SECTION A
GENERAL INTRODUCTION

Understanding Ancestors

Can the history of the multiplicity of pre-literate communities scattered through New Guinea be written? Our answer is a resounding affirmative. Is there really any need for this seemingly esoteric exercise? Most decidedly there is. Men have lived in parts of these islands for many centuries, according to the archaeologists, and they have left behind them numerous fragments and clues with which we can see sometimes hazily, sometimes with precision and clarity, important aspects of their life. For almost a century, the people whom we now call Papuans and New Guineans have been drawn village by village into a different world—that of the European. These most recent immigrants brought with them a different way of life, a new technology, and writing. Their actions, ideas and memories have been committed to volumes of paper, among which the historian can move with some confidence because these men speak his language and belong to his culture. Perhaps the historian should not be blamed if, finding this volume of written evidence, he should be content to confine his interests and investigations to the men who produced them and their achievements. Here would be material enough for the learned paper, the doctoral dissertation and even a book or two. And from such a conscientious but narrow enterprise we would learn much about the multifarious achievements and follies of our European ancestors in this difficult and magnificent tropical outpost of civilization.

Perhaps a generation ago when men were emerging from the terror and ashes of that cataclysm which almost shattered the structures of the European age in New Guinea, such a stance was possible. But it has been largely unproductive, perhaps because scholars considered the undertaking impossible or not really worthwhile. Since the Second World War a new world has emerged and in many places the European age has come to an end. Historians both Western and non-Western have been caught up in this revolution and have turned their gaze around from the Europeans towards those people who were previously subject to them. Sometimes a new form of ethnocentrism and parochialism has given place to the old; sometimes there has been a chasing after new fashions, the invention of new labels in the hope that these would create new histories; but largely there has been expansion and deepening of Western scholarship and understanding about new societies being formed out of old pre-literate communities. And in this important and creative process which has emerged from experiment and argument about methods, people in the new nations have gained a sense of perspective about themselves and their place in the world.

In many ways it could be said that New Guinea has been fortunate in being for the European 'the last unknown'. This has meant that when her people were woven into the web of imperialism, Europeans were sometimes conscious of their shortcomings and aware of the difficulties they could encounter in working with fragmented small-scale communities. There was a dark side too. For many decades after the Europeans first came, this island was cut off from the mainstream of thought and practice about colonial enterprises because of its position of geographical isolation in a far corner of the Pacific. Now, despite this negative aspect, New Guineans are acquiring a larger voice in their own affairs, the European era is drawing to a close in these islands, and scholarship has developed beyond the first immature flush to a stage where it can make a positive contribution to perspective and understanding for New Guineans. These insights, skills and methods by which historians can develop a truly New Guinean history have been tested elsewhere: in Africa, in Asia and to a lesser extent in the Pacific. When they are applied to the task in this country they may provide some sense of identity and some means by which scholars may understand and evaluate in an objective way the impact of the Europeans and New Guineans' response to this alien presence.

But this task has yet to be launched. Since 1953 when Murray Groves outlined some of the problems
associated with the writing of Papuan history, we historians have been exhorting a number of times to get on with this work.\(^1\) And here in answer to both this exhortation and the need just outlined, is a beginning, an outline, a view of the raw materials and some of the problems associated with their collection and use, but still an incomplete task. It is the hope of the authors that this publication will carry out some of the work necessary to help complete the task outlined above. At the outset certain basic propositions upon which it is built need to be made apparent and the objectives and limitations stressed.

The first proposition is that an indigenous perspective must be taken into serious account for there to be an adequate or even valid history of New Guinea. The comparatively recent advancement of this view has already been noted. Its necessity in the present circumstances of emerging nationhood in this country is accepted here as motive and starting point for this undertaking. The dangers of distortion in making indigenous history a starting point are seen as no greater than those already apparent in the totally European perspective of a previous generation. The difficulties presented by a complex cluster of small-scale preliterate communities with written records coming predominantly from aliens of other cultures are large and must be faced with the limitations on accuracy, precision and finality which they embody. That it is possible to overcome these difficulties and limitations to the point of presenting some coherent patterns and frameworks for further work is suggested by the commentaries and collections of readings and sources which follow in this section. Concern to tell the story as fully as possible, using all the evidence available to achieve a balanced and objective analysis, is not new to historians. Thus an attempt to take into account the people of New Guinea in the writing of their history is not a surprising or an uncommon demand to make of the historian.

What is new are the skills and methods required to fulfil this demand. The historian must go outside the conventional written records and seek his evidence from other sources such as oral tradition, indigenous law and customs, linguistics, archaeology, botany, serology and physical and social anthropology. He needs to acquire the skills of other disciplines and sciences or engage in joint enterprises with members of other professions, particularly anthropologists. But in all this he needs to maintain the questioning scepticism and aims of a historian seeking to construct a chain of causation and change and seeking out particular people, groups or events in this process of change. Hence the second proposition is that while it is a necessity for historians to move into these new realms of evidence to achieve an adequate indigenous perspective, the threads from these new areas cannot stand alone for him. He has to adopt an integrated approach—integrated in the sense that he borrows all the evidence available and balances all the parts together as well as balancing non-literate sources against written documents. Here again it is a matter of vision and perspective. If the starting point is an assertion that the indigenous people of New Guinea cannot be absent from their own history or we are left with a hollow shell, then the next step is that balance is best achieved by taking into account all the sources and the fact that a new society has emerged after the entry of the Europeans into these islands. For this history we use another man’s term, autonomous history.

What such an integrated autonomous history of New Guinea society and culture means in detail and practice is discussed below. Here it is merely stated it as the second basic proposition.

The third relates to scope and practice too. It assents to the fact that in the pre-European age, and still now, the reality of New Guinea is made up of myriad small-scale societys having their own history, cultural identity, social organization and language. This has a corollary: that to make sweeping generalizations about New Guinea and its history is to distort this reality beyond recognition. European history in these islands is also very localized, and influenced by this geographical and social fragmentation. Therefore the historian will only capture this reality by concentrating his efforts upon developments and people in particular areas. The scale chosen can only be worked out on the ground, and needs to be defined by the questions he asks. When these studies in particularity and depth are available then it may be possible to write a history of New Guinea as a whole. While this work is conceived as a collection of sources for New Guinea history the specific areas are kept in mind.

The themes presented below are based on these three propositions and extend them further into the task of constructing an indigenous and autonomous history of New Guinea. They illustrate some of the issues involved. No attempt has been made in collecting together the readings and sources to be in any way exhaustive or definitive. The aim has been to suggest something of the range and variety involved and to choose some of the most interesting from those available in print.

Part I covers some of the oral evidence available and raises some of the more relevant issues associated with its use and interpretation. In Part II the discussion embraces areas of material culture and economics, selecting a number of documents to emphasize the importance of two questions in such an investigation: land and exchange of goods. The assumption here is that these two questions give significant insights into indigenous economic life. Part III is concerned with some social and non-material elements of indigenous life. It is in the realm of social relations, politics, culture, religion and communication or language that many historians may feel themselves on familiar grounds. Here some of the central issues about contemporary New Guinea are being debated. And it is in this complex area that the relevance of taking an autonomous perspective comes into account.

In these first three parts, while the historian needs to rely upon the data provided by social and cultural anthropologists, he is drawing largely on the words and actions of New Guineans as they are recorded by these witnesses. Part IV is concerned with assessing the usefulness of scientific evidence and its interpretation by skilled experts from other disciplines. Here the historian weighs up and evaluates what the zoologist, the archaeologist, the botanist and the

linguist tell him about New Guinea's past and sometimes what these scientists infer about the past from the fragmentary evidence they gather in the present. Sometimes their conclusions provide a useful, though broad, framework within which the historian can think about the remote past. While some of the more extravagant hypotheses about the migration of Pacific peoples shaped scientific speculations of earlier decades, the more recent evidence assists the process of understanding settlement patterns and cultural influences in these islands.

It will be seen that many of the documents chosen are products of European scholarship scattered over a number of generations. Their use gives some important clues to the process by which Europeans have come to understand the complexity and variety of people and cultures in these islands in a systematic and ordered way. It has been a lengthy and sporadic process. It is part of European intellectual and cultural history in these islands. But more than that, one of its most enduring products may be that it has passed into the hands of a rising generation of New Guineans, insights and skills that they can use to understand the shaping of their country in time and make the past with its splendours and miseries more widely known to their own people.
PART 1

LIVING VOICES OF THE PAST: DOCUMENTS A1 to A4

"In the olden times there were greater mumiis than there are to-day. Then, they were fierce and relentless war leaders. They laid waste to the countryside and their club-houses were lined with the skulls of people they had slain. To-day, we are mere children. We fight weakly, with our mouths; and men of no consequence can talk loud and slanderously against their mumiis without fear of punishment. The olden days were better."¹

This nostalgic utterance made by a Christianized young government headman from the Siuai area of Southern Bougainville in the late 1930s, harks back to an epic age, before the Europeans came, which was peopled by heroic mumiis (chiefs). Whether in reality such men lived and such events took place is a matter of conjecture and of dispute. That heroes such as these inhabit the memories and traditions of many New Guinea communities is becoming more evident as more myths and legends are brought to light and recorded. Nearly thirty years ago, F. E. Williams, the government anthropologist, wrote in this vein about Orokolo mythology in the Papuan Gulf.

"The people of the myths are called lau-haera—the Story Folk. That they really lived and achieved marvels in their time is never doubted. And, although the modern native in his more rationalistic moods may speak of them as gone for ever, there are nevertheless still times when their existence is plainly assumed. Those Elena philosophers who have actually propounded the theory of immortality—and it is their theory, voluntarily offered, not mine—explain it in this way: the Story Folk changed themselves at the end of the mythical epoch into various creatures, or sometimes inanimate things, of forest, air, and sea. They thus enjoy a kind of immortality in the species or in some permanent work of nature. But they also exist in some spirit form... as if they merely incorporated themselves in the living creature or merely haunted the rock or stream..."²

There is also evidence of an active and expanding post-contact mythology, for instance among the Tangu³ of the New Guinea north coast and the Kuma⁴ of Minj in the Wahgi Valley of the Western Highlands, which points to the durability and the plasticity of an activity by which the past and present are woven together in a way that is meaningful for the people. Legendary history and mythology are but two forms of oral testimony which are known to exist in New Guinea. This evidence presents peculiar problems to historians, particularly now, when a chill of scepticism has swept over the whole issue of the use of oral traditions in history because the extravagant faith of previous generations of scholars led them to present myth masquerading as history.⁵ Nevertheless, I would propose that no valid history of New Guinea can be written without taking serious account of all possible forms of oral evidence testifying to the indigenous view of both pre- and post-European history. Any historical account, other than one concerned totally with the European origins and aspects of Western phenomena in New Guinea, which did not search out, evaluate and employ indigenous oral and written sources, would inevitably be partial and distorted. This is not to suggest that the use of such material presents no difficulties or hazards for a Western historian trained in a literate and scientific tradition of history. While my task here is not to present a manual in method for practising historians—though such a work urgently needs to be compiled by those at work in the field—some of the problems associated with this enterprise need to be considered briefly. These include questions about the various types of oral testimony; about their meaning and purpose within their social context; about what constitutes facts and truth; about time-scale and chronology and about the context, method and circumstances of the collection of oral data. These lines of questioning

¹D. L. Oliver, A Solomon Island Society: Kinship and Leadership Among the Siuai of Bougainville, Cambridge, 1955, p. 411
²F. E. Williams, The Drama of Orokolo: The Social and Ceremonial Life of the Elena, Oxford, 1940, pp. 137-8
⁴M. Reay, 'Myth and Tradition as Historical Evidence', Second Waigani Seminar, The History of Melanesia, Canberra, 1969, p. 463
do not exhaust the difficulties presented by the use of this type of evidence, but a brief consideration of each will help to clarify some of the more central issues.

First there are questions of definition. What do we mean by 'oral' evidence? How do we distinguish its various types and what is the relative usefulness of these types as historical evidence? The work of definition has barely begun in New Guinea. Other than Malinowski's useful discussion of the range and types of Trobriand oral tradition which we will examine below, some collectors of folklore and mythology have merely grouped their materials according to differences in theme and content.9 Guidelines need therefore to be sought from work done elsewhere. The most appropriate starting point is to employ the definition developed by Jan Vansina in his Oral Tradition:

'Oral traditions consist of all verbal testimonies which are reported statements concerning the past. This definition implies that nothing but oral traditions—that is to say, statements either spoken or sung—enter into consideration. These must not only be distinguished from written statements, but also from material objects that might be used as a source of knowledge about the past.

It further indicates that not all oral sources are oral traditions, but only those which are reported statements—that is, sources which have been transmitted from one person to another through the medium of language. Eyewitness accounts, even when given orally, do not come within the sphere of tradition because they are not reported statements. Oral traditions exclusively consist of hearsay accounts, that is, testimonies that narrate an event which has not been witnessed and remembered by the informant himself, but which he has learnt about through hearsay.'

The essential distinction Vansina has introduced here is one between oral traditions and other forms of oral evidence. He takes this process of refinement and definition a stage further by distinguishing a number of categories of oral tradition 'each with its own limitations, its own bias and its own particular uses for providing a knowledge of the past'.8 The criteria he selects for distinguishing these types are: 'the purpose, the significance, the form and the manner of transmission of the testimony.'9 A full scale account of the role of indigenous oral traditions in the writing of New Guinea history either on the local or the wider scale would need to make a close scrutiny of Vansina's instructive typology. Since he does not see this as final, it may be that it would have to be revised in the light of New Guinea evidence. A preliminary survey of published sources only does reveal at this stage representative samples from each of the six broad categories.10 While this is not meant to be in any way exhaustive it does indicate the possible range and variety of evidence available.

(i) Formulæ

Titles are often found describing the status of 'big men' in particular communities like nde kreuap, 'men like the forest tree', among the Mbowamb of Mount Hagen,11 or we namfa eketo maketo waiyne, 'a big man who walks unharmed up and down the valley', one given by the Siane to their most powerful big men.12 Slogans are to be found attesting to the importance of pigs among the Mae Enga, 'pigs are our hearts',13 and taro among the Siuai, 'when our taro is finished we are finished'.14 There are many records of ritual formulæ of which Malinowski's collection of Trobriand garden formulæ are the most famous.15

(ii) Poetry and Song

These played an important role in the artistic, religious and social life of a number of communities. It will be discussed later, but perhaps the most interesting example is Thurnwald's collection of Buin songs.16

(iii) Lists

Here genealogies, of which a great number appear in the anthropological literature, are the most common form. In general they do not appear to embrace many generations in most New Guinea communities and despite the problems of distortion associated with them they are now being employed in historical investigation.17 Some of the problems associated with the use of genealogies in establishing chronology will be discussed below.

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9These include B. Blackwood, 'Folk Stories from the Northern Solomons', Folklore, 1932, Vol. 43, pp. 61-9, and G. F. Vestdorff and H. Tischner, Die-Mbowam: die Kultur der Hagenburg-Stämme im Östlichen Neuguinea, Hamburg, 1943-8, Bd. 3 Mythen und Erzählungen.
10J. Vansina, op. cit., p. 143
16R. Thurnwald, 'Prolean Literatur der Buin, Solomon Islands', Yale University Publications in Anthropology, No. 8, 1936. See below Part III 'Images of Tradition and Identity'.
In this category Vansina includes sources of great diversity but all having two features in common: their narrative form and the fact that while they all record history to some extent their main aim is 'either to instruct, edify, give pleasure or vindicate rights.'

Incorporated here are tales of local and family history, religious and secular myths, artistic tales and personal recollections. The greatest bulk of New Guinea oral evidence so far collected seems to lie within the scope of this category. This material appears in the collections of myths and legends already mentioned, in anthropological studies of particular communities like Seligman's study of the Southern Massim people; in unpublished field notes, for instance, those of F. E. Williams; scattered through the pages of the Papuan English-language newspaper The Papuan Villager published monthly from February 1929 to the end of 1941; and in the more recent and systematic collection associated with the Journal of the Papua and New Guinea Society.

Its relevance and value as historical material will remain uncertain until it is subjected to close scrutiny and correlated with material still untapped. This work needs to be conducted in a systematic fashion region by region employing the techniques of recording and assessment which have been developed from Vansina's principles. Perhaps this work would best be conducted and coordinated through a national institute of historical research. In the meantime a few examples of the various types appear below: a land tenure myth from the Siuai (A 1), a family oral tradition from the Mambare River (A 2), and two records of personal recollections: one from Ahuia Ova, a Papuan (A 3), and one from Paliau Malot of Manus Island (A 4).

When the task of collating the customary law of New Guinea is fully under way then we will have a chance to assess the place of legal precedents in indigenous life and their importance as historical sources. There is certainly evidence of explanatory commentaries and occasional comments in the anthropological reports. For instance, there is the valuable commentary recorded by Murray Groves from informants of Boera Village about the making of Motu pottery, as well as the commentary from Suiai with which we began. This latter is matched by one from Jeki, former Paramount Luluai of Sio, recorded by T. G. Harding in 1963-4:

'He leader talks and there is war; he speaks and there is food; he speaks and canoes are built; he speaks and men die. He is a king.'

This process of building up a typology would assist the historian in clarifying, according to Western standards of scholarship, some of the questions about the usefulness of these categories of oral tradition. Whether New Guineans make such distinctions and on what grounds are also questions that need to be faced. Here Malinowski's inquiry among his Trobriand informants provides a useful model:

'Their folk-lore, that is the verbal tradition, the store of tales, legends, and texts handed on by previous generations, is composed of the following classes: first of all, there is what the natives call libogovu, 'old talk'; but which we would call tradition; secondly kukuwanehu fairy tales recited for amusement, at definite seasons and relating avowedly untrue events; thirdly, wosi, the various songs and cinavina, ditties chanted at play or under other special circumstances; and last, not least, megwa or yopa, the magical spells. All these classes are strictly distinguished from one another by name, function, social setting and by certain formal characteristics. ... the 'old talk', the body of ancient tradition, believed to be true, consists on the one hand of historical tales, such as the deeds of past chiefs ... stories of shipwreck etc. On the other hand, the libogovu class also contains what the natives call liliu, myths, narratives, deeply believed by them, held by them in reverence, and exercising an active influence on their conduct and tribal life ...'

He points out that the Trobriand Islanders know from their fathers or maternal uncles ('Kadada') that some of the libogovu are non-historical in their content and thus label these tales liliu or myths. Even though the mythical personages in these stories perform fantastic and miraculous feats, they 'live in the same houses, eat the same food, handle the same weapons and implements as those in use at present.' The difference between the historical and the mythical is not found so much in these material details of life in the stories, but in the events which occur in the myths that do not occur nowadays and in the powers with which the mythical personages were endowed. 'In mythical times human beings come out of the ground,'
they change into animals, and these become people again; men and women rejuvenate and slough their skins; flying canoes speed through the air, and things are transformed into stone.\(^{28}\)

On the basis of this analysis, Malinowski then concludes that a myth or lili'us has the following qualities and purpose:

'Thus we can define myth as a narrative of events which are to the native supernatural, in this sense, that he knows well that today they do not happen. At the same time he believes deeply that they did happen then. The socially sanctioned narratives of these events; the traces which they left on the surface of the earth; the magic in which they left behind part of their supernatural powers, the social institutions which are associated with the practice of this magic—all this brings about the fact that a myth is for the native a living actuality, though it has happened long ago and in an order of things when people were endowed with supernatural powers.\(^{29}\)

Hence, it would seem that although the lili's of the Kula community may not provide reliable historical accounts of past events, nor do they provide evidence about the evolution of many material aspects of the people's lives or their institutions, yet they do have historical importance as evidence of the attitudes, ideas, values and beliefs of those who preserve and recount them. So basic are they in this respect that a historical study of the institutions, values and ideas of the Trobiand Islanders would be incomplete without this mythological evidence.

But, since mythology is so basic an element in the lives of the people, then it would play a continuing and dynamic role in their lives, particularly, it would seem, in the dramatic changes brought by Europeans. Malinowski's major concern was with the traditional role of myth in Trobiand life and history. Another study, that of K. O. L. Burridge on the Tangu of northern New Guinea, shows that mythology can play a vital role in the process of social change. He discusses the ways in which a 'primal myth' is adapted and developed to show the differences between Tangu and European and to point to ways in which a new life could evolve to enable Tangu and European to live together in brotherly harmony. Mythology thus provides important historical evidence again, on the level of attitudes, beliefs, ideas and values concerning the reaction of Tangu to dramatic new elements in their lives. His conclusion highlights this dynamic, plastic element in Tangu mythology:

>'When Tangu recount myths or tell stories they participate in a social convention, art form, ostensibly historical or even evolutionary, to project a future, to explain or account for the whole, or part of a current situation, or to see through the present into the past. There is no story that does not carry a quality of myth, and few myths do not have direct doctrinal or dogmatic force.

Tangu consider their myths to be repositories of truth...

A consideration of Trobiand and Tangu attitudes towards their oral traditions has led us into the midst of the vexed issue about the distinction between myth and history. It is apparent from these two cases alone that the issue can only be resolved in terms of the particular community and its traditions. This discussion has also suggested three other questions, raised earlier, which are closely allied to the issue: the meaning and purpose of these traditions within their particular social context; questions of fact and truth; and questions of time-scale and chronology. Each will be reviewed briefly, because each points up the caution and skill necessary in the use of oral evidence for the writing of New Guinea history.

Obviously historians recognise the necessity of establishing the meaning and purpose of a particular source within its social context. This seems even more necessary in the case of the oral traditions of pre-literate communities, not only to establish their validity as historical sources, but also to sort out whether a particular tradition is being used to validate and reinforce certain social arrangements in the present. Oliver points out that 'the enshrining of a place name in a creation myth serves the Siuai as a title deed for land-ownership',\(^{31}\) and Malinowski underlined this problem by stressing that 'the mythical personages in the Trobiand tradition are living the same type of life, under the same social and cultural conditions as the present natives.\(^{32}\) Studies elsewhere have shown that oral traditions have been employed in a similar way to provide an ideological base for contemporary politics.\(^{33}\) Raymond Firth's note of caution about this particular issue is sobering for the historian as well as for the anthropologist:

In general then ... it may be said that traditional tales, sociologically viewed are instruments, and flexible ... They are linked to the social structure, but not in a simple relationship. To conclude—the material the anthropologist collects is from the native point of view an account of past happenings, but this account is necessarily moulded into forms that are dependent upon existing social relationships and therefore must be largely a projection of the present

\(^{28}\)B. Malinowski, op. cit., p. 302

\(^{29}\)B. Malinowski, op. cit., pp. 303-4


\(^{31}\)D. L. Oliver, *A Solomon Island Society*, p. 46

\(^{32}\)B. Malinowski, op. cit., p. 301

into the past. Descriptions of a former state of society in which a different arrangement of groups or institutions existed can only be visualized by the narrator of the tale from the point of view of the social arrangements which he himself knows and in which he is an active participant ... Merely to prune the tales of obvious impossibilities and imaginative embroidery and accept the rest as a historical record is therefore inadequate ...

Even where it is plausible that there was in the past an event substantially as described, the record of it obtained by the anthropologist from the present day informant is essentially the perpetuation of a social situation rather than of a crude objective item of history.  

Anthropological insights can also guide the historian towards a solution of the difficulty about what actually constitutes fact and truth in oral evidence. R. F. Salisbury has recently published an important study on the origin of a myth about the discovery of a salt spring in February, 1953 in the Siane area of the Eastern Highlands. This was a particular historical event about which he gathered evidence and its interpretation. He made this comment about the event and its witnesses:

"... Among local informants no ... division is made into 'fact' and 'imagination', or into reality and supernatural. The differentiation is between story-tellers who have the 'true' story (ona), and those who lie (suki) or who 'do not hear/understand correctly.' The criterion for truth is not objective fact ...

Truth in Siane is partially a matter of appearing an authoritative inside doposter; partly it comes from a belief that there is some power derived from a precise knowledge of ritual formulae. It is these formulae and their inner meanings that are sought in discussions ... Virtually any European factual statement about factory production or any missionary discussion of sin can be seen as a distortion of a hidden deeper meaning. If one knew that hidden meaning, the ultimate truth, then one would have power to control the flow of manufactured goods. In the same way those who knew only a few facts about the salt spring sought for the inner meaning of those facts—invented rumours in our terms; sought the truth in Siane terms, in a normal Siane way."

How helpful and relevant these clues are for understanding traditions in other areas has yet to be tested.

Because the Western historian is concerned with the processes of change in time he needs to be able to establish a fixed chronological framework and a timescale within which to work. Here again there are difficulties because past and present are so often woven together in no fixed order, or as one writer has put it:

"In mythical and genealogical distance any actual or comparative time-scale is irrelevant."  

Malinowski found that the Trobrianders

"... have no idea of what could be called the evolution of the world or the evolution of society; that is they do not look back towards a series of successive changes, which happened in nature or in humanity, as we do."  

So we are back again to testing the purpose and context of individual sources. This holds true for genealogies before they can be accepted as a means of dating. A recent analysis of the notion of time among the Maenge people of East New Britain has suggested a new line of inquiry that may be of assistance to historians in evaluating genealogical and oral data.

"Traditions invested in the different descent groups, together with memories told about the foundation of successive villages, give the Maenge an historical background which indisputably plays a part in their perception of time ... This background can claim the right to be called historical because there is a large consensus throughout the country as to the order in which the various descent groups came into being. Moreover, since the scission process is always identified with a migration process, the new junior branch deciding to settle down away from the original site, it remains possible to check up the traditional record in many instances through enquiries conducted among the survivors of the villages successively involved."

These clues may prove helpful in constructing a broad framework for the writing of local village histories.

The final area of difficulty concerns the ways in which the historian can assess the context, methods and circumstances in which oral evidence has been collected. In many cases, particularly with evidence gathered in the early decades of this century, little of this important detail is given. In the light of what has been said about context, truth and time, this detail is essential for the evidence to be both useful and valid. It would also assist the historian in sorting out and comparing various versions of the same tradition. But in the final analysis it seems that if the historian is to make any worthwhile and creative contribution to the understanding of New Guinea, he needs to put on his boots, take up his tape recorder and go out into the villages to collect his evidence on the spot. If his ear is attuned to the people he can hear and record what seems to be rich and revealing evidence flowing from the living voices of the past.

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37 B. Malinowski, op. cit., p. 301
Malinowski suggested that some myths could be seen as charters in which social structure and settlement patterns were validated and canonized by reference to the actions of ancestors and spirit beings in the past. In the study of the local history of pre-literate communities in New Guinea the recording and analysis of such myths is of great importance as a basis for tracing local settlements and groupings. Douglas L. Oliver of Harvard collected the following myth among much other oral testimony during field work among the Siuai people of South West Bougainville from February 1938 to November 1939 as a member of the Peabody Museum Expedition to the Solomon Islands. By that stage he considered that these people were living in their second phase of westernization. The initial phase had begun in the last decades of the nineteenth century when the first European goods and ideas had been brought by native traders from other islands and by a few white traders. Then around 1915 more sustained contact began this second phase with the introduction of the Pax Australiana through Administration and mission activities. Oliver acquired facility in the Motuna language of the area in which this tradition was recorded. These myths recounting the origins of various local groupings are peopled by Kupunas, manlike supernatural beings who moved about performing marvellous feats. They seem to have come from the islands to the south or the mountains to the north. How they were created, or whether they had always existed, no Siuai could tell. Oliver notes that there were besides creation myths others in which various Kupunas created Siuai mankind and at the same time ‘established the matri-sibs into which all mankind is subdivided’. He continues: ‘They are presented here as natives repeat them, the narrative being interrupted from time to time with explanations about how certain myth characters and incidents are now preserved as shrines, practices, injunctions, etc... The enshrining of a place name in a creation myth serves the Siuai as a title deed for land ownership.’ See also his earlier study, ‘Land Tenure in Northeast Siuai, Southern Bougainville’, Papers of the Peabody Museum, 1949, Vol. 29 (4), p. 33 where he calls these myths ‘title deeds or charters of possession’.

Long ago the kupuna, Kohka, dwelt at Pakoram (Nagovis), but whenever she gave birth, a demon there would destroy the infant’s soul by piercing its fontanel (ura) with her fingernails. (Note: In Motuna, ‘soul’ and ‘fontanel’ are identical.) For this reason Kohka’s people did not increase in number. One day, when Kohka left her offspring and went to the gardens, the demon tried to persuade them to dwell with her rather than with Kohka: ‘With Kohka you will be weak; with me you will be strong.’ Then she shot them with spears made from flying-fox wing bones. She was killing the last one when Kohka came up and asked her to fetch some water from the stream in a shell container. Kohka gave her a container with a hole in it, so that the demon was not able to keep it filled and remained a long time at the stream. This gave Kohka and her sisters a chance to escape, and they went southwest and east. On the trail they passed by a demon, Thunder, who was standing on top of a ka’akaka tree eating fruit. Kohka warned him that the Pakoram demon was following, so that Thunder was prepared. When the Pakoram demon arrived at the ka’akaka tree she asked ‘Thunder for some fruit, intending to catch him off-guard and kill him. He threw down a few to her from the top of the tree where he was standing, but she refused them, saying: ‘I do not eat the fruit at the top of the tree; I eat only that from the lower limbs.’ Thunder guessed what her intentions were and became afraid. He climbed down to the lower limbs, and before she could catch him hurled lightning at her. She shielded herself from that with her hand so that the only way he could kill her was to fall on her himself. This he did, so that Kohka and her offspring escaped.

Kohka and her sisters finally arrived at Kona and settled down there. Still grieving for her slain offspring she tabooed eating white pig, opossum, ccl. sorghum cane, raiwana bananas, and sugar cane. Then, in order to end the mourning and remove the taboo, she constructed a platform and climbed onto it to eat the food ceremonially. This was the first Climbing. When Kohka left Pakoram she carried with her some water from the Pakoram stream, and when she arrived at Kona she deposited it in a spring there. This is the water in which she cooked all the tabooed foods eaten by her at the Climbing. (Now, before a Climbing, Kohka’s descendants, the Kingfisher-people, go to Kona, dam the spring’s run off with a mat made of shell money, and obtain some of the water in a bamboo for use in cooking all the tabooed foods to be eaten ceremonially at the Climbing. The only other occasion when Kingfisher-people may go to Kona without fear of becoming Near-death is at the time when Kingfisher children are taken there for their first view of the sacred spring.)

After Kohka had been at Kona for a while she gave birth to Kingfisher (Halcyon bougainvillii). As soon as it was born, Kingfisher dug a hole in the ground and hid inside it. When Kohka looked into the hole she discovered that she had borne Kingfisher and not a kupuna like herself. Later she gave birth to a kupuna daughter and instructed her never to kill or eat a kingfisher, since that bird is a true sibling.

Kohka was not the first of the Kingfisher-people who left Pakoram and went to the east. Even before her time some kupuna relatives went from Pakoram to Moon-reflection-on-water (Tumoninho) and thence to a spot on the Mopai River just south of Jeku. They settled down there and became known as Urirama.

Kohka and one of her sisters were at Kona one day cooking a prawn on a hot stone. When the prawn was half-cooked it jumped into the stream and swam away. The two

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kupunas were very surprised at this. One of them rolled her eyes in amazement; thenceforth her descendants became known as Eye-rollers (nura). The other sister continued sitting on the ground with her legs apart (ke-tai); thenceforth her descendants became known as Legs-aparts (kehns). The Legs-aparts remained at Kona, but the Eye-rollers went to Akuno near Koropo village.

One day four Legs-apart kupuna women were walking along a trail. The second of them whistled as she walked, and thenceforth all of her descendants became known as Whistlers (warun). The third stopped for a moment to blow her nose, and thenceforth her descendants became known as Nose-blowers (susum). The fourth one in line fell behind the others, and when night came she went to sleep at the base of the kirakira tree; thenceforth her descendants became known as the Kira-people. All the descendants of the first Legs-apart in the line retained the name Legs-apart.

Another sister of Kohka’s left Kona and went to Romihono (on the Kuru creek, just east of Novei village). There she dwelt alongside the kupunas of the Parrot-people and out of friendship with them she also taboosed parrots. One day she and one of her neighbors constructed a trap at Ane near Romihono in order to catch an opossum. Instead, it trapped a rikirimoroava, an animal-demon that is part eel, part opossum, part snake, and part lizard. When it was ensnared it sang this song:

Kun kun kun tuima tui
Huro riri’me, huro kuku’mo
Come set me free, come cut me loose.
Huro rimirimote
Come free me so that you can eat me.
rokora tamanara
your fiber rope
pai ru terereki
Who told you to make this trap?
pai tama rerukai
Who told you to make this rope?
Kun kun kun

As the two kupunas were approaching the trap they heard this ditty and were afraid. They climbed onto it, saying: ‘raru raru komma, raru raru komma.’ This is how the two kupuna women received their names; the one from Kona became known as ‘Komma’, and the other one ‘Karuna’. The Kuma kupuna ran away to the east and settled down at Kimaoto near the Mivo river. The Parrot kupuna remained at Romihono after killing and eating the Rikirimoroava. The bamboo knife with which she killed it is still at Ane, as is the bloody and urinous of the Rikirimoroava.

Komma remained at her place near the Mivo River and had many descendants. All of them continued to taboo kingfishers, keets, and a new totem subsequently acquired, the megapode. In addition, all Komma women are forbidden to eat all other kinds of birds as well as flying-foxes; the reason being that women cannot shoot birds so why should they eat them? Their place near the Mivo became known as Forbidden (Kimaluhi) because of the custom forbidding any man who marries a Komma woman to acquire a second wife. Now there is a bamboo thicket on Forbidden containing one cane for every living Komma. A new cane begins to grow as soon as an infant is conceived in the womb of a Komma woman.

The origin of dancing, instead of wailing, at the funeral of an old person took place among the Komma at Forbidden. Once an old kupuna woman there died and kupunas came from Terei, Situai, and Nagovi; but instead of weeping they danced so violently that the ground broke.

Meanwhile, the Eye-rollers were moving about and settling the central and southwestern parts of Situai. One of them remained at their place between Koropo and Amiu while four others went in different directions. The one who stayed behind said: ‘I remain here, sitting still just like a pot (hiaro).’ Her descendants became known as the Potties. Another went southwest to a place near Kotu village. While on the way she became feverish and thirsty, and cried out: ‘Alas, if I only had a green coconut to drink!’ A cockato-o heard her and dropped one beside her, whereupon the kupuna exclaimed gratefully: ‘From now on you are my sibmate, and none of my people will kill or eat you.’ She established her new home and called it Place-of-the-Cockato-o and her descendants thenceforth became known as Cockatoo-people. Another Eye-roller went to Uso and her descendants became known as Pakatai. Another went to Hukaha and Tonu, and her descendants became known as Moekunai. And the fifth went to a place near the present villages of Kaparo and Siror; her descendants became known as Kaparotai.


A2 A Barereba Family Oral Tradition Concerning the Death of Mr J. Green, Government Agent, at Tamata Junction in 1897

Though published in English almost sixty years after the events took place, this is a valuable example of published oral traditions concerning the clash between local people and the government in the early stages of contact in the coastal regions of British New Guinea. Its particular value lies in the fact that the chain of contacts and events leading to Green’s murder has been preserved in detail in the reports of Sir William MacGregor. Green himself has left behind one report on the area, published in 1896 just before his death. (See J. Green, ‘Report of the Government Agent for the North-east Coast’, British New Guinea Annual Report, 1895-6, pp. 75-7.) So this account from one of the chief local protagonists, Isaac Petari, recorded at an uncertain date by his son Stanley Bare-reba, can be balanced against evidence from other sources. Its validity is not final, because we know nothing of the time or circumstances in which the son
A Barereba Family Oral Tradition

recorded his father's tale. Nor have we Stanley Barereba's text in the Binandere language against which to check this more recent English translation by Petari's grandson, Stephen Barereba. John Green, who occupied the post of Clerk of the Native Regulation Board from April 1895, was held in high regard as a government officer by his fellow administrators. For this reason he was given the difficult task of establishing a post in an area caught in turmoil as a result of the dangerous hostility between local groups and European prospectors drawn into the Mambare River area by the news of gold traces found in its upper reaches by Sir William MacGregor in 1894. Green served briefly as Government Agent for the North East Coast from November 1895 until his death on 14 January 1897. The detailed context can be fitted together from the European sources already mentioned. (See particularly W. MacGregor, 'Despatch Reporting Result of Expedition to the Mambare River to Capture Natives Implicated in the Murder of the late Mr George Clark', British New Guinea Annual Report, 1895-6, pp. 12-22; and his 'Despatch Reporting Ascent of Mambare River and Action Taken to Discover Actual Perpetrators of Murders at Peu, Gadara, etc.', British New Guinea Annual Report, 1896-7, pp. 25-8, 29-35.) Other published indigenous narratives of the early stages of contact with Europeans in British New Guinea include the recollections of Gamae of Mawatta concerning the relations of his people with Europeans, particularly Luigi D'Albertis (see G. Landman, 'Folk-tales of the Kiwai Papuans', Acta Societatis Fenicar, 1917, Vol. 47), and the accounts by Igo Gau and Taubada Ova of the proclamation of the Protectorate in Port Moresby by Commodore Erskine fifty years earlier in 1884. (See Igo Gau and Taubada Ova, 'Hoisting the Flag at Port Moresby Fifty Years Ago', The Papuan Villager, March 1935, pp. 22-3.) More recently R. F. Fortune published a few letters by Dobuans (R. F. Fortune, 'Dobuans Abroad: Letters from the Dobuan Islands', J. Polynesian Soc., 1961, Vol. 70, pp. 314-32).

Most of you know or have heard about the Mamba River. Many years ago, in the days of my grandfathers, white men made their first camp at the place where the Tamata Creek joins the Mamba. The people who lived there, and still live there today, are the Doepo, Giriri, Kanewidari, Gima-appipe, Demonda-unji, Buiey-kane and Ririu.

The first government station was started near a little creek called Tema, which is between the mouth of the Tamata and the present government station of Toma. The white men and their helpers camped at the mouth of the Tamata but walked to the Tema every day for their building work. The people brought food to sell to the white men, but as they were afraid they always carried with them their fighting spears and clubs.

One day, some of the Ririu people stole some things from the camp when they went to sell their vegetables. The white men told the policemen to get ready to catch the thieves when they came back again. The next people who visited the camp were the Doepo and Giriri people (from Deaugari near Ave, where Fr Copland King later started a mission station). The policemen tried to catch them, but they ran away into the bush. The policemen fired their rifles, and shot four men: Tago, Mendura, Eramai and Anikena. Seven men were caught (Dumain, Tara, Pirida, Ade, Tonguwa, Nongori and Masita) and taken away to Port Moresby, where they were taught the government laws, and how to live a better life. They were taken to Thursday Island and shown many things which they could tell their people about when they returned home.

After a long time, Mr J. Green was sent to the Mamba as magistrate, and he took Dumain and Masita with him among the policemen. The other men were left in Port Moresby. Mr Green went up the Mamba River to the Tamata and camped at the same place as before, and began building a government station at Butemo Nasi, near the first place at Tema Creek. As Mr Green wanted a cookboy, Dumain chose his young brother Kanana.

One day in his time off duty, Dumain went home to see his friends. Although his work with Mr Green was very happy, when Dumain saw the orphan children and widows of his cousins who had been shot, he became very angry and told the people that he was sure Mr Green was going to fight against them. He talked with his relations and with my grandfather Petari, who was the leader of those people, and made a plan for fighting. Dumain told Petari, 'The white men are not many. I have seen them. So we will start with Misi Giriri (Mr Green), and kill them as they come until we have killed them all.' Dumain was very happy at the thought of fighting.

Petari agreed with Dumain, but was afraid of the rifles. Dumain said not to worry, because he knew what to do with the rifles.

When Dumain saw Mr Green at the camp next day, he told him, 'These people do not want to help us build the new station because they saw their friends and relatives shot by the policemen, and they are afraid of the rifles. If you want these people to carry timber from the bush to build the new station, you must tell the policemen to put their rifles away.'

Mr Green did what Dumain said, and the policemen put their rifles away before they started work next day. But Mr Green kept the pistol which he carried on his belt, as well as his watch. When they all went to work on the new station, Dumain sent word to his people, who gathered round the new station, but kept themselves hidden in the bush waiting for the sign from Dumain.

Mr Green asked where all the people were. Dumain told him that they were cutting timber in the bush; but they did not come all the morning. When it was nearly time for lunch, Kanana the cookboy asked Dumain to ask Mr Green for his watch, so that he could be sure about the time for lunch.

Mr Green was busy working with a Kiwai man called Gaewo on the building that was going to be the office. When Dumain asked him for his watch so that Kanana could tell the time for lunch, he also said, 'And give me your pistol, too, because I think that these people are afraid of it, and that is why they are not coming.'

As he was busy up on the house, Mr Green just took off his belt with the watch and pistol, and threw it all to Dumain.
Dumain took the belt with the watch and pistol and threw it in the creek. Then hitting a buttress root of a big tree with the back of an axe, he pretended to sing; but his words were calling his friends to come out and start fighting. When my grandfather and his friends heard Dumain’s words, they came out from their hiding places with decorations on their bodies, and beating their drums and singing.

Mr Green asked Dumain, ‘What is all this noise that I hear?’ ‘Fighting, fighting,’ replied Dumain. ‘If your people had not shot our cousins, you would be safe. But you did so, and we are here to take your blood.’

When he heard this, Mr Green said in the Binandere language, ‘Dumain naka mina besi daue da eteno aiete, indutu gain estiena, ari ewagarewa atapateno giseta awa oe enbo tio de naka mana ce edo na dain etecu.’ This means: ‘Dumain, I have helped you to sleep comfortably, and I have given you good food, and taught you good things for your benefit; but you are not loyal to me, and are here with your people to kill me.’

But Dumain had no pity, and jumped for joy at the thought of fighting.

My grandfather Petari and his cousin (Christopher Osembo’s father) came out of the bush first, and killed two Kiwai men who were clearing the bush near the boundary. The other people killed all the policemen and workmen who were on the station.

Then they all went with Dumain to the office building, where Mr Green and the Kiwai carpenter were getting ready for the fight. They could not go very close, because Mr Green was a strong man and he was throwing pieces of timber which he had sharpened at one end with his saw.

As all the spears thrown at Mr Green and the carpenter were missing them, my grandfather Petari told the people to stop. Then he broke the spear in his hand to make it shorter, and holding his shield over his head, he climbed up onto the building. Mr Green looked up at Petari, and my grandfather threw his spear right into his eye. He fell to the ground, and a visitor, Babugo (who was Sgt Orere’s father) broke his head with his club. (Babugo was from Tawe, and was visiting the widow of one of his relations who had been shot.)

A spear hit the carpenter in the leg, but he was big and strong, and pulling it out he threw it back at the crowd. Then another spear hit him and he fell to the ground, where they killed him.

The people brought all the dead bodies and put them in a line. When they counted them they saw that they had killed more than their friends who had been shot, and they put the extra ones in another line. That made them very happy.

Dumain told his people to take Mr Green and all the stores and eat them. But the people said they would not carry Mr Green or any of the European things, because they thought that when more Europeans came they might smell them, and so be able to follow them and fight them. So they burnt everything that was there, and then all went away to their homes. But Dumain took a rifle for himself from the camp at the mouth of the Tamata, and carried it with him into the bush.

While all this was happening, two men were hiding in the bush and watching. These two men had hurried down to the place where Mr Green’s assistant was camped with some more policemen down on the Mamba River and they told everything that had happened at the new station. So when the people came out of the bush ready to fight, the assistant told his policemen to fire their rifles in the air. The people were afraid of the rifles, and dropping their weapons they ran away home. The assistant did not like to stay there any longer, so he took his policemen in their launch down the Mamba to the sea, where the Morris England came for them and took them back to Samarai.

Some months later Mr Monckton was sent to the same place, and he was told not to shoot any more Mambare people. My grandfather came straight away from his home to greet Mr Monckton, and he was his first friend. Mr Monckton asked him if he was one of them who had killed Mr Green, and he said he was, and told him the whole story of how they had killed Mr Green.

My grandfather brought all the people to be friends with Mr Monckton except Dumain, who was wandering in the bush with his rifle. But he was soon caught by his brothers and brought to Mr Monckton. They had a court case, and Mr Monckton told Dumain, ‘You learnt many good things, but you didn’t care: so you and your friend will go to Port Moresby and be prisoners.’ He left the others because they were ignorant.

That was the end of the fighting, but I want to tell you one more thing that happened when they killed Mr Green. When the dead bodies were lying in the line, one of my grandfathers took the boot off Mr Green’s foot for his supper, because he thought it was a European foot. He cooked this boot and tasted it, but still it was not cooked enough. So he cooked it again with cabbage, and then ate the cabbage while the boot was still smoking over the fire. He did this for many weeks, but every time he tried to chew it, it was still too tough. At last Dumain discovered what he was doing, and explained to him everything that Europeans wear. Then my grandfather Uterabae Ariri threw away the boot.

This story was told by my grandfather Isaac Petari, who was baptized by Fr Copland King soon after the fighting. He told it to my father Stanley Barereba, who wrote it all in Binandere; and I have copied it in English for you to read.

to write Motu extremely well,' according to C. G. Seligman who employed his talents as his 'chief informant concerning the sociology of the Koita'. Malinowski also engaged his services for about three weeks late in 1914 before proceeding to Mailu for his first New Guinea field work. At that stage Malinowski considered that Ahuia was 'a man of great natural intelligence' and that he had in the previous ten years engaged in ethnological investigations as a result of the training he had received from Seligman and Captain F. R. Barton. In 1918 he retired from service with the Government as a Village Constable at Hanuabada and as a Court Interpreter. It was as a result of these functions that a deep personal friendship grew between Ahuia and Sir Hubert Murray, the Lieutenant-Governor of Papua from 1908 to 1940. Certainly Ahuia seems to have been the most powerful man in Hohodae from 1900 to 1940. This was, according to C. S. Belshaw who knew him in his last days, as a result of 'the inheritance of important lands, of his close friendship with European authorities, and of his own driving and intelligent personality'. His decline from eminence among his people may have begun around 1932 when his appointment of a feast chief was challenged. Then rivals challenged the legitimacy of his adoption by his mother's brother Taubada Ova from whom he had received his name, his chiefly position and his land in Hohodae. Finally he was exiled from Hohodae to Kilakila in November 1948. In these latter decades he was also dogged by personal and family tragedy. Belshaw saw him shortly before his death and found him 'dignified, half-blind, and lonely, with not an interest in the world but the telling of stories'. He died on 23 April 1951 and was buried in Hohodae cemetery. F. E. Williams, Government Anthropologist in Papua from 1921 to 1943, considered Ahuia to be 'a good native, with a proper pride in the culture of his own people' and persuaded him to record these reminiscences. Though Ahuia spoke English relatively well he proposed to Williams that he write in Motu. The person chosen by him to translate from Motu was Igo Erua, a native clerk who was a contributor to The Papuan Villager, and one of the leading Poreporena cricketers. Sometimes Williams edited Igo's English text and in places he summarised some long-winded passages. A search through Williams' extant papers in the Mitchell Library has not revealed the original MSS. by either Ahuia or Igo Erua. The skeleton outline he gave to Ahuia to guide his memories has survived.\(^1\) Williams also supplies the following clues as to the method he adopted: 'Ahuia needed some guidance and some encouragement. We first sketched out the

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\(^1\) F. E. Williams Papers, Mitchell Library uncatalogued MSS, 5, Box 3, Item 29

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ground together, then he proceeded alone with the help of a typed syllabus, or table of contents, which had been evolved from our earlier interviews. It proved a considerable task at which he worked laboriously in his spare time for a period of several months. He was paid at the modest rate of 3d. a hundred words; the translator, Igo, at 2d. a hundred; they netted respectively £2.6s.3d. and £1.10s.9d.' The detailed apparatus of notes provided by Williams has been left out and the published version of the reminiscences cut for the sake of space. The remaining extract gives some clues to the value of using such sources. Ten years after the publication of Ahuia's Reminiscences Sinaka Goava collected the recollections of an old woman of Pari village by the name of Kori Taboro. She died near the age of ninety in March 1950. Sinaka Goava's MS. is now held by the Library of the University of Papua and New Guinea. More recently a member of the staff of the University, Dr U. Beier, has published the autobiography of another Papuan, Albert Maori Kiki. Ahuia's other published writings include the following: 'Motu Feasts and Dances', trans. J. B. Clark, Papua Annual Report 1922-3, pp. 37-40; 'Story About Pottery Made Long Ago by the Boera People', The Papuan Villager, June 1941, pp. 47-8; 'The Story of Kiarwa and Taurama', The Papuan Villager, 1929, Vol. 1 (II), p. 8; Belshaw also noted that 'some of his stories of clan origin and some of his extensive genealogical knowledge have been preserved in a large record book kept by the Hohodae people'. Biographical details other than those in the Reminiscences come from: C. S. Belshaw, 'The Last Years of Ahuia Ova', Man, 1951, Vol. 51 (230), pp. 131-2; C. S. Belshaw, The Great Village: The Economic and Social Welfare of Hanuabada, an Urban Community in Papua, 1957, pp. 22, 129-30, 132; B. Malinowski, 'The Natives of Mailu', Transactions of the Royal Society of South Australia, 1915, Vol. 39, p. 499; B. Malinowski, A Diary in the Strict Sense of the Term, 1967, pp. 9-13; and C. G. Seligman, The Melanesians of British New Guinea, 1910, pp. ix, 17.

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PATERNAL ANCESTORS

In the olden times my grandfather came from Babaga. He was named in the Babaga language Keto Vali, and in the Koita language Geita Hari.

At that time there were two villages situated in the Babaga land. One was called Verairubu, and the other Sevele, which was adjoining to the former. The Verairubu women used to go to the coast very often for collecting shellfish or to buy them from the Hula villages, and the people of Sevele made a plan.

The plan was this. They built a platform beside the track by which the Verairubu women used to go down to the coast, and they sat on it, for they wanted to see the tattooed right thighs of the Verairubu women. When the women
had passed, they pulled the platform down and built it up on the other side of the road, and sat on it and waited for their return. They did this very often, and the chief’s wife of Verairubu understood their plan and she told her husband. She said, ‘I want to tell you this and you to hear, whether it is right or wrong.’ The man said, ‘Tell me, what is it?’ and she told him all about it.

When all the people were assembled together the chief rose up and said, ‘I am calling you because I want to tell you of something that has made me very upset. Here is the thing of which my wife has complained to me. Everyday they go through the Sevele village, the Sevele people build a platform on the west side of the road; and when the women have all passed, they pull the platform down and put it up again on the east side. She says they do this because they (the Sevele people) want to see their right thighs. It has made me very upset. And now, this is the best way for us: we will make a feast and we will bring them all in and we will kill them all, because they were doing a very bad thing.’ And all the people said, ‘Good, we better do this. We will kill them all and no one will escape.’

They prepared the feast and invited the people of Sevele, Kalo, and Kamali to attend. And the chief instructed his son and said, ‘My son, I want you to do my order. When the chief of Sevele comes in for the feast, don’t be afraid, because you are going to do as I ordered you and carry it out properly; and if you don’t, I’ll kill you.’ And the boy said to his father, ‘My father, I must carry out all your orders faithfully. What shall I do to him?’ And the father said, ‘When the chief of Sevele arrives you have to watch him until he sits down on the veranda and the tail of his siki (perineal hand) falls down between the boards. You see it and take a piece of wood and go under the house with care and tie that piece of wood with the tail of his siki. Tie it up tightly so that I can kill him. If you don’t do as I tell you and if the man escapes, I will kill you then.’ They waited until the date of the feast, when Galoga Logoro arrived with all his people. And that boy carried out what he was told. He did it properly and came and said, ‘Father, I have done everything according to your order.’

The father rose up and took his spear and went and took hold of Galoga Logoro’s hair. And Galoga tried to jump down from the veranda, but the tail of his siki pulled him back, so he had no chance of escape. Then he said ‘Ae! Taloga, Logoro!’ and he praised himself, saying, ‘When I entered the villages of Alomarubu and Rivali they gave me pigs, and when I went to Hula they gave me turtles and big arm-shells. My name is Galoga Logoro and I will be ended today.’ When he finished his talk he was killed. All the Sevele people were killed, but the Kamali and the Kalo people were allowed to go.

When the fighting was over, they cut off all the heads and took them to the place called Rage Kou, and put them all together (just the same as coco-nuts in a nursery). The last head they put down was that of Galoga Logoro. And when they had done this, then all the heads said, ‘Galoga Logoro take! All the people were very frightened, and when they returned to their village they discussed this till day-break without having any sleep.

In the morning they divided the abbu into two, left and right. The left lived at Babaga. The right was divided again into two parts: some went to live at Gaioibo, and Geita Hari and all his people came here to the Port Moresby district. They built a kage near the present village of Akorogo. When they finished building it, deaths occurred among them, and they broke up and their families wandered about the places.

The man Geita Hari was father of Ova Geita, and I am one of Ova Geita’s sons myself.

MATERNAL ANCESTORS

The generation of which my mother was born: the man named Navu Kave borned (bogot) Hedu Navu; Hedu Navu borned Rohi Hedu; Rohi Hedu borned Abau Rohi; Abau Rohi borned Oa Abau; and Oa Abau borned my mother Diara Oa and my uncle Taubada Oa.

The grandfather of my mother was Abau Rohi, who was a great fighter. They called him Abau Kama because the villages of Delena, Roro, Nikura, Paitana, Avo, Vanuamui and Kabadi were all his enemies.

On one occasion, one of his relations, named Oa Siala happened to be at Kabadi and the Kabadi people had killed a pig and served food for him, and then killed him on top of the food served. Abau Rohi led the war to the mouth of the Tottu River and waited. And there a man named Oa Kelebu, brother of Oa Siala, had great sorrow for the death of his brother, so he gave up all his mind to die. He sat on the edge of the river: with his legs in the water and waited. The people persuaded him and said, ‘Oh, Oa Kelebu, the Kabadi people will be here. You’d better get out of the place.’ He replied, ‘Don’t be persuading me, because I don’t want to live. As my brother has already been killed by them, I want to be killed by them too’. And the Kabadi fighting men arrived and he was killed. Because he was very sorry for the death of his brother, his promise was fulfilled.

Abau Rohi counted his men: they were three hundred. But the Kabadi people had one thousand. About 100 were killed by the Nara people (i.e. by Abau Rohi’s) and Kabadi killed about 100 Nara people in that fight, so there were 200 left alive.

There was a Porepoena man named Arua Daera in this fight, and he was chased by Abau Kama. And Arua Daera called and said, ‘Oh, Abau Kama, this is I’, and Abau Kama replied, ‘Friend, you must run as fast as you can, so you will not be seen by the fighters. I am watching till you pass away (i.e. escape).’ Therefore Arua Daera ran before his friend and escaped.

Abau Kama tried to up against a big tree, called vanu, at Tottu River and waited. Later on a Kabadi man came and left his son on the side of the river. And the boy sat on the edge and cried, ‘Oh! Oh! Father, come back and take me.’ And the father said, ‘Come quickly. I am afraid that we will be found by the enemies.’ But the boy did not listen to him. And Abau Kama stood and watched him all the while. The man then swam back and held his hands to get the boy. And Abau Kama threw his spear from the edge above and speared him under the ribs through to the other side, and said to him, ‘My name is Abau Kama!’

Abau Kama’s clan was named Vauria, because their hill was also named Vauria. After that fight they lived in that village quietly. But one day the word was heard that the villages of their enemies wanted to have another fight. The man Abau Kama called all the people and said to him, ‘Here is the talk. I want you all to hear it. All the villages of our enemies are intending to capture and besiege our village, so we must be prepared and look out for them.’ They replied, ‘What shall we do?’ He said, ‘The Kapok tree must be cut down. When it is cut down, cut off the branches, and cut the middle part into three logs and tie them up with cane. Then clear the scrub from the top of the hill to the flat.’ These things were carried out by the people according to his instructions.
They kept on waiting, until one day the enemy arrived. They looked down and saw them on the flat and told them to wait a little bit, for they were just having their meal; they will fight later on. They just told them a lie. Then they instructed their children and youths to call them up. So the enemies walked up the hill-side. Then all the children ran up on the street (i.e. into the village) and the enemies were quite near to the logs. Then the in-charge called out, and the canes were cut and the three of them rolled down the hill. And the enemies who were on the hill-side near the rollers were all killed, but the ones who were walking slowly on the flat escaped. They named these rollers bokis.

After that fighting, a very bad attack of sickness and death was epidemic through the village. Many people were dead, from five to ten died a day. On account of this they left the place, and spread out to different places.

They all had one chiefman, Abau Rohi (Abau Kama) who came here to Hohodae and lived with Ganaga Abau, who was head man of Dubara clan (iduha). This man then shared the land into two, and gave one share to Abau Rohi and told him, 'We better live here.' That was how my grandfather Oa Abau was born. He was the father of my mother and my uncle Taubada Oa.

BOYHOOD IN THE VILLAGE

In my young days I was a very bad boy. Once I was playing and knocked a Kilakila boy about, and my father was very wild at me and beat me in payment. And one day I was out fishing, and while I chased the fish to spear it, one Yabukori boy, named Mase, threw his spear and wounded my leg; and I speared his leg too. For that my father beat me again; but Mase's father came and said, 'Don't beat your boy. He hit Mase because Mase hit him first, and it is square.'

My father was a high man, so he did not want me to do anything wrong. On one occasion I was playing at Konedobo with my mates, and one boy, by name Kora Maraga, threw a stone at me and hit me on the head. And I took one stone and threw it at him and hit him on his head for payment. On another occasion we were at Kilakila. My father was lying on the verandah and I was playing in the street with the boys, and I threw a spear and nearly got into my father's eyes. He was then very angry and beat me very badly. (Ahuiia tells of a further incident where a boy hit him with a stick, and he retaliated in anger and was once more beaten by his father.) My father instructed me not to do any more trouble. So he always taught and kept me in right ways.

When I was living at Kilakila I was playing on the road with some boys, and we saw some of the Gorobe people with the turubu (cassowary bird) on their heads, and thought they were Koiai. I was very frightened and cried and ran to my father, Ova Geita and told him, 'Father, I am very frightened because I saw some of the Koiai, so I ran up to you.' And my father said, 'Where are they?' And he saw them later on and said, 'Don't be afraid, they are our friends.' And I was not frightened then.

When I was a little boy (a baby) my parents took me out to Laloki for hunting purposes. We camped at Baabu Kasaka. While my father was out for hunting, I crawled about and fell into the river. And my uncle jumped down and saved me from my misfortune (I don't know about this, but my mother told me). On the return of my father from hunting in the evening, he heard this and gave hard talk to my mother.

One day I went with my mother, uncle (mother's brother) Taubada and others to cur garden, and slept out there, because that garden was always destroyed by a wallaby. So one night we got up and took the wallaby net (hou) and set it outside the fence of the garden, and waited there until the morning. And we got in the garden and chased the wallaby. And it came out and was caught by the net and I held it. But it got out, and I bit its tail and it jumped me about like a dog does until my uncle came and held it and we both killed the wallaby.

FIRST EMPLOYMENT

When I was a big boy, I started to work for white men to earn money. I was first employed by ... and ... and ... I was a very good boy to them, and they were very good to me. But many times they put the money on the floor and tried to cause me to steal. But when I swept the floor in the morning I picked them up and put them on the table, and tobacco as well. I never at one time stole my master's properties. They paid me at 7s. a month.

At that time a great famine occurred in Porepora. I had planted a melon in my tinabada's yard. And the name of this melon was Pie Melon. In that year the village people assembled the lakatoi because there was no food and the people were very starved. But my masters were very good men, and they kept my mother with rations until the arrival of the lakatoi. These lakatoi were full up with sago. My mother was rationed with a bag of flour or rice per month.

During this time the Hohodae people had made a garden at Talai. These gardens produced pumpkins and sweet potatoes, so the Motu people sold arm-shells to Hohodae for the food. Hohodae people were enriched by the Motuans in that year.

(Ahuiia goes on to tell how he visited his friend Garcia Vagi, a boy who was working for a certain Captain S ... aboard a schooner beached in the harbour.) And that man poured a whisky into the tumbler and gave it to me, and I thought it was for a medicare for sick men. So I drank till I finished it and nearly died, because I was not used to it. Then on one day I went and reported to Mrs I ... (his employer's wife) about the man who gave me a drink. The taste was exactly the fire. And Mrs I ... was very wild when she heard me say this, and she reported to the magistrate; and the magistrate sent Captain S ... back to his home for good.

(Among Ahuiia's many employers was Mr Musgrave, then Government Secretary, who took him to Cooktown, possibly as a personal servant while on furlough.) There we spent six weeks. I saw all kinds of European things. I rode on the railway; went to inland, where I saw some black policemen; they were tall men. I went out for trips on several occasions, by the war-boats too. When we were on the sea I never ate or drank for six days at least, on account of the seasick.

(Ahuiia mentions Frank Lawes, first Resident Magistrate in Port Moresby, Romilly, 'the first Governor in Port Moresby' and 'Governor Douglas', as men whom he remembers.)

When I was a youth I worked for Mr G ... Sinahada (i.e. the mistress) cooked food, and I waited at the table (as a steward) and made the beds and did all the house work, laundry as well. They paid me one pound per month and one bag of rice besides.

When I finished from Mrs G ... I was employed by Mrs B ... as a cook boy, and then I married Bojo Alua. I planted that rubber tree near the Resident Magistrate's office; so I am getting old, and the tree has also grown up as a big tree. I then received three pounds per month.
(Ahuia speaks of the erection of three buildings at this time, including the old Hotel.) The owner was Miss W ... , a fat and short woman. These were the first buildings in Port Moresby (this is incorrect). I am forgetting the years of my employment.

(On leaving Mrs B ...’s service, Ahuia remained some months in the village, and then was employed as cook at Government House for a short period at £3 a month. After a further stay in the village, he was appointed Village Constable, at 10s a month.)

GOVERNMENT SERVICE

I was in the position of Village Constable for five consecutive years. During this period I acted three general works. Firstly, work for my chief’s business (i.e., as leading man of Hohodae); secondly, as Village Constable; and thirdly, as a Court Interpreter.

As Village Constable I stopped all the quarrels. On one occasion three men were fighting, and I went and tried my best to stop them, but they never took any notice of me and continued on fighting. So I arrested them and brought them in before the Resident Magistrate, and they were then instructed by the Magistrate and sent back home.

Another time one Tatana boy, by name of Nauri Igo, had done some stealing, and I was sent by the magistrate to fetch him in. So I went over to Tatana and called him several times, but he wouldn’t take any notice of me. So I went up to the house and threw him down from the house and put the handcuffs on his hands and brought him in to Port Moresby. And he was sent to gaol for one month.

Captain Barton was a magistrate then. One day we both investigated the Poreporena villages. As we walked along the street he saw some of the old posts standing in the street and said, ‘Why are these posts standing here?’ and we told him they were the posts for the dancing daba. These daba are made for the meeting of the dance, or some other kinds of feasts. We told him all that, and he said, ‘Why don’t you do it now?’ And we said, ‘Because we are afraid of the missionaries.’ But Captain Barton said, ‘Oh no, you must not stop it; because they are the customs of your olden people.’ So from that time we started the dance until now.

In that year I married Goka. She was first married to another man, but her husband was jealous on me all the time. I did not know her and she don’t know me, but on account of the man’s jealousy she said to him, ‘No good you jealous about this man all the time, and making him ashamed!’ So she came to me herself, and then I never worried about my position, so I married her. When I married Goka, Captain Barton was Governor and Mr Br ... was magistrate. Mr Br ... held the court about my trouble, but I was found ‘not guilty’ and I won the case.

At that time Mr Weaver was killed by Ariki and others. And they hid him in the scrub. The Government thought he had had his bath in the Laloki River and that he was taken by a crocodile. But a Boruni man named Ginate came and reported to Mr B ... that Mr Weaver had been killed by Ariki. When Mr B ... heard this he was very wild with me and said, ‘Why didn’t you tell me about this trouble?’ and I answered, ‘Tasaba, I don’t know about it until now, and we both hear it at the same time.’ But Mr B ... would not believe me. He thought that I had heard the trouble but hid it; but it was not so.

(There was a long and ineffectual search for the murderers in the Koiari hills. Finally Ahuia approached the Lieuten-ant-Governor at Government House, and volunteered to take over the search himself.) I said, ‘Oh Chief, I want to ask you something,’ and he said, ‘All right,’ and I asked him, ‘I want you to send me and I shall go inland and search for the man and bring him in.’ The Governor said, ‘All right,’ so I went out and searched for him with strength and wisdom until I found him. When I found Ariki and asked him, ‘Where have you been living? I have been looking for you and could not find you,’ he replied, ‘Every day I saw you, but Ginate has been hiding me and threatening me.’

(Then follows an account of how Ahuia handcuffed Ariki and took him to Port Moresby; also of how he met Ginate by chance on the journey, and arrested him on sight.) The magistrate was very glad, and spread the news in the town that night; he mentioned my name and said, ‘Ahuia has found Ariki and brought him in,’ so that everybody was very glad on me. When I sought Ariki that time I did just the same as a white man would do, because I carried out my work with faithful.

So Ariki was hanged and Ginate was sent to gaol for 12 months for his telling lies. He told the Government plenty of lies, that I hid Ariki; and also he had hidden the words about the killing of Mr Weaver. I knew all the thoughts of Ginate. He was too jealous on me because he saw that I had worked hard for the Government, so he tried to blame me to the Government. But his complaint to the Government was frivolous. I knew how to do. I could defeat him easy on that case. That is why I have had a very good and clean name in the Government service until now.

One time a Koiari man, named Mudiki, was killed by Iohia Vagira. Iohia Vagira had committed adultery with Mudiki’s wife, so he wanted to kill the man (Mudiki) first and marry his wife afterwards. And a Baruni man came and reported it to me, and I went to the Resident Magistrate and reported it, and he sent me for investigation. He told me, ‘You go and see the dead body and come back and tell me.’ And I went as instructed and found the dead body. It was stinking. I saw the wounds and instructed the people from the village to bury him.

(Ahuia made his report, and was sent back with the Medical Officer to disinter the body, after which it was duly viewed and reburied.) After burying the body, I carried out the usual and general plan of how to find the right man who had killed a man. I told Iohia Vagira, ‘Will you bring me a bit of pepper. I want to have a chew of betelnut.’ And he brought me a pepper fruit. I chewed it and vomited. And I again sent him to bring me a ripe paw-paw, so he brought me one. I ate it; jus: the same, I vomited out. So from these signs I knew he was the rightful man who actually killed the man. (Ahuia had him arrested and brought before the magistrate, who asked him how the murderer had been discovered. Ahuia explained and eventually, though no doubt on somewhat stronger evidence, Iohia Vagira was tried and found guilty.)

(Besides being Village Constable, Ahuia was used as an interpreter by various Resident Magistrates.) All my masters were satisfied with me, and were all very good to me too; and I was very good to them... When Judge Mur-ray came and saw all my works given to his satisfaction, he wanted me very badly. (Thus Ahuia became Central Court Interpreter.) That was a very good job, and my clothes were marked with different braid... I was a very good boy, and my master was a good master too. I supposed if I was a very bad boy he should be the same.

I always translated exactly what the defendants said, with truth, so there was nothing wrong at all. The laws of white men are much better than our laws. Plenty of times
Judge Murray and myself held a court case; but I have forgotten the years because I had no record of them. When I was interpreter I translated all the words well and plainly. I have not been caught translating wrongly, or caught in trouble at any time in the office.

The laws of white men are very rightful and powerful ones. The olden days were different from this time. For them all their goings were with fear and doubt. But nowadays it is not the same, because the peace and the laws are above us with powerful. Therefore all the enemies in different villages call one another brothers and relatives. Nowadays the gardens are made at Laloki and the nearby lands, either four or five miles away, because the Government’s arm is above us all. But before times the people were very frightened and never went that far at all.

I was helping Dr. Seligman for some time when I was the Village Constable of Poreporena village. He was working about the native customs, and he did a lot about the tabu feast and a lot more about some other things. Old Tauba Oa and Kuruku Geita of Kourabada village, they both told all about the customs, and I am the man who explained it to Dr. Seligman. And also one old man, his name Vagi Douna of Mavara _idua_ of Poreporena, Motuan, he told us something about Motuan customs before Dr. Seligman. When I was helping him do this work I did the same as in the law court or the Central Court. One day Dr. Seligman made one boy to make himself like the woman giving birth to a child. And some boys saw that and they laughed. So Dr. Seligman was very wild because they laughed.

When Dr. Malinowski first came to Port Moresby he came to see the Judge and asked him to let me help him to do some of his work. So the Judge let me go and help him for some time. And when I was having my short holiday for some time I went with him to Sinaugolo. So we stayed at Rigo, at the Government station, and we took some Sinaugolo customs, about two weeks. Then we returned to Port Moresby. But it was very rough on that day, so we could not get in to Port Moresby in one day. We sailed to Tupuseleia and anchored there; and next morning we arrived at Port Moresby. Then I finished from him.

**MARRIAGE**

I first married Boio Alua. I married her from betrothal. But her head was gone bad (lunatic); so I threw her away and married Gari Rei. I married Gari Rei in church, and Mr. Lawes officiated our wedding. After this I married another woman, named Rigua; so I was then put off from the Christian on account of this. Then I married Goka and threw Rigua away.

I married another woman also, named Vagi Gege, but she was a lazy woman and my first woman chased her out of the house. She was in a family way (conceived) when she left me. Her baby was born, but died. She was then married to another man, and she is living with him until now. Gari Rei bore me a baby girl. But it died when it was small. But none from the other women.

The reasons of the women I married and threw them away. Boio Alua, her head was no good and I hated her; Rigua, she was a greedy woman. She wanted all my properties should be managed by her. But I told her that I divided them into two—she to take some and Gari to take the others. But she wouldn’t take any notice, so I beat her and sent her away. She was then married to Arua Ganiga and bore two children, one girl and one boy. But she was with me for two years without children.

Amongst all Goka is my first-beloved wife and Gari is second. But Goka is the best, because she knows how to make the garden, and how to do washing and ironing, and gives me good foods to eat. She can keep the house in order, and all my visitors were looked after by her. So that is why I put her as number one.

This is the custom of our olden people. If a man has very large gardens he can get two women; and if a man have plenty of visitors he can get two women. But a man who is lazy and gets two women, everybody will laugh at him; and they might say, ‘No use for him to get two women’. That is how the olden do this game.

And if a man have no children by first woman, that man must not go and look for another woman without the consent of his first woman. His first woman should say, ‘I think you better go to look for another woman and make some children. No good we have no children, and when we are getting old, what we going to do?’ So a man tries his best until he finds another woman, and marries her then. This is another way of man getting double women.

**ADOPTED CHILDREN**

My first adopted child was the daughter of Mase Vagi and Igua Rova. They presented her to us because we had no children. We brought her up with all our best, but she died from dysentery. They presented this child to us because Igua Rova (the mother) was a relation of Goka (my wife). So she and her husband were sorry for us, and never minded about giving us the child.

The second one, Lohia Guba, was the son of Guba Oala and Boio Gogobe. They gave us this boy because Guba was a brother of Goka, and he never minded about the boy. We adopted him with tin-milk until he grew up as a youth and died.

The third one was the son of the same man and woman. This boy, named Oala Guba, was sent to me by his father to substitute Lohia Guba. I kept him until I bought a woman for his wife. He had two female children by her, but he also died. The names of his children are Goka Oala and Vani Oala. They are living with me.

The fourth one, Mataio Kone, was the son of Kone Udia of Kilakila. This boy was given from charity. So I adopted him with the cow’s milk until he was a big boy. And I wanted to put him in the school, but he died.

The fifth one, Oa Siala, was the son of Siala Veu, of Diumanu (Nara). He was a chief of the end village of Diumanu; also the Village Constable of that village. This man had a bad sickness and sent me a message in which he said, ‘I want you to come and take me to live with you until my end. And I want you to bury me at Poreporena and take this boy for your own. When he grows up he will take your place because you have no children.’ Therefore I sent a canoe to Nara and fetched the sick man Siala Veu, his wife, and the son Oa Siala. They lived with me until the end of the man, and we buried him here. His wish was fulfilled. His widow lived with me and I took off her death mourning for her husband and sent her back to her home village. But I kept Oa Siala as my son, as his father had promised. I bought him a wife with 51 riches (ornaments).

The sixth was Kabena Vagi. His mother, Heni Maku, was married in Tupuseleia and had three male children, and she died. After her death my wife Goka and I went to Tupuseleia, and the two elder brothers gave this boy to my wife as payment for their mother’s death. We brought him here and adopted him until now he has grown up as a man. So both of them, Oa Siala and Kabua Vagi, are like my sons. And I am trying to get a woman for Kabua, and he
and Oa Siala will live in my house and when I die they will look after these two girls Goka Oala and Vani Oala. These girls are now at the school of Roman Catholic, and when I die they will not be forgotten from my property, i.e. the lands cultivated with coco-nuts, mangrove trees, etc. They must have a share of them.

CHIEFTAINSHIP

After the death of my uncle Taubada Oa’s two wives, he told me to take his place as a chief. And he instructed me to do just the same as he did, to respect the people and to speak about making the gardens. He also said that I must not go out for fishing or hunting very often, but to do my very best in making a garden. And he did not want me to have bad manners. He said if I did the same thing as I did when I was a boy, the power of my chief would be useless. Taubada Oa also told me that I must not tell lies to anybody, and not to go after the younger women. If I did I would get into trouble and spoil my name. He taught me how to make gardens and hunting, and how to prepare the feasts. All the chiefs in other villages are liking me very much and respect my name. I kept all Taubada Oa’s instructions, and he was satisfied with all my ideas. All his works and ideas have been broken (surpassed) by mine, because my name is higher than his.

My father Ova Geita’s place was taken by Rabura as a chief. But now Rabura is dead and I took that position over too. At present I hold two positions (i.e. in Kilakila and in Hohodoa). The position I got from my father (in Kilakila) is a Chief of Olden Time and for the Peace; that which I got from Taubada (in Hohodoa) is only a Chief of Fighting.

The proper chief belonging to Hohodoa has no descendants now. Some of the chiefs are only for the gardens, or strong-arm chiefs. (Ahuia here gives a list of the succession of ‘proper chiefs’ in Hohodoa: Abau Vanı, who begot Erogo Abau, who begot Vani Erogo, who begot Eghau Vanı (all of Taurama tidatu). Eghau Vanı, however, never married.) This was because his leg was bitten by the Koiaris’ dogs and made a big sore; so he became a cripple-leg then and had no children. (Since Eghau Vanı had no issue, the ascendency in Hohodoa passed to Oa Abau, son of the warrior immigrant from Nara (see section on Maternal Ancestors above) who had joined Dubara tidatu, and passed to his son Taubada Oa.)

HUNTING

The names hereunder were the friends of mine. They always accompanied me on fishing, hunting, and gardening etc. Avaka Rohi, Kora Maraga, and Hera Mamaga and Kabua Iaru (all deceased). We had a very good company.

One time we all went for hunting and Avaka shot one wild pig, and he was very frightened of it. And there were also some Kuriu champion catchers of pigs; they were all afraid and stood near the trees and hid from being seen by the pig. When I arrived at the place I caught the pig with my koda (pig-catcher) and fought with it till it had bitten my koda in little pieces. But I was strong and caught it by the ears and killed it. Everybody gathered together at the scene and looked at the pig and they also looked at me. And they all said, ‘This is a very big pig which was caught by this boy without wounding him.’ And others said, ‘Because he is a very strong boy, so the pig could not wound him...’

(Ahuia was once sent as Village Constable to arrest two boys of Papa for stealing bananas from a garden.) The people of these two boys were very angry with me. They said, ‘Why does he come and arrest our pig-getters? Does he know how to get pigs?’ And one of my uncles, who was a teacher in that village, heard them talking about me, and he was very upset and wrote a letter to me and invited me to go to Papa and have a race in hunting with them. (Ahuia says that he had no time then, but in 1922 (some 15 years later) he went with all his boys to Papa. More than six villages then combined in a reed-gathering and hunting expedition inland of Papa.) In that time I won and defeated all the villages by getting four pigs. The Papa people tried me in chasing the pigs, but could not do anything; so in that time I showed them my appearances.

‘DUBU’ AND ‘TABU’ FEASTS

(Ahuia made a tabu feast many years ago, with the support of Garia Vagi of Taurama tidatu, Hohodoa. The platform used for the display of the feast was not a proper dubu, but made of mangrove saplings.)

When I travelled about with the Governor and he saw the dubu in sinaugolo villages he said, ‘Why don’t you make one like these?’ I kept this in mind. When I wanted to make a proper dubu, all Hohodoa refused me. Avaka Rohi and myself started one. I was on the right side, he was on the left. We both helped together until the work was completed. In that year I got 2,600 yams and Avaka got about 1,000 yams. So when all the people heard that we both found plenty of yams, they all gathered together and came to help us. In this feast the Governor gave a large pig for his help in the feast; the Government Secretary gave me a bag of rice; and T. Ryan helped me with one sheep. They gave me these because they were all my friends.

The yams, bananas, and sugar-cane are the things we really like. But nowadays the Europeans brought us melons, pumpkins, manioc, etc. They are not accounted by us. We say that they are only for food-stuffs.

The reason for quarrelling between Garia Vagi and myself: Garia got 1,000 yams in 1931 and he thought he was going to make a tabu, but he never told me anything about it. I lived with quiet; then one day Charlie Hedu came up to me and said, ‘What do you think?’ And I said, ‘What is it?’ And he said to me, ‘I want you to help me by renewal of your dubu.’ I replied: ‘Good I will do your willing.’ When Garia heard this he was very upset about it, because he thought that I should help him. So he came and started the quarrel with me.

Afterwards Garia hired Oala’s lorry and went to Laloki and took 200 coco-nuts from my property without my permission. I was then very upset about it. So the Resident Magistrate told me to sue Garia in Court if I wanted. But I declined to take any proceeding against him because I knew if I did so he would be getting into a big trouble. We both hated each other for two consecutive years.

At one time I wanted pacifying with him in front of the people of Poreporena, Elevala and Tanaubada. The Resident Magistrate also invited us to pacify. I stood up in front of the people and made a speech. I said, ‘I wish that we must pacify in front of the people.’ But Garia Vagi stood up and said to the Resident Magistrate, ‘No, I do not want to pacify with him today.’ And all the people then went away.

Until in the year 1932 we went to Laloki and worked there. Garia had killed a wild boar, and he brought one of the legs to me and gave to me. We both then talked together.

He had said in front of the people that we should pacify by means of gifts, and this was not fulfilled. When I spoke in front of the people that we should pacify for nothing
(i.e. without exchange of gifts) he said that was not the custom. We must pacify by gifts, because olden people did so. I told him that we must pacify in the name of God, because all the riches in the world are not valuable, but the peace of the Lord God is the only big thing. Afterwards he pacified according to my willing. On account of that he built a new *daba* and called it by the same name as mine, ‘Gaibu Dubu’.

**SPIRITUAL ADVENTURES**

One female god, named Ibuna Vavine, lived in the bush at Koma. In the olden time she dwelt in the big tree of the kind called *irimo* as her house. She started the song of *Mada*. She also taught the people this very song. That is how this song is sung by the people.

One time I was very ill and likely to die, and I was carried to Garia Vagi’s grass house and the people watched me there. One night Ibuna came and lifted me up. She wanted to take me to her place at Koma. The house where I slept had a partition erected. But when she took me and flew with me outside, it seemed there was no partition in the house; and I was not heavy. When she and I were between the grass and the iron house the watchers all woke up, because Garia Vagi’s wife was not asleep. She woke them up. By this time Ibuna was frightened and threw me down on the verandah, and I hurt my chest and forehead because there were hardwoods spreading on the verandah. But no marks were found on my body. I saw this woman. Her skin was very white, like a white woman’s and her hair was very long and fair.

During the year 1911 I was asked by the Governor to make one cane suspension bridge at Laloki just for trial. So some friends of mine and myself went to Laloki to do this work. One morning while I was there, I got up to hunt in the Koma bush. I went right into the bush and saw a pig come to me. And I stooped down and waited for it. It walked right close to me; I could put my hand on it. I got ready and aimed my gun at it and shot it. And it was then lost. It never ran at all but was just lost (disappeared).

I stood alone, and made up my mind to return to camp. And on my arrival they all asked, ‘Where is the thing for your firing?’ And I replied, ‘The thing for my firing was a pig, its body nice and fat and smooth and it looked not like a village pig.’ But it was a pig which belonged to the gods (spirits). When the night came we all slept and my grandfather, Oa Abau, came to me and dreamed me and said, ‘Why did you go and shoot our pig this morning? Do you know that it saw you and came to you and you shoot the poor pig? But don’t be afraid as it won’t die. Your grandmother carried it up on the verandah with weeping and poured hot water on the wounded shots.’ And I replied to him that I did not know; I thought it was a wild pig and shot it. He also said, ‘You hear this. The name of the pig is Moro Nimu. When you find a pig, just call it Moro Nimu.’ I then woke up. I knew that I had been dreamed by the gods (the spirits of the dead men). And I told my wife Goka and the people who were in the camp about the dream, and they were all surprised at it...

Another dream is this. Once I went out to hunt and slept overnight. And my adopted son named Mataio, a dead boy, appeared to me while sleeping. He said to me, ‘My father, I am very sorry for you. So I want to tell you something and you have to pay heed to it. Tomorrow when the grass is going to be burnt, you will shoot two pigs.’ And I woke up and thought that was only a night’s dream, and I never trusted it. In the morning we went and burnt the grass. Then I shot two pigs and four wallabies. Therefore my dream was fulfilled.

**DREAMS**

In the year 1914 I was a Court Interpreter. I had a dream one night that a big wave floated up higher than Paga Hill and broke upon Port Moresby township. The town was in this wave. In the morning I woke up and thought what should be the meaning of this dream, or what should happen. About two days over, the news was heard that Germans and English were met. I was told that a big war is now starting. I knew that is the meaning of the dream I dreamed.

If someone dreams of eating meals of bananas or sago in his house, and does not gather the people to worship the dead spirits, then this makes the dead spirits upset, and the gardens will be burnt up as by fire. So when a man has this dream he must tell it out at once. If he has a pig to kill, he must get bananas from the gardens and cut up the pig and cook it with the bananas. Then he invites all the big men and all the heads of clans (*saba*) to eat the food. When this has been done, the garden restores its strength again...

The same sort of thing happens in the fighting or quarrelling. When two men are quarrelling with each other, the dead spirits help one of them and are against the other. Nothing will happen freely, by itself, because in the country of Papua fashions of this sort began in the midst of the people. Therefore all our gardening, hunting and fishing are sacred. If the garden is made with sacred, that garden will produce plenty; and if without sacred, that garden will get nothing. Both the fishing and hunting are in the same way. Because the olden people of our country began these things, so we are quite accustomed to them. Therefore some of the people are wanting to do the old customs, thinking they are very good; and some of the people are saying that they wanted to use everything from the new customs, thinking they will be all right. But the man who is well accustomed to the old customs wants them badly. So this makes the people doubtful. I myself think the old customs are fitting for the Papuan people and for their benefit, because some of them have tried to copy the new fashions but do not make them the same. At one time our Big Governor said, ‘You must do everything from your old customs so they will fit you. You may try to copy us, but you cannot be the same.’

**OPINIONS ON SORCERY**

About the Sorcerers. I have looked upon all the male and female sorcerers and this is what I have found. They say by themselves that the dead spirits come upon them and twist their hairs. The sorcerers say that the appearances of the dead are like the living people; but an ordinary man cannot see the dead body.

I think that some sorcerers are doing right (genuine) and I have a little faith in their works. But most of them I am not believing, because they (simply) heard that the others were doing good, so they wanted to become sorcerers themselves and (go in for) bluffing. They try to make the people believe them, and say that they are true sorcerers, so that they may get plenty of things in payment. That’s what they want it for...

Many years ago my wife Goka was very ill, and one sorceress of Eleva came and asked me and said, ‘Is your wife sick?’ I said, ‘Yes.’ And she said, ‘I will try and make her better.’ I said, ‘Good. Do it just as you please yourself.’ She then said, ‘I will just go into the bush and get some medicines.’ She went out and I was making a plan to catch her. I went to the house of one of my friends and walked in
and sat down, and I looked from the window to watch the work of the sorceress. When she was in the bush she chewed some leaves of weed in her mouth and then came out and sucked pains from the sick woman's body and spat into a coco-nut shell and walked out to the verandah and ate it again. And she went in again and tried another suck and came out on the verandah and did the same as at first. I kept on watching and then left for my house. When I walked up into the house I did not make any talk, but just had a smoke with her, and she then left me and went to her village. This is the the woman who was gaoled by Mr B ... once for doing that. But she never stopped doing it, and that day I could have reported her. But I thought she is a very old woman, therefore I had pity on her and did not make any report; and also I did not pay her anything.

When I was acting as an interpreter I was given twelve months' leave, and I went to Kerema by a cutter and there I made a small lakatoi. And in that time I got a very big sickness, and some Elema sorcerers treated me by rubbing. This is the way they did it. They smelled my body with some short strings in their mouths, and then coughed and pulled the short strings out of their mouths. Those who were ignorant thought that those were snakes (or earthworms); but the men were bluffing. In that time I found out the Elema sorcerers; but I was not angry with them, and I did not pay them anything. There were about three who tried on me. Therefore this is what I am saying, that the sorcerers are lying; they are not fully in truth.

VICISSITUDES IN CHRISTIANITY

(Ahuia begins this chapter with a hearsay account of the coming of the first missionaries, a number of South Sea Islanders under Rua Toka, to Port Moresby. They had been established by the London Missionary Society at Varirava, some distance to the north, but had moved down and settled at Hanuabada, where they were well received. Later on, when Dr Lawes was already at Port Moresby, Ahuia saw the men lined up before his house at the Declaration of the Protectorate, but he remembers very little of that occasion.)

(Next he tells of an incident which occurred at a subsequent visit of 'a-man-wars boat'. A foreigner, Jim Malay, resident in Hanuabada, had quarrelled with a sailor and knocked him down, whereupon he was laid hold of by the 'man-wars'.) They took him to the back of the church and tied him against a big tree and the poor man was covered by the ants(biraten). When he was covered by the ants he cried and said, 'Oh Charlie(?) come and untie the rope!' This is what he said in his crying. But they were waiting until the given time was up; then they untied the rope. I was a boy and went with the people and saw this clearly, and heard him crying.

(Next Ahuia tells how when grown to manhood he married Gari Rei, and being a Christian, was married by Dr Lawes in the church. Then he reverts to the case of Goka, seeking once more to justify himself.) This Goka belonged to another man. But her husband was always too jealous on me, and beat her all the time. She said, 'I do not know about this man; but you are giving him to me yourself all the time. My skin is badly paining. So, very good, you give me to that man. I will go and marry him, then afterwards you will know.' I did not know about her, but on account of the man's jealousy and his talking about me to her, that made me to intending to go for Goka. And I went with wiseful until we came to court, and I won the case and married her.

(Hereupon, it appears, Ahuia was dismissed from Church membership and ceased for the time being his attendance at divine service.) Once when I was at home T ... M ... visited me. He walked into my house and said, 'The peace of the Lord God is come to your house.' I replied, 'Very Good.' I was very glad, because for a long time I was out from Christian on account of my marriage to Goka. (Ahuia now resumed his attendance at church though still debarred from communion.) But afterwards all the deacons and Christians were grumbling about me. They were saying that the men who have double wives are not to go into the church. But when I heard this I never stopped going to church.

One evening I was invited by Mr Clark, and I went to him and he said: 'You must not be moving about (bothered) until one of your wives' end. Then you will join the church.' And I replied, 'Good.' And I lived with good and also went to church with strong, and I preached in village too. Before Mr and Mrs Clark went for leave in England, he heard that I had been preaching in the village. He was very pleased and wanted me with all his means.

After they had left for England on their furlough, the complaints of the deacons were heard by the teacher named P ... . When he heard these nonsenses, he preached about them at one Sunday afternoon service. This is what he said, 'Don't you all know a man named Abraham? Has he married double wives, or not? We all read the Book and we all know it very well. And how is that?' I was reminded by his preaching and I knew it was about me.

I was living under care of T ... M ... , because he was a best friend of mine. And afterwards T ... M ... said to me, 'This is the best way for you to do, to bring out all your dancing ornaments and other adornment things and burn them off.' Therefore I brought out my head-dress and other dancing adornments and heaped them up on the beach and I instructed the boys to burn them up. They were all properly burnt off.

One day, later on, Judge Herbert came to me and he walked into my house because he wanted to see that head-dress. He asked my wife, 'I want to see the head-dress'. And my wife Goka answered him, 'T ... M ... has ordered this man to burn up the head-dress and other dancing adornments and nothing has been kept back at all.' When the Judge heard this talk made to him by my wife, he grew angry on me for so much six months' time. But afterwards his anger went away, and we had a proper talk together.

When I was living at home sometime I had a misfortune: I had a big sickness. This was after Mr and Mrs Clark left for England, on their leave. I nearly died. And at that time some of the deacons came to see me, and went back and told some of their male friends, 'That man's head is bad.' And the words came to me and I was very upset.

When Mr Clark was in London he praised my name in front of many people. He did not know that after he was gone the deacons said my head was bad, and that I was angry and that I made a dance. This dance feast was for the 'dead bone' of my adopted son named Mataio (Motu call this maso-turan; in Koita it is ita).

When Mr and Mrs Clark returned here they also heard this, and they came to me and wanted to persuade me to return to church. They said, 'Will you come to church?' And I replied to them, 'Wait awhile. I must prepare my heart.' But they came to me all the time and kept on persuading me. And I told them that I had not been going to church at all; but my mind was waking continually and not sleeping at all. Of course my body was dancing and
making a feast in the village. I told them this and his wife said to him, 'Now you hear what he says. Do you think he is out of his mind? You have been giving him too much talking.' We had a very long talk that day, and they left me. So from that day they never visited me for some time.

Some time afterward the Catholic Mission came to me, and they took my two grand-daughters. And therefore my mind was very doubtful. And some time after that the Governor brought his wife, and both came up to my house. It was on one Saturday afternoon, I had invited them to come. We had a good talk in the house and the Governor saw my two grand-daughters and he asked me, 'Who do these two girls belong to?' And I replied to him and said, 'They are the daughters of my adopted son Oala. Their father died and I took them as my adopted granddaughters, and they have now been taken by the Catholic Mission and put in their school.' And the Governor said, 'Why is that? They must not go unless you tell them to go, because you are their guardian.' And also I told him that this makes me a doubtful mind: should I go to the L. M. S. or to the Catholic on account of these girls? And the Governor answered to me and said, 'You are doubting about going to one side or the other. They are just the same. So don’t be afraid about it. Just stay on. They will not kill you for staying as you are. Just please yourself.' So I am now living as the Governor told me.

Therefore the Catholic Mission have now baptised these two girls Goka Oala and Vani Oala, and put them in the school. They go to their school continually; but sometimes when we happen to be at Laloki for gardening we take them with us and spend one month, three weeks, or sometimes two weeks time, because we got a permission from Father for this purpose.

But my mind cannot be changed. I do not mind being put off from the church for my trouble sake. But my mind is still believing the Lord God and cannot be removed from him. The man who baptised me was Dr Lawes, and while I am living at present I must believe both religions, L. M. S. and Catholic—not only one religion but two of them. It is because I understand that they are working for one God. One is not working for one God and one for another. Of course they have different religions, but they are for one God.


A4 Paliau Maloat Reflects upon his Childhood and First Experiences of the World beyond his Village, c. 1954

This fragment from the autobiography of Paliau is in marked contrast to the reminiscences of Ahuia Ova in both its character and purpose. By the time it was recorded by the American anthropologist Theodore Schwartz somewhere between June 1953 and July 1954, Paliau was at the centre of a social reform movement named after him and was considered by Schwartz and others to be 'one of the most important native leaders in the South Pacific'. Schwartz carried out his fieldwork as a member of the Admiralty Island Expedition of the American Museum of Natural History. The autobiographical sketch from which this fragment comes was dictated by Paliau in Pidgin (Neo-Melanesian) which was the lingua franca of the movement. It was an almost unbroken narrative. On the circumstances of its recording Schwartz states: 'I made no suggestions about the context, but simply stressed that I wanted a detailed story of his life, on which he could spend as much or as little time as he wished. The few places where I deleted partly repetitive or less informative sections, to keep this account within readable bounds are noted. In translation I have tried to maintain the simplicity of the Neo-Melanesian style.' Paliau was born in Lipan village on Baluan Island about 1915. Traditionally he was a member of the highest-ranking family of the Lipan division and traced his descent from Lolokai, one of the big-men of five generations ago whose leadership had been recognised by all Baluan. However, what emerges from this excerpt is his sense of being outside the traditional culture of the island. This was confirmed by his later experience as a policeman until he began about 1937 to implement a plan for reform. This was interrupted by the Pacific War during which as a police sergeant he worked with the Japanese in New Britain. For this action he was held in custody but not charged, returning finally to Baluan in 1946 to begin his movement of reform. Studies of this movement and the cargo cults which developed on Manus in response to the impact of the War have been made at first hand by Schwartz and Margaret Mead. Paliau also gave a verbal account of this period which Schwartz recorded on tape. This and other evidence from indigenous sources as well as his own fieldwork provided the data for Schwartz's study. In 1953 the Baluan Native Council was established by the Administration and Paliau became its first President, remaining President of successive Manus Councils until 1967. He was elected as a member of the House of Assembly for the Manus Open Electorate in the elections of 1964 and 1968. Margaret Mead, who met him when she was leader of the
Museum Expedition in June-December 1953 and who noted the way in which he drew much of his following from the lagoon-dwelling people of South Manus, saw him as a man of great imagination and intelligence and of intense loneliness: 'All his imaginative enthusiasm was for the Manus, to whom he proudly traced one ancestral line ... Speaking in a language which was not his mother tongue, Manus rather than Baluan, he led a stranger people, whose spirit he admired extravagantly, whose landless fate he pitied far more than it deserved, whose vision of a world in which all children who were born lived, and no man's hand was turned against another, and no human being sacrificed for gain, he met with his vision of a unified people, whom he must lead toward a limited earthly paradise to be realistically attained only by hard work and controlled behaviour.' (See M. Mead, New Lives for Old: Cultural Transformation—Manus, 1928-1953, Chapter 8, pp. 165-83 esp. pp. 182-3.) Other studies of Pailiu's movement in a wider context include: A. J. F. Köbben, 'Prophetic Movements as an Expression of Social Protest', Internationales Archiv Für Ethnographie, 1960, Vol. 49, pp. 117-64 and L. P. Mair, 'Independent Religious Movements in Three Continents', Comparative Studies in Society and History, 1958, Vol. 1, pp. 113-36.

PAILIU'S STORY OF HIS LIFE

When I was born to my mother and father, they were still 'cranky.' (This can mean 'insane' or 'foolish,' but in this context means 'backward.') They couldn't make known to me the time or the month that I was born in. I was the same as John here (Pailiu's son, aged seven) when my mother died first and my father died next. It was only a short time. I was still John's age. I cannot see their faces at all. Then I just drifted around. They did not bear another brother to me. They had one daughter who died, then they had me. Soon after, they died. It is the same today, I am just one. When they died I didn't stay just with one person. I was not looked after properly then. I was midway between them all. I was in the middle between Joseph Pati and Ninow Namei. The latter and my mother had the same mother and father. Joseph Pati is a man (a clan brother of Pailiu's father) and Ninow Namei is a woman. I was in the middle between the two. But I wasn't properly cared for. Why? My parents were dead. Later when I was a little older Joseph lived in his own house and Ninow lived in hers. After my father died Ninow took me. She took care of me. But it was characteristic of me even as a child, I didn't stay put. The two of them quarrelled over me. Joseph Pati angrily told Ninow she would have to let me stay with him sometimes. Both of them were right, but it was my way as a child not to stay put with either of them. I stayed here and there among all of the men now. Then I left the two of them altogether and stayed with Kalowin, an old man of Lipan. He was kin to my father and I stayed on my father's land. He looked after me. Later there was a quarrel between him and Joseph Pati ... Later I used to play with other children. When we finished playing, I used to follow them.

I went to their mothers and fathers for meals. I ate the food of everyone around the village. Then I was older.

While I was still young my eyes saw clearly all the big feasts they used to make before. They made big feasts with pigs, gathered all the yams and sweet potatoes and heaped them together. They could get as many as 100 or 200 pigs. Then they made a feast. Their money was dogs' teeth and shell beads. When they made the big feasts, they didn't just do it for nothing. One man would talk, he is the most important man on Baluan. Then he would hold a meeting of his men to make the feast. When it was time for the feast they beat the slit gorges and danced to them. All the men would get a shell from the ocean—a white shell. They would put it on their penises and they would dance with them. Not the women though, they put on new grass skirts to dance. When they dressed up they adorned themselves with shell beads. The meaning of this dance was that they rejoiced in this feast that they made that everyone came to look at. Another meaning it had when all the men put on shells and went to dance was (as if they said), 'I am a man of know-how; I have a great deal of wealth; I have dogs' teeth and shell beads; the rest of you are just rubbish in the village; you are not accustomed to doing this dance.' It is like this. If I am 'rubbish' in having no dogs' teeth, no food and no pigs, then I can't make this dance. This is the mark of men who have much wealth, who raise many pigs, and who make large gardens. All of us children were schooled in this custom. Some learned and some didn't. I didn't learn. Why? Because I knew it was no good. I tried it once. This attempt was not my idea, it was Joseph's. He made what we call a sinal (a carved beam on which this dance is done). They put it on two posts. He sent me onto it. He told me to go up on it for the first time. Then I was to come down on the beam with one of my legs toward one side, and with my other leg toward the other side. Then I return to the middle and make a speech, the speech Joseph had taught me. I came back to the middle and wanted to make my speech on top of this wooden beam. I wanted to speak but my mouth mixed it up. Now I don't know what I said. I was confused. I babbled. I jumped down and turned my back on all the men who were watching the dance. When I jumped down, I didn't go straight to a house. I collapsed onto the grass along with all the decoration on my body, dogs' teeth, shell beads. They had put red paint on my hair and marked my eyes with red paint. I collapsed on the grass. I was extremely sick... It wasn't an hour till I became sick, I think it was only two minutes until I became sick. No one knew about me, no one saw me. Why? Because I fell down in the tall grass. When the feast was over late in the afternoon my body was a little strong then, I got up. I went home, then I was all right.

This old man, the aged father of Pailiu (an older brother of Pailiu's grandfather who was also named Pailiu) whom Joseph Pati had called to this feast that Joseph was making for a woman (as an affinal payment to the old man), was there. The feast lasted two weeks. When it was over this old man for whom the feast was made died. When I was sick, if I died, I think this old man would not have died. When my sickness was finished, I was not dead right then, this man died. I knew this feast had been for him. He had already eaten. He received it along with these pigs and distributed it among his clan. Then he died. Now my mind was decided like this. This custom was no good. I was through with it now. When they made big feasts I didn't go. I could hear them. I could see them when they were made but I wouldn't try it any more myself. When they made the feasts and
when the feast was over a strong sickness used to break out in the village. When a feast was finished and the sickness occurred it used to kill 20 or 30 men. Later they used to say that spirits, tamberan, kill us. The meaning of tamberan was this: if one man dies first, his ghost takes all of us. The ghost of one goes and kills another. If 20 men die, they say that 10 are reciprocation for 10.

When a big feast is finished, there is a famine on Baluan. Why? If they make big gardens and then the gardens are ready, the man who is to make a feast sends word all over Baluan. Everyone digs up all the food to make a big feast. I considered it and I thought it wasn’t right...

By the time I was a little older I found that all my age mates had died from this way of life. If an older man pulled them into it later they died from it. When one died many more in the village followed them. They all had to die. But I didn’t believe this talk about the spirits of the dead. Why didn’t I believe it? It was the way of children; they are ignorant. When I was a child my parents died. I never used to conform properly to any belief. Times when there was much sickness, the time of rain, darkness, thunder, and lightning, all the kin of my father and mother would be cross with me. They would scold me like this, ‘When it is a bad time, when a man has died, when spirits of the dead roam about, you must sit down good, you can’t run about.’ I wouldn’t listen, I wouldn’t stay put. If there was a big rain and they spoke to me, I would go out in the rain. Why? It is the way of children. They are ignorant. They can’t be afraid. That’s how it is, that when I was older I didn’t believe in tamberan. I said this talk of tamberan is a lie.

GOING AWAY TO WORK

Time passed, then I was more grown up. I think I was about 15 years old, when they put me down for government tax. I wasn’t finished with all of these ideas. What ideas? The idea that I wouldn’t accept the talk of the big man who said there were ghosts in the village and my thoughts about all the big feasts. Now that I was older I realized that these feasts caused the loss of many men of Baluan. This continued to stay in my mind. Now, at this time I didn’t travel by canoe. I didn’t go to the big place (the Great Admiralty); I just stayed with the men of the island. Just once, when I was younger, I heard the name Lorengau, and I thought it was one of the big places of the white men. Then once I was taken in a canoe. We went to Lorengau. When I arrived, I saw it was just another place like our own. I was not familiar with Mbukei, I hadn’t gone there. I had gone to Lou; I had gone to Pwam. As for Mouk (the Manus village near Baluan), all the old men of before had said that I had an ancestor there. When I was still small my father used to take me to Mouk. It is the way of children. If their father goes they cry to go with him. They used to go to a small islet here, Takumai. My Manus grandfather that they had spoken of was named Sangol. He belonged to the same clan as Pwankiau who is still alive. He is the old man here in the house over the lagoon. Following this line of relationship through this ancestor, my father used to take me to the house of Pwankiau. I also follow this story and I have taken this old man Pwankiau to live with me here. I associated only with the young men of Baluan. In Mouk I just went straight to Pwankiau. When my father was still alive he used to send all sorts of food to Pwankiau. I only went around with the children of Pwankiau. And almost until I was 15 I just stayed in the village. Then I was marked to pay taxes to the government.

I heard this from the patrol officer who collected the tax. I stood up before his eyes and he said, ‘Next year you will pay tax, now you cannot.’ Then I thought, ‘I am not a fully grown man yet, and they have marked me to be taxed.’ Then I thought about finding money. I started working for a Chinese named Leyu. I worked for two years. I didn’t have whiskeys yet. I was a young boy, not a young man. This Chinese looked at me and said I wasn’t capable of hard work, I was just capable of cooking. He said I was too small. He wanted to send me back, but I was persistent. Why? Because the patrol officer had said I was to be taxed. I wouldn’t have any money. This Chinese for whom I cooked, Leyu, had a business collecting and marketing Trochus shell. Later he brought another Chinese to help him in this work. This Chinese who assisted was Akan... This Chinese Akan didn’t have a servant. Soon Leyu dismissed me as his cook and sent me to Akan. I worked as cook for him for two years. During this time that: I cooked for him I received two shillings a month, one length of cloth per month, and two sticks of tobacco, a little matches, and a little soap each week. When I finished, I was given £5 for these two years. When I finished my work I was angry, while I was at work also I was angry. My anger was for this reason, these two Chinese didn’t pay well. I was angry, but I didn’t quarrel with them. I wasn’t lazy about work. I just kept it to myself. When I had finished the two years I divided the £5. For £2.10s. I bought myself some things in the store. The other £2.10s. I brought to the village. I gave it to Joseph Pati and all the kin of my father and mother. When they saw that I had come back, and they came to see me, they all cried. The meaning of their crying was this. I was lost for two years when their eyes couldn’t see me. When I came back they all looked with recognition at my face that was like the face of my father who had died. They all saw that I looked like my mother who had died. Because of this all the kin of my father and mother came to cry over me. When Joseph Pati saw all these people he opened my box that I had bought at the store. He took all the small things that I had brought along with this £2.10s. and he divided it among all these relatives of my father and mother who had come.

What I have just told is the same for all the men of Manus. The first time that I went to work I saw that this was not right. Why did I see it wasn’t right? I went to find money for the government tax. So that I wouldn’t go to jail over them. I had also bought a few little things such as laplap (a length of cloth worn as clothing, like a wrap-around skirt from waist to knees, worn by both men and women) and some other things from the store also. Then Joseph Pati divided it up among all these people, and I am again rubbish. I no longer have anything. This sort of thing didn’t just happen to me; it happened to all the men of Baluan and Manus together. Others who had gone among the white men previously had come and received the same treatment also. They couldn’t hold on to a single thing. They all thought it was all right. But I understood now, and I thought it was wrong. It made nothing of me. Why was this? They all valued all this money from before that belonged to our ancestors—dogs’ teeth and shell. They all valued all the ornaments of the past, the grass skirts and the leaves used for adornment. The women used leaves. The men pounded the bark of a tree and wore it. They all thought about all these things, then when they went to work for the white man and came back they threw away all their money on their kin. Now I was poor. Now what? I was angry in my mind, but I didn’t express anger with my mouth. Soon the Kip (government officer) would come for money and I had none.
I thought again of going to ask this Chinese if I could work for him. I went with him again for another two years. I went and stayed with this Chinese, Akan, who was still in the same business. I got my pay just as before. The monthly rate was the same. When the two years were up I received again £5... I sent the money on to the village, but I didn’t go. Another Chinese wanted me again. He was named Akim. He wanted me to go shoot pigeons for him with a shotgun. I cooked, too. I stayed with him for six months. Then he beat me. He wanted me to herd the goats of the doctor into the house. I refused to obey. I said, ‘These goats are not mine, they are the doctor’s.’ Then he beat me. I pushed his arm away. He went to get his gun to shoot me with it, but I ran away into the bush. Later I went to the government officer and told him. He said, ‘Never mind, go back to the village. That’s the way Chinese are. You two will always be cross and they don’t think. Eventually he will really shoot you.’

I went back to my village. My money was gone. They had already divided it up among all the brothers, sisters, and other relatives of my mother...