

**LEGENDS OF THE
ABAU OF IDAM VALLEY
WEST SEPIK PROVINCE
PAPUA NEW GUINEA**

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1. AKATAULUK AND THE TWO SISTERS

As told by Tumlio and Feinou of Bisiaburu, Idam Valley



Plate 1. Tumlio of Bisiaburu, Idam Valley (1972-3 BM30:17)

Akatauluk made a ‘hide’ in a *ficus* tree to shoot birds feeding on the fruit. He told a boy that they would go and wait for the birds the next day. A *bup* spirit heard them talking. Early in the morning, this spirit woke Akatauluk and, disguised as the boy, went with him into the bush. They had to paddle upriver to get to the tree. During the journey, Akatauluk glanced over his shoulder and noticed bright lights under his companion’s armpits — one of the characteristics of a spirit. He then realised that he had a spirit with him.

When they got to the tree, Akatauluk told the spirit to wait below while he climbed the tree to shoot at the birds from the hide but first he caused many evil, poisonous things to gather around the roots of the tree. They waited for the birds to come and then Akatauluk shot many of them with his bow and arrows. As they fell to the

ground, the spirit collected them, broke off their heads and tore the bodies in two. One lot of half-carcases he set aside for Akatauluk but he ate his share without bothering to cook them.

Akatauluk saw what the spirit was doing and yelled out, “Why are you messing up my birds?”

The spirit replied, “You come down out of there. You are my food!”

“Come and get me,” retorted Akatauluk.

The spirit tried to climb the tree to get Akatauluk but all the poisonous things bit him and he fell to the ground. He tried again and again until Akatauluk called out, “I am coming down now.” He put a spell on the leaves and branches of which the hide was made and threw them down and they seemed to the spirit to be Akatauluk himself. He chased each thing as it was thrown down but he never caught Akatauluk, only leaves and branches.

When Akatauluk ran out of leaves and branches he wondered what to do next. He took a betel nut, hollowed it out, made himself tiny and crawled inside. He fitted perfectly.

Akatauluk had already thrown down his bowstring. He had thrown it a long, long way away and as it fell it had called out in Akatauluk’s voice, tricking the spirit again. Now he had only his bow left. He instructed it to call out in his voice as it fell. Then he threw it a very long, long way away and the spirit chased after it.

Meanwhile, Akatauluk climbed into the betel nut and fell to the ground. A tortoise came along, picked it up and hid the nut deep in the sand at the bottom of the river. All the fish, eels and tortoises gathered over the spot. The spirit returned but he could not find Akatauluk. The canoe was still there but there was no sign of Akatauluk.

The spirit went to get a drink and wondered whether perhaps Akatauluk might be in the water. He pushed the water-creatures aside, at which they exclaimed angrily, “What are you looking for? There is no-one down here. How could a man live at the

bottom of a river?” The spirit ignored them and continued his search. However, he became cold and returned to the surface to warm himself in the sun. Akatauluk stayed where he was because the tortoise reported to him that the spirit had not gone away but was just sunning himself.

Eventually the spirit got up and searched some more, pushing aside branches and logs and stirring the water into mud, killing many fish. But his eyes got sore and red, so he returned to the surface and hung upside down in the sky, observing the place where he believed Akatauluk to be hidden. The tortoise saw him there and instructed Akatauluk and the animals that they should not leave their positions yet.

At this time the tortoise was making a string bag. It left the task to go up and make another observation and reported back that half the spirit was still visible — the top half, from the waist up. The tortoise finished the string bag, then went up again. This time he saw that the spirit had disappeared entirely. He went back down and told Akatauluk. The water was still very muddy and many fish had died.

Downstream, two unmarried sisters were netting fish from their canoe, working their way upstream. The older one’s name was Lobwei and the younger one’s name was Wabiei. As they came over the spot where Akatauluk was hidden, the betel nut came to the surface. It popped up into the air and then fell back into the water. It had changed its form and looked like some other kind of seed.

The older sister, Lobwei, said, “What was that? A seed of some kind?” She retrieved it and remarked, “It is a nice-looking seed.” But the younger sister said, “Oh, it is only a seed. Throw it away.” However, Lobwei (who was ugly because she had sores all over her backside), insisted that she was going to take it home and plant it. They argued about it for some time, but Lobwei remained adamant.

They got lots of fish and continued on to their village upstream. There Lobwei planted the nut near their house. They cooked and ate some of the fish they had caught and went to sleep. In the morning they saw that an areca palm had grown to full size where Lobwei had planted the seed and it bore big bunches of betel nuts. Then the younger sister wanted the palm for herself but Lobwei reminded her that she had

wanted to throw the seed away and it was only because she, Lobwei, had insisted, that they had the palm at all. They argued about this. Then Wabiei suggested that they get their other sister and share the betel nuts. But Lobwei opposed this. “No. You leave it alone. It is my palm. I will get the nuts.”

So she climbed the palm to get the bunches of nuts. However, Akatauluk, who was hidden inside near the top of the palm, poked her with a sharp spine and she was forced to retreat. She tried again and again, but the spine kept pricking her body till the blood ran.

Then Lobwei persuaded her younger sister to try. Wabiei climbed up and was a long time at the top. Lobwei became impatient and urged her to hurry up, but Wabiei called out that she couldn’t because the stems of the bunches of betel nuts were too tough to break. Actually she was being held by Akatauluk, who was talking to her. “Do you have a room of your own in the house?”

“Yes.”

“I will come there tonight but do not tell Lobwei.”

Then she came down and Lobwei gave up trying to get the nuts. They ate and went to sleep.

That night Akatauluk came out of the palm and it collapsed, for it was only a bark shell held up by the presence of the man inside it. He went to Wabiei’s room and hid there. In the morning Lobwei saw that the tree had fallen down and that it had no insides. She wondered what was going on. Had there been a man inside it?

Both the sisters went out to make sago flour. Akatauluk came out of hiding, got all their cooking utensils (tongs, sago stirrers, etc) and hid them inside the house. The sisters returned and put the stones on a fire so that they could make hot water for the sago jelly. Lobwei went to get the utensils and discovered Akatauluk. The sisters made the sago jelly and began to argue heatedly over who should have the man.

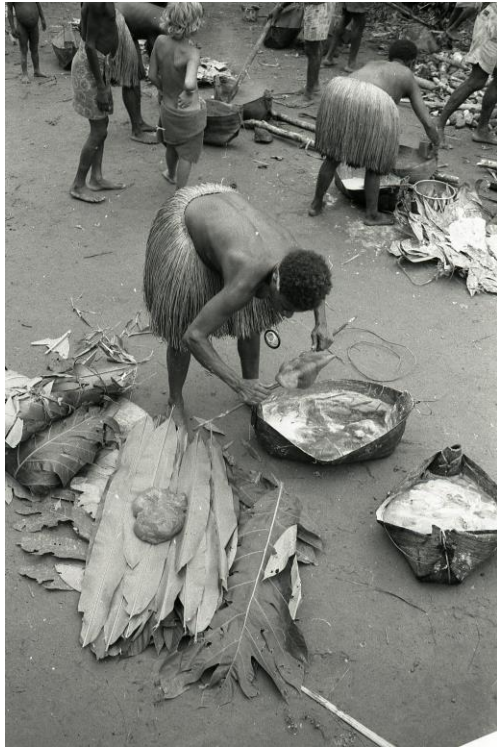


Plate 2. Bamblediam woman preparing ‘hot-water’ sago jelly (1972-3 BM16:9)

Plate 3. Bundles of ‘hot-water’ sago jelly placed in a pile, Bamblediam Village, Idam Valley (1972-3 BM16:17)

Lobwei said, “I brought the seed here and planted it. That man is mine.” To which Wabiei replied, “Are you a good-looking woman? He would not want you.”

Then Wabiei and Akatauluk devised a plan to trick Lobwei and get away together in the canoe. They decided to pretend that they had found a possum in a tree and that Akatauluk would climb up to get it. Whilst Akatauluk was up the tree, Wabiei would pierce holes in all the bark sago baskets to prevent Lobwei utilising one of them as a canoe. Then Akatauluk would dislodge a *bodbod* (arboreal orchid) which would fall to the ground and assume his form. Lobwei would believe it to be him and would mourn his death. Meanwhile the two lovers would escape in the canoe, leaving the older, ugly sister behind.

All went according to plan and the *bodbod* fell with a loud thump. Wabiei shouted, “Hey, your man has fallen down.” Lobwei ran to the place and mourned what she thought was Akatauluk. And so the lovers escaped. However, the mother of the two sisters had seen them escaping and came and told Lobwei. “You think you are

mourning your man? They have tricked you. They got away in the canoe. This is only *bodbod* you are crying over.”



Plate 4. Well-used black-palm basket for sago; Iaburu, Sepik-Hauser junction (USEE 1968 BM1:23).

Lobwei ran to the river with the baskets but they sank, all but one small one which Wabiei had overlooked. All the time, Lobwei was singing, “He is not your man; he is mine. I found the seed and planted it. He is mine.” She put her things in the basket and paddled upstream after the escaping couple.

Now a man named Alaleima lived upstream. The young lovers had asked him to cut a long bamboo pole and pull Lobwei ashore, if she came by, to prevent her continuing the pursuit. So Alaleima got ready and when he saw her coming he hooked onto her basket and pulled her ashore. He thought to himself, “You have horrible sores but that’s alright, I have medicine to fix them up.” Then he began to have intercourse with her.

Now Alaleima had two penises. The one at the front was small, and Lobwei complained derisively, “That’s too small.” So Alaleima turned around and gave it to her with the huge penis he had at the rear. This caused blood to run over her sores,

which were around her backside and vagina. Blood flowed freely. Then he tried to take his penis out but could not disengage. So they went down to the river and were then able to disengage. Alaleima washed the blood from Lobwei's sores, rubbed them with a special ginger preparation and they healed.

So Lobwei stayed with Alaleima and Akatauluk and Wabiei lived together.

2. LABIOU, THE WALLABY

As told by Saisayat and Unafio of Selelian, Idam Valley

A woman gave birth to a son. One day she went to get firewood. She put the child in a string-bag and hung it up at the base of a tree whilst she cut the firewood. This work made her sweat a lot, so she went to wash. A wallaby came and took the child in the string bag into the bush. The woman returned to find the child gone, and cried out. She hurried back to the settlement and demanded to know who had stolen her baby, but nobody could help her. "It was your child," they said. "Why didn't you look after it better?"



Plate 5. Child in string bag, Bibiyun, Yapsie (August) River (USEE 1968 BM10:33).

Then the woman mourned, “A spirit took my child. A spirit took my child.”

Meanwhile, the wallaby brought the child to a large tree where there was shelter among the buttress roots. It wondered what to feed the child. It got some grubs from under the bark of sago trees and the child ate them. He slept well amongst the roots where he was sheltered from the rain, but the wallaby was partly exposed to the weather. The wallaby really cared for the child — not like human parents who sometimes neglect their children.

They went everywhere together, the wallaby feeding the child on sago grubs. Then when the boy was bigger, the wallaby stole a bow and arrows from a settlement and the boy learnt to hunt and to shoot birds. They stole bananas from the boy’s parents’ garden. The boy also made a shelter from the leaves of the black palm and they slept in that.

One day, the wallaby left the boy. It was unable to make tools and utensils to help the boy in his work so it went to see if it could find some. It found a man working in a garden with a stone adze. All the man’s other utensils were in a string bag. He got sweaty from his exertions and went to a creek to wash, leaving his stone tools, his bow and arrows, his fire tongs, his gourd lime container, his tobacco leaf and all his other personal belongings in the string bag. The wallaby gathered up all these things and took them back to the boy.

When the boy saw the stone adze, he decided to build a house on a hill. He cut many trees, including two kwila [*Intsia bijuga*] trees for posts, one to place at each end. He built the house in a day; first the frame, then the roof and then the floor and walls of bark. He made several hearths and, in the centre of the house, constructed a lowered springy platform for dancing. The platform in such houses is used for celebration dances following successful raids on enemy settlements.

When the house was completed, he planted out a garden: bananas, yams, taro, sweet potato, *apika* (a green leaf vegetable), pandanus, tobacco, coconut palms, betel nut palms, and plants to provide materials for making tools and utensils. Then he went out looking for enemies to kill.

In the house was a room for his 'father', the wallaby. When he caught game, the boy always gave his 'father' the liver and belly-fat to eat.

The wallaby was concerned about how much work it was for the boy to cut and scrape sago and make sago jelly, to hunt and cook game, to cut firewood, and all the other things that had to be done. So one day, the wallaby went down to Keiyap Creek and cast a spell, and the water became muddy. Two unmarried women, who were menstruating at the time, were downstream. They saw the muddy water and said, "Let's go catch fish." Meantime, the wallaby had changed into a *kwasap* (tree fern) and was standing on a sandbank. The women came to the spot and said, "Let's put our things under this *kwasap* while we go fishing." They went off, catching many fish.

The wallaby hung up all the women's things on its neck and waited. But it got tired of waiting for the women to come back, so it said a spell and the water became clear again. The women returned, their baskets full of fish. They hung up their baskets and fish-nets on the *kwasap* and reached for their skirts, but the wallaby ran off, taking all the women's things with it. It swam to the other side of the river and called out, "Why don't you two come over here?"

The women said to each other, "Let's go and kill that wallaby."

They chased after the wallaby but it kept running off when they got close. They were determined to retrieve their things so they did not give up. Although the house was really quite close, the wallaby led them to it in a roundabout way. It led them back and forth until they believed that they were a long way from the river. But the women continued the chase because they were afraid that their parents would be annoyed if they lost their things.

At last the women came to where the young man had cut down all the trees and they thought they had the wallaby cornered. They had not seen the house yet, but the young man saw them coming. He had killed a pig and was sitting down chewing betel nut, waiting for his 'father' while it was cooking.

The young man saw his 'father' first, and then saw the women following. The wallaby came to the house and sat down and the young man thought, "What has my father been doing that these two women are following him?" The women saw the house and its gardens, and marvelled; it was a very nice place indeed. Then they saw the young man and were ashamed, because they were naked. He called out to them, "Come and get your things. My father took them but you must come and get them back."

But the women were afraid. Although the young man was from their own settlement, they did not know who he was and were afraid. He called out again, "Come and get your things." So they went and got their things and were impressed with what a nice place it was. The young man invited them to stay and eat bananas before leaving, but it was already late in the afternoon and they argued about whether they should stay the night or go back immediately; or whether one of them should stay and the other return. They both liked the man and wanted to stay. He told them to take whatever they wanted to eat, sugarcane, bananas or whatever. He also told them to take firewood and make a big fire to heat stones; and he invited them to chew his betel nut.

The women were dubious. "What if someone gets annoyed at us for eating their bananas and other food?"

"No. There will be no problem. Go ahead." So they agreed. They heated stones and the young man told them to make sago jelly and to cook the fish in leaves in the fire.

The women asked, "What if someone complains that we are using their sago?"

"No. There will be no complaints. Go ahead."

So they cooked their fish, made the sago jelly and took it into the house. The young man told them to eat the sago jelly but that he could not give them any pork as it was reserved for his people. He was tricking them into thinking that there were lots of people living with him. He instructed them to bring all the food up into the house and divide it between them. They objected that someone might be angry with them for eating all the food but he assured them that it would be alright. Then they ate the pork and he ate the fish and they went to sleep.

In the morning, they got up, cooked their food and chewed betel nut. They were making themselves quite at home. They had decided to stay.

The young man said to them, “Okay, get your things together and return to your people.” But they replied, “No, this is our place now. Your ‘father’ confused us and we do not know the way back to our people. We will stay.” They were both very much attracted to the young man. They asked him, “Whose sago is that?”

He replied, “That belongs to my people, but you can cut one down,” once again tricking them into believing that there were others living with him. He cut down the sago palm and they washed out the flour. Then he went off and shot a pig. They did this for many days. They smoked a lot of pork and hung it up in the house.

Meanwhile, the girls’ people mourned them and went out to hunt game for the mourning feast.

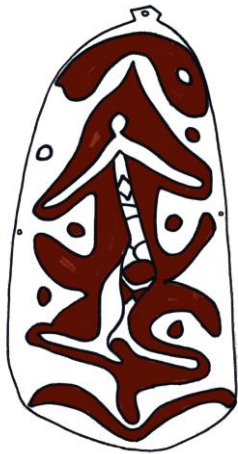
The young man constructed a ‘hide’ in a *figus* tree from which to shoot hornbills. He shot many of them, took their black and white feathers, and decorated his natal string bag, which he and his ‘father’ had carefully preserved. He and his ‘father’ attached the feathers and put betel nut and tobacco leaf in the bag. The wallaby put it around its neck so that it hung down its back, then went down to the place where it had originally stolen the child and began to sing and dance, referring obliquely to the way it had stolen the child from the woman.

The woman’s people heard the noise and went to investigate. They brought their canoes to the place but the wallaby ran off and halted at the feet of the young man, who was hiding in the bush with his bow and arrows at the ready, chewing betel nut. The people decided to track the wallaby, calling out, “He is in the bush there.”

They began to follow the tracks, but the young man went down to the sandbank and threatened them, and they all ran away, some on foot and some in their canoes.

The wallaby followed the young man. The people were retreating back to their settlement and the young man called after them, “Come and get me.” But they replied, “You might kill us.”

“No,” he said, “I will not kill you.” So they took two canoes, making a platform over them so that they could not be attacked and capsized, and went to fetch the young man and his wallaby ‘father’.



Wallaby image on shield carved by Deikon of Baiuwai, Sepik River, 1969

They brought them back to the settlement. The young man went into the house but the wallaby had to stay underneath, for the ladder up into the house was too difficult for him to climb. The people fed them and they talked together till the young man said that it was time for him and his ‘father’ to return to their own house. He asked them why they were accumulating so much smoked meat. They told him that they were mourning two lost young women as well as a lost baby; the people were only just now ready to hold the mourning feast for them. They did not know that the baby had grown to manhood in just a few months. He asked them when they were planning to have the feast and they told him, tomorrow. He merely said, “Okay,” and he and his ‘father’ returned to their house to sleep. He did not tell them that he was the lost baby boy or that the two girls were with him.

The people at the settlement made lots of sago jelly and so did the young man. He went down and ate theirs and then they all came up to feast at his place. He asked them, ‘Do you understand what the wallaby was singing about?’

Then he told them about how his wallaby 'father' had stolen him in the string bag whilst his mother was cutting firewood. At this revelation his real parents hugged him and cried. The young man then asked them if they knew what had happened to the two young women. They replied, "They went fishing. The river became muddy and they went upstream to catch fish but never returned."

"No," he said, "here they are." And he brought them out so the people could see them. They all cried with relief and joy that the girls were alive.

Now the two women had had many children. The young man pointed out which children belonged to which woman. The people decided to stay with the young man and his two wives and to abandon their own settlement. But first they returned to their settlement for a celebration dance. The young man put the wallaby in his string bag and carried him there but he did not feed it, so during the night the wallaby went off and stole some food from a man's garden. In the morning the two wives asked the people, "Did anyone feed the wallaby. It has gone."

"No," someone answered. "I think it must have gone off somewhere to get food and has been killed."

It had indeed been killed, and when it was shot it had called out in a man's voice. But although the killers knew that it must be the young man's 'father', they killed and ate it anyway, although everyone had been warned not to harm it.

The people waited and waited for the wallaby to return but in vain. They searched and searched but could not find it. Then the young man came upon the place where his 'father' had been killed and he heard some men talking about it. He saw them eating and discarding the wallaby's bones and overheard them say, "It was only a wallaby. It couldn't have been the young man's father. It was alright for us to kill and eat it."

The young man took one of the wallaby's bones back to the settlement and showed his wives. Then he took his stone adze and fashioned a dagger from the bone, returning quickly to where he had seen the men who had killed his 'father'. They were still eating when he attacked and killed with the dagger all those who had tasted of his

‘father’, ten family groups in all. Those who had not eaten of his ‘father’, he spared. He asked them if there were any others who had eaten of his ‘father’. “No,” they replied, “you have killed them all.”

He had indeed killed them all - men, women and children. He then returned to his own house, beat his hand drum and blew his wooden trumpet, rejoicing that his ‘father’ was avenged. He said to them all, “We did not hide from them that the wallaby was my father. They knew, but took no notice. It was their own fault.”

3. THE ADVENTURES OF A SPIRIT-MAN

As told by Saisayat and Unafio of Selelian, Idam Valley

Three people lived together: a man, his wife and a spirit-man. But the man and his wife thought that their companion was a real man; they called him *kam* (cousin). The man and his wife used good water from a creek to drink and to cook with, but the spirit-man had to drink water squeezed from rotting wood and vegetation. When they ate, the man and his wife ate sago jelly with their meat, but to the spirit-man they gave meat only. They would not give him any sago so he made sago jelly for himself from the water squeezed out of rotten logs.

One day the spirit-man was sleeping in the house when he saw light rippling on the underside of the roof. It was the sun reflecting from a pool of water. He went to find where it was. He realised it was reflecting from water and eventually he located it. But as he bent down to drink, it dried up immediately and all he got was a mouthful of dust. He went and got his stone adze, cut two small trees, sharpened them into stakes, and stuck them into the ground where the water had been. He bent them apart so that they split the group open, and water gushed to the surface. There was so much water it caused a flood.

Whilst all this was happening to the spirit-man, the married man was off in the forest hunting with his dogs. The spirit-man threw lots of rubbish into the water: bits of wood, leaves, breadfruit and other things; these turned into fish, crocodiles and tortoises. Then he made five canoes: one of *kwila* (a hardwood), the second of *alima*

(the usual timber for canoes), the third of *malak* (a red-leaved tree), the fourth of *yiknan*, and the fifth of *eiwal*. Then he carved designs on the kwila canoe and decorated it with feathers.



Plate 6. Three canoes being carved from *alima* timber near Bamblediam, Idam Valley; Wakin in foreground (1972-3 BM19:5)

The first four canoes he hid in the bush, leaving the fifth in the water. After that, he returned to the house and tried to have intercourse with the woman through her navel. But this did not work so he got a sliver of bamboo and cut her hymen. Now he was able to have sex with her properly.

He returned to the water and decided that it was too clear — people would finish off all the fish. So he followed the creek up to its headwaters and stomped around in it to make it muddy. He put a spell on it so that it would always remain like that.

Meanwhile the husband had killed only a few immature animals — piglets, small cassowaries, and so on. He returned along the track to find a swift, deep river between him and the house. He did not know how he was going to get across and sat down on the bank with his dogs. Then he saw the canoe over in front of his house and called out for someone to come and get him.

The spirit-man suggested to the woman that she go but she didn't want to because she was afraid of the crocodiles in the river. So the spirit-man paddled across to the husband but instead of taking the man aboard the canoe and paddling him home, the spirit-man returned to the other side paddling underwater. He laughed at the man as he tricked him, for he was angry that he had been forced to drink water squeezed from rotten logs and that the clean water had been hidden from him.

The spirit-man called out to the husband: "Come on across the water!"

"How?" asked the man.

The spirit-man got into the *alima* canoe, paddled it across, and again returned underwater without the man. He repeated the same trick with the *yiknan* and *malak* canoes.

Now the spirit-man had instructed one of the crocodiles to grab a particularly miserable-looking dog, which would be sitting on the prow of the next canoe that he paddled across. Then he got the *kwila* canoe, paddled to the other side and took on board the man and his dogs. The 'rubbish' dog, a skinny animal, sat at the prow and, as they crossed the river, the crocodile grabbed the dog and pulled it into the water.

The man was afraid but angry, too, at the loss of his dog. When they got to the bank, he drew his bow to kill the spirit-man but the latter quickly paddled out of reach.

"Why do you want to kill me?" he asked.

"Because you kept me waiting so long and now I am very hungry. It's your own fault."

The spirit-man retorted: "Okay, you can kill me. But I have fixed up your wife. Go and see what it is like to have sex with her now."

So the man went and had sex with his wife and it was most enjoyable. Then he called out to the spirit-man, "Okay, you can come back. I was just very hungry and it made me very angry." So the spirit-man returned and they were friends again.

They slept and next morning the spirit-man proposed that they dam the river to catch fish. "How can we do that? It is too big," objected the man.

"I can do it," the spirit-man assured him. He cut lots of trees to make a dam and the husband threw leaves against the barrier and the water backed up. "Hurry up," the spirit-man called. "We must get the fish before the water breaks down the dam."

They collected all the fish from the dry river bed downstream from the dam.

Then the spirit-man said, "I am going to have a wash." He went to the house and decorated himself with feathers and other ornaments, and took his hand drum.

"What are you doing?" asked the husband.

"I am going to bathe," replied the spirit-man.

"But why are you putting on decorations?"

"That is what I do when I bathe." The spirit-man told the husband to cut the vine that held the dam together, while he stood in the dry riverbed below. The husband objected, but the spirit-man insisted. So the husband cut the vine, the dam broke, and the water swept the spirit-man downstream. He sang as he was borne along, beating his hand drum. He was swept down into the deepest parts of the river and was carried along by the tide. Eventually he was cast ashore and lay in the sand like a log.

Now this was a place where women came to get water. Four women were preparing sago jelly. One came down to the river to get water. As she bent over, the spirit-man's penis became erect and he penetrated her. She returned to her house.

Another of the women came down to get water and the same thing happened. The third woman also had the same experience. They were instantly pregnant.

The fourth woman saw that the others were pregnant and wondered how it could have happened. She too went down to get water but she was a little too far from the spirit-man and his penis missed her. He was quite upset. The woman did not notice. She went back and questioned the other three women about how they became pregnant but they would not answer her, so she went and sat down in her house.

The three women went down to the river, dug out the spirit-man with a stick and washed him clean. Then they saw that he was a man and all four women became his wives.

4. NABUWAL, THE STAR

As told by Saisayat and Unafio of Selelian, Idam Valley

Nabuwal was a star. He chewed betel nut, spat the red juice down onto the ground, and a woman menstruated. The following month he did it again, and again she menstruated. She was married to another man, but Nabuwal was enamoured of her. This happened again and again.

Now the woman's husband, Kiluwudnau, decided to go to a dance at a settlement called Miniaburu [on the Hauser River]. The woman intended going too, but Nabuwal chewed betel and spat and she began to menstruate. When she asked if she could go, her husband replied, "No. You are menstruating. You stay here."

Then the woman called on all biting insects — ants, centipedes, scorpions, and so on — to gather under the house to protect her from seducers. Nabuwal came down and tried to get into the house but the insects prevented him. He saw a coconut tree nearby. He climbed it and threw a green coconut, then jumped through the hole it made in the roof of Kiluwudnau's house. He immediately attempted to rape the woman, but she resisted him and fought strongly. Her husband's mother fought him too, but Nabuwal

broke their collarbones and thus overcame them both. The woman fell on her back and Nabuwal raped her.

When he had finished, he forced her to go with him. She was wearing a large skirt and as they went she broke off bits of her skirt, leaving a trail for her husband to follow. They went up river till they came to a mountain. They climbed the mountain and came to Nabuwal's place in the sky. Then some of the Nabuwal's people said, "Why did you bring that woman here? She is the wife of a great warrior."

"That's alright," Nabuwal retorted, "I am a fighter too."

The woman refused to eat and mourned her husband, Kiluwudnau. His name meant 'a pig and a cassowary' because he was a great hunter and fighter.

Kiluwudnau returned by canoe the next morning. As he came close he noticed that there was no smoke rising from the house. When he got there he found only his mother, who said to him, "Why did you leave your wife? There are many different kinds of men around. Look at my shoulder — broken! We fought strongly against the ravisher but he raped your wife and carried her away." She told him all that had happened. "See how the house is a shambles?" Kiluwudnau said nothing, but went to sleep.

The next morning, Kiluwudnau took his bow and arrows and searched everywhere for his wife, and the next day also. He came home to sleep but he did not eat. While he was asleep his wife's spirit came to him and said, "You have been looking everywhere but you have not found me. Follow the river upstream and look for pieces of my skirt that I hung on twigs and branches. Follow those and you will find me."

In the morning, Kiluwudnau woke up and took his bow and arrows and followed the river upstream. Then he found pieces of his wife's skirt, as she had told him, and he knew he was on the right track. He followed the trail until he came to the mountain and continued to follow it to the top. The *amlou* bird called out to the woman "Kiluwudnau is coming now. Kiluwudnau is coming now."

Now Nabuwal's sister was mourning with Kiluwudnau's wife, because she was now her sister-in-law. Nabuwal became angry and made them both shut up. "So you think he is the only hunter around here? I can kill pigs too!"

Kiluwudnau arrived and hid near the place where people came to excrete. When his wife came to relieve herself, he poked her with a stick. She ignored it but when she had finished, he poked her again. "Who's that?" she asked.

"Me. Kiluwudnau, your husband."

"No, I think you are some other man."

"No, I am your husband."

"How did you get here? Why did you come?"

"You showed me the way. You told me about the trail marked with pieces of your skirt."

Then she was sure that this was her husband. "I am going to make a fire and get some water. You hide," she said.

Her husband told her, "When you make sago jelly, leave some aside and bring it to me along with some meat if there is any."

"I don't eat much," said his wife. "I will keep some of my share for you. When Nabuwal has eaten he sleeps soundly and he will not hear you coming." So Kiluwudnau told her, "When it is ready I will come to the house and you give me the food. When I have eaten, I will kill Nabuwal." Then he asked, "Who is the woman who was crying with you?"

"She is the sister of the man who raped me and brought me here."

Kiluwudnau's wife returned to the house and said, "It is nearly night time. Let us take out the meat."

So they ate and then Nabuwal fell asleep. Kiluwudnau crept to the house and shook the hearthpost below the house. His wife heard and brought food to him. He ate, then told her to go and pack her things. He instructed her, "When I come up into the house and make a noise, you make the fire flare up."

She did as he said. When he gave the signal she built up the fire and Kiluwudnau shot Nabuwal, first in the heart with a *siknas* [an arrow with a barbed bamboo blade], then under each armpit with a *huksik* [an arrow with a broad bamboo blade for shooting pigs]. Thus he killed Nabuwal.

Kiluwudnau's wife woke Nabuwal's sister and said to her, "Wake up! We are being attacked! Look at your brother!"

Nabuwal's sister became afraid and hurriedly gathered her things together and they all three left quickly and returned to Kiluwudnau's house. His mother was overjoyed that he had brought back his wife, as well as another woman to help with the household chores.

In the morning, the Nabuwal people saw a great deal of smoke rising from their kinsman's house and went to investigate. They found Nabuwal's blood everywhere and the women gone. They said, "Ahhh. So you wouldn't listen to us. You stole another man's wife and now look where it got you." Thus they threw mocking comments at his body. "Why are you sleeping? You will have to steal another man's wife now."

But Nabuwal's close friends wanted to avenge his death.

Kiluwudnau got ready for them. He took two arrows and stuck them into the ground on either side of the house. He cast a spell, saying to the arrows, "When I say, 'My hand is hurting', you must rise and kill all my enemies."

Nabuwal's friends came and surrounded the house. The women cried, "They are surrounding us."

"Do not worry," Kiluwudnau reassured them.

Nabuwal people shot arrows at the house and Kiluwudnau returned the shots, killing three men with every arrow he shot. He fired arrows until his hand hurt. Then he called out "Okay, get them now. My hand is hurting."

At this, the two arrows flew out of the ground and slew them all — all except one man who ran away. He got back to his settlement in the sky. He made a white clay penis and gave it to the women and said, "When you want to have sex, you will have to use this."

When he said this, the men who had remained behind became angry, and the women taunted them: "The first lot did not fight properly. Go and finish off Kiluwudnau."

So the men attacked again and all the events of the first encounter were repeated. Once again the one man escaped and returned to his settlement to make another clay penis and give it to the women. Now there were no men left except for this one man.

Kiluwudnau went to Miniaburu, gathered the men together and said, "Let us go and get the women of the Nabuwal people. I have killed all the men."

So they went — up the river, up the mountain, and up into the sky, where they attacked the settlement. They killed all the pigs and any women and children with blemish, keeping the good-looking ones for themselves. They cut sago trees and made sago jelly to eat with the pigs they had killed. Some they ate there and some they took back to their settlement, along with the women and children they had spared. They also brought back the man who had twice escaped and Kiluwudnau gave him his sister in exchange for Nabuwal's sister.

5. MOLWIFLU, THE HORNBILL MAN

As told by Saisayat and Unafio of Selelian, Idam Valley

A woman was given in marriage to Molwiflu. She wanted to live with him, eat with him, sleep with him, but her father would not allow it, saying “You must wait. You must not go to him too soon.” For a long time he prevented her from being with him.

Early one morning, Molwiflu took his canoe upstream to go hunting. He searched and searched but only shot one hornbill. He took it to a sandbank, skinned it, and sewed the skin over his own body, hiding his bow and arrows inside the skin as well. He could fly like a hornbill and cry out like a hornbill. When he took the skin off, he was a man again, with a man’s voice.

Meanwhile his wife had gone by canoe to her garden. Molwiflu, as a man, walked to her garden — he had decided that he would no longer be denied his marital privileges. He found her and helped her load her canoe with fruit and vegetables from the garden. Then he made a fire and they ate some food, after which they spent a very long time having intercourse.

Molwiflu told his wife to paddle the canoe out to midstream and tie the canoe to a log sticking out of the water there. She did so. Molwiflu put his bow and arrows inside the hornbill skin and put it on, then flew out and stood on the prow of the canoe, crying out like a hornbill. His wife was troubled when she saw the transformation. She paddled downstream to her settlement.

When they got close, Molwiflu flew up and sat in the branch of a tall *alima* tree. The woman went to her father and said, “Why are you stopping me from living with my husband? Look at that hornbill. Is it yours? Is it even truly a bird? No, it is a man; it is my man!”

This made her father angry and he tried to get the bird-man down. He tried chopping down the tree with a stone adze but the adze broke; then he tried to cut it down with a stone sago-palm cutter but that broke too; then he tried to knock it down with a

gardening stick but it smashed. He became so angry he decided to hang himself with a piece of rattan. So he hung himself and died.

The hornbill-man stood on the branch of the *alima* tree for several days, watching while his wife mourned her father. Then he took off and flew downstream to a place where there were two single women and no men. He stood on the branch of a small breadfruit tree.

“Oh, look! Let us kill that bird for food,” one woman said to the other. “But how? We are not men and have no bow and arrows.” So they got bits of firewood to throw at the hornbill-man.

Just then, Molwiflu called out in a man’s voice, “You must not try to kill me. I am not a bird; I am a man.”

They were amazed and became afraid and dropped the wood. Molwiflu shed his hornbill skin and came down from the tree. He said, “I had better leave now.”

But the women objected. “No,” they pleaded, “stay with us.”

“But your men will kill me.”

“No, we have no men. We live alone. Here, eat some food.”

So Molwiflu ate some food and it grew late. “I will have to go now,” he said. But the two women pressed him to stay.

“Stay a few days at least,” they pleaded, “Then you can go back.” It became dark and they said, “See, no men have come. We have no men. We are not hiding them. Sleep here.”

Meantime, Molwiflu’s wife had become pregnant and bore a son — all within a few days. Molwiflu’s niece came to help her look after the boy. They got a basket full of water and some ginger that promotes rapid growth in children. They scraped the

ginger into the water, put the child in it and cut the umbilical cord. They took him out and immediately he was able to walk. They gave him a bow and arrows and immediately he went out and shot birds.

Now Molwiflu had had intercourse with the two sisters and very soon the older sister had a son and the younger sister had a daughter. There was also a third sister.

The son of Molwiflu's first wife said, "My father is coming now."

But his mother said, "How would you know? You have never seen him. He isn't a man anymore. He changed into a hornbill and flew away."

Molwiflu decided to go back and visit his first wife. The three sisters heard what they thought was a bird call and wondered what it was. They asked Molwiflu, "Are you married to another woman?"

"Yes, I was married. But her father prevented us from living together. It wasn't really a marriage."

"Listen," they said, "we can hear a bird. Can you hear it?"

"Yes," he said. "But that is not really a bird. It only sounds like a bird. It is a woman crying out." Indeed, it was Molwiflu's wife mourning the loss of her husband.

In the morning, Molwiflu set out for his settlement and his first wife. Again the boy came and told his mother, "Molwiflu is coming."

But she said, "He will never come back. He has changed into a hornbill and flown away." And she wept.

Molwiflu heard her crying as he came near the house. He stood in the bushes near where people defecate. When his wife came to relieve herself, he poked her with the tip of his arrow but she ignored it, thinking it was just a branch. When she had

finished, he poked her again and she looked up and saw him. “Who are you?” she asked.

“I am Molwiflu, your husband.”

“No you aren’t. He changed into a bird. You can’t be Molwiflu if you walk around like a man.”

“No. I am your husband.”

She went and found her husband’s niece and said, “Hey, your uncle is here,” and she came and greeted him.

Now the boy had gone to sleep in the house, with his bow and arrows on his chest. His mother said to Molwiflu, “You must not make a noise. The boy is headstrong, He might wake up and shoot you.” They sat down and she gave Molwiflu something to eat. Then she said, “I am going to wake the boy.” She went inside and woke the boy, saying, “Wake up. Your father Molwiflu has come.”

The boy jumped up. “Where is he?” he asked.

“Just outside,” she replied.

He rushed out and said, “Oh father, I am overcome. You slept with my mother and now here I am, a fully grown man.”

Then Molwiflu asked his wife and son, “Are you going to stay here, or do you want to come with me? I have a nice place down the river, all to myself.”

They said they would go with him. Molwiflu’s wife said to her husband’s niece, “You had better go back to your mother now.”

But she replied, “No, I should stay with you and help you and my uncle to look after the boy.”

“Okay, I just wanted to ask you. You can come with us.” So they packed all their things and set off.

When they came near to the house, Molwiflu said to them, “Wait here.” He went to the house where he found the three sisters. He rolled a cigar and enquired of them. “Are you angry?”

“What about?” they asked. “I have brought my wife and son and niece,” he said.

“Why did you leave them in the bush? Bring them to the house. Of course we are not angry.”

So he went and got them, warning the three sisters not to surprise his son lest he kill them. When they came to the house, the other son (the child of the eldest sister) came down the ladder followed by his half-sister, and Molwiflu’s two sons embraced as brothers.

Meanwhile, Molwiflu’s sister began to grieve because her daughter had gone away. She searched and searched but she could not find them. She cried and cried, and became so upset that she killed her baby that she was carrying in her string bag. She got into her canoe to cross to the other side of the river and saw some children playing on a sandbank. She killed one of them. Her husband saw her and yelled, “Why did you kill someone else’s child? You are some sort of fighting woman, eh?”

At this, she got a bow and a multi-pronged arrow and shot her husband in the backside. He pulled the arrow out and went inside his house and cried and shouted. His wife continued to mourn the loss of her eldest daughter.

Molwiflu’s sons grew up and became great hunters and fighters. They went out on raids and killed many enemies. One day they went out to fight and were at it all day. Their father waited and waited but they did not return so he went out after them. He found them attacking a house — the last one in that area. As he approached, one of his sons heard him and spun around ready to kill him. Just in time, Molwiflu called out,

“No. Don’t shoot. It’s me, your father.” If he had not called out so quickly, he would have been killed by his sons.

They killed all the people in the house, killed their pigs, cut down their sago palms, and prepared themselves a feast. They slept that night at the enemy house and returned home in the morning.

Molwiflu began to worry about his sister, so the next day he went back to her settlement. He did not tell his family. He came near to her house and stood near the place of defecation and when she came out of the house to relieve herself, Molwiflu poked her with a stick. “Who are you?” she asked.

“I am Molwiflu”

“You can’t be. He turned into a hornbill.”

“Yes, I am. I am your brother, Molwiflu.”

Then she took him into the house and fed him.

“Would you like to come with me?” he asked her.

“Yes, I will. But where is your niece?”

“I don’t know,” he lied. “I have just come home.” But later he told her what had happened and how he had taken her and all his family to another place to live. So his sister and her husband got all their things together and followed Molwiflu. His sister became angry again about her daughter going off without saying where she was going and she picked up a stick and carried it with her, intending to beat her when she found her. But when she got there, she was so relieved to see her again that she threw the stick away. In any case, her daughter was grown up now and strong, whilst she herself was skinny and weak, for she had had little meat to eat. So she was afraid to beat her daughter. Her daughter, for her part, though ready to defend herself, was afraid she might break her mother’s fragile bones. They all took pity on her and Molwiflu’s two

sons went out and hunted every day. They fed her on meat till she was once more full-fleshed and healthy.

One reason that Molwiflu brought his sister to his settlement was to ensure that he had her approval for his son to marry her daughter. She approved, and his son by his second wife married her. His son by his first wife married the daughter of his third wife, and they all lived together.

6. KON AND THE SPIRIT-WOMAN

As told by Saisayat and Unafio of Selelian, Idam Valley

Kon, a married man, went to find some leaves to roll a cigar. Then he went to check the sago-bait he had left to attract wild pigs. When he got there, he laid aside his cigar-leaves, and found a stick to lift the bark of the sago palm looking for sago grubs.

As he was working at finding the grubs, a *balaisa* (female spirit that lives in the top of ficus trees) came and began eating his sago jelly and grubs. When he noticed her, he exclaimed, “Hey, what kind of woman are you? You are eating uncooked grubs.” However, he divided up the grubs between himself and the woman, and set off for his house.



Image of a *balaisa* (spirit woman) by Soni, Bamblediam, Idam Valley, 1972.

But the woman turned her hand in a crook over her head and although Kon set off in a particular direction, he found himself walking in a circle back to the woman. “Why did you come back?” She asked Kon innocently.

“I did not intend to,” he replied, “but something is preventing me from leaving here.” He tried many times to leave but found himself compelled every time to come back to the woman. And the woman said, “Why don’t you follow the trail by which you came?”

But Kon replied, “It is dark now.”

Then the woman said, “What are you going to do?”

“I tried to go but I couldn’t. It is dark now.”

“Why don’t you come to my house then?”

Kon agreed. Her house was right near where he had been collecting sago grubs. Climb this ladder,” she said.

“But you have lots of decorations hanging on the ladder: pigs’ teeth, dogs’ teeth, shell rings, *girigiri* [cowrie] shell; I might break them. You go first and show me the way through it all.”

So she went up and said, “See, nothing was broken. Follow me up.”

So he did. There was no fireplace. He asked, “Where is your fire? How will we cook food?”

“I do not cook food,” she answered. So Kon got some rattan and a piece of wood, split the wood and pulled the rattan through the split, back and forth until an ember glowed. He put it in a bed of tinder and blew gently until a flame sprang forth. But when the *balaisa* smelt the fire she vomited up all the grubs that she had eaten. She went and washed out her mouth. Then Kon cooked some grubs and gave them to her to eat. She thought they were delicious.

Now the *balaisa*'s mother was in another room of the house. For many years the *balaisa* woman had wanted to marry a man but every time she brought one home, her mother would kill and eat him.

Kon and the *balaisa* were sitting down and eating together. She said to him, "You must take your barbed arrows and as soon as my mother comes in, shoot her, otherwise she will kill and eat you. I have brought many men to this house but she has killed them all."

"But I can't kill your mother," protested Kon.

"If you don't, you will not stay alive — she will eat you!" the *balaisa* persisted, and at last Kon agreed to kill her mother. He took his bow and arrows, entered the mother's room, and shot an arrow straight into her heart. Then the *balaisa* came in and chopped up her mother with a stone adze. As she was dying, she called out, "So you are killing me!" The daughter replied, "I have brought home many men and you killed them all. You wanted to hide me. Now we are killing you." As she said this, the *balaisa* hacked at her mother, took out her heart and chopped that into little pieces. Now that there was no chance of her reviving, she disposed of the body.

After this strenuous incident, Kon and the *balaisa* fell asleep. The next day, Kon wanted to go into the forest to hunt. But the *balaisa* said, "Where are you going?"

"I want to go out and hunt," replied Kon.

"No, wait. First go and cut some firewood." So he got firewood. Then she sent him to get breadfruit leaves. So he got breadfruit leaves. Then she went down the ladder of the house and got some *sabla* (ginger) leaves and rubbed it on her mouth. She called out for pigs — domesticated pigs and wild pigs — and they came at her call. She explained, "The pigs that come first are mine. I look after them; do not shoot them. The ones that follow are wild pigs; you can shoot them."

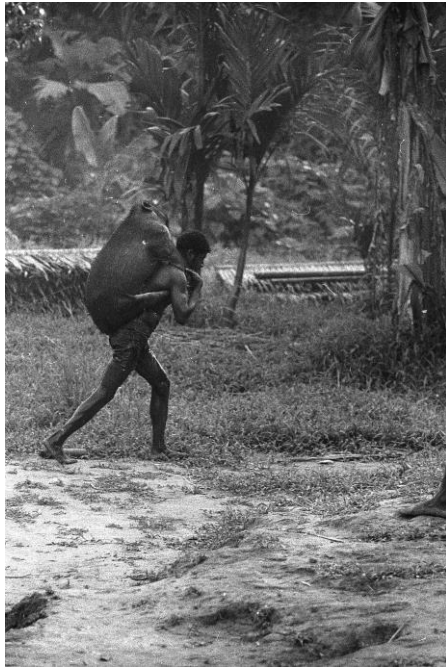


Plate 7. Returning from a wild pig hunt, Bisiaburu, Idam Valley (1972-3 BM30:13)

Kon started shooting at the wild pigs, aiming for the biggest and fattest, and although many got away, he shot many. He and the *balaisa* cooked them all and smoked most of the meat; the rest they ate. But they had nothing to eat with the meat — no sago jelly.

They climbed back up into the house and the *balaisa* said to Kon, “You must not sleep with me straight away.” Kon agreed to this.

Next morning they went out and collected the leaves of the *eima* plant, *vafma* (banana) leaves, and the bark of the *idapnou* tree. All these materials have a strong smell. The *balaisa* instructed Kon to make a fire and heat some stones. Then she told him to take a bark dish full of water, drop in the hot stones, and then the three ingredients they had collected. She then lay on a low platform and she told him to push the bark dish underneath.

The infusion caused the *onon* (centipede), *kiali* (scorpion) and *faniva* (pig louse) to fall out of her vagina into the basket. If a man has intercourse with a woman who is menstruating, these creatures will devour his penis. Now they were both happy as they could make love without reservation.

Meantime, back at Kon's settlement, his wife's sister was wondering what had become of him. So she followed his tracks into the forest. She found the cigar-leaves where he had left them, followed his tracks to the sago tree where he had collected the grubs, and traced the confusion of tracks where he had tried unsuccessfully to return to his house.



Image of leaf used to roll cigars, by Ambukinan of Bablediam, Idam Valley, 1973

But she could not find him and returned to the settlement, assuming that he had been killed. So she and her sister rubbed clay on their foreheads and cried in mourning. Kon and the *balaisa* had seen her walking around below trying to find Kon, but they kept silent and remained undetected.

When the woman had gone, the *balaisa* told Kon to cut some sago and when he had done so, she washed out the starch. Kon made some new arrows. Then they slept.

The next day, the *balaisa* told Kon to cut firewood and get bread-fruit leaves. When he had done this, she called out again for the pigs and said as before, "Leave the first pigs — they are mine. And shoot only the biggest and fattest of the wild pigs." Then Kon shot about ten pigs. He butchered them, heated stones, cooked the pigs and smoked most of the meat. Meanwhile the *balaisa* made up a large amount of sago jelly.

Then Kon, with this *balaisa* woman, returned to his wife's people; but they were invisible and the people could not see them. Now, the men had been out hunting for wild pigs, and looking for wild fowl eggs and sago grubs for Kon's mourning feast, but they weren't having much luck. Kon and the *balaisa* woman decided to go along

with them. The people had very poor luck but Kon and his woman were extraordinarily successful; they went back to her house and she called the pigs again, Kon shot many, and they cooked and smoked the meat ready to take it back to Kon's people.



Plates 8-10. Butchering pig, Bibiyun, Yapsie River, 1968; layer of sago flour and greens ready to receive the pork; laying the pork on the sago and greens; the whole lot was then covered with leaves and hot stones to cook (USEE 1968 BM10:16, BM11:12, 22)

The women had gathered leaves and firewood ready for the return of the hunters and the men had built a long trestle on which to place the meat. Kon had helped them build it but they could not see him. The morning after the hunt, the people built a fire and made sago jelly. Kon and his woman piled up their contribution on the platform; but they were still invisible and so was the food.

Then the people got ready for the ceremonial washing. They went down into the river, and Kon and his woman went too and washed with them. They sat down and chewed betel. Kon poked his first wife in the chest with the end of an arrow and she said, "Who is that?"

"Me, Kon, your husband."

She was angry with him and demanded, "Where have you been?"

“I’ve just been around,” he replied.

“No, I think you’ve been with another woman.”

“I’ve just been around,” he insisted.

“You are lying, You’ve been with another woman.”

“Well, yes, I have. I went to her house. That’s where I’ve been lately.” Now Kon was visible during this conversation because of his contact with his wife. The *balaisa* grasped the wife’s hand and she became visible too. Now everyone could see them both.

“So you are the woman he has been with?” Kon’s wife exclaimed. The men said, “Ah, he found a beautiful woman and he has been staying with her.” They called out the news to those who had not yet seen them. They were glad he was back and admired his second wife, so they turned the mourning feast into a welcome feast.

The food that Kon and the *balaisa* had brought became visible too and the people noticed what a large contribution Kon had made to their feast. The food was distributed. The people gave Kon and the *balaisa* the food they had gathered, and Kon’s contribution went to the people. The fact that Kon’s contribution exceeded theirs caused them to marvel. Everyone ate their fill and went to sleep.

The food lasted five days and they began to get tired of the dried, smoked meat, complaining that they wanted fresh, juicy meat. So Kon and the *balaisa* agreed to get some more and asked the people to get firewood and leaves ready.

All the men went with Kon and the *balaisa* into the forest. She instructed them not to shoot the first lot of pigs that appeared, only the second lot, which were the wild pigs. And so they shot many wild pigs.

It was agreed among the men that they must not irritate or anger the *balaisa* woman as she was able to attract many pigs with her ginger ritual, making it easy for them to shoot them. They urged Kon, too, not to anger her. But Kon did not heed them.

They finished off the pigs they had killed and the next day prepared for another hunt. The *balaisa* asked Kon's first wife, "Whose sago palms are those?"

"Mine," she replied, "but you can cut them."

The *balaisa* said to her, "You rest in the house and I will prepare the sago." She made a lot of sago flour and then a lot of sago jelly.

Both wives had children: the first wife had a son and the second wife had a daughter.

Now Kon's sister had given the *balaisa* woman some sago jelly but she did not eat it straight away; she put it aside while she went off to work. When Kon got up in the morning, he found it and ate it. When the *balaisa* returned from work to find her sago jelly gone, she was angry, for she had worked hard and was hungry.

"Who has eaten my sago?" she demanded. "It was given to me by my sister-in-law."

"I ate it," Kon replied.

His wife let it go at that but the people had heard and were angry with Kon for endangering their relationship with the *balaisa* woman. But a couple of days later she called out for the pigs again to assist the men with their hunting.

Now Kon's first wife gave the *balaisa* woman some betel nut, which she put away in her net bag. But Kon found it and chewed it all.

The *balaisa* woman had gone into the forest to find some *daka* to chew with the betel nuts; but when she returned she found they were gone.

“Who has taken my betel nuts?” she demanded. “They were given to me by my sister-in-law.”

“I did,” Kon admitted.

She was angry with him. Her sister-in-law tried to appease her by offering her some more but she refused, saying that she had already given her some and was not responsible for the theft.

Both the women were pregnant again and the births were imminent. Everyone retired for the night but the *balaisa* woman was still angry. She induced a heavy sleep in everyone and then tested whether they were deeply asleep by banging around the house with a piece of firewood. As nobody stirred, she left and walked through the forest to her own house.

The next day she could not be found; everyone searched for her but could not find her anywhere. She had gone up into a *figus* tree high up on a mountain and nobody could find her. There were no more pigs, for they had followed her into the forest.

Kon’s first wife followed the tracks of the *balaisa* woman and her pigs. By this time the *balaisa* woman had had her second child, a son. She saw her sister-in-law coming and said to her, “I am sorry. You and I do not have any reason to be angry with each other. You must be a mother to my daughter.”

“You must return to us,” said Kon’s first wife.

“No, I can’t come back.”

They argued until evening and then the first wife returned to the settlement crying. The next day she washed some sago and took it to where she had spoken with her sister-in-law, but the *balaisa* woman had gone. She had gone away to another place and the woman returned crying.

What appear to us to be wild pigs are really the *balaisa* woman’s pigs.

7. SOKIYOLU, THE GRANDSON OF THE EEL

As told by Saisayat and Unafio of Selelian, Idam Valley

An eel and a woman married. He lived in the water and she lived in a house. They had intercourse and she had a son, then a daughter, and then another daughter. The woman did not tell her son that his father was an eel.



Image of an eel drawn by Olus of Bamblediam, Idam Valley, 1973

One day, when he was a youth, he went down to the river bank to sit and carve arrows. The eel rose to the top of the water to enjoy the sun. The youth saw him, jabbed him with one of his arrows, and killed him. He pulled the eel out of the water onto the bank of the river and went to tell his mother.

“That eel is your father,” she said.

“It is your fault that he is dead,” her son replied. “You didn’t tell me he was my father.”

The mother made some sago-string skirts, put them on and mourned her husband.
[Here the storytellers sang the song.]

She cried and cried and could not sleep. She laid the eel in her lap and he decomposed there. Flies came around and laid their eggs and the maggots entered the woman’s body through her vagina. They ate away her flesh, leaving the skin intact.

Her son went out hunting to accumulate smoked meat for a mourning feast, but he could not find any game and returned empty-handed. Meanwhile his sisters were washing sago. The youth called out to his mother to bring fire but she did not answer; she was dead. He went into the house and saw her. He pulled her hair and her bones fell apart and he was left holding her hair and skin. So he took her skin, washed it and dried it in the sun. Then he put it on and he looked just like an old woman. He acted like an old woman, too.

Then his sisters returned from sago-washing and he told them that their mother was a pile of bones and that her skin had disappeared.

They prepared a mourning feast of sago, wildfowl eggs and fish. The son hid his mother's skin and went out hunting. Then the three of them ate the food — there was no-one else.

The girls said, "We don't have a mother now to sleep with." Their brother replied, "Forget it. You sleep in that house and I'll sleep in this one." They all went to sleep.

In the morning the youth got together all the food in the house and carried it a long way away, without telling his sisters. But he took the ashes from the fire and walked in them so that his sisters would see his tracks. Then he set off.

He saw a mound and got some wildfowl eggs from it. Then he saw smoke. He cut a wild black-palm, sharpened it, and threw it towards the smoke. It landed at the feet of an old woman.

He came to Olie Creek; there is sago there. He saw sago grubs and collected them too. He walked on, following the direction of the spear. He came upon a dam across a creek, made by the old woman and her two daughters. He stopped there and cooked the food he was carrying and hung it up in a tree. He washed and decorated himself and then hid inside his mother's skin, leaving the food and his weapons in the tree. He followed the damned-up creek, walking like an old woman. He trembled like an old woman, holding onto a walking stick.

The old woman at the fire saw this ‘old woman’ coming and wondered who she was. She wondered how she would communicate with her. So she got some earth and mixed it with wild taro leaves and water and she and her daughters and the ‘old woman’ drank it and were able to speak with one another. [Here the storytellers sang another song.]

They all decided to go fishing together. But the ‘old woman’ slipped into the forest and removed his mother’s skin. He squeezed the sap of the derris vine into the water and it stunned many fish. He then entered the water and hid beneath a pile of debris. The old woman and her daughters had no knowledge of this method of catching fish. They were groping around in the water and one of the daughters grabbed hold of the man’s finger. She thought it was a fish but it got away.



Plate 11. Dam of stones across the Idam River at Antib, to catch fish (1972-3 BM37:23)

The man came to the surface, slipped back into the forest, and put on his mother’s skin again. He told the three women to make a fire, dried himself, smoked a cigar and chewed some betel. He then told the two daughters to go and bring him the load that he had left in the tree. They wondered how this ‘old woman’ could have carried a heavy load but the ‘old woman’ said “I am a very strong woman.” The two girls recovered the load and struggled up Beke Mountain to their house.

The 'old woman' said she wanted a separate room. Then they cooked the fish they had caught, shared them and ate them with the food the 'old woman' had brought with her. Then they retired for the night, the 'old woman' forbidding them to enter her room.

In the morning the two girls and their mother left the house to cut down a tall sago palm. While they were gone, the man took off his mother's skin, ate some sago, then took his dog and his bow and arrows and went hunting. He shot a pig, brought it back, butchered and cooked it and ate the liver with sago. He hung the rest over the fireplace to smoke it. The blood of the pig was on his arrows. He dried them in the sun and then hid them under his mother's skin. The blood was on the dog too. He rubbed some of the blood on his walking stick and when the three women returned, he claimed that he had killed the pig with it. He did not let them see his dog and of course he had put on his mother's skin again.

This went on for a long time until one of the daughters became suspicious. The women went off to wash sago one day but the girl excused herself, saying she had diarrhoea, and hid in the bush to watch the house. The man followed his usual practice and when the girl saw him she became enamoured of him. The man went out hunting but only caught a Gourria Crown Pigeon. He hung it up in the house. Then he smoked a cigar and cooked and ate some sago. He tried to put on his mother's skin but it broke and tore. He tried to sew it together but to no avail. He took a post, tied a cordyline plant to it, put his mother's skin at the top and fixed the post in the ground.

The three women returned and saw the Gourria pigeon and then they saw the skin of an old woman on the post. The old woman mourned for a while and then made a fire to prepare sago jelly. The young man had hidden the fire-tongs so that the women could not find them. Then one of them saw them protruding from the 'old woman's' room. She tried to grab them but the young man rapped her on the hand with them. Then he emerged from the room and the two girls cried out with joy. He married the two girls. The old woman wanted him too but her daughters killed her.

The man and his two wives lived together and had many children — no daughters at all but twenty or more sons. They all grew up and when the youngest son was old enough to wear a phallocrypt, the man and his wives died.

The brothers made a huge garden. A flood came and some ripe bananas that had fallen to the ground were carried away in the flood, down the river to where there was a settlement of women, near Mount Lawonkanyom.

The youngest woman went down to the river to get water. She found the ripe bananas, put one in the sun, and then peeled and ate it. The others she carried up to her house. They all thought it was the fruit of a tree — they hadn't seen that kind of fruit before. She persuaded her sisters to try some and they were all delighted with the sweet flavour. So they decided to try and find out where the fruit had come from.

They got into their canoes and followed the river upstream. They followed a number of tributaries but failed to find the banana trees. They returned to their settlement to sleep, arose early in the morning, and continued their search upstream. Eventually they found the big garden of bananas. They collected lots of the ripe fruit and returned to their settlement.

A couple of the brothers came to the garden and found that their bananas had been stolen. They discovered bits of women's skirt material caught on branches here and there and realised that women had been there. They returned and told their brothers. They decided to hide in the forest and watch their garden the next day.

The men slept then rose at daybreak and went and hid, each watching his part of the garden. The women came in their canoes. The men heard them coming and saw that there were no men with them. The men whistled to one another. They planned that each would grab a woman — the eldest first, then the others.

When the women got out of their canoes, the men grabbed them. The youngest woman fought against her captor, Sokiyou. The others submitted readily and advised her to do so too. But she refused and grabbed the young man's phallocrypt and it fell into the river. The young man exclaimed, "That was my father's phallocrypt!" He

released the woman and dived into the river to retrieve the phallocrypt but it went down into the water and he lost sight of it.

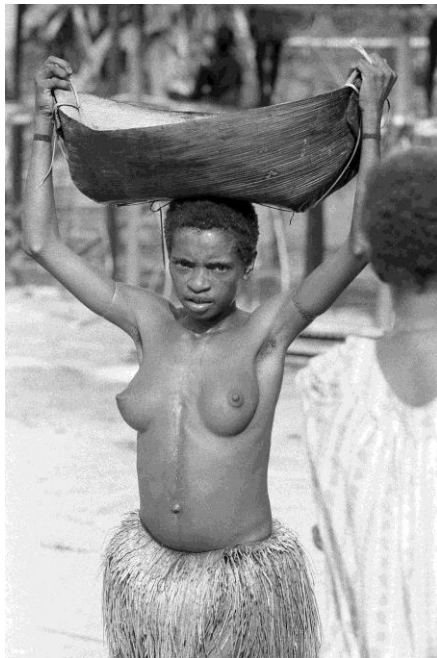


Plate 12. Young woman of Bamblediam, Idam Valley (1972-3 BM15:10)

He told his brothers that he was determined to find it. He parcelled up some food and betel nut, put it in one of the women's canoes, and paddled downstream until dark. He slept, and so did the phallocrypt. He continued the chase the next day until he arrived at the Sepik River. The people of Iaburu, Mukwasi and other Sepik settlements tried to catch the phallocrypt but it got away from them.

Kosagoi, of a settlement on the Sepik near Weia Creek, was cooking breadfruit on a sandbank beside the Sepik. He saw the phallocrypt and captured it in a bamboo fence. But he could not get it because of crocodiles in the water. Then he saw Sokiylolu, the grandson of the eel, coming down in a canoe. Kosagoi called out that he had captured a phallocrypt. Sokiylolu drew up his canoe near Kosagoi and they ate breadfruit together. Kosagoi told Sokiylolu there were crocodiles in the river and that he would have to make magic to retrieve the phallocrypt. He instructed Sokiylolu to hide in the bush. He then made magic to cause a black palm to grow tall. He then climbed up to the very top and it bent down under his weight, right over the spot where the phallocrypt was entrapped in the bamboo fence. He snatched it up and the black palm

swung upright and shrank back to its normal size. He called out to Sokiyolu and gave him the phallocrypt. They sat down together and ate some more breadfruit. Kosagoi told Sokiyolu to put on the phallocrypt but he put it behind him while he ate more breadfruit. To his amazement, it turned into a banana tree.

Sokiyolu took some suckers from the banana tree and prepared to paddle back upstream. Kosagoi asked him where he would sleep and said he himself usually slept at the house of the wasps (*kolagum*).

Sokiyolu said, "I'm not a bird that I should sleep in the *kolagum*'s house. I'm a man and must sleep in a proper house."

Kosagoi replied, "If you sleep in a proper house, an evil spirit will come and devour you." This spirit was a kind of eagle. It doesn't exist anymore.

Sokiyolu left Kosagoi and paddled up the Sepik to Weia Creek and then followed that creek up to Weilu Creek, then into Mosi Creek to a settlement. But the settlement was deserted because the evil spirit had killed everyone. Kosagoi had told him he could take some bananas from one of his trees, so Sokiyolu picked some and cooked and ate them.

Then he went looking for water to drink and found some a distance away from the settlement. Two women — Kosagoi's sisters — were hiding in the water in the guise of frogs. Sokiyolu took his two cassowary bone daggers from his upper-arm bands and stuck them in the ground behind him while he bent to drink. The two frogs changed back into women and took the daggers and banged them together. Sokiyolu turned around and spoke to them but they could only croak in reply. So he took some earth and wild taro leaves and mixed them with water and gave it to them to drink and then they were able to communicate. They asked Sokiyolu why he had come, as there was an evil spirit there.

"Don't worry," he replied. "I'm an obstinate man." He took the women to a house and gave them some bananas to eat. He then cut a black palm, split it into pieces, and fastened them across the roof to bar the entrance of the evil spirit who would try to

tear the roof to pieces with its sharp claws to get inside the kill the occupants. He then made some good arrows and got his weapons ready. He defecated all around the evil spirit's house, lit a big fire inside it and then returned to the house where he had barricaded the women.

The evil spirit saw the smoke coming from his house and came to kill the intruders. When he came he made a loud noise, like the noise of an aeroplane. He tore the houses to pieces looking for the intruders. Then he came to the house where Sokiylolu and the women were waiting. He tried to break in and the house shook. The evil spirit called out, "Where are you?"

"I am here," Sokiylolu replied. "Where are you? Come and show yourself!" The evil spirit did so and Sokiylolu shot him in one eye, then the other. Then Sokiylolu called out, "Lift one of your legs!" The evil spirit did so and Sokiylolu shot him beneath his leg; then he shot him beneath his other leg, under his ribs on both sides, and then in the heart. The evil spirit flew away with a great noise to his own house but it broke down under his weight and he died there. Sokiylolu called out for the survivors of the settlement to return to their houses. They had hidden away as animals and insects in the bush, in holes in the trees and in the ground. They all returned and gathered at the settlement, which was called Walemli. They saw the evil spirit was dead. Sokiylolu cut open its body and they found shell and teeth valuables inside. Sokiylolu took these and told the people to eat the carcase of the evil spirit. So they cooked and ate the body — it was like a bird's body. Sokiylolu married the two girls, Kosagoi's sisters.

Now Sokiylolu wanted to return to his settlement. He took with him the valuables he had retrieved from the evil spirit's body, the evil spirit's head, and its aged mother, but when they were in the forest, half way home, she turned into a bird (*yebi*) and flew away. This bird calls out in the early morning. It also cries "Kwi! Kwi!" when someone dies or when someone is coming to a settlement. This transformation took place at Isimotoli, now just a sago camp of the Amto people.

Sokiylolu and his two wives continued on to Wosnai and made sago there. They slept there with the people of Wosnai. They held a big dance in the spirit house (*pupani*). The men put on women's skirts and wore headdresses with painted designs. Two

wallabies ate the evil spirit's head. Sokiyolu took a firebrand and hit them on the tails and that is why the tail of the wallaby (*labiou*) is red.

Sokiyolu and his wives set off again. They came along the track across the Musinau Creek, Nifiyap Creek and along Kabiei Creek to Usawei, at the headwaters of the Idam where Sokiyolu's adventures had begun, and thus rejoined his brothers and their wives. The woman who had struggled with him had mourned his presumed death but upon his return Sokiyolu married her. The three women got along alright for a while but then they began to quarrel. Kosagoi's two sisters left to go back to their home when Sokiyolu was away hunting one day. He returned to find them gone and his brothers told him what had happened.

The two women had left a message for Sokiyolu to stay with his other wife and not to follow them but Sokiyolu ignored this and told his brothers he was going to follow them. He asked them to smoke lots of fish and meat, and bring it to him at Walemli after three months had elapsed, and he would cook sago grubs for them. So he set off after his two wives.

He had told his first wife that he did not want her and that she was not follow him, but she followed him anyway. Sokiyolu shot and killed her. He caught up with his other two wives and they went together to Walemli.

The brothers waited the three months then set out for Walemli. They came across the body of Sokiyolu's first wife. They put her body on an ant's nest. The ants bit her and stung her and she revived and returned to the Idam where she later married one of the other men. The brothers continued on to Walemli where sago and sago grubs were being cooked for them. Many people gathered and there was a big feast. Then the brothers returned to the Idam and left Sokiyolu at Walemli with his two wives.

8. THE STORY OF WEDMEI

As told by Saisayat and Unafio of Selelian, Idam Valley

One day, a woman and her two daughters went out to process sago. Her husband stayed at home. After a while, he felt hungry and wondered what there was to eat. He decided to get some breadfruit. So he climbed the breadfruit tree and knocked down a few of the fruits with a stick. There was a death adder [probably *Acanthophis laevis*] curled up at the base of the tree.

Now the death adder was the woman's lover. One of the breadfruit fell on the snake and killed it — blood flowed everywhere. When the man came down to collect the breadfruit he found the snake and said, "Ah! Good! Some meat to eat!" He returned to the house, made a fire and put the breadfruit on to roast. He wrapped the snake in leaves and cooked it too. He ate the breadfruit first and then the snake — his wife's lover. He used the rib bone of the snake to pick the meat from between his teeth and then put it in his hair.



Plate 13. Roasting breadfruit at Bablediam, Idam Valley (1972-3 BM31:31)

The woman and her two daughters returned. They made a fire while she went to get some leaves for the sago jelly they were going to make. She looked for her lover and found his blood. Then she noticed the white sap of the fallen breadfruit and guessed that her husband had killed the snake. She returned to the house and made the sago jelly.

Her husband offered her some of the breadfruit, but she said “Later.” Later she ate some and then lay down, silently mourning the death of her snake lover.

Early in the morning she went and sat outside on the veranda of the house. She called to her husband, “Come and I will see if you have any lice in your hair.” He came and laid his head on her lap and she pretended to look for lice. She found the bone and said to herself, “Ah, so you killed my snake lover, eh?” But aloud she said, “No, you don’t have any lice.”

She waited awhile and then she said, “I am going to find some leaf vegetables.” She was pregnant. She left the settlement and immediately her legs changed to those of a cassowary. She came to a stand of wild sago trees and trod the fallen fruits into the ground, so that it would look as if a cassowary had been there. She wanted to trick her husband — her worthless husband — into building a hide to catch the cassowary. She returned to the house. “Hey, you must go and build a hide near the wild sago. A cassowary has been there eating the fruit.” So he went and built the hide and then returned home to sleep.

In the morning he took his bow and arrows and hid and waited. The woman went off into the forest leaving her daughters at home. She changed completely into a large cassowary. Meanwhile her husband was singing a song to attract cassowaries. Part of the spell involved making snatching movements from under his armpits to his mouth, and blowing through his curled hands. He heard a cassowary booming and said to himself, “Ah, it is coming now.” It got closer and closer. He shot at it but he kept missing. Then he got it in the leg but it sprang into the hide and flattened it, along with the man and his weapons. His bones were broken and his weapons smashed. He could not get up. The cassowary ran off and changed back into the woman, all except for one feather in her hair. She went and sat down on the veranda of her house.

The man writhed about and wriggled his way into a patch of stinging nettles. He was barely alive but the nettles revived him. He broke off one branch of the nettle to carry back to the house with him. Then he hung by his hands from the branch of a tree to straighten out all his bones. He left his broken weapons and returned to his home. His wife saw him coming and said, "What have you been doing?"

"A cassowary nearly killed me," he answered. He slept and the next morning called out to his wife to search his hair for lice. As she was looking he noticed the cassowary feather on her forehead and thought to himself. "So, it was not a real cassowary. It was you who attacked me and nearly killed me."

Immediately he got up and went and found some derris root. He squeezed its juice into a small pond and caught lots of fish, particularly among the roots of a large ficus tree standing at the edge of the pond. He found a kwila tree with a forked branch, shaped it into a forked stick and hid it nearby. He returned home and his wife and daughters made sago jelly. They cooked and ate the fish he had caught.

His wife remarked, "So there are lots of fish at that pond you went to today."

"Yes. If you like we can go there tomorrow." She agreed and they slept.

In the morning they went to the pond. When they got there he said to her, "You get some firewood and make a fire. I will get some fish and we will cook them straight away. You can eat some first." So she made a fire and he brought lots of fish. She cooked them and ate some. He said, "I'm cold. I'll eat some fish and then you can take my place in the water."

He got some vine for her to string the fish on, and a basket, and told her that the roots of the *ficus* tree were a good place to catch the fish. She entered the water and collected the fish and strung them on the vine. Her husband waited with the forked stick. She came out of the pond to get a length of rattan to string more fish together and re-entered the water. But when she wanted to come out a second time to get another length of rattan, her husband used the forked stick to push her head under the

water and hold her there. At the same time he said a spell to make the water rise, and she drowned.

He picked up the fish and returned to the house. His two daughters had prepared more sago flour and were making sago jelly. “Where is our mother?” they asked.

“She said she was sick,” he lied. “Hasn’t she come back yet?”

They said she hadn’t and began to wonder whether their father had killed her. Later that night a firefly came and flew near their faces. “Ah, that must be our mother’s spirit,” they thought. Now the drowned woman was pregnant, near full term.

Next morning the two daughters told their father that they were going to process sago but they were really going off to look for their mother’s body. They searched the pond and found her body floating in it. Two *watabwe* birds [the Brahminy Kite, *Haliastur indus*] were sitting on her chest and calling out. The daughters said to them, “You must bring our mother’s body to us.” So they pulled the mother’s body to the bank and the two girls gave them pigs’ teeth necklaces as payment, so now the *watabwe* has a white breast.

The two daughters made a funerary platform and put their mother’s body on it. They went home and mourned. Their father was away in the forest, hunting. The girls cooked and ate some taro. They got the roots of wild taro and cooked them in the fire. They put water in a bamboo tube and scraped some of the wild taro roots into it. Then they added other ingredients, including a snake (*dod*.)

Meanwhile their father had shot a small pig and returned home. “I searched everywhere,” he said, “and all I found was this little pig. Hurry along now and cook it. Where’s my taro?”

They gave him the wild taro — they had eaten all the true taro. The younger daughter began to feel sorry for her father but the older one strengthened her resolve. Their father ate the wild taro and exclaimed, “Hey, my throat is stinging. Where’s the water?” They gave him the bamboo tube and he gulped down the contents, snake and

all. It bit his heart and he died. The daughters put his body on a funerary platform in the forest.

The mother's body swelled up and her belly broke open and the child inside got down off the platform and walked around. He drank from one of his mother's breasts. The other one was rotting but this one was alright. The daughters came to mourn at their mother's body. Their crying frightened the child and he ran away to the pond. The girls saw from their mother's body that a child had been born and was suckling at one breast. They returned home, wondering whether their newly-born sibling was a boy or a girl. They went to sleep.

The next morning they returned with a fishing net and placed it on their mother's body. If the child was a girl, she would take the net. They left. The child came out of hiding and broke the net and threw it away. The girls returned, saw the broken net and concluded that the child must be a boy. So they went home and got a stone adze and a small bow and arrows and put these on the mother's body. When the child found them, he cut at nearby trees with the adze and shot the arrows round about. The girls came back, saw these signs, and were sure that the child was a boy. But they had not seen him because he hid in the pond. They would hear him jumping into the pond as they approached. He kept the adze in the pond too.

The girls went back home and made a huge fishing net. They had agreed that the older daughter would go quietly to the pond and carefully place the net into it. The younger daughter would come later, crying loudly to frighten the child, who would then jump into the pond and thus into the net. They carried out their plan and the boy ran like a wallaby and jumped into the pond, right into the net. The two girls rushed to the net and hauled him ashore.

"I want to drink my mother's milk," he cried.

"No. She is decomposing. We are your mothers now." He continued to cry all the way home. When he smelt the fire, he vomited. The girls sealed off the house to prevent him escaping. Then they taught him how to eat cooked foods. "You have been

drinking our mother's decomposition juices and that is not right. Eat this real food," they urged him.

They took care of him and he was alright. The younger girl stayed with him whilst the older one got food. She even hunted game with bow and arrows. The boy grew rapidly.

One day the older sister got some breadfruit that had fallen from trees owned by men of Mafwal and brought them home. The boy found them, cooked them and ate them. He found them so delicious that he cried and cried for more. His sisters tried to tell him they were just seeds of a tree. "No. They are too delicious," he insisted.

"Tomorrow we will go and get some more," comforted the older sister. Then she told the younger sister, "You can go with him to the bush and get more breadfruit whilst I go hunting. Get the ones that have fallen to the ground, cook them there and give them to him. Then climb the tree and knock down some more."

Next day they went off as decided, the younger sister carrying two bundles of arrows for the boy, leaving his third bundle at home. They got to the trees, gathered the breadfruit, cooked them and ate them. She hid him in the bushes to eat them whilst she climbed the tree to get more. She was up in the tree when a leaf fell into the river. Now the man who owned the tree was paddling up the river that very moment. He saw the leaf floating down the river and wondered what had caused it to fall. He examined it. "It cannot be a cockatoo as there are no marks on it. It must be a man," he thought.

He came to the place where his trees were and called out, "Who is getting breadfruit from my trees?" The girl tried to change into a possum but the man saw her and said, "You are not a possum. You are a woman." He came ashore and she cried out loudly, but her older sister was a long way away. However, the boy jumped up, grabbed his little bow and arrows and immediately attacked the man, singing as he rained arrows upon him.

“Hey, this little boy is hurting me. Come and take him away before I have to kill him.” The girl came down out of the tree and struggled with the man but he hit her on the shoulder with a lump of wood and carried her off to his canoe. The older sister had heard the girl’s cries and came running but by the time she got there the man had already left, carrying off her sister.

“What’s going on?” she asked. The boy told her. “A man came and took away my mother.”

“It is all your fault,” said the older sister. “If you had not cried so much for breadfruit, this would never have happened.”

Now the boy was named Wedmei (*wed* is the name of the maggots that were eating his mother’s body and *mei* means the marks they had made crawling on his body).

The older sister gathered the breadfruit and cooked them. They ate some, shelled the rest and put them in a string bag.

Now a man had been hunting on a hill on the other side of the river. He had killed a pig, butchered it and was roasting it. He was sweating so much he decided to cool off in the river. He changed into a snake. He saw the woman cooking breadfruit and came ashore right in front of her. When the boy saw the snake he was afraid and climbed onto the woman’s shoulders and cried. She threw the breadfruit pulp at the snake, hoping that it would eat it, but it bobbed its head up and down, indicating its rejection of this ‘food’. Then she threw the shells of the nuts but again the snake wouldn’t eat. But when she threw the shelled nuts, it ate them. She realised then that it was really a man, for snakes do not eat breadfruit and everyone knows that men can change into other creatures.

She fed the snake until his belly was full. Then she turned his head around to indicate that she would sit on his back whilst he took her across the river. The boy was afraid and cried. She sat on the snake’s back and he cried even harder, so she made herself tall so that he would feel more secure. They swam across the river and the snake indicated a path with his head. He led her to his camp on the hill. They came to a

house and the snake indicated that she should enter. She went inside and the snake entered by another way. The snake indicated with his head that she was to get a dish, take the pork out of the hot stones and put it in the dish. He indicated that the liver was for him and that she could eat the rest. He indicated the sago and the stones and thus suggested she make sago jelly. She made it after the snake showed her where all the utensils were, and she put it in the leaves. He then indicated that she should put the liver with some sago jelly and give that to him to eat. She was to eat the rest. He ate his portion.

They began to live together. He slept at one end of the room and she and the boy slept at the other end. When he wanted to go hunting, he went into the forest, sloughed off his skin and hunted pigs in the form of a man. When he came home, he put on the snake skin again. He showed her where she was to cut sago. They lived like this for months and the boy grew rapidly. The woman was convinced the snake was really a man because a snake could not do all the things he did.

One day the sago-washing apparatus broke. The woman returned home to get a new piece of coconut fibre to repair it and noticed the snake's skin in the room. She was afraid that the man would kill her for finding out.

That day, he had gone out hunting but had little success. All he got was a piglet. He went home, made a fire, butchered the pig and put it in the fire to cook. Then he went up into the house to put on the snake skin but saw that it was falling apart. He sewed it up and tried again to put it on but it kept disintegrating. He said to himself, "So you have found me out. I wanted to wait until the boy had grown up." He took the skin to the swamps and buried it. Then he got the baskets, fire tongs and sago implements and piled them in his room.

The woman returned from sago-washing, made a fire and began to look for her utensils. She noticed the roasting piglet. Then she saw the fire tongs poking through the wall of the room and thought, "So, you have been hiding things." She tried to grab the fire tongs but the man jabbed her all over her legs and arms with a flight arrow tipped with cassowary-bone. The boy saw this and cried.

“I didn’t do this without reason,” said the man to the boy. “Your mother saw my hunting skin.” Then he healed her by spitting masticated ginger onto the wounds and rubbing them with leaves till the wounds all disappeared. He gave the utensils back to her and she made sago jelly and took the meat out of the fire. The man ate some meat as well as the liver but the boy refused to eat any meat as he was angry with the man for hurting his mother.

The boy grew quickly and soon he was fighting enemies and hunting pigs. His ‘mother’ told him to follow the river downstream and to look for a woman who looked just like her, that is, her sister. She reminded him of how the man from Mafwal had abducted her.

One day Wedmei followed the river down to get some fibre to bind his arrows. It happened that at this time the man, and the woman he had abducted, were paddling upstream. They had many children — more than twenty — in the canoe with them. The woman heard a bird calling Wedmei’s name. “I just heard a bird calling Wedmei’s name,” she said to her husband.

“No. He died a long time ago,” he insisted. But Wedmei was hiding on the river bank and when the canoe came to shore he shot and killed his brother-in-law. Then he killed all the children, leaving only his sister- mother alive. He lined up all the bodies in the canoe, with his brother-in-law at the prow, and pushed it out into the current so that it would drift down to Mafwal. The Mafwal people saw the canoe floating by. They paddled out to it and discovered the bodies.

“It was his own fault,” they said. “He should not have abducted that woman from upstream. Just look at the arrow marks!”

Wedmei took his sister-mother back to his settlement. He put on his decorations and went and told his other sister-mother that he had rescued her younger sister and killed the man and all their children. “Why didn’t you bring them here? They were your in-laws,” she reproved him.

“I didn’t like them,” he explained. Wedmei hunted game and fed his sister-mother till she regained her youthful appearance.

Now the name of the snake-man was Sakbeinap. He married both sisters. Long before he had met the older sister and Wedmei, Sakbeinap had concealed his younger sister. He had spread some leaves, placed a layer of sago on top of them, laid his sister on the sago with more sago covering her and then bundled her up in a sago parcel. Then he had placed the bundle into deep water and left it.

After Wedmei returned with the younger sister, Sakbeinap asked Wedmei to go fetch this bundle of sago from the river and bring it to the house. He told him to be sure to place it gently on the ground. Wedmei did as instructed and Sakbeinap told him to put it in the sun to dry. He then untied the parcel and the girl broke out. Wedmei was so startled that he ran to the house, climbed up to a platform in the rafters and would not come down. The woman reproved Sakbeinap for scaring Wedmei. “He will not come and eat with us. Why did you frighten him like that?”

Wedmei refused to join them all day. The next morning, at first light, he went off with his bow and arrows. He was going to fight. He was gone a whole month and his sisters mourned his absence. They were angry with Sakbeinap but he was unperturbed. “That’s okay; you can be angry with me if you like.”

Then Wedmei returned, banging on the buttress roots of trees as he approached, thus signalling his victories. Sakbeinap’s two wives said to him, “You must not pressure the boy into marrying your sister. He must decide for himself.” But Wedmei found that he liked the girl and decided to marry her. They lived together thenceforth.

One day Wedmei noticed lots of birds eating the fruits of a *ficus* tree. He decided to construct a hide and shoot the birds. His wife went with him and collected the birds as he shot them. Another day he went alone. There was only one fruit left on the tree. A *kobo* [the Vulturine Parrot, *Psitttrichas fulgidus*] came and perched on a branch. Wedmei wanted to shoot it but he was afraid he might lose the arrow — it had been made long ago by his father. He drew his bow and slackened it, then drew it again and slackened it. Then he decided to shoot. He let fly and the arrow hit the bird and broke

the branch as well. The bird was not killed and flew off trailing the branch, leaves and seeds falling to the ground as it flew upriver.

Now a feast was being held at a place up river and the bird fell to the ground near this settlement. A woman was collecting leaves for the cooking when the bird fell at her feet. She stuck the arrow in the ground, knowing that someone had shot it and would be coming for it. Wedmei followed the trail of leaves and seeds that had fallen from the *ficus* branch and came to where the woman was standing with the bird. She was alone, for all the other women had found sufficient leaves and returned to their settlement.

“What are you doing here?” she asked Wedmei.

“I am just here to get my arrow and the bird that I shot.”

“Stay here,” she suggested.

“No. I will just take the arrow and the bird and go.”

“No, you must have intercourse with me first,” she insisted.

So Wedmei had intercourse with the woman. As he lay on top of her she said, “Your skin has nice marks on it. I think you must have made these marks on your skin.”

“No, I’ve always had these marks.” But she didn’t believe him and kept nagging him about it until he agreed. She wanted marks like that too so Wedmei got a rat’s tooth and cut marks on her skin. Blood flowed all over. As he got up he asked, “When are you having the feast?”

“Tomorrow,” she replied.

“I will come back and I will see you there,” promised Wedmei.

She went home but she lost so much blood that she died. Her people put her on a funeral platform in the house and decided to make the feast a mourning feast.

Wedmei returned home, slept, and in the morning got up to go to this woman's settlement. Wedmei took his wife, his brother-in-law and his two older sisters, and he carried his hand drum and wooden trumpet. The woman's people were all dressed up for the dance. They ate and shared their food with the visitors. Then they started to dance in the dance-house. Near dawn, Wedmei took up his trumpet and his drum. The trumpet said "Sex! Sex! Sex!" and the drum said "Sifi! Sifi! Sifi!" (the dead woman's name). Her husband reflected on this and concluded that Wedmei must have been responsible for his wife's death. He got a *siknas* arrow and shot Wedmei in the leg. Wedmei flew home like a bird but Sakbeinap took up his bow and arrows and killed everyone in the house. Then he too went home, where he found Wedmei recovering from his wound.



Plate 14. Carved designs on the end of wooden trumpets (*iwol*), Bamblediam, Idam Valley (1972-3 BM32:29a)

9. THE ADVENTURES OF NAMAIYANEI AND NAMAIYANAI

As told by Saisayat and Unafio of Selelian, Idam Valley

A man had a son and a daughter. The family went to a lagoon to catch fish and a huge tortoise which they knew to be there. The man said to his wife, "You can eat the fish, but I am going to eat the tortoise. I will have to get some sago and make a big fire to heat the stones for the cooking and you will have to look after the tortoise until I am ready to cook it."

So they began fishing and caught lots of fish and many little tortoises. His wife would ask, "Is this big enough? Is this the one?" "No," he would reply. And again, "Is this the one"? "No."

Eventually they caught a very large one and when she asked, "Is this it?" he answered, "Yes, that is the one." By this time it was dark. They returned to the settlement and the wife said, "Let us cook the tortoise."

But her husband said, "No. I must get some sago first and then we can cook it. Cook some fish and we can eat that." So they ate fish for a couple of days.

When the fish were all finished, the two children wanted to eat the tortoise and cried but their father said to them, "Your mother and I are going out now to cut and wash sago. We will cook the tortoise when we get back."

The children began to play with the tortoise, letting it walk away, then fetching it back, over and over again. Then they took it back to the house and put it inside.

A spirit-man (*diok*) came and asked the children, "Where is the tortoise belonging to my cousin?"

"He has eaten it," they said.

"No he hasn't," said the spirit-man. "Where is it?"



Plate 15. Sasial of Seelian, Idam Valley (1972-3 BM30:19) and image of a *diok* drawn by him, 1972

He kept on asking them until they showed him. He began playing with it just like the children had. He put it at the bottom of a coconut tree and when it had climbed a little way up he pulled it back down. “You will lose it,” they objected. “It will run away to the water.”

“No, I won’t lose it,” he said. “I am not a child.” And he continued playing with it. But eventually it got out of reach and the spirit-man was unable to get it back down out of the tree. He got a rope loop so he could climb the coconut tree after the tortoise but he was unable to catch up with it and it climbed right up into the sky where it became the moon. The spirit-man was very worried so he got a mature coconut, cut off its shell and transformed this into a tortoise. He took it back down to the children and told them, “I got it back. Here!” The children put it back in the house.

Their parents returned with the sago and prepared the fire and stones to cook the sago-jelly. Now, the wife had bad eyes. The man called out to his children, “Bring the tortoise now and we will cook it.” But the children were afraid to, because they suspected the tortoise was not real. So the man went and got it himself and put it in the fire. But it did not sputter like a nice fat tortoise should; it just burnt like a piece of wood. “Hey, what is happening to my meat?” exclaimed the man.

The children told their mother what had happened — that a *diok* had come and taken the tortoise from them and lost it in the coconut tree, substituting for it a piece of

coconut shell. Their mother was wearing a reed skirt and when she heard her husband calling angrily for the children, she hid them under her skirt.

“Where are those children?” he demanded. He felt like killing them for losing his tortoise. “I don’t know,” she replied. “I cannot see very well.”

A day or so went by. Then a part of her skirt fell open and her husband saw the children hiding there. “So, you have been hiding them.” He went out and cut some black-palm spathes and some rattan. Then he collected some ginger. He added to these materials the shoots of many food plants (coconut, taro, banana, sweet potato, yam, breadfruit, etc) as well as of plants necessary for making tools and implements (bamboo, pit-pit, black palm, etc). Finally he got some smoked pork, a bundle of sago, and some embers. He put all these things in a basket made from the spathes of the black palm, and the children with them. The children were unconscious. Their father put a large shell into their hands, each child clasping it with one hand, and covered the basket with a large crocodile skin and tied it securely. Then he took the basket down to the flooded river and threw it in.

The basket floated downstream a long way. Eventually it washed ashore and the children came out of their coma. They used the shell to cut their way out of the bundle and then realised that this had been done to them by their father. Their skins had deteriorated so they scraped themselves with a piece of wood and then washed clean in the river. They began to wonder about finding shelter from the inevitable rain. There was a lot of grass (*namai*) growing there and they decided they could shelter amongst that so that the rain would not fall on them. Now the name of the girl was Namaiyanai and she was older than her brother Namaiyanei.

The girl found the smoked pork that had been placed in the basket with them and gave her smaller brother the large portion. However, when she put the leftovers back in the basket, it returned to its original size.

Then she noticed that there was a large stand of sago palms nearby, some flowering. She cut one palm with a stone sago-palm cutter that their father had provided and cut out and washed the sago pith. The boy said he wanted to go and eat black palm shoots. His sister said, “Alright, but do not go too far away; stay close by.”

Namaiyanei went to a hill where he found a good house-site, from which he cleared all the trees. He cut some posts and set them in the ground, then got some more poles for beams and rafters. He made a sago-leaf roof, black-palm bark floor, bark walls, several clay hearths and finally a sunken dance-floor. Then he made two slit-gongs, a hand drum and a wooden trumpet. If he had not made these things how would he have been able to fight, then celebrate his victories?



Plates 16, 17. Balia of Bamblediam, Idam Valley, making roof thatching with sago-palm leaves (1972-3 BM30:3, 7).

When Namaiyanei had finished he felt very hungry. Meanwhile his sister had finished washing the sago. He returned to their camp and told her he was very hungry. She cooked a huge pile of sago. “Do you think you can eat all this sago?” she asked.

“Yes,” he replied. “I am very hungry.”

During the day, Namaiyanai had heard trees falling but she thought it was the wind. She suggested to her brother that they retire to their grass shelter for the night, but he said, “No, let us go and sleep in the poor shelter that I put up on the hill over there. I am sick of getting wet.” So they went over to the hill. Then she saw the house and she drew in her breath: “Ffffffffff....”

“Is it alright? Does it shake? Is it strong or”

She went into the house — it was as unmoving as a rock. She jumped up and down on the dancing floor — it was as solid as the rest of the house, yet with a slow spring as it was supposed to have. “Yes. We will live here. We will not go anywhere else. We will stay here till we die,” she said.

The boy noticed that a sago palm had been broken down by the wind and that pigs and birds had been eating the pith. He made a hide near to it. His sister told him to do this and showed him how. She said that if he saw a four-footed creature, it would not be a *diok* (spirit) but a pig; and if he saw something with a long yellow, red and blue neck, that was a cassowary and he could shoot it for food. “But if you see something with long skirts, that is a *balaisa* (female spirit). If you see one of those or a *diok*, you must run away.” A *diok* may be recognised by the noise its knee-joints make as it walks; it also has lights under its armpits. All night long she taught him how to live and work as a man.



Image of a *balaisa*, drawn by Soni of Bamblediam, Idam Valley, 1972

At dawn, he went down to the hide and many birds came to the sago. He shot plenty of them. Then some cassowaries came to eat at the sago tree. He thought at first that they were spirits and was afraid. But he waited then realised what they were. He shot one and killed it, then ran back to his sister. “What are you doing back here?” she asked.

“I shot a spirit and ran away,” he exclaimed, tricking her, for he knew very well he had shot a cassowary. “It had a long tail,” he added.

“And did it have a long neck with red, yellow and blue markings on it?”

“Yes” he answered.

“Oh, then that was just a cassowary. It is alright to shoot them. Let us go and look at it.” So they returned to the fallen sago tree. “Look! See its tracks?” he said.

“That’s a cassowary,” said Namaiyanai. “Let’s follow its tracks.” They came to the cassowary. “See?” she said. “A cassowary.” They gathered all the birds he had shot, filled up Namaiyanai’s net bag with them, and set off home, the boy carrying the cassowary. When they got home, he cooked the birds and ate them while the girl cooked the cassowary, ate some and smoke-dried the rest.

The next day the boy went down to the hide again and shot lots of birds. He heard a strange noise and became afraid but he stayed in the hide. When the animal came near, he shot it with an arrow. It staggered off a short distance and died. The boy ran back quickly to his sister.

“What are you doing back here?” she asked. “I shot something but I’m not sure what it is. It might be a spirit.”

“What did it look like?” asked Namaiyanai.

“It had four legs,” replied her brother.

“Oh, then that was a pig. Let’s go and look.” So they went back to the hide where they saw the tracks and Namaiyanai said, “Yes. That was a pig.”

They filled up her net bag with the birds that Namaiyanai had shot and he carried it whilst his sister carried the pig. They gathered firewood and leaves, butchered the pig, and cooked the pig and the birds with hot stones. They ate the meat with sago but the boy didn’t eat any of the pork because he had killed the pig and was afraid. They went to sleep.

During the night the boy got up and planted all the shoots and seeds their father had placed in the basket with them — plants for food, tools and utensils. He did not plant them properly — just threw them around in the garden that he had cleared. They grew up overnight.

A big wind came early in the morning rustling the leaves and blowing down all the ripe fruits and seeds. The boy wondered what was happening. "I cut down all the trees. What can be blowing in the wind?" He arose and looked outside, then marvelled. "Before I was sometimes hungry. Now I will never be hungry again. Hey, sister; get up and look at our garden!"

She got up and looked outside. "We used to be hungry, but never again. We could never finish off all this food. A lot of it will rot."

Namaiyanei was no longer a boy; he was a full-grown man. He was a great hunter and his sister washed sago. Nearby there was an extensive and dense stand of sago palms.

The young man was out hunting one day when he came across a settlement. "Hey," he thought, "we are living close to an enemy settlement!" He hid and watched for a while and then returned to his house. He had killed a pig and so he cooked it. He told his sister to make sago jelly and to make it very stiff. She did so. He tied up a bundle of sago jelly and hung it up with a parcel of smoked pork. In the morning, when he heard the dawn-bird's call, he got up, took the food he had prepared the night before, gathered up his bow and arrows, and went off to fight. When his sister woke, he was gone. She assumed that he had gone hunting.

A man was working in his garden on a hill. A bird called out Namaiyanei's name, to warn the gardener that Namaiyanei was coming. The gardener bragged to himself, "If he dares to come and I shoot at this man, the arrow will go right through him and stick into a tree behind him."

Namaiyanei chewed some fight-ginger, drew his bow, crept up close to the gardener and shot him. Then he went to the man's settlement and killed everyone — men, women and children — except for one boy and one girl, whom he brought back to his house. When he was nearly home he ate the sago jelly he had taken with him. Then he beat on a buttress root [a war signal]. His sister called out, "Oh! So you didn't go hunting; you went to fight."

Namaiyanei brought the little girl to his sister and said, "Look after her and she can help you with your work." Then they slit the boy's belly with a knife and washed the slit-gongs with his blood.

He went out fighting many times and each time brought back a boy and a girl, but he only killed the first boy. In this way he built up a strong group of men and women to help him and his sister. As they grew up, the men went out to help Namaiyanei fight and they brought back even more children. This went on for years.

Now, when Namaiyanei and Namaiyanai first emerged from the basket, their skin was white, but gradually they got darker and darker as they grew older.

One day they decorated the slit-gongs, one with male decorations (pigs' tusks, dogs' teeth, etc) and the other with female decorations (skirt, etc). Namaiyanei was going out to fight again when he noticed smoke rising from a spot near the river. "I wonder who that is up there?" he mused.

"I think they are our people. They threw us into the river and we floated down her," replied his sister. "Our old mother and father are probably still there."

"I think I will go and visit them and bring our mother back here — but not our father. He threw us aside like the seeds of a tree and caused us a great deal of hardship." So saying, he went off to investigate the origin of the smoke. A bird called out his name to warn his father but the father did not know the name and wondered who it might be. He was confident of killing any aggressor but Namaiyanei shot and killed him with one arrow. Then he went to the house and found his mother. He brought her back home with him. As he was drawing close to his settlement, Namaiyanei beat on the buttress roots of a tree, and his sister called out, "Who is the old woman with you?"

"She is our mother," he replied.

"Where is our father?"

"I don't know," he lied. "I think a tree fell on him and killed him. He threw us into the water like the seeds of a tree and caused us a great deal of hardship. Serves him right."

"Yes, that is true," agreed his sister.

Namaiyanei forsook fighting and went out hunting to get meat for his mother. When she was well satisfied and looked sturdy, he went back to fighting. By this time there

was only one enemy settlement he had not attacked — they had destroyed all the rest. He took his men, they surrounded this last settlement, and they killed everyone. They went looking for another place to attack but there were none left. So they returned to their own settlement, beating on buttress roots as they went.

Now they began to prepare for a mass marriage, for no-one at the settlement had been married yet. When everything was ready, they slept. The next morning, Namaiyanei told the women to gather firewood, stones and leaves, to make sago jelly, and to cook the domestic pigs that had been killed. Then the marriages took place, including Namaiyanei and Namaiyanai, who took mates from among those brought back from the raids. Everyone sat down to a feast of sago and pork (both smoked, and freshly roasted). Then they held a dance and beat the female slit-gong. A man beat the male slit-gong and a woman beat the female slit-gong. People far away heard them and wondered who it was, as they had never heard gong-sounds from that direction before. They decided it must be the men who had been fighting them so much.

10. WOBLIOTI, THE OUTCAST

As told by Nukwaliau of Selelian, Idam Valley

A man and his wife went out to cut and wash sago. They took with them their baby boy who was not yet walking. They washed him, laid him on a bed of sago-petioles and covered him with sago fronds. Whilst they were working, some enemy warriors surrounded the man and his wife and killed them. They cut up their bodies and took the meat away with them. One of the men spat fight-tinger onto the blood of the slain couple. They did not discover the baby boy.

People from the slain couple's settlement decided to see how the sago-processing was coming along and discovered the scene of the killings. There was blood everywhere and they saw the tracks of the enemy. One of the women found the baby boy and took him back to their settlement. The dead woman's sister brought him up.

The boy's older brothers attacked the enemy in revenge for their parents' deaths.

The boy grew up to be very aggressive — a most persistent warrior. He was in the habit of chewing red ginger leaves and this increased his anger against enemies. But he also used to kill his own people, quite indiscriminately. His name was Woblioti.

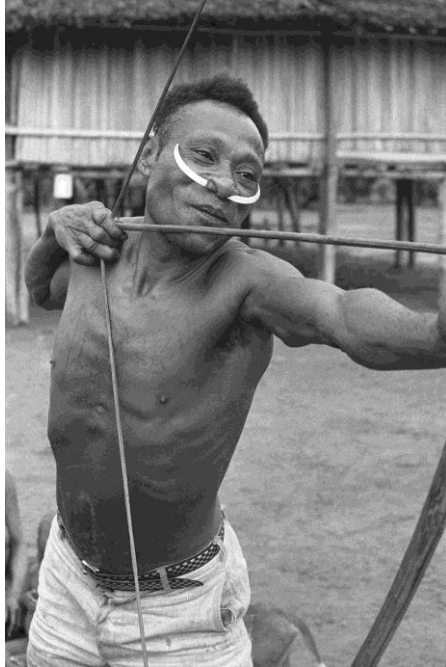


Plate 18. Mafian of Selelian (1972-3 BM29:18)

If Woblioti came across anyone, anywhere, he was as likely to kill them as not. His people tried to reason with him but he replied that he was an angry man. He would go out to fight and when he returned, if he saw someone sitting on a veranda, he would shoot and kill that person, no matter that he or she was one of his own people. His elders tried to reason with him but he wouldn't listen. He even killed children playing on the banks of the river.

His people eventually lost patience with him. His brothers dispersed, leaving the oldest to take Wablioti away to a bush camp near a mountain. Another brother, living alone near another mountain, suggested that the three of them get together, but the oldest brother would not allow it lest Wablioti kill him.

The two brothers settled down together, hunting, fighting, cutting and washing sago, cooking and so on; they had no woman to do their domestic chores.

One day, they collected pitpit [*Miscanthus floridulus*] to make arrows shafts and brought them back to their camp to straighten them over the fire. Some went crooked. The oldest brother suggested they play around with them but Woblioti didn't want to. "We are not boys that we should play around." But the older brother was persistent, so Wablioti agreed and they shot the shafts at one another until Wablioti accidentally injured his brother — one of the shafts pierced the older brother's right thigh and the end broke off in his leg. Wablioti protested, "It is all your fault. What are we going to do now?"

His brother could not walk. The leg swelled up, like a pregnant woman's belly, and after a while the swelling broke open and a female child was born. At the time this happened, Wablioti was out hunting and had shot a pig. He returned carrying the pig on his shoulders and heard the cry of the new-born baby girl. "Wow! This isn't a natural child; it was born from the arrow-shaft," he exclaimed. He butchered the pig, collected its blood, mixed it in a bark dish with scraped ginger, and cut the umbilical cord after anointing the child with the mixture.

The child grew rapidly. Woblioti rubbed medicine into the wound on his brother's leg and it healed instantly. They cooked the pig and tied some of the pig fat to the child's wrist. She chewed and sucked on this and grew instantly to adulthood; she was now a woman with fully-developed breasts. They made a skirt for her, showing her how to do it, and she put it on. They showed her how to wash sago, make string net-bags, string ornaments, how to cook sago jelly and other womanly domestic chores. Thus she learned all the things a woman should do and she looked after the two men.

They lived together, the men fighting and hunting and the 'daughter' attending to the sago and other domestic tasks. Her breasts grew fully until they hung down on her legs when she sat.

One day the two men went hunting. Woblioti killed a pig and brought it home. The girl saw him coming and took off her skirts, lying naked, as though asleep, in the doorway of the house.

Woblioti threw down the pig and went to the house to get his tobacco and betel-nut and saw her lying naked in the doorway of the house. He trod on her vagina and she jumped up, exclaiming. "I want you to have sex with me," she demanded.

But Woblioti said, "You are not a real woman. You were born of a stick. I can't have sex with you."

This made her very angry. She got up, put on her skirts, and sulked. The older brother returned and asked her to get some firewood but she refused and continued sulking. He asked her to get him some sago jelly — she refused. He told her to clean up the pig droppings around the camp — she refused. Then he asked Woblioti what he had been doing to her. Woblioti explained exactly what had happened but his brother did not believe him. He became angry and accused Woblioti of having intercourse with her. They took up their bows and arrows. Woblioti successfully dodged the arrows shot at him but his brother was not as fortunate for he was hit with one of Woblioti's arrows and died.

Woblioti was overcome with grief. He carried his brother's body into the house. "It is all your fault," he said to the 'daughter'. "Why did you have to try and seduce me? You aren't a woman's child!"

He continued blaming her, he was so overcome with grief. They both mourned. They got some bark, wrapped the dead man's body in it and placed it on a platform in the rafters of the house. They butchered the pig that Woblioti had killed, cooked it and ate it. Then they went to sleep. In the morning they took two stone adzes and went out and got the bark of two particular trees. The girl shredded it into huge piles. Woblioti left her at this task and went hunting. The girl hung the shredded bark all over the body in the rafters.

Woblioti came back from hunting and told her to go and get some bundles of sago flour from where it was stored in the creek. She did so and they heated stones and made sago jelly. Woblioti said, "That's enough now. There are only two of us; we don't need much." So they ate and the rest they threw down to their pigs beneath the house.

Then Woblioti said to the girl, “When you leave here, you will come to a fork in the track. At this fork I have stuck a marked stick in the ground. You must take the left-hand path; you must not take the right-hand path.”

“Why? Where are you going?” asked the girl.

“Nowhere in particular,” replied Woblioti. “But if I go off somewhere to fight and should get killed and do not return, you must take that path. Do not follow me along the right-hand path.”

They went to sleep. When the dawn-bird called out early in the morning, Woblioti got up, broke his bow and fight arrows, buried them at the bottom of the steps of the house, and set off along the track.

When the girl woke, she looked around for Woblioti but could not find him. He had taken some meat, two bundles of sago-jelly, some smoked pork, betel nut, lime, and tobacco. The girl also took provisions and followed after Woblioti. She came to the fork in the track and took the left-hand path as she had been instructed, and came to a house where some of Woblioti’s people lived. One man had just shot a pig and was cooking it. His name was Maifwif because he held his bow in his right hand rather than in his left. The girl had been told by Woblioti that she was to remain with his people and not attempt to follow him. She would see that there was a man there who looked like him; she was to stay with this man.

Meanwhile, Woblioti continued on his journey. He stopped at nightfall, ate, slept and then went on the next day. He travelled for months. After he had exhausted his food supply, he subsisted on wild fruits. Eventually he came to a wide river. There he saw a big tree with ripe fruit on it and he climbed to the top. From there he saw some people coming up the river in canoes, to do some fishing. He threw down a fruit so that it plopped in the water near the canoes. A woman said, “Hey, what’s that? A cockatoo? What is that smell?”

Woblioti called down, “It is me; up here. I’m eating the fruit of this tree.”



Plate 19. Men paddling upriver to Bisiaburu, Idam Valley (1972-3 BM30:9)

Then they all saw him and exclaimed, “It is a man.”

The woman who first saw him then called to the others following behind, “Don’t come by here. There is a bad smell around. There is an evil man here. Pass by over there.”

Woblioti said, “Okay. You go. I’m just eating the fruit.”

But the people spat at him, shot arrows at him and brandished paddles at him. These people came from further down the river. The river was the Sepik River and the people were the Iwuliundu. Many people came by in dozens of canoes. They all spat at Woblioti and hit out at him with their paddles. The last canoe to come by was paddled by an old man, his wife and two daughters. The others told them not to go near the tree as there was an evil-smelling man there in its branches. But the old man

ignored them. Woblioti called down to him, “I am so hungry that I am reduced to eating the fruit of this tree.”

The old man said to his wife, “We must help this poor man.” She agreed: “He can look after our house when we are away in the gardens or hunting. He can watch the fire.” The youngest daughter did not like the idea and spat at Woblioti, trying to persuade her father to leave him in the tree. But the older daughter agreed with her parents. So the younger daughter transferred to another canoe and Woblioti came down out of the tree and got into the old man’s canoe.

The rest of the people were angry with the old man and refused to let him and his family come near them. “Get away from us,” they said. “You have an evil, smelly man with you. Go some other place and sleep.” So the old man paddled on up the river and made a camp beneath a hill by the river bank.

When Woblioti smelt the fire and the food the old man was cooking, he vomited up all the things he had been eating. He vomited violently until his stomach was quite empty. Then he washed out his mouth and the old man gave him some betel nut to chew and tobacco to smoke. He asked Woblioti, “Are you alright now?”

“Yes, I’m fine now,” replied Woblioti.

The old man gave him some sago-jelly and dried fish, but Woblioti didn’t want the fish. So the old man offered him some eel and he accepted that. Now his stomach felt fine.

They had built only a rough shelter. They all slept and in the morning Woblioti asked if he could use one of the old man’s stone adzes.

“Certainly,” replied the old man. “What do you want to do with it?”

“Oh, I just want to cut the tops from some black-palms to eat.” And off he went into the forest.

The old man also went off with a stone adze, to cut some timber to build a house. Meanwhile, Woblioti worked quickly and built a huge, fine house on the other side of the hill, next to the river. First he cut some timber from near a large stand of sago palms. Then he cut two hardwood trees for the main posts and smaller ones for the other posts. It was the kind of house that had a large central, springy dancing floor. He erected the frame, put on the roof, added black palm bark floor and walls, and made the hearths. Then he carved two large slit-gongs and placed one at each side of the house. Then he carved a hand drum and a trumpet, completed the dancing platform, and cut some firewood. He completed all this in one day, whereas the old man was still cutting timber.

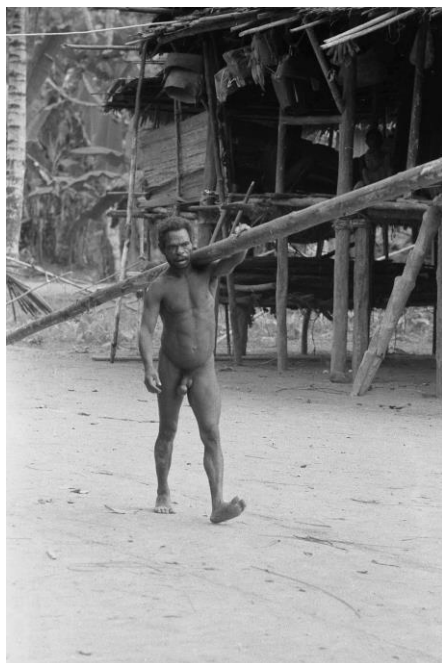


Plate 20. Moni of Bamblediam carrying a beam for a new house (1972-3 BM13:34a)

On his way back down to the camp, Woblioti saw that a pig had been eating the top of a fallen sago palm, so he tracked it and captured it, but did not kill it. Then he noticed the droppings of a Gourria Crown Pigeon and thought to himself, “At nightfall I will come and shoot this bird.” When he came close to the camp, he took some nettles and rubbed them on his skin to disfigure himself and appear to be a ‘rubbish’ man. He was pretending. Now he was very hungry.

The old man returned and Woblioti asked him where he had been. "I went upstream looking for timber," he replied. "At first I found nothing suitable but then I discovered some good trees and cut many posts and made a raft of them and floated back down the river to camp." He had made a line from thick rattan and when he drew near the camp he had called out for his daughter to come near the riverbank. He had thrown the line to her and she tied it to a big tree and hauled the raft to the bank.

The old man had a smoke. Woblioti ate some sago jelly. The old man said he would leave the raft in the water and begin building with the timber the next day. Woblioti said, "I've made a rough house where we can sleep till we build a good one." He was being very modest.

They took all their belongings, including food, materials for making arrows, things for planting such as banana suckers, coconut, betel nut, yams, taro, sweet potato, tapioca, and so on. They carried it all over to the other side of the hill. Then they saw the large, fine house that Woblioti had built, and were struck dumb. They put their things inside and settled in. They wondered how Woblioti could have built such a magnificent house in one day, all by himself. The old man said to his daughter, "You must give this man whatever food he wants; everything that is ours is his. You must not annoy him in any way."

Woblioti said to the old man, "You and your family can sleep in this room and I'll sleep in this other room."

The old man said to his daughter, "This man is a good man. You must sleep with him." And she did so, though reluctantly, for she did not fully like him yet.

The old man then went down to the raft and cut it loose with his stone adze, calling out to his people downstream: "You can retrieve this timber and build yourselves a house with it. My house is built already." Then he returned to the house.

Woblioti asked the old man if he could try out his bow and arrows. "But don't give me a bow that is too hard to draw." He was being meek. He tried several and one was very tight. He chose that one and went out to hunt. He found the Gourria Pigeon and

shot it. Then he found the pig that he had tracked and captured earlier in the afternoon and shot it. Then he returned to the house, taking only the pigeon with him.

“I shot a Gourria Pigeon,” he announced. The old man was startled and thought to himself, “This man is not a mere boy.” Then he said, “You are supposed to be a ‘rubbish’ man. How do you do it?”

Woblioti then announced that he had also shot a pig and suggested they go out and bring it back to the house. When they got to the pig, they asked, “Did you shoot it this evening?”

“Yes, I shot it this evening,” affirmed Woblioti. They tied a rope to the pig and the old man said to his daughter, “Take off your skirts and carry the pig to the house.” She did so and then they all went to sleep. Woblioti waited until they were all asleep, then got up and planted out all the garden things — bananas, coconuts, betel nut, yams, taro, sweet potato, tapioca, sugarcane, pitpit for arrow shafts, gourd vines etc.



Plate 21. Typical garden of the Upper Sepik area (USEE 1968 BM19:4a)

Just before dawn a wind sprang up and rustled the leaves of the plants growing in the garden around the house — they had grown to maturity overnight! The old man and his family woke and were startled by the noise as there was no garden around the

house the day before. The fruits of the plants had ripened and fallen to the ground. The old man got up and looked at the abundance of food in the garden and marvelled. Then he woke up his daughter and said, “Get up and look around you. What has happened?” She got up, went outside and saw the garden. She was overjoyed; there was so much abundance.

They gathered the ripe fruits, butchered the pig Woblioti had killed the evening before, made a fire, and heated stones. Then they set to and cooked up a magnificent feast. When it was ready they took out the stones, sat down, and ate.

The old man then went downstream and confronted his people. Why did you try to harm this man? Why did you spit at him, brandish your paddles at him, and shoot arrows at him? I am here enjoying an abundance of food and meat now. Your houses are falling down in disrepair; this man built a fine, big house in one day!”

Woblioti took the tusks of the pig he had shot and smoothed down pieces of black palm to make a hunting bow and a fighting bow. He made many arrows, some with bamboo blades, others with barbs. He then took lots of arrows and went upstream. He shot a great many pigs, wallabies and marsupials. Then he cut down a dead tree and tied the animals to it. He threw the log into the river, gathering all the animals he had shot, as he floated downstream. When he arrived at the house, he called out to the old man’s daughter to pull him ashore. She hurried down to the river bank, caught hold of the rattan line Woblioti threw to her, and pulled Woblioti and his raft of animals ashore.

Many times Woblioti did this. He didn’t go out and kill just a couple of pigs; he made it a real expedition, returning with a large number of animals. The guts of the animals they butchered, they threw into the river and the people downstream were at a loss to explain where it was all coming from. There was too much food for the old man’s family to eat, so he called out to his people downstream, “All this crocodile food, all these victims of the crocodile, you people can eat.” So they took it and ate it. This happened many times, the people downstream eating the left-overs from Woblioti’s hunting expeditions.

On yet another occasion, Woblioti went hunting and killed over twenty pigs. He tied them to two dry logs and floated them downstream. Again he called to the old man's daughter to take hold of the line and pull him ashore. Now, while he had been hunting, heavy rain had washed away his worn-out outer skin and revealed his fine strong body with all his ear, nose, head and body decorations intact and glistening. He buried his old skin in the swamps. When the girl saw him she trembled with excitement and desire. She thought he was another man. She pulled the raft up to the bank and ran up to the house, to her mother and father. "We thought this man was a rubbish man but he has been transformed into a fine, handsome young man. He is a real warrior."

The old man came down to the river's edge and regarded Woblioti with a mixture of pleasure and awe. They shared a cigar and then set about butchering the pigs. But the old man accidentally cut his hand with the bamboo knife, so they decided to give the remainder, as yet unbutchered, to the people downstream. They threw the carcasses into the river and the old man called out, "Take all this crocodile food and eat it. I am tired of butchering it. You eat it." The people gathered the carcasses from the river as they floated by and carried them into their houses. There they noticed the wounds from Woblioti's arrows. As they could not find any marks of crocodiles' teeth, they concluded that a man must have shot the pigs.

The younger daughter of the old man thought about all that had been happening and concluded that the 'rubbish' man must be responsible. She decided to go and find out. She walked upriver to Woblioti's house and hid in the forest to watch. She saw Woblioti and was overcome by his handsome and fearsome appearance. She returned to the village and said, "You thought that man was a 'rubbish' man and spat at him, brandished paddles at him, and shot at him with arrows. You should see him now!" Then she went into the house where she had been staying, gathered up all her things, and announced that she was returning to her father, to live in the fine house built by Woblioti.

"What house?" they asked. "You are lying!"



Plate 22. Community house on Idam River between Isagu and Bamblediam (1972-3 BM29:14)

“Come and see,” she retorted. So they went with her to see. Her older sister saw her coming and was angry.

“Why have you come? You have come to this man, have you? You have come to my man? You spat at him, hit at him with paddles and shot at him with arrows, and called him a ‘rubbish’ man. Go away. You are not welcome here. Now that you see he is a handsome man, you desire him. You didn’t want him before.” But the younger sister ignored her and insisted on staying. She was as enamoured of Woblioti as was her older sister. They both became his wives.

Woblioti settled down with his two wives and began to feel sorry for his in-laws, the people who had despised him. Their houses were falling apart so he helped them to rebuild them. He asked them to go to the lakes to catch fish but to bring back the eels and the tails of the crocodiles for him.

So some of them went fishing. Woblioti would not eat the fish they brought back, only the eels and crocodile meat. He built many houses, all in a day. When the people returned with the fish they were all delighted with how quickly he had rebuilt their houses. The women made some sago and prepared a feast for Woblioti. He participated in the feast and then returned to his own house.

One day the men went out to fight but they were only pretending. They were really only fighting wild taro. The men gathered and ate well, then set off downstream in their canoes. They came ashore and sent out scouts. They built shelters. Woblioti went along with them and thought they were seriously preparing to attack an enemy settlement. They gathered in the shelters and stirred one another into a fighting mood. They prepared sago to eat after the attack. Some men went out and cut some leaves from wild taro plants and brought them back into the camp to show everyone and said, “Look! Tomorrow we will enjoy killing this enemy!” Woblioti thought this was a manner of speech and that they were really going to attack a settlement. But first they slept.



Plate 23. Bisiaburu men returning from wild pig hunt, Idam Valley (1972-3 BM30:10).

At dawn they set off and surrounded the wild taro. They attacked it and broke it down. Woblioti ran around to watch the fight and saw that they were only playing, so he took one of his arrows and scratched his leg with it. He cried out, “Ayiii! Ayiii!” so that they would think he had been wounded. They ran to him and carried him back to their camp and thence by canoe to the village. They decorated themselves when they were close to the village, sang victory songs, and blew the trumpets. The women were delighted at the victorious return of their menfolk. But someone told Woblioti’s two

wives that he had been shot and they began wailing. However, he was only slightly hurt and his wives were angry because they had been needlessly upset.

Woblioti asked his wives to make him a thick sago jelly. They did so, bundled it up, and hung it on the veranda of the house.

Then, when everyone was asleep, Woblioti got his weapons ready and his fighting- ginger. He had a nap and before dawn he took his things and the sago and walked to a nearby settlement. A bird called out that Woblioti was coming, warning the inhabitants.

“Whoever you are,” they called out, “Beware! We will kill you with our bows and arrows. Our arrows will go right through you and stick into the sago palms behind you!”

“I am here!” Woblioti retorted. He chewed some of the ginger then attacked the settlement and killed everyone. He killed a young boy, butchered him, and washed the slit-gongs at his house with his blood. The old man watched him and wondered, but he did not understand.

Woblioti made many such expeditions. He did not stop until he had wiped out everyone who lived in the mountains nearby. He methodically wiped out every settlement in the area. And all the time he was thinking of his dead brother.

So he left his adopted people and came to the camp that he had made with his brother. As he approached, he heard bird-calls, that of the *simal* [Lesser Bird of Paradise, *Paradisaea minor*] and the *kobol* [Vulterine Parrot, *Psitttrichas fulgidus*]. These birds had formed from the shredded bark he and the girl had draped all over the body. As he approached, he heard the birds calling: “Niyak-niyak! Niyak-niyak!” Their feathers had fallen down all over the floor of the house. He gazed at all these feathers and then went on along the track to find the girl.

Woblioti came upon a man cooking a pig. This man was a fearsome warrior too, just like Woblioti. It was Maifwif, who had married the ‘daughter’ of Woblioti’s elder

brother. Woblioti joined him and they chewed betel nut together but he was not recognised. Then he saw the girl working about the house; she was heating stones to make sago jelly. She went down to the creek to get some water in a bark basket and Woblioti, concealed in the bushes, poked at her with a stick. At first she thought it was just a piece of stick prodding her and she brushed it aside. She went down into the creek, filled the basket with water, and was coming back when Woblioti's stick prodded her right in the stomach.

The girl was startled. "Who's that?" she cried.

"Me, Sepnekwaunesi," he replied, using his second name. Then he said, "Me, Woblioti."

Then she recognised him, threw down her basket full of water, hugged him and cried. Her husband heard her crying and called out, "What's the fuss?"

"It is my uncle, your father-in-law," she replied.

Maifwif ran to join them, crying too. Woblioti said, "I am not dead, that you should weep so much. Enough! Let us go to your house." They gave him betel nut and continued with the cooking and then they ate together. Then Woblioti asked his niece, "Have you been to that camp lately?"

"No," she said, "you forbade me to do so. I have remained here."

Then Woblioti took his niece back to the old camp. They came into the midst of all the singing birds, the *simal* and the *kobol*, and there were feathers everywhere. They entered the house, hitting at the birds with sticks. There was squawking and screeching and they killed many birds. One Bird of Paradise with short tail feathers, an immature bird, went inside Woblioti's hair. Later on it would reappear on his head at dances and then hide away again in his hair.

Although they killed many birds, many also got away. Woblioti let them go with his blessing. They bred in the forests and this is how they originated.

Woblioti and his niece plucked the feathers from the birds they had killed and gathered the plumage into two heaps, one for her of the birds that she had killed, and one for him of the birds that he had killed. They filled up numerous baskets with the feathers and carried them back to her house. The carcasses they did not eat but threw away.

Then Woblioti told his niece to make many string net-bags, large and small, as well as string bands for the arms and legs, and attach the feathers to these. Woblioti arranged that his niece and Maifwif should be ready to go with him to his new settlement in ten days' time. Then he returned to his in-laws by the Sepik River.

When Woblioti got back, he immediately began his fighting expeditions again. Meanwhile he instructed his wives to make string net-bags and string arm and leg bands. He went hunting and fighting for many days.

First he taught the young men how to hunt and fight, then took them all out and said to them, "Before, you pretended you were warriors by attacking a patch of wild taro. Now you are going to see what the real thing is like."

They held a big dance, then went out and attacked the few remaining settlements of the mountain people and wiped them all out. When the fight was over they returned to their village to dance but their body decorations were very shabby — just stalks of flowering grass which broke almost immediately.

Woblioti began to sing a song. After a while, the people realised he was singing about them, how they had despised him, spat at him, and so on. All his in-laws were struck with remorse.

"It is true; you are right. We were wrong to do all those things to you. There is nothing we can say." Then they slept and in the morning Woblioti went out and finished off the last settlement all by himself.

There was one man at the settlement who was a fine young warrior. Woblioti killed him, butchered him, took his guts, his liver and his tongue, and placed them in a bark basket, then carried them back to his dead brother's camp. When he got there, he lifted down the remains of his brother's body, and set out all the bones in order — the whole skeleton. Then he placed the young warrior's internal organs on top of the bones and threw a handful of maggots over them. He took the blood of a pig he had killed and sprinkled it over the bones. He then retreated to another room of the house, hid, and watched.

The bones began to transform. He watched as the body emerged from the remains he had arranged; it moved, the limbs stretching and flexing. He marvelled: "Have I succeeded in reviving my brother?" He went and pulled up his brother into a sitting position and walked him up and down inside the house. Then when he seemed to be able to move about alright, he told him to climb a nearby coconut tree. He did so. Then he instructed him to fetch a bunch of betel-nuts from a nearby palm and he did so — no trouble at all. Then Woblioti told him to call out and he did so. Next he was instructed to fetch his bow and arrows and he went and got them. "What do I shoot?" he asked.

"Shoot any pig that hasn't got its ear nicked," replied Woblioti. So he went out and shot a wild pig. The arrow went right through the pig and stuck into a tree behind it. Now Woblioti was satisfied. He told his brother to bring the pig to the house. They butchered and cooked it. Then they cut sago, processed it and made sago jelly and ate. The rest of the meat they hung up in the house and then went to sleep.

In the morning they got up and walked to Maifwif's house. Maifwif and the girl were waiting as instructed when Woblioti and his elder brother came in. Woblioti said to the girl, "This is your real father." She held him and cried and cried. Woblioti fed them all and then said, "We will have a big feast at my house, with my in-laws." He told them to bring all the feather decorations and the string bags she had made. They cut sago, processed it, and made sago jelly. They gathered betel nuts. Then they went out and shot a pig, brought it back and cooked it.

Meanwhile his in-laws were doing the same, as he had arranged. They were all ready and had begun the dancing when Woblioti and his family walked in, late in the afternoon. The older brother had taken Maifwif's sister as his wife.

They all joined in the dancing, exchanged food, and then adjourned to the *afok*, the special dancing house, and danced a war-dance. But Woblioti's in-laws did not have any good decorations.

Woblioti doused the fires and the house was dark. He got out the decorations he and his family had brought with them and told all the people to gather together. He decorated them with these marvellous feathers, men and women, and then told them to dance. Woblioti's two wives beat the slit-gongs. First they were told to sing without the drums, then the drums joined in and they all danced. Then Woblioti ordered the fires to be relit. Everyone saw how fine they looked and trembled with excitement. Then Woblioti said, "You Iwoliandu, this is what you should do when you have killed an enemy. This is how you must dance."



Plate 24. Dancers at Bamblediam, Idam Valley (1972-3 BM19:35)

11. A STORY FROM ANGORAM

As told by Auyamas and Oulus of Selelian, Idam Valley

There was once an unmarried woman who was enamoured of a particular unmarried man and she made it obvious. He decided he had better get away from her or there would be trouble in the village. So he went out to hunt with his dogs, killed some small pigs and cassowaries, and went to his garden house. The woman wanted to follow him but her brother objected. "You are not married to him. You must not be infatuated." However, she insisted and would not listen to him so he took his bow and arrows and killed her.

Meanwhile, the man was preparing the animals he had killed, and then cooked them with some taro. Now the spirit of the girl followed him to the garden house and hid inside a tree. She watched him cooking the food, saw him take some taro out of the 'oven', and go into the house. He ate the livers first, with the taro. He had kept the livers aside when he butchered the animals, and cooked them inside the house while the other meat was cooking in the hot-stones 'oven'. Then he took the rest of the food out of the 'oven' and built up the fire in the house to smoke the meat he could not eat that night. Then he put some boards across the door.

The girl's spirit came and tapped at the door. "Who is that?" he asked.

"I am a woman; please let me in."

"No. You are a spirit-woman; I'm not going to let you in." They argued back and forth until it became dark.

"I am hungry; please let me in," she pleaded. Eventually he could not stand it anymore and let her in. "Look!" she said. "If I was a spirit-woman, I would have eaten you by now." Then he saw that her face and body were those of his girlfriend, but her hair was very long; he wondered why. He gave her food. She said, "You must not sleep with me tonight."

"That's okay," he agreed. She still had some of the blade of her brother's arrow inside her body. They slept on either side of the room.

Next morning they ate together. Then she suggested, "Let's go hunting with the dogs. I will take this big string-bag and carry whatever we catch." They went out and after a while they caught a small pig, then another, and yet another. At first she walked well, but then her belly began to swell as the blood from her mortal wound accumulated. She hid it from the man. She said, "I want to go and defecate." She went aside, let some of the blood out of the wound, and rejoined him.

After a while her belly swelled again and she made the same excuse so she could let the blood out. Yet again, the same thing happened.

"Hey!" he said, "Why are you defecating so much?"

"Well; you know how it is. Last night I ate liver and taro and now I have diarrhoea."

They came to a mountain and she said, "Let us climb this mountain." So up they went and again her belly swelled and she had to excuse herself. Then they came across a certain tree and she said "Cut some of the bark of this *idabnou* tree; it has a strong smell. We will mix it with *eima* and *yaima* leaves in boiling water and that will cure my illness." She he cut off some of the bark, gathered the other leaves and then she said, "Let's go back now." They returned to the garden house.

"Get me some black palm spathes to make a dish," she said. He did so. "Quickly," she urged him, "You must not rest. Get firewood and get the animals we caught ready for roasting." So off he went. He singed and butchered the animals. "Quickly, make the bark dish." He did so. Then they prepared the concoction from the bark and leaves and heated stones ready to drop into it. They made a platform above the dish and piled the hot stones nearby. "Now you must go over there," she said. "You must not watch me." So he went off some distance away.

Then the woman's spirit sat on the platform above the dish and put the hot stones in the dish one by one until the mixture boiled. At the fifth stone, out came much blood and an arrowhead, which fell into the dish.

“Hey! Come here! What is this?” she called. He came and bit at his finger with distress. He took the arrowhead out of the dish. Then she told him all that had happened — how her brother had killed her because of her passion for him. “So now I have come to you as a spirit,” she finished.

“Indeed,” he observed.

Meanwhile, back at their settlement, her body was wrapped in bark and placed in her parent’s house. People were mourning her death while her spirit was with the man she loved, at the garden house. She was much better now, so she and her man made love. They resumed the preparation of the food, took the food from the hot stones, and ate. They stayed together for many days and eventually she became pregnant. She bore the son and he grew quickly, miraculously, in just a few days, because she was a spirit-woman. The child played around the house.

Back at the settlement, the man’s older brother — who was married and had a little daughter — was worried that his brother had not come home. He wondered whether the girl’s spirit had eaten him. So he took some sago and went to look for him. When he came to the garden, the boy saw him coming and ran inside to tell his father. The older brother saw the child and wondered where his brother had found a woman. Then he saw the girl. He recognised her body and face but her hair was long. He sat down and they gave him food and told him all that had happened — how after her brother had killed her, her spirit came and married her lover and bore him a son.

“Yes,” he said. “I thought you were her, but your long hair confused me.”

“Where is her body now?” the younger brother asked.

“In her parents’ house,” the older brother replied.

“Then you must take it and bury it deep in the swamps. It must be placed in a moist place, not a dry one.”

So the older brother returned to the village and took her body and put it in the swamps. Nobody tried to stop him when he maintained that it was best to put bodies in the swamps. He did not tell them that her spirit was alive.

Then, at a time agreed upon, he took his wife and his daughter to the garden house. He told them, but no-one else, what had happened. The younger brother's son was playing outside the house and the older brother said to his daughter, "Your cousin is playing outside. Hear him?"

The boy called out to his father, "Uncle is coming now." The two children were happy to see each other and played together. By this time, the spirit woman had had a daughter. She was holding it in her lap when her husband's brother's family arrived. The brother was so happy he nursed and played with the new baby. Then they made a fire, cooked some food, and ate. Some smoked meat and sago jelly they put aside to take back to the village. They got their things together and set off for home.

When they came near the village, they heard people crying. It was the girl's parents. "What are they crying for?" she asked.

"They are crying over your death," said her husband's brother.

"But I am alive; I am not dead. Am I a spirit? They must not cry."

So they came to the village and to her parents' house. When people saw her they wondered who she was — such a fine looking girl, too, and with long hair. "What are you crying for?" she asked her parents.

"We are crying over our dead daughter," they answered.

"Who do you think I am?" she asked them. "I am not dead. Go and wash. You must not cry anymore."

They went to the river and washed, and their daughter gave them the food she had brought with her, as her parents had not eaten during the mourning. Her brother was

ashamed that he had tried to kill her, but nobody was angry with him. The spirit-girl's younger sister cared for the new baby girl, except, of course, for the breast-feeding, and it became like her own child. Things went on like this for about a month.

Then one day the men were out hunting and the spirit-woman went out to cut and washed sago. She brought back the sago and put it in the house whilst she went to get a dish of water.

Now one of the posts from the burial platform on which her body had been placed, was stuck into the ground near the ladder to the house. Her younger sister was on the veranda with the baby. As she came back with the water and was about to climb the ladder, a male pig charged her.

"Look out!" her younger sister called. "That pig is attacking you!"

She threw down the dish of water and looked for the nearest post to climb. The nearest one was from her burial platform. Her younger sister shouted to her not to climb it but it was too late for her to find another. She climbed it and her body pulled her spirit into the swamp and she disappeared.

Her parents, her husband and her brother were angry with the younger sister whom they thought responsible for her older sister's disappearance. However, they gave her in marriage to her older sister's husband and the baby she had been caring for became hers.