo watched his cousin's car rolling down the road. He sighed and said, "Young people.....so this is how they travel in the town!"

After dinner Dubo sat up with Joyce and her husband till midnight. He went to bed still thinking about the ride in his cousin's car.

That night he dreamt he was riding in a car that was going at a terrific speed. He was heading towards huge buildings and rows and rows of buses and trucks.

He was just about to crash into a bus when he heard a faint voice saying, "Uncle, get up; it is time to go to church".

Dubo sat up and saw Greg grinning shyly, and then he was relieved to find that he was only dreaming.

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# The People With Unopen Mouths

**A story told to THEOPHILO KAGA LAUVA by Amai Kavini of Tatupiti Village in the Goilala Sub-District.**

Many, many years ago there were living a family of four, a father with his son and mother with daughter. The boy and father lived as fish and eel catchers, while the mother's family were busy farmers. The father's family lived in a house of their own and so did the other. Every day each went out to labour, till evening saw them gathered back in the village each secretly to his house. They passed to each other the smallest rubbish pieces of what was brought in, then kept the best and largest quantities for themselves.

This went on for a very long time, till one fine day both parents went out to work, while the two children stayed home and played around till each got so angry that they brought out their secrets.

The girl said: "My mother and I always bring good food but give you and father all the rubbish".

The boy also said: "We too. We catch fish and eels, bring them home and give you the small ones while we have the big ones".

When the mother arrived, the girl told her. Being very angry she dressed herself as a man, took out a bundle of spears, and went after her husband.

She met him by the river side, speared him with several spears, left him and returned home quickly. Then she chased the children to play outside while she dug a deep hole in the house, made a good bed over it with soft sticks and started heating two white smooth stones.

She called out to her children: "Is your father home?"

They said he wasn't.

At last they could see him afar off. They kept watching and telling their cruel mother that he was approaching nearer and nearer. Then he came in and told them that a man had speared him a few times on on the way home. The women called him in onto the trap bed and it fell down into the hole.

Quickly the woman threw on top the red-hot rocks and then pushed over hot fire ashes and ground to cover him up.

After that she left for another land with the two children. They travelled on, spending days sleeping, till they reached a land where people grew many gardens, just to feed wild animals.

These people lived in large villages, had no pests of any kind, but had wings of flying foxes on their backs. As they came up, they found cooked food of animals lying on the road, so they helped themselves and waited till a young dumb girl came with a basket full of food, which she threw at them and then went back to the village.

The mother with her children followed her to the village and into her house. The girl's family, who were all dumb, received them with a great welcome, and introduced them to their fellow villagers, sharing their work, till at last the boy thought of a very clever idea to open the peoples' mouths.

One day, he and his mother went to a garden with the little girl who found them originally. While the three were digging potatoes, the boy found a small snake, brought it and frightened his sister with the unopen mouth. She got such a fright that she tried to scream by making sounds in her head and the mouth that was there but wouldn't open.

Suddenly, the skin burst open. She was joyful at speaking to them, as well as being able to share the lovely meals formerly given away to beasts of the forests.

On the next day, they went again to the garden, and while the two sisters and mother were collecting food, the boy also collected all kinds of crawling creatures. He took them to the village, gathered all the people in the middle of their village and made them sit in a big circle. Then he opened up parcels of the creatures and each one made its tricks. But the people were terrified by their looks so that all held their faces, ran here and there trying either to laugh or scream, and all at once their mouths opened.

So the whole village made a big dancing party for the boy, his mother, and sister. They stayed with them for an uncounted number of years till one day the family wanted to go back home. Then a band of warriors guided them safely to their homeland. While they were coming home some of the men walked with them on the ground, while others flew across the trees, killing possums and birds for their food. When evening approached, they descended and slept together with those on the ground. In this way they weren't short of food or meat.

When they reached the mother's homeland, all these men with wings like those of the flying fox built houses for them, and then returned to their own place.

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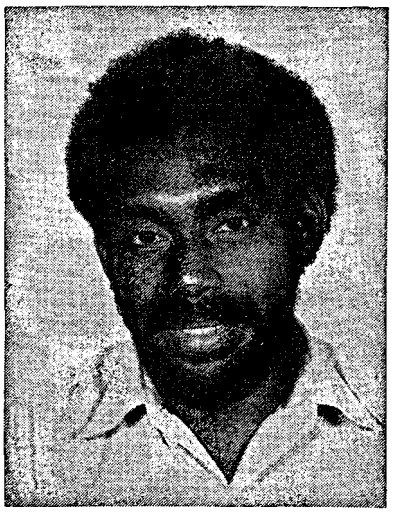
# Childhood Romance — Island Style

John Saunana



There was a time in Dione's life in the far-away islands of King Solomon when nature's watchman, time, did not play quite such an influential part in the daily lives of the islanders. Life in general was relatively easy, carefree and always merry. The islands people then never counted minutes and hours; their whole concept of time was narrowed down to day and night, week, month and year. And these classifications had no specific relation whatsoever to what the same terms mean nowadays.

For example, the day began for many people when the cock gave its third cry in the early dawn, at about 3 a.m., and might continue till 3 or 4 o'clock in the afternoon when all work must cease temporarily. Night followed immediately, although there would still be sufficient light from the sun if one cared to visit friends at their garden hamlets, take a dip in the river, or perhaps go fishing on the dry reef when the tide was low.

For some strange reason, there had always been seven good full days in a week for as long as Dione could remember. The month was determined from one full moon to the next full moon, the various sizes of the moon being also important in determining specific intervals within the period of the month. Appropriately, the native name for "month" in Dione's vernacular is still *hura,* the moon.

Finally, the year wasn't made up of months; it was calculated at the time when the yams were normally harvested, a period of about six months. In addition, there were many other ways of calculating the year, the next most common being the careful observation of the phenomenal variation in the seasons. In those days, the people had specific names for the rainy season; the dry season and the starving season; the season when sea shrimps rose to the surface of the sea; the season when water crabs and sea prawns hatched their young; and so forth. Time was therefore something of an endless chain which revolved continuously round an imaginary axis, joined together by small notches called days and nights and slightly bigger ones, the weeks and moons, and finally, the year.

Time as we know it today had no consequence then, it merely came and went, and as far as the people were concerned, there was nothing especially different from one day to the other, which might render the day before distinguishable from the following day. The people always had the notion, therefore, that what couldn't be done one day could always be done the next day.

No doubt, in the minds of many of them, the period between sunrise and sunset, or appropriately, when the sun climbed up into the eastern horizon and sank into the western skies, was too short in terms of a life time. It could hardly be missed should one day be discounted from productive work now and then.

As could only be expected, what was true in the daily lives of the adults was even more so in the world of the young. Children, as a matter of fact, had so much freedom that they usually grew up, like their fathers before them, with absolutely no realisation of the importance of time. They lived in a world in which there were no bells or gongs to regulate their lives or activities.

But one should not try to paint the picture of the world of the young unnecessarily beautiful, so as to betray the fact that even in this carefree and "timeless" society, the parents still had, of course, a pretty tight hold on the up-bringing of their children.

In order to achieve this control, every effort conducive to the proper training of the young about the practical aspects of the society was resorted to when they were still at an early age.

Dione remembers vaguely that it was the women, the mothers, in fact, who were usually the dominant figures in household and good behavioural matters in the practical education of the young. In spite of this, however, the children were nearly always more or less free to enjoy themselves when the chances availed themselves; particularly in the early evenings under the gentle gaze of the tropical full moon, on the stretch of the white sand beach, with the comforting sounds of the sea and the exciting noises of the children at play mingling together.

★ ★ ★

It was about one of those memorable nights of long ago in the early childhood of Dione, that the incident of the boy's first romance occurred.

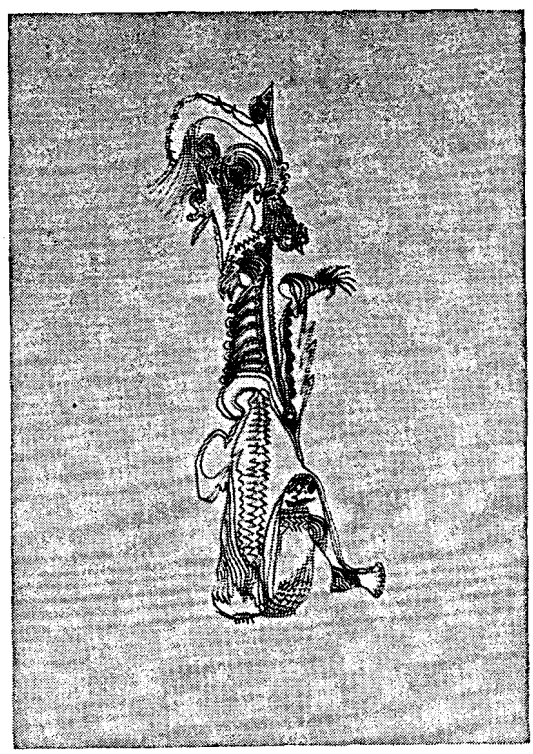
"Dione! Dione!", came a voice out of the nearby scrub. As it was too far away just then, it seemed to the boy that the voice could have been coming from nowhere. But he listened just the same.

"Dione! Dione!"—the voice could be heard again, this time more audible than before, even louder than the roaring of the waves at the sea-shore and the laughter of his comrades at play.

"Yes! Oi! Oi!", he shouted excitedly in reply.

It was in fact the familiar voice of his playmate, Vero, and so he wasn't terribly amazed after all at her calling him now. Both were of the same age and had always played games like "hide and seek" together. Whenever they both felt that their mothers and fathers weren't likely to notice their absence, the two would steal out of sight to play.

Their parents loved to point out to one another how the two children had become almost inseparable because they belonged literally to the same age-group or *tai ugu*. But whenever their parents discovered their absence, and particularly if it was during the day time, they would raise their voices as loud as they could and yell out their names in turn, hoping to lure them back to their house, either for them to look after the smaller children or in order to accompany them to the garden.



Sometimes they would succeed in locating them before they'd sufficient time to hide themselves. On several occasions, however, the two children would purposely defy their parents and continue playing.

Now, however, Vero's voice rose in crescendo, as though not particularly satisfied with her partner's reply. Very much aroused now by her obvious excitment, Dione rushed toward her: What could be the matter with her? . . . Had anyone hurt her?

In his frenzy, he sort of realised how little girls always seemed so weak and delicate that their mothers had to treat them as though they were little gems. Of course, this had the most shameful effect that when they weren't treated as such by their comrades, they were always too flexible to resist shedding tears—in many instances, in fact, they'd break down shamelessly.

"For heaven's sake, Vero, what is it you want?" asked Dione, angrily. "If you continue that unnecessary yelling, our mothers will soon be aroused and will want to know what this is all about."

"Oh, wouldn't you just listen to me for a moment? I have a surprise to tell you about. Do you know what I have just overheard from my father and mother?" she asked, eyeing him excitedly.

Dione then realised how serious Vero was in her pleading for his attention and that she was unmistakeably in command of some real secret.

"No", answered Dione, rather reluctantly. "I can't possibly know what goes on between you and your folks in your house, unless of course, I were a god, which is expecting too much of me; or do you expect me to know it before you tell me?"

"Oh, I didn't mean it that way. . . but I thought that I'd ask you, anyway", she said in self-defence.

"What is this great secret?" insisted Dione.

"It is something that won't interest you in the least", she replied, so as to dissuade him from taking the subject any further. "It's nothing really . . . ."

"Vero, I'm merely asking you to tell me what has made you so excited. And what is so sacred about it that I shouldn't hear?"

"I wish you weren't as insistent on hearing it as you are", murmured Vero.

"But I am!"

"Well, since you are immovable, I shan't be obliged for any apologies. . . . No. . . . oh, it's some place that we are going to . . . .Somewhere on an island, far far away from our village", said Vero, now finding her old self coming back.

Although Dione had taken up the subject rather reluctantly at first, it became increasingly obvious to him that he had to help out if necessary.

"So you and your folks are going places, aren't you?" he asked. "And where is this place that you're going to?"

Vero looked puzzled for she had forgotten the name of the little island which her father had mentioned.

"No, I can't remember now except that it's far across the sea and can't be seen from here".

"What a silly answer," thought Dione to himself.

"At least, *your* folks should know where the island is and the name of the mission school and hospital on it . . . because they'd mentioned that you'd been there before", Vero said, forcing Dione to call on his reserve memory to help out with the names.

For a moment Dione seemed to be completely at sea.

He looked embarrassed. But he did not want to admit failure, for that would mean that he was an ignorant and forgetful boy. A small black cloud shielded the light of the moon, casting dark shadows about them, while the gentle ripples of the Solomon Sea chased each other up and down the sloping embankment of sand.

Up above them could be heard the screeching noises of a flock of frigate birds, returning to their home on the rocktops of Cape Rohu, after a busy day's fishing flight along the eastern coast. In the brief interval of the blackout, their silvery white bodies were silhouetted against the pitched blackness of outer space. Soon their wings had carried them away out of sight to the west and the moon came out once more with its reassuring brightness.

Dione still hadn't come up with the answers to Vero's question; but he'd made some ground. And he wasn't so embarrassed now, as he was a few minutes earlier. "I have never been out of this place since I can remember", Dione reminded himself. But, little by little, Vero's lead fired Dione's imagination back to those nights when his mother told him about her own and his father's life together before he was born.

Suddenly, a thought struck him: the island? . . . and the hospital? . . . His eyes brightened.

"I've been told many times that I was born in a mission hospital—could this be the same place that you're going to?" asked Dione, thoughtfully. "I've never seen the place myself, although I was born there, and therefore I can't possibly remember where it is and what the name is. I can only say that, for all I know, it is not on this island, neither is it in this world; but somewhere in the *Aro Marawa"*, said Dione, pointing and circling his finger heavenwards. "It's somewhere in the *Marau Maea* — next to Jerusalem or Bethlehem in Judea", added the boy, obviously fighting against blank ignorance of his geography of the Holy Land.

Dione's notions of the Holy Land, of God and Jesus Christ, of the Bible and the White Man were smeared with illusions and assumptions of all kinds.

He was born at a mission hospital and, as an infant, was looked after for a considerable length of time by the European mission sisters there, and when the time came, was baptised by the priest at the nearby school. His early contact with Europeans, and the Christian upbringing which his parents gave him, blended together to form fantastic notions of the White Man and God.

To him, God was an old, greying, gentle, but powerful White Man, and Satan was like the old black ruffian or sorcerer who carried with him his evil dirty basket wherever he went, red-eyed and fierce to look at, and who kidnapped little children to satisfy his cannibalistic urges. And further, as far as he was concerned, Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Galilee, Gethsemane, Calvary and all other biblical names were all up in Heaven. His Heaven was up there in the clouds somewhere; and Hell, according to him, was under the ground where people are buried at death.

"How are you going to get there?" asked Dione, half expecting her to say they would walk. He, on the other hand, professed to know.

But she knew better than that. "Why, father said that we could go there by ship or canoe", she replied.

"What ship is going to take you, I wonder!" said Dione doubtfully.

"I think it will be the Southern Cross. Won't that be lovely?"

● Continued Page 14

# POEMS BY PAPUA NEW GUINEANS

## The Gazelle Incident

Due north-east from here,
in the land of tremors and eruptions,
the police stood like the Spartans,
and the Mataungans stood firm too,
claiming power and land,
a venomous political obligation.
Right round the globe
there's no peace where
a house is divided in two
and no sense of compromise.

Out of the heat of peaceful violence,
the law with batons bold and banging
and shields ready to protect,
the two foes stood ready for battle.
Amidst the enemies came Whippy,
with his savorous and melodious icecream,
the celestial hammering crochets of "Greensleeves" —
surely such charm of music
has power to sooth the savages . . . .
so goes the saying.

JACK LAHUI

★ ★ ★

## Niugini Money

I feel my pocket
Yes, I can hear the tinkle of
Coins
But not only me
Everybody does it.

Always cash in hand
Little in custody.
Why bother saving it?
Why bother when you
Never take it to the grave?

Everything cashes in on us.
Steamships, Burns Philp and Chinaman,
All cash in on us.
We don't go shopping —
Things go shopping at us —
All ads do so
I'm afraid.

JACK LAHUI

## Delay in the Coming of Day

The desire of the snake
to smuggle oil into its harbour
in the darkness of the night
delays the growth of the child
at the breast.

In the cold of the mountain air
the same old continuous cry —
*not . . ripe . . . yet . . . until the place*
*overflows with pen-book masters* —
slows down the advance of native Niugini.

In the wilderness of the dark rainforest
that other famous cry, for
*balanced spokesmen . . . storekeeper ratio*
*and more cost benefit analysis*
slows the journey to a real Niugini.

In the silence of the day
the wealthy prostitute seduces
the young ambitious lad
and produces
the late-born, deformed child.

MEAKORO OPA

★ ★ ★

## Skul

Mama/papa laikim skul
singautim gavman
mama/papa laikim pikinini
kisim save long Univesiti

Memba bilong haus
laikim plenti man save
sing aut long girapim skul
memba bilong haus laikim man i save

Taim ol man save kamap
ol i tok autim bilong gavman
memba bilong haus i tok se:
"Ol man i save bikhet tumas" . . . .

Nau mi askim:
"Watpo ol i laikim skul?"

DATA VANA

# Oa Robe

O! Oa Robe,
Father of the sorcerers,
Father of the magical stones,
This world of ours lies in your hands,
As it was on the day you created it
In your loneliness.
You alone gave the sun and moon, light.
You alone created all the creatures,
From nothing but your single form.
You even create the child in the womb,
Make the sperm flow in men,
And the blood flow in women.

O! Oa Robe,
Father of the sorcerers,
Father of the magical stones,
Your feet walk above the ground,
While your ears listen,
To every secrecy in men.

You nurse the child in the womb,
You give it breath,
You open its mouth, eyes and ears,
On the day of its birth,
And let it cry,
Once it touches this world.
You created the Oreke River,
That flows to the sea in many tributaries.
You even placed another Oreke River in the sky,
That it may fall down and water our land.

O! Oa Robe,
Father of the sorcerers,
Father of the magical s.ones,
Your feet walk above the ground,
While your ears listen,
To every secrecy in men.

LUCAS AIHI

★ ★ ★

# The Warrior

Up the limestone mountains
Down the swampy lowlands,
Young Takupin, the warrior
Comes plodding home again.
A bow and arrow he carries
In triumph of his victory
And wearily his young dog
Keeps faithfully to his heels.

Up the Kaiap ridge he's travelled
Seeking for his foe,
And many moons have vanished
Since his wantoks saw him last.
He whistles a tune of someone
He hopes to marry soon,
And shell bracelets and bamboo armlets
Keep rattling to the tune.

Beyond the wooded ridges
Against the lower hills,
Near the long range of mountains
His kunai house he nears.
And onward the warrior
Plods through the noon-day sun,
While shell bracelets and bamboo armlets
Are rattling to the tune.

The afternoon has filled the sky
With storm clouds blackest black,
At times the lightning strikes
Around the warrior's track.
But Takupin presses onward
His failing strength he tries,
In hope to reach the river
Before the flood should rise.

The thunder rumbling round him
Echoes o'er the plain,
Heavily, on kaukau patches,
Falls the splashing rain.
The water swirls through gorges
All stained with yellow mud,
While Takupin pushes onward
To beat the rising flood.

As the warrior nears the river
His strength begins to wane —
He s.ops to rest along the track
And recover his strength again.
With his faithful dog beside him
He will stay and rest the night,
He'll begin again his journey
At tomorrow morning's light.

The sun shines o'er the mountain
At the dawning of the day,
As young Takupin and his dog
Continue on their way.
While he whistles a tune of someone
He hopes to marry soon,
Shell bracele s and bamboo armlets
Keep rattling to the tune.

WILLIAM LOMAS

About The Poets: next page:

## The Poets

LUCAS AIHI hails from Nabuapaka, near Yule Island (Central District). He was educated at De La Salle High School, Bereina, and now works in the Reserve Bank at Port Moresby. Other poems and stories of his have appeared in *Overland, Currency,* and in the anthology *Love Poems of Papua New Guinea* (Papua Pocket Poets). He says "Oa Robe" is a supernatural being or spirit in the Kairuku area near his home.

JACK LAHUI, from Porebada, near Port Moresby, who was educated at Sogeri High School, and is now a trainee film director, is doing more studies at the Administrative College, Waigani. "The Gazelle Incident" is another of his poems which was commended in the First Annual Poetry Competition: the others have appeared in *New Guinea Writing,* Number 2, and in *Overland.* Jack recently attended a seminar on "Poetry in the South Pacific", at Macquarie University, in Sydney.

WILLIAM LOMAS, from Kaiap village near Wabag in the Western Highlands District, is a graduate of Holy Trinity Teachers College, Mount Hagen. His poem won a prize in the literary section of the First Port Moresby Eisteddfod.

MEAKORO OPA KHAN, from Iokea village, Gulf District, attended Kerema High School, and is now a second year arts student at the University of Papua and New Guinea. Ano.her poem of his appears in the special New Guinea number of *Overland.*

"DATA VANA" is the pen-name of a second year economics student at the University of Papua and New Guinea.

# The Romangiro *

Anna Solomon

Splash! The empty green bottle was thrust into the muddy waters of the Rima. After bobbing up and down it was swept away by the current until it was hidden from the pair of eyes that were watching it. Still rubbing his eyes Jack picked up his old battered T.A.A. bag, slung it over his shoulder and began walking towards the village.

There was no moon and the place looked dark and still. It was silent except for the shrill whistle of the crickets and the squeak of the bats in the breadfruit trees. In the distance dogs' barks could be heard now and then. As he walked along the path Jack had to walk on the grass to avoid treading on the droppings of the pigs. He cursed the owners for not building a pen for the animals.

On approaching the house he could see the light of the lamp through the pangal wall. The dogs rose up to greet him when he appeared. As he was patting them and talking nonsense to them his wife called out, "Who's there?"

"It's me, Jack! I'm talking to the dogs", he replied.

"Oloman, ol dok i save toktok na yu stap hatim gris wantaim ol!" she said sarcastically. Jack could feel the anger welling up inside but he was in no mood for an argument; besides, he was feeling hungry after drinking from the green bottles.

As he mounted the creaking steps he could hear the soft snoring coming from the adjoining room. The children were all fast asleep. He had tried his best to understand them, but like all the village people the children regarded him as a lazy *romangiro.* It was

**Romangiro — a word used by Mengar villagers as a nickname for a person who does not do any work but just wanders around the place.*

● Continued from Page 11

"Oh, yes, of course. How lovely that will be", he heard himself say. "How lovely to travel on board a big ship — just like we are on dry land now, only that the ship moves!" he agreed obligingly. "You folks are lucky! How interesting it will be to sit back, rest, sleep or do what you like while the ship ploughs along toward the distant horizon, which it can never hope to reach, and all around is the sea forever beckoning to you!"

Just then, however, the yelling of Vero's mother could be heard in the distance, calling for her to go home.

"Vero, Vero! Vero . . . Vero . . .*Vero* . . . !" Her voice was growing louder as she was coming nearer to them. Turning abruptly to Dione, Vero asked to be excused.

"Yes, certainly, you may go; only don't engage in argument with your mother, I can sense a menace in her voice", warned Dione.

"Oh, don't you worry. She won't bite. At least, I'm not scared of her".

"Well, I hope she won't", encouraged Dione.

"Goodbye", whispered Vero. "More about the trip next time?" she asked, and simultaneously, was on her feet.

"Certainly!"

But when he turned to say goodbye to her, she'd already taken to her heels down the stretch of sand to her house, leaving him behind.

"Yes nanae . . .mother, I'm here . . .coming back to you safe and sound", called Vero sheepishly. There in the distance and in the stillness of the night could be heard Vero's voice, trying vaguely to console her irate mother.

true that he was a *romangiro* but he couldn't stand people calling him lazy and the children were worse than the villagers. He couldn't do anything to them as they were not his children but his brother's.

With a sigh he entered the door of his room. Seated beside the hurricane lamp his wife was busy tying up things for the market. Without looking up she told him where to find his food. Throwing down his bag he walked over to the rack and after fumbling over the plates he found the right one. The plate contained *nangu* - the typical dish of a few fish and greens. Using his fingers he began to eat his cold food. There was silence while he ate his food noisily, throwing the scraps to the dogs outside the door.

"Ol manki kam bek pinis o nogat?" he asked with his mouth full, referring to his elder nephews who had gone to the theatre.

Without turning around his wife replied, "Nogat, ol i no kam bek yet."

Finishing his food, he pushed his plate away, wiped his hands on the towel and began searching his bag for tobacco. As there was no paper to roll his tobacco in, he started searching the room until he noticed a newspaper thrown carelessly on top of the net. With a smile he flipped through the pages until he found the right one. Tearing out the page he began rolling his cigar. As he was lighting it the dogs began to bark.

"O, ating ol lain hia i kam bek nau," he said, putting the cigar into his mouth. Soon they heard the young people talking, then "goodnights" were exchanged and their nephews could be heard approaching the house.

"Oh damn these mosquitoes," grumbled one of them, slapping the insects on his legs.

"Now look here brat, you better pipe down or else you'll wake the whole family." Kiring's voice put an end to their chattering.

Soon he heard them entering the room and closing the door behind them. After moving around the room for a few minutes he could hear the springs on the beds creaking and he knew that they were all in bed now.

Every day as he sat on the verandah he could see people hurrying to work, some to their gardens, some going to the "tais saksak". People were always in a hurry to work and his wife was one of them.

"Why do people hurry to work?" This question was always bothering him. When he wanted to go to work he always took his time about everything. In the morning he would wait until he had had his breakfast, washed his face, then, gathering his tools in a leisurely manner, he would go to work. It was no wonder people called him a *romangiro*.

All these things were going on in his mind as he sat watching his wife.

The thought of bed brought a smile to his face; his was the only house in the village containing spring beds. When the kiap came to the village everyone looked to the *romangiro* to provide him with accomodation, which he was very proud to do.

As he sat smoking away his wife finished tying the things and gathering up her bilums. He watched her hands, which were dry and hard.

After straightening her things she got up, casting a glance around the room. Seeing that everything was in order, she walked over to her sleeping place.

His wife went to bed and the place was silent. Still Jack sat there staring into the night. The cigar which was dangling from the corner of his mouth was getting shorter as he puffed away thoughtfully.

The snores of the children made him think of his family. All his brothers had gone away from the village to find jobs in the town. He was going to go too, but his eldest brother, the children's father, told him to stay back in the village and look after their family property.

"I was a big fool to listen to him," he thought. "Look at the way his children are treating me."

"I am Jack, the *romangiro*, since that's what everybody calls me. My wife has no time for my troubles. My brother's children think me a pest. My other brothers have their own family to look after so why should they worry about me!"

The call of the wildfowl brought his mind back to reality. "I must have been dreaming away again," he thought. Getting up slowly, he walked over to the lamp, and after turning the wick down, got into his bed.

Darkness crept slowly into his mind and soon he was off into dreamland. Loud snoring was the only thing that told the people that it was Jack, the *romangiro*.

★ ★ ★

# One Eye The Black

Kalamendi Sukot

This story comes from our island off the coast of New Ireland. There are many islands off the eastern and western coasts, but Djaul Island lies south by itself.

☆ ☆ ☆

There was a man who could not keep up with modern life, and so he set himself apart from the rest of the community.

The country in which he lived is still the same as it was some years ago. Birds feed by the rivers and on the trees; and the roaming wind blows in the valley and rolls up the hills.

There is a little lovely country where hills after hills and valleys after valleys disappear gradually into the distance. Trees are scattered up the hills and down in the fertile valleys, where streams of clear and fresh water flow slowly and continuously down to the sea.

There is a small track winding up and up to the top of Mon hill. Viewed from the top, where there is a small grass hut, the great plain of Panapakum can be seen clearly. Trees sway in the wind which is heard murmuring below. It blows up and is then funnelled by the valley of Nona-Ata, and finally sweeps up to the small grass hut.

"Ha-ha-ha", laughed the simple man. "Wind, north wind; take it easy eh? Remember my house eh!"

This is the country where the simple man lived, ate simple food and worked with simple tools. He wore nothing on his body. However, the doves and their forlorn crying made him feel that he was accompanied in this lonely country. Sitting outside his little hut at night, he heard nothing but the birds, the owls hooting in the trees, which stood still in the silence of the night.

Fishing alongside the streams in the valleys are young, fullygrown and old long-legged birds, both males and females. At about half past five in the morning grey, dark and white cranes come flying to the streams to fish. Very late in the afternoon they fly away to their sleeping places; except the ones that have their eggs in the reeds alongside the streams.

☆ ☆ ☆

One hot day the simple man wandered up and down the hills. Looking down from the top of one of the hills, he saw his new friend drinking greedily in the stream.

"Ha-ha-ha! You, you, you!" laughed the simple man. He ran down the hill to get him, but his wild friend saw him and started running away from him. He was too fast for the simple man to catch up with him. However, he foolishly jumped into the river and the simple man grasped him before he reached the opposite bank.

"Take it easy, eh!" he said calmly to his new friend. But his young friend was kicking and struggling.

"Come on, come on, young pela," said the simple man. "You see, we will live together in my lonely home, eh?"

He took him home happily, and started teaching him to understand the Tiang ("brother") language which he spoke. The time came when they understood each other.

"Ha-ha-ha", laughed the simple man happily. "Now my friend, go, and bring home with you a bird for our meal".

His black friend understood what this simple man was talking about. He stood up, waved his hairy tail and went running into the wild, rich forest. After thirty minutes he came running home with a big black bird in his mouth.

"Ha-ha-ha", laughed the simple man proudly. "Now bring it here".

His wild friend walked towards him and brought him the bird.

"Yes, yes," said the simple man. "You know, eh? You see, you are very, very clever. I teach you, ha, ha, ha. . . . . What do you call me? Tena'Akalit (teacher), eh?"

His friend waved his hairy tail, which meant that he was in favour of this name for his master.

☆ ☆ ☆

Tena'Akalit's new friend, "One Eye The Black", was a very skilful hunter who killed wild pigs and birds and brought them home. Every day they had meat. They had this happy life together for some years.

Gradually their days together were coming to an end. Their roaming and hunting days had passed slowly away together with the hours, days, months and years.

"My friend", said Tena'Akalit sadly. "This is our country. When I die, you don't leave it, eh?"

His black friend, who was sitting by, nodded sadly.

One day, after a successful hunt, One Eye The Black came home and saw his Tena'Akalit lying helplessly inside the hut. Slowly and sadly he walked towards his teacher and sat by him.

Oh. . . my . . . friend", mumbled the simple man. "I'm leaving you".

His friend moved closer and closer to him.

"My. . . dear. . . friend, don't leave our home, eh! My friend. . . .mmmy. . . .dear. . . .frrrrr. . . . nd. . . . ."

He died in peace, leaving his poor friend sitting beside him in great sorrow for days and nights.

☆ ☆ ☆

After four days the body was decaying. Its stinking odour was spread all over the place by the wind. At about midday there were three black crows jumping from branch to branch of the trees near the hut, trying to get a good view of what was inside it. After a slight look at the dead body, the first crow flew into the hut through the door without hesitation.

Springing up angrily from the side of the corpse, the dead man's friend killed the hungry bird. The second one flew in also, but he was put to death. Seeing that his two friends had been killed, the third one flew away in hunger and fear.

A few hours later, three wild dogs came running from the west. They were attracted by the odour of the rotten body. They all rushed through the narrow door. One Eye The Black, the brave and loyal friend of the dead man, fought with all his might to prevent his Tena'Akalit from being eaten, but he was soon beaten. He was badly wounded, and what's more it was then that he lost one of his eyes.

Down came One Eye, rolling and rolling until he reached the foot of a *crima* tree, where he lay and rested comfortably.

Two weeks later he had recovered. He stood up and walked up the small lonely track. Up and up he went. When he got to the hut he saw that the bones of his great Tena'Akalit had been scattered everywhere. He started collecting them together into the hut. At sundown he rested.

Early the next morning he started collecting bones again. He did a fine job. He brought every single bone back into the hut. The hut was now dilapidated, but One Eye The Black still guarded his Tena'Akalit's skeleton.

Sitting outside the hut in silence was One Eye The Black, watching the full moon peeping slowly from the top of the far eastern hills. In the great silence and stillness of the night One Eye The Black howled and howled.

The little lovely country is now lonely again because simple Tena'Akalit is now dead. One Eye The Black is also lonely. There is nobody to be seen or heard. However, doves are heard crying forlornly and owls are heard hooting in the trees, in the valleys and on the hills, all night.

Who knows why, where, how and when? One Eye The Black alone knows that.

Yes, it is his secret!

★ ★ ★

# The Land Of Leh

**A legend collected and translated by KUMALAU TAWALI.**

This is a story of a place, somewhere out there on the fringe of Rambutso or Nauna, way out in the ocean. Its name used to be called "Leh". And it had a chief whose name was Songuluep. It is out there on the outer fringe of Nauna, out there in the ocean. It was a big place and it was a long place, and its people were numerous. So they lived there.

Songuluep was at his home. He had a pool of water situated in the bush. It had not the slightest amount of dirt, and was as clear as a mirror. There he went to comb his hair. And he had a lime gourd, which was enormous. And when he was at his home and when he chewed betelnut and was beating the sides of his lime gourd, every village on Leh could hear it. He was doing things in that order at his home.

And there was a girl. Her name was Pinasim. She was at Baluan. Her grandmother — the mother of her mother — cared for her until she was grown-up. When her grandmother talked to her, she did not hear her advice. So her grandmother challenged her in this way: "Why, I am talking and you don't listen, what do you think you are? Do you think you are worthy of being the wife of the chief of Leh out there?"

And Pinasim replied: "Yes, it's a long distance, but it's a matter for endeavour and I will try".

And she went to see an old woman. She asked her: "Dear old woman, do you have anything with you?" And to Pinasim she replied: "No, much that I do not have, but little I have". Then this old woman said: "Take some stalks of the sago leaves and bring them to me". She went and got these sago leaf stalks and brought them to her. The old woman sharpened all of them. She said: "When you are walking, throw one of these in front of you and it will become dry land — walk along it and go and throw another one and walk along it. And so you will come across the sea".

That morning, Pinasim stood at the back of Baluan and threw one of these stalks out to the sea. As she threw it, it became land and she walked upon it. She walked on and on, and as she reached the sago-leaf stalk which she threw, she stood there and threw another one. It became land and she walked upon it, and after her the land was turning back into ocean. So she walked this way until she reached that place they called "Leh".

She continued into the bush and climbed up a *kalapulim* tree which grew near the pool where the chief used to comb his hair. While she was sitting up there the chief arrived and began combing. And Pinasim tatooed the skin of a *kalapulim* fruit and let it drop into the water. Down it came and he saw it.

And he said, "Oh! That fruit of the *kalapulim* - its skin is so well tatooed! Was it by bird, or cuscus, or man?" And he examined the tatoos closely. Then he threw it on the ground and continued combing. But he was looking at that tree in the water. And when Pinasim picked another one, ready to throw, he saw her. He said: "Ah! Climb down you! I have seen you, so please come down!" She came down, and he left her in the bush. But, every day, he came to her. Then one day he told his first wife, and she came and brought Pinasim to the house. When she brought her she said to Songuluep: "Hiding your wife in the bush is not polite, because she is beautiful, she came from a distant land, and thus, she is a respectable woman, a woman of status". And Pinasim stayed with them in one household.

Time passed. And the women of that place, Leh, when they were ready to give birth, used to have their bellies cut open with a knife.

One day Pinasim was ready to give birth to a child. Her husband was always telling her: "Now that you are with child they will cut your belly to take out the child. And you will go to your grave". She thought about this and she said, "Oh! my people don't do it this way. My people do it differently." When she was going to have her child, she told the first wife, "Will you please lock me up in the house." She locked the door, and left Pinasim there inside. When she brought forth her child, it cried. And all the women heard the child's cry and went to see her. They began to question her. They said, "How did you bear your child? For in our way, when we bear children, they cut the bellies, take out the children, and the women go into holes in the ground. How is it that you have done it like that? That you have not died but brought forth your child?"

And they searched every part of her body. They said, "Where did your child come from? From which part?" They asked their questions in this way. Later on, Pinasim was to show them where and how, the women of this land called Leh.

Time passed after the birth of her child and he grew big. When her son excreted she wrapped his excreta in a big leaf and threw it in the sea, saying: "This excreta of my son, let it float until Baluan, to his grandmother. When she comes to wash her wooden bowl in the sea, this excreta will stick to her bowl. And if she throws it away, it should jump back and stick to the bowl again."

So it came to Baluan and was drifting near the rocky shore. And when his grandmother came to wash her bowl, this excreta went closer and stuck to the side of her bowl. Then she threw it away. Afterwards when she washed her bowl again it jumped back and stuck fast to the side of the bowl. So she wondered: "What is it? Let me see". When she unwrapped it, it was the excreta of a child. Then she thought: "O, my grand-daughter, whom I became angry with, must have gone to some place and is married and has had a child. This is her child's excreta." So she knew. And she said, "She can't be in any other place but that place of which I told her, she went and is married there."

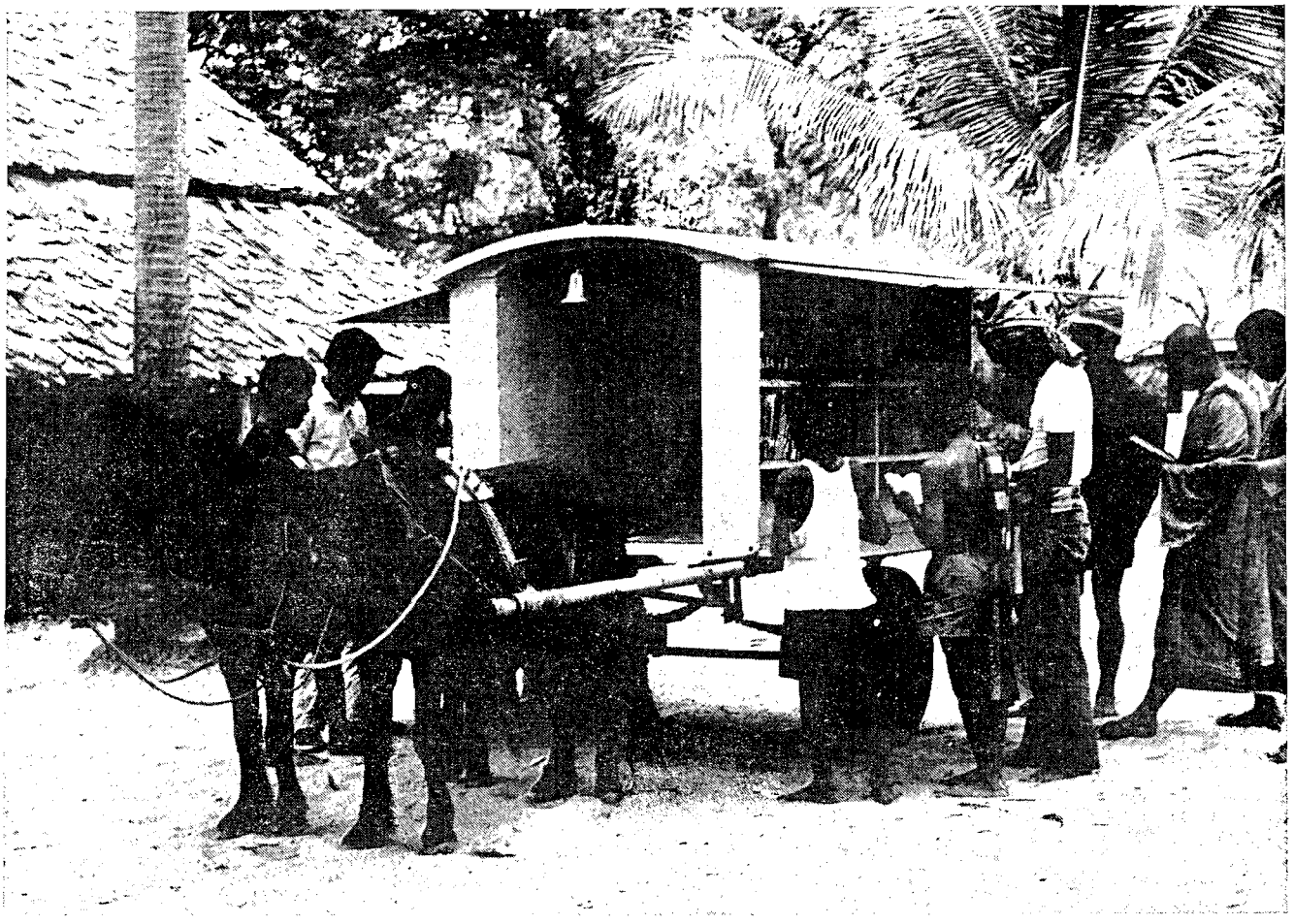
Thus she told Pinasim's brothers. She said, "Get your taros and fish pots ready. You are going to see your sister at Leh." So they dug yams, mami and taros and cut bananas, sugar cane and coconuts. They sailed five canoes, and that night they arrived at Leh. While Pinasim was still asleep, they brought everything and left them in her house, went back to their canoe and then sailed back to sleep at their home that same night.

The first wife cooked the things left in the house for Pinasim to eat. She did this for a while. Later, Pinasim realized that these types of garden foods came from her home. "This sort of food must have come from my home. I don't know of any on this island. And how is it that it seems to come so mysteriously?"

So, one night, she decided to find out. She made a torch of coconut leaves and lit it beside her, and that night she kept her eyes open. She lay beside her baby and sang lullabies to send him to sleep. But she stayed awake, listening. When it was almost midnight, they came. They carried their food into the house. On and on flowed the food, into the house. And when everything had been brought up and they turned back to go to their canoes, she lit the torch and came to see them. She said, "These things were coming, but I did not know and tonight I have seen you. So, the things were coming from my home! But when you came, you never came to see me!" She invited them to stay with her, until daylight. They could have stayed with her for two or three days. Then they were going back to Baluan.

So Pinasim told her husband: "My brothers have come and when they return I'd like to go back with them. I'll go and, later, they will bring me back."

And Songuluep said: "That is good, that's good. But you, if you want to go, leave my son behind. You



● *A pony cart library — its arrival announced by the little bell hanging from the roof — visits a village in Thailand. (Photo: United Nations). UNESCO has named next year, 1972, as "International Book Year". This means that in developing countries all over the world there will be special displays of books and magazines, and readers will learn more about books written and available in their own and other countries.*

yourself go with your brothers and later on they will bring you back."

Pinasim answered: "No, the boy won't stay behind. I'm taking him with me."

But Songuluep insisted: "No, you cannot take him with you!" Songuluep was reluctant, because this was his only child. He thought: "This dear son of mine, if this woman takes him away to her home, he will never come back. And when he is gone I will have no replacement. No one to represent me in the land called Leh." They struggled with words. Eventually he listened to his lady. "Well, go aboard with your brothers — take the child and sail away." So she went aboard and they sailed off. And she took the child with her.

Songuluep, with silent anger, took his gigantic lime gourd, and walked until he came to the largest *kalapulim* tree in the hills near where he usually went to comb his hair, and watched the sails. He watched them until just before they disappeared beyond the horizon. Then he uttered: "My only son. The one who, when I died, could replace me, is gone!" His anger erupted. He took his lime gourd, and said: "I am the chief of Leh, but now that my son is disappearing out there I am rubbing the side of my lime gourd. It is leaving my hand. When I throw it on the earth let it break upon the land of Leh. The land will sink and have no name, and my son will not reach Baluan."

When he had uttered these words, he took his lime gourd and threw it on the land of Leh. It sank, and water ran from one end of the land to the other. And that land called Leh has sunk somewhere out there on the outer fringe of Baluan, or Rambutso, or Nauna. And its population has been wiped out. But some swam, with the aid of logs carried by currents and winds, and they drifted to Manus. That is how some of the land of Leh are now in Manus.

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## READER'S COMMENT:

The Editor,
"New Guinea Writing",
PORT MORESBY, P.N.G.

Pennant Hills, N.S.W.
29th May, 1971.

Dear Sir,

Mr. Renagi Renagi Lohia's story about some customs among the Tubusereia people does not only show sensitivity and respect for a way of life that is merely a curiosity to most foreigners, and is often derided by them and deprecated by many Western-educated young Papuans and New Guineans.

With cognizance of the ability of many young Papuans and New Guineans to express their feelings, thoughts and views in English, and of the need to use English to reach the world at large, I suggest that there is also a need to use languages which are an integral part of the indigenous cultures. Everyone who heard Mr. Lohia address a public meeting at Port Moresby in English on part of the matters contained in his story "Kekeni na Rabia Garabina Lalonai Enohomu" and has read the story will agree with me.

Whilst appreciating that some Motu people may consider the use of Police Motu (a bad name, long overdue for change) an abomination — much like some Australians view Pidgin English — I plead for Mr. Lohia and other Motu writers to use Police Motu as well. Papua's *lingua franca* is spoken or at least understood by people from Daru to the Trobriand Islands and provides a much larger public for writers like Mr. Lohia.

Finally, it would be good to see your magazine publish "Kekeni na Rabia Garabina Lalonai Enohomu" in English, for the enlightenment of your Australian readers. I hang my head in shame when I read about or listen to much of their well-meant advice to Papuans and New Guineans on the subject of "bride" price (another bad name, long overdue for change).

Yours, etc.,
HARRY JACKMAN.

*A full English translation, by the author, of his Motu article in "New Guinea Writing", Number 3, is now available for anyone interested, by writing to the Editor.*

*Mr. Jackman will be interested to learn that at a recent conference of linguists and other people in Port Moresby it was decided to recommend the changing of the name "Police Motu" to "Hiri Motu".*

## ★ ★ Book Review ★ ★

If Melanesian art and culture find it hard to survive in our day — a thematic suggestion projected in HOHAO: *The uneasy survival of an art form in the Papuan Gulf*, by Ulli Beier and Albert Maori Kiki (published by Nelson) — then we can be sure it will be harder in the future days of our sons and daughters.

It is the Melanesian of today who must face the reality of his own situation and responsibility for the survival of what he and his forefathers value. Tomorrow will be too late.

Albert Maori Kiki and Ulli Beier have carved, with the gods, an opportunity in *Hohao* to awaken our eyes. Our Melanesian eyes, that are fast becoming attracted and ac customed to other values and to the junk and rubbish of the so-called civilized world.

The magic and beauty of our past have become elements of shame, sometimes, when they should not be. Deep down inside us our gods live. I know, because I do not find any difficulty in understanding and enjoying *Hohao*, its sincerity and truth. Our past was as real as *Hohao* now speaks and displays itself:

> "I am a woman — and you are a man."
>
> "A woman? What is woman? I don't know woman!"
>
> "Well, you see: I have vagina, I have breasts. That thing you have there is called penis, this thing I have here is called vagina . . ."
>
> — *from "Lakekavu", one of the Orokolo legends retold by Albert Maori Kiki.*

Albert Maori Kiki and Ulli Beier further show us, with *Hohao*, that we can work as partners for the survival of what we value. So let us rise, sons and daughters of Melanesia, with the spirits of *Hohao*, and sing and dance to the magic tunes of our forefathers today. If we don't, who will?

FRANCIS BUGOTU

*The reviewer is a senior "local officer" of the Department of Education in the British Solomon Islands, at present on study leave in England... He is also the author of the radio play "This Man", recently produced by Holy Trinity Teachers' College Drama Club at the Twelfth Papua New Guinea Festival of Drama in Lae.*

*The Administrator, Mr L. W. Johnson, in his National Day address, on 13th September, 1971, at Sir Hubert Murray Stadium, Port Moresby:*

Every people has a culture that is unique. Ours has been . . . rich and satisfying. It has been, and will increasingly become, a source of inspiration to our growing band of authors, artists, playwrights and dancers. In looking forward, we must also look back, for every nation is born out of its past. . . .

Thought should not be divorced from responsibility, as it too often is, but we should not shrink from new and even radical ideas . . . .

I have no doubt that the growth and progress of the nation Papua New Guinea will not be checked. . . .

*A Tolai spokesman, Mr. John Kaputin, in a book, "The Politics of Melanesia", published by A.N.U. Press, Canberra, 1971:*

We must now speak in order to exist, to assert our personal and national identities. . . .

Our basic social institutions, our political framework, our culture are in a state of flux. . . .

What appears, from our point of view, as a cautious and conservative programme for Australians to follow (in New Guinea) may appear to them as a daring and radical one . . . . No-one can confront this impending test with an easy assurance as to its outcome . . . .

# Talking of Books

The fifth issue (June 1971) of *Kovave,* the literary journal of the University of Papua and New Guinea, is now available from bookshops, including Books New Guinea, Port Moresby; Post Newsagency, Port Moresby; University Bookshop, Boroko; New Guinea Book Depot, Boroko; and Christian Book Centre, Madang and Lae: at $1 a copy.

Russell Soaba's short story "A Portrait of the Odd Man Out", which won the Second Annual Short Story Contest, and has twice been broadcast by the A.B.C., and Brother Alain Jaria's award-winning poem "It's Me, That's Certain!" are both published in this issue. Other contributors include Arthur Jawodimbari, Leo Hannett, John Kasaipwalova, John Saunana, Wauru Degoba, Lynda Thomas, Benjamin Evara, Bede Dus Mapun and Samuel Goiseba.

(The Editor of *Kovave,* Ulli Beier, will shortly be leaving his post at the University to take up a new position, working with African writers and artists, in Nigeria. He will be missed by all his friends — especially our writers!)

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Producers of school plays and little theatre groups will want to buy copies of *Five New Guinea Plays* (Jacaranda Press; $1.50). This is the second volume in the "Pacific Writers Series" — Vincent Eri's novel *The Crocodile* (now reprinted) was the first. The plays are "Manki Masta" by Kumalau Tawali, "Cargo" by Arthur Jawodimbari, "The Unexpected Hawk" by John Waiko, "The Ungrateful Daughter" by Leo Hannett, and "Alive" by M. Lovori. There is also a very useful introduction, by Ulli Beier. Available at all bookshops. (The third volume in this series is now being planned. It is a collection of short stories by Papua New Guinean and Pacific Island writers, called *The Night Warrior.)*

★ ★ ★

Playwright, producer and teacher, John Wills Kaniku, whose first play "Cry of the Cassowary" (published by Heinemann in *Two Plays from New Guinea)* has been studied and acted already by many colleges and drama clubs, has scored another first — as the first Papua New Guinea recipient of an Australian Council for the Arts award. He has now gone to Melbourne and Sydney to study theatre directing until the end of the year. While John is away, his group of actors, Theatre New Guinea, will continue to present plays, including his own new play "King Toi" - which is a tragi-comedy about the problems of "home scholars" (that is, unemployed school leavers). He is also working on short stories, a novel and a film-script.

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Readers of *New Guinea Writing,* Number 2, will have seen the advertisement of the first six issues of the LUKSAVE series, published by the Australian National University. These are brief summaries in simple English, with photographs and maps, of the *New Guinea Research Bulletins,* and are very useful for teachers and secondary school students. The latest issues, now available at 25 cents a copy by writing to New Guinea School Services, P.O. Box 1238, Boroko, are called "New Guinean Businessmen" (a companion volume to the earlier "Papuan Businessmen"); "Namasu"; and "New Guinea, Australia and the United Nations".

★ ★ ★

# About Our Writers

*BROTHER ALOYSIUS F. AITA, M.S.C.,* is studying to be a priest, at De Boismenu College, Bomana. He comes from Koruava village, Goilala sub-district, in the Central District. Another story of his appears in Number 48 of *Overland.*

*MOSES HAVINI* was born at Tanamalo village on Buka Island, Bougainville District. He attended Kerevat High School, and is now a final year student at the University of Papua and New Guinea. He was editor of the student newspaper, *Nilaidat.*

*ARTHUR JAWODIMBARI,* who comes from Konje village, near Popondetta (Northern District), attended Martyrs' High School, and is now a third year arts student at the University of Papua and New Guinea. He is the author of five plays, including "Cargo" and "The Sun".

*THEOPHILO KAGA LAUVA,* also from Koruava village in the Central District, is president of the Tapini Local Government Council. He has collected many legends of the Goilala people.

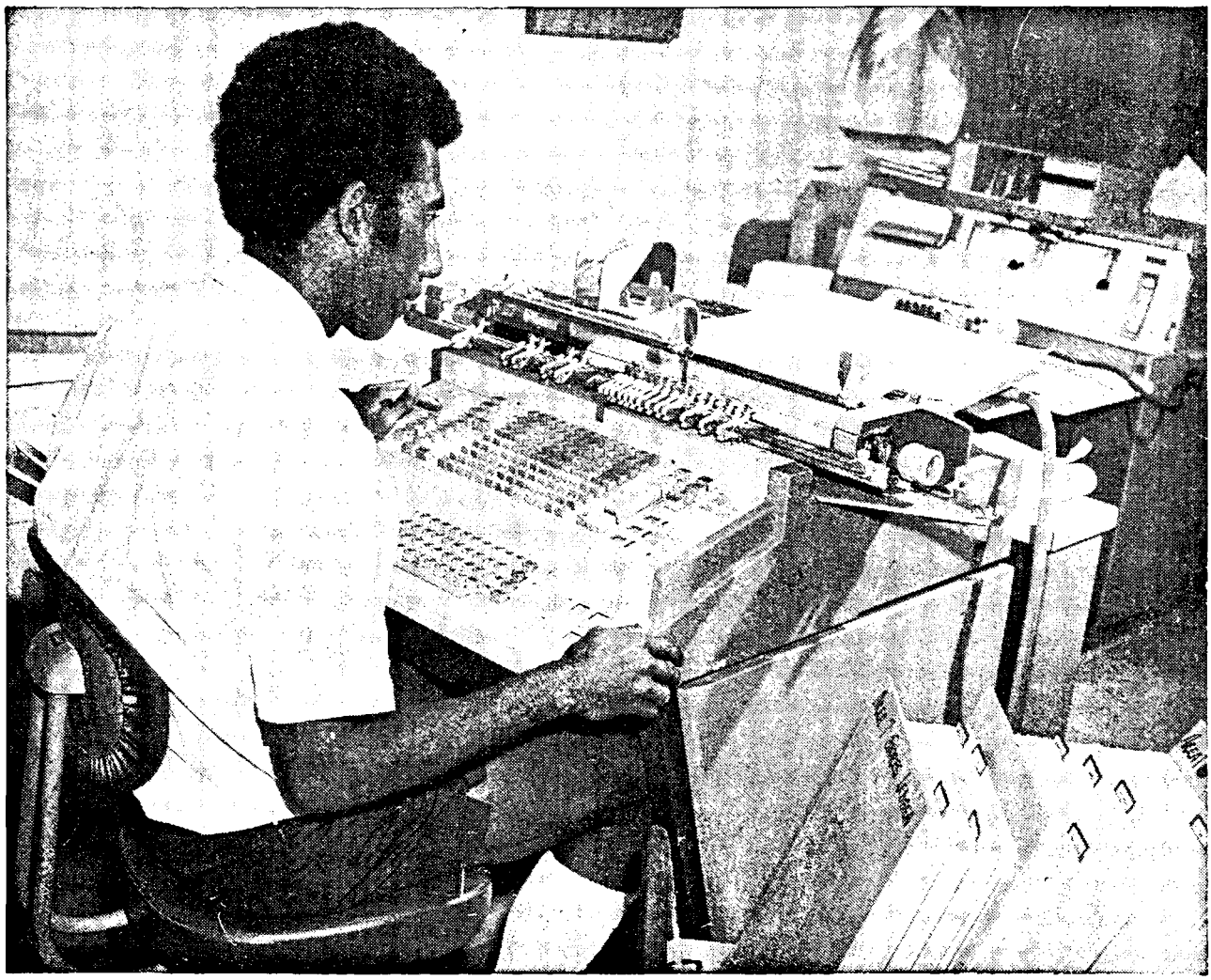
*JOHN SAUNANA,* a Solomon Islander, is now a third year arts student at the University of Papua and New Guinea. He has had stories published in *Kovave.*

*ANNA SOLOMON,* from Mengar village in the East Sepik District, is at present a fourth form student at Mercy Girls High School, Yarapos. She was a participant in the Second Annual Wewak Creative Writing Course (1970).

*KALAMENDI SUKOT,* who comes from Sumuna village, New Ireland District, was educated at George Brown High School, and attended the 1968-69 Rabaul Creative Writing Courses. He is now in his second year of training as a business advisory officer at the Co-operatives College, Laloki. He had another story printed in January 1971 issue of the Council on New Guinea Affairs quarterly, *New Guinea.*

*KUMALAU TAWALI,* who was born at Tawi village, Manus District, is a graduate (B.A.) of the University of Papua and New Guinea. He won the First Annual Short Story Competition in 1969, and the First Annual Poetry Competition last year (with his book *Signs in the Sky:* published by Papua Pocket Poets), and is on the panel of judges for this year's poetry contest. His play "Manki Masta" is available in *Five New Guinea Plays.* His stories and poems have appeared in many magazines including *Kovave, New Guinea Writing* and *Overland.*

The legendary tale in this issue was collected by Kumalau whilst he was on a tape-recording assignment for the Literature Bureau.



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