

MYTHS AND LEGENDS  
FROM MT. HAGEN

# **MYTHS AND LEGENDS FROM MOUNT HAGEN**

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TRANSLATED BY ANDREW STRATHERN**

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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.]

### 37 - 51 AETIOLOGICAL STORIES

*(These are considered by Vicedom not to be stories taken as part of their religion by the Mbowamb - many of them are just pieces of history, he comments.)*

#### 37. THE BROTHERS WAIMA AND RUNGA

There were two brothers, the elder Waima and the younger Runga. The elder brother announced one day that he was going out to open up a new piece of land. The younger one was to stay at home, look after the boar, dig potatoes and cook the meal. A little way off from the settlement the elder brother turned himself into a bird and flew off. Coming to an inhabited place he stole a pig, cooked and ate it till he was full, returning home in the evening. This happened for several days more till one day the younger brother suggested he should go with his brother and help to finish planting the new field. The other refused and went off, but this time the younger one followed him. At a large sweet-potato field folk cried out, "Here comes Waima the man-eater and now he's got his younger brother with him. Is he going to eat his brother?" The two came to a hill where the elder brother dug up a tuft of lemon grass; the younger one followed, repeating his actions. Down below was a dancing place, a cooking place and a fire-place. The younger brother saw the older one go into the men's house, take out a pig and eat it till he could eat no more and then take a pair of birds' wings, fit them on and fly off. He then came out from his hiding place, took some meat and went back home where he cooked the meat and laid some out for his older brother. The latter asked him on his return where the meat had come from and was told a bird had dropped it. The elder brother accused him of having been at his place but the younger one denied this. Next time the elder brother took the younger with him voluntarily. Inside the hill he gave him wings of the Ntowa bird and they flew after and stole a fat pig. The elder brother suggested they eat the pig's head raw, but

the younger one refused. As they cooked the meat the elder brother said, "I thought you might turn out capable of eating men but I can see you can't. So you will live here on earth, marry and procreate children. I will fly off to all parts of the earth to kill men and eat them." He gave his young brother the cooked meat and a number of vegetables, also a bundle which he told him not to open but to keep against his own eventual return. The younger brother did so. Meanwhile he married and had many children. One day in a cloud of darkness the elder brother flew back down and was given his bundle back. He said, "If you had opened it I would have eaten you." Then he flew away again. The younger brother lived with his children until they were all dead. From him, the man who stayed on earth, all we human beings of today are derived. That is what folk say and they tell this story to prove it.

(Told by: Puk)

### 38. THE TWO BROTHERS

There were once two brothers, of whom one was always out working while the other was lazy and stayed in the house. However, the one who liked to be outside was deceiving his brother. Instead of gardening he used to steal pigs and eat them, bringing a little bit back home. But one day the home-keeping brother followed the other out and saw what was going on. Next day he made a face and the brother guessed what was wrong. So he took him into confidence and they both flew out as birds after pigs. They separated for the enterprise. The elder one caught a pig but could not carry it so he changed his skin and became a slave and walked eastwards looking for his brother. He met an old woman and killed her and pulled her skin over him and went and sat down in her house. The old woman's son came back and the imposter insisted to the son that the family pig be killed, she herself going off to the water-side to wash the entrails. There the younger brother was and the older brother resumed his proper form and said to

him, "I told you to get a small pig, but you would chase after a big one. There you are now!" The two then took their pig home and ate it there. Later they went out again and caught pigs.

(No teller recorded)

### 39. THE YAMKA

*Vicedom's note: The people give genealogical as well as mythological accounts of their origins. The genealogy usually begins from some immigrant group, the original land of the immigrants not being known at all. The stories enable us to deduce the historical fact that the leading sections of the population were originally immigrants into the area.*

Of the Yamka it is known that there were formerly only four men. Two of them were called Yamka Pokla and Reketlip, the two others Yamka Nump and Namp. The four lived to the south in a foreign land called Yam. Nump and Namp built themselves a men's house near a pathway, then constructed a tunnel trap near this. They killed human beings and piled them in the trap. The dead people's kinsmen found this out and surrounded the two men and killed them. The two other brothers had not taken part in the killings but were still afraid, so they took their two wives and their possessions and went off. They also took their sister, whom they had married to a man called Koipam. The sister had a son called Rempeke. They travelled for four days, making sleeping huts each night till they came to Kakop, westwards from here. They met a bachelor from Kendika who was at the hunt, who asked the men what was wrong and was told that they were fugitives. The bachelor welcomed them and shared his food with them. Later they gave him their sister for a wife, and she bore him a boy, Aketlka. One day Pokla shot a marsupial by the riverside as he was trapping fish and cooked it. He was going to eat it when a cordyline fell down onto his hand. The man gave a cry and said, "If you want the animal, take it," and went home. Next day he returned and found the meat

intact, also that the piece of cordyline was now near his fish traps and next to it was a bow and a Warepa arrow and a piece of Kete ear-ornament. He took these home and told of his experience, then said, "Let us Yamka go to the river Pentakitl where the low part of the valley is, lay out a place and then hold the Kor-eimp festival." While they were at this task two Yamka women went westwards looking for creepers, where they were forced by a Nengka man. Their kinsfolk went off to Nengka to make war. The Kendika helped the Yamka in this, while the Remndi helped the Nengka. Two of the Kendika were killed by the Nengka. The Kendika wished to recompense themselves for this and they robbed the Yamka's pigs and raped their women. The Yamka were badly upset. They left the Kendika, went westwards to Tetltakikuimp and settled near the Kukitlka in Pontopont and Tepokla. They built stockades and lived inside these. As a Kendika came to steal a pig they killed him with the axe. But the Kendika came and made war in revenge for this and the Yamka were driven out yet again. A Yamka woman called Mon had married a Keme man called Kumane, and he invited the Yamka to come to him. The Yamka did so. As they found it to their taste in Pundepukl and Mantitla they settled there. And that is where we live now. My fathers all came and settled here. South of Pundepukl lived at that time the Kupaatka to the east of the Koipe. Northwards on the Keim river were the Keme. These said to the Yamka, "You should live up here near the river. We will go further off towards Metlpa country." So the Yamka settled there, and now we call it Yamka country. The Yamka spread over it. When we do anything we grasp the cordyline as our promise.

(Told by: Ko)

#### 40. THE NDIKA

The Ndika spread in the following way. Two young men came into the Klam woods and hunted game. They built a hut in the forest and lived there. One of the Ndika Mulkaka found them in the

wood and asked them why they had come. They said they were hunting and had nowhere else to do it. The three decided to stay in the forest and live together, so they built a house and did so. One day the Mokae held the preliminary dance for a large Mar dance and the Ndika youths decided to take part. The two strangers were gazed at in admiration by all the women and the women began to fight as to which one should have them so that they had bloody heads over it. Their kinswomen joined in too. The men marked this and asked the two, "Who are you, that our women have bloody heads over you?" The women's brothers threatened to kill them, and they too asked, "What tribe are you?" thinking perhaps they were Ndika Mulkaka. The Ndika Mulkaka however disowned them and left the dance place. The Mokae all came together and decided to follow the two and kill them. The Ndika Mulkaka went up-river and met the two, and asked them, "Where is your home and place where you have come from?" The two replied they came from Klam. One of the big men in Ndika Mulkaka took his shell and gave it to the men of the Mokae who had come up and were going to kill the two. He took the two back to the settlement of the Ndika Mulkaka where they were adopted into the group. They lived there along with those who had already belonged. After a while they were told, "If you want to lay out a field go into the bush and choose a piece of land." They looked about and decided to settle on the far bank of the Wetlemukl river. They laid out a field and built houses. The Ndika Mulkaka gave them two women whom they married. The Ndika Mulkaka then held the Kor Wop<sup>"</sup> festival. They cooked sweet potatoes and killed pigs. An old man took the pig's livers, spoke a spell over them and gave one half to the Ndika Maipangketlkang and the other half to the clan of the Ndika Mulkaka. When they had eaten the liver, the Maipangketlkang went out and lived in their land, while the Ndika Mulkaka stayed in their land in Meia. The former settled in the south near Wetlemukl and have procreated children there.

(Told by: Kutli)

41. A WOMAN TURNS HERSELF INTO A DOG

A man had a wife who went around getting hold of human corpses and cutting off the upper parts of their thighs which she cooked at home and ate. One day the man was lying asleep in his men's house, but woke and heard how his little son was crying. He waited a while to see if the boy's mother was going to calm it, then he himself went out into the settlement and saw that the child was alone in the house - the mother was not there. The father took his son in his arms and hushed him. As he sat there putting his boy to sleep he saw a red dog leap in through the door. "There's a dog come in," he thought but as he looked he saw the dog turning back into a woman behind the fireplace. The woman then settled down and made a fire. Her husband called out, "Wife what have you been doing running around outside and what's that you've brought home with you? Your son was lying here crying. What have you to do with the dead persons whom you've brought here?" So he grumbled at her and showed his anger with her. The wife replied: "What my father's folks have eaten that will I also eat. That is what I have gathered for myself. Why does that trouble you? Are you grumbling at me maybe because I've planted your fields for you, so that they're all bearing crops. Or are you grumbling because I've borne you a son? What's the matter with you?" As his wife so spoke, the man went out into his men's house and left the woman alone.

(Told by: Nggobe)

42. THE KAIWAMB

An old man lived together with his wife. They had an only son, who spent all his time out in the forest setting cassowary traps in which one day he found two catches. He took one and brought it home to his parents who promised to give him in return a young pig. However, when they went to cook the cassowary, the fire would not burn. As they were blowing at it there came a fair-skinned man from the woods and tried to make it burn as well. In the end they all lay



breathless on the ground. The son out in the forest noticed how no smoke rose from his parents' place and hurried back in alarm. He saw a pale-skinned man watching his parents from the edge of the banana field and he took an arrow and shot the man. The man broke the arrow off and made away with the rest still in him. The son went up to his parents and they blew again on the fire which burned easily this time. The son said that next day a pale man would come and say to them that he should go with him and cut out the arrow from him. "Call me if he comes," he said and returned to the woods. Next morning the pale man did come. He had two large boar tusks on his chest. He asked the two parents to tell their son and when they pretended not to have one he threatened to kill them, so the mother ran off to get the son, who went off with the stranger. As they went the pale man said there was a marsupial up a tree. He would climb the tree and dislodge it so that the other could then kill it on the ground. He climbed up and threw down a big snake instead of a marsupial - which, however, the other hacked to pieces all the same. (Variation: The red (= pale) man climbed up the tree and as he pushed the animal down, Keiwatika shot it. But instead of a marsupial a man fell down dead. The red man then accused Keiwatika of murder but Keiwatika said how could he have known? The red man told him to take the dead man back to his settlement but Keiwatika pointed out that the dead one belonged to the red man's tribe, so the red man picked up the corpse and they carried on their way.) Later on, in the same way, a cassowary was shot. They came then to a river, where there were good little stones lying in the stream, so they played at stone-throwing until the dark-skinned man had given the pale one a bloody head. Again, they played the spear game with wooden spears until the pale one bled with wounds and called for the game to stop. Later they came to a bridge which was constructed out of human bones. Once across the bridge they saw a number of pale-skinned men with the bodies of murdered girls and boys attached to their belts by

string and old men slung over their shoulders. They greeted the pale man, saying what a fine man he had brought with him. The dark man was invited into their settlement by the pale men but he stayed outside in the open. At night time a dark girl came to him bringing a small tree with its roots which he rigged up as himself and went off to sleep with the girl, leaving the tree with his clothing on it outside. The girl also told him that when he was asked to cut the arrow out he should ask to sit on a young girl's lap while doing it. This the man did, and he refused all the pale-skinned girls brought him, demanding a dark one. So they brought her to him. Telling the others to stay at the dancing place, he himself went into the house with the girl and the man. Despite the man's cries he cut through his neck and killed him. Then the two turned themselves into birds and flew out into the open, sitting on the heads of the men. These tried to strike at them but kept hitting their companions instead until they were all annihilated. Then the two turned back into human beings and took all the pigs and valuables of the pale men, burnt their little people, women and children in the houses, and went off. And once over the bridge of bones the man hacked through the suspending creepers so that it fell down. Then they went to the man's home.

(In a variation Keiwatika operates on the pale man outside while the others stay in the house. He tells them that if the man cries out all is well. He cuts through to the man's heart and kills him. Then he sets fire to the house and shoots the others as they try to escape.) On reaching home they gave the man's parents a parting meal and then went out in the woods. The parents died, the wife bore a boy and a girl. Her husband stole pigs and killed men until one day he came to a place where he had killed many men and found there only the widow of one of his victims who offered him food and contrived to kill him in his turn. She gave him a shove while he was leaning on the end of his bow, so that it pierced his throat. She sang a victory song as follows:

"Keiwatika has killed the pigs,  
 And he has killed the men!  
 He walked about as a murderer,  
 But now I have killed him in his turn.  
 You people, come and gaze on him!  
 As he killed my man, so have I done to him."

The people came and burnt Keiwatika's corpse. When his wife heard about this she hanged herself.

(Told by: Ndika Puk)

#### 43. THE KAIWAMB

A number of brothers, living together in one house, were killed by a pale-skinned man while hunting in the forest and had their heads cut off. Only the youngest was left and he took his house-dog and went out to investigate. He found a place where all the food gathered by his brothers lay rotting and noticing a Kepa marsupial nearby he decided to catch it. As he climbed the tree where it lay it turned into the pale man, who cut off his head and called out to the dog below which was waiting for the animal to fall. The dog ran off home with the head and the man could not catch up with it. A girl who lived with the boys held mourning for the brother along with the dog, and next day, with packs of pig meat, they went into the forest to search. They found places where the creepers and trees were smeared with blood and the way muddy and slippery, so they carried on, until, crawling through a hole in a rock they came to a fine settlement, built on a hilltop with steep slopes up to it. A pale man came by, loaded with bodies of persons he had killed. She greeted him as a friend and gave him a piece of meat. As he prepared to eat, she took his axe and killed him. She did the same with all the pale men who came that way and with a young woman too, taking the valuables from her and hanging them on herself. She carried on up the hill and meeting an old woman, posed as her daughter, spending the night there

in the old woman's house. Next morning the old woman said, "You know, last night I thought you were my daughter." "I am your daughter," the girl said; then killed the old woman with her axe. She then took all the valuables, pigs and cassowaries of the house and went home with the dog. They killed and ate the pigs and lived together till they died.

(Told by: Petlep)

44. PITLIMA KONTOM

Two men once took part in a Mar-dance, at which the women so admired them that they each wanted to become the wife of one of them. They refused on the grounds that they had no house and lived in the open always. The women came along with them after the dance to see if this were true, but only one, a pale-skinned woman, stayed with them and insisted on marrying one. She bore a boy and a girl to her husband. However, the two men treated her badly. She cooked them food but they did not eat it. They had a sister whom they had hidden away in a separate house and she cooked them food which they ate. One day the pale-skinned wife was annoyed by her boy and hit him with a stick. In his anger he wanted to revenge himself, so blurted out the story of his father's sister and told how her husband threw away the food she cooked for him into the bush. She decided to go and visit the girl and so she did, and invited the sister to go with her to where her people were holding an important festival. She forced the girl to go with her, so the girl tore out her hair and left it behind. On the way they crossed a bridge over the Ndimi river made of human bones and the girl and two children were afraid but were chivvied on by the pale woman. When they arrived at the dance-place the men were discussing when to eat their daughters and whether to cook them or not. The pale woman gave her daughter to one man as an instalment of repayment for a loan of shells. Next day the men made human sacrifices and cooked the meat. They brought fat pig meat to the prisoners in order

to fatten them up. They took their things and went to an offering-place where a rum taro fell to the ground from the house-post and turned into a man. He offered to cook the pig for them and kept the cannibals away by climbing a tree and urinating all over their cooking fires. He cooked the meat and he and the sister went off with the packs of food and came home to the settlement of the girl's brothers. The girl told her brothers the story and the brothers gave her to the man for a wife along with presents of pig meat, which they took off to the man's settlement. The brothers dug a deep pit and disguised it with leaves of the breadfruit-tree and when the pale wife came home with a load of human meat they told her to lay it on the leaves. She did so and fell into the pit and was killed. They filled the pit in again with earth. But down in the house they saw someone making a fire and they realised it was the pale woman come alive again. They rushed up and cut her head off and threw it into the fire. Then they took their son (who had been brought back by the sister) into the men's house with them and slept there. In the night the pale woman came up to the men's house and called to her husband, "Kim kengkopao!" "What is it?" he called from inside then recognizing the voice as that of his wife he said to his brother, "Alas my brother, yesterday she gave me earth and vegetables, which I ate. Now she's calling me out and I must go." The brother began to cry at this and stayed inside the house while the other ran out. He ran as far as Maip and hearing someone following him ran on to the Papekla stream. Next day he returned to find his wife back before him. The two brothers decided that this time it would go differently. The younger brother stole from her a netbag she was making and she shrieked and ran after him. Her man stayed in the house and found a little packet hidden in a corner which he opened and found the woman's heart. This he placed in the fire where it was burnt. The women then fell dead and the men threw her corpse in the river. They packed their things up and went off to their sister's place. There

they lived together.

(Told by: Aje)

[Translator's note: me rum is actually a taro pest, not a kind of taro itself; kim kengkopa is a kind of green vegetable, Rungia klossii. Vicedom's reference to 'earth and vegetables' should probably be 'mui and kengkopa' i.e. short pit-pit and Rungia, which are often eaten together. The word mui = 'short pit-pit, is close to the word mōi = 'earth'.]

#### 45. ROK POKAPOKL

There was a man who could turn himself into a Pokapokl frog. He wanted to hold a Mar-dance and ran about to beg loans of feather ornaments for the occasion. He wanted also a man called Morok from Kopon to come and cook sweet potatoes for him at the dance so went off on the two-day journey to Kopon to get him. He found Morok's wife sitting cooking sweet potatoes in the house, while Morok himself had gone into the forest to hunt for birds and marsupials and wild pigs. He stayed in the house along with the woman overnight and next day Morok returned with a good load in his netbag of cooked marsupial and pig meat. His wife told him the position and he divided out the meat which they ate then slept. Next morning Rok Pokapokl asked Morok to come with him but Morok refused. They argued the whole day and next day Morok agreed to go, saying to his wife, "I wonder if he'll kill and eat me and if I'll get back safely to you?" On the way they came to a field where the man Morok's sister was walking, along with several other women. The sister was a big strapping girl with a frame like that of a man. She greeted the two and announced she was coming with them. She hung her netbag over her back and did so. When they reached Kontomnga the woman asked Rok Pokapokl, "Where are we going?" She received the reply, "To Mulka." She struck him with her big stick and said, "Is that far off?" "Don't hit me," the man said. So they went on, but at Mulka Rok Pokapokl did not stop and the

woman asked him where his house was. "Down south," he said. "What?" said the woman, "Down south? I thought you said you lived here!" and she gave him a bloody head with her stick. "Stop," he cried, "My house is down south in Rakopa." When they reached Rakopa they saw large numbers of fat pigs alternating between their styes and the bush. The two men told the woman, "You go into the women's house," while they went into the men's house. At the dance-place the two men saw that the area was surrounded by a high fence-system. In the men's house Morok found a good many human skulls and he began to be anxious. Rok Pokapokl took a rush torch and smoked the heads with it. The woman meanwhile left the women's house and came to eavesdrop near the men's house. She thought, "So long as they keep talking there's no danger." Behind the men's house there was a pool with red water and beside it she hid herself in the grass. Rok Pokapokl said to Morok, "I've a plot of onions\*outside, let's go and get some to eat." Morok at first refused but was persuaded to go out. They lit torches and went down to the pool. There Morok said, "My friend I see that you've brought me here to kill me." The sister heard this too. The man Rok Pokapokl then fell on him and tried to throw him in the pool. The woman came out of her hiding-place and pulled her brother away and threw Rok Pokapokl in the pool instead. She and her brother pulled down the high fences round the dancing place and also the houses and threw the material into the pool as well. Then they set fire to the whole pile and the fire burnt up Rok Pokapokl as well. They took his pigs and cooked them and packed the meat up to carry off. Next day they reached home. The man said to his sister, "If you hadn't been there the man would have killed and eaten me for certain. You've saved me and brought me back home." He killed a fat pig and gave her the meat. Then he took eight shells and gave them to her, and she went back to her place. Morok lived on till one day he fell into a pit made by another man for catching wild pigs. His wife and son did

\*Translator: possibly some other plant is meant, since, to the best of my knowledge, onions are an introduced plant.

not know how they could live without him and they drowned themselves in the river.

(Told by: Nentipa)

46. THE BOYS WHO PLAYED AT SPEAR-THROWING

Some boys playing at throwing reed spears against a Mire-tree were given taro and meat by a pale-skinned man who came up to them with it and also told them to watch out since that evening he would come to sleep along with them. They told him, "Good, do come." At sunset the eldest brother Mojoim, whose growth had been stunted, hid all his brothers in the hole where the house post entered the ground, covering the gap with resin, and there they slept so that the pale man could not find them when he came. Next day he asked them where they had been and they replied they had been inside the house-post and seen him at his search. He gave them meat again and shouted out that he would be back at evening. This time they hid in the fire-wood, and the pale man bit into the house-post but could not find them. He left saying, "I come to kill and eat you but you're not here. You must have gone home to your parents." But the following day he found them again at their game, so paid a visit in the evening as well. However, this time the elder brother had hid them under the roofridge and so he missed them. The same thing happened again and again till the old man (the pale man) became angry and determined to get his revenge. Meanwhile the boys had grown fat on his meat. One day they slept inside the branch of a Keraip tree. The old man failed to find them, but next day he watched the movements of Mojoim and saw him put all the boys' possessions inside the tree-branch. At night he tried to climb the tree but hadn't the strength. Next morning he brought his whole clan back to the spot, and they all tried to bite at the tree so as to gnaw it through and bring it down. They broke all their teeth at this. So they took their axes to it but the axes were all splintered. Next day they tried again but later on a heavy



storm came with rain and hail and a tempest which upturned the boys' house and blew over the tree where they were hiding. Their branch fell into the Ndimi river and was thrown up on the side some distance down where the river widened. It was found by some young women who were gathering firewood and they took it home. Inside the house the boys began to play on their Jew's harps and the girls were amazed but could not find the source of the music. Next day they all went out to dig sweet potatoes except for one whose fat pig had died. She was going to drag it out and throw it over a cliff. She sat there and cried. Mojoim came out of the hole in the branch and went about outside. The girl noticed him and asked, "My brother, where are you going?" He said, "I'm going about in the place and the path to your door is the only one I've found." She said, "Good," and invited him to stay and help dispose of her pig. The boy looked at the pig and said it was all right to leave it where it was. The girls did not know how to make fire, so he made some for her and proceeded to cook the pig. He gave her a piece of roast and she liked it. The other girls heard about this and they all came home and embraced the young man. But the first girl told them not to, as he belonged to her. All the other boys then came out and each was matched with a girl. Each built a house for his wife and himself to live in. Mojoim laid out a field and told his wife to bring out his food to him there, but she lost her way and had to sleep out in the forest. A light came down from the heights in the west and eventually a large man and a woman appeared, and putting the woman in a netbag carried her off to their home. There they hid her in a room of their house and gave her meat. In the evening there came white and red paradise birds and Kapa and Maya marsupials to the men's door and he gave them all meat to eat. The pale woman said to their visitor, "Go home and tell your husband not to kill any birds or marsupials. He can catch fish and kill pigs and eat them but he must not kill birds or marsupials nor eat their flesh." With this she gave

the woman a necklace, a cowrie rope and a bundle of salt, and taking her in the flat of her hand threw her through the air so that she reached her home. There the woman distributed the goods equally to all her husband's brothers, then repeated to them the prohibitions. After a while one of the men shot a bird sitting among a number of others on a tree in bloom. Next day he built himself a hut and watched out for the birds but only one came and that a very large one while a flock of others settled on another tree some way off. The man shot the big bird but the others swooped down and took it off. The man went home, smeared himself with clay as a sign of grief for the loss and told his wife to cook sweet potatoes as he must go and chase the bird with his arrow in it. His wife angrily reminded him of the prohibition against shooting birds and asked him who had said he could shoot the bird. He went and cooked bananas for himself and next morning he set out really early for the forest. He travelled a good way to the west and found a place where the people were in mourning for a death. As he approached the people made the dance of threatening war. As he came closer he saw how the dead man had an arrow in the upper part of his thigh. A little man came up to him and asked if he had forgotten he had killed the man and then they set to and killed him. His ghost went off back to the settlement. Mojoim's wife saw that the ghost had come into the settlement and that they had killed him. The others asked her if she had been struck dumb and they supposed the man to have returned alive. "Fine," she replied. She suggested to her husband that they dig a hole. They did so, laying it out from east to west. In the hole they put their flasks of fat and their bags of valuables and their pigs as well. They themselves sat down on one side of the hole and burnt a fire there. In the night the dead man came and set fire to the houses of all the others so that they were killed in the blaze. In the morning the two emerged from their hole and built themselves a house. They took one of the pigs and held

a funeral feast. The two then continued to live together.

(Told by: Ko)

*Vicedom's note:*

a) Cf. myth 16.

b) *The taboos here recorded are not ones practised by the Mbowamb; nor do they know whether their forefathers held to them or not.*

47. KUTLI WANDA

In Kutli all the people died in an epidemic except for one man with his two wives, the one pale-skinned the other dark. They decided to hold the funeral feast for the dead, so they prepared a place and built a small ghost house and sacrificed the pigs. When the meat was laid in the ovens they felt thirsty and told their two children who had also survived to go and fetch water. The father gave a sound bamboo to the daughter and this soon became full, but the son had a leaky one and had to stay by the water trying to fill it, while the girl went back to her parents. On her return they ate the meat, left a piece in the ashes for the boy, then went off. Later the boy returned, ate the meat and tried to follow his people, till night came and he slept under a tree. Next day the people carried on while the boy slipped off into a comfortable hole by the river bank. An old man carrying split wood along the bank saw the boy's footsteps in the sand and the boy himself in the hole, so brought him home on his shoulders, putting him in the men's house. The boy grew big and strong in his care, and he built a high fence around the house to conceal his protege's presence. One day he heard that the people of another clan were to hold a Mar-dance, and he borrowed ornaments for the boy to wear at this, telling the people he was borrowing them for his wife. At the dance the girls fought over the young man, as he was so handsome, and asked the old man (his protector) who he was, but the latter told them he did not know, the youth must be a foreigner. One young girl in particular wanted to marry him but her father forbade this, telling

her she would be killed by the foreign people if she went off with him. The women all fought about the matter, the men joined in and the youth was involved and himself 'killed'. They wept and held mourning and the old man said he would bury the boy by himself, so he took the 'corpse' home then waited till the boy came to. He kept the boy away from them all after that and all the girls married other men except for the youngest one, who refused to have anyone else. One day the boy emerged again from his hiding place and the girl saw him. She insisted on marrying him this time and so it was done. After a while the old man died. His adopted 'son' said, "I was a poor creature, an orphan, and he adopted me and brought me up. Now he is dead. I will hang myself." He cut off a finger and went to the old man's deathplace and there he hanged himself. His wife lived with her sisters.

(Told by: Wur Pop)

#### 48. THE REJECTED BOY AND THE MARSUPIAL

A man lived with his wife and small brother. The brother shot all his arrows at some birds without success, so was sitting at home making new ones when his brother's wife came up to him and said that he could tattoo her skin just as he was incising his arrows. The boy said no, but she insisted, so he complied. The husband was angry and finding that his little brother had done it, he hit him with his stick. Affronted, the boy went off with his arrows, his little axe, his flask of fat and his clothes. He went into the woods along with his dog and they built a house there. For every sweet potato they ate they planted one also, till they had enough seedlings to plant out and these soon bore more potatoes. The dog stole seedlings of sugar cane, bananas, potatoes and vegetables and these too were planted and grew well. The dog also stole a sow which farrowed after a while and so they had a good number of fat pigs in time.

Another version is one in which the dog's role is taken over by the marsupial Watnga:

A rich man in Kutli had two wives of whom one bore him a daughter then a son too, while the other was childless. One day a sow farrowed and the two wives told the husband where she had her litter. The man came and brought the piglets home. The little boy ran after him crying and would not stop, even when the man was annoyed and scolded him. The father gave him a piglet to quieten him and the boy was delighted, taking it back and feeding it on water and lots of sweet potatoes till it grew big and fat. One day the father announced they would kill and eat it now as it was ready. The boy cried and said, "No, it's my pig. We don't kill it." Father and son quarrelled over the pig, till the father shoved the son aside and went to get the pig. He gave the boy no share of its meat but cut off a piece for his daughter. She had pity on her brother and laid out a piece of her share for him and told her father she had done so when he asked her whose bit of meat that was. He was angry and struck her with his stick saying, "The boy gets no meat, do you understand?" They removed all the meat from the oven and went up to the Ndimi river. Once across it the father cut its supports. The boy was cross and had not kept up with the others so he was left behind. A marsupial, Watnga, came up and asked him what was wrong; and on hearing that he had been left behind to his fate by his father he took the boy off to his own home across the Ndimi. In a day and a half they came to a fine place with canes in a field, a banana field and a plantation of pandanus-palms. They decided to stay. The marsupial stole an axe and the boy built a house with it. Later the boy laid out a field and with the marsupial's help gathered crops and pigs. One day Watnga saw two women fishing in a river. He stole their netbags and they saw this and followed him back. The young man then gave them sugar cane and bananas and they slept the night in his house. He suggested next morning they could return home, but they announced their intention to stay and he said, "All right." They killed two pigs and the women carried the meat back

to their settlement, with Watnga in front. The women's people had been worried and had already held mourning for them. They announced they were now married and that they had brought the meat in payment for this. The meat was divided out and eaten communally. Their people gave them meat and valuables and living pigs to take back. So they lived with the man. One day the man went out leaving the two women in the women's house and Watnga in the men's house. The men's house accidentally caught fire and Watnga shoved all the possessions outside it, but while trying to save the man's favourite flute he was himself burnt and died. Next day the man returned and found the whole body of the Watnga burnt to death. "My marsupial Watnga!" he cried, "You were no ordinary animal, you were one of the spirits. Now what will I do?" He went out and hanged himself. The two women came in the morning and saw what had happened. They gave a shriek and went out and hanged themselves also.

(Told by: Ndika Puk)

#### 49. THE GIANT SNAKE

A woman went into the woods to gather creepers. She met a giant snake which gave a cry and swallowed her. Then it sprang into the lake at Kitleng and stayed there till the time of the new moon. Then it left the lake and spewed the woman up on a hill. She sat there and warmed herself in the sun, and she saw her husband in the forest. As a sign of grief he had smeared himself with mud and was looking for his wife. She showed herself to him and he rushed up to her in great joy. She told her story and he took her back home. Later he went into the woods and found a young Ewa snake there. He took it home and made a hole for it and fed it and it soon grew big. One day the woman was digging sweet potatoes when she was bitten by this snake which had crawled out into the open and hidden there. The wife came home and died. The man had to continue his life alone while his wife had become a ghost.

(Told by: Pentiwant)

50. THE STORY OF THE SHOWER OF ASHES

Once upon a time, in olden days, men saw that to the south the whole land was covered with dark clouds. A storm was on its way and there was a rustling and a whistling in the air. They asked what this meant and heard that it was raining ashes in those parts, so that the people could not go out to dig up their food crops. So they themselves went out and gathered in supplies. The ash-storm reached them and they had to stay inside their houses for four or five nights. By this time they were either terribly hungry or else they actually did starve to death. They were badly shocked by the event and were sure they would all be annihilated and that their spirits had deserted them, although they continued to pray. Gradually over a two-day period it grew light again, till they were able to emerge and saw their crops and fields were ruined. They were in great need, as their stores were finished and they had to plant new crops while they were still hungry. After a month nearly all of them died. A few remained and through time increased again. The plants we grow were handed down to us from those survivors. People today do not know that the ash-storm once took place. Men have increased again and it is said that a new race of men lives.

(Told by: Ko)

*Vicedom's note: This story is known all over New Guinea. Here it relates to historical fact. The goldminer Leahy had often to work through as much as ten feet of ash-layers until he came to the layers bearing gold. All valleys are filled with deposits of lava.*

51. A MAN WHO RETURNED FROM THE DEAD

A man of the Mokae Wantakang went to steal pigs but was seen by the Mokae Komonkakang and struck down. They dragged his body to a river and threw it in, then laid large stones on top of it and returned home. At night-time the man came to and freeing himself from the stones tried to drag himself home to his brother's settlement. The brother

was worried and stayed up in case he should come home. The returned man fell in front of the house-door. He was covered in blood and his brother thought he was dead and cut off two fingers. Then he took the man in and warmed him at the fire, till he recovered and was alive again.

One day the Mokae waged war, and were driven to the far side of the Kiapokla river. The young Mokae men decided to catch mice and marsupials there. The man who had just escaped death and another man went down into an old lavatory-closet to fetch out an animal which had fallen in there. While they were down there the young men above warned that their enemies the Kenewaneka were coming and then ran away - the two came out but soon saw it was a joke and went back again. While they were down this time the Kenewaneka really did come - they had seen the youths and come into the area with their weapons. The young men gave the alarm in earnest and ran off but the two in the hole thought 't was a joke and stayed down in the hole. The enemies discovered them there, speared them and cut off their heads, and went off. One of them really was killed but the other one who had already survived one death came again into the world of the living and is still alive today.

(Told by: Aje)

*Vicedom's note: A man is considered dead when his soul is driven out of him, and the sign of this is when he is speechless and loses consciousness: any movement of his body in such a condition is no more than the twitching of his nerves and muscles.*



52 - 57 GEOGRAPHICAL MYTHS

Vicedom's introduction: *The stories given under this heading include only those in which the people attributed a particular characteristic to some region. There are only a few of them. The fact is that the land is so well known that there are not many places of which the people do not have a story to tell, but the shortness of my field-work period is responsible for the fact that I have not collected more geographical stories than those here presented.*

52. TIKAIM

A little man went to a river side to sharpen his axe. While he was at his work he saw a Rumpena bird come and fly off with a stone, so he took his bow and arrow and chased it as far as the Miti-rock. It was dusk and he sat down on the rock and saw that food preparation was going on in his settlement. The Kepa and Maya marsupials came and brought bananas and greens for the birds. The man took a bit also, then killed and cooked and ate a marsupial. He tried to get home but finding the way difficult and rocky he crawled into a cave, made fire and warmed himself. The smoke rose into the air from the cave. His brother Mitopa saw the smoke and told the folk this was where Mitipaim his brother must be sleeping. He took vegetables and a pig on a rope and went to meet him. His brother greeted him, "My dear brother, I saw a Rumpena bird at a spirit place and the spirits caused the bird to lead me here. So here I am living in a wretched cave." They ate the food Mitopa had brought and then cleaned up the cave entrance so that it had a pleasant appearance and planted cordylines around it. Then Mitopa said, "My brother, you must stay and I must go home." So he did and the little man lived in the cave till he died. The place is now called after Mitipaim and when people are going to war they first blacken their arrows and spears with charcoal at this place.

(told by: Ko)

53. NDEKATL AND MOKATL

Two young women, Ndekatl and Mokatl, went into the woods to gather creepers. It was cold and when they came to a sunny hill they sat down to warm themselves for a while. Ndekatl announced that she preferred to look in the direction of the Ndimi river while Mokatl preferred to look down to her own place. At sunset they wanted to go home but could not as they were stuck to the rock and spent the night out. Their worried parents came up next day and found them caught fast up there. They stayed overnight and sacrificed a pig to the ghosts but even this failed. Then they went home. The bodies of the girls became overgrown with moss and we call them Ndekatl and Mokatl still today; the little one looks back at her own people, the big one down here to us, the strangers.

(Told by: Ko)

*Vicedom's note: Ndekatl and Mokatl are two rocks on the Spia mountain south of Ogelbeng.*

54. THE NDIMI-FOLK

The men who live on the banks of the Ndimi river are called Ndimimongamb-folk. They live to the north of the river bank. To its south live only us Mbowamb. Men say that the Ndimi folk take nose-shell ornaments and throw them over the river while people on this side throw back stones to the Ndimi men. One day an Mbowua went across to get a closer look at the Ndimi people. There he saw a "boy" binding up banana vines and asked him where his father was. The "boy" asked him to come and bind the bananas for him so he agreed. The Ndimi man then took him - still on his ladder - over his shoulder to the river and was going to throw him in. "Hey stop, my friend!" the Mbowua cried and the Ndimi man replied, "Why did you insult me before? Now you'll see whether I'm a child!" Then he threw the Mbowua into the river. And we say whenever anyone talks really big, "Look out, the Ndimimongamb man carries the banana ladder."

(Told by: Ko)

55. HOW THE KATLA LAKE WAS MADE

The Keme and the Penti folk laid out a huge field near Katla. As they were about to plant it rain fell and they went home. One old woman found she had left her apron behind her, so went back and found an old man there who asked her who had made the field. She told him and added that she was a Keme woman. He gave her a bundle of things and told her to give them to her sons. She was to tell them to sacrifice a piglet and to open the bundle while doing so. She went home and did so, but the sons said, "An omen, eh! What sort of omen's this?" and they opened the bundle on the spot. They found it contained only remains of sweet potatoes, skins of sugar-cane and bananas, human skin and skin of pigs and cassowary, and fragments of shells, and they laughed at these as worthless and asked the old woman if she had been copulated with by the old man and so lost her sense. She said, "You may laugh at me now, wait till tomorrow!" Next day they went up to their field and found it no longer there. In its place was the lake Katla. The Keme sacrificed to the ghosts on one side of the lake, the Penti on the other, and we still say that the lake belongs to them.

(No teller recorded)

*Vicedom's note: Katla is a lake formed in a volcanic crater one hour west of Ogelbeng. It is considered an entrance way into the underworld and is feared as a place of ghosts. It is fed from a large marsh. The Keme and Penti used to live near the lake. The old man seems to have been the spirit-owner of the field and if the people had followed his prescription they would have found marvellous valuables in the bundles. As they did not he made the lake over their field.*

56. WHAT HAPPENED TO A WOMAN IN THE KATLA LAKE

The mother of Mamã from the Katla area was a shrew. At home in Katla she annoyed her husband. When he struck her for this she went home to her village but there she annoyed her own people. One day after being hit by her husband she wanted to gain revenge and jumped into the

Katla lake. At the bottom she met an old man and told him, "I was so annoyed with my people at home that I wanted revenge and I jumped into the lake, so here I am." He gave her a piece of sugar-cane and told her to return at once. When she delayed he took a stick and chased her off. So she came back up to the top and the people took a hook and pulled her in. When she came to herself she said, "There are a number of ghosts living under the lake in Katla. I've seen them and now I've come back."

(Told by: Metl)

57. MENENGA FROM AMBERA

The Menenga bird from Ambera wanted to build himself a men's house, so he went into the forest for creepers. It began to rain, so he took shelter under a tree and as the rain slackened off a large cassowary came and ate fruit from the tree. It also swallowed little Menenga then vomited him up again. Menenga went and bathed, shook his feathers, took his creepers and went back to Ambera. He built his house and held a feast for its inauguration, inviting all the birds from the forest and grasslands and all the animals too. After the feast he brought in a large bundle of bananas on a stick, carrying them over his shoulder. In his hand he had a spear tipped with a cassowary claw. He began a fiery speech in which he invited the cassowary to come and eat all the bananas, as it was so hungry. The cassowary thought Menenga meant it so came up and Menenga struck it with his spear so that its knee broke.\* The others all took sides. The marsupial Ait said to the marsupial Kumukl "I've broken off my tail in the fight." And he took his tail and laid it across his back. The other thought Ait spoke the truth and bit his own tail off. Seeing he had been deceived he hid in a hole. Ait took the tail and put it on himself, then went up a tree. Since then Kumukl has lived in the earth and Ait in the trees.

(Told by: Aje)

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\* From that day the cassowary has been unable to bend its knee forwards.

58 - 63 HUNTING STORIES58. THE RICH MAN AND THE TWO BACHELORS

A rich man went into the forest and hacked at trees to obtain grubs. As he was about this, two bachelors came along and saw him. They said, "We'll each share a bit of this." They spoke to him, "You're hacking out grubs, are you?" "Yes," he replied. "We'll help you by putting in the wedges, you split the wood," they said. He agreed. As they were working at it they saw a big fat grub inside the wood. "You take it," they said, and he put his hand inside to seize it. At that moment they pulled out the wedges and the wood snapped shut on his hand. They took the grubs he had collected and his axe and other things and went off home, where they cooked and ate the grubs.

The rich man had brought his dog along with him and the dog now began to howl, wanting its master to go home with it. It grew dark and the two slept there together. Early in the morning the dog bit off a piece of its owner's head hair, took this home and showed it to the men. It kept running away quickly along the road it had come, then doubling back. The men saw this and said, "I wonder if the man has been killed or died in a storm, his dog has come back alone, let us go and look for his tracks where the dog has come from." So they went off. The dog ran ahead, looking back to check that they were following. So they continued until they came to the place where the man was lying with his hand trapped in the log. His skin had swollen up and was cold. "Who did this to you?" they asked. "Two bachelor men came and trapped me like this and so I'm lying here," he replied. They wedged the log open again, and between them they lifted him up and carried him home. There they rubbed his skin with nettles, placing him in the men's house and massaging him till the circulation began again. They split wood and made a fire for him, and so he was alright.

One day he sharpened his battle axe and took it with him into the forest. He cut a fruitingspray from a wild betelnut palm and

when he came to the place where he had been cutting out the grubs previously he set this up. A young Kepa marsupial came to eat it and he seized the creature and went up the tree with it and hid himself there in a hole with the marsupial at the entrance way and himself behind. Just then the two bachelors came by, and heard the marsupial crying out, "What's that? It's a marsupial," they said, and searching for it saw it was up a tree. They began to dispute. "I will climb the tree and kill it," one said. "No, I will do that," the other said, "you stay down here and watch." One of them prevailed, and told the other to close his eyes at first and open them only when he was told to, then he would see the marsupial. So he climbed up and inserted his hand into the hole to catch the marsupial, but the man inside quickly severed his neck with an axe blow and then called out, "Look now!" The man below opened his eyes and saw his brother was killed. Crying and wailing, he took him on his shoulder and went in the direction of home.

The man up in the tree now quickly climbed down and taking a short-cut in the forest he hastened to the two men's house and hid himself in the cooking-hole with rubbish on top of him. The bachelor brought the corpse in and laid it down on the same spot. Hearing a rustling noise he said, "Is it my brother or who is it?" "My brother, I will not die, I am still alive," the intruder said, pretending to be the killed man. "Go and fetch some stinging nettles to rub me with from the precipice nearby." "My brother, is that true or not?" the other asked. "True," he replied. So off the bachelor went, and the rich man followed him with the corpse. The bachelor was leaning over the slope holding on to a hook with which to gather the nettles. The rich man came up behind him and hurled the corpse at his neck and back, so that the two fell down the slope and the bachelor was killed.

Returning to the house he took the bachelors' possessions, their axes and their boar pig, burnt down their house, and himself went

home. There he told his men, "You know those two men who injured me? Well I've killed them and brought back their property." His brothers said, "Well done!" and they made a shout and a dance in victory.

(Told by: Tiki)

*[Translator's note: this has been translated from Vicedom's Melpa text, given on pages 174-79 of his volume.]*

#### 59. THE STORY OF THE PIG TRAPS

A man laid pits for trapping pigs in the woods. He used to bring the meat home and eat it along with his wife in her woman's house, not sharing it with the other men. One day he went out and failed to find any pigs so next time he sent out his wife instead, telling her that if she found a big pig she should kill it but if a small one she should bring it home alive. The woman found a pig of good size and decided to kill it on the spot. As she was about the job a fair-skinned woman came through the woods and greeted her. They shared some pieces of the pig and began to cook the rest together in two ovens, one large and one small. When the meat in the small oven was ready the wife noticed that the pig's entrails had not been cooked yet. So she asked the other to take the guts to water and clean them out. The fair woman took them off as far as Mundeke about 3 hours walk away leaving her little daughter behind. The wife (now referred to as the dark-skinned woman) quickly packed up the meat and prepared to go, giving excuses to the little girl by saying that her mother would catch up soon. She finally put the girl on top of the meat and took her off. The fair woman followed in pursuit after a while. Meanwhile the husband was worried and went out to look for his wife. Meeting her on the banks of the Klumanrong stream he asked her why she had the little girl with her and whose the little girl was. The wife replied that while she was in the wood a fair-skinned woman came and wanted to eat her, so she got away and brought the assailant's little girl too. "Good," said the man and cut off the girl's head with his

axe, throwing the body in the stream. He did the same with the fair woman herself when she came along. Later the wife went out to gather sweet potatoes and seeing some frogs by the field's edge she went to catch them, but she saw they were in fact the fair woman and her daughter. The fair woman said, "You have plenty of food here. Leave a bit for me in future and later I'll come and eat it." The wife returned and later threw four cooked sweet potatoes into the grass. She asked her husband to let her go with him that night into the men's house to sleep with him there, but he refused saying that she should sleep in the woman's house, and with these words he left her and went to the men's house. The wife climbed on to the roof of her house to sleep up there. A cassowary, dog, wild pig, and red-coloured water came and amused themselves in the house garden. From the east came the fair woman and her daughter and searched the house through. They found only the four potatoes and shared these equally. The wife above knocked on the wood of the house-roof and the two beneath were frightened out into the garden where they were eaten up by the cassowary, dog, pig and red water so that there was nothing left of them. The man returning in the morning saw bones lying about and thought his wife had been killed and eaten. He chopped off a finger, poured ashes on himself and prepared to hang himself. His wife called out to him from inside the house, "What are you doing? I'm here! Yesterday I begged you to let me go with you into the mens' house but you refused and had no pity on me. So what are you doing now cutting off your finger and pouring ashes on yourself? That's what I'd like to know."

(Told by: Rok)

60. THE MAN KUMBA

There were a number of men with a little brother. They told him to stay at home and look after the boar while they went hunting.



He persisted, however, but lost his way and told his story to a broken-down young bachelor who lived in the woods. The two went hunting together and the boy brought back his animals whole but the bachelor broke off the heads first. They found a fine house and made it their base. One day the boy saw a man carrying a dead woman on his back. He wondered why the man had killed the woman and followed him up. He met a young woman and told her and she said, "Good," and gave him green vegetables and cucumbers which he took back. At home the bachelor noticed a tree fruit in the boy's bag, liked its taste and demanded to be taken where the fruits grew. Next day the boy took him there and himself hid with his dog in a banana patch while the bachelor stood overlooking the road. One by one men came by with dead women they had killed on their backs and the bachelor killed them all with his spear. A little old man came by with children and an old woman on a kind of skewer. The bachelor fought with him but could do nothing till at sunset the young woman told him from up a tree to take the old man down to where his own men's house was and to rip up the red cordylines growing near it. This the bachelor did and threw the old man in a red lake and took all his valuables, cassowaries and pigs. He took the young woman as well and gave her to the boy for a wife, along with fat pigs and valuables, helping them home with all these by taking them onto the palm of his hand and throwing them up so that they landed in front of the boy's house-door. He told the boy that when he was home he should take the fat boar and kill it, remove its kidneys, tongue and entrails, build a little offering-house and sacrifice these objects in it, repeating this later. The boy's brothers were amazed at his return, saying they had already held the mourning for him. "Oh well," he said, "Let's have the funeral feast as well," and killed and cooked the pigs. Then he did as the bachelor had told him, while the other brothers sacrificed the other pigs at the place of offering. The brothers later went off to war and were all killed. Only

the youngest brother remained and had children. Then he too died.

(Told by: Ken)

*Vicedom's note:*

1. *Human beings, especially children, are under the protection of the spirits (i.e. the bachelor was a spirit). All the ghosts ask for in return is a small sacrifice.*
2. *The old man's heart was hidden in the cordylines.*

#### 61. A HUNTING STORY

A man called Kora set his dogs Ntupi and Ntopa to catch a Kepa-marsupial up a Keraip tree. The dogs cried and surrounded the tree, trying to climb up it, but knew not how to. One of the dogs said, "Drive Ntupi off, I'll go and get the man by myself." At this the man took pity on his dogs and took them off, singing as he went home that he would go and catch this real man of an animal. "I will go and seek this man":

The Kepa has run into the forest and disappeared!

Ntupi come quickly, Ntupi come quickly.

The forest Kepa has passed by here,

Ntopa come quickly!

Man, chase Ntupi away!

I will go out and hunt this man,

I will go out and hunt this man!

You are a true man, live well!

I will go and seek you,

You man with your broad belt, live well!

I will go and seek this man,

I will go and seek this man.

(No teller given)

62. THE MAN KAWOKLA FROM KOPON

In Kopon there was a man called Kawokla who wanted to marry the Kopon-woman Rakop and had paid the engagement fee for her. When he gave an instalment of the bride-price they rubbed the woman with grease and brought her to the man. Then the two lived together. Next day Kawokla paid over eight shells and eight pigs and the following day the pigs were killed and the meat divided among the kinsfolk at the dancing-place. The next day again more pigs were killed and eaten indoors. While the meat was being cooked, Kawokla's sister, a slatternly girl, went and put poison in the pig's entrails while she was washing them. Kawokla's wife felt sick and died the next night. Her husband knew nothing about this, as he had gone out to hunt, but in the night he had a dream in which he saw his wife and said to her in surprise that he thought she was busy cooking meat. He woke and going out into the open he heard two slaves down below shouting out that his wife was dead. He began to weep and hurried home. The men there were carrying out his wife's corpse for burial and held the mourning for her. After she was buried her husband determined to follow her. So he went down to the land of the dead and came beneath a lake. However he did not know which way to go, so went and sat on the lake-edge and looked around. He saw a girl nearby who came up and asked what he was doing. He explained he was looking for his wife. One of the man's sisters had previously died along with her little daughter. It was this daughter who now ran up and questioned Kawokla. She took the man down under the lake and when they arrived his sister said, "My brother, what is the matter, why have you come? Have you come as a dead person or as a living one?" On hearing why she promised to hide him and told him not to worry. He had cut off a finger and his sister let the blood from it drop into some vegetables. The newly-dead wife came staggering in and the sister gave her the vegetables containing the blood to eat. The woman stayed in the house and would

not go out with the other folk. The sister asked her how she came to die so early on in life. The wife said she was newly wed but her husband did not stay with her. Instead he ran about in the woods and so it came about that she died. The sister asked if she would like to see her husband, and she said yes, but how, since she was in the land where all dead people go. The sister then brought her the man from his hiding place and the two were re-united. The sister gave them some things (valuables) which they took home to their settlement. They lived together again, till one day the man said he would go out and hunt. A little man came up to him in the woods and said, "I brought up a number of those pigs here, and now you've eaten the lot of them!" The man denied this, but the little man took him into the house and pointed to the opossum bones lying about, then invited him to go and hunt along with him. While they were making traps the little man struck Kawokla and killed him. At home his parents and wife grew anxious and wondered if he had been killed. His young brother went and discovered what had happened and the people wept and held the mourning when they received the news. The wife cut off a finger and was going to hang herself. The old people told her not to saying that she could live with Kawokla's young brother now, instead of Kawokla himself. The woman agreed but in the night she did go out and hanged herself. The married pair were buried and mourned for together. Then pigs were killed and the funeral feast held. The two old people were left alone and the young brother grew up and lived his own life.

(Told by: Aje)

### 63. THE STORY OF THE SNAKE IMA

A man went up north to visit his maternal uncle in Kopon. His uncle greeted him: "Nephew, you've come!" And the other replied, "Yes, I've come." "What a pity you weren't here yesterday or the day before - we had a number of game-animals but we've cooked and eaten them all now," the uncle said. "Yes, it is a pity," the nephew replied.

Next day they decided to go hunting, but the nephew became tired and told his uncle to carry on while he sat and rested. As he was resting he noticed some fine bamboos and went to cut these. He found a wild pig lying dead in the thicket and stuck his arrow into it to cover it with blood. The pig had been killed by the snake Ima. The nephew went and announced to his uncle that he had shot a pig, and the uncle expressed surprise and praised him in delight. They took the pig home and laid it in the oven, then heard a continuous rustling inside the oven-hole. The uncle told the nephew to get into the oven-hole after removing the meat and look out. He himself heated a stone and gripped it with his fire tongs. A snake came in the hut and wanted to devour the two, opening its jaws wide at the uncle. He rammed the stone down its jaws. The snake writhed and thrashed about, got out of the house and threw itself into a pond nearby, splashing about in the water. Then it died. The uncle from Kopon said, "My nephew, what a skilful hunter you are! You came here and you've already killed, cooked and eaten a wild pig! You did it all by yourself with amazing skill! Ah, but in fact I know quite well that that pig was already dead, that you just took it over and tried to deceive me into thinking that you alone had killed it."

(Told by: Kopong)

*Vicedom's note: The snake had right of ownership over the animal it had hunted down. Snakes are regarded as uncanny creatures, handled with great caution and fear. There are no poisonous snakes in Hagen. The motive for fear is magical. Cf. Vol. II.*

64 - 67 ENTERTAINING STORIES OR STORIES OF CUNNING

Vicedom's introduction: *"With the following tales there begins a series of entertaining stories or 'stories of cunning'. The people themselves look on them in this way and can become convulsed with laughter at them. Nevertheless they consider the stories to have some authenticity, although they simply say that the tales have been told them and were made up by their ancestors. They believe all the same that events recounted in them did at one time happen. The stories have a fictional 'look' as can be seen most clearly from Nos. 64 and 65 where the motifs are very similar to each other. There seems to be a definite limit to the imagination of the teller of the story. He wants to carry the story further but is unable to think of any further twists."*

64. MIT AND KUKITL

Mit and Kukitl were two young tearabouts who made a habit of rape, murder and theft - they carried on as if they had no sense at all. One day they met an old married pair digging ditches, offered to help them and in return demanded a meal of sugar-cane, vegetables and pig. They cut down all the sugar-canes the old couple had and picked all their vegetables. The old man did not know his wife had been forced to cook so much food and when he saw the amount of it he was so angry that he struck her on the head with his stick. The old woman fought back and Mit and Kukitl took sides. When they saw that the two were finishing their fight Mit struck Kukitl on the head with his fist. Kukitl had placed a pack containing red pandanus dye on his crown and the liquid streamed over his face. He then demanded compensation from the old pair. The old man gave a pig and the old woman a bundle of salt, and the goods were consumed on the spot.

Another day they went out to break into houses and steal pigs.

In one house, where only an old woman and her daughter lived, Mit stole a pig while Kukitl hid in the pig's sty and raped the daughter of the house as she came by. The girl cried that she had been used by a man and the mother leapt up shouting: "Where?" She took a torch and lifted up the girl's skirt to examine her. Kukitl came up behind her and gave her a shove so that the torch dashed into the girl's genitals and burnt her. "Mother, you burnt me, that hurts," she shrieked and ran outside to cry. Kukitl ran out and climbed up a tree as the people around had woken up and gathered around the house. The moon was up and a slave saw Kukitl go up the tree and gave the alarm. A man climbed up with his axe to get Kukitl down but as he approached Kukitl struck him on the head so that he fell below, shouting, "Look out down there!" to the people. The men thought it was Kukitl who had fallen and struck wildly at the body while in the confusion Kukitl escaped. In the end they brought a torch and saw they had killed their own man. Next day as they were burying their man, Mit and Kukitl came along, Mit in front with his bow ready strung and Kukitl behind. They were recognised and one man shot at Kukitl. The arrow missed its mark and killed a woman instead. Mit cried out, "Now they've killed my wife!" and he shot at a youth and killed him. Then the two went away. Next morning they cooked a small meal and took it with them. One had made up his eyes with resin so as to look as if he were blind, while the other had plastered resin on his nose and given it a very broad appearance. They went up to the place where Kukitl had raped the girl and found the men holding the mourning. The men could not decide if it was really Mit and Kukitl this time and meanwhile the two pretended to abuse and strike each other, once again releasing packs of red dye from the crown of their heads. As the men had decided to kill them they came up to do so, but saw their faces already covered with blood. They were afraid and let them be. The two went back home.

(Told by: Ko)

65. WOIP PETEWA

An old woman had a son, who was a little, ugly, stupid being like a slave. One day he was laughed at by a collection of girls and in anger he planned, along with his mother, to get his own back. They made a coffin of weak wood and his mother tied him in loosely. Then she took the coffin out and invited the girls to join in the mourning. The girls came, but instead of smearing themselves with clay and ashes they had rubbed themselves with fat and put on their finery of shells and necklaces; and instead of weeping they stood around and cracked jokes. The mother cried out and the son broke from his coffin and urinated all over the girls, who screamed and ran off. To gain their revenge the girls turned themselves into mice. Woip Petewa caught them and thought he and his mother would have a fine meal. The mice were cooked but just as they were about to be eaten they turned themselves back into girls, urinated over the two and so spoiled their feast.

One day Woip Petewa saw the girls go to the river bank for lianas. He turned himself into an opossum and lay as if dead on the pathway. The girls picked the animal up, cooked and salted it, and were just about to eat it when Woip Petewa urinated on them and went off. "Ejo, o, o!" the girls cried and went home. And that is how the feud went on between them.

(Told by: Ko)

66. THE MUNDOKITLA-FRUIT

Two brothers lived together. One day while the older brother was in the field digging sweet potatoes, the younger one cooked some pieces of the Kitim vegetable. He noticed how the young leaves were good but the lower, older leaves, were bitter and he took a piece of sugar-cane from his brother's garden to sweeten his mouth, hiding the skin of the cane when he had finished. The older brother came home and while sitting by the fire he saw how an ant was dragging off a tiny piece of cane-skin. He said to his younger brother, "I see you've taken



and eaten a piece of cane while I was out. Come here and rake the ashes so we can roast the potatoes." The younger one came and the elder brother seized his hand and pushed it into the hot ashes. The boy cried out with the pain and ran out. A vulture flew by and dropped a piece of meat, and later a Tentepai bird flying from the east let fall a fruit of the Mundokitla tree. The boy tasted the fruit which had a distinctive smack and offered it and the meat to his elder brother. The two decided to go off to the east and look for more fruit of the same kind. The elder brother climbed up the tree and broke the fruit off while the younger one collected it up in a netbag. Meanwhile the tree's owner was sitting beside a stream and sharpening his axe on a stone. Suddenly he felt that his leg had gone to sleep and the sole of his foot had begun to tingle. He wondered, "Has my bag of shells been robbed? Have they stolen and killed my boar? Or maybe they've forced my old wife?" Then finally, "Perhaps they're pilfering the fruit from my Mundokitla Tree." At that his sole stopped tingling. He took his axe and went to kill the thieves, but as he came, the younger one hid himself inside a fruit and the older one turned into a vulture and flew off. The owner said, "Well, the two birds have flown! And all I did was to come here at the bidding of the sole of my foot, and I'd cooked some taro to give them." He gathered up the fruit, put them in the house, then went off to see to his pigs. Some girls came along and began to play the thread-game but stopped after a little as they had never learnt how it went on from there. The young brother jumped up and offered to show them, but said they must first all stand in a row and close their eyes. They did so and he took his axe and cut off their heads. Then he took the Mundokitla fruits and went home. The two brothers ate the fruit and continued to live with each other.

(Told by: Koka)

67. THE STORY OF THE CASSOWARY-TRAPS

There once was an old woman and her son. The two had a cassowary and all three lived together. One day the son decided to go to Enga to boil up salt. While he was away the old woman told the cassowary to guard the house while she went out for sweet potatoes and to kill any thief who might come. While she was in the field, the son came home, and the cassowary, thinking him a thief, kicked him and killed him. The old woman came back and seeing the body cried out: "Mother of mine, they've killed my man!" She held the mourning for him and was joined in this by the other folk. One foggy and rainy day she attached a string to the cassowary's leg and the other end to her own leg, so that it could not run away. As she was cooking in the house the cassowary ate her share of the sweet potatoes as well as its own and she struck it with a pair of tongs. It ran out and she had to run with it till she ran into a tree and was killed. The cassowary dragged the corpse behind it till it fell itself into a pit trap and was killed. The trap owner found it there and was delighted, but seeing the woman there as well, still with the tongs held up in her hand, he was frightened and thought she had come to kill him. His trap lever then sprang up on him as he released it in surprise and he was killed by it. The noise it made was a signal to his brother who thereby prepared the oven. He went to climb a breadfruit tree and pull leaves from it. As he was about this he fell down into the fire and was roasted alive.

The fire smoked strongly and the sign was seen by the maternal uncle of the two brothers, who decided to investigate, thinking they were cooking cassowary meat. But when he reached the place he found only one badly burnt little piece of meat, which was in fact the remnant of his nephew. He could not bite through it, so he went to a bamboo-clump to cut himself a knife. However, as he bent it down it splintered and pierced his stomach. So the man had to die there,

up in the bamboo, and he swayed about in the wind.

An old couple went into the field to gather vegetables. On the way back they saw the man up in the bamboo-clump swinging his axe to and fro. They thought he was for killing them and hid in the banana patch. They decided to pick some ripe bananas and the old man climbed up a vine telling his wife to sneeze should the man come who was for killing them. A gnat flew into the old woman's nose and she sneezed accidentally. The old man came down in a hurry and tore his scrotum off in doing so, but ran off home all the same. In the night he placed his head-dress between his legs to cool the pain. His wife woke up and thought the head-dress belonged to the man who was after killing them so she struck at it with her stick. The old man woke up thinking the blow had come from the killer and the two ran out in fright. The old woman turned into a frog and the old man into a Pietl marsupial as soon as they came to the river-bank.

An old woman and her daughter Angamb Rukuklum found the scrotum and used it to provide fat for their cooking and so became quite glossy with it. They were able to rub their aprons and bags with fat as well. Kota Pakatl and her mother were jealous of this as their skin was covered in ashes only and they stole the scrotum. The other pair heard after a while who the thieves had been and came to fight them, till they drove them out. Kota Pakatl and her mother ran out into the woods and lived there. Hence we say that the Kota mushroom lives out in the forest. Angamb Rukuklum and her mother ran into the grass-flats and that is why we say that there the Alang-grass Angamb grows.

(Told by: Koka)

68. NDE RAIPA

A man lived with his wife. One day the man went out to take part in a pig feast, but on the way he was overtaken by a heavy storm. He took off his decorations, his cassowary and bird-of-paradise feathers, wrapped them up and brought them back to his wife, saying, "Wife, I'm bringing you my things, take them inside and put them up on the trestle." Then he took himself off to the men's house. The wife thought that her husband had given her a piece of meat. She took the bundle, raked up the hot ashes into a pile and placed the bundle among them, covering it all with ash as well. After a while she thought the package should be roasted now, so she removed it from the ash and unwrapped it in expectation of a meal. Then she saw the ropes of cowries and feather head-dress of her husband inside. She cried out, "Oh dear, what have I done?" Then she laid the ornaments on the trestle and did not dare to leave the house. Next morning her husband came and said to her, "Just give me my things now, so I can pack them away properly." The wife confessed what had happened, and when her husband heard this he took his axe and struck her a blow with it which wounded her badly. The woman began to scream and cry. The following day she left her husband and went to the settlement of her brother. Night fell as she was on her way and she lay down under a tree and slept there. The stench from the wound in her head attracted an Eim snake which crawled up and curled itself into the hole. When day came the woman continued her journey. She crossed the river and came near her brother's settlement. All her kinsfolk were there at a communal task - they were preparing to cook a pig they had killed. The woman's brother saw her arrive from the dancing-place. She had something on her head as if she were carrying a child there. But as she approached the people saw that it was a snake. Her brother asked her what she had

on her head. She replied, "My husband and I had a quarrel and struck each other and that is why I have come here to you." She sat down and the people turned again to their cooking. The snake could smell the roasting meat and slithered out from the wound. The people hit it with sticks and the woman then died at once. Her brother took her corpse into the sugar-cane patch and bound it in place, upright, between two canes. At home the husband felt remorse, thinking, "I have killed my wife with an axe blow." He decided to go and search for her. The brother was already waiting for him as he entered his settlement. The husband said to the brother, "I hit my wife with a stick and she went away. Has she come here?" The brother replied, "Yes she came here and told us she had quarrelled with her husband. Now she is in the men's house and sleeping." The husband believed his brother-in-law and went with him into the men's house. The brother-in-law said to him, "If you want some sugar-cane just go into the field, there's plenty there and you can have some for yourself!" The husband removed his axe from his belt and laid it down in the men's house. He went into the field to take sugar-cane. As he was about to break off some pieces he saw that his wife's corpse was there, fastened to a cane-stalk. He screamed and shouted out, "Ai!" His brother-in-law came up to him and said, "You shout out 'Ai' and act as though you knew nothing. Was it not yourself who killed the woman?" Then he took his axe and killed the husband with it. They buried the man and his wife together in one place.

(Told by: Koka)

#### 69. THE TWO SIBLINGS

A woman lived with her brother. There was one field which the brother allowed to be harvested jointly, and the woman was digging taro and sweet potatoes for the evening meal. There she noticed a taro of unusual size, big enough to make the main meal of the day. She dug under it with her stick and pulled the corm out. All at once

she saw that it was her brother's wife. The wife had turned herself into a taro and now she had been killed by the sister. On seeing what she had done the sister gave a tremendous shriek. She went home and cooked the food and said nothing about it. When the food was ready she took it and distributed it among the men, who ate it and then went home to their settlement. But her brother ran into the field to look for his wife and there saw that she had been killed by the sister. He was furious, and returned with thoughts of vengeance. Next day he said to his sister, "Come, we will go into the forest today and gather lianas." So they went together into the forest and looked for lianas there. They came to a steep overhang where there were fine creepers growing and the brother said to his sister, "Look at the fine creepers down there. You go down and get them!" The woman replied, "No, my dear brother, the bank there is too steep, so that I would tumble over with trying to hack off the creepers." But the brother wouldn't listen, replying instead, "You won't fall over. Come on, get down there and pick up those lianas." So the woman went down and as she was gathering the lianas she saw a very thick one even further down and reached out for it. But as she bent over her brother gave her a shove with his hand and she fell to the bottom. The fall did not kill her and she lay there still alive. The brother, after knocking her over the edge bothered himself no more over his sister but climbed back up the side and went home to his settlement.

While the man sat at home in his settlement the sister out in the forest tried to climb back up to the ridge. But it was too steep for her, and she had to stay down below. She became in great need. The few sweet potatoes she had brought with her were soon eaten and so was her taro so that she had nothing more to eat. In her hunger she ate her head-dress and her netbag. Then all she had was finished and she lay there starving.

In another village a man sat at his house-door and noticed

something in the forest which continually sparkled. He was curious and decided to go and see what it was. Coming to the over-hang he saw a digging-stick planted at the top, then down below a human head. He took some wood and made a ladder, and clambered down. He found the woman, picked her up and carried her back to his village. He picked stinging-nettles and rubbed the woman's body all over with these. He gave her food and she ate hungrily. When she got well he took her for his wife and the two lived together along with the man's father.

One day they heard that the men from another area were planning a feast and had decided to kill a good number of pigs for it. The married pair left their old father behind and went to the feast. It happened that they stayed near to the house of the man who had pushed the woman down the ridge, and when the woman saw him she said to her husband, "Look, that's the man who threw me over the edge. There, he's sitting over there now, take a look at him." As she said this to her husband, the other man quickly pulled a new skin on, disguised himself, and went away. When the two saw he had gone they killed his pigs, and cooked them. The man then divided up the meat and said, "This is for my wife who comes from the Wagi valley." And he gave her all the meat. As they took it from the oven they said, "We must watch out or our meat will be stolen from us." The next day they packed it up and took it home. When the owner of the pigs returned he shouted to his wives, "Bring the meat outside!" The wives answered, "Yesterday's meat is no longer here." Then the man said, "There was a time when I threw a woman over a cliff-edge. A man from Roklakla saved her and married her. The two came here yesterday, stole the meat and took it back to their village."

The two took the meat home, divided it and ate it. One day the man said that he wanted to go into the forest and build a hut for hunting birds from. While in the forest he noticed a good number of birds sitting on a branch and pecking at the tree's fruit. So he

climbed the tree and built a little hut there. However, the branch suddenly broke and the man fell down and was killed. The old father and the wife sat at home and worried. "The man hasn't come back," they both said. Next morning the father said he would go into the forest and look for him. So he went out and found the man, fallen from the tree and dead. When the wife heard the news, she held the mourning for the dead along with the old man. Then she went out and hanged herself. The old man hanged himself as well. So they were all dead together.

(Told by: Aje)

#### 70. APA THE WOODSMAN

There was a man called Apa the woodsman. He had obtained two wives, one light-skinned, the other dark-skinned. One day Apa heard that the Kouwitl people planned a great feast at which they were going to kill a large number of pigs. Apa decided to attend this and he made a great net for the fire-wood inside the house, slinging it between two posts along the wall. He filled it with split wood and beside the two door-posts he placed a knotty piece of wood. He decorated himself, took his axe and put it in his belt, then said to his two wives, "Outside there are two banana trees. If the first one has a bunch of fruit and leans towards the house-door then you will bear a boy-child. That is how I shall find it when I come back. If the other one fruits and leans towards the house-garden you will bear a girl - and that's how I shall find it on my return. Until then the firewood is there for you to take it." With that said he put his axe in his belt and went off to Enga. While he was there his dark-skinned wife bore a boy and the light-skinned one a girl. Every day they burned the wood till the net was empty, from one door-post to the other. When they burnt the large knotty logs as well and the man was still not back they decided to punish him. They took the boy child and made a bed for him in the hole of a hollowed forest-tree, the



Keraip tree. They laid him in this and cut off a length of liana which they put into his mouth. The boy sucked at it, as if he were drinking at his mother's breast. The women saw him at peace and went back to their settlement. There they took a dog and killed it - they hit it, threw it in the swamp and waited till they heard its yelps no more. The dog's corpse disintegrated and later they returned to the swamp and dug out its bones and laid them out on the trestle over the fire where stones are placed for heating inside the house. When the two great knotted logs were burnt up the man came home. He had cooked some salty water in Enga and brought the salt home, along with some cooked meat. He had obtained some tree-oil in Enga also and brought it back with him. As he came in he noticed how the position of the two banana trees was as he had mentioned. He went in and laid down his things. He asked his dark-skinned wife where the boy child was. She didn't say anything but took down the bag of bones from the trestle and showed them to the man. He was furious and gnashed his teeth. After a while he unpacked and distributed his meat, giving a good deal to the fair wife but very little to the dark one. The two wives then announced they were going to the forest to gather lianas and that Apa should stay behind with his little daughter. They took the fat from the meat with them, and there gave it to the boy, afterwards putting his liana back into his mouth. After about eight months the woman made a fine head-dress and apron and took these along with some ripe bananas into the wood. They were seen by the little girl and she followed them. When they reached the place in the forest the heavy dew showed the foot-marks of the young boy running about and they saw that he was grown big and strong. They gave him the clothes and food and later returned, the little girl following again. After a while the girl obtained permission to go to the men's house. There she slept along with her father and said to him that the two women had a boy in the woods, hidden, and that she herself had seen him. When the two

women found that the girl had betrayed them they fell into some hard weeping. The man slept on the matter at first, then, one morning he asked his wives, "Tell me, is the boy you bore me really dead or did you deceive me?" The two claimed they had told him the truth, and the man shouted out, "You're lying, he's out in the forest. Bring him in, go on, march!" The mother cried hard then went to get the boy, but he refused to come. The girl went to fetch him but he again refused and when she insisted wounded her with a stick shouting, "Leave me in peace and go away." The two women then went out together and brought him in for the man to see. One day the man went out, crossed the Ndimi river and set up an offering place on the other side for sacrifice of pigs. He killed the pig and distributed the meat to his wives and children. To the girl and her mother he gave a generous part, to the boy and his mother only a little. After the meal he told the children to go to the water's edge and draw some up from it. He gave the girl a good bamboo to carry it but to the boy he gave a bamboo whose bottom he had already punched through. So the boy's tube could never be filled and after waiting for a while the girl left him and returned to the offering-place. As soon as she came, the man quickly divided out the food again. The women lingered over it in order to wait for the boy, and the man became furious and threatened to hit them with his axe. So they hurried through and made themselves ready. The boy's mother began to cry and left behind the piece of meat from the pig's backbone and a piece of the liver. Then she raked up the fire and went with the others. Once they were over the Ndimi river the man cut away the liana supports of the bridge and the bridge fell in the water while they went on their way.

The boy at the river's edge fiddled around with his leaky bamboo and saw its bottom had been pierced. He gave up drawing water and hurried back, but found only the meat and the remnants of the fire. At the riverside he found the bridge broken and his people nowhere.

He began to cry. The father on his departure had cursed the place, crying out: "You spirits, you spirits from here and from there! Come here, kill the boy and eat him up!" The boy was now in the place under the curse. He ran up and down and found a hole and crawled into it and slept. While there he noticed a spirit moving up and down the river-bank and watched this till day came. Then the spirit came up to the hole and asked the boy what he was doing there. The boy replied: that he had been left behind by his people, and the spirit, hearing this, took him under his arm and carried him across the river. They accompanied each other after that and came to a high mountain under which there was a settlement with banana fields and fat pigs running around. The spirit took the boy, killed a pig for him and gave him the meat to eat. The boy grew big quickly. One day the people from another area held a dancing festival. The spirit said to the boy: "Ndimipena\*, you should go and take part in the Mar-dance." The boy agreed. When the dance time arrived the spirit killed a pig and gave the meat to the boy. The boy then put on his nose disc and his feather head-dress, bound on his large Nassa-shell face-decoration, put the Nassa-shell rope into his nose, took his drum and went to the dance. At it the people said, "What kind of a man is this then?" and tried to tie him up with a rope. The spirit came and told them, "You people go away and leave the young man in peace, and when they would not listen he drove them all together with a stick. The young man danced and when a rain-shower came he went with his father (the spirit) into a house where they spent the night. Next morning they rubbed themselves with grease and the father killed a pig again and took the meat along. At the dance the people again asked, "Who is this man?" and tried to tie him up. However, his mother had also come and she

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\*This was the name given the boy by the spirit and meaning the place in the Ndimiriver (where he found the boy).

recognised him and began to cry. The young man saw this and said to the spirit, "My mother's here." Another rainshower came and the spirit took the young man and his mother home to his settlement. There he said to them: "Stay here with your mother! I have brought up and own many pigs. Kill them and eat. Always take a leg from them and bring it to the spirit house. Split wood and stir up the fire in the spirit house, then take the meat and burn it. It will turn itself into a nothing! (Then it will vanish away.)" The young man did this as the spirit prescribed. The meat was completely consumed by the fire. Then the young man lived with his mother and they both lived on till they died.

(Told by: Naklma)

*Vicedom's note: The spirit most considerately seeks to withdraw when the young man finds his mother. In a variant, identical in other parts with the version given here, it is made clear that the spirit has to disappear through the sacrifice. He allows himself to be burnt along with the meat and so changes his form from that of a human being into that of a spirit.*

71. RANOM MANE

A man's two wives went to catch frogs and saw on the river-bank a tiny child. The one said it was a spirit and should be avoided but the other said it was a little boy whom she would take home in her netbag and bring up. She did so and it drank keenly at her breast. ~~The other~~ wife went to the men's house and told the husband who advised her to stay with him in the men's house and leave the women's house to ~~the others~~. The little boy was very troublesome, asking to be picked up and put down and kept the foster-mother busy all night. Suddenly he was no longer a child but an insidious little man. As daylight ~~showed, this~~ little man killed the woman with an axe, cut off her head and put it in a bag, then snipped off her two breasts and stuck them onto the pig stakes outside. He left with the head, which dripped

blood and showed his tracks.

The other wife told her husband to go and look for her co-wife. On his way he saw two white birds on the pigs' tethering stakes and called inside to his wife to bring out his arrows but got no reply. The wife in the mens' house brought him his bow and he shot one bird, which curiously, made no move. He went close and saw that it was his wife's breast, not a bird. He ran in and saw his wife dead there. The man began to cry and moan, strewed ashes on himself and cut off a finger. Then he went after the killer, following the blood drops. He asked persons on the way if they had seen a man with his wife's head - he asked two women of the vulture totem, two of the Paom-marsupial totem, (who were digging up worms), and two of the Kaipokla-marsupial totem. All told him no man had been by, only the spirit Ranom Mane. He came to a splitting of the ways and couldn't find which way Ranom Mane had gone. He asked a Watnga marsupial, which went and dug up a tuft of lemon grass, revealing a way into the hillside they were on. Both went down the way and saw a dwarf making a sacrifice and singing about his food:

My mother help me,  
 My father help me,  
 My sister help me,  
 Let me eat as I'm eating,  
 Let me eat as I'm eating every day!

The man questioned the dwarf as to what food he had and asked for some as he was hungry. He forced the dwarf to pull everything out of the oven, including in the end his wife's head. The dwarf admitted stealing this and advised him to take it back and fit it on his wife again, and he gave him numbers of spells which the man laid in memory. Then he tried to kill the dwarf with axe-blows but failed until the the Watnga advised him to pull up the red cordyline plants in the garden and throw them in the fire. This he did, and burnt the whole

place down. The two men then took the head home and Watnga set it on the woman's shoulders so that she came alive again. The husband offered Watnga 10 mother-of-pearl shells (gold-lip) and 10 shell necklaces, cowrie-shells and eight pigs, as a reward. Watnga shook his head and asked for some shell fragments instead, which were hanging from the man's beard. Watnga took the other gifts as well and divided them among his friends, but the shell-pieces he kept for himself. Since he did that, the Watnga has his coat flecked and sprinkled with the signs of the shells.

(Told by: Ko)

*[Translator's note: the song is translated from an interpretation of the Melpa text which Vicedom gives and not from his German translation, which differs in some points from the original. This story is known in the northern Melpa area as Tet-peng-e, and I have translated a version of it to appear in a collection of folk-tales edited by Ulla Schild.]*

## 72. THE MAN AND HIS WIFE

There once lived a married pair who had several children including some honest daughters, all of whom they had married off. They gave one to a man from Enga, another they married to a Kopon man, another was bought by a man from Demboga. The Kopon husband held a pig-festival and the other sisters wished to attend. The wife from Enga and the one from Demboga came in, and telling their parents to remain at home, went on to Kopon. When they had cooked the meat and the feast was over they brought back the supplies to their parents. The father took the meat and divided it out, giving exactly the same portion to each woman. They ate it and slept. When they were emptying out their netbags the father saw a little piece of meat left in one bag which he took and gave to the Demboga wife and the Enga man's wife noticed and commented on this. Next day the women returned to their husbands' places. The Demboga wife fell ill on the way,

struggled back to her house and died there. All the folk cut off their fingers and held the mourning for her. The ghost of the dead woman went out to Enga and visited her sister there, telling her she had no further thoughts of home so she had come to visit her. While the two sisters sat there and conversed, the Enga husband came and saw that the Demboga woman had mud and weeds hanging from the back of her head. He took his wife outside for a moment and said: "My wife, look after yourself. That woman is dead!" His wife replied that he was out of his mind and trying to deceive her. The man withdrew to the men's house taking his pigs with him. His wife returned to the house to her small child and saw her sister. When the time came to sleep, the dead woman asked her sister to let her have the child sleeping beside her. The mother handed her daughter over and the woman struck the daughter and ate her up. Then she killed and ate the mother as well, and after her revenge was completed she returned home to her village. Next morning the man came to the women's house and saw that his wife and child were lying there dead. He cut off a finger and was heavy with grief. He moaned and cried, "Whom shall I live with now?" For grief he hanged himself.

(Told by: Kontaki)

73. KUMAN PAJE

Two men wanted to go into the forest and hunt for opossums there. So they put together their food for the trip. Their sister gave it to them and she had to carry it for them. In the forest they left their sister in a hunting hut where she spent her time sorting out creepers and they themselves went off to the hunt. The young woman sitting in the hut heard up in the forest a rushing and droning noise, sounding as if it were coming along the path. However, it went off in the direction of Mulke. The whole way and the earth around droned. Then it returned from Mulke westwards into the forest and as it came the whole earth shook and the forest was in a state of disturbance.

The girl went inside the hut. A foreign man came and was about to pass by when he noticed that a woman had been sorting creepers at the hut door but was no longer there. He looked in and found her and accosted her with, "Come on let's go." The girl started to cry and screamed out, "No. I won't go. I've got my two brothers living here with me. They've gone into the woods. When they come back I'll be able to go with you." But the man would not be put off and insisted she go with him. The woman gave in and prepared herself to go with him. However, when they got out in the open there was a noise of whistling up in the forest and the man went off quickly, leaving the girl behind. "Someone's coming," he shouted and ran away. After a while the brothers returned with their catch. The woman was overjoyed to see them and they cooked and ate the opossums and lay down to sleep. Next morning the two brothers again said they were off to the hunt and the woman said to them, "Brothers, please don't go out and leave me all alone here. Yesterday while you were away a man came and wanted to kill me. Stay here by my side." The brothers were angry and said, "Don't talk nonsense. Who would come here and want to kill you?" And with this rebuke they went out. Soon the woman heard the foreign man coming again, entering the house and saying to her, "Come on, we're going together." When she refused he was angered and threatened to kill her so that she gave in and went with him. The woman walked behind and switched off a little branch by the wayside from time to time. Then they came to a mountain rock where a number of ways met and they stopped to rest. The woman wondered which way they would take. Then the man went and dug up a tuft of lemon-grass and an underground way appeared. This they followed until they saw in front of them a lake with dark waters and behind it a lake with red water. When they reached the first lake the man threw the woman in it. He saw her sink, then went home to his settlement. The woman lay in the water and saw some fish traps set there, so she went in and curled up



inside one. The two men returned home with their opossums and saw that the girl had gone. They began to weep. They decided that one of them should return to the village while the other went to look for their sister. The searcher followed the clues of the nicked-off bushes until he came to the crag where the ways split and wondered which way to take. From the west a Watnga marsupial came and asked him what he was doing there. The man explained and the marsupial said, "That is good," and went and dug up the lemon-grass tuft. They found the way and followed it until they saw a small distance away how an old man was drawing up fish-traps out of the water. The old man hoped to find fish inside but instead he found a woman. The two came up and he asked what was their business. They replied they were looking for a woman so the old man told them he had just caught her in his trap. They praised him, then went inside the house to sleep, saying to each other that when the abductor returned they would kill him. They kept all their weapons beside them and lay down to sleep. However, the marsupial Watnga rose, took his spear, and went to where the man was sleeping and killed him. On his return he and the brother took the sister and went home with her. The girl married Watnga and the brother received many valuables for her. Then they lived happily and peacefully together till they died.

(Told by: Nentipa)

#### 74. THE MAN AND HIS LAZY SISTER

Once a brother lived with his sister. She was very lazy and did no work at all, never going into the field to gather food. One day the woman as usual sat in front of the house and the brother took up the netbag to go to the field, telling his sister to stay where she was. As she sat there she saw a pig enter the house-garden and begin to root up the vegetables and eat them. She threw a stone at it but made an unlucky hit for the pig fell down dead. She hurried forward and pushed the pig's body into a hole, then returned to her

seat. Soon the pig's owner came and told the girl he had come to collect it. She replied that she had accidentally killed it while trying to drive it out of the garden. The man was furious. He went off and agitated to his brothers so that they all made ready for a fight. The woman saw them coming, decorated herself, placed the feathers in her brother's shield, then waited there. The brother heard that a war was on hand and that people were coming to fight it from all directions. He hurried back and questioned his sister who told him the story. The pig's owners then came and fought with the clan-mates of the brother round and about the battle-place, driving them forward then being forced back. The brother ran in and struck one of the enemy. Then he ran back, took all his valuables and hid them in a hole, put on his cassowary feathers and took his sister a little way with him. Once in his fields he changed the woman into a cassowary, turned his cultivated bananas into wild ones and his vegetables into weeds. Then he went on till he came to another inhabited area with separate fields laid out. There were vegetable gardens with cucumbers. He entered one, took a few cucumbers and ate them, then lay down to sleep at the edge of the field. A young woman came into the field and saw that some vegetables had been stolen. She set up a cry about it, then followed the thief's tracks and found the young man at the field's edge. She woke him and asked him what was the matter, and he replied that he had been driven from home in a war. "That is good," she said. "Come, let us go back to my village." The village men commented on her bringing the young man with her and when she told them what had happened one of the men pronounced that it was good too. He cut some sugar cane and gave it to the young man to eat and when they had eaten together they slept. After that he lived with them. One day they were to open up a new field and first had to lop the branches from the trees. The newly inducted man said that the man native to the settlement should stay at the bottom while he himself went up the tree. Once up it

he looked around and saw smoke rising from the settlement where he had left his sister behind. He felt a strong nostalgia and laid his finger on the branch and chopped it off. The man below commented on the blood dripping down and was told why. He told the young man not to grieve any more but to go along with him and recover his sister. So they both went to where the young man's house had been and saw a cassowary running about there. The young man said to his companion, "Stay here and watch out." He then ran after the cassowary's tracks and chased it in the direction of his companion. "Don't kill it," he shouted out "Catch it alive and keep hold of it." The other grasped the bird firmly and when the young man came up to it he tore off its two wings at the joints. The bird at once turned into a young woman again. The two men then removed all the valuables from the cache, and took these and the girl home with them. The village girl (who had found him) was then married by the man who had fled there. The village man (who had been his companion) married the sister of the erstwhile fugitive. They all lived together till they were old and died.

(Told by: Koka)

75. KORON OF KOPON

Once a brother lived with his sister. One day a man came to court the sister. The two men came to an agreement and the girl was married. The brother bought two wives for himself with the valuables he received for his sister. The sister bore her husband two sons. One day when the two were grown quite big their father died so that they were without a father. After a little their mother also fell very ill. Realising she was about to die she decided to go to her brother. She said to him, "When I die, come and take the boys to live with you, since they haven't any parents left now." She then died. Her brother came and took the boys home with him.

One of his wives had no pity or affection for the orphans. She scolded them and struck them with her stick, pushed them around

and ill-treated them. The other wife had pity on them and took them to herself. She made them armbands and head-dresses. She clothed them with aprons and gave them food. One day the husband of the women, the boys' maternal uncle, announced he was going off to the valley of the Ndimi -river in the Kopon region in order to shoot white birds-of-paradise and gather spiced fruits. The two boys were grown big and handsome. One very foggy day the Ndika-men in the area where the two boys lived came and spattered the people with mud and robbed the banana fields. The youths joined in the game. While they were at it, the two wives came and said to them: "We've tied up a pig in front of the house-door. When you've finished plastering yourselves with mud, go home and loose the pig so that it can run free in the bush." However, the boys carried on, and the game was played so vigorously that it was nearly mid-day and the pig was still tied up. After finishing their game they went to the stream and bathed. As they neared home they saw that the women were back too, and that the hard one was grumbling. The pig had been left out in the sun and was found panting for breath. The woman complained: "These two useless gadabouts with their unwashed ears, these two swaggerers, who never even had a mother long enough to receive small sweet potatoes from her, these two would-be-greats have allowed the pig to strangle itself here. Now they're standing out there in the sun." The two boys on hearing this did not enter the living-house but went to the men's house and threw themselves to the ground and cried. Then they laid themselves down to sleep. The wife who loved them brought them cooked sweet potatoes, but they refused them lying there and crying. She asked them why they rejected her, then returned to her house. Next day the women tied up the pigs as usual and went to dig sweet potatoes. The two youths climbed a tree and saw that the women were a fair distance from the house. They gathered vegetables, killed and cooked their own pig and greased themselves, put their feathers on and took out their new aprons. They

packed up the meat and went off. On the way they met a number of pretty girls who asked them why they had come - "If it's wives you're looking for, here we are. Look at us and if you like one of us take her with you and continue on your way." But the young men did not listen, they carried on their way. They arrived at a crag where they sat down and blew their flutes, unpacked their meat and ate it. After they had eaten they looked around them. They saw that on a great rock-overhang there were a number of trees standing. They took out the bark material they had brought, removed the outer layers and made some string. They then went to the trees and together hanged themselves.

Their maternal uncle was still in Kopon, hunting and gathering fruits. He had also caught and cooked a wild pig. He gathered all together and took the path for home. Arriving there he saw that the men's house was empty and already full of fleas so that he knew there was trouble. He cut off a finger and poured ashes over himself to show his grief. Then he took the main path to the east. He made enquiries on the way and always received the reply, "They had meat with them and travelled further to the east." He hurried on, and came to the crag. At its top he found the two youths hanging there from trees. He was so full of grief that his life seemed to be no longer worth living and he too went and hanged himself. The news of these suicides gradually was spread and the bodies were taken down from the crag and mourned for. All did this, even if they were not kinsfolk of the dead. Later they killed pigs and held the funeral feast. The two wives then lived all alone. The hard wife neither cried nor took part in the mourning but the other one cried every day. The ghosts of the men who hanged themselves saw this and returned to the settlement and took the kind wife with them into the land of the dead. The hard wife lived alone till she died.

(Told by: Aje)

76. THE TWO SONS

A man's wife bore him two sons, one fair the other dark, and the boys grew big and strong enough to make animal traps in the woods. The fair one used not to bring his catches back complete but broke off their heads which he ate raw, while the dark one brought his whole to the house, cooking and eating them there. One day they were hunting and the fair boy, acting as usual, said while he ate the animal heads, "I'm eating the head, just as if it were my mother's and I were eating her, or my father, or my brother." His brother went and warned the parents. The father said, "I can't believe it, you're deceiving us. Is the boy a cannibal? He can't be." The son replied, "Well, you can stay here with him if you have so high an opinion of him. But we're getting out of it." The children and their mother packed their things up and went to another area. While resting on a crag-top they saw their old settlement behind them. They saw that the boy had returned and actually had killed and eaten his father. They carried on their way and settled in a new place, laying out fields and building houses. One day the fair skinned one came up to his brother in the fields and asked why he had left and come here. The brother said, "Well, there was no more ground left so I came and settled here." The fair one said, "If that is so, it is good. Come now we'll go to my settlement." The dark one replied, "Yes, that's right." Then he ran and told his mother, informing her that if he were killed she would see a red cloud (of smoke) coming up, otherwise a dark one. In the fair one's settlement pig meat was placed in front of the dark one while the fair one ate human flesh. Next day they prepared to go out and kill men, and in a settlement the fair youth killed a good number of people and gave one dark woman to his brother for a wife. He told the brother to take her back, stay with her for a day, then return for more killings. The dark youth took the wife home to his own settlement, while the fair one cooked and brought back his prey to his. The

dark one did not sleep at home but kept away in the woods. When the fair one grew tired of waiting for his brother, he went to the brother's place and killed some of its men but was himself killed in turn. The brother took the remains back to the fair one's settlement and buried them. Then he took his valuables for himself and came back home to his own place.

(Told by: Kijangkwa)

77. PAKLA RONTOPA

A man lived with his young sister, allowing her to be lazy. He went himself into the field to dig sweet potatoes. He split the wood and looked after the house. They ate the food he brought together. One day the man returned from the gardens and saw that the girl was thoroughly upset and had thrown herself on the floor at the far end of the house. He asked her what was wrong but his sister carried on crying and made no reply. Ought he to give her valuables? No reply. Did she want to marry someone? Still no reply. He lost patience and went out. As the girl was unhappy at living with her brother she also wanted to leave. Next day she made herself a length of string, bound one end to the doorpost, then walked off with the string, laying a trail behind her. She came to a river with a fast current and waited on the bank not knowing how to cross. A handsome young man came by and asked her what she was doing. On hearing her story he picked her up and carried her over. They continued to his settlement where she lived with him and later married him. She bore him a number of children, all of whom she named after objects so that they turned them into these objects, such as "Firetongs" (the first) "Digging stick" (the second) and "old mat" (the third). The girl's brother, wondering where she was, decided one day to follow the string. He pulled some taro, roasted it and broke open the crust. Then he rubbed himself with oil and decorated himself, took his food and followed the trail. He came to a house with a number of children

playing in front of it who told him to go further east to look for the 'foreign' woman. When he arrived at her house door "Digging stick" met him and shouted out, "Hello Uncle," and hung onto the bunch of leaves at his rear, which he used for sitting on. "Firetongs" came out with the same greeting and hung on his apron. He thought to himself, "This is where my sister went to and she's already got a troop of cheeky and dirty little children." He went in and sat down. The children told him their parents had gone out to collect worms in the rain. Meanwhile, they wanted to go out and get vegetables saying, "What a good job you've come, Uncle. Later we can cook all these things and eat them together." The parents returned with the worms and the woman cried out, "My brother, you've come." The husband said, "Brother-in-law you've come. How nice. We've just brought home a number of worms. We'll cook them and eat them together." The pair then took banana leaves and wrapped the worms in packets, made sausages of them and roasted them in the fire. Seeing them do so the man felt he would have to vomit. When the sausages were ready they took them from the oven and presented him with a whole packet of them saying, "We have a guest today." They thought he would eat them but in the dark he pushed them under the sleeping place and also returned some to his sister. After the meal the two men went into the men's house, but the woman lit a torch and examined the whole place in order to clean it. She saw where her brother had hidden the worms. Next morning she called her husband to her and said, "Just think husband, my brother has despised our good food and thrown it away." They made a plan between them. Telling the brother they wanted to go and eat sugar-cane in a field they had planted, they came with him to a steep slope so that they had to climb into the field by a ladder. Below, the field was laid out on a level strip, and there was a house there as well. The field was fertile and the fruit ripe. They told him to stay in the house while they harvested the canes and he, suspecting



nothing, went in and waited. They hurriedly climbed out of the field and pulled up the ladder behind them, then looked down and taunted him, "You despised our food, you can stay there by yourself." The brother shouted back, "Why? I've done nothing wrong. You can't leave me here, you're my sister." The others cried out from above, "You spirits. All you spirits of this place. Come and eat the man there up." The man wept and said, "She is my sister, yet she has no heart in her body. She has abandoned me." After moaning for a while the man made a hole inside the house, went out for split wood, lit a fire and heated stones. He gathered taro and yams, bananas and pit-pit and different varieties of beans and cooked them all. Evil spirits came into the field and wondered where the man was. As they looked in the house the man quickly threw food out of the door. The spirits gathered round and squabbled over it and he threw out more when it was finished. While he was at this a bat flew in and he caught it in his apron. He put his head-dress on it and hung all his decorations around it. Meanwhile, he was still throwing out the food, until the day came and his stocks were exhausted. He heard the spirits say, "His food is done now so we'll go in and eat him up himself." He shouted to them, "I'm coming out on my own accord so don't worry." He took the bat and threw it out while he himself slipped into the oven and covered his head with leaves. The spirits ate the bat and looking into the house could not see anyone so were satisfied they had eaten the man. At daytime they disappeared. The man emerged and tore out his hair, distributing it and his rear decorations about the field. Then he ran and hid.

The two others woke early and came to see what had happened. They ran about, looked inside the house and saw the signs outside it. They were sure the man had been eaten and said, "That's good. Now we're free of him." Then they gathered some vegetables. Meanwhile the man himself climbed out up the ladder and drew it up behind him.

He called down to the couple below and announced that matters were now reversed, and the spirits would be eating them not him. The woman cried out, "No, no, my dear brother, please don't. I'll come running back to you." But he replied, "You showed me no pity yesterday," and went away home. The two spent the night in the house and the spirits all came and ate them up. Later the man went to their settlement and killed all their children. Their netbags full of vegetables he took home with him. Then he himself married and lived with his wife till he died.

(Told by: Ko)

#### 78. THE STORY OF THE GIANT SNAKE

There once was a young man who lived with his sister. Beside their house there was a lake in which a monster snake lived. The young woman used to allow the snake to drink at her breast. One day she was seen by her brother and he did not agree with the practice, so he sharpened his axe, went to the lakeside and enticed the snake out by clapping his hands, then chopped it to bits. Next day the girl found the snake dead in the lake. She began to cry and moan, and, running into the house, she hanged herself. The brother returned home and finding her dead he buried her, afterwards living by himself. He had to dig his own potatoes and cook them for himself. In time his aprons were dirty and threadbare and his head-dress all awry. As he had no more need to be decent he ran about naked. His food also came to an end and he went hungry and was in great need. One day he saw sweet potatoes growing near his lavatory-place and went to make fire for roasting them. In the fire-place he saw a head sprouting among the ashes and realised that the head of a giant snake was shoving itself up through the ash. "Oh," he cried, "an omen - I killed the snake, my sister killed herself and now this omen." The lake-water then overflowed its banks and covered the whole area and the man drowned. The lakeside was now bare and uninhabited but grew

fine vegetables and people came to gather them. One day a man came and placed fish-traps in the lake. He caught a large eel. He was delighted, announced his catch at home and suggested perhaps a pig could be killed too so that a big meal could be laid on. His parents agreed and said: "But we'll cook it all in the men's spirit house." The man went back to his own house to get the eel but found to his surprise it had gone. "Never mind," he said, "We'll eat the pig anyway." A little while later a little girl went into the house to get a hot coal for a fire and there she saw a monster snake with a fish skin around its belly. On one side it looked like a snake, on the other like a pig. The girl screamed and the people came to take a look but the snake had disappeared. They said, "A spirit must have come into the house. Perhaps it was the little girl's maternal uncle. Come let us pray to him." So they did and we make the same prayer ourselves still.

(Told by: Ko)

#### 79. THE STORY OF THE MAN PIM

A young man living with his mother was the owner of a boar. One day he told her to look after it while he went out to the riverside. He found a garden beside the river and took some food from it - then found a pig's entrails on the path. He kept finding more entrails and washed them down in the river to take home with him. He saw a man's footprints and came to an offering place where the man Pim sat killing pigs. Pim cut up the meat with a bamboo knife and put the pieces in the top of his head - he had no eyes or mouth. As Pim prepared his meal the young man quickly stole some meat and made off. His mother was amazed and on hearing his story praised him for a good young man. Pim himself was furious and made a pit for the thief to fall in, disguising the top with leaves. Next time the young man fell in it. Pim had laid a netbag in the bottom and he simply gathered it up and strung it between two trees with the culprit inside, telling

him he could stay there and die. A flying dog came by and saw the prisoner. It flew back to the young man's home and began to eat ripe bananas in a garden where it heard the mother crying out for her son. It took bananas and fed the young man, rather to his surprise. The young man promised the dog his boar if he would free him, so the dog gathered up all the animals and birds to help him free him. His mother greeted him tearfully and fed him up till he was fit again. The youth then went and set a hole trap for Pim with two sharpened spearpoints. Pim fell in and was killed. The youth took his possessions and food and divided them out among the animals and birds.

(Told by: Tiki)

80. THE STORY OF THE POOR MAN PURI

All the people died in an epidemic. Only one small boy was left and he fed himself on ripe fruits, eaten raw. One day he wanted to kill a pig, so he took a bamboo thong and rubbed fire. Then he killed and cooked the pig and ate it. He decided to cook all the other things in future as well. He built houses for himself and the pigs and hung the valuables up. One day he packed up some meat and went to the Wagi-valley till he came to an inhabited place and explained his position to a man who sat down and talked to him. An old man got him sugar-cane and a girl came in with sweet potatoes which they cooked and ate. Next day the man presented the girl with cooked pig, hung valuables on her and gave her to the visitor as his wife. He took her home and later paid the brideprice for her. After a while the two decided to offer pigs in sacrifice to the man's parents and the other folk who had died in the epidemic. The Yamka and some others came to help him and a dance was to be held as well. The man chased about trying to borrow decorations but no-one would lend him any. He decided to go and shoot birds for himself in Kopon country, and took his wife with him. He took back all he caught to his wife. Suddenly the wife saw a disreputable and nasty little man who told her that they

could not stay in the hut where they were and should move on. The wife told the husband but he laughed at her. In the night the little man came and threw them out, later coming and leading them to his men's house with a good woman's house nearby. The two ate together the food he gave them, then the man slept in the men's house and the woman in the woman's house. Next morning the little man told them not to go yet but to stay and he would give them materials for decoration. He took white bird-of-paradise feathers and skins of the marsupial Rakop and gave these to them. When night came he invited the man to accompany him to a courting dance. He did so and at the end of it a pretty young woman wanted to come with the man. Her people agreed to the match and the little old man paid the price in pigs and valuables. He then told the man that the reason why he had first driven him away was that he had made no prayers for him. In future whenever he sacrificed pigs he should remember to pray to him. The man promised to do so. He arranged his possessions and returned home. On their arrival the local men decided that on the next day they would hold marriages of their women and after that would begin the feasting. A man from Enga attended the feast as well, and as the houses were full of guests he slept in the house for sacrificing in. He noticed that at night time great quantities of marsupial animals came and ate the fruit from the trees, squabbling over it and tumbling about. He shot one with his spear, but when he went to get it found a little man there laying dead. He shouted out "Apa!" and ran away into the night. His host later came out to see how he was but instead saw the dead body. He cried out, "Oh my mother. Someone's killed my little man." In grief he went inside and hanged himself. Next morning his two wives saw him there and for grief they hanged themselves also beside him. The other men came and held the funeral feast after they had mourned for the dead.

(Told by: Aje)

81. THE HELPFUL DOG

There once lived two brothers who stayed together in the one house. Their friends and clan-mates worked hard at catching game in the forest and cooked and ate it, but never gave any to the two brothers. One day one of the two said he was going to hunt while the other stayed at home to look after their possessions. He managed to catch only one animal but found a house where he could cook it. Near the house a dog was barking loudly and the man went to investigate. He found a fine settlement with grass and cordyline hedges. In the middle was a pig tied up with string. The barking dog came up, sniffed at him, then went and bit through the pig string and brought the pig to him. It brought him vegetables and wood also. The man killed the pig and cooked it and the dog took half plus the backbone, while the man took the rest of it, including the head, back home. His brother asked him how he had come by it and he replied: "The pig had died in the forest so I cooked it and brought it home." After a few days he announced he was going into the forest again and he repeated his arrangements with the dog, bringing meat home once more. After a few more times his brother insisted on going into the forest in his place and received the appropriate instructions about the dog. However, when the time came, the brother kept driving the dog away and when he had cooked all the meat he placed it at his side. When the dog came for its half he killed it with a stick and threw it into the men's house which stood in the spirit place. The brother at home was amazed to see the entire pig brought back and said, "My brother you've brought the whole pig just like someone who has made a theft and cooks the lot to bring back with him." He made a face and went to sleep alone in the men's house without eating the meat. Next day he went to the forest settlement and found all its houses burnt down. He dug up a tuft in the ground and found a way through the earth till he came to a fine place, with turf and cordyline and two men's houses, one

facing east the other west, at either end. The houses were empty. In front of one lay the old man, all burnt by fire with ash encrusting his shoulders. The old man said, "You two brothers were poor devils. I had pity on you and helped you so that you could have food to eat just as the rich folk do. I gave you pig and game. You took it daily and ate it. Now you've killed me for it, and I'm a ghost. Leave me now and go home." The man went home and told his brother how he had ruined everything for them. The two then lived on in poverty until they died.

(Told by: Ndika Puk)

82. THE FIVE BROTHERS.

There were once five brothers. One of them had not grown big and he had to do the work of the others. He was called Ndepona Pok. "Pok the man from the woods." He had the ability to take off his skin and change his appearance. One day he took off his usual skin and put a fine new one on. Then he went out and wooed a woman and brought her back. As they came near the house he asked her to give him a piece of meat, saying he knew a man suffering from frambosia who lived nearby and wanted to give him a bit. He advised her to go on to his house and told her the way. When she left he took off his handsome skin and put on his old one. On returning to the house he said to the girl, "Don't sit in this useless part of the house, you go over there and sit down," and she did as he said, agreeing with him. All the man's brothers came home and greeted the young woman. Ndepona Pok explained she had come to marry one of them and later she was married to the eldest brother. He repeated the enterprise twice, and each time the girl he brought married one of the brothers. One day he decorated himself and went out. He came to a field of sweet potatoes where there was a girl Ajampetla being wooed by a number of suitors. Ajampetla, seeing him come, said to her suiters,

"Look, here is my matrilateral cousin, a man to whom my father listens. I must take him to the house and cook for him." She took him to her home where her father and mother and brother were and announced that she had decided to marry her Ndepona Pok. They agreed and gave him sugar-cane and bananas and next day killed a fat pig, greased the girl and gave the meat to them both saying they should go together now. On the way they stopped for a rest and Pok asked for a piece of the meat. But the girl asked him what he wanted it for and said she would go with him and take it to whomever he wanted to give it to. He refused on the grounds that the man he wished to give it to had frambosia so she went to the house, finding the wives of the brothers gathered there. They welcomed her in, struck by her beauty. She took off her netbag and lay down in the place of the slave. They remonstrated with her saying that it was the place of a man with frambosia and leprosy, and that she should come over and join them instead. But she replied that some of her own people had frambosia and leprosy so it didn't trouble her and she would stay where she was. Pok came along with his boar and greeted the young woman. Then the others abused him saying, "you're a slave, you stinking dirty peasant, so what do you think you're doing here beside a good-looking woman. Get out and put on a clean apron for once, go on, get moving. This fine young woman would like to eat her food, but when you're there her nose is choked with your stench, so you can get going." However, the fine young woman stood up for him saying, "That's not true. You're lying and cheating. Here, you come and sit beside me and we'll be together." The people were disturbed and angered by this and asked her why she was fool enough to sit with him. They divided their food out but gave none to the slave. However, the girl had pity on him and gave him her own meat and other bits and pieces and afterwards she lay down to sleep on his side of the house. The others were irritated and asked how she could sleep with an ugly down-and-out, but she took no notice. Next day Pok took her out to a



hill-top, dug up a tuft of lemon-grass and took her along a path revealed under the tuft. There was a wonderful settlement laid out inside the hill with plants, flowers, hedges and woods nearby. They killed a number of pigs and cooked and ate them and when evening came returned to the house, distressing the others again. A little later another tribe held the Mar-dance and these people attended it. The slave told Ajampetla that if she saw an exceptionally handsome man at the dance she should draw water and offer it to him. At the dance this did take place and the people wondered why she was offering the stranger water as she was supposed to be married to Ndepona Pok. When the dance was over, he told her that he would stay a little and go to his home dancing. Ajampetla finding the slave not at home went quickly to the place under the hill and saw the slave's skin lying inside a house there. She put it in the fireplace and burnt it, then hid herself and kept a lookout. At sunset Ndepona Pok came for his skin. She said to him from her hiding place, "If you had shown yourself before as you showed yourself today we could have been living together for a long time already. But you showed your least attractive side and the people were so annoyed they treated you as a slave. If you will stay as you are now I will love you and live with you." Pok was annoyed and cried out, "What is it you are saying? Aren't you the woman I've had with me for a long while already? However, you've done well." Then they lived together and the woman bore him first a son and then later a daughter. They brought up the children and grew old and so they lived until their death.

(Told by: Ko)

83. THE FAIR-SKINNED MAN NUKINT

There was once a man called Nukint who went about the countryside one day and stole a pig. He killed it and carried it off. At a river-bank he met a woman, and invited her to share in his spoils. So they both carried the pig off. The woman gathered vegetables and the man banana-leaves. The man cut the pig up and gave the woman a piece to roast and taste. But the woman did not eat it. Instead she sat down and made a face and stayed that way. The man remonstrated with her and then they both prepared and cooked the meat. The man gave half to the woman and kept half for himself. The head, backbone and entrails were similarly divided. Then the man packed up his meat and went away. The woman seeing this shrieked out, "Oh my brother, now he's actually turning away from me." She packed her share speedily, in her anxiety including litter and wood, and with her net-bag full, she followed the man. He was always a little ahead and she ran behind. They continued this way till night came, when the man laid himself under a tree and the woman also lay down under another. Next morning the man set off again very early and although the woman followed she could not find him. She came instead to a house where an old married couple lived and asked them if a man called Nukint had passed by. They replied no and invited her to stay with them. The woman began to cry and finger her netbag, when she felt the litter and wood inside it for the first time. She cried and explained her story to the pair. The old man then said, "There's a theft committed here at our place every day and we haven't caught the thief yet. Will you not look out for the culprit and drive him off?" The man gave her a big digging stick and she went to the edge of the field and kept a look-out. She saw a woman enter the field and gather cucumbers and green vegetables. The woman proceeded into the old field and there gathered sugar-cane and pit-pit, packed everything up and was about to

go. The look-out woman then fell on her, took her collection away and hit her with the stick, giving her a bloody head. The thief ran away fast and the woman returned home to the old people. Next day they wanted to kill a pig, so the two women gathered vegetables while the man picked banana leaves. Next day they killed the pig and as they were placing the meat in the oven-hole the old man said to the woman: "It was good that you came with Nukint. Would you not like to know where he lives and to see him again?" The woman said yes and the old man took her on the flat of his hand and threw her out into the air with a swinging movement. She flew through the air and came down to earth again in front of Nukint's house-door. She saw that Nukint's wife had her head bound up, so she was afraid and wanted to go away. The wife discovered her and said to her husband, "That's the woman who hit me with the stick." When he heard this the man went out and brought her home into the house. She gave all the meat she had brought to her man. They ate it together and then lived with each other.

(Told by: Petlep)

#### 84. THE TWO GIRLS

There were once two girls who were eager to be married. They held a courting-dance and the one chose an ugly man while the other chose a very handsome one. One day as they were working in the fields the one who had married the more handsome partner taunted the other. The other in turn suggested they exchange their husbands and when her sister refused said, "Sister you are very nasty. Now you have insulted me." They dug their sweet potatoes and brought them home. The one sister took up her bag, put on her apron, greased herself and went off to her husband's settlement. The other sister stayed behind with thoughts of revenge. So she hanged herself and her ghost went to her sister's place. The sister greeted her and gave her sweet potatoes, saying, "Eat these and sleep here in the house." Then they sat down

and chatted. When the vegetables were ready in the oven the sister proffered them all to her guest, who did not, however, eat them but took them and hid them in the sleeping cubicle. The sister noticed this and thought, "This can't be my sister alive. She's dead and come as a ghost to kill me." She took out some cooked sweet potatoes and went to her husband in the men's house. She said to him, "My dear husband, there's a woman arrived, I think she's dead and come as a ghost and I'm afraid. Let me sleep here with you in the men's house." However, the husband refused. The ghost had slipped after her sister to eavesdrop. She hurried back to the women's house and when her sister returned chided her with being away so long. They sat together, but the sister did not trust the situation well enough to sleep. She laid out a mat for the other to sleep on. However as dawn was breaking sleep came over her. The ghost fell on her and killed her, then strung her up by a pig cord with her hands to the west and her feet to the east. When the man returned and saw her he cried out, "They've killed my wife, so they have." He wept, poured ashes over himself and cut off a finger. As he sat there he saw that a bird, the Rompena, came flying by from his side and perched on a pig stake. After resting there for a while it flew away. Hence men say that the souls of the dead turn into a Rompena bird. If they return, they are angry and wish to eat up their husbands.

(Told by: Ko)

*Vicedom's note: In Mt. Hagen it is held that the souls of the dead can turn into birds only so long as the funeral feast for them has not yet been held. After the feast they turn into ghosts. The feast is always held a few weeks after a person's death.*

#### 85. WAIPA FROM PUNDEPUKL

In Pundepukl there was a man called Waipa. He heard that the Mokae men, those from Koipe and Nokopa, from Ulka and Ulkepuke were all going to court the girl Rangkopa at Koklunge. He went along

too and was greeted by the girl's mother who told him he could leave his meat with her and go to dance with Rangkopa. The girl greeted him and told the other men that she had danced with them the two previous days, so they could rest a while, as she wanted to take the newcomer back to her house. She introduced him to her parents and asked them to prepare food for him, saying, "He can eat and sleep here, then tomorrow morning he can continue on his way." "That's right!" they replied and got him some sugar-cane and a meal. Next morning they took vegetables and killed a pig. They rubbed Rangkopa with the fat, hung her valuables on her, gave Waipa the meat and said he should take it with him. He took it home and shared it with his brothers and kinsfolk. Next morning, very early, Rangkopa's people came and saw that Waipa was preparing to pay the bride-price. He handed over eight pigs and many valuables. The girl's people prepared the pre-marriage meal and killed pigs. Then the two lived with each other.

One day Waipa said he had eaten all his pigs and so would go out to hunt game. He went to the banks of the Ania stream and the Kim river and the Klomant river and laid animal traps along their banks, picking up his catches from them. He stayed a month, and then wished to cook both the smoked meat and the newly-caught animals. His people made preparations. Waipa said to his wife, the Kokluge woman Rangkopa, and to his sister Nuin, who was married in Katlua, that he wanted them to go and collect the newly-caught animals from the traps "When you've collected them bring them back here," he said. "Go now!" While they were at it the two women found a pleasant and sunny little clearing in the forest near Maip. As they sat there sunning themselves the Kitleng man, Apa, came with a poorly-made axe in his belt and a bundle of arrows in his hand. He heard what they were doing and offered to make fire for them. He took a piece of wood in one hand and Rangkopa's shin-bone in the other and rubbed the two together till

the woman's bones were worn through and she died of the pain. He told the other woman to go back and tell Waipa who had done it and to bring his brothers with him to make war. Nuin did so. Waipa lamented and cut off a finger. He cooked his meat and held the funeral feast, and next morning said, "Now let us go to war!" They put on their feathers, took their bows and spears and went to war. They climbed up the steep hillside which leads into Kitleng on the east but were shot at from above by Apa. Many of them were killed and they returned to Pundepukl. Waipa killed pigs and paid compensation to the Ndika, Jamka, Keme and Kukitlka men who had been killed by Apa while fighting for him. Then they gave up the war.

One day the Meke man Wetlauetla came to see Waipa in Pundepukl. Waipa told him he was a man impoverished through a war, so what did he want? Wetlauetla replied he had only come to ask for a little salt: "Then we will both look at this bundle of salt together." (*Note by Vicedom: text is a figure of speech; "I want you to prepare me a feast for the ears." Why we will see later.*) Waipa replied that this was good and that Wetlauetla should stay. He gave his guest sugar-cane, then cooked him bananas and a piece of meat. Next day, as he was about to go, Wetlauetla mentioned that he had heard the story of what Apa had done and asked how it would be if he himself took revenge on Apa on Waipa's behalf. Waipa suggested he was joking but the other was in earnest, so Waipa promised him shells and necklaces which he brought from his house if he would do so. Wetlauetla asked Waipa to hang a necklace around him in advance, so Waipa did so. Next morning Waipa and his brothers went with Wetlauetla to Apa's ridge. There Apa saw them and hastened to get his weapons, boasting that he would kill them all again. As he spoke an arrow from the Meke-man Wetlauetla went through him and he fell dead. The victors took all his possessions, his netbags with shells inside and his other valuables, as well as his fat pigs. They knocked

his house to bits and burned it, and then returned to Pundepukl. Waipa paid his ally Wetlauetla with numerous shells, necklaces and cowrie-strings. After this Pundepukl Waipa lived a span of time, until he died.

(Told by: Ndika Puk)

86. THE SPIRITS NTIM AND NTAM

There was once a young woman who was hidden by her parents in a bamboo-cane. The spirits Ntim and Ntam knew about this and decided to marry the girl. They went hunting and gathered a pile of grasshoppers, along with opossums and birds. They brought the meat to the girl's parents as a part of the bride-price in order to contract an engagement.

There were also two men, called Towa and Kawokla. They also wanted to marry the girl. They killed pigs and brought the meat to the girl's parents. They took the girl with them back to their village and so the pre-nuptials were completed. One day Ntim and Ntam came with the meat from a fat pig to the girl's parents and wanted to take the girl. The parents were amazed and told them the girl was already married to Towa and Kawokla. The spirits were furious and killed the old couple, ripped the house and gardens apart, then went back to their settlement. One day Towa and Kawokla decided to collect lianas in the woods, and they took the wife with them, leaving her in a hunting-hut while they went out to hunt. Her job was to sort the creepers they had gathered. It was hot and as she was thirsty she went down to a stream to drink. She heard a Rompena bird suddenly beginning to sing: "Ajamb Waklop, look out, here come the spirits of Ntim and Ntam." Hearing this, the woman hurried back to her hut. The two spirits did come, and told her to go along with them. She cried, but they insisted, so she pulled out her hair and strewed it around the front of the hut, took her cowrie-necklace and other valuables out of her netbag and went with them. They came to a steep drop on one

side of the way. One of the spirits ran off down this and from there he shot the woman with an arrow. They left her body lying there and went away. The woman's spirit went home and cooked a meal in the hunting-hut and the men, who returned with their catch, received their food from her. After the meal, she announced to them: "Live well, you two men! I have now become the wife of the spirits Ntim and Ntam and am going to see them." She went out into the open and there disappeared. The two chased her for a while but could not catch up and Towa grew tired and turned back. Kawokla continued to follow. They came to a steep drop, where there was a vegetable garden. The ghost vanished there, and the tired man lay down to sleep. He was found by an old woman and explained his story. The old woman praised him and took him with her. He had cut off a finger and brought it with him. The old woman cooked vegetables and allowed some of the blood from the finger to drop over these, cooking it along with them. She took the food to the spirit-woman to eat and continued so daily till the woman came alive again. One day she asked the woman if she would like to see her husband again. She said yes, very much, but she was now in the land of the dead, so how could it be managed? The old woman brought her husband to her and the two recognised each other and went home to his settlement. As they came near it Towa's little boy announced that Kawokla and his wife were returning. His father told him not to talk nonsense, since those two were dead long ago. The child told him, "Look for yourself, father," and so they were there. The woman returned from the dead later bore a boy, who grew up and was no longer taken about with her by his mother. She went to gather sweet potatoes, and left the boy with his father at home. The child began to scream and cry. The father was at once annoyed and said, "What are you crying for? You owe your life to me. Your mother was dead and I cut off my finger and gave her the blood and brought her back to life. Do you hear?" The mother came home, and hearing this was so vexed she ran



away at night and hanged herself. The man hanged himself too, in anger at this. Then the boy lived along with his other people.

(Told by: Kut)

87. THE FROG POM

A man working at a new field had fur and feather ornaments with him and laid them at the field's edge. A frog came and hid them, and the man, failing to find them, said, "If you're a human being who have taken my things, give me them back. But if you're a ghost then take them away with you." The frog returned the decorations and the man took it home with him as well. His parents asked him why he had this ugly little animal with him, but he refused to throw it away and kept it with him, sharing his food with it and taking it as companion whenever he went. One day the Mar-dance was to be held in another area, so the man hurried round borrowing decorations. At the dance a strange girl came and the people clapped their hands in amazement at her beauty. She danced with the man who had the frog and people wondered if she was his sister. Rain came and the man went to put his decorations away. He invited the girl to come with him but she ran off home and there changed her skin into that of a frog again. The man returned too and slept along with the frog. Later he mentioned that he wanted to put a sow to the boar. The frog took the sow out into the forest and the man found he had lost them both. A month went by and one day the man saw his pig's tracks, followed them and found the pair's dwelling place. Next day he returned and saw that the frog had turned into a beautiful young woman, leaving the frog-skin in the house. He found the woman digging sweet potatoes in the field so went back and threw the frog skin in the river. He went back to the field and told the girl that had she shown herself like this before, they could have been married, only he had thought she was really a frog. Then they married and lived together till they died.

88. KINTAM PENTEM

A man had two wives, one dark the other fair. The fair one was his favourite and he always gave her large portions of meat while he gave small ones only to the dark one. One day, while he was clearing a new field, he told his two wives to go and get him food, then carried on with his work. The fair wife ran off and gathered food, cooked it and hastened back to the field. The dark one stayed at home, left behind by the fair one. As the fair one came to a place where the ways divided she took a tuft of grass and laid it so it pointed along the other way from the way she went. The dark woman, following behind, followed the grass sign, and suddenly she came upon a man's house. A man sitting inside it greeted her with, "Cousin, hello!" The woman replied: "The fair-skinned wife deceived me into taking the wrong road and here I am." The man replied, "Good!" and killed a pig to give her meat. In the night the man went out from his settlement and went to where the husband was sleeping with the fair wife and the children. He took a string and bound a feather head-dress of the wife high up on a house-post, then went away. It was chilly in the morning and the husband called to his wife and told her to make the fire. But she slept on without hearing him, so he stood up to give the fire a stir himself. As he came out from the sleeping-place he saw his wife sitting in the crook of the house-post. He gave a cry and thought, "She's gone mad and is out to kill me!" He rushed out of the house and ran away. However, his wife woke and saw him do this and followed with her child into the woods. There the man shook them off and they ran another way. When the dark wife came back, bringing her meat with her, she saw that there was no-one in the house. Even the fire was out. She took the coals she had brought with her and made a new fire in the house, cooked herself food and sat down. The man returned and slid quietly into the house. His wife saw him and asked, "Husband, what's the matter?" He replied,

"While you were away a ghost came into our house and was going to kill us." Then the two lived with each other. The fair one stayed out in the bush, not daring to come back home, living on a mountain. As she was out there, Enga people came along, carrying salt, and seeing her they were afraid and ran into the bush on all sides. She was frightened too, ran off, and fell over a steep slope so that she died. Then the people from Enga went home.

(Told by: Aje)

89. THE WOMAN AND THE GIANT SNAKE

There were once two men who lived together in the same house. They heard that everyday suitors were going to court a young woman, so they went along too and the girl announced to her other suitors that she would be taking the newcomers to her home. There, her father said: "My daughter, you have brought two men with you." "My father," she replied, "There are two handsome young men who have come to me and I have brought them home." "Good," he said and went into the fields for food to give them. They then unpacked the meat they had brought and gave it to the parents. Next morning the parents greased the girl and hung valuables on her and gave her to the men, who took her away. One of them married her and paid over the bride-price; and they lived together.

One day the woman went into the field to dig sweet-potatoes. While at her work she saw a monster snake coming at her. She gave a loud scream and tried to kill it with blows from her stick. Suddenly she saw that it was her own husband whom she had struck. She began to cry and was going to cut off a finger. Meanwhile the man came alive again and said: "I came and you did not recognise me. That is why you hit me. I am going now to the men's house to sleep. You come behind me and dig up onions on the way home and carry them along with you." The wife did as he said and brought her onions to him in the men's house. There she saw her husband lying inside, dead. She started to

cry, and as she was afraid that her husband's people might kill her, she left him and went back to her own people. There one day she saw her husband coming along the edge of a field and she cried out in joy, "There's my husband!" She put her arms round him, and he said, "Come, wife, return home with me." On the way he unpacked meat and gave it to her to eat. When they came to the dancing-place the woman saw to her amazement that the people were sitting down and holding a mourning session. The people said, "Why, here's the man himself, and he's brought his wife with him." She sat down among the mourners and put on widow's mourning decorations. After a while the people held the funeral feast and the wife was left all alone. Later she went into a lake where the water grasped her and pulled her down. Under the surface she saw her husband and all the other dead people, so she knew she was in the land of the dead. She lived there with her folk.

(Told by: Pamunta)

90. TENGAN-JUIMB

Once a man lived with his wife. She bore him first a girl and then a boy. When the children had grown big the parents went out one day and left the children behind. The woman went to dig sweet-potatoes and the man went to the forest to split wood. The children at home saw a wild duck flying in with a bird-arrow through it and it fell to the ground at their house-door. They took it, cooked it and ate it, and while they were doing so, the parents returned, so they explained what had happened, saying they had laid the arrow on the trestle over the fire. At that moment the hunter came with enquiries about the duck and they told him what happened, suggesting he take his arrow and go. However, he demanded compensation and would not accept pigs or shell necklaces, so they offered him their daughter. He was an untidy and ugly man. Next morning the parents gave them pig meat and sent them off. After a bit the man took off his ugly skin and threw it away, putting on a fine skin and decorations in its place;

and his wife remarked on how attractive he had become. They went into a house and sat down in the place for the inferiors. A woman tried to persuade the girl to come away from there, but she refused. The man came with the meat and divided it among them. They ate together, then he went to the men's house. Next morning the new wife prepared to go to the men's house, but the other wife said the women did not go there and that she ought to stay put as a new wife should, instead of chasing after the man in the men's house. The man brought back game and he and the new wife made a present of it to her parents. At night the wife slept with the other women. As the wives were always quarrelling the man built the new one a house for herself, into which none of the previous wives were to go. The older wives sat together in the old house and said they would visit the other one. One of them did so and liked it so well that she continued to live there. Both she and the new wife bore sons who grew up big. One of them fell from a branch while hunting and died. The father and his other son found him and held the mourning and the funeral feast, attended by a great crowd. The crowd then went home. The living son built another house for himself and his mother and they lived there together.

(Told by: Rok)

91. PINT FROM MUKL

In Mukl there was a man called Pint. He spent all his time in the woods and left his parents alone at home. One day he saw a fire burning in the distance, as far away as from here to Katlua. He went home and told his parents and suggested killing a pig so that the next day when he went to investigate the fire he could have meat with him. This was done. Next morning Pint greased and decorated himself, gave the small pieces of pig-meat to his parents and took the two flanks, the backbone and the head for himself, packing them in his netbag. He took his weapon and left. On the way he met an old woman beside a large sweet-potato field. He greeted her and gave her some meat. She

praised him and he told her why he had come. The old woman replied that the fire was burning because men were coming to court her daughter Ajampetla, and she told him to go and dance with Ajampetla a little.

When she saw him Ajampetla said to the other men that a relative of her father's had come, whom she must take to her father and give some food to. At her house the father said, "When girls are in love they run off to the village of their man, but when men are in love they do not run into their girl's home. However, you have yourself brought your man here, and that is the right way!" He gathered and cooked bananas for the guest along with a piece of meat, and after the guest had eaten, he lay down and slept with the girl in the women's house. Next day the father took a fat male pig and valuables to the spirit-house and killed the male pig there. He greased the girl and hung her with valuables and presented them both with the cooked meat. They went away, and coming to a mountain ridge sat down and looked around. They saw houses burning in the girl's parents' place. Pint told Ajampetla to stay there while he went to look for the parents. He found a company of men there who had killed the parents and were going to tear the place to pieces. He ran and killed them with his spear but was himself killed by an insidious little slave. Pint's soul went to Ajampetla and said what had happened without mentioning his own death. The girl noticed that he looked strange and began to cry and held mourning for him. Pint told her to stop and to come along with him. When they arrived at the mountain crags Pint said to her: "Go down to the other side of the river. There a house stands. Undo the house door and go inside. I will follow on later." They carried on together and the woman went inside the house. The man ran into the house-garden and made off to the west. The people sitting in the house asked Ajampetla: "Where are you going to?" She replied that she had come with Pint from Mukl and since Pint had been killed she was now by herself. They said that it was right that she had come on by herself

even though he was dead. They held the mourning for Pint and killed pigs for the funeral feast. The woman married one of Pint's brothers. They lived together and had many children. Then they died.

(Told by: Naklma)

92. KUTLI AND MAK

There were once two men called Kutli and Mak. Mak was a poor fellow, but Kutli by contrast was rich and had many valuables, and was able to hold a festival for shell-exchanges. It was time for him to receive back the shells he had loaned out, and to the festival there came also the woman Moklamb Detlamb. She had decorated herself as a man with a feather head-dress and cowrie-ropes and had hung a shell on herself. As she approached the festival-place she began to beat her drum and arrived dancing. As she was a stranger all the folk were amazed at her presence, asked if she were one of Kutli's sisters, then decided she must be a foreigner. The woman took no notice, and danced the Ware-dance. As she was very beautiful Kutli told his wife to keep hold of her after the dance so that she should not get away. The wife bound her with a string and kept an eye on her. However at dusk the woman freed herself and made off. The people excitedly looked for her but could not find her. Next day she returned, decorated with feathers and parts of opossums, with an effect which could not be matched by any of the others. She did the Ware-dance again, was bound again and got free once more. The people were puzzled, as she was not like a woman of their people in her ways, and searched for her without success. The next day was the last day of the festival and everyone greased themselves and danced and the borrowers of shells all made their return to Kutli. The foreign woman came and danced the Ware and this time Mak told his wife to grasp hold of her, but the woman broke free again. Mak was very doleful, smeared himself with dirt and said how he'd wanted to marry the girl but she'd escaped. Next morning he killed and cooked a whole

pig and packed all the meat in his bag and went off, determined to marry the girl, though he was only a poor man.

He ran towards the west and came to the settlement of the Kendika. He asked them about the woman and they replied yes, she had been through, but she was a bad woman, a cannibal. In the Poyeka settlement he greeted a slave politely and asked about the woman. The slave shrank away and advised him to go somewhere else rather than to the woman's place. Mak however, kept on. He gave the slave the pig's liver and continued. In the forest he came near to the big mountain Ketlua Letlip, and heard that a little way off someone was chopping wood. He went in the direction of the noise and found his matrilineal cross-cousin, chopping at the wood. The cousin advised him in fear not to go to Moklamb's settlement, as she ate men, but Mak countered, "No, I won't go back. My brother Kutli held a shell-festival and treated me like a poor churl at it. That upset me badly. So I'm going to carry on and marry this woman." He gave his cousin a piece of meat and received in return a pearl shell. The cousin picked bananas for him and gave him a piece of pork which he had in the house. Mak cooked the food and they ate it together. Mak announced he would pursue his way tomorrow and the cousin again tried to dissuade him, saying he had already been given a shell and should go home to his place satisfied with that. Mak wouldn't hear of it. Next morning he reached Ketlua Letlip and saw that the river was swollen and running fast. As he was wondering how to cross it a cassowary came and tried to ford it. Failing in this the cassowary returned, cut down wood and built itself a bridge, and crossed that way; so Mak followed it, and climbed up a large Pangkep-tree, from which he had a good view all around.

He saw a troop of women working in a field with large numbers of dogs around them. One of the women went and drank from the river. Eventually Moklamb Detlta Klamb climbed down to the water



to wash her sweet potatoes. Mak threw a fruit of the Pangkep-tree at her and hit her between the shoulder-blades. She gave a cry and looked about her and saw Mak in the tree. He said, "Look, I'm here. Come with me." She said she would first take her potatoes home, then she would come. She took them home and cooked them, saying to the other women: "I have such a bad stomach-ache! The worms are biting me." She retired to her house and packed her clothes and valuables and went to the man. They crossed the river and stayed the night with his cousin. Next day they reached Mak's home. Everyone was astounded and Kutli said he would go too and get a wife like that from Ketlua. Mak advised him not to. He himself had been a man who had nothing to lose and didn't care if he died but Kutli had too much to lose. However, Kutli went, and passing through Kendika and Poyeka, received the same warnings as were given to Mak. The cousin tried to buy him off by giving him eight shells, but Kutli wouldn't listen. He crossed the river and climbed the Pangkep tree. However, he saw only unattractive women coming down to the water's edge. Then an attractive one came and he threw a fruit at her, without seeing that she had a dog with her. The dog howled at him and brought the other dogs along. They all bit at the tree trunk till they had gnawed it through. The tree fell down with Kutli in it, and the dogs bit him to death. The cousin heard the news one day, and going to the place where the corpse lay he cut off a little finger from it and took it to Kutli's brothers. The brothers said, "He's been killed, here's the proof of it, a piece of his body." They sounded the invitation to war in all the settlements and by night-time all the warriors were assembled. They set off, and arriving at the place where Kutli was killed surrounded it and set alight to the houses. The dogs, which had cried so loud before, ran about in the houses and were burnt with them. The warriors took all the valuables, bags of shells and necklaces, and returned home. Back at home Mak divided the spoils and paid the allies. He killed pigs

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too and gave meat to the men who had aided him. Then the warriors returned home to their settlements.

(Told by: Puk)

*Vicedom's note: The dogs were the women's husbands.*





Plate 2



Plate 3



Plate 4





Plate 6





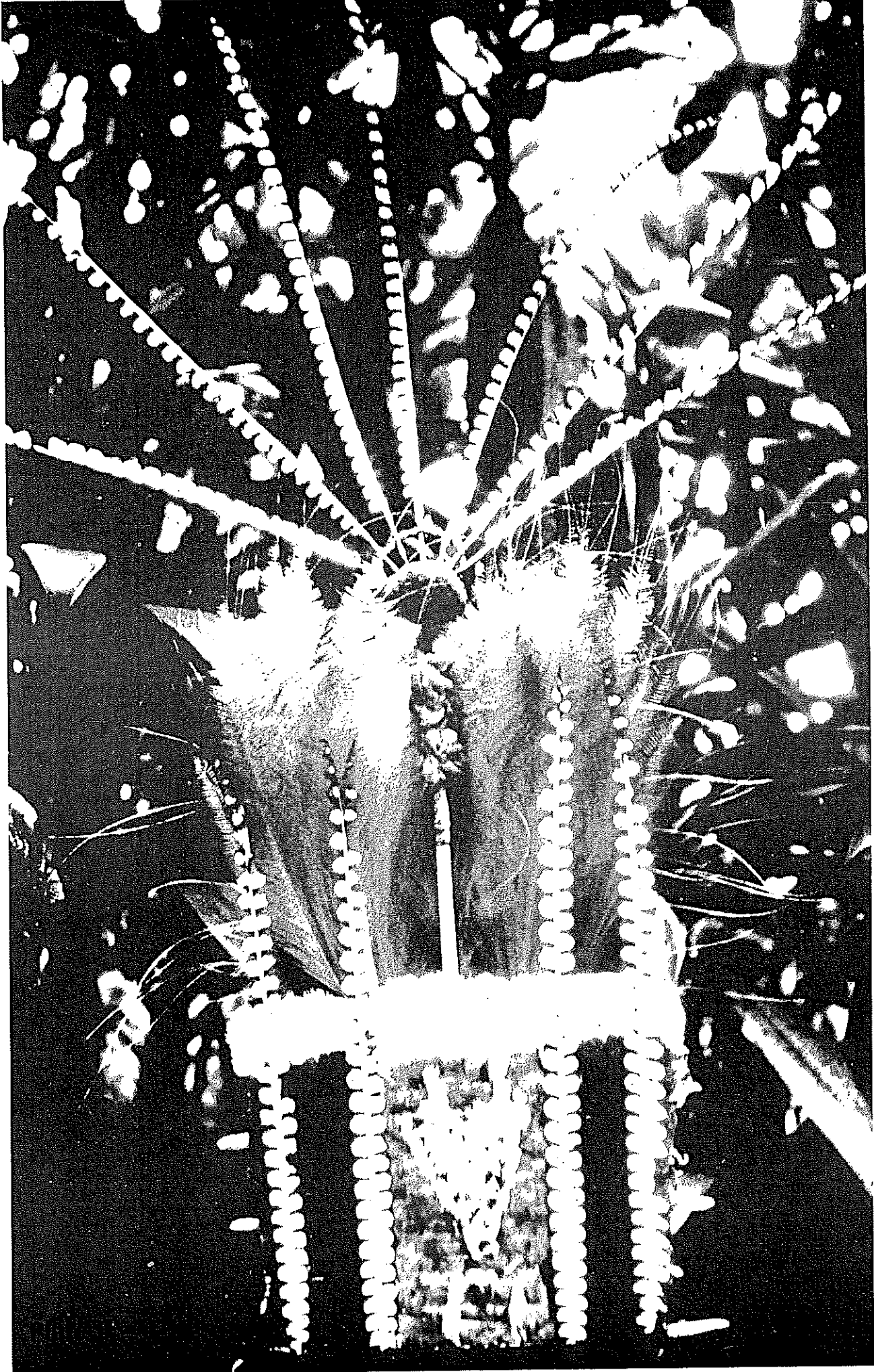
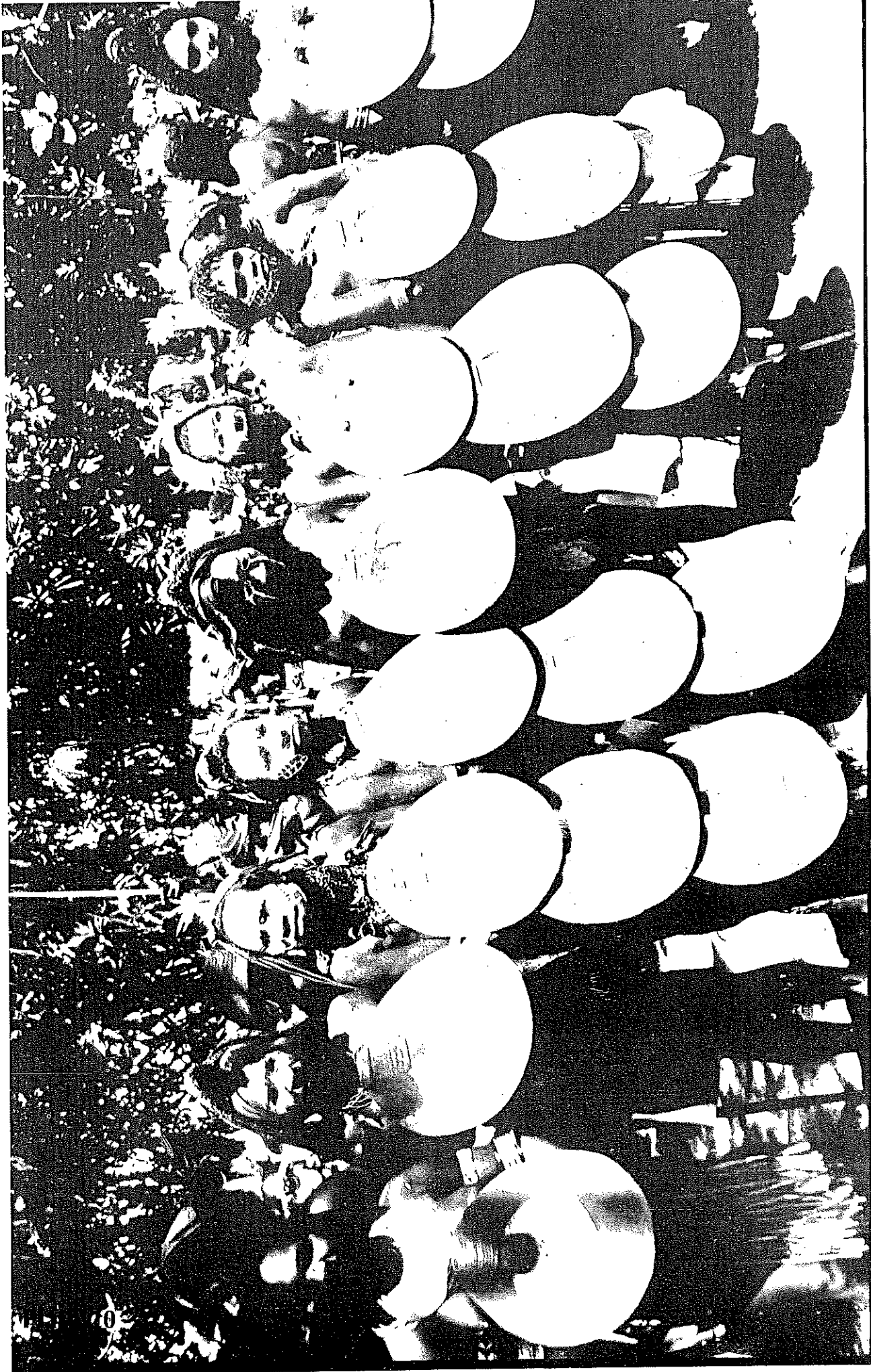




Plate 9



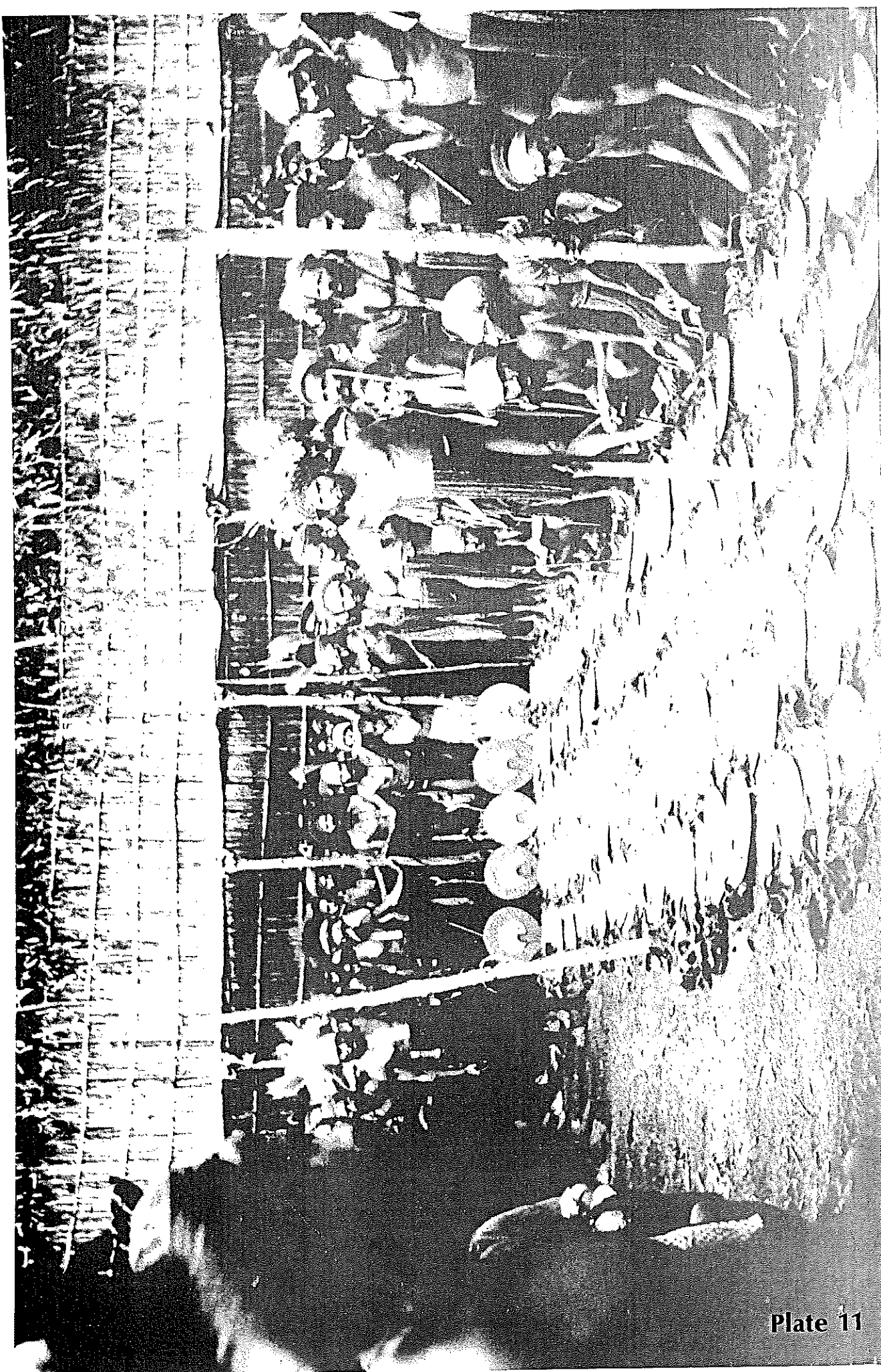


Plate 11

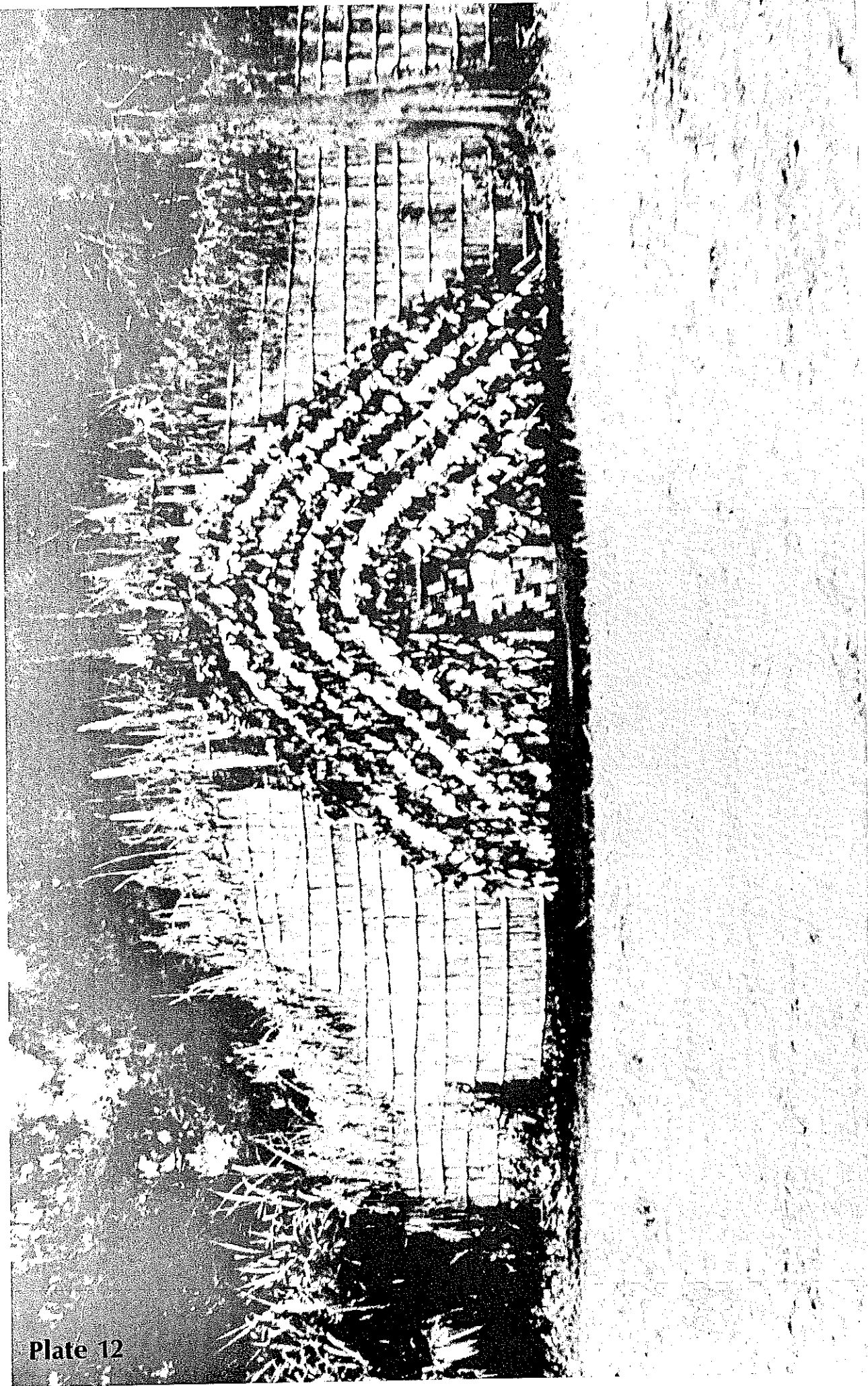


Plate 12

NOTES ON THE PHOTOGRAPHS

1. Young woman of Ulka tribe in the Nebilyer Valley, parading at a moka festival, 1970.
2. Two brothers, Ndoa and Kngal, of Kawelka Membo clan, dancing mør for a moka festival at the place Maninge, December 1971.
3. Two women married into Kawelka Mandembo clan, dancing werl at Maninge, 1971. They wear special long aprons (nggil wenyen).
4. Ndau, married daughter of the big-man Ongka of Kawelka tribe, resting after participation in the werl dance at Maninge, 1971.
5. Young woman with large pearl shell (kina) suspended at her breast, near Tomba 1969. She dances arm-in-arm with men doing mør.
6. Minembi tribesmen dancing mør to celebrate the re-opening of a community school at Golke, Dei Council, 1976.
7. Nikint, son of the big-man Ndamba of Kawelka Kundmbo clan, holds up a joint of pork for presentation after a performance of the Kor Nganap festival at Golke, 1973. (On this festival see myth no.16.)
8. The køi wal head-dress, worn by men for important moka festivals. Long sprays of King of Saxony crest feathers surmount and line a brilliantly-coloured plaque of parrot plumage and Red bird of paradise feathers.
9. The big-man, Ndamba of Kawelka Kundmbo clan, makes a speech of thanks to the men of Minembi Mimke clan, who have just presented his group with over \$A1,000 as a 'money-moka', September 16th 1973.
10. Senior women at moka festival near Tomba (not far from Tambul) in 1969. They wear multiple displays of pearl shells mounted on resin backings.

11. A display of pearl shells to be given as a war-compensation payment (wuφ peng) between two clans of the Ukini tribe, near Ropanda, December 27th 1964. The payment preceded a Kor Nganap performance. The main fence round the cult enclosure can be seen at the men's back.
12. A cult-enclosure fence for the Kor Wφp cult at a ceremonial ground belonging to the Epkla-Elya tribe-pair in the lower Nebilyer Valley. The special arch of red and white leaves over the doorway is known as kor tapra pepil or kφltapa.

See also A. and M. Strathern, Self-decoration in Mount Hagen, Duckworth, 1971, colour plate 29; and H. Strauss, Die Mi-Kultur der Hagenberg Stämme, Hamburg, 1962, p.408, for further illustration and discussion.