

LEGENDS OF THE

AMTO OF SIMAIYA VALLEY

WEST SEPIK PROVINCE

PAPUA NEW GUINEA

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1. DINUKNAU, THE CREATOR

As told by Auyamas and Oulus of Selelian, Idam Valley

Dinuknau was angry because his sister had been given to another man in marriage, but no woman had been given to him in exchange. So he cut the buttress root of a huge *ficus* tree, constructed a big boat with compartments, and filled it up with many species of plants and animals, male and female of each kind. He made a bundle of sago flour and placed it in another compartment. Then he caused an overwhelming flood and his boat floated.

After a time, he heated stones until they were red hot and threw them into the floodwaters. The water boiled and then dried up and the boat came to rest on Kabwali Peak, the mountain between the lands of the Amto and the Abau. Dinuknau took the plants and animals out of the boat. It turned to stone and can be seen there to this day.

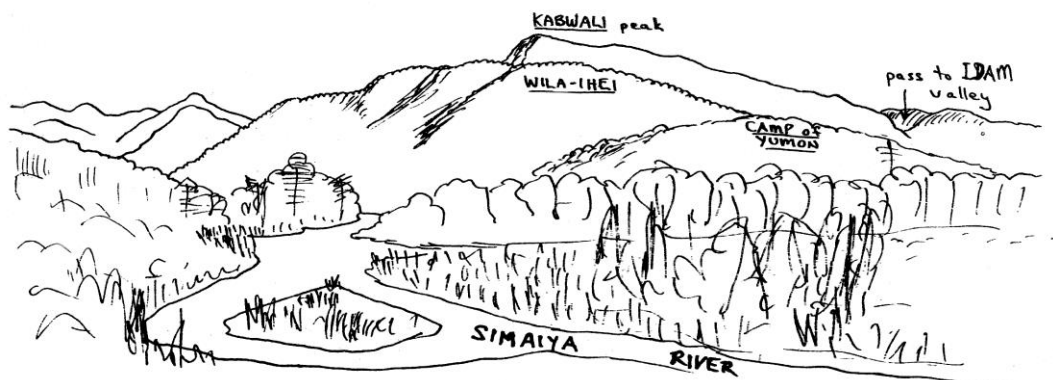


Plate 1. View south up the Simaiya Valley from Sisilo towards Kabwali Peak (1972-3 BM30: 33, 34)

Dinuknau grew old and bent with age and wondered what to do for company, for he was lonely. He changed into a rat-like animal and died. His body became maggoty from the blowflies, and the maggots developed into human beings - thousands of them, male and female. Dinuknau was then resurrected as a young man. All his 'children' spoke one language, Dinuknau's, which survives as the language of the Amto people.

Now the children of Dinuknau had no competition, for no one else had survived the great flood. Dinuknau cultivated the plants and bred the animals in a small garden. When he had plenty of all types of plants and animals, he distributed them among the different groups of his offspring. Some plants and animals died but most survived. Dinuknau spoke and a dense jungle sprang into being. Many animals, such as the wild pigs, cassowaries and birds, took refuge in the forest and multiplied. The forest was necessary for the survival of these wild species. Dinuknau was satisfied with his work.

Many quarrels erupted among his children. He had encouraged them to intermarry, exchanging sisters to obtain mates. But quarrels occurred over women and property, so Dinuknau separated them into many different groups living in different places, speaking different languages. But Amto remained the chief language. For instance, the people of the Idam valley who have Amto ancestors must learn the Amto language; they must not abandon the ancestral tongue, so they are bilingual.

Dinuknau then went away. He carried a bundle of sago jelly and took a pig with him. He gave the sago to the pig and sat down to rest, with his hands propped on the ground behind him and his knees bent. To this day, you can see the depressions in the ground which are his hand-prints and knee-marks, along with the footprints of the pig. The bundle of sago turned into stone and is still there, in the Simaiya headwaters.

Dinuknau left his pig and walked on to the headwaters of the May River. On a hill he built a house. There was always plenty of meat in his household.

Now Dinuknau had a son and he was killed by the Bo people. Dinuknau found the body, with blood flowing everywhere. Dinuknau contained his anger and befriended

the killers. He prepared a mourning feast: piles of sago jelly with meat heaped around them, and covered with leaves. But he had mixed the excreta of pigs and dogs with the food.

Dinuknau called the people to the feast. The people were at first suspicious, for they were afraid of vengeance. The children would not touch the food but the adults' greed overcame their fears. They ate the food and became invisible, and their voices sounded like birds calling. The children cried out frantically for their parents but were unable to find them. Dinuknau cared for the children and when they grew up, the hills were repopulated.

2. THE ORIGIN OF COCONUTS

As told by Ikedi of Sisilo, Simaiya Valley.

Two women, who were sisters, cut a sago tree and then began scraping out the pith. Their brother came along and demanded that they make him some sago-jelly. He had killed a pig and wanted some sago to eat with the meat. However, his sisters ignored him. He gathered firewood and put the stones on the fire to heat but his sisters did not bring him any sago. So he got a cassowary bone knife, dug a hole and sat in it to sulk.

His two sisters came along to where he had been preparing the pig and saw the pork. "Hey! Our brother has made a fire and heated stones but left the pork here. What is he doing? Where is he?" Then they saw him sitting in the hole, sulking. "What are you doing in that hole," they called. He tried to get up, exclaiming "Aiyo! Aiyo!" as he turned into a coconut tree.

The coconut tree grew rapidly, bore fruit and the coconuts fell to the ground and immediately sprouted, forming a large grove. The dogs smelt the coconuts, broke them open and ate the sweet, white flesh. Then they defecated in the long grass nearby.

Some of the village men noticed that the dogs' bellies were full and wondered what they had been eating. They discovered the dogs' excreta in the long grass and decided

to burn the grass. They set fire to the grass and the bits of coconut in the dogs' excreta released oil which sputtered in the flames.

"Hey! I wonder what that is they have been eating," exclaimed one of the men. "I think I'll try some." So he took some of the excreta to the creek, washed it thoroughly to separate out the pieces of coconut, and ate them. "This is really sweet," he thought to himself, and they all went back to the village to sleep.

In the morning, this man followed the dogs and found the coconut grove and all the fallen coconuts. "This must be what the dogs have been eating," he thought. He took one, broke it open with his adze, and ate the white flesh. It was very sweet. He climbed up the coconut palms to get some more. He hid them but returned with one to the village to show the others. Whilst he was up in one of the palms, however, he had found one of the two sisters who had transformed herself into a bird. She had no skirts and the man took a hold of her and pulled her down out of the palm. Then he took the leaves of a certain tree, heated them in a fire, and magically transformed the bird back into the beautiful young woman she had been. He then took her to his house — he lived somewhat apart from the others — and shut her in securely. Then he took one of the coconuts to his people and showed it to them. "Come and try this. It is excellent food and very sweet." Everybody tried it and agreed. The man said, "Sleep now and in the morning you can go and get some more for yourselves." He told them where to find the grove of coconut palms and returned to his woman.

The people got up in the morning and went to the coconut grove and, with their stone adzes, cut up all the fallen, dry coconuts they could find. Then they climbed the palms and cut down all the green coconuts. Some of the dry coconuts had fallen into the Nifiap and Kep Creeks and floated away. Thus the coconut spread all over the place.

Now among these people there lived some spirit-men called *amkiye*. They looked like real people but were not. One of them saw pieces of the bird-woman's loose skirt in one of the coconut palms and thought to himself, "Our brother has found a woman up here and has not told us. I must go and look at her." He put the piece of skirt inside his penis gourd and his penis immediately swelled up as big as a house post. He came to his 'brother's' house and called out, "Hey brother! You must give me that woman

you have in there. I found bits of her skirt in the coconut palm and now I have an erection.” But the man ignored him, refusing to give up his woman.

The spirit-man pestered and pestered him until he devised a plan to rid his people of these spirit-men. He cut a black-palm and with its pith he made a jelly, like sago jelly. From this he fashioned a form, moulding legs, arms, face, breasts, vagina — the whole body of a woman — until it looked like his bird-woman. He added a skirt, then said to his creation, “Get up now; come alive! You are a beautiful young woman.” Then he called out to the spirit-men, “You can have that woman if you want to. She is waiting at my house. You can all have intercourse with her.”

The *amkiye* who had been pestering him so much came and took the ‘woman’ on his shoulders and, followed by the other spirit-men, took her to a house built high up on tall poles. They climbed the ladder, following the *amkiye* carrying the ‘woman’. But when he got to the top, the ‘woman’ changed back into boiling hot palm-jelly, spilling all over the one carrying her and then onto those below on the ladder, killing them all with its scalding heat.

3. THE STORY OF HIYALI

As told by Eifok of Amtó, Simaiya Valley.

Many generations ago there was a man named Hiyali who lived at Hyoko, a settlement just south of Amtó. Early one morning, at dawn, his two sisters woke him and told him it was time to go to a bird-hide that he had constructed beside a river. He went there and after a while shot two Gourria Crown Pigeons [*Goura victoria*]. By evening he had lost track of time. The sap of a kwila tree [*Intsia bijuga*] was oozing and attracting the birds; they also fed on the fallen fruits of the tree. He kept shooting at them and missing because the birds were really spirits that lived in the roots of the tree. When it became dark he saw that all the spirits had surrounded him; there was no way out.

“What are you doing here,” they demanded as they danced around him. One threw a stick into the hide and shouted, “Hiyali, listen to our song. We sing like this every

night.” Some were jumping around like wallabies; they were getting ready to kill and eat him.

“Let’s eat him now,” some said.

“No. Let’s wait till morning,” said others. So they continued singing and dancing till dawn and then they hid in the roots of the tree, changing into tree trunks, roots, rotten logs and other things.

Hiyali decided to leave while he could. He picked up his bow and arrows and the two pigeons and left hastily. But when he emerged from the hide, the spirits chased him, calling out after him. They caught him, killed him, cut him up and ate him, leaving only his skin intact over his bones and heart, so that he appeared to be whole. Then they sent him on his way, carrying his bow and arrows and the two pigeons, though these were now rotten. He came to Hyoko and his people made a fire. He smelt the fire and immediately disintegrated. His people mourned his death.

Thus it is that men fear to be abroad in the forest at night if there is no full moon.

4. LIBOTI AND THE SNAKE

As told by Ikedi of Sisilo, Simaiya Valley.

One day some men caught a large python. They killed it, cut it up and cooked it. However they did not offer any to Liboti. He was angry about this and said, “Am I a pig or a dog? You must share your meat with me too.” They offered him a tiny portion but he rejected it with contempt and told them to keep it.

Early the next morning, Liboti went out to catch a snake for himself. He wanted a really big one, as thick as the trunk of a kwila tree. He found lots of small ones but kept looking until he found a really big one. He attacked it but it did not die. As he was fighting it, another large snake, which he had not seen, dropped from a tree above him, wound itself around his neck, then down around his shoulders and chest. The other snake began to wind around his legs, then up his body. They immobilised him

and squeezed him until he lost consciousness. Then the two snakes unwound, believing they had killed him, and slithered off to drink water. Whilst they were away, Liboti regained consciousness, saw the snakes had left him, and struggled to his feet. He placed a log where he had been lying, to deceive the snakes, and hurried back to his settlement. The snakes returned and tried to swallow the log, thinking it was Liboti, but soon discovered they had been tricked.



Image of snake (*isoku*) drawn by Bake of Amto, 1973

Some time later, a sorcerer attacked Liboti and ate all his flesh. He prophesied through Liboti that all the people of the settlement would be killed by snakes, eels, water spirits, and the spirits of large rocks. The men took heed and prepared for a siege. They got their weapons ready and barricaded the doors of their large house.

A frightful storm blew up — rain, wind and flood. The rain went on and on all night and the wind shook the house. When the rain ceased, the floods came and crept higher and higher towards the house. The snakes, eels and spirits of the rocks attacked the house and the men tried to defend themselves. The fight raged on until the large snakes got close enough to the house to allow the little black snakes — which the large snakes were wearing through their noses as decoration — to enter and attack the men. Then the big snakes climbed onto the roof of the house and attacked from above. Then the spirits of the rocks danced towards each other and smashed the house between them. The flood then swept the whole lot away and everybody was killed.

Thus it is the custom to be generous with meat otherwise such misfortunes could befall one.

5. THE SORCERERS' PROPHECY

As told by Ikedi of Sisilo, Simaiya Valley.

Two men were attacked by sorcerers and their flesh was eaten. The sorcerers prophesied through them that water spirits would wipe out their community if they persisted in living so close to Aiya Creek. But the people ignored the warning and even built a settlement closer to the water, including a fine ceremonial dancing house.

One night they were singing and dancing in this ceremonial house, both men and women, when a fierce storm blew up and it rained heavily. The water rose rapidly, higher and higher until it entered the house, and continued to rise. The people sought refuge in the rafters but still the water rose. As it rose, they called to one another, "Hey, father..."; "Hey, brother..."; "Hey, cousin..."; "We will all die together." Then the spirits of the rocks came and crushed the house and everyone was killed.

Others of their group, who lived in other camps, reflected on their fate. "They were warned but they took no notice. It was their own fault, for building so close to the river."

6. BEKIYANI, THE SACRED MOUNTAIN

As told by Einou and Samoi of Sisilo, Simaiya Valley.

A man and his son, of the Siawa people, followed Weka Creek and came to the mountain called Bekiyani. There they found the creeks dried up and full of fish. They collected the fish, returned to their settlement, and told everyone, "Get the derris root ready and some sago-jelly, and we will go and get some more fish tomorrow." They cooked the fish they had brought home and shared them around.

"Where did you get these fish?" the people asked.

"At Bekiyani mountain," they replied.

“Ahh! Let’s not go there,” they said. “The water spirits might kill us.” But they all went the next day despite their fears. They built a hut there, marked out the places in the creek where they would catch fish, and then went to sleep in their hut. However, they did not know that water spirits had eaten the two men and taken possession of their minds and bodies to entice their comrades back to the mountain so they could eat them too.

Next morning they squeezed the juice of the derris root into the water and caught large numbers of fish. They roped the fish together and hung them in the hut. Lots of crocodiles and eels were also in the water, but they were really water spirits. Although the men tried to catch them, they couldn’t hold them. The water churned around them like whirlpools in deep water.

A man named Sawumo, and Sake his son, saw this and became afraid, realising that the eels and crocodiles must really be water spirits. They pleaded with the people to let the crocodiles and eels be, as they were spirits, but the people ignored them. “You are afraid, eh?” they taunted. “Yes, we are afraid. Leave them alone.”

Just then the water rose from ankle-deep to well over their chests, and the fish that had been hung up nearby wiggled vigorously.

“Hey! The fish are not yet dead. Let’s get out of here,” the two men pleaded, but the others wouldn’t listen.

“No. This is good food. Let’s catch some more.” The water rose to their heads and the two men ran away. Then the dogs of the water spirits began howling. The spirits attacked with stone adzes, killing all the people by hitting them on the forehead. The fish jumped right off the cane rope on which they were strung.

Sawumo and Sake got away in time but all the others were killed. They took a leaf for each person who had died and when they returned to their settlement they threw the leaves around and said, “We are the only survivors. All the others were killed.” Then all the people cried and mourned. The water came rushing down from the mountain, red with the blood of those killed by the water spirits.

Now this mountain is forbidden. It is safe to walk in the foot-hills around the headwaters of the Simaiya River but no-one will climb Bekiyani.

7. SIAKU, THE WOMAN WITH MANY CHILDREN

As told by Oloinou, Inano and others of Amtu, Simaiya Valley.

Siaku had many children — a great many sons who continually played at fighting with tiny bows and arrows, and their older sister who was grown up and married. The sister's husband used to hunt for pigs and gave them to his many brothers-in-law but as he handed over the pork it became mere bones with no meat or fat on them.



Plate 2. Boy with play bow and arrows, Otwilimakom, Dio River area (USEE 1968 BM4:11a)

One day, Siaku got tired of the clamouring children. She made lots of sago jelly and wrapped it in a huge leaf. Then she slept. In the morning, when all the children had left the house to play, she rubbed ashes from the hearth onto the ladder of the house

and stepped on them as she climbed down to the ground. Then she left, carrying the sago jelly in a huge string bag.

The children returned to discover their mother had gone. “Where is she?” cried one. “She’s gone!” cried another, “Oh! Here are her tracks!” said another. “It’s your own fault,” said the oldest brother. “She got tired of your constant squabbling.”

Meanwhile, as Siaku walked towards a certain mountain, she gathered fish, birds, possums, frogs, piglets, cassowaries and put them in her huge string bags - a separate bag for each type of game. She followed Yesiya Creek until she came to the mountain. She climbed it in the late afternoon and slept there.

On the way up the mountain, Siaku had heard some spirit people talking in a cave. She went close to the cave to spy on them. The men were cooking pigs and the children were calling out and crying; there was a lot of noise.

While Siaku slept, the spirit men stumbled upon her string bags, which she had hung in a nearby tree, and then saw her sleeping. They put some ginger, used for hunting pigs, into her personal string bag and departed.

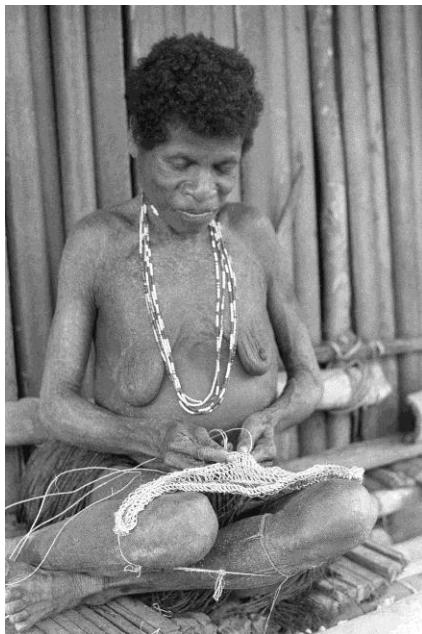


Plate 3. Woman of Amto Village making a string bag (*ye*) (1972-3 BM31:8)

Siaku woke up after a while and discovered the ginger in her bag. She realised the spirit men must have put it there. She sewed up the bag with a piece of vine and set off for her home. That night she slept crouched up in a seated position, as she was cold. Her sons, who were following her tracks, came across her. "Hey! What is that? A log? A black palm?" They drew close and discovered that it was their mother. They woke her; "What are you doing sleeping here?" they asked.

"I got tired of all you children playing and squabbling. I'm hungry; I haven't eaten."

So the children made a fire by pulling rattan through a split stick. Others gathered firewood and leaves and Siaku instructed them to bring her string bags full of game. They roasted the animals and cooked wildfowl eggs in bark. Then Siaku lined up all her children and divided up the game and sago, presenting each his share as he stood with tiny bow drawn.

When they had all eaten, they set off for their home, Siaku first, followed by the boys who shot game as they went. They brought in birds, pigs, cassowaries, wallabies and possums. Their older sister saw them arriving with all this game and marvelled.

Then the boys expressed their annoyance with their sister. "Why didn't you come with us to find our mother? We are only children who play and squabble, huh? So we are not hunters, huh? Go and tell your husband that we are sick and cannot play anymore."

So she went and told her husband and he replied, "That's fine. All they ever do is play around anyway. As far as I am concerned, they can be sick, and die too!"

Now the sister had put a parcel of very fatty pork, given to her by her brothers, above the hearth whilst she went out to process sago. Her husband discovered it and wondered where it had come from. "The pigs I kill never had any fat. Where could this have come from? I think my brothers-in-law must have killed it."

The sons of Siaku sent out word that they had a ginger that would help them hunt pigs successfully and that they would teach other men to use it too. They smoked a lot of

pork ready to give all visiting men when they arrived. They prepared a long ladder for the house they had built high up on poles, and they prepared their decorations for a dance. The women made sago jelly.

The sons of Siaku decorated themselves inside their high house and took up their hand drums. They opened the door to the house and came down the ladder, two by two, singing and drumming as they descended. The last son blew on a wooden trumpet. They sang and danced and then showed the visitors how to use the ginger to hunt pigs. Finally they distributed the food and said, “Later, you must return food to us.”



Plate 4. Hand drums (*yimti*) at Sisilo, Simaiya Valley (1972-3 BM30:36); the handle on the middle drum is not a traditional feature

8. YUMON AND THE MEN'S CEREMONIAL HOUSE

As told by Ikedi of Sisilo, Simaiya Valley.

One day there was dense cloud, wind and thunder and it rained heavily, continuing all night until daybreak. Yumon wondered who was causing this. He took up his bow and arrows and went off to visit his deceased older brother's settlement. There he saw that two pigs, which belonged to his dead brother Sowinau, had broken down his coconut tree. They had gone off into the forest to rest and so Yumon followed their tracks; he

was angry about the coconut tree. Clouds fell lower and lower until he lost his bearings but still he followed the pigs' tracks.

Then he came across two women cutting firewood by the trail. Yumon's face was painted with black soot and he had his bow drawn, ready to shoot the pigs. The women called out to Yumon not to shoot the pigs lest he make Sowinau angry. So he relaxed his bow. Then the women called out to Sowinau. "Come up here," they called to Sowinau's spirit. "Your brother Yumon has come."

Many spirit-people had gathered for a dance at a nearby settlement. Sowinau took Yumon to his house and offered him some food. Yumon said, "I am not a spirit. I have my body still. I cannot eat your food."

"No, it is alright. You can eat this food," replied Sowinau. So he did. Then Sowinau gave him a white variety of betel-nut [*Areca catechu*] to take back to his village to plant, where it grows to this day.

Sowinau taught Yumon the dances and songs of the men's ceremonial house. He took the food that Yumon had brought with him and wrapped it up in a bark parcel, then gave him a variety of betel-nut to chew, that is 'hot'. Yumon ate some and passed out. When he awoke at dawn, he could not find his parcel of food, nor the village, nor the people; he had been carried back to his own settlement by his brother's spirit.

Yumon smelt fire and vomited. When he felt better, he planted the white betel-nut that Sowinau had given him. Then he gave instructions to the men to build the ceremonial house as he had been told. He sent the villagers off to gather all the necessary materials and they built the house on a high mountain nearby, called Tabali. Then Yumon told them to get lots of sago palm petioles¹ ready so that he could paint designs on them. He taught them the songs and dances that he had seen and heard in the land of the spirits. Then he forbade the women and younger children to enter the new ceremonial house.

¹ The petiole is the wide base of the palm frond; it is commonly but incorrectly called a 'spathe'. Trimmed and flattened, it forms a surface approximately 50 cm wide at the base and 1.2 m long. The outside surface is smooth and designs can be painted with charcoal, and red and white earth pigments.

About a year after the completion of the men's house, the older boys were admitted to the interior and were kept secluded there for about ten months. They defecated in a separate room of the house, and had their food brought to them. They became quite fat. Pieces of cane were hung from the roof of the house and the initiands were hung up by the ankles, several boys from each hook, like flying foxes. Yumon slapped the initiands with his hands, which he had rubbed with ginger, until they became unconscious. Then he revived them by putting the ginger under their noses.

The women had prepared body decorations — for the arms, legs and chest — and conus shell necklaces. Fish, eggs and meat were accumulated. Sago was prepared and stones gathered. Everything was made ready for a big feast. The initiands ate the sago and put on the decorations. Then they went to sleep. In the morning they got up and decorated themselves again, and danced. When they were exhausted, they slept, eating at the end of the day. Yumon said they would have to pay for this ceremony.

9. HOW THE TOHITO CEREMONY WAS CREATED

As told by several anonymous Amto men, Simaiya Valley.

One day a man went to cut a sago palm. Now this particular palm had been forbidden to him because of a man's death three years previously. However, the man cut the palm to get sago grubs. He carried them back to his house, cooked them and ate them; but then he fell sick. He told his elder brother, who said, "Why did you cut that palm? You knew it was forbidden. The dead man's spirit has made you sick." Then he went and got some young leaves from the cut sago palm, made a triple-braided rope of them, and shoved a piece of sago palm frond down the centre. This was a symbol of the poison arrow which had made his younger brother sick.

The man became very sick, losing consciousness several times. As the elder brother was returning from making the braided rope, he met a crocodile spirit that had just killed and eaten a pig. This spirit asked him what he was doing. He explained and the crocodile spirit expressed sympathy and said, "Hold onto my tail. We will go down into this part of the river and speak to the dead man who is making your younger brother sick."



Image of crocodile drawn by Kofekiyo of Amto, 1973

So they went down into the water and found the dead man's spirit. He was decorated with ashes from the fire and with boars' tusks, and he was smoking the younger brother's heart over a fire, thus causing the illness. All the fish were assisting too. The dead man admitted, "Yes, I'm making your younger brother sick because he broke the taboo on the sago palm. He must die. See, I have his heart and liver over the fire."



Plate 5. Mesu (left) and another man painting a sago petiole at Amto Village, Simaiya Valley (1972-3 BM31:14)

"Please, you must not kill him," the elder brother pleaded. The dead man gave him some lengths of sago spathe and said, "Count these. I will come when the last one has been counted, one for each day. Make a *tohit* from two pieces of sago petiole. Prepare some food for me and I will prepare some for you. You will not see me. I will come as a blue blowfly; you will hear me buzzing."

He also gave instructions for other things to be made: carvings of fish and other things, with markings carved and painted on them, to represent the fish spirits that were helping the dead man to make the younger brother sick. The drawings on the *tohitō* were to be of *ficus* trees and bananas, deep water-holes, sandbanks and other things [eg. Introduction, Figure 14].

When the elder brother had received these instructions, he returned to the surface of the water with the crocodile. He went home and he and his wife got the food ready. He made a *tohitō* as instructed, drawing a design to represent the water spirits. Everything was ready.



Image of water spirit drawn by Einou of Amto, 1973

When he had counted off the days, the spirits of the dead came as blowflies. They sang a song about Bale Creek and Kowai Mountain — a *tohitō* song. Then the food was set out — the sago and the meat. The spirit had told the elder brother not to give him dried fish, but pork and sago-grubs. The people in the house fed the spirits by hand. They did not see them; they only heard them buzzing and watched the food disappear.

They covered over the sick man and he disappeared from sight. Only the elder brother could see what was happening. The people surrounded the sick man and joined the spirits, dancing and singing. The song was *teitei*, meaning “Get up now!” The man revived and the spirit of the dead man told the elder brother that when the younger

brother was fully recovered, he was to marry the dead man's widow, as he himself would never be able to return from the land of the spirits.

The sick man got up and asked for food and water. He ate, then he went down to the creek and washed, and was fully recovered. He was told to keep away from that particular stand of sago trees in future — he had already gotten seriously ill once for breaking the taboo!

10. SILAWON WRESTLES WITH A SPIRIT

As told by several anonymous Amto men, Simaiya Valley

A man named Silawon said to his brother Wesalin, "If you die, your spirit must come and call out for me." Then he went away. One day, Silawon killed two animals — a young pig and a young cassowary. He roasted them at Kolmalo. He had readied some roots of the red-fruited pandanus, which has thorns, as clubs. He took the leaves wrapped round the roasted meat and hid them beneath a pile of old leaves from previous roastings. The meat he put inside the house.

Then Wesalin died and his spirit came and called out to Silawon. Silawon went inside his house, fastened up the doorway, and sat listening. He heard his brother call again from the base of a nearby hill. "Wafio! Wafio!" ("Brother! Brother!"). Silawon knew it was Wesalin. Wesalin's spirit made a whistling sound, then charged at the house, knocking aside the door of black-palm bark, and attacked Silawon. He was intent on devouring him.

Silawon and Wesalin fought fiercely, into the fire and out of the fire. Then Silawon struck the spirit with the pandanus-root club and when it fell to the floor, he burnt it with a flaming black-palm frond. Thus he chased the spirit away. Silawon sat down and waited to see if the spirit would return, but it didn't. He smoked tobacco to keep awake until dawn. When he heard the owl calling, he got his things ready, put the meat in a basket and went home. When he arrived, he dumped the food on the floor, put his bow and arrows away and immediately fell asleep. He slept until dark.

Silawon's older brother, Sikepi, asked him why he had fallen asleep. "I am not an ordinary man," replied Silawon. "I have just fought with a spirit and he nearly devoured me. But I chased him off and now I am exhausted. You people divide up this meat and eat it. But there is a python here. You must give it to our sister to eat."

11. WOSAKIN AND THE PATHWAY TO THE LAND OF THE SPIRITS

As told by Oloinou and Inano of Amto, Simaiya Valley.



Plate 6. Inano of Amto village, Simaiya Valley (1972-3 BM31:1)

Wosakin's older brother married two women. One of them was attracted to Wosakin. Their relationship did not become sexual, though the woman would have had it otherwise.

Then Wosakin got sores all over his body and he had decided that he had had enough of his brother's wife's attentions, so he made plans to leave the settlement. He worked hard gathering food and plants for starting his own garden. He hid all that he gathered near the mouth of a certain creek.

When he had sufficient resources gathered, he walked to Biyu River and followed it westwards until he came to a place where two black palms had been knocked down. There he cut down a tree and, miraculously, a large portion of the bush was cleared.

Then he cut a sapling for a house-post and, miraculously, he had many. He placed one post in position and, suddenly, there were all the posts in position! He then placed one pole in position as a floor-beam, and all were instantly in place! One rafter, and the roof-frame was complete; one section of thatch, and the roof was covered; one piece of bark for the floor, and the walls and floors were all covered. Thus was the house built in a very short time.

Wosakin then planted his garden in the same way; one stick of taro placed in the ground multiplied instantly to a garden-full; and so on for the various plants that provided him his food and raw materials.



Plate 7. Area cleared for Amto garden, Simaiya Valley (1972-3 BM30: 31)

After all this labour, Wosakin was tired, so he slept in his newly built house. The next morning he went out hunting and shot a wild pig. He made a fire and put the stones on to heat. Then he roasted the pig, eating some and smoking the rest of the meat. But he felt a need, then, to chew some betel nut. So he left his house and followed the Biyu River further west, downstream, until he reached Batuli, the great salt sea. There he found a betel palm. He climbed it and got some betel nuts. Whilst he was in the palm,

he saw the spirit of one of his ‘brothers’ who had died. So he came down out of the palm and hid in the bush with drawn bow, ready to kill this spirit.

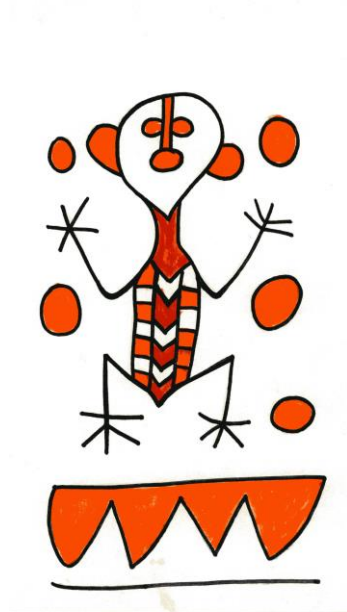


Image of spirit drawn by Ikid of Amto, 1973

The spirit noticed Wosakin’s tracks in the grass and wondered who had been by. Then he heard a rustle in the bush behind him and turned around: there was Wosakin with drawn bow. “Are you a spirit?” he asked Wosakin.

“No,” answered Wosakin, “I am not a spirit; I am mortal.” Then Wosakin lowered his bow and handed it over to his spirit-brother. Then they paddled upstream to the spirit-brother’s settlement. There were hundreds of spirit-people there and they asked “Is he a spirit?”

“No,” answered Wosakin’s spirit-brother, “He is mortal.” Then they wanted to kill and eat him but Wosakin’s spirit-brother would not allow it. Instead he went and killed one of his domestic pigs, roasted it, made some sago-jelly, and feasted Wosakin. The food that was left over was put in a bark basket, but there was so much the handle broke. Then they gave two spirit-women to Wosakin in marriage and he went back upstream to his settlement by the two bent black-palms, his two new wives carrying the basket of food.

Later some of the spirit people followed and settled at Wosakin’s place at the head of the Biyu. They enquired of Wosakin, “Who’s house is this?” “Mine,” he told them.

“Who’s garden is this?” “Mine,” he told them. Then he gave them food: bananas, coconuts, betel nuts, pandanus fruit, taro, sweet potato, yams and a lot more.

While Wosakin lived at his settlement at the head of the Biyu, he saw many spirit-people passing by on their way to the settlement of the spirits downstream; they were responsible for knocking down the black palms!

Then one day, Wosakin returned to his mortal brother’s settlement, carrying a string bag full of smoked meat. It was raining.

The older brother was with his son inside his house. The boy enquired of his father. “Why are all those ripe bananas fallen down and lying all over the ground? Why don’t we eat them?”

“It is forbidden to eat of one’s own garden when someone in your family has died. My younger brother has disappeared and must be dead.”

Then the boy said, “No. Your brother is here.”

“Are you sure? Where?” Just then, Wosakin came to the door of the house. “Where have you been?” asked the older brother.

“I ran away because one of your wives was trying to seduce me. But now you can eat food from your garden, as I am not dead. I returned to let you know where I had been. I found Batuli, the great salt sea, by following the Biyu downstream. When you die I will see your spirit coming, for I am living by the pathway of the spirits.” He gave his older brother some smoked meat, then left to return to his own settlement.

Wosakin’s two spirit-wives were displeased that he had gone to visit his mortal relatives, so they decided to prevent him from making any more such visits. They magically restricted Wosakin’s vision so that he was unable to see the trail leading to his mortal brother’s settlement.

However, Wosakin had told his mortal brother that he was living on Biyinabi Creek, at the head of the Biyu, so the brother decided to pay Wosakin a visit. But he could not find Wosakin, for the track to the settlement had been erased. He returned to his settlement, took some earth from the place where his younger brother had stood, and rubbed it on his arrows and on his face. He was angry, too, with his wife for causing his younger brother to run away and disappear. He shot and killed her with the earth-rubbed arrows.

This woman's spirit came to Wosakin's house and Wosakin realised his elder brother must have killed her. He tried again to visit his elder brother's settlement but could not find the trail. So he had to settle down where he was, with his three spirit-wives and wait for his brother's spirit to find him.

12. THE STORY OF WODOMOU AND HIS WIFE

As told by Samoi of Sisilo, Simaiya Valley.

Somebody poisoned Wodomou's wife. She went off to wash sago but she did not eat. She set up the apparatus and threw in some sago pith to wash out the starch, but her shoulder broke. She returned to her house to sleep.

Wodomou had gone out to hunt birds of paradise. He was still in the forest in the afternoon when his wife died and her spirit came to him. When he saw her he said, "What are you doing here? I thought you were ill."

She took his bow and arrows and put them in her string-bag. Then she put him there too and carried him off, crying his name. It was a very large string-bag and she had four others as well, one with designs on it.

She walked a long, long way, then turned about, and danced and sang all the way back again. Wodomou tried to turn around in the bag but his wife's spirit said, "Keep still or I will kill you. I am taking you to where you cut down a certain tree, where you killed a certain pig, where you ran down a certain cassowary." This was a kind of sight-seeing tour of his former exploits and doings, a journey back through his life.

When they approached their old house, his wife's spirit hung the string bags in a tree and allowed Wodomou to emerge. "We will build a house here, not far from our old house, and live here." So they built a house. "Now we will stay here together. You must not try to go away." They went to sleep.



Plate 8. Family at Amto Village, Simaiya Valley (1972-3 BM 31:4)

Later in the night, the wife's spirit awoke and went off to their old settlement to sing and dance near her body, which the people had placed on a platform. Wodomou woke and saw that his wife's spirit was gone. When she returned in the morning, she said to Wodomou: "Go and get some food, fruits of all the various trees." He got them and they ate together.

Meanwhile, Wodomou's people were preparing food for the mourning feast. His spirit-wife heard them saying: "Tomorrow we will get sago and make sago jelly; tomorrow or the day after." She told Wodomou, who then went into the forest and killed many wild pigs.

Now the people did not know what had become of Wodomou. They thought that perhaps he had gone crazy and wandered off into the forest because of his wife's

death. They gathered together the sago and made sago jelly. They gathered sago grubs, and cooked them, enough to mourn both of them.

Meantime, the wife's spirit had become pregnant by Wodomou and miraculously the child was born and grew to maturity in just a few days. Then the wife's spirit came to Wodomou and said to him, "You must stay with our child, for I must leave you both. I will sleep here until dawn, then I will leave you." She also left instructions that Wodomou tell the people that they should obtain fresh sago to make the jelly, not sago that had been stored in water. He was also to have them dispose of her body, which was exposed on a platform, as well as the skull in its string-bag. It was part of the funeral custom of these people to expose the bodies of their dead on platforms, saving the skulls, which were washed and placed in a string bag along with aromatic herbs.

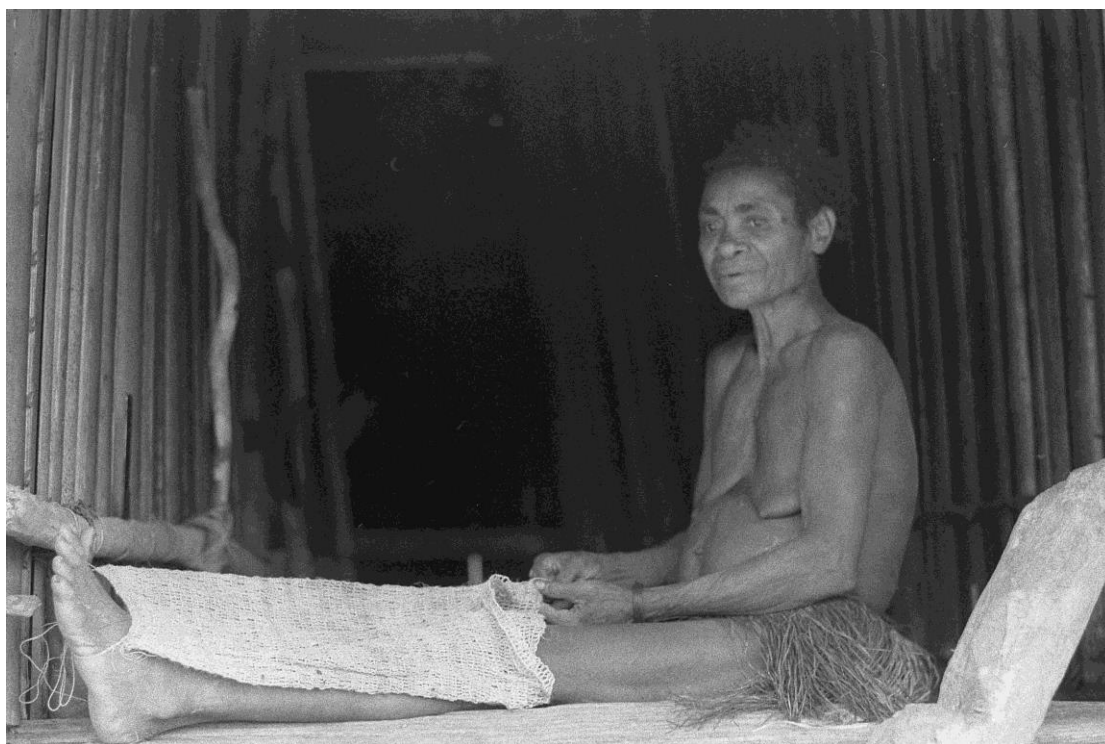


Plate 9. Woman of Amto Village making a string bag (*ye*) (1972-3 BM31:10)

Wodomou walked to his old settlement and found one of his mother's kinsmen, a cousin. This kinsman was surprised to see him and asked where he had been, so Wodomou told him everything that had happened, then told him what his wife's spirit had instructed. Later he climbed a nearby betel nut palm and took the nuts.

Wodomou's brother noticed that the nuts were missing from one of his palms and asked around the settlement about who had taken them. "It was Wodomou; he has come back." The brother found Wodomou and was very glad to see him. They embraced.

Now, Wodomou had two sisters. He instructed them to go to the house that he and his wife's spirit had built, to get his bamboo smoking-tube. When they got there, they saw his wife and child. "We thought you were dead," they exclaimed to Wodomou's wife.

"No," she said. She returned with them to their settlement. The people crowded around the child and carried him into the house. They all went inside and sat down. They offered the wife's spirit some sago jelly, but it had been made from stale sago, not fresh sago as she had instructed. "I cannot eat this," she protested. "It smells. I told you all to prepare fresh sago for me. I cannot stay now." Then she saw the funerary platform with her body still on it, and the skull in its string-bag and said, "What are those things?" Then everyone knew that they had failed to carry out her instructions and that she would leave them. She walked over to her body lying on the platform and disappeared.

Wodomou and the child went over to the body. Wodomou rubbed it with a certain type of ginger she had given him. Then her spirit spoke and said, "I am in the land of the spirits. I cannot return to you. It was the people's fault for giving me sago that was stale and smelly. I told them what had to be done. Now it is too late; I cannot stay with you all now."

She went first to the house that she and Wodomou had built, thence to her father's place — the wallaby's place. Wodomou told his child to stay with the people. "You wait here; I'm going to follow your mother." Then he went off after her. She was singing and dancing as she went to the land of the spirits.

Then Wodomou met the wallaby, who asked him what he was doing there. "I am following my wife's spirit," said Wodomou. "Forget it. Just let her go."

“No,” insisted Wodomou. “I want to follow her.”

“Then hang onto my tail,” said the wallaby. It took Wodomou’s string-bag with the betel nut, and his bow and arrows and other belongings, and off they went. They followed the spirit-wife to the spirit-world. She called out to Wodomou, “One of these spirit-men is going to sing and dance before me. He will marry me unless you hide and kill him. When you have killed him, you must return to your settlement.”

Wodomou and the wallaby hid in the bush as instructed. There was singing and dancing among the spirit-people until just before dawn. The spirit-wife made a fire and then lifted her elbow high — the sign for Wodomou to kill his rival. He shot and killed the spirit-man and then clung to the wallaby’s tail and they escaped. At the entrance of the road to the spirit-world, the wallaby used special ginger magic to change two black-palms into women making sago flour. The pursuing spirits found these two ‘women’ and killed them. Satisfied that they were avenged, they returned to the spirit-world.

The wallaby brought his wife and children and came to live with Wodomou and his people.

13. WEIPAI TAKES HIS FAMILY TO THE SPIRIT WORLD

As told by Einou of Sisilo, Simaiya Valley.

There were people, who no longer exist, called the Koboru, who lived at the head of the Simaiya Valley. One day, led by Weipai, they attacked and killed Woliopou of Amto, and his sister Biatu. Biatu screamed when she was attacked and the people of Amto heard. They quickly organised an ambush for the approaching Koboru and when Weipai appeared at the head of his men, he was struck with an arrow of the type called *waipa*.

Weipai pulled the arrow from his side and hitched up his belt to cover the wound. He placed his stone adze at the base of a *kamia* tree and said, “If they kill me, cut down this tree and use it to carry me back home.”

The Koboru and the Amto fought and eventually Weipai succumbed to his wound and died. So they cut down the tree, tied his body to it, and carried him back towards their settlement. But his spirit went ahead.

The Koboru saw Weipai coming into the settlement and said, "So, you have returned. Where are the others?"

"I came ahead," replied Weipai. "They are behind me." Then the men carrying his body came close to the settlement and the people heard the cry of mourning and they wondered who had been killed. All the while the fighting continued, with the Koboru retreating until a truce was called at Unanei Creek.

Meanwhile, Weipai had called together his wife and children and said, "Let's go to the bush. We will kill a wild pig." And off they went. The people saw Weipai and his family leave, and they heard the mourning cries. When the raiding party arrived at the settlement, they cried out, "Weipai is dead! They shot him!"

"No! That can't be true. It is not possible. He was here only a short while ago." Then they saw his body and realised that it must have been his spirit that they had seen go off with his family.

Now Weipai's spirit had carried off all his weapons and tools and other possessions, including food plants such as taro, bananas, sweet potato, yams, and so on. He left them with his family in the bush whilst he continued on to the land of the spirits by himself. He told the spirits, "I have left my family in the bush and I am going to return to build them a house and to make a garden."

"That's alright," they replied. "You may do that. It would not be right for your children to be left in the rain." So Weipai returned to his family and built them a house, and made them a garden. Back home, the raiders realised that Weipai's spirit had preceded them to the settlement and taken his family away. They mourned Weipai and his family and the next day prepared a platform for Weipai's body.

Now Weipai's family realised they had no fire, but Weipai said, "I'll go and get some for you. You sleep." So he went back to the settlement where his body was, and sang and danced. Then he took some fire and brought it to his family. His wife said, "What shall we eat?"

"Don't worry," replied Weipai. "I will go and get some sago." He returned to the settlement and stole some sago, which he took back to his family. "They will have collected lots of sago-grubs by now. I'll go and get some." He went and stole all the grubs they had collected. Then he went hunting. On the first day he shot two wild pigs; the second day, three pigs, and then four cassowaries. The game he shot was fat, whereas his people never got fat pigs. By this time, Weipai's wife realised he was a spirit, by the lights that sparkled from under his armpits.

Then Weipai ran into his cousin. He instructed him regarding the food for the mourning feast. "You must get some fresh sago. Then catch an eel and reserve the tail-part for me. The sago grubs must not be cooked too dry. You must kill a domestic pig for me, keep the fat for me and you take the rest."

Weipai's cousin went and told his mother what Weipai's spirit had instructed the people to do. Some of the people wanted to follow Weipai's instructions; others were sceptical. At first, his mother was unwilling to go to the trouble of making fresh sago. "He will not come back," she complained. But the cousin insisted, so she went out and prepared fresh sago. Whilst the doubters prepared the string bag for Weipai's skull, others got wild fowl eggs, an eel, fresh sago jelly, fish, pork fat and sago grubs cooked just right, as Weipai had instructed. Those who believed that Weipai would return put all this food in a basket and waited.

The next day, Weipai told his wife and children to get ready to return to the Koboru settlement. He put on all his decorations, including two bird-of-paradise plumes. Back in the settlement, the argument about whether he would return went on and on.

So that morning, Weipai and his family arrived and the cousin who had conveyed Weipai's wishes to the people, said, "See, he has come. You believed that I was lying, but see, he has come." Weipai entered the large community house and sat down. He

told his family to begin eating, then he ate the food that had been specially prepared for him. Everyone was astonished. He washed his hands and went outside. Then he saw the funerary platform. “What is this?” he asked.

“Oh that? That is for putting tobacco seeds out to dry,” lied his kinsmen. But Weipai knew what it was. Then he saw the string bag with his skull in it and asked, “What is this?”

“Oh, only some wood,” they lied. But Weipai knew and said, “No. You didn’t have faith that I was really coming back to stay. So now I am leaving you. And you, cousin, you are coming with me.

Get your things together. You too sister! And my wife and children! All of you will come with me to my house in the bush!”

Weipai walked towards his skull and disappeared, to take his own pathway to the house in the bush. He arrived there and waited for his family and kinsman to come. When they were all together, they sat down and ate. Then Weipai took them all to the spirit world. He gave his sister back to her dead husband, and his children and cousin he gave to other spirit people in marriage. None of them were ever seen again by the Koboru, for they lived in the world of the spirits. The Koboru realised that it was their own fault.

14. EMAIYOU, THE MIRACLE MAN

As told by Manaiye and others at Sisilo, Simaiya Valley.

Emaiyou was of the Siauwi people, from a settlement called Musan, to the east of the Simaiya Valley. About to set off on a journey, he called his brother but his brother didn’t answer so he set off alone. He crossed the range and came to the Simaiya Valley. There he came across a man being put on a funerary platform. His widow was minding the children and when she saw Emaiyou she took one child and hid it behind some bark and told the others to hide.

Emaiyou felt sorry for the children. He put some ginger on the dead man's body and resurrected him. The man sat up, then went to his settlement and got some sago jelly and pork and gave it to Emaiyou. Then he said, "Let's go and sit on the veranda for a while." Afterwards they assembled the children at a place near the forest and got them to clear some ground and build a ceremonial house. They put on decorations and sang and danced. They sang and danced down along the creek, and away along the next creek.

The parents returned to the settlement and saw that the children were gone. "Where are all the children?" they cried. The widow explained all that had happened. "Why didn't you try and stop them?" they asked. "I hid one child," she answered.

So they followed the trail clearly left by Emaiyou and the children and the resurrected man, until they came to a hole in the ground that had been formed by a fallen kwila tree. Emaiyou had plugged up the hole with the kwila after they had all gone into the hole — all except the resurrected man, who had returned to his funerary platform, lay down on it and immediately decomposed. The parents could not follow their children so returned to the settlement to mourn.

Emaiyou proceeded to carry out several mighty and miraculous works. First he caused a landslide which dammed Eiya Creek, and caught twenty large eels. He decorated the largest eel and said, "The men who are following us will not kill you; only your progeny." Then he cut off its tail and put it in a bark dish.

Then Emaiyou carried a large stone to the top of a mountain. There he called and called but nobody answered, only snakes and lizards. At last some people answered him but he said, "You answered too late. The lizards and snakes replied first. They will change their skins and thus achieve immortality; you will not, so will die." Then he threw the stone into the dammed-up Eiya Creek and killed many fish and eels. The stone may be seen there to this day.

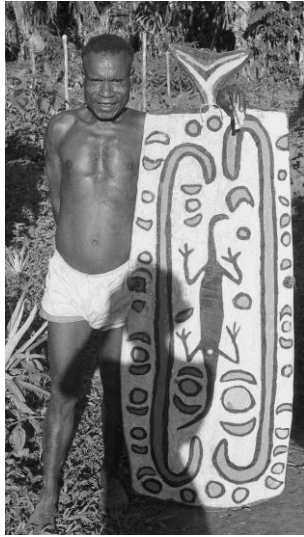


Plate 10. Fokiyei of Amto with his shield representing *fefo*, a lizard species (1972-3 BM 33:31)

Emaiyou went down the mountain to the creek and gathered the fish and eels and carried them to the head of Sagwei Creek. There he collected some red pandanus fruit, firewood and stones, and prepared an oven to cook the red pandanus with black-palm shoots. He ate some of the pandanus and put the rest in a dish. He roasted some fish and cooked some sago too. He cut down sago palms and scattered their shoots about in various creeks so that they would grow and be a memorial to him. He defecated and his faeces became fish — a species forbidden as food — as another memorial.

Then he returned to the mountain with a large parcel of food. He gave it to the children who had followed him. Half of the red pandanus sauce he gave to them too; the other half he used to put the red colour on various species of birds and animals — the red feathers on the black parrot (probably the Vulturine Parrot, *Psitttrichas fulgidas*), the birds-of-paradise, the hornbills; the red markings on snakes, and so on. He told these animals that men would not kill them and they should recite his name as a memorial.

Emaiyou came down from the mountain and followed the Simaiya upstream. He buried his hand drum at the headwaters of the river as another memorial. Then he returned to the people of the settlement and said, “You must tell this story about me to your children. I am going away now.” He went south into the mountains, beyond the headwaters of the May and Idam Rivers. The animals he marked have never died and the children who followed him into the hole in the ground were never heard of again.

15. THE ADVENTURES OF SELI

As told by Koli and Apos of Amto, Simaiya Valley.

Seli's parents had died when he was an infant so he was cared for by his grandmother and his brothers.

One day Seli's brothers went out hunting and shot a wild pig. They butchered and roasted it and Seli asked for the head. They put it aside for him, but his grandmother ate it and substituted a leg for it. "I asked for the head," Seli complained, "and you gave me a leg."

"No. We gave you the head," they insisted. It was his grandmother who had switched the portions.

This happened many times; Seli's grandmother always took the best portion for herself. When Seli got a little older and could use a small bow and arrow, he started shooting at his grandmother and she got sores all over her body from the little arrows.

Then one day, when he was still a young boy, Seli's grandmother gathered all the plants they would need to establish a subsistence garden for themselves. They left home and walked along a track for a day to an old garden site where there was an old, dilapidated house, which they repaired sufficiently to shelter them.

Seli went off to make a hide to watch for birds. He shot some and brought them back and ate them. They slept. Then the next day, Seli shot some more birds. He brought them back and they ate some of them. Then he went off again early in the afternoon to shoot some more. When he got home later in the afternoon, he found that his grandmother had eaten all the birds left over from the morning's catch. He became angry and shot a blunt arrow at the old woman's thigh.

"Why did you shoot me?" she complained. "I took you away from my people because they were not looking after you properly and you used to cry and cry. And now you go and shoot me!"

The next day, Seli's grandmother went into the forest and cut a buttress root from a tree. She smoothed it down, trimmed it to an oval shape, carved a design on one side, painted it, and decorated the shield with feathers of the bird-of-paradise, vulture, parrot, and other birds. Then she found some fungi and attached them to the back of the shield. Then she returned to the garden house.

Seli came back from the hide and asked his grandmother where the birds were from the previous afternoon. "I cooked them and they are hanging up over the hearth."

"You didn't leave me many," complained Seli, and he began to cry. Then his grandmother gave him all the birds that were left.



Plate 11. Buttress root of a tree cut out for a plank to make a shield (1972-3 BM37:24)

Plate 12. Aulou of Amto holding a shield he carved; white motif at bottom represents a fish species (*lukolo*) in a river (central vertical motif in red) (1972-3 BM33: 30)

The next day, when Seli had left to watch for birds, his grandmother took the shield she had made and jumped with it into the river, where she and the shield both turned into fish. The fungi on the back of the shield became scales. She swam back and forth to test her new capabilities. "Ah, that's good," she said. But her head was still a human head.

Seli came back to the garden house and discovered that his grandmother had gone. He wondered where she could be and called out for her. She heard him and answered, “What are you calling out to me for? I am here in the water.”

Seli came and saw that she had changed into a fish, except for her head. “So, that is where you are!” he exclaimed.

“Yes. I am here!” But seeing her as a fish he cried and cried. She swam around to show him how she could swim and told him, “You must not eat this type of fish. It is forbidden to you because of your grandmother.” This kind of fish had not existed before Seli’s grandmother had become one. The taboo applied only to Seli.

She discarded her skirts because her body was a fish body. She said to Seli, “You must not go back to your brothers. They did not look after you properly. Follow the river upstream and I will swim up with you.” Then she took her head and threw it on the bank and he stopped crying. Now she was all fish.

Following his grandmother’s instructions, Seli got three kinds of ginger: *asu* (long-leafed); *momti* (short-leafed); and *bowa* (big-leafed). He also got taro stalks, banana suckers and other food plants and carried them upstream in his grandmother’s string-bag. He came to a fruiting fig tree, climbed up into it, and ate lots of fruit. Darkness fell and a cassowary came to eat the fruit too. At first, Seli thought it was an evil spirit coming; then he saw it was a cassowary. He wondered how he could kill it as he had left his things, including his bow and arrows, hidden in the bush nearby. So he put some sharp little sticks, which he had in his hair, inside some of the figs and threw them down. The cassowary ate them and the sharp sticks stuck in its throat and killed it. “Eei! I have killed a cassowary without bows and arrows,” Seli congratulated himself. Then a pig came and he followed the same procedure and killed it too.

“The sun has gone down. How can I cook my meat?” He called out and called out and eventually a spirit-woman and her child heard him and she called out in reply. They walked towards Seli and eventually came upon him in the tree. The spirit-woman’s child winked at Seli to warn him that his mother was a spirit-woman and would kill and eat him.

The spirit-woman called out to Seli, “Don’t be afraid; I won’t eat you. You must not be afraid of my teeth; I only use them to cut firewood.”

“No, I’m not coming down,” said Seli. “I’m afraid of you.”

“I’m not a spirit; I’m a mortal woman,” she insisted.

“No. I am afraid,” Seli repeated. So she broke her woman’s spear and threw it into the river. Then she pulled out her fangs and threw them into the river too. Then Seli felt safe to come down out of the tree. “I was calling out because I killed a pig and a cassowary and had no fire to cook the meat,” he explained.

Then Seli went into the forest, found a dead kwila tree, stuck it upside down in the ground and hung all his garden things and other possessions from the projecting roots. Then he said to the spirit-woman, “Let’s butcher the pig and the cassowary now.”

Seli cut up the animals while the spirit-woman cut firewood with her teeth. Then she made a fire, got leaves and put stones on to the heat. Then they prepared a roasting oven. He told the spirit-woman to go and clean out the pig’s guts, but he made a magic spell to dry up the river so that she would have to go a long way to find water. Off she went.

Seli took a length of cane and wound it around the top of the kwila to make a platform. Then he piled up rocks around the base of the kwila to prevent her from cutting it down. The spirit-woman, meanwhile, travelled a long way looking for water but could not find any, so she ate the guts raw, as they were, excreta and all.

Seli took all the roasted meat out of the oven and put it up on his platform. But first he had taken out the bones from the meat and placed them back in the oven. He called out to the spirit-woman to come and get her share of the pork and then he climbed up onto the platform. As she walked back she finished eating the intestines and excreta. She opened up the oven and found only stones and bones.

Now Seli had taken the spirit-woman's daughter with him, to marry her. They were right up on top of the kwila, which grew and grew till they were out of reach of the spirit-woman. She was furious. She ran and sank her teeth into the kwila but nearly broke her jaw.

The spirit-woman ran off to get help from her spirit-people. She told them what had happened and that Seli had seduced and abducted her daughter. "Let's go and cut down his kwila post," they said. Many spirit-men gathered with their spears and adzes. They threw their spears at Seli, with no effect, and then tried to chop down the kwila tree, but their adzes broke. Seli let down a length of rattan and the spirit-men climbed up but, when they had almost reached the top, Seli cut the rattan and they all fell down and were killed. The spirit-woman returned to her place and told the others that Seli had killed everyone. So they got another group of attackers together and tried again but the same thing happened. They launched nine attacks altogether; every time, Seli let down a length of rattan and cut it when they were nearly to the top, thus killing them all.

When the spirit-woman went off to gather the tenth group of attackers, her daughter told Seli how he could change her into a real, mortal woman. First he heated stones in a fire, boiled some water in a bark dish by dropping in the hot stones, and built a platform. She lay on top of the platform with the boiling water underneath. As the steam rose, a centipede and a small-eyed snake dropped out of her vagina. It is the presence of these creatures that identifies a woman of the spirit-world. If these creatures were not forced out of her body, they would bite Seli's penis when he tried to have sex with her. The treatment was successful and she became a real woman.

Then the tenth group of attackers came. They threw all their spears but they broke; they chopped with their adzes but they broke too. Then they all began to climb the rattan that Seli let down, all except one spirit-man, Tetafiya, who stood a long way off from the kwila. He called out to Seli, "You can finish them all off. I don't want to eat you. I am staying here."

The daughter told her mother to come up first. They all climbed up and Seli cut the rattan and they all fell down and were killed. Then he poured boiling water over them

for good measure. Then Tetafiya called out, “I am going now. This land will belong to us both.” And off he went, a long way away.

Seli’s wife said to him, “Give me some food now.” They ate meat and sago. Then she said, “Have sex with me now and see that I am a real woman.” So he had sex with her and they began to live together.

One day, Seli went off to hunt. He killed a pig and put it in water so that it would keep until he got back to it. Then he went out and killed two men and a woman. He went back to the pig, butchered it and roasted it. Then he blew his trumpet and beat his hand drum. His older brothers, away downstream, heard him and wondered who it could be. This happened many times.

To get down from his house in the kwila tree, Seli would spit ginger and the branches of the kwila would bend down almost to the ground so that he could climb down. One day his betel-nut ran out and most of his arrows had been lost or damaged, except for a couple of *weipa*. So he went off to find some betel palms.

As Seli walked downstream, he heard men coming upstream in a canoe. He stood on the bank of the river with his bow drawn. The men saw him and came ashore. They noted that Seli was a big and handsome man. “Hey! Do you want to shoot us?” exclaimed one of the men. He moved close to Seli, then snatched the arrow from the bow and grabbed him. “Who has been blowing trumpets and beatings drums upriver?” he demanded.

“I have,” replied Seli.

Then the man introduced himself. “I am your brother.”

“And I am Seli.” They embraced. Seli got some betel nut from a nearby palm and the brothers persuaded him to visit them downriver. He got in the canoe and went off to visit his kinsmen. Seli’s wife observed this from afar. “They are taking my husband away,” she thought. She was pregnant.

During the journey downstream, Seli named all the major rivers — the Yapsie, the Idam, the Simaiya, the Sepik . . .

The village people saw them coming. They saw the handsome young man in the middle of the canoe and wondered who he was. When they came ashore, the people could see that it was Seli and they greeted him. They all ate together and slept.

The people were glad that he was alive; they had believed him dead and had placed taboos on fishing with derris vine, on certain betel nuts and on some plant foods. Now these taboos could be lifted. They gave him betel nut to chew, with ‘daka’² and lime. One of his older brothers gave him a new bow and several arrows, and they wove pandanus-fibre arm-bands for him.

One day the older brothers went off to catch fish with the derris vine. One of the brother’s wives wanted to seduce Seli so she pretended she was sick and did not go fishing with the others. Seli went off to get some betel nut and she followed him. He climbed the palm to get the nuts and she came right up to the palm. He saw her and said, “What are you doing here?”

“I want you to have sex with me,” she replied.

“No. You are my older brother’s wife. I cannot have sex with you.”

She kept trying to persuade him but he refused. Finally he returned to the house, took an arrow, and thrust it into her leg. Then he climbed up a betel palm and suddenly it grew right up to where his house was on the kwila post. His wife saw him coming and grabbed for him, but all she got was a leaf. She lamented, “The betel palm grew but it just missed our house. Oh, sad for me; my man has gone.” Seli had landed somewhere beyond the kwila post house.

² ‘Daka’ is the flowering catkin of the *Piper betle* vine. In Asia and Southeast Asia, the leaf, rather than the catkin, of the vine is chewed with the areca palm nut. Lime made from burnt shells is added to release the alkaloids in the plant components and turns the chew a brilliant red.

Seli's brothers came home from fishing to find Seli gone. "Maybe he has gone home," they speculated. They asked the woman who had tried to seduce Seli, but she said she did not know where he was. However, Seli overheard them talking and called out, "Who are you looking for? I am over here. It is that woman's fault. She tried to tempt me to do wrong. I felt like killing her but I did not want to hurt you by hurting her. So I climbed up the betel palm and escaped."

Immediately the woman's husband turned around and killed his wife, and threw her body into the river. Then he got his paddle and paddled and paddled his canoe to where Seli was. But as he came close to the bank, his wife's spirit became a whirlwind and almost capsized the canoe. The whirlwind then began to pursue Seli, breaking down trees, but he managed to keep ahead of her. Seli's brother cut down trees to help Seli find his way back to the settlement, but the wife's spirit destroyed the trees altogether and thus frustrated his plan. Seli shouted to his brother not to try to keep up with him, but to go home, eat the fish, and sleep. Seli ran a long, long way and then made a shelter in the bush.

Seli saw the tracks of two pigs, one male and one female, that had been eating sago palms. He took a stick and beat the pigs to death; he did not have his bow and arrows. He cooked only the meat of the male pig as there was too much pork for him to eat both pigs. Then he found a rat in the bush, killed it and took its incisor teeth for an engraving tool to make arrows. He got some black-palm and made a bow, scraping it to shape with the boar's tusks. So Seli made a camp and slept there. Then he walked a long way until he came to a big log jam in the river. No men, only women, lived there.

Meanwhile, the spirit of his brother's wife was still pursuing him. She broke through the log jam but Seli walked about with his bow drawn to frighten her so she would not come too close. Eventually he drew close to where his kwila-post house was and exclaimed, "Now I am a mortal again, back there I was a spirit."

But darkness fell before he reached his house. Just then he was met by a water rat with a white tail, which was carrying some grubs. Afraid that Seli might kill him, it offered him the hospitality of its house. "Hold my tail," it said. So Seli held on, the

ground opened up, and the rat took Seli to its underground home. Seli was surprised to see how nice it was.

Then the rat said, “You wait here and I will get some food.” It went out by another tunnel and stole sago and taro from a woman who lived on the surface above his home, and brought it back to Seli. Seli ate and the rat asked him why he was walking through the bush. Seli recounted the whole story and then they slept.

In the morning, Seli left the water-rat’s home and walked on. A man named Yabulekiya and his daughter lived in a house nearby. Seli cut down a sago palm so that he could get the tender shoot to eat. The tree fell near Yabulekiya’s house and woke him up. “Who is cutting down my sago palms?” he demanded angrily.

Seli was astounded because he could not see a house or anybody. Yabulekiya had made it invisible with a spell. Seli called out, “I’m sorry. I was hungry and wanted to eat the tender shoot.”

“Then go ahead and eat it; but it is my tree. I planted it.”

“No.” protested Seli. “I must not eat it. You worked hard caring for this palm. You must eat it.” But he was frustrated and took his bow and arrow to shoot Yabulekiya. However, he could not see the man because he was inside the invisible house. So he chewed a certain type of ginger and spat it around about, and the house became visible. Yabulekiya saw him with his bow and arrows and said, “So you want to shoot me, eh? Come inside instead and eat with me. My daughter has gone to get some sago grubs and make sago jelly.” He took Seli into an inside room, then called out to his daughter to hurry. She heard him and wondered why he was in such a hurry; it wasn’t usual. “What’s your hurry?” she asked.

“I’m just hungry.” he replied.

She came in and they cooked the grubs. Then Yabulekiya brought Seli out of the room and said to her, “This is your husband.” Thus they were married. They ate and slept.

However, the woman did not like Seli. So, very early in the morning, Yabulekiya took Seli and all his belongings, as well as some food, and left them in the bush. When Seli woke up, he continued his journey and soon came to his kwila-post house.

Meanwhile, Seli's wife had borne a son and he had grown miraculously to maturity. He instantly became a great hunter and warrior. Seli's brothers heard the young man blowing trumpets and beating his hand drum but they assumed it was Seli.

So Seli came upon his house and climbed up the kwila-post and entered. His son woke and saw him, grabbed his bow and arrows to kill the intruder, but his mother warned him just in time. "Don't shoot him. He is your father."

"Oh! I have never seen my father so I did not recognise him. I have never had a father."

"Yes you have a father, but he was lost. Now he has returned."

"No. I will shoot him," insisted the young man. But his mother persuaded him to accept his father.

"What name shall we give the boy?" asked Seli. "Let's call him Seli too." But his wife objected that having the same name would be confusing. So Seli suggested Yablima as an alternative and that is what they called him.

16. THE ADVENTURES OF HOKUMANI

As told by several anonymous men of Amto, Simaiya Valley

One day Hokumani went off to make a garden. He finished and returned to his settlement. Then he took his bow and arrows went out after wild fowl. He shot an arrow at one but he missed it and the arrow stuck into a nearby tree. An old spirit-woman called out, "Hey, that's my dog you're shooting at. Can't you hear him howling? That's no wild fowl." Then she said, "Go and get some betel-nut and come back here to my house. We will sleep together and then I will show you something — all the ripe pandanus-women."

So Hokumani went back to his settlement and got some betel-nut. He returned to the spirit-woman and they sat down together and chewed the betel-nuts in her house. Then she said, "You can look at the pandanus-women through this little hole in the wall; but you mustn't go outside and look or they will change back into pandanus."

Hokumani looked and saw the pandanus-women dancing and singing. "I thought they were just pandanus trees, but they are women!"

"Of course they are women. They are not just pandanus," she repeated. She told him not to throw away the chewed betel-nut; to keep it until he saw two women walk by beneath the house. Then he was to throw the chewed nuts at them. Hokumani saw two women walk by and he threw the chewed nuts at them.

"Hey! Who is throwing betel-nut at us?" they exclaimed.

"Me," said the spirit-woman. "I am just playing." The two women were her daughters. All night the pandanus women sang and danced. Hokumani kept throwing chewed betel-nut at them but when they asked what was going on, their mother said she was throwing it at them for fun. At dawn the dance was over and all the women changed back into pandanus trees.

The spirit-woman went into the forest with a spear and killed a wild pig. She roasted it and gave some to Hokumani. "Go and get some rope," she said. He went and got some. Then she said, "Tie these two pandanus fruits together and carry them carefully. Take care not to let them fall and you must not split them open. Take them to a certain *ton* tree and place the two pandanus carefully at the base of it. Get a piece of bamboo and fasten a hook at the end. Use this to catch a snake you will find in the top of the tree."

Hokumani did all this. He climbed the tree and chased the snake with the hook. It escaped him and climbed down the tree but was grabbed by two women. They called out to Hokumani, "What are you doing up there?"

"I am chasing a snake," he replied.

“We have caught it for you. Take your time coming down,” they said. Hokumani was astonished. “I carried pandanus fruits here and now they are women.” One woman was green and the other was red, the name of the first was Kobietita and of the second, Wabodida.

They cooked the snake and divided it up — some for themselves, some for the old spirit-woman and some for the *dioku*, the spirit-men who live in caves and in the holes in trees.

Meanwhile, a particularly roguish *diok* was talking to the old spirit-woman. “Mother, has my brother come yet?”

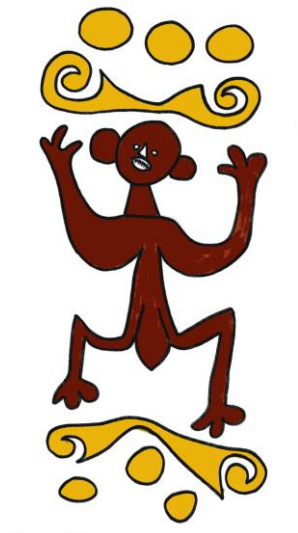


Image of spirit-man drawn by Ikid of Amto, 1973

“No, not yet,” she replied.

“Ah, why doesn’t he hurry up and bring our meat so that we may eat?”

Then Hokumani and his two women arrived. The women went inside and the *diok* smelt them. Hokumani gave him some of the snake meat but the *diok* hungered for the women. He left, saying, “Tomorrow I will come again.”

“What for?” asked Hokumani.

“I just want to talk with you,” said the *diok*. Then they all went to sleep but the *diok* did not really go home; he stayed hidden outside, watching the house and thinking about the two women.

The next day he returned to the house and became excited when he smelt the women’s urine. “That’s a nice smell,” he thought to himself. He went up to the house and asked the old spirit-woman to give him a firebrand to take to his house. She gave him one and he set off. But he threw it away and then went back and said, “Hey, mother, it went out. Give me some more.”

“But I just gave you some,” she protested.

“Yes, but it fell in the water and went out.” So she gave him another and the same thing happened, over and over.

Hokumani began to get suspicious so he said to the *diok*, “Get your bow and arrows and come back here. Hide and wait for two wild-fowl that sit in the tree there in the afternoons. Shoot them.” The *diok* agreed and hurried off for his bow and arrows. When he returned, Hokumani told him to go and hide. The birds came and sat on the branch of the tree. The tree was really the old spirit-woman’s house and she called out, “Hey what are you shooting at? They are not wild fowl; they are my dogs.”

“Where are you?” asked the *diok*.

“Up here,” she replied. He dropped his bow and arrows and went up into her house. He grabbed her and had sex with her again and again; he did not stop. She went out to climb a betel palm but he continued having intercourse with her, even as she climbed the tree.

“Hey, you are no man - you are a spirit,” she said.

“No. It is just that I have not had sex for a long time.”

“If you leave me alone, I will show you some women who will fill you with desire. Come back inside the house. Chew some betel-nut I will give you and keep the chewed nuts. Throw the chewed nuts at two women who I will give you as wives, just as I did for Hokumani. The *diok* was reluctant to believe her at first, but agreed and it happened as she said, as it had for Hokumani.

They slept. The next day the old spirit-woman went out and killed a pig. She made sago-jelly and cooked the pig. She had given the *diok* a powerful variety of betel-nut which put him to sleep. She woke him and he said, “Where are all those women?” “They have gone,” she said. “But take these two pandanus fruits. Be careful not to damage them. Go to a particular *ton* tree, climb it, and catch the snake at the top.” But the *diok* did not take care; he broke the fruits. He climbed up the tree and chased the snake, but it eluded him and climbed down. There were two women at the bottom but they couldn’t catch it either as they had broken legs. The *diok* did not worry about that at first; he got busy having sex with both of them, for a long time. He was disappointed that they had broken legs but they pointed out that it was his own fault.

When he was completely satisfied, he carried one of the women to his house, then returned to get the other, making a third trip to get his bow and arrows and the pork the old spirit-woman had given him. But it was a lot of trouble. “Serves you right for breaking our legs. It’s your fault. You were warned to be careful.”

The *diok* tied together a bunch of betel-nuts and some ‘daka’ and went to Hokumani’s house. “I have no fire,” he said. “Can you give me some?”

“First give me some of your betel-nut,” replied Hokumani. So they made an exchange and the *diok* left. But he threw away the firebrand and returned to ask for more. Hokumani protested that he had only just given him some but was persuaded to give him another. This happened several times.

Then he said to Hokumani, “Give me one of your wives with good legs and I will give you one of mine with bad legs. Then we will both have one good woman with good legs.” But Hokumani refused, saying “It is your own fault that your women have broken legs.” The *diok* left.

Next day, Hokumani went hunting in his area and the *diok* went hunting in his. Hokumani shot a pig and went searching for it. It died near where his two wives' brothers lived. They found the pig and hid it in the hole of a tree. Hokumani searched and searched for his arrow too, but they had hidden that also. Then they took the pig and arrow to where he would find them. When he found them, the brothers came to him and said, "Hokumani, we are your brothers-in-law, for you married our sisters." They asked whether their sisters had borne any children yet and Hokumani told them that both women were pregnant. They asked him to take good care of their sisters and their sisters' children. Hokumani butchered the pig and gave them all but the breast, which he kept for himself.

When Hokumani got home, his wives said, "Where is the rest of the pork?"

"I gave it to the dogs," he replied.

"But there aren't any dogs there," they said. "We think you must have given it to our brothers."

"Yes. That's right," he admitted.

Now, the brothers-in-law had asked him to come back in a week's time, and to bring the *diok*, for a dance hosted by them. They would have sago jelly and sago grubs ready for the feast. So when it was time, Hokumani left for the dance with his older wife and the *diok*. Hokumani chewed lots of betel-nut which turned into bamboo spikes when he spat it out. The *diok* trod on one and hurt his foot. "You go on," said the *diok*. "I will stay till my foot feels better and follow you later."

Hokumani agreed. "Make a shelter and wait here for me to come back." So Hokumani and his wife continued on. But the *diok* wasn't really hurt; he healed his foot instantly. When Hokumani had gone, the *diok* went off and shot a flying fox. It changed into a cassowary. He wondered how this happened and put it in water to keep until he got back to it.

The *diok* returned to his house; his wives asked him why he had come back. He told them that first he had cut his foot and then had shot a cassowary. Then he added, to Hokumani's second wife, "Hokumani told me to come back and get you and bring you to him when my foot had healed." Thus he deceived them. The old spirit-woman was suspicious but the *diok* reassured her. Then he climbed into a betel-palm and threw dust in her eyes so she could not see things clearly.

The *diok* got things ready and set off with Hokumani's younger wife to the spot where he had left the cassowary. He butchered the cassowary and cooked it, dividing it up. Some he set aside for Hokumani, some for the old spirit-woman, and he and Hokumani's wife ate some of the rest. Then he built a platform. Hokumani's wife was to sleep beneath it and he was to sleep on it. He told her to sleep naked with her legs apart, on her back. He lay on his stomach and when she was asleep he penetrated her with his penis and remained in her all night.

In the morning they put the meat into a string bag and the woman carried it home. The old spirit-woman asked her daughter, "How did you sleep?"

"Oh, fine," she replied. "He is a good man." Thus she deceived her mother.

Meanwhile, Hokumani decided to return home. He told his brothers-in-law that one reason was that his bananas were probably ripe; the other that the *diok* had not turned up and he was worried about the possibility of him seducing his wife. The brothers-in-law agreed; they knew about the *diok*. So Hokumani left laden with gifts: sago jelly, sago grubs, pork, fish and other foods.

He came to the place where he had left the *diok* but he was not there. "I think he has deceived me, the bastard," thought Hokumani. He went till he reached the bush camp where the *diok* had seduced his wife. There he found bits of her skirt and realised what had happened.

Now the *diok* heard a bird calling Hokumani's name, warning him that Hokumani was coming. When they got home, the older wife learned what happened and began

mourning the seduction of her younger sister. “Hokumani will be angry about this,” she warned.

But Hokumani wanted to deal with the matter in his own time and assured his wives, “No, I am not angry.” Then the old spirit-woman told him what she knew but again he said that he was not angry.

“Why didn’t you take both of your wives to the dance?” she reproved him.

Hokumani invited the *diok* to come and eat some of the food he had brought back from the dance. The *diok* boasted what a good man he was and how well he had looked after the younger wife. As they finished eating, Hokumani grew very angry. He learnt that his younger wife was pregnant by the *diok* so he devised a plan of revenge.

Hokumani and the *diok* agreed to share each other’s sago grubs. One day Hokumani pretended that he was going into the forest to hunt but when he got there he cut a piece of black palm and made a spatulate club, with sharp edges along either side. He hid it and then returned to the settlement where the *diok* remarked, “So, you’ve come back?”

“Yes,” replied Hokumani. “I didn’t see any pigs.”

“You should not go around in the bush by yourself,” chided the *diok*. “Someone might kill you.”

“There is nobody around here who would attack me,” retorted Hokumani.

“Let’s go and eat some sago grubs,” suggested the *diok*. “Let’s eat yours first and then we will go and eat mine.”

So off they went, taking some sago jelly with them. They came to where Hokumani’s wild sago was. “See! Lots of grubs here,” announced Hokumani. The *diok* took a sharpened stake to split open the fallen sago palms but then decided he did not want

that task; he suggested Hokumani break open the palms and that he would gather the grubs. Hokumani complied and prised open one palm. When the *diok* put his hands in to get the grubs, Hokumani let the trunk close on his hands, trapping him. Then he attacked him with the club he had made and killed him. He laid his body on its back with the penis sticking up in the air, and jammed a wild-fowl egg on top of the erect penis. He lined other wild-fowl eggs around the body and covered it all with the leaves and sticks of the wild-fowl's nest. Then he gathered some sago grubs and headed for home.

The older wife saw him coming, by himself, and warned the younger wife:
“Hokumani is returning. He is by himself. I think he has killed the *diok* and now he is coming to kill you.”

The wives of the *diok* asked after their husband. “Where is he?”

“I don't know,” lied Hokumani. He went off somewhere else. He went one way and I went another.” But they knew he had killed him. They ate some sago-grubs and slept. They waited all day but the *diok* did not return. They ate and slept again.

The next day the older wife began to mourn for her younger sister. The latter got a coconut shell and put ashes and live coals in it to take with her when she went with Hokumani. She said to her older sister, “I'm going to hang my string-bag here. If you see fireflies around it, you will know that he has killed me.”

Then Hokumani called to her. “Come with me. You can collect wildfowl eggs whilst I get some more sago grubs.” They went to where Hokumani had killed the *diok*. His wife began to look for wild-fowl eggs in the mound of leaves and sticks and uncovered the *diok*'s penis with the egg on top.

“What is this?” she cried.

“It is your man's penis. Eat it,” demanded Hokumani.

But she jumped into the river and was washed downstream. Hokumani grabbed for a bamboo bladed arrow but he only managed to wound her in the thigh; the current swiftly swept her away out of range of his arrows. Downstream a long way, she was swept onto some rocks and her blood flowed red in the river. Many fish were attracted by the blood.

Now, the Kwaletita women lived along this part of the river. They had no men. They saw all the fish and said to one another, "Let's net some of these fish." They scooped up lots of fish. Then one of the women saw what looked like a black-palm basket washed up on the rocks in the river. She went out to investigate and as she came close she realised it was a person. She became afraid and backed off, shouting, "A spirit! A spirit!"

Just then, the woman revived and called out, "I am Wabodida. My husband, Hokumani, shot me with an arrow."

"What are you going to do?" they asked.

"Get some leaves of the *ton* tree, dry pit-pit leaves and firewood. Make a fire and heat the leaves, and we will make my body well again."

Now the Kwaletita women did not know about fire. They cooked their meat in the sun, by laying it in strips on stones in the sun. Wabodida told them to break up the dry pit-pit leaves and put the firewood around them. Then she tipped the ashes out of the coconut shell which she still carried with her, despite the misadventures in the river. The fire caught immediately. The smell of the fire caused all the Kwaletita women to vomit. They heated the leaves and rubbed them on Wabodida's body and she became well. Her pregnancy was not yet obvious.

Meanwhile, Hokumani returned home without his second wife. Wabodida's older sister saw fireflies around the string-bag and she believed Hokumani had killed her. She mourned for her sister.

But Wabodida was alive and relatively well. She had with her a string-bag full of sago jelly, meat and salt. She told the Kwaletita women that they should henceforth cook their food in the fire, not eat it raw like pigs and dogs. She cooked some of the food she had with her and gave them some, and they realised how delicious food was when cooked. Then they carried Wabodida to their house, for she couldn't walk yet. There Wabodida taught them how to make a hearth in the floor. They cut a hole in the floor, placed posts at the four corners, made a basket in the hole and lined it with clay. Then they lit a fire in it. "This is what you must do in all your houses so that you can cook food," she told them. Two women were particularly conscientious in looking after Wabodida and following her advice. The others were not yet convinced. So Wabodida showed the two women how to cut down the sago palms, how to break them open and extract the pith, how to set up the washing apparatus to squeeze the starch out of the pith, and how to let it settle and then dry into a doughy mass that could be wrapped and carried home, or stored in water to prevent spoilage. Then she showed them how to cook it in the fire. She gave some to the two women and they enjoyed this new food. Then she showed them how to make sago-jelly. They carried her around so that she could show them how to collect the materials and make the jelly.

In due course, Wabodida gave birth to two sons. One was Hokumani's and the other was the *diok*'s. The first was named Sufnau and was a well-behaved child, but the other was troublesome. When he grew up and planted things, they came up as weeds and flowers instead of coconuts, taro or whatever. He got discouraged, observing, "My brother plants things and they grow alright, I plant things and they come up as useless weeds."

Sufnau was also a great hunter and warrior, and killed many men. But the other brother fought only wild taro plants. Sufnau kept cutting the legs off his victims, hoping to find one to replace his mother's injured leg, but none fitted.

Meanwhile, Hokumani had other sons and they were great hunters, killing many pigs and cassowaries.

At last, Sufnau found a leg that fitted. He severed the old one at the knee and put a new one on. He rubbed blood on it and tied the muscles with the roots of the *ton* tree. The leg functioned well and Wabodida was able to walk.

The *diok*'s son made stone implements — adzes, mortars, and other things. Banging one stone on another, he made thunder. He was preparing to go into the sky as a cloud.

Now Sufnau was in the bush one day when he came across a dead pig. “Who shot this?” he wondered. Then his half-brothers turned up and introduced themselves. They agreed that they would meet up again in three days’ time. They butchered the pig and divided it up, then went their separate ways, the brothers upstream and Sufnau downstream. When Sufnau brought home the pork, his mother asked him where the rest was. “Dogs ate it,” he replied.

“I don’t believe you. I think you must have met your half-brothers in the bush and given them some of the pig.”

“Yes that’s true,” Sufnau admitted. The half-brothers were asked the same questions by their mother and they said the same thing as Sufnau but their mother realised that her younger sister must have survived and borne a child, whom her sons had met and given pork to.

Now Sufnau and his brother had married Kwaletita women. The *diok*'s son had married two sisters. Sufnau had asked him and his two wives to join him at the meeting with his half-brothers. So at the appointed time they all got ready and went off to meet the half-brothers. Then they all set off for a nearby lagoon. There the *diok*'s son decorated himself with red paint and made a ladder. When they all sat down to eat, the food for the *diok*'s son was placed behind his back instead of in front of him. This was an indication of rejection.

“Who’s son am I?” he exclaimed. “Am I a spirit’s son?” Then he drew his two wives near to him and said to the others, “I am going up into the sky. If you hear a loud noise in the clouds, you will know it is me. If I make a very loud noise, you will know

that someone is breaking a funerary taboo. If the thunder rumbles, it means you will be attacked by an enemy and you must run away. If you see lightning at the same time as the thunder, beware! It means an enemy is about to attack you with shields, for the jagged lightning is like the markings on the shields.” Then he climbed up the ladder into the sky, along with his wives. But he sent one back as a large, light coloured frog. It is forbidden to eat this frog. There is a black frog that is alright to eat, but the *diok*’s son told them that they must shoot their arrows so hard that the frog will be pinned to the ground. If it gets away and jumps into the water, so that its blood runs in the water, thunder and lightning will kill the careless hunter.