



MYTHS AND LEGENDS  
FROM MT. HAGEN

# **MYTHS AND LEGENDS FROM MOUNT HAGEN**

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A.J.S.



TRANSLATOR'S FOREWORD

This translation of Revd. Georg Vicedom's 'Mbowamb Myths and Stories', published originally as Volume 3 of a large ethnographic work on the Mbowamb or Mount Hagen people and written in conjunction with Herbert Tischner, is an abridged version of the German text. The aim of the translation is primarily to present the myths and stories themselves, with a reduced amount of commentary and annotation. The abridgement has been done by (1) omitting the author's foreword, although his introduction is retained; (2) shortening or omitting the author's notes on the texts; (3) omitting some references and the index; (4) further abridging repetitious parts of the stories beyond the shortening techniques already employed by Vicedom himself and explained in his foreword; and (5) omitting the examples of Melpa (Melpa) texts at the end of the book, although these would be of interest both to literate Melpa speakers and to linguists who might wish to inspect the orthography employed by Vicedom. For scholarly and comparative purposes, then, this translation is of rather less value than the German original; but I hope that it will both be a useful key to the more extensive materials in the German and will provide some interesting literature for English and Melpa readers.

Andrew Strathern.  
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September, 1976.

ORIGINAL INTRODUCTION BY G. VICEDOM

The myths and stories in this volume were collected at Mt Hagen, in Central New Guinea, about 400 kilometres westwards from the Huon Gulf. In the main they represent the spiritual traditions of the Ndika and Yamka tribes, with whom I was in regular contact, since they lived around the mission-station Ogelbeng. I would not care to claim that this collection covers the whole of the myths of all the Hagen tribes. A four-and-a-half year period of field-work, coupled with the innumerable duties which life at a mission-station entails, is very short for an adequate study of the life of a people and their religion. Among missionaries, it is reckoned that from 10 to 50 years are needed fully to study all aspects of a people's life. However the collection does include all the myths which are general knowledge in the society. Our school-pupils and workers, young men up to 22 years old, were keen to tell us all the stories they could gather together, and asked their fathers to tell them ones which they could later repeat to us.

Further, I had in Ko, a Yamka man about 55 years old, someone who knew the esoteric myths (e.g. 16-18) as well, and despite his initial fear to do so because of his fellow men and the spirits he told me them in the end under agreement that this was in confidence. Ko was a particularly stimulating man in this connection. He understood what I wanted and gave me especial help, from his own memory and from his enquiries among other men. If he was uncertain of a story he would first verify it with the old men, so as to give me an accurate account. That his dictation was a little disjointed did not matter since I had several fluent boys who knew his ways and could take it down from him and retail it to me. I made the collection from the two tribes but could find few variations, at least of any significance, elsewhere; such as we've found have been included.

Every enquirer looking for ethnographic material at first finds the people very distrustful and unwilling to talk, especially when there are numbers present, but also when alone with the ethnographer. One reason is that the people are not used to telling their stories at any time, only at prescribed times. A father or mother may tell the children a 'story' for a particular purpose or in answer to a certain question. The situation is quite different when a foreigner asks after such stories at any time and on any occasion. But that is not the main reason. The main reason is that the tribesman feels instinctively that the European cannot enter his thought-world, so that his myths do not say anything to the European's mind. Myths are a religious inheritance from the spirits, designed to help those who are linked to these spirits with the questions of life. As they are the property of these spirits they can be passed on only to those who have themselves a close relationship to the spirits. The tribesman thus trusts the European and becomes open only when he sees that the latter wants to treat the myths seriously and to understand them. This happened quite soon to me in Hagen. As soon as they felt that I, the white man, understood them, I had no more difficulty in obtaining stories.

The European must avoid two mistakes: he must not scoff at things taken seriously by the people: the world view of the tribes is as much concerned with reality as is our own even if it is different and a contemptuous attitude puts the story-teller off. And he must not correct the informant. He will not gain much by cross examination on the spot either, but must wait for some other occasion which will be appropriate. The informant often gives lengthy accounts of matters which are of secondary importance and touches only briefly on the main point. To him the main matter is self-evident, and in any case he takes pleasure in actions - his theoretical knowledge is built out of understanding of these, whereas

we have our concepts and definitions. The stories have been handed down by the people's forefathers and he will not change them at the whim of a European or even his own will. This would seem to him as wrong as it would seem wrong to us to quote inaccurately from the works of others.

Many of the stories have no titles, in which case I have provided one. Others had irrelevant titles concerned with secondary portions of the story, but I have retained the titles in these cases. In others we learn the name of the chief actor only from the title. The story-teller does not worry about this, as he is not concerned to create an elegant literature. However this is the first collection of myths from Inland New Guinea uninfluenced by any other culture, to be published, and this gives them their peculiar interest and value.

The Central New Guinea environment is very different from that of the Coast and the basic theme in these myths is the struggle of man with his environment, the treatment of which finds few parallels in other Pacific cultures known to me. Similarities with South Sea myths turn out to be cases of ideas which are in fact world-wide.

Does the tribesman think seriously about life and does he consider it rationally? More than we usually tend to think. See myths 4, 5 and 36, where debate goes on as to whether men live beyond the grave and what the land on the moon is like, and the same kind of thing can be found in the more recent narratives as well.

Actual experience is looked for to provide the answer to these questions. The fact that they have no systematic answer to the chief questions of their life simply means that they have religious beliefs and experiences without feeling the need to clothe these with theology. But the people nevertheless do have religious traditions, tied to experiences, described in their stories, not to logic and theology. All these myths are looked on as 'histories',

experienced at one time by the people's forefathers and so regarded generously as the truth.

Nevertheless, distinctions are made. When once I tried to use a myth as evidence for an actual social custom of the people they said, "No, that's not right, we don't do that. That's a kang, a story, something our ancestors made up". For the tribesmen, each myth is an independent 'experience'. I asked them when a myth can be used as evidence, and was told, "Any story we have telling of events which we ourselves could not have experienced (since we were not alive) we take to be the truth. But if it deals with things which differ from our own customs and traditions which we have today, then we say, "Our ancestors made that up." Any myths not connected with religious duties need have no correspondence with actual custom and law or morals, but they do have importance in life since they form the basis for religious belief and action and for the world view.

Nevertheless the stories in fact give us some idea of the people's past. They sometimes depict customs and cultural structure quite different from that of the Mbowamb now, which indicates that the Mbowamb have been in contact with other peoples during their past wanderings. Myth No. 76 describes an omen otherwise unknown to the people today, though they have countless such omens. Myth No. 46 describes taboos not followed currently. Myths 42-5 show that the Mbowamb were at one time in contact with head-hunting and cannibalism in other cultures whose location they can no longer give nor do they know what influence these cultures had on their life. Apart from this the myths do give us a profound and lively image of the contemporary life and culture of the Mbowamb. I have found that there is no ethnographic fact which is not to be found also recorded in these stories.

If the cultural views of the Mbowamb, as they appear in these myths, differ from our own we have no right to make a value-judgement over this. We must take the mythology in all seriousness for what it is, the people's view of themselves and the environment and their attempt to master it. Naturally, this 'mastering' takes a different form from that which it takes with us. We do not in fact try to 'master' Nature, we simply try to put it to our service. (We realise this occasionally when the forces of Nature break over us and it gives us a 'clout'.) The tribesman does not look for this sort of technological mastery...but for magical mastery. We feel powerless when Nature brings catastrophes upon us; the tribesman has this feeling more regularly and more strongly as his life is more bound up with nature. This, then, the Mbowamb do in their mythology. An interesting point in this connection is that there is in fact no objective confrontation of his environment by the tribesman. He does not try to observe and study natural events per se, he sees instead, on grounds of his bond with nature, the secret of the supernatural force which lies behind these events. He asks of every event, "How does this help or harm me?" The centre of his thinking is himself...But the myths do form a corpus of knowledge of the environment which encompasses the self, they are a form of primitive science. World-view and world-picture are for the Mbowamb the same thing. Their thought is more reality oriented than that of us Europeans, though the orientation is different.

The answers given in these myths to the questions "How has man become what he is within his environment? How were human beings created?" etc are disappointing. The indigenous Hagen myths do not reach the heights found in other myths of the South Seas. The problem of initial creation is not all that interests them. They are concerned far more with the problems of their present situation. To questions I made about creation of the Universe and of men, the

Mbowamb replied: "How should we know how everything was created? As things were before in the old times so they remain now. We don't know any more. Our ancestors have told us nothing about this." The universe and certain beings are taken for granted. Myth No. 11 begins with the brief statement, "The Upper-Tae-man Tamunta and the Upper-Tae woman Yuwin were brought down to Earth". We learn that they were in the sky before but not who brought them down. It is only when we reach the time of the origins of the tribes and the discovery of the means of life and the establishment of custom that we meet a supernatural force which stands behind these events and has its physical embodiment in the dog. The Mbowamb thus fall into the large class of peoples who consider that animals, and in particular the dog, are the creators and makers of all. However, the Hagen myths are not consistent in this respect.

are dealing here with three population strata, each with its own traditions. A separate series of myths, which today is most important in the life of the people, attributes everything to a bird, which represents the supernatural force (Nos. 16-18 and 46). And separate again is the question of descent lines which trace men's origins back to plants, as is found most markedly in Ceram. Only one myth, however, deals directly with this, describing how the birth of two children occurs in conjunction with the ripening of two banana-clusters (No. 70). Animals, whether dogs, marsupials, or birds are always the friends and helpers of men (cf. Nos. 11, 16, 17, 27, 31, 43, 48, 58, 79 and 81) - in them the spirits are embodied, who help men. The snake is the only exception to this. It is regarded by the people as an evil power, although there are no poisonous snakes in Hagen. It always hurts men (cf. Nos. 49, 63 and 78).

A few traditions testify to a close relation between men and plants, especially the cordyline, which is used as a decoration

and is also planted around all cult-places. In myths 60 and 71 it is also the plant on which the life of its owner depends. As long as it is rooted in the ground its owner cannot die; when it is torn up his life is at an end. The red cordylines are worn as decoration at the Kor-Nganap festival for this reason too.

This theme does not however appear in the oldest section of the myths, Nos. 7-9 and 15 which deal with primal human religious notions - the idea that all things on earth derive from the copulation between sky and earth, male and female, which takes place in storms.

It is further said that earthquakes occur when the land is hungry or that the land kills a person in a storm. The tribesman sees himself threatened by this force and confronts it. It exerts also, however, a good influence over the growth of the animal and plant world and men seek to tie it in with the fertility-cult. In this men remember the strength of the storm and earth spirits and attempt to harness these to their own ends. The Mbowamb thus still in reality have sky and earth myths, even though they have not preserved memory of the time when sky and earth lay on each other in unity. Another magical power is that which makes the alternation of day and night (cf. No. 10), the account of which gives a different explanation from the one which appears in Nos. 2-5, and inconsistencies do appear internally in these myths also. In the oldest tradition, the sun and the moon are a married pair. The sun is the husband and the moon his wife. The moon is torn in a quarrel and her shining appearance results from this. Little emphasis is placed on the sun as the daylight in the mythology, however, much more on the moon, even in the more recent myths (cf. Nos. 4-5). In these myths the moon is male. Although the moon is not worshipped, it is held to have strong influence over men. It governs the whole system of Mbowamb time reckoning, and all enterprises are organised with reference to it. Festivals are held at the full moon. With its



course is bound up the growth of plants and animals and children. It is supposed to have intercourse with women and so initiate their menstruation.

The death of fish is also attributed to the moon, where we see remnants of the position which he holds in Polynesia of Fish-God. The people leave fish which they find dead, saying these are the moon's.

Although the sun as daylight has no great importance, it plays an important part as a giver of life. The bird in No. 7 is a representation in myth of the Sun, which wishes to keep men alive through observation of its taboos. No. 17 can only be explained, however, in conjunction with No. 16 in which appear women without sex-organs, seven of whom obtain these organs through the action of a man, while the eighth does not and becomes the most highly venerated spirit among men. The myth has strong connections with Pleiades myths of the South Seas. The seven women are the Pleiades, and the eighth would then be the Sun. However, I cannot verify this with the Mbowamb, as they no longer know of the significance of the Pleiades and Sun elements in the myths.

The Mbowamb thus have different traditions of:

1. the universe;
2. atmospheric appearances;
3. the creation of men.

These different tales show that the Mbowamb are made up of different populations, each with its own mythology, while all attempt the best description of man's relations with his environment. That the myths which are concerned with this have become dominant is not surprising, as they answer the innermost need of Mbowamb existence. The contraposition of the tribesman with his environment is concerned with the question: What must I do in order to stay alive? He feels the problem of sickness and death severely. He rarely traces a death

to sorcery-magic and so the problem is deeper for him than for other peoples of New Guinea. The myths give no clue to the answer of the Mbowamb to this problem of death, namely, that death is the condition of procreation (this is the oldest solution) or that it is the result of sexual intercourse (a more recent notion). The first idea cannot be found in our myths here, but the second appears in No. 16, which is the basis for the Kor-Nganap festival, held every 6-8 years. In this the people purify themselves from the pollution of sex-intercourse. They say, "We hold this festival in order to stay alive."

We can therefore see what they think of as the cause of death. If we also regard the seven ancestresses of men as the Pleiades while the eighth sister is the Sun and the bringer of purity, we see that the Hageners feel a bond with the universe and trace their greatest benefits to it. They entertain also a hope of life after death (cf. Nos. 36, 62 and 86). The ghosts live a shadowy life and also still help those who are alive, cf. No. 25. They help men only if asked to do so and provided that the required sacrifices are made. If the bond of sacrifice is not maintained between men and the ghosts, the existence of the ghosts in the land of the dead comes to an end.

The questions of the religion and world-picture of the Mbowamb are dealt with more fully in Volume 2.\* One thing, however, this introduction has already showed, that is, how involved the world-picture of the so-called "primitives" can be. The myths are the basis of this picture of the world, and from the myths the Mbowamb religion takes its vitality. They are bound up with the life of the Mbowamb and permeate that life. They are the experience of the ancestors, the knowledge and strength created by them from generation to generation, in order to give purpose to their life.

\* [I.e. Vol. 2 of Vicedom and Tischner Die Mbowamb.]

MYTHOLOGY1 - 10 THE UNIVERSE

Vicedom's introduction: *"The tribesman does not practise a disinterested contemplation of the universe. His thinking about the universe is not only geocentric but in a much stronger sense, egocentric. He does consider the earth as the centre of the universe, and in particular the place where he himself lives is maioklimb, the navel, or mid-point, of the earth, but within his mid-point the man referring to it is again the central object. Thought is not objective but purely subjective and takes the form of self vs environment. The immediate environment is not held to constitute reality by itself but only in conjunction with the power which works secretly behind the manifestations of nature; and hence his world view is formed accordingly."*

1. THE PICTURE OF THE WORLD

There, where on the horizon, heaven and earth meet, there live beneath the ground the earthquake people. At the horizon the legs of the sky go down into the earth in which they form a kind of great rock, at which the earthquake people push and make it shake, so that they cause an earthquake. The earthquake people say that our earth is up above them, while below them is the sky. In the middle of the earth is a great post on which the earth is supported and men say that the earthquake people grip this and shake it. We call those who live below the Earthquake people and we call ourselves Human Beings. But the earthquake people call us the Taewamb, the Beings of the Above. Sun and Moon rise in the east of men's sky and travel to the west. There they pass underneath to the sky of the earthquake people and travel from west to east. That is what we tell ourselves.

(No teller given)

2. THE LAND OF THE SUN AND THE MOON

It is said that the land of the sun is red and glowing hot, and only red men live there. The plants and wild animals are red too. The land of the moon by contrast is dark and glistens like fat. The people, plants and animals have this kind of glistening appearance as well. The moon is heavily populated and the men there plant a great many crops. They have the same foods as do the men on earth. It is also said that the moon is an old man, who at daytime covers his forehead with a bandage, but loosens this at night-time so that we can see him. The moon rises in the east and sets in the west. There in the west there is a very high cliff. When the moon reaches it he springs down it and runs underneath over to the east again, so the next night he comes up again in the east. The sun does the same as the moon. Beneath the earth is a huge stone, where the earthquake folk live. It is a fine land. The plants grow tremendously well there and the people have huge pigs. Our day here is their night and vice-versa. It is said that the earthquake folk are just like us, with the same build, and that they live as we live - if we kill pigs for a feast, or go to war, or hold a dance, so do they. But if earthmen do something bad they incur the anger of the earthquake people and it seems that is why they make the earthquakes below us. We do not know whether they had the truth or whether they were telling us stories.

(Told by: Kope)

*Vicedom's note:*

- a) *the sky-legs are called mukl kamp*
- b) *sometimes the sun is regarded as female, the moon male, sometimes the reverse, cf. 3-5.*
- c) *the notion here given that the earthquake folk live an analogous life to that of the earthmen is found only in this text. It may be a traditional idea, however, since the earthquake folk are identified with the dead, cf. No. 14.*

### 3. SUN AND MOON

A man hunted for marsupials, caught a good many, and cooked and ate them. One day his matrilateral cousin decided to visit him in order to share in the catch. The man himself climbed up a breadfruit tree to gather leaves for the oven, but the branch broke, and he fell down into the fire and was burnt to death on the hot oven-stones. The cousin arrived and finding only a small piece of burnt meat in the fire he decided to take it, thinking that his cousin had already eaten all the rest of the meat. However, the piece of meat was so hard that he could not bite through it so he went to cut himself a bamboo knife. However, while he was doing so his bamboo splintered and pierced him through the stomach, then sprang up again and he was held there dead. In the same area there lived an old woman and her husband who spent their time looking for tadpoles and frogs by the river. They came to the place where the man had been pierced by the bamboo and saw him up there still with his feather head-ornaments, his three-pronged spear and his axe, just as he had been dressed for his visit. They gave a tremendous shriek and in his fright the old man took his sharpened axe and struck the old woman in the forehead, so that the skin was broken and the bone showed through. She bled badly. Quickly she turned herself into a toad and hid beneath a stone. The old man was turned into a Pietl marsupial and climbed up a tree. When the old man wants to visit his wife now, he first rubs his face with the leaves of the Koeteng tree, which are as rough as sandpaper. His face then shines wonderfully and we say that it is the Sun. When the woman runs about at night time and her face bleeds where her husband wounded her, we say that it is the moon.

(Told by: Ko)

*Vicedom's note: The early part of this myth is exactly the same as myth No. 67 but the people refused to allow this one to be regarded as merely a variation of the other. The two characters are here known to be the Sun and the Moon while in No. 67 they are just two comic persons. The*

*myth is found in other parts of New Guinea and the South Seas dressed up differently according to region. The main motif is always the same, that Sun and Moon parted from each other in a quarrel.*

#### 4. THE MOON

One rainy day the men sat in the mens' house and talked together. They discussed the sun and the moon and one set of the men supposed that the land where the sun was housed was fatty and glistening, the other that it was red and glowing while it was the land of the moon which had the glistening fatty appearance.

As they came to no agreement one man said he would go and find out, to settle the matter and the others applauded this. So they packed him into a hollowed log, along with a small supply of food, and stopped the ends of the log with resin. Then they threw the log into the Wahgi river. The current took it and day and night it swam along until one day it came to rest. The man inside looked out through a tiny hole which he had bored, and saw that to the east there was a great red cliff, which ate up the water and evaporated it. That was why the current had stopped and the log could swim no longer. The man jumped out, along with his food. A girl came to draw water and she asked him how he had come and why. He explained, and she said, "Good, don't worry about it. Come with me." They went together into her dwelling-place and the man saw that there was an old man there whose face was bound up with leaves of the Koipeka tree. The girl told her story and the old man said, "Good," and went out to get sugar-cane for the guest. The girl brought meat and vegetables to them both in the mens' house and later the old man invited the visitor to come out and course over the land, as it was night-time. They ran westwards in the sky and the old man said that they were above his visitor's own people and wondered if these were visible. The man had seen them a long while before, but all the same he replied, "No, I can't see them." At dawn they returned to the moon's home and lay down to sleep. During the day the moon told his guest it

was time for him to return. He gave the man a cooked pig, necklaces, ropes of cowries and eight shells, and said he must return in the evening. Meanwhile the man looked about him and saw how the land of the sun was glowing hot and shimmered, while the land of the moon was cool, glinting and fatty in appearance. At evening the old man took him on his palm and threw him back to his settlement. All the men gathered round him, noting the things he had brought back, and he announced to them his findings. He bought a wife with the things he had brought back. One of the men commented on the luck he had had and said he would go and see for himself too. The man who had already made the journey said, "No, you can't go! If you go you'll start stealing and doing other bad things and then they'll kill you." However, the other insisted he would go and the first man in the end said, "Go on then!" The other did so, travelling in the same way as the first had done. When his log came to rest he saw a young girl catching fish and he told her the same story as his predecessor had done. She invited him back to her home, as before, but on the way he raped her. The girl's father took the man right into the mens' house with him, but the girl brought them no cooked food - she sat still in her womens' house. At night time the old man invited the visitor to come out and catch fish and course above while they were doing so. They went up in the sky towards the west and the old man asked if the visitor could see his own people down below. The visitor replied, "Yes, I've been looking at them for a while and wishing I was back down there with them." While they were up there the visitor saw how dead fish were lying in all the rivers, killed by the old man, while his daughter ran about below gathering them up. They returned and later the old man gave him a few presents. Next night he took the visitor running again, but as they ran to the west he let go of the man's hand, so that he dropped to the ground and all his bones and his possessions were broken. As the men gathered up his corpse they said, "He behaved badly up there and so the moon has killed him." They performed mourning and

held the funeral feast. Nowadays when we see fish lying dead in the rivers we say they have been killed by the moon. As the two men saw it, so it has been handed down to us, and we give the same account as they did.

(Told by: Puk)

*Vicedom's note:*

1. *The design of the boat indicates that the people have only a vague idea of canoe building. They make no canoes or rafts nowadays.*
2. *The 'red rock' = the 'legs' of the horizon. On it all waters are held to evaporate, returning as clouds.*
3. *The moon's phases are explained by saying that the moon covers or uncovers his face to a greater or lesser degree and accordingly travels faster or slower, sleeping for the rest of the night after his run. At the new moon the moon does not course at all.*
4. *The story is told as a warning and a lesson to young people.*
5. THE MOON (a variation of No. 4)

One day the men of a settlement were working together at a communal job, and after it they sat down to eat and tell each other stories. They began to talk about the sun and the moon and one section said that when the moon rises we see the face of an old man, while others disputed this and said it was the split in the face of a rock which we saw. They argued about this and finally hit each other with sticks over it. One of the men, in order to stop the dispute, then said that he would go and see what the truth was. The men enclosed him in a large hollowed out log with plenty of food, stopped up the holes with resin, tearfully said goodbye, then threw him into the river. The man guided his log in the current till night-time, then fastened it firmly in a backwater part of the stream. Next day he again launched it into the current, and came eventually to a whirlpool, which drove his log around and around in



circles. Further down-stream he saw a great rock which was stopping the course of the water. Nearby the moon, an old man, was going about, and he took a long look and pulled the log to the bank. He took the log home on his shoulders, threw it down at his house-door and proceeded to split it. To his surprise he found a man inside, and after questioning him he brought his visitor some sugar-cane. While the visitor was enjoying this the moon called together all his kinsfolk to tell them the news. At night-time they all assembled again and the moon led the group out on a hunt in honour of the guest. The moon took off the covering he had bound over his face and the land was illuminated, for then the full moon stood in the sky. In this light the men went out to hunt and the visitor went with them. He saw his own kinspeople down below but said nothing about this. They caught marsupials, and ate them together on their return, then told their guest that on the morrow he must return. They gave him shells, necklaces and other valuables in quantity and at evening time of the next day the moon took him on the flat of his hand and threw him back to his home. He then told the results of his expedition to his brothers and distributed among them the valuables and meat he had been given by the moon people. One of his brothers then decided to copy the man's journey as it had been so successful, and despite the other's objection, he did so.

Once arrived and discovered he announced openly that he had come to see the moon. (The other man had merely said he had come to look about him.) The moon gave him some sugar-cane and said nothing other than that he could stay. The moon took him hunting for marsupials in the night, and as they were above the visitor's own wife and kinsfolk he sweated in his anguish at this. "There they are down there," he said; "And I have to run about up here." The moon was so angry at this that he let the man go and he fell to the ground and was killed. His people heard the noise of his fall and found him there dead. They began to weep, took and buried the corpse and later held a funeral feast.

(Told by: Kope)

6. THE RAIN

Of the rain it is also said that it is produced by a woman among the sky-people called Rangkopa who urinates over the earth and the urine falls as rain. The dry season occurs when she hitches her skirt between her legs and does not let out her urine, so that the sun shines all the time. In the rainy season she looses her skirts and lets them hang down and she urinates over us. When men catch the rain they say, "We're going to drink the urine of the woman Rangkopa."

(No teller given)

*Vicedom's note: Besides the naturalistic explanation of rain, that it is evaporated water in the clouds which re-liquefies and falls on us, there are two magical explanations. The one given here appears elsewhere in New Guinea as among the Kate. The other is that the rain is the tears of the Taewamb who weep over the wild creatures which have been killed by men. On the Taewamb cf. Nos. 11-13.*

7. THE RAINBOW

When there is a rainbow in the sky, this is because underneath on the ground or in the forest a giant snake is lying and its image is mirrored in the sky. If the rainbow spans only half of the sky it is said that the snake has been broken in two and only half of it is to be seen in the sky. If there are two rainbows it is said that there is a married pair there, the 'woman' lying below and her husband lying above.

(No teller)

*Vicedom's note: The Kate have a similar explanation of the rainbow.*

8. THE THUNDERSTORM

When the clouds gather and men see it is going to rain and be stormy it is said that this is Ngkukngkakla. If there is lightning then a flecked boar comes and zig-zags with its penis through the air. From below up from the earth there comes a red sow and when the two meet and their sexual organs mingle and someone is

standing at the place where this happens, he is struck by the lightning and dies, as if the two pigs had burnt him with fire. When the two pigs have copulated, then the flecked boar travels down to earth and the real pig goes up into the sky. When it reaches the sky, the sky begins to bellow and the earth beneath is in uproar. Men say, "The lightning has eaten men and has gone on its way bellowing." If anyone is struck by lightning there is a rattling noise and it is said that this is Ngkukngkakla speaking. However, we have no single story about this. Some say that a red man comes down below in the storm and eats men, while others say it is a red pig which comes and kills men.

(No teller)

*Vicedom's note: The main idea is that the sky is male and the earth female. The question of whether these forces are men or pigs is secondary. Ngkukngkakla is the same person as Nungnung in myth No. 15. He is called to in the fertility cult. I cannot establish whether he is a creator-god or not. In the fertility cult a woman called Ketlpo is also called up out of the earth. The land itself is thought of as a magical force.*

#### 9. YAMKA TENGERANG

Yamka Tengkerang was a big-man. One day, as he was walking in the fields he was overtaken by a heavy storm, and it thundered and lightened. From above came a pig and from below a pig out of the earth. The two pigs 'ate' him, and turned him upside down onto his head. His kinsfolk at home were worried and came to look for him. They found him in the field, struck by lightning and standing on his head. They took their shields and spears, returned to the field, and bore the corpse in. At home they sat in the mourning house and grieved for him then they took him out to burial. Now, when the Yamka go into war and wish to kill someone they call on Tengkerang saying, "Yamka Tengkerang, come down here, we want to kill men!" When they plant fields and the sun shines increasingly so that

the plants wither and die, they call on Tengkerang again and say, "Our fields are poor! Yamka Tengkerang, come down and help us!" Whenever they have an enterprise they call on Yamka Tengkerang.

(Told by: Ko)

*Vicedom's note: When the victim of a storm is brought back home men do not trust Ngkukngkakla and they take their weapons with them.*

*The father of the man who told this story had known Tengkerang. The event thus dates from four or five generations back. One can see how a historical personage becomes a mythological figure.*

#### 10. TENGERUM AND TANGKERUM

An old man lived all alone. In the evenings when he lay down to sleep, he would always hear Tengkerum going by his house to the west. Then it became night-time. In the morning when Tangkerum came eastwards from the west it became daytime. The old man wondered what this was about so he made a trap and caught Tengkerum in it. Next morning he did not come by. The old man went to his trap and found in it a disreputable man with very long legs and skin covered with ash and mud. The man accused him of setting the trap and the old man replied that he had thought a marsupial used the path and he would not have set the trap there had he known that the man used it. "Good," said the man, "no more words then - just free me so that I can carry on." The old man did so and the man tore both his eyes out and took these away. One he put in a gourd at his home, the other he hid in a cucumber. The old man was blind and had to feel his way home, where he lay down and wept. His crops grew ripe, but he could not see this. He had to feel for ripe bananas and pluck them. One day two women came gathering vegetables and decided to pick the fine cucumbers. One of the women tied up her netbag and left her child in it then went to get the vegetables. The old man in the house began to shriek and the woman screamed in fright and ran off, leaving the boy behind. The boy began to cry and the old man

felt his way up to him and brought him into the house. He felt along the boy's mouth and noticed he had just two teeth. He went into the garden and got ripe bananas for the boy. So he fed him each day and the boy ate well and grew big. One day the boy asked his foster father: "Father, what's the matter with your eyes?" The father told him the story, and when he had heard it the boy went out and made a trap out of a creeper and a hole. He caught the man in it. He came up to the trap and the man said: "Who has tampered with the path? I want to go on and I can't get out of here!" The boy replied, "You've stolen something that belongs to my house. Bring back the things you stole and give them here! Then I'll let you out!!" The wild spirit then said, "Yes, I took away your father's eyes. One is in a gourd and the other in a cucumber. Go and get them, they're still there!" "Good," said the boy, "you can come now with me and we'll get them." So they did and the wild spirit put the eyes back in the man so that he could once again see. The two then tried to kill the wild spirit, but he simply would not die. Then they searched the top of his head and found there a little package. They took this and crushed it between the oven-stones. Then the wild spirit died. When they had killed him, the two men lived together until they died.

(Told by: Koka)

*Vicedom's note: While it is known that day and night depend on the sun, there is a supplementary notion that they are caused by a spirit. There is a single spirit who has two names. The double name apparently signifies day and night. The spirit is called a wua wangen - that is a low-status man - because of his down-and-out appearance and his treacherous ways, which are like those of such a man. It is a motif often found in stories of the South Seas that a grown person in need finds a saviour in the form of a boy child.*

12.

*The spirit was hard to kill because he had hidden his heart in the package. So long as the heart was alive, no man could kill him heart is the seat of life. Cf. Vol. II and myths Nos. 44 and 60.*

11 - 20 THE MYTHICAL ORIGINS OF MEN

Vicedom's introduction: *"It is a conspicuous gap in the inventory of Hagen myths that there are so few creation myths. This is a sign that the myths belong to the Melanesian culture. If one compares the wealth of creation myths which is found in Polynesia or in Indonesia, those given here will seem definitely poor. Nevertheless, there are connections with Indonesia and Polynesia. The dog appears here as the original ancestor of men, as creator of other things and as men's helper (cf. Nos. 15, 31, 81) and this role of the dog appears in mythology all over the South Sea Islands. So Mt. Hagen has definite connections with the South Sea area in terms of thought. At the same time, the dog's function is not easy exactly to describe. It itself did not procreate or make men, it simply brought them down from heaven to earth. It is always man's companion, protector and culture creator. As this function is in fact performed for the Hagenes by their ancestor spirits, the mbokor, the position of the dog must be explained by saying that it had these functions only so long as men had no ancestors. It was thus the representative of a Taewamb or sky-spirit. The original tribal founders, male and female, are thought of by the people as having passed out of their ken and appear only in magical activities. The religious cult is concentrated on the ancestor-spirits and a few High spirits."*

11. THE UPPER-TAE MEN (The Tae People from Above)

The Upper-Tae man Tamunta and the Upper-Tae woman Yuwin were brought down to this earth and lived here. They had two children, one called Ndika the other Yamka, both boys. After a while they had two girls also, one called Rangond and the other Mepitl. No one else was around. The trusty dog went into a field where two men were working. They had only poor axes, which they had laid by the side of the field and these the dog stole, so that the men ran after it back to Tamunta's place. Tamunta gave them sugar-cane, and the next day one of the girls

married the man Ndepona, the other the man Nikent, each paying ten shells for his wife and a good many pigs besides. The girls then went away with their husbands. Next day they killed pigs and divided out the meat at the dancing-place and the following day they killed again and held the feast at the bride's house. One day the women bore children, of whom one was called Keme, the other Kukitika. The dog ran out again and stole the netbags of two women, who followed him back and were bought as wives for the two boys at a price of ten shells and ten pigs each. They distributed pig meat to their own folk, then the next day brought meat to the girls' settlement where they ate it along with the girls' kinsmen there. These two women also had two children, one called Kope and the other Mokae, and so it continued. The Ulka and the Ulkapuka, the Ulkena and the Roklakla and the Kutli were all born in this fashion and so all the tribes came into being.

The people on earth at that time did not know fire, and ate all their food raw. The dog ran off into the forest to get fire. He bit into a bamboo and splintered off a strip bloodying his mouth as he did so. He brought this home to the people, but they asked him what it was and why hadn't he brought fire. He told them to rub the bamboo against wood and so they made fire. They cooked a pig and found its taste very savoury. All these things the dog gave them.

One day the Nengka came into Ndika territory and stole a pig. The dog gave the men arrows and spears and they waged war. The owner of the pig took his shield, spear and arrows, strewed himself with ashes and said: "They've killed a pig of mine!" His brothers followed him into battle. Each time a man was killed they strewed themselves with ashes and buried him, held mourning then carried on the fight. They fought for days, then finally stopped and counted their losses. The pig owner killed all his pigs and distributed the flesh to the Ndika in compensation for their dead. Then they removed



the mourning weeds from the widows and married them off again. This done, they held a Moka. And so we still do today. These customs and the Moka, yes, everything has been shown to us by the dog. Now men have multiplied and spread. As the dog planned it, so it has been. The dog is of all things the root.

(Told by: Ko)

*Vicedom's note:*

- a) *The names of the first two girls are taken from stars.*
- b) *The number 10 is interesting here. Usually 8 is given as the conventional number and 10 only where an exact account is given.*
- c) *In myth 17 a bird finds fire for men*

## 12. THE UPPER-TAE PEOPLE (The Sky People)

A man hunting marsupials in the forest came upon a place where clay had been dug up and thrown onto a creeper. He thought a marsupial might have done it so he hid himself and waited. In the morning numbers of men came, dug clay, and carried it up onto the creeper. After them came a girl all by herself, whom he grabbed hold of. She turned into a tree and a snake but could not break free. "Are you a man or a spirit?" she asked and he told her. They climbed up a tree together and came to the houses of the Tae people. She hid him in her netbag and went to her parents saying, "I've brought a man with me." The parents said he was from earth and could not stay. She must go down and live with him on earth. They gave the two meat of the Ait marsupial which they call their pig, and told them to go, adding that early tomorrow morning they themselves would come and should be given pig meat and vegetables. Next morning the man called all his brothers and explained the business. The Tae people came in a dark cloud and the men gave them vegetables and meat. However, a piglet suddenly began to squeal inside an old woman's

netbag and the Tae people sprang up and were away, taking with them the girl the man had married. The husband was so enraged he struck the old woman and her pig with a club. The Tae people could not bear the pig's squealing, which they had never heard before and so they disappeared. "Now we will never see the Tae people again on earth," the men said.

(Told by: Kijangkwa)

*Vicedom's note: The Tae-people are the lords and creators of the wild - if a wild creature is seen while a man is out hunting he says it is a Tae wild creature which has come down to earth. The Taewamb are always close to men in a fog cloud. The myth has numerous variations in the South Seas. The general pattern is that formerly between men on earth and the sky-dwellers there were social relations which were rescinded by the sky-folk because of bad behaviour on the part of the men.*

### 13. THE TAEWAMB

Two men were out hunting and one went off by himself and found a place where clay had been dug from holes and carried up a creeper. After a while the place was surrounded in a cloud and the Taewamb came. The man seized a girl who came after them and held her fast, though she became a stone and a tree in trying to free herself. They climbed up a Keraip tree together and she took him on the flat of her hand and sprang up with him into her sky village where she lived and hid him and went to tell her parents. These demanded to see him and prepared a meal of Kepa marsupial meat and greens and leaves of trees. The man ate some and took the rest home, climbing down the creeper. He told his story and said the Taewamb would come and visit tomorrow morning. The Taewamb did come and were given pig meat and befriended; but an old woman's piglet began to squeal inside a bag and the Taewamb flew off back to the sky. So the men went back home. The Taewamb could not bear the pig's squeal. They know only

the cries of the birds and marsupials.

(Told by: Kope)

#### 14. THE EARTHQUAKE-FOLK

A number of men were out hunting and found a shaft into the earth which was muddy and churned up with footsteps. They were curious and threw a stone down it which fell onto the earthquake-folk below. One of these took his weapons and came up to the top where he performed a war-dance. The men were afraid and hid till he was gone, and then threw another stone down. This time the earthquake-man came up covered with mud and saying that his man had been killed. Later the earthquake-folk came out and held the funeral meal then returned. The stone-throwing and war-dancing was repeated from day to day till one day a dwarf said he would go down the hole and see the people below. So he went down with a pack of meat and told the people he met that he was hunting. The earthquake-folk shouted "Let's kill him!" But the man who had been in the habit of emerging above ground from the hole and dancing said: "No, he means no harm, he's brought us meat." So they sat down and kept company. As the sun set the dwarf's parents came and said, "Dear boy, who told you to come here? It is night and we cannot turn you away, but in the morning you must go." Next morning they gave him pearl shells, cowrie necklaces, and nassa-bands and sent him home. He told his story there and after a while a big man of his community decided to go down and visit the earthquake-folk. He went down and laid his bag against the door of a men's house. A man came out and asked him his business and he mentioned the dwarf, but was told they knew nothing of such a previous visitor. They didn't bother any more about him, so he went into the garden of the men's house and saw there a red lake with a large Araucaria in its centre, so he climbed up it. The other man watched him from the men's house and shot him with an arrow, so that he fell down dead. As he had not returned, two further men decided to go down

the shaft and look for him. But they too were killed by the earthquake-folk, who rushed out at them from the men's house. The men above said, "The earthquake-folk have struck us a blow," and held the funeral meal. Then they returned home.

(Told by: Ko)

*Vicedom's note: The earthquake-land is thus also the land of the dead. The Hageners have no special word for this land, but refer always to the uklnga kona, that is the customary land or the land where everyone must go in the end. Cf. description of the land of the dead, No. 62. [Vicedom is wrong to translate ukl-nga kona as 'customary land' here. The /u/ in ukl-nga is long, and the word means 'forever', not 'customary' - Translator.]*

#### 15. THE SKY-MAN NUNGNUNG

*Vicedom's introduction: "Myths 15-19 describe the establishment of important religious festivals and the festivals are themselves practically the enactment of these myths. This myth is concerned with the fertility-cult. Nungnung is the same personage as Ngkukngkakla in Nos. 8 and 9.*

A brother lived with his sister Waklop and his dog. The man and the dog were afraid that the sister would be taken away from them so they hid her in a hollow bamboo. They went to dig sweet potatoes together and as they did so said, "As our hands are dirty with the work so will there be earth on the hands of the young girl." They did their work and the girl did nothing. One day from the field they saw smoke rising from their house and the man sent the dog back to investigate. The dog saw that the house was occupied by a pale-skinned man who had dressed himself as a woman - but the apron covered him so inadequately that his sexual organs were showing. The dog ran back and told his master, saying, "It looks like he's going to kill us." When they got home the pale man said, "I want to get married, so give me your Ajamb Waklop. Down in the land of Mot there is plenty

of game, of fish and food. So I came to take the girl back to all this and share it with me." The two denied that they knew any such person, but they shared out their sweet potatoes with him, then lay down to sleep. But the pale man did not sleep the whole night through. The dog told the man next morning that the pale man was angry with them and perhaps they ought to give him the girl. They decided to do so. While the preparations for the marriage went on, the pale man slept on the grass. The girl took the pig guts to wash them at the stream but found it dried up. She washed the guts with difficulty and her bamboo knife fell in and was carried off. She saw another piece of bamboo floating on a bamboo-leaf, so made herself a new knife. Suddenly Ndepona Nikent stood above her and asked, "Why have you broken my bamboo? Go with your new husband, and on the way he will want to eat meat the whole time I will follow, I will sit on the steep river bank and wait for you." So it happened. The pale man ate first a piece of the backbone, then a piece of the head, and so on, begging it continually from the woman. Across the river she saw numbers of pale men and was afraid, so told her husband to go on while she paid a visit to the bush. As the pale man went across the bridge Ndepona Nikent shot him and he fell in the water. Then he took the woman and they went along another path till they came at night time to a pleasant place planted with cane and bananas and stopped there. The man warmed up the pig meat and offered the woman her share, but she sat there and made a face and would not eat. "What's the matter?" he said. "Don't be awkward; look, tomorrow I'll kill a fresh pig." But she continued to scowl. The same happened next day. The man was angry, packed up some meat and went off. "Wait, my friend," she said. "Let's go together." And she ran after him until at night-time in another forest, she lost him. As she sat in the forest she saw the sky-man Nungnung splitting wood there and she went and told her story. He told her he had only a poor house but she could spend

the night there if she wished. The girl was greeted there by an old woman and her daughter and stayed with them. Nungnung announced he was burning undergrowth in a field and they should all come and help clear it. He had already divided out the field in sections for each person. The newcomer girl grew thirsty at the work and was told by Nungnung to go to a stream and to drink only from the nearside where the water was dirty, not from the far side where it was clear. She drank, but from the forbidden side. Next day they saw that their field was already planted and were amazed. Later the girl realised she was pregnant and wondered who had copulated with her. The boy she bore had teeth shortly after birth and grew very fast. Soon he was big and went out and cut bean sticks, but cut his hand. His mother was angry and said, "What kind of a man was this child's father that he's gone and cut his hand now?" Nungnung heard her and was ashamed about the matter. He called the boy to him in the men's house and showed him his father, Ndepona Nikent. The father had come, he said, since the mother had spoken bad words. The boy ran back and told his mother that a fine man had come and who could he be? One day Nungnung and Ndepona Nikent decided to make the great prayer for prosperity. They hooked out Kungpot, a plant from the pond near the house, and told everyone to bring large supplies of food. They tidied the place and built a stage on which Ndepona Nikent danced while Nungnung stayed near the pond and gave the call one makes to pigs (az az az). One after the other pigs, males and females, came out of the water. He tied a boar to a post of the men's house while Ndepona Nikent danced the Mar-dance and many other dances and sang. Nungnung took the pig-rope covered himself with a mat and made the prayer for fertility. "Skyman Nungnung o! Earth-woman Ketlpo! Ku ku ku!" After the prayer the man came down from the stage. They killed pigs and cooked the meat. They made sausages from the small pieces and gave these to the people who took them home and kept them. As the

two did then, so we Mbowamb do now and speak the same prayer.

(Told by: Ko)

*Vicedom's note: The myth is recounted after wars in which losses are sustained. The quick growth of the boy gives new hope. Note the invocation to sky-man and earth-woman: they are to come together to produce fertility.*

#### 16. THE FOUNDING OF THE KOR NGANAP FESTIVAL

There were two children whose parents were dead, so they lived as orphans with another man and his wife. One day news came that the Enga people were to hold a pig-festival and as the man had kinsmen there he decided to attend. He filled a large bag with fire-wood, placing two tough knotty logs at either side, and saying, "When you've burnt the wood from knot to knot then I'll come back. When you've burnt one of the logs I'll be sleeping in a forest hut on my way home, and when you've burnt the other I'll be coming out of the forest towards home." He struck his axe in his belt and went off. After a while all the wood he left was burnt and one of the boys tried to split one of the knotty logs with the man's wood axe. His younger brother told him not to, but he did, and broke the axe-blade. "That's done it!" said the younger, and as they were both afraid of the man they took their oil-flasks and bag of valuables and a little pig they had brought up and went out into the forest. They went far from the man's settlement and then built themselves a new house. Their pig was taken to a boar and farrowed and they soon had a number of big fat pigs. One day the young boy saw that the Nikent birds kept sitting on a tree to peck at its fruit. He asked his brother to shoot one and the brother did so, but the bird flew off with the arrow in its body, falling at a spot where there was a clump of bright green trees. Next morning the brother cooked some marsupial meat and bananas and went to the place where the bird had fallen. He saw gardens and also fat pigs thrown over a rock. He found a beautiful

girl in a house, whose upper arm was bandaged where the arrow had struck it. He explained his business and she said, "Maybe this arrow I have is yours." The man saw there was no fire in the house. He offered the woman some marsupial meat which she refused saying she didn't know what it was. "Try it," he said and as she did so she liked it very much. He made her fire and brought in one of the dead pigs and cooked it. She liked that too. While he watched the oven he saw the woman run out and rub herself against the stem of a banana tree. When she returned the man took fragments of shell and axe-blade from his bag and hid these in the banana-tree stem, intending that the woman should cut herself open on these and so make a vagina for herself. This did happen, and she cried out, "Apa! O my uncle!" She was badly ashamed and returned and sat down in the house. After a while her sisters came back and the man hid to watch. All but the youngest sister entered the house and he pushed the door to behind them - when the youngest sister came she saw the door was shut and went on her way. Inside the girls grew hot and sweated. Finally they ran out and rubbed themselves on the banana stem. The same happened in each case and all returned in shame to the house. The man then made aprons for them from his own clothing and gave them the cooked meat. Next day he took them and all their possessions away with him. He gave his brother three of the girls and kept four for himself. After a while he saw that one of his wives, the one he had met first, was infertile. One day they quarrelled and he struck her with his stick. She went out to the field and dug up sweet potatoes and cried. She saw a storm was darkening the land and there came a heavy wind and rain. The storm approached and with it there was her youngest sister, who asked why she was crying. She had brought with her a bird and red cordyline sprigs. She gave a bundle of things to her sister and said, "Give this to your husband. He must take it behind the men's house and there in the bush unpack it and look at it." The



woman went home and told her story, saying a spirit had given her the bundle. The man found red cordylines and other medicine plants and white bird-of-paradise ornaments, and the cordylines and other plants he set in the men's house garden. He killed a pig and ate it, then slept in the men's house. He heard the spirits dancing outside. They took meat from the offering place and shared it with the men around. In the morning the man found the offering-place gone, but where he had planted the things from the bundle there were two stones and underneath these other stones, painted in various colours and the whole place was surrounded with cordylines. He called his brothers to bring their pigs and he himself took his boar and they sacrificed. They gave the heads and a piece of backbone to the women. But the two sides of pig the men took and brought them to the secluded place of sacrifice. There they cooked the meat and ate it themselves. Then they came out again and said, "Now we will sacrifice to the spirit Nganap." They reared numerous pigs and on the day decided upon they built long scaffoldings for the sacrifice. The man took the white birds of paradise which the women had brought and distributed them to the men, each receiving one. Next morning they again sacrificed pigs and again gave the heads and pieces of backbone to the women. They took the two main halves and sacrificed them, in the place set apart for the spirit. Next day they rubbed themselves with fat and put on red cordyline for their rear coverings. They decorated their foreheads with shell discs and their chests with necklaces. Then they came out dancing to the dancing place. When the dance was over and they had returned again to the secret place, they came out with the meat, climbed on the scaffolding, and handed the meat to the people. This is what they did, the people saw, and today also when they sacrifice to Nganap they do it in the same way. The women who went with the man became women of our kind, men say. The youngest sister, who went past the door, came back as the spirit Nganap. When we

sacrifice pigs and bring them to this spirit we do not share our meat with our women.

(Told by: Ko)

*Vicedom's note: Before the man changed their condition the women were without sexual parts and knew nothing of human intercourse. Only one remained in this state. This is of great importance. The men take delight in their women, but have a bad feeling that it is as "kor wia" or "ghost men" that they have intercourse with them and that in this way they pollute themselves. That is why the Nganap festival is held. The spirit-woman gives them objects through which they can establish contact with her and so they are able to cleanse themselves of the impurity associated with their consorting with the sexually endowed women. On this their life and success depend.*

#### 17. THE ORIGIN OF THE ANCESTOR STONES

A man built a hut from which to shoot birds in the forest. He shot a bird which flew off with his arrow, and he saw it settle on a tree a good distance away. Next morning he packed sweet potatoes, sugar-cane and bananas together and went out to search, wandering about till nightfall. He slept in the open without having had a proper meal - he had put his sweet potatoes under the forest leaves and eaten just a few pieces of sugar-cane. Next morning he saw that the leaves in a part of the forest floor were heaving upwards. He saw in fact a stone pushing up from the ground. A white bird-of-paradise called to him to bring a fat pig and sacrifice it on the spot. "Me?" he said. "Yes you!" said the bird. He returned and told his brother he had seen an omen and they went back together. They had no fire to cook the pig but the bird told them to take a bamboo-stick and rub it on wood. They did so, and made fire. Then they realized they had no stones, but following the bird's commands again they laid the meat in an oven-hole without any stones. They roasted the meat

on wood-embers. As they did so the bird spoke to them:

You must abstain at my command, from those things  
which I tell you of:

Listen!

Rurukl river! Kum Kum! Great river, river Walta!

Kum kum!

I tell you, so listen and hold to this:

Offer to me my sacrifice meat,

And of it no women nor child shall eat.

No man shall split wood

Nor with his wife bed

Nor eat sweet potatoes

Nor do any work

Separate yourselves off at my command

And keep to the rules which I provide

Rub my two stones with a pig's inside

And make my name honoured both far and wide.

The two men took the mess from the pig's entrails and rubbed the stones with this. They took the meat and cut it up, then brought home along with the two stones. At home they called the Ndika and Yamka and all the tribes together and said that one man from each clan should come forward. The two then distributed the meat among these and said to them: "Do not give any of this meat to your women and children when you take it home. Only we men may eat it. Let our festival be celebrated widely from now on. When we sacrifice to the Nganap spirit let us build a large house and let some of us men be the 'male section' and sleep in the men's part and others be the 'female section' and sleep in the women's part. The 'male section' should then go out and dance and the 'female section' should follow. Now you have heard all this, you can go." The men heard and that is how the festival has been arranged ever since.

(Told by: Ko)

18. WHEN THE MEN GO INTO THE KEITAMB HOUSE

An old married couple went into the forest where the wife looked for mushrooms and the husband wandered about a bit then sat down. He heard a cry of "wokatl putl no putl no" and saw this came from a bamboo, so he cut it down and took it with him. He told his wife it was nothing much, just some strange thing, but he would not let her see it. They came to a river which was difficult to cross and the old man laid down his bamboo on the bank and helped his wife over. Then he retrieved the bamboo. As he was crossing with it, it gave him a shove, so that he fell under water, and when he reached the other side he noticed his body was washed very clean. He hid the bamboo under the roof and at night time he heard it playing "woklakl woklakl woklakl putl no putl no woklakl woklakl wua rondoklwe' i.e. 'man very strong'! Next day the old man took a pig and called all his brothers and sons together. They sacrificed the pig at another place and blew on the bamboo-stick. It made a pleasant noise and to keep the rest of the curious folk away they built a high fence about their place and houses inside it so they were able to blow away undisturbed even in the night. One man had no pig as the others had and when they took theirs for a sacrifice he went and stole one. They followed his example and stole pigs too and when pursued by the pig-owners they ducked themselves down in the river where the old man had first washed himself. One day they decided to make sausages out of all their pigs. They stopped up all the holes in their house and roasted the meat on scaffolds over the fire there, while outside they oven-cooked the sausages. They ate the meat along with taro and yams. They hung the bones from end to end of the house and when they had filled it with these they rubbed themselves with fat and danced out into the open without saying a word. When they reached home the folk saw that those who had been taken out as children had returned as grown men. They lived about four years away from home and in the fifth

they returned. Then they lived with their people again.

(Told by: Ko)

*Vicedom's note: This myth shows that there was formerly a custom of initiation of boys in Hagen. These older men can remember taking part in it and give accounts of it. Such a custom is widespread in the Highlands. The bamboo involved could have been sounding in the wind, and this was held to be a sign of the spirits by the people, who give this explanation for anything strange. The cult was called 'kei-tamb = I will take (catch) the bird'. Birds were represented in the cult itself. We are reminded of totemic descent from birds of.*

*Vol. II. [Translator's note: tamb probably = 'magical substance', rather than 'I will catch' here.]*

#### 19. THE ORIGIN OF THE MOKA SHELL FESTIVAL

Once, while a man was sharpening his stone-axe by the river, he suddenly saw that fragments of shell were lying on the bank and nearby lay a plait of a woman's hair. He took these things home with him, and next day packed up food and dressed himself in his finery and set off up-river. He came to a wide path where there were charred remnants of torches and the path soon became muddy and churned, as if it were used often. On approaching a village he climbed up a pangkep tree and kept watch to spy out the land. Numbers of young women came to draw water, dancing the Metle-dance as they came and the Welta dance too. When a girl came along by herself he broke off a fruit and threw it so that it hit her between the shoulder-blades. She screamed and said, "If you're a ghost, go away, but if you're a man, come here." So the man came and she took him home. Her female companions remarked on this and her brothers gave him sugar-cane and invited him into the men's house for the night. However, he maintained he was used to sleeping in the same house as the women so they allowed him to do so. In the night he tried the plait of hair against all the girls as they slept but could find no match for it. Next day he was offered one of the girls for a wife, but he refused, on grounds that

he wanted to go further up-river and would pick up a wife on the way back, if they liked. He gave the men a quantity of meat from his netbag. He repeated his enterprise at the next village but again could not fit the hair with any of the girls there, and once more put off taking any of the girls for a wife. At the next village's watering place, he saw a great number of hair-plaits and shell splinters lying around. Again he made himself known to a girl and said he came from down-river. "Good," she said. "Come home and sleep there. In the morning they are sure to say to you that they will give you a wife. Do not reply, just make a face." With this she left him and he made his way into the village. The village girls began to fight over him, each one saying they would marry him and go away, till their parents came and told them to stop. The man was given sugar-cane by the men and the women gave him cooked food. Once more he contrived to sleep in the women's house. He could not match the plait here either, but said to himself he knew the one it would match with and waited till morning. The men of the village suggested he should take his pick of the girls present next morning, but he simply frowned at this. They lined them all up and told him to choose, but he said nothing and made a face. The mother of the girl he wanted then realised this might be the case and said she would go and get her. The father refused this and they disputed for a while but in the end it was agreed to give her to him. The man then put on a friendly look and laughed, "Yes, that's the one," and the men said, "Fine," and killed pigs for a feast. The mother of the girl said, "Here is your meat and your belongings - take them with you. This man is the girl's own choice so there's an end of it. Leave us now and go." She set them both on her palm and threw them through the air to the man's home. The man left the woman in his house, then he took his meat out to his village friends and slept in the men's house also. The woman woke up in the morning and thought she would go and see the settlement and

where her husband lived. Finding it was a fine place fenced around with cordylines and with bags of valuables hanging there she said, "I thought maybe he would have one valuable - now I see he has many and daily makes loans of shells. He's rich. How pleased I am." The man had already married two wives and these had borne him two sons Eklimp and Kuklup. At the time when they were growing youths the men of another tribe held a shell festival. Men were running about here and there to borrow feather decorations. The father took his two sons to take part in the Mar-Dance and they slept in the guest houses provided. The wife Kopona Nde, whom the man had first met at the river, came too, and she noticed a pale-skinned woman who had come. The pale woman said, "I see men who belong to me. Where are the other handsome men of whom the people speak?" She spat in the two boys' faces, then went away. The people said, "She must have come to take away the two boys, so you men had better look out!" The men watched all through the night but at day-break they dozed off thinking the pale woman would not come now, but she did, and when they woke the boys were gone. They wept and held the mourning and later the funeral feast of pig-meat. After this was over the father took his wife Kopona Nde and went to look for the two. They were told at a dancing-place of the Kendika that the pale woman had passed by. At a place hemmed in by high rocks, the wife Kopona Nde struck at a rock face with her digging-stick and made a way through. She did the same with a lake further on. Under the lake's surface they found two boys sitting in a fine dancing-place and were told by these that this was the dance-place of Eklimp and Kuklup. The man went into the men's house and the wife hid herself. Eklimp and Kuklup came home with split wood and said to their father: "Father, how did you manage to find your way here?" "You got here," he said, "and I followed." "We're glad you've come," they replied. "The woman brought us here and we couldn't escape." As they talked together the pale woman

came with food, made a face on seeing the father and went off to her house. In the night Kōpona Nde fastened the door and burnt the pale woman inside the house by setting the whole house on fire. They released the other men the pale woman had kept there, took all her possessions, valuables, cassowaries, pigs and went home. The other men dispersed to their villages. Eklimp and Kuklup lived with their parents and made the Moka shell-festival. We took it over from them and perform it now as they did then.

(Told by: Ko)

## 20. AUNTOKLA NINGNINGKITL

The Penambe wanted to build a men's house and sent a man into the forest after creeper. While he was there it began to rain, so he sat down under a tree in the Auntokla-wood and waited for the rain to go off. He heard the Auntokla Ningningkitl singing up on the mountain top:

e, e, e, The Penambe youths must eat it e, e, e,  
 " " Elte " " " " "  
 " " Kope " " " " "  
 " " Mokae " " " " "

He went home and told the men that they had been mentioned by the Auntokla Ningninghitl in its song and suggested they distributed the meat for the building of the men's house. The men did so and sang:

The Mokae must eat it!  
 " Ndika " " "  
 " Nengka " " "  
 " Minimbi " "

"We gave you the food as the Auntokla Ningningkitl told us to do."  
 So when men go into the woods and get the poles for the men house, they take these home and before they place them in their holes they rub them with pig-fat and soot saying: "Let us rub our dwarf with fat!" When the posts are rubbed they say to them: "When the men from



the east come to visit us, you must, as a dwarf, feel proud to have been rubbed with fat and soot. Then you will provide us with pigs and valuables. That is your job!" With those words they plant the posts upright in their holes.

(Teller: Not recorded)

21 - 29 THE GHOSTS OR SPIRITS

Vicedom's introduction: *Behind the workings of his environment the tribesman always sees a secret power at work. This power is most important to him as he has no naturalistic explanation of events.*

*There are three types of these powers:*

1. *The nature spirits or Korwaki which live in the fields and woods and are greatly feared by the people. They are the owners of the animal and plant world, control the growth of these things and exercise claims over them. They dislike men and are continually seeking to pursue and punish them by cunning and by force. It is only in the Wahgi valley that sacrifice and prayer is made to them; at Hagen this is not done.*
2. *The Mbokor. These are the ghosts of the dead and have kinship ties with the living. A ghost can exercise influence over those only who have blood-ties with it. Men fear them if they have not made the correct sacrifices but in general they are in a relationship of friendship with them. The religious tie made through sacrifice and prayer is very strong. The Mbokor do not receive special notice here but their presence is made known in the workings of nearly every story.*
3. *The High Spirits, such as the Nganap. Men stand in awe of these. They show themselves in men's lives less in individual affairs than generally in the circumstances of sickness and death. Myths 15-17 are concerned with them.*

21. THE WILD SPIRIT

In Kitleng there was a wild spirit which came out of its hiding and stole a man's sugar-cane from his field. The owner followed the thief's tracks as far as the great rock at Kitleng but could find them no further and so went home. Next morning he saw that the single

cane which had been left standing had now disappeared too. Once more he followed the tracks of Kitleng without success. So this time he tied his son Keima inside a cane and told him to shout out if the thief came in the night. The boy did so but the spirit took him off too, inside the cane. The father followed, always calling, and at Kitleng heard his son's voice coming from inside the rock. The father could not get him out. From time to time he made visits and each time he heard that the son had grown older till in the end he died, and the father was old and died too.

(Told by: Tik)

22. THE WILD SPIRIT KORWAKL

A wild spirit had killed all the men in a settlement. Only one man and his small son were left alive. One day the father said to his son that he was to go and draw water. While the boy was away the wild spirit came into the house and killed the father, then went off. The spirit was on the point of crossing the water when the boy down at the stream saw him. The boy took a stick and killed the spirit with it. He saw that the spirit's legs were very long but that its body was little different from his own.

(Told by: Kope)

23. THE WILD SPIRIT IN SEARCH OF ROMANCE

A man built himself a new home. When the women had gathered the grass and the roof was on he invited the local girls to come and hold a women's dance and so inaugurate the house. Several men came, including a wild spirit Korwakl, who had made eyes for himself from resin, put on a fine belt and plenty of feather ornaments. The men thought he was a human foreigner. The wild spirit sang a new song at the dance:

On the Roma tree is a hole,  
 On its boughs and branches I live!  
 I came here while I was a boy!  
 And I live on the Kon-tree boughs!  
 I came here while I was a boy!  
 I've come and I'll be your little love!  
 I've come to the dance just like the other men.

The man who made the sacrifices to the wild spirit recognised him, and told the men they were silly to stop dancing and listen to the song. He struck at the wild spirit with the flat of his hand but the latter escaped from the house through an air-hole and took a pretty girl with him. Next day the man who always made sacrifice to the wild spirit warned the people about it and suggested they should sacrifice a red pig to it. While they were cooking the meat from this sacrifice they heard how the wild spirits were holding a war-dance in the wood. The people said, "The wild spirits have killed off all our young women for sure! That's why they're holding the war dance!" On going home they found all their girls asleep. They lay there and were dead.

(No teller recorded)

*Vicedom's note: In the Waghi it is not every family head who sacrifices to the wild spirits but the medicine man, who has no cause to fear.*

#### 24. THE KUMKOIM SPIRIT

A war once broke out in which all the men of a clan were killed, except for one, and the enemies decided to kill him too. He gave them the slip and escaped into the valley of the Ndimi river. He killed pigs then took his shells and necklaces and went to the settlement of a Kopon man. He went into the haunts of the Kumkoim spirit and brought back many objects with him. As he returned they all decided to kill him. But he turned himself into a Kumkoim and escaped. So he did again and again. But one day a number of men gripped him fast and although he tried to turn into a Kumkoim they killed him before he could do so.

(No teller recorded)

*Vicedom's note: In Chimbu the theory of man's double nature is very strongly held.*

25. KUMKOIM, THE DOUBLE NATURE OF MEN

A man often went to visit his matrilineal cross-cousin on the upper reaches of the Ndimi river, always returning with presents. One day he decided to go again, so he washed, rubbed fat on himself, and made a new rear cover of banana leaves and a new front apron and set out. He found his cousin's husband sitting in their house-door in Kopon. The husband ran in and told his wife that the visitor was on his way. He himself would now change his nature and kill and eat the visitor. He told his wife to tell her cousin that he had gone up to the river to hunt. Saying this, he slipped inside his wife's vagina. There he hid, while the woman greeted her cousin and suggested they cook sweet potatoes and eat them together. They went to the field to collect the potatoes and when they had gone some distance the woman said, "Your cousin\* is not here. He's gone out. So copulate with me!" He refused. They both returned to the house. In it there was a poor little man with frambosia and other sores. This man invited the visitor to sleep beside him telling him that otherwise the cousin would kill him. He cooked bananas for him and warned him not to eat any others offered him. The cousin then came and greeted him. In the night the cousin came and tried to eat the visitor, but the little man with frambosia sprang up and defended him the whole night. In the morning, too, he was offered food but would take it only from the little man. The cousin, however, gave him a flask of oil and told him he could take it home. The little man advised him to crack the flask and break it when he came to the river, which he did, and heard the voice of his cousin asking why. He replied, "Because you want to eat me. This time you've failed." The other then turned into a Poklma bird and tried to eat the man, but the man shot him with an arrow. He turned into a snake

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\* i.e. 'my husband'.

but was laid low by the man with his stick and received the same treatment when he took the shape of a dog. He gave up and went away saying, "I wanted to eat him, but his father and his mother were with him and helped him. So he's on his way home."

(Told by: Ko)

*Vicedom's note: The man's ancestors were stronger than the Kumkoim and protected him against it.*

## 26. ETIPORA

A number of boys lived together and spent their time hunting. One day one of them made a trap for a Kokleim marsupial he had seen out of a Kuklinga creeper and a lever of Kumpekī wood, and caught one in it, but could not release the tightened lever. Even with the help of all his brothers the job could not be done. Finally they all stood on it and it sprang up, throwing them through the air into the forest, where they had to live by gathering wild greens and mushrooms. One of them caught a bird, which they all ate together. He went out again and saw Nikent parrots and Ketepa Paradise birds pecking at the fruit of a tree, so he shot some. There came by a girl with a bag full of sweet potatoes and vegetables and he exchanged his birds for her vegetable foods. Next day the woman brought them seedlings of plants as well in return for birds and so the trade continued. The boys soon had good fields and finally she gave them a sow and a boar. "Now we have everything but wives," they said and the woman went home and fetched all her sisters, so that each man had a wife. They reared many pigs and gathered valuables and made loans of shells and large distributions of meat. The Spirit Etipora heard of their activities, and turned himself into a Kēpa marsupial to come and lie in the hollow of a tree near where the young men were holding a feast. In the shape of the animal the ghost squealed and one of the young men went to catch it. The spirit killed him, and repeated this operation on all the others. One day the father went out with the boys to see what had

been happening. They came to a place where there was a terrible stench and found the bodies. From each body they cut off the little finger, took these home and threw them on the hot oven stones.\* Then they took their weapons and fought, in the inner-room of the house. The children of these murdered men lived and grew up and their wives lived on also. One day one of them saw Etipora in the forest, killed him and threw him over a rock. Then they all lived happily together.

(Told by: Puri)

*[Translator's note: there seems to be a hiatus in the text here. Perhaps it should read 'The fingers, warmed by the stones, came to life again as warriors. Then they took...etc.]*

27. THE MENGKAO

A crowd of boys lived together and had laid out a taro-field which a pig kept coming and rooting up. After some argument they set a trap and caught in it a big fat pig. However, a little old man called from the trap "Why have you caught me in this, open up!" The lever then sprang on them and they were sent through the air into a region of the forest where they settled down to live. One of them, who had set the trap, met and traded with a young girl for sweet potatoes and plant seedlings, giving her animal game in return - to begin with he concealed the fact from his brothers together with the fact that he had planted a field too. Then he gave them some cooked meat and vegetables and showed them what he had done and they praised him. They imitated his enterprise. One day a number of girls came and divided themselves out among the boys. They brought food and pigs with them, so the boys' time of want was over. The boy who had been first to make the field took the girl he had first met to himself and made the allotment of the others to his brothers. They lived together, reared pigs, cultivated fields and procreated children. We call this story the story of Mengkao.

(Told by: Ramndi Nukint)

28. THE HOLE IN THE ROCK

Two men caught a pig and found themselves without materials to cook it. A little boy came up and asked them what they were doing in his house, then produced for them what they needed. They gave the boy a bit of meat and he ate it raw. Night soon came up and the two prepared to sleep. The boy suggested they take the pig from the oven, but they told him he was out of his mind as it was nowhere near cooked yet. They had also refused him the job of washing the guts as they were afraid he would eat these raw if they gave them to him. After insisting for a while the boy fell asleep, whereupon they placed a hot stone on his heart and dashed water over him till he was burnt to death. They took their meat and went home to eat it. When the new moon and the dry season came the people decided to gather creepers in the forest and took a pregnant woman with them, leaving her in a cave with her little boy. While they were away gathering creepers the entrance to the cave became closed and dark, then opened again. When the others returned the two said that they could sleep in the cave but they themselves would build a hut outside and sleep there. Next morning the cave entrance had closed finally. The two told those inside that they had been warned but had not listened, and left them. The village folk later came out and tried to cut through the rock with their axes but failed. They visited again from time to time and after a month they heard that only one man of those in the cave was still alive and in two months he was dead as well. Later the cave entrance reopened and the bones of the dead were to be seen inside. The people took the bones home and buried them. Then they built a house for the skulls, killed pigs and completed the mourning.

(Told by: Pera)

*Vicedom's note:*

- (a) *The people were punished for the treatment the two men gave to the child, who was in fact a spirit.*



- (b) *A poor man is buried where he dies. A rich man's bones are placed in a special locality. An outstanding man's skull is set up in a special house built for it, and in front of this the clan's sacrifice is made.*

29. THE BIRD NUNGALAKA

Over in Ountokla in the Nunga forest there is a big bird called the Nungalaka which grips men with its claws and flies off with them. A young man out hunting was covered with snow-flakes and was mistaken by the Nungalaka for a white marsupial-marten. The bird swooped down and carried him off, but he was very heavy for it and carried on holding to its legs. In the end he mastered it and brought it home to his parents. They greeted him in surprise and as they loosed the bird from him he died.

"The Nungalaka's a bird for which even men are not a match," they said. This bird will also carry off marsupials and pigs.

(No teller recorded)

30 - 33 HOW MEN OBTAINED FOOD AND THE NECESSITIES  
OF LIFE

Vicedom's introduction: *Myths of creation are not prominent in Hagen Mythology. If one asks, one is told that men know nothing of the creation of the plants and animals. "Things are now as they've always been!" And what is the use of thinking about these matters?... In the fertility-cult, prayers are made to the weather-spirit, known to the Jabem as well, among whom food is provided by the "thunderer"... Particular types of food are held by the Hageners to have been thrown down to earth by the Taewamb, but their opinions on this conflict. In the final analysis, the Mbowamb care only about the growth of food plants. Growth depends on the spirits and the favour of these is therefore sought out.*

30. HOW MEN OBTAINED FOOD AND GOODS

At one time there were no foods and few goods on earth. Men lived on worms collected in the rain and so forth, including grass. One day an old woman and girl wished to collect water. At the river-bank they saw a man emptying his bowels on the bank. In his stools they found a sweet potato and took it home to plant. Later, men came and took seedlings from this plant and since then men have had sweet potatoes as their staple food.

(Told by: Nengkopa)

*Vicedom's note: This myth is found elsewhere in New Guinea, especially in the Middle Watut. In the Middle Watut myth it is two sky-men who provide the potato. This myth may provide support for the notion that men got the idea of planting crops from seeing things grow on rubbish-heaps.*

31. THE MYTH OF FIRE

A man and a young boy hunted in the woods with their dog, and ate the meat raw, as they did not know fire. One day they caught a Bangom marsupial and brought it home and began to quarrel as to

whether they should eat it raw or should cook it - they finally opted for it raw. Their dog meanwhile bit through the string they had used to tie it up, and went off to get some fire from its mother. It brought the fire back and made it up with grass, so that smoke rose in the air. The men watched this and were amazed, then quickly took wood and stones and cooked their animal. They took a kindling log home and showed their discovery to all the people, offering to share it out, for a consideration. This was done, and the dog ran back to its mother, who asked it to whom it had given the fire. "To the men," it said. "I told you not to give it to anyone," she said, and struck the dog with a stick till it bled. It ran back to the men and told them that the fire ought to be extinguished. The men decided to give the dog's mother a sow. They went to the "old woman's" settlement and did so, but said that they would not put the fire out. Since then, men have always had fire and lived with it.

### 32. THE DISCOVERY OF THE AXE

Two old folk went into the woods; the wife for creepers, the husband to hunt. He caught a fine Mutl marsupial and they went to cook it a little way off from their settlement. He gutted it and she went for banana leaves of the Kengena type. As they bent to line the oven, the old man saw that the woman's vagina was free, so he copulated with her. Something stuck into her back so that she bled. They looked, and saw it was the blade of a Kumbamon axe, sticking out of the ground. They took their stick and dug in the earth and found further down numbers of blades of the Kumbamon and Ndima types of axe. They packed these in their bags and took them home, then assembled everyone, young and old, and suggested that marsupials should be hunted and sacrificed as payment to the spirits of the axes. They did so, and also cleared the axe-site, dug it and split the axe-stones to make blades. They built themselves houses on the spot, sharpened their axes and hafted them. Whenever they were out of blades, they went and mined more. The

Rungi people have those two old folk to thank for the industry they have at present. Those two are long since dead. Nowadays men sacrifice a marsupial to them before cutting out a new axe from the stone-face. They light their way in the mine with torches drenched in resin.

(Told by: Ko)

*Vicedom's note: Cf. Vol. I for details on axes. Kumbamon is a hard axe for splitting wood; Ndima, a battle-axe.*

### 33. HOW THE PEARL SHELLS CAME INTO BEING

A man was determined to marry a young woman with many suitors. He put on his finery, including a pearl shell and green snail shells to dangle from his ears; packed up pig meat and went to take part in the courting. The girl explained to the other suitors that her father's maternal uncle had come, so she must leave them and take the new arrival to her father. The man presented his meat to her parents and they ate it together. Next day the parents gave them a meal of pig and taro and sent them off together to be married, telling them that if from the distance they saw a red cloud rising, this would mean they (the parents) had been killed; if a black cloud, all was well. On their way they looked back from a hill and saw that there was indeed a red cloud where the girl's parents lived. The man told her to stay and hurried off into battle. He killed a good many but was surrounded by a mass of men and dispatched. His soul returned to his wife and took her through a path inside the hill, telling her: "Down there is a woman who will take you on as her daughter, and a man who will be your father, and you'll find many brothers too. Go to them." She went down and found a friendly, laughing people to whom she explained her business, and by whom she was given a welcome. Next day she began to cry, however, and went down to a lake where she saw a number of tadpoles. She hurried back to tell the men and was informed that this was all right she should keep calm about it. Next morning she saw that instead of tadpoles, there were shells in the water and she rushed back to tell the men this, too.

They came and shot the shells with their arrows, then drew them out.  
Since they took the shells out of the water, the place has become poor.  
They shot the shells with their arrows, and so these are gone and only  
big lice are to be found there now.

34 - 36 SICKNESS AND DEATH

Vicedom's introduction: *The people in Hagen have found no answer to the questions of why men must fall sick and must die. They do recognize it as an important problem. If someone were to tell the people he could provide them with immortality he would have them in his hand. As they consider no death natural, they have elaborated numerous magical practices to ward death off, some of them supposedly derived from the spirits. The only true specialist who is accepted among the Mbowamb is the medicine-man - this shows how basic and difficult they find the problem of disease and death.*

34. HOW MEN OBTAINED PROTECTION AGAINST PNEUMONIA

Eastwards from here there lived a man with his wife. She sat in the front of her house one day and saw that a fire was burning on the Mepete mountain. She said to her husband, "There's a fire burning over there, there must be something wrong; let's go and see." "No," he said, "We haven't got time. We've got to get through our garden work first. So we can't go!" He took the wife out to the field, but she did not plant much. Instead she sat there and cried. "Stop it," he said. "What's wrong with you?" "Nothing," she said, "It's just that I can see a fire burning up there." "All right, stop crying," he said, "Tomorrow morning we'll go and see. Today we'll have to cook sweet potatoes for the journey." When, next day, they reached the fire in a far mountain they saw that it was burning fiercely and blackening all the trees about. The man went forward to reconnoitre. He climbed over a rock and saw that down there everything, potatoes, leaves, sugar-cane, had a skin like that of a pig, while on the other side all the stones were overgrown with moss. The fire singed him and he went back to his wife. A wild spirit came and said, "Foreign folk in my forest!" The man hid but the woman couldn't find a place so was discovered. She told the spirit - who came in the guise of a little old

man - their story, and he said they could stay in a house to the west, where later on he brought them sugar-cane. He told them they must bar the door at night and not look out. However, in the night, the husband, ignoring his wife's remonstrances, made a peephole and looked out. The little ugly man had changed his skin and turned into an old man, who climbed up a high Araucaria tree and made a somersault down to the ground from it. There were many folk about, all decorated for the Mar-dance, and they said, "What kind of example is this you've given us? We're afraid of it." "Oh, it's nothing much," the spirit replied. He gave them a kind of water and some sticks of a medicine-plant, which they brought home. If anyone has pneumonia and a spell is allowed to be spoken for it, then this medicine, which the wild spirit gave the two, is used.

(Told by: Ko)

### 35. LOSS OF HOPE THROUGH SICKNESS

There was once a little man of the autochthonous people who had a skin-disease and was very broken down by it. He was very ill too and as he lay in his house could not keep the flies off himself - they swarmed round and plagued him. In his trouble he sang:

Leave me and go to the hill of the Kult-tree.

I'll go and sit by the Koipeka-tree.

Go to the men's house and settle down there!

I'll come along then and lay me down there.

That's in the main one - or go to the small one,

And I'll come along and sit in it too.

Sit on the Kopra place under the Malt-tree.

I'll come along and sit under it too.

He sang this continually in his pains. When he died his kinsfolk took his corpse to the spirit-houses, where there was a fine place, with the Malt and the Koipeka and the Kult-trees standing and a pleasant lawn. The place was called Kopra. They buried him there. During the

burial there came a swarm of flies and sat themselves down in his grave.

36. DO THE DEAD LIVE AGAIN IN THE GRAVE?

The men had all collected in the men's house, and there a dwarf said that when the dead are buried the ghosts come and take the souls of the newly-buried with them to the land of the dead. Some agreed, but others did not, and they disputed the matter to no conclusion till one of the little men said he would go and find out. A woman had recently died and a place for her grave had been cleared. The little man was encased in reed grass and creepers by his brothers at a spot near the grave, and left there to watch. In the night numbers of dead women came to haunt the vicinity of the cordyline-fence, swinging cordyline twigs in their hands. Coming up to the dead woman they asked her, "Dear friend, are you here too now and sleeping?" "My friends," she replied, "I would like to sleep here but there's a living man nearby and he's watching me. So I lie here ashamed!" "Show him to us," they said, and when they found him were for killing him with their long digging-sticks, but he rolled off in his camouflage, struggling vainly to get free, till he came to the house-door, unheard by his brothers. They found him in the morning, freed him and warmed him at the fire. He was able to confirm the dwarf's assertion. "The ghosts come at night and take the souls of the dead with them. Women came by the fences with cordyline twigs in their hands." And he added how it had come about that he was attacked and only just managed to escape from them.

(Told by: Aje)

*Vicedom's note: The burial-places are in a kind of wild forest-area, set aside for the purpose, it seems. Graves are hedged with cordyline. The dead are taken up into a community of those of the same sex as themselves.*