Front cover illustration:
On the island of Masahet, with Aniolam in the background and the mine site visible (far left). Masahet, May 2008.

Back cover illustration:
Kirsty Gillespie recording pil at Leesel, Aniolam, with Benjamin Rukam, Herman Luak, and Joseph Kondiak. January 2010 (photo by Nick Bainton).
Pil:
Ancestral Stories of the Lihir Islands
1. *Forms and Styles of Traditional Banoni Music*, by Regis N. Stella (1990)
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National Library Service Cataloguing-in-Publication Data:

Gillespie, Kirsty.
p. ; cm. – (Apwɨtɨhɨre: studies in Papua New Guinea musics ; 12)
Includes bibliography.

ISSN 1027-4707


PNG/398.209583/G54 – dc22

National Library Service of Papua New Guinea

Printed by Markono Print Media Pte. Ltd., Singapore
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STORYTELLING TRADITIONS are vibrant throughout Papua New Guinea, but remain naturally inaccessible to those who do not speak the languages concerned. One of the roles of the Institute of Papua New Guinea Studies (IPNGS) is to develop “a publication programme to inform the people of the country about all aspects of indigenous culture” (*National Cultural Commission Act* 1994: sect. 20(g)). Since the very beginnings of the Institute in 1974, we have issued publications that celebrate such traditions. Sometimes these publications are in local languages; in other publications, translations into English, Tok Pisin, or Hiri Motu are provided. Ideally, we prefer to provide both the vernacular text and a translation.


While some of these writings were published as monographs, others appeared in the journal *Oral History*, which existed from 1972 to 1985. Originally established in 1972 at the University of Papua New Guinea by oral historian and editor John Collier (later, Kolia), it was taken on by the Institute upon its establishment. From 1973 until 1980, an extraordinary ten issues appeared each year; this was reduced to four issues during its final years. The hundred-odd volumes of *Oral History* contain an amazingly rich corpus of all kinds of oral traditions.

The authors of these collections include local and overseas researchers. In some cases, the stories were originally published in another European language, but have been translated into English to enable Papua New Guineans to have greater access to them.

Elsewhere, I previously suggested that narrative traditions in the country could be considered according to their relationship to song (Niles 2003.ix). The present collection of Lihir pil gives examples of how songs are used at various intervals in an otherwise spoken text.
Pil: Ancestral Stories of the Lihir Islands appears as the twelfth volume in our Apwɨtɨhɨre: Studies in Papua New Guinea Musics series. The use of songs to punctuate spoken stories was also an important feature of an earlier book in this series—Richard Moyle’s collection of Takū kkai from the Autonomous Region of Bougainville (Moyle 2003)—but is certainly common to many other parts of the country.

Indeed Moyle’s book proved to be of particular importance to the existence of the present collection as well. In March 2009, I was invited to attend the launch on Lihir of Kirsty Gillespie’s compact disc of Lihir music (Gillespie 2008). I brought along a number of our publications to help explain our work to people on Lihir. While our books concerning music were of passing interest, Moyle’s collection of stories evoked much greater discussion. People were particularly attracted to the inclusion of the vernacular text of stories plus English translations. A lively discussion about a possible comparable publication for Lihir stories transpired. While it would be almost a decade before such a book could appear, the initial inspiration from one of our publications showed what a powerful stimulant such books can be.

Already in March 2011, Kirsty approached me about the possibility of the Institute publishing a book of Lihir stories. I said we would very much like to do so and encouraged her to produce such a manuscript. For various reasons, it was not until the end of January 2018 that we received her document. But then things moved quickly indeed. A rough PDF of the book was created to obtain quotes for printing. And continuing our policy of having double-blind peer reviews of all our potential publications, we sought comments from two reviewers. They were unanimous in their support for publication and offered suggestions for further refinements. These were shared with Kirsty, who made final revisions to the text, while at the same time seeking funds for printing. In the meantime, decisions were made about photographs for inside the book and the cover by exchanging a flurry of PDFs showing possible layouts. By the middle of May, the main text of the book was completed, allowing enough time for the expected increase in her family.

While this book contains a written version of pil stories in the Lihir language with English translations, we are especially happy that the recordings from which the written versions were transcribed and translated are available on the Internet. What a wonderful resource for the people of Lihir and for anyone who values cultural traditions.

In addition to my visit to Lihir in 2009, I was also privileged to return there in 2015 to participate in the book launch of an English translation of a dictionary of the Lihir language that my Institute published (Neuhaus 2015). This was another project in which Kirsty played a key early role. But I had first met Kirsty in 2004, when she was doing PhD research on the music of the Duna people of what is today Hela province (Gillespie 2007; published in 2010). We
collaborated on a project concerning chanted tales or sung narratives in parts of the Highlands of Papua New Guinea, culminating in research, two workshops, and an edited volume (Rumsey and Niles 2011).

Kirsty and I also met at various conferences around the world during our mutual involvement in the International Council for Traditional Music (ICTM). In 2012, I was general editor of ICTM’s journal, the Yearbook for Traditional Music, and was thrilled when Kirsty and anthropologist Nicholas Bainton submitted a paper based on research in Lihir (Gillespie and Bainton 2012). Kirsty’s term as chair of the ICTM’s Study Group on Music and Dance in Oceania led to us teaming up with Sally Treloyn to edit a festschrift honouring Kirsty’s doctoral supervisor, Stephen Wild (Gillespie et al. 2017). I am very happy that this book of pil can continue this productive collaboration.

I would like to thank the anonymous reviewers for their encouraging and helpful comments, and Newcrest Mining Ltd. for their essential support in enabling publication in this form. I also thank Kirsty for her enthusiasm to publish this delightful collection with the Institute. I am very pleased that my Institute continues to provide support for such publications. This book also benefitted significantly from my attachment as honorary associate professor with the Australian National University. Of course, we are most particularly indebted to the storytellers for sharing their considerable skills and knowledge with us all.

The Institute of Papua New Guinea Studies is proud to publish this collection of Lihir pil and hopes it will further stimulate or even provoke collections of stories from other parts of the country as well. As John Kolia encouraged Papua New Guineans to write their own history forty-two years ago (Kolia 1976), we expand his exhortation to embrace all types of oral literature, including stories. This is our challenge to readers.

DON NILES
ACTING DIRECTOR & SENIOR ETHNOMUSICOCOLOGIST
INSTITUTE OF PAPUA NEW GUINEA STUDIES

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Foreword

The tremendous work and achievement of Kirsty Gillespie to document pil ancestral stories is indeed a bonus for the people of Lihir. She has preserved the stories in written form for our future generations which is a relief to Lihirians who are passionate about the preservation of the oral pil storytelling cultural tradition and the preservation of the Lihir language.

This work also reminds the younger generations of Lihirians of the importance of our tradition of storytelling. Documented in the Lihir language and in English, this book will benefit future generations. It comes at the right time, when the Lihir language is under threat as a result of rapid changes in lifestyle due to large scale mining on Lihir Island (Aniolam) since the mid-1990s.

Pil and its cultural significance in Lihir society

According to elder Michael Solgas, one of the storytellers in this book, pil storytelling began at the very beginning of time, during the period when our ancestors used stone axes. It was the era when men gave commands, and things happened the way they wanted; all activities and happenings were undertaken according to instructions and orders, just like God, who gave the command, “Let there be light!,” and there was light.

Pil storytelling was so important. It played a significant part in the Lihir social structure: pil were told by important elderly men (toye) and women (weyen toye) during the yam-planting seasons, as it was traditionally believed that pil storytelling events during that period assisted the gardens to become healthier, eventually producing large quantities of good quality yams during harvest time.

The main focus of pil storytelling was to pass on wisdom and moral guidance to children, to provide important inspirational guides to encourage and mould them to be better children, who will later care for the needy, the sick, the disadvantaged, so that they all happily live together in the community.

Pil stories allow listeners to focus their minds and decide to inherit the wisdom of the characters, thus discouraging them from the behaviours of the unwise and greedy men and women in the stories, who will always be punished in the end as evident in the endings of some pil. Codes of conduct also surround the telling of pil; for example, during the storytelling event, all must listen and not
talk while the story is being told. It is said that anyone who breaches this rule will have their tongue split into two (telmatsmats) like a lizard’s—a rare and ugly physical feature.

The pil book: A treasure for Lihir

This book is a treasure for the people of Lihir, as the pil stories and their songs are told, recorded, and written in Lihir language. Pil storytelling is less a part of community events compared to the past when I was growing up, as the present young generations and adults are more preoccupied now with other activities. Therefore, it is highly important for Lihir people to revive this storytelling tradition in villages and schools, and encourage the younger generations of today to tell and write these stories in Lihir language.

On behalf of the people of Lihir, I thank Kirsty Gillespie for the initiative and the great work to secure financial assistance to make it possible to document pil stories and to publish this book. Your work in recording pil ancestral stories is a contribution to the preservation of the Lihir pil tradition as well as the language. A puet si wa Kirsty.

I thank the Lihir Cultural Heritage team, especially Peter Toelinkanut and Rosemary Tohielats for their contribution in translating the pil and for their time spent with Kirsty on this work. A puet si gol Peter kene Rosemary.

A special thank you to Nick Bainton, who supported and provided assistance during his term with Lihir Gold Limited Community Relations team on Lihir, and to Don Niles from the Institute of Papua New Guinea Studies for your time and support of this project. A puet si gol Nick kene Don.

Yel na!
Acknowledgements

I first wish to thank the people of the Lihir Island Group for welcoming me to their islands and sharing with me over many years their unique cultural traditions. A big thanks to storytellers Theckla Inial, Andrew Monka, Joseph Pilai, Edmund Sanabel, Michael Solgas, Rosemary Tohielats, and Elizabeth Walis for allowing me to record their telling of pil. The members of the Lihir Cultural Heritage Association have been integral to my work in Lihir, facilitating travel and interactions with communities, and I am grateful for their guidance and care. Luke Kabariu, as a founding member of the Association, Superintendent Cultural Heritage for Newcrest Mining Ltd. and a highly respected Lihir elder, has been a constant point of contact for me while I was finalising this project in Australia, assisting with the spellings of place names on the Lihir map as well as communicating with community members on my behalf. His continued support of my efforts to document Lihir culture is greatly appreciated. Peter Toelinkanut and Rosemary Tohielats, as both members of the Association and passionate advocates for the Lihir language, devoted many hours to the painstaking work of transcription and translation of these stories, and without their efforts this volume would not exist. A pet si gol.

I am grateful to the Firebird Foundation for Anthropological Research for the financial support which funded the 2010 recordings, transcriptions, and translations; and to Lihir Gold Ltd. and Newcrest Mining Ltd. for their in-kind support during fieldwork. I would also like to acknowledge Newcrest Mining Ltd. for their generous contribution to the production of this publication. The two anonymous reviewers of this book in manuscript form gave very constructive comments, which helped improve the volume: thanks are also due to Nick Bainton, Simon Foale, Susan Hemer, and Martha Macintyre for their contributions to the list of further references that concludes the volume. Thanks to Eswin Kumanunku, Nick Bainton, and Artem Golev for their photographic contributions, and to David Haigh for the vital work of making the book and accompanying sound files available on the website, lihir.info. Finally, I wish to thank Don Niles for his unwavering support and encouragement, eagle eye and wise counsel.
Notes to the Reader

This book can be downloaded for free as a PDF file from the website Luk Save long Lihir: http://www.lihir.info/kastom/pil. The sound files for the stories can also be found at this website.

You can listen to the stories by visiting the above website, or by clicking on the QR codes on the first page of each story in the book. (An example appears at the bottom of this page.) This requires the reader to have first downloaded QR reader software onto a mobile phone or tablet. Software is freely available via Google Play or the App Store.

All recordings were made by Kirsty Gillespie.

All photographs were taken by Kirsty Gillespie, unless otherwise indicated.
Pil: An Introduction

Pil are oral narratives told in the Lihir Island Group in New Ireland Province, part of the Bismarck Archipelago in the far northeast of Papua New Guinea (map 1). These stories are likened to fairy tales, though some are said to be true stories, and all feature some element of Lihir reality, especially in relation to their references to ancestral customs and to the lived landscape. Many of these stories have recurring songs within them that add to the drama of the tale. Stories often feature sorcerers, tricksters, and various spirit beings that interact with mortal humans, and some point to the origins of aspects of Lihir life. On the most domestic level, pil stories play out family conflicts and in doing so present a right way to live and be.

This volume shares a selection of pil that were recorded in collaboration with the Lihir Cultural Heritage Association (Tok Pisin: Lihir Kalsarel Eritig Asosiesen), a community-based organization that supports cultural activities using funding from the large-scale gold mining taking place in the islands. Mining has been a significant part of the Lihir social, cultural, economic, and geographical landscape since the mid-1990s, and much literature exists which considers how mining has impacted upon Lihir life. While mining has brought change to cultural traditions, at the same time the economic boost experienced by communities has led to an increase in the scale and frequency of some customary activities. Similarly, the existence of the Lihir Cultural Heritage Association and the activities that they have been able to undertake are due to mining in the islands. At the same time, mining, and the change that it brings, has been the impetus to undertake documentation of Lihir cultural traditions, including the pil that constitute this collection.

The Lihir Cultural Heritage Association grew from the original Lihir Cultural Heritage Committee established in 2009. Through an extensive consultation process across the islands, the group put together a guidance document for their activities, entitled The Lihir Cultural Heritage Plan: Defining the Lihir Cultural Heritage Program / A irir wana mamalien a anio Lir: A Plan for Social Stability and Harmony on Lihir (see Bainton et. al. 2011 for background to the

1. When the article is included, the genre is known as a pil. The term pil has also been used as a general term for “story” in Lihir, such as when referring to Bible stories (see Neuhaus 1927).
formation of the plan). This document identifies language as one of the four “house posts” or pillars that uphold Lihir culture, and lists the recording of song and performance genres as one of the tasks to undertake in order to satisfy this objective: *Identify, document, and preserve the history and culture of Lihir in order to promote understanding and maintenance of Lihirian cultural heritage*. The collection of pil brought together in this volume, and the broader body of pil recordings that this collection in sourced from, is thus a direct outcome of *The Lihir Cultural Heritage Plan*. More details on this recording project and the selection of stories appear below, but first, some notes on the performance genre itself.

**The performance of pil**

*Pil* can be told by individual males or females of varying age and are a source of evening entertainment. Often *pil* function as bedtime stories or lullabies for children, who are generally listeners of the story form, and in this way can learn how to tell *pil* themselves. Despite the seemingly familiar, domestic performance setting for *pil*, certain protocol surrounds the telling of the genre: children have been warned that if they tell *pil* during the day something will

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2. The object dropping onto the head of the storyteller has varied in accounts between a bottle, a gourd, and a coconut.
fall on their heads and crack their skulls. Similarly, there is traditionally a right
time of year for telling pil: the yam-growing season, from yam planting through
to yam harvest. Pil should not be told near food gardens outside of this time as
this could affect the fertility of the gardens.

In performance, pil characteristically open with a formulaic exchange of words
between the performer and the audience. These words cannot be translated,
and some Lihir people have suggested this is because the words are an archaic
form of Lihir language. The performer addresses the audience with the word
meme. The collective response of the audience varies depending on where in
the islands the performance is taking place. On Mahur, the outermost island in
the Lihir Island Group, the audience response has been recorded as tete pots (or
tete pot), whereas in stories told on the island of Masahet, the phrase is usually
tel mats. The different responses may reflect dialect differences (between six
and eight dialects have been identified across the island group). Although the
actual words of this exchange cannot be translated, the knowledge of them and
the function they have is clear: with the first phrase the performer summons the
audience’s attention that the story is about to begin, and in their response the
audience indicates that they are ready to hear the story.

As they formulaically open, so do pil close; with the storyteller figuratively
giving a pig’s head to another person (a pig’s head itself is not actually given).

At the end of the performance, the storyteller announces he or she is giving
the head of a pig to someone nearby and names that person. This person then
tells the next pil (if not within that sitting, then it is implied that they will be
the first storyteller the next time people sit down for pil). Sometimes the giving
of the pig’s head is factored into the story; for example the very last event in
the narrative might involve the protagonist hosting a feast, which provides the
storyteller with the perfect segue to give the head of the pig from that feast to
the next storyteller, thus bringing their story into the present and so bringing
an end to their narrative.

SONGS WITHIN STORIES
Pil storylines are generally well known—new pil do not appear to be readily
composed. They are handed down over the generations without a sense of any
individual ownership, though there are associations of certain stories with
certain places and the people who live there, as well as associations between
tellers who are known for their renditions of particular stories. Thus, although
individual competencies naturally vary, pil are open for most anyone to tell.

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3. The two stories in the present collection that were recorded in 2008 (i.e., the first
and last stories) do not feature this formulaic opening and close; this is likely due to the
stories being recorded outside of the formal pil documentation context that shaped the
2010 recordings.
A recurring song—usually one which is unique to that story—is heard in the majority of pil. While the telling of pil can vary between storytellers, the songs within narratives are regarded as fixed. The same song might be heard three or four times within that story. The songs are typically the words of the protagonist speaking to someone else or to themselves about something which they are experiencing, usually conveying directly or indirectly how they feel about an experience. They are short—often just four lines or so—and sometimes songs are sung twice or more in succession (especially at the first rendition), as well as at intervals throughout the story. Individual lines are also often repeated in the songs. In the shortness of their texts and in their repetition, pil songs are comparable to other Lihir songs used in customary dancing, which also have songs made up of short texts that are repeated in succession (though many more times) until a dance has ended and that feature the repetition of individual lines. The pil songs also have an internal rhythm which further connects them to the Lihir songs of dance.

Stories with songs have been recorded in other parts of Papua New Guinea, most thoroughly by Richard Moyle in his documentation of “musical fables” (kkai) from the atoll of Takū, east of Bougainville (2003) in Papua New Guinea. Moyle identifies such a narrative structure as being typically Polynesian, in particular that “fables embodying short songs appear to be characteristic of West Polynesia and the Polynesian Outliers” (2003:xviii), Takū itself being a Polynesian Outlier. There are, however, examples of songs within stories that appear in other Papua New Guinean locations not otherwise considered to be culturally influenced by Polynesia—Lihir being one. Niles identifies a number of authors who have described such traditions (Niles 2003:ix); more recently Birgit Drüppel has described songs within stories (lauwin) that are performed by the Kaulong people of West New Britain (Drüppel 2009:25–33).

In a 1973 collection of oral literature from Papua New Guinea published in English, Glenys Köhnke writes that “many of their stories incorporate song, which enhances the atmosphere” (Köhnke 1973:x). Like Lihir pil, many stories

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4. The only recording of pil I have made which includes more than one song is a story where two different songs were sung in quick succession at several points in the narrative, representing courtship dialogue: a woman singing to a man, and the man responding.

5. Neuhaus makes the following etymological observation and speculation in his grammar of the Lihir language: “The word for ‘tale’, a pil, is the i-variant of the root word pulipuli, which in Makasar [in Sulawesi, Indonesia] poetic language is employed for ‘speech’. In Pala [a Patpatar language from ‘mainland’ New Ireland] it is a pir. That may be a reference to the origin of some tales” (Neuhaus 2015:29). From this we can understand that the pil narrative genre may appear in similar forms across the New Ireland region and possibly beyond. (By an i-variant, Neuhaus is understood to mean an alternative form of a word, where the usual vowel is replaced with an i. Thus, pulipuli becomes pilipili, which in Lihir language becomes pil.)
in her collection are narrated by a sole performer. Audience participation does however feature in one particular story, where Köhnke describes that

listeners of the tale take up the song and so express their own participation in the oral tradition. The re-enactment of the legend reflects the unity of story-teller and listener in a living culture, common to all. (Köhnke 1973:x)

This level of audience participation is also uncommon in pil, though there is an exception in the song of the last story in this present collection. In this story, the audience joins in with the song once the narrative and the song have been established, displaying the kind of unity to which Köhnke refers.

Moyle himself does not speculate on the function of song within the Takū narratives. Don Niles, in his introduction to Moyle’s volume, however, suggests that songs in stories may encapsulate something essential about the story, provide commentary on it, bridge different episodes, enable a character to express themselves in another verbal form, or be used at various points in the narration to provide … aural continuity. (Niles 2003:x)

Niles also goes on to say that “even if the song is not in a language known to the listeners or consists solely of vocables, the change from a spoken text to a sung one further heightens the emotion of the scene” (Niles 2003:x).

While the majority of pil contain a recurring song, not all utilize songs. Rosemary Tohielats, Lihir translator and educator, compares pil with songs to pil without songs (original in Tok Pisin, followed by its English translation) in this account:

Tupela wantaim i orait. Sampela i gat singsing, sampela nogat … Singsing em bilong pulim tingting bilong ol lisenas, bai ol i konsentret moa … Ol bai sori moa long en, ol bai lus tingting long ol narapela samting we em i stap klostu long en … taim em i singsing, ol bai sindaun na harim. (pers. comm., 3 September 2011)

Both kinds are okay. Some have songs, some don’t … Songs draw the listener’s mind in, they will be able to concentrate more … They will all feel much more for them [the main character], they will forget all the other things that have been occupying them … when the storyteller sings they will all sit down and listen.

One of the key elements recurring throughout these descriptions is the emotion the listener feels upon hearing the song and how it incites a sympathy/empathy towards the character’s own emotional state. It is also likely that the recurrence of song in story assists the narrator by providing a lull in the recounting of events, and also, in Niles’s words, “helps recall the story to the narrator” (Niles 2003:x).
Map 2: The Lihir Group of Islands (based on Bainton 2010:19, map 2-2, and data from Google Earth; revised place names provided by Luke Kabariu).
The evolution of the pil project

I first came across the pil genre in 2008. During a project repatriating wax cylinder recordings of Lihir songs (see Gillespie 2017), I travelled with the Lihir Cultural Heritage Association (then Committee) across the island group, playing back the archival recordings in digitized form and recording people’s musical responses to the recordings, a project which resulted in the first output of the Lihir Cultural Heritage Association, the compact disc *Ae tinil wen Lir: Music of Lihir* (Gillespie 2008).

On one memorable evening, the Committee members and I sought a senior man known for his performances of Lihir cultural traditions broadcast on radio by the National Broadcasting Corporation (NBC); recordings of his performances are said to be held in the NBC studios in Kavieng, the capital of New Ireland Province. The man had aged, and as he began to tell one of the pil stories he was known for, it became clear that he was no longer performing at his best. His daughter, an established culture bearer herself, then stepped up to tell the tale. This very moving story of the tale of two boys and the Ailaya—a significant cultural and geological site on the island of Aniolam that is understood by Lihir people as the portal to the afterlife—constitutes the final story of this volume. The recording of this pil started a conversation amongst the Lihir Cultural Heritage Association members about the importance of documenting this oral literature; there was a concern that because of the rapidly changing lifestyle in the Lihir Islands, due in large part to the introduction of mining in the islands, the art of telling pil and their transmission were in danger. In 2009 funding was secured from the Firebird Foundation for Anthropological Research to pursue this documentation.

The bulk of the recordings of pil for this project took place over January and February 2010, during which ninety pil were recorded. The large number of recordings made suggested that pil was not yet an endangered tradition and that people were still actively performing pil; people of a variety of ages were able to draw upon their existing knowledge of pil to perform for recording. Recordings were made across the four permanently inhabited islands of the Lihir Island Group: Mahur, Masahet, Malie, and Aniolam (map 2). All stories were told for the purpose of recording and documentation. In recording out of the traditional context, some stories were inevitably told during the day, however the Committee members and I were advised that this would not attract the kind of consequences (such as something falling from the sky onto the head of the storyteller) as described in the previous section, as we were working

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6. Two pil in the present collection were sourced from my initial recordings made in 2008.
within a cultural heritage programme (Lawrence Klamga, 16 January 2010, vol. 1, STE-000).7

Only a small selection of stories has been included in this volume. In making this selection, translators Peter Toelinkanut and Rosemary Tohielats and I chose stories from across the island group: stories that were considered particularly well told and that refer to a variety of immortal beings and situations describing cultural life in Lihir.

**Content of the stories**

As mentioned at the outset of this introduction, *pil* are sometimes likened to fairy tales; Lihir people have used this term as a comparison. Mythological creatures and spirit forms often appear and are described in detail. There is an established repertoire of *pil* that is recognizable to an audience; newly composed *pil* are not common. Even when the story itself might not be known, there is a format to *pil* stories that is familiar. *Pil* often begin by introducing the protagonists on whom the story is centred. Quite often these are siblings, or siblings interacting with their parents, aunts, uncles, or other elders. One of the key functions of *pil* is to educate people, particularly the young, on how to live good lives, and the maintenance of good family relations and obligations is seen as a crucial part of Lihir life. Lihir people clearly articulate this in the telling of *pil* narratives, as illustrated in the stories in this collection.

Real place names are often used in *pil* to locate the story firmly in the lived landscape. In many stories the bush is referred to as *anio* (or *hanio*), meaning “place.” People are described going “up” into the bush. In pre-Christian times, Lihir people generally lived above the shoreline where the soil was the most fertile and they could establish food gardens (on Mahur, hamlets still exist on the upper plateau of the island). An elevated inland position is also likely to have been strategic from a defence point of view. As colonial authorities and missionaries arrived, people were encouraged to move down to the shoreline and settle in hamlets that were more easily accessible. In most of these stories, the gardens are quite separate to people’s living spaces, and are perhaps considered the true “place” of origin of a person.

Food—growing food, and the feeding of people—looms large in the stories, as something that sustains life and human relations. It is impossible to overstate the importance of food in maintaining social relationships in Papua New Guinea, and this is clear in the narratives here. Providing family and the wider community with food is vital to social stability, and as we see in the stories,

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7. Where relevant, I have retained the file name of the recording for reference. The code refers to the volume number, format (e.g., STE = stereo), and file number (000 being the first file), the latter two being generated by the recording hardware used, a Zoom H4n. Recordings made in 2008 are in the format “year.file number” and were recorded on a Marantz PMD-670 Solid State Recorder using a Røde NT4 stereo microphone.
the denial of food to a member of the family or community can lead to drastic consequences. Thus, gardening features prominently in Lihir life and narrative; those who can grow ample food can thus provide sufficiently for their communities and therefore sustain and enjoy positive (and reciprocal) relationships. Pil stories abound with references to gardens and gardening techniques (Hemer 2013:66–69 offers a detailed description of gardening on Mahur with a focus on yams that complements the reading of some of the stories in this collection).

Cooking techniques are also described in pil stories, and pigs feature prominently as figureheads of the feast. Pigs are not only an important source of protein and essential for every feast, but more than that, the pig symbolizes prosperity and signals a family’s or community’s ability to maintain social relationships by raising and providing pigs for feasting and other important social events (pigs also being considered across Papua New Guinea as a form of currency). The reference to the pig’s head as part of the formulaic close of a pil carries with it this implied significance.

The first story of the collection, “How Lihir Came to Be,” is the story of the evolution of Lihir life, from a time with no people, through a time of cannibalism to the current period of Christianity. Of particular note is the attention paid to the development of feasting techniques. The second story, “How Lihir People Used to Marry,” describes a now defunct courtship ritual and includes reference to the tolup house, a place where girls were confined at the time of their first menstruation, and from there re-presented to society as having come of age. In the third story, “The Brother and the Ilio,” we are introduced to the spirit being ilio and the foods associated with their world.

The fourth and fifth stories in this collection, “The Sister and the Mdualih” and “Two Brothers and the Gesges,” present us with two mythological beings: the mdualih, who is the adult form of a foetus that has continued to grow after its mother died, and the gesges, who takes the form of a grotesque trickster creature. The final two stories bring us back to focus again on human relationships, with “Dengmaladeng” being a story about the consequences of deceit, while “Two Brothers and the Ailaya” is a tragic tale highlighting the suffering of those neglected by their relatives. A synopsis is precedes each story in this collection.

While I have stated that new pil stories are rarely composed, the final story in this collection is compelling as it directly incorporates contemporary history into the telling of a familiar narrative. In describing the stones at the base of the Ailaya at the story’s end, the narrator explains that they are under the road now built around the Ailaya. The Ailaya is located within the mine site on Aniolam, and the road and soil covering the stones are part of the infill where once the Ailaya met the sea. This infill has further significance as it obstructs entry into the Ailaya by sea, the customary way in which the spirits of the deceased entered through the song pathway known as tsure. In the tsure song form, which is part of the mortuary ritual rangen, the spirit of the deceased is sung from the
place their body is resting, through the seascape and past particular landmarks into the entrance to the Ailaya (for more detail on this ritual, see Bainton, Ballard, and Gillespie 2012). The reference then to this changed landscape has a particular poignancy. While the narratives themselves might be familiar and even formulaic, they are open to new details and descriptors that bring stories firmly into the present, making them even more relevant and meaningful for people today. This ability for *pil* to adapt to include elements of contemporary life may be key to the future of this genre of storytelling.

**On orthography, translation, and legacy**

The oral language of Lihir has been documented in writing in a number of projects, at irregular intervals over the last century, most notably by Neuhaus in his grammar written over the early to mid-twentieth century (Neuhaus 1954; translation published in 2015) and the Bible translations of the Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL), alongside other more localized literacy projects. Despite this activity, there is still no consensus on a standard way of writing the language. This is largely due to the multiple dialects that are present within the island group, utilizing some different vocabulary and different pronunciation. A number of workshops on the Lihir language have taken place over the years, including workshops on Bible translation, literacy, and orthography, the most recent being the 2012 Lihir dictionary workshop facilitated by linguists from SIL. While these have been important for raising awareness and understanding about writing the Lihir language, they have not resulted in a standard orthography used in practice throughout the region (see Bainton 2015 for an overview on Lihir language documentation, dialects, and attempts at standardizing the language).

In this collection of stories, the translators and I decided that preserving the dialect of the storyteller was important; partly because the stories were associated with both a particular person and a location. Both translators, Peter Toelinkanut and Rosemary Tohielats (also members of the Lihir Cultural Heritage Association), are based on the island of Aniolam, but come from different dialect areas and, like many Lihir people, have extensive contact with people from across the island group due to their work and their connections, so capturing different dialects did not pose a problem for them. Rosemary transcribed a story by Edmund Sanabel of Mahur, while Peter Toelinkanut transcribed the remainder of the stories in the collection which cover a variety of locations and dialects. In some stories, such as the second one here, “How Lihir People Used to Marry,” the storyteller uses more than one dialect. In two stories, “The Brother and the Ilio,” told on Masahet, and “The Sister and the Mundalih,” told on Mahur, we have retained in parentheses some of the sounds (mainly vowels) that are typically dropped in the dialects of these islands, so as to assist in comprehension.
The publication of this volume was delayed while the representation of the Lihir language was discussed and considered. In the end, members of the Lihir Cultural Heritage Association and I have chosen to pursue the bilingual publication of these stories, publishing the near-original transcripts of the stories with little additional editing; while this may result in some inconsistencies and imperfections, we feel that this is the most honest, inclusive way to proceed.

The titles given to the stories have been created to reflect most clearly and simply the distinctive content of those stories. In translation, we have taken a semi-literal approach; that is, we have tried to translate as close as possible the phrases as they are spoken (reflecting the meaning of individual words), but at the same time we have aimed for a clear translation of the meaning into English. This approach is designed to assist readers who would like to cross-reference with the Lihir text, as well as maintaining some of the style of the oral delivery. Translation generally follows common usage of terms by Lihir speakers of English. This may vary on occasion from the literal translation; for example, the term *toboh* when used as a noun in the story “Dengmaladeng” is translated as “chief.” Although *toboh* in this context might more accurately be translated as “big man” (referring to the male leadership of a clan), as Lihir does not have a system of “chiefs” as such, here the word “chief” has been chosen as it is a common way to refer to male leadership across Papua New Guinea (and indeed the broader Melanesian region) especially in cross-cultural contexts.

Readers of the Lihir text will note that occasionally words in the language of Tok Pisin appear. Tok Pisin, a creole language that draws significantly upon English and German, is one of Papua New Guinea’s official languages and is spoken across the Lihir Island Group, particularly when interacting with the many non-Lihir people living in the islands. The use of Tok Pisin words in *pil* is sometimes out of necessity, to name aspects of life that exist or originated outside of Lihir (such as *lotu* “Christianity” or *Baibel* “Bible”); in other cases it may be chosen simply as the word that comes most immediately to mind, where sufficient vocabulary in Lihir already exists. This code-switching between Tok Pisin and Lihir reflects the way that people speak in the islands today, and concern is expressed in *The Lihir Cultural Heritage Plan* about the effect that the prevalence of Tok Pisin might have on the future of the Lihir language (see also Kabariu 2015, Gillespie 2014; on code-switching in other Lihir genres, see Gillespie 2011).

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8. While the text (in both Lihir and English) closely matches the audio file, it should be noted that minor edits have been made to aid the flow of the narrative in written form. Halts in the story have been removed from the text; corrections made by the narrator to their own words during storytelling have been retained while mistakes have been removed. We do this not only to present the text in the most agreeable, readable form, but also out of respect for the storytellers, who would wish for their stories to be rendered as clearly and cohesively as possible.
The accompanying sound files function as a resource to complement and cross-reference with the written texts, as well as the opportunity for the reader to hear the story as originally told: writers in the past have lamented the fact that book form alone cannot provide this sonic experience (Kühnke 1973:x). It also allows for the reader to experience the songs without the filter of musical transcription. Song texts are highlighted in bold and prefaced with “[sung]” where they occur in the stories.

The members of the Lihir Cultural Heritage Association and I hope that this collection of pil—including transcripts, translations, and recordings along with photographic illustrations of Lihir life—will be a useful contribution to the long legacy of Lihir literacy and language documentation, and appeal to Lihir people both young and old, as well as those wishing to learn more about life in these islands.

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Photo 4: Elizabeth Walis, storyteller. Li, Mahur, January 2010.


Photo 10: Peter Toelkanut (left), translator, with elder Thomas Kut. Mahur, September 2007.
Photo 11: On the island of Masahet, with Aniolam in the background and the mine site visible (far left). Masahet, May 2008.

**Photo 13**: Approaching a hamlet; domestic pigs are allowed to forage freely during the day. Mahur, May 2008.

**Photo 14**: Martin Bangel, member of the Lihir Cultural Heritage Association, in his garden of yams. Mahur, January 2010.
**Photo 15:** Hamlet. Kuelam, Mahur, May 2008.

**Photo 17:** Inside a courtyard. Kinami, Aniolam, January 2010.

**Photo 18:** Bamboo platforms for resting, in a courtyard. Bulamue, Masahet, January 2010.

Photo 20: Stone steps and bamboo poles to assist people climbing up from the foreshore to their gardens. Mahur, May 2008.
Photo 21: Preparing for feasting. Pigs can be seen tied to bamboo poles in the foreground, while at the rear the fire heats the stones in readiness for cooking. Malal, Masahet, May 2011.

Photo 23: Women placing food parcels onto hot rocks for cooking. Li, Mahur, January 2010.

Photo 24: A “stone oven” is covered to keep the heat in while cooking. Li, Mahur, January 2010.
Photo 25: Cooked food and coconuts ready to eat and drink. Li, Mahur, January 2010.

Photo 26: Women and men gather in separate groups at a time of feasting. The fence of a men’s house (rihri) with wooden Y-shaped entrance (matanlaklak) can be seen far right. Masahet, October 2011.

**Photo 29:** The Ailaya and surrounds, showing landfill and roads in the foreground, with the outer edge of the mine pit visible far right. Aniolam, September 2007.

**Photo 30:** The Ailaya. Aniolam, September 2007.
Photo 31: Rosemary Tohielats with Kirsty Gillespie. Lienbel, Aniolam, October 2011.

ONE

How Lihir Came to Be

As told by Joseph Pilai at Matsuts, Aniolam.

This pil is an origin story of the largest island in the Lihir Island Group, Aniolam. Its geological formation and first vegetation is described, and stone tools are in use. Food arrives with a couple identified as Adam and Eve, but only small amounts are eaten until a certain figure arrives and instructs the children of this couple how to prepare for a feast, using leaves and hot stones as is now customary. The character instructs that his head and body be separated and cooked; on opening the stone oven the cooked body has become a pig and the cooked head a taro (taro is said to resemble a head, with eyes, and a stumpy section resembling a neck). Instructions on growing and harvesting taro are then given. This story, while pointing to the origins of current Lihir feasting practices, is also considered a description of the origins of cannibalism. The story ends with a song and description of a separate character who, because of his laziness, only has one nut to eat (a sub-story grafted onto the main narrative). Finally, this time of going without, and eating people, is said to end with the arrival of Christianity, and the getting of wisdom.
Okay, I will tell a story about our beginning, we from Aniolam, how the place came about.

It was still saltwater, it was still only water.

And, as time went on and on, eventually the place came up [out of the water], and time ran on and on and when it dried up, it dried up to reveal Aniolam.

There it was, it remained so, time went by, the vegetation of the place started to grow, finally, on top.

The vegetation grew, the shoots went up and up to a certain height, the same as it is today, in the desert.

And the place did not yet reach its full height, the trees did not grow very big, they were like what we know as grass, it was a savannah.

And the trees did not grow.

And there were no knives like today, where axes are available, belonging to white people.

And blades, belonging to white people.

And the cry, like that of the chain saw, that has come up today.

Before there were no knives, there were no axes, and the stones, that they talk about as knives, they cut with them.

They cut bamboo in half, they don’t cut it in the middle, they cut it at the node, and the bamboo were not that strong then, they were soft.

It was not like it is today, the bamboo are now strong.
Ka hi muo e suak i molmol te, i undan si na i hot.
A i hot dien ko putio hok si na i pukpuk, sa warto a i suak i meh, sa war.
E kate kate kate; a he nien, e riberte.
Kape te na he nien i lakan a hanio, e niolam.
Kape te na he nien.
Ka die na ianianie a sa ma tohie e arien a telgiet i en, mane Adam giet oarketan ma la Baibel.
Ma la buk tom, tien mel giet parketan, kape na se purien, die kasi ianianie, die na ka ka sa purien.
A punien e bek, e se e ha bekie a punien?
Ie hok ma hu giet me tel giet, e talie a punien, harien si na lu moktsien.
A lu moktsien, ie te imen ha wan a dam te te imen ma giet te ga tsaktsakie, giet la Adam e Ewa, dul le lo weien dul ha bekie a punien hi meh.
A iasian a punie tele ha ‘mana’.

Si na lien we ilamel.
Ka i muo se le a ‘dian’.
A ias me ki giet sele a dian.
Ka i lamel te ka te ko tsakie te na e lien kina he kwikapits die le a mana.

And before the bamboo were soft, as they were using stones.
With the stones they only touched the node, it would snap the bamboo there, snap it.
It went on and on and on; the food, there was none.
There was no food on the land, Aniolam.
There was no food.
And they had nothing to eat, the big man began to put us here, like Adam who we know in the Bible.¹
In the sacred book, like we know, there was no food, they did not eat, there was no food to be had.
The food surfaced, so who came up with the food?
He himself [the big man] that made us, he brought the food, it started with a husband and wife.
The couple, now we know the beginning of the foundation that we talk about, we say Adam and Eve, those two, the woman, the two came up with the food, we know.
The name of the food was called manna.
The word for it today.
Before they called it dian.
The name we called it was dian.
And today we usually call it the word from the white people which is manna.

¹. Papua New Guinea is a predominantly Christian country, and the incorporation of a Christian origin story and Christian terms such as “manna” into this ancestral genre are ways for people to synthesize multiple world views.
They ate it, when it arrived it had hardened as it had been dug from the ground.

They dig to this depth [indicated by storyteller], they grasp it, a very small bit, and eat it in the afternoon, [the next day] they don’t eat in the morning, and they don’t eat at midday, that thing that you have eaten.

They don’t eat every day, they eat in the morning, in the afternoon they don’t eat, the [next] morning they don’t eat, they go around, they are alive with this thing called dian.

It is in the soil and they [the couple] dig it out.

They get only a small bit, they grasp it in one hand (like this [gestures]), their hand goes down into the soil and they grasp it.

They do not put two hands down into the soil, they use one hand only.

Their hand goes down into the soil and they grasp it like this.

If it is a month they will be eating a little bit, it is collected with this hand, they grasp it.

They again put their hand down into the soil, they hold it, they go off with it, they put it out to dry.

They eat a very little bit, like this, one will eat in the afternoon.

And it will fill the stomach and they will be full for countless days, or, for a long time.

They don’t eat in the morning, they don’t eat in the afternoon.
Mole die yen si na leleh...

If they eat in the afternoon ...

Gel mana ngung weien gel na iana puk si na leleh.

Me and my wife we will eat in the afternoon.

Gel na ka si yen si na owa, gel na ka si ru yen si na leleh, o si na kandiek.

We will not eat in the morning, we will not eat in the afternoon, or during the day.

Gel na ba yen ian si na sa ben i mil, gen na ba pan, gel na ba pan, a tien mel ri ba ri sonson han de ta, gel na ba ri yanie a pu tsikitsun.

We will eat the day after, we will wake up, we will wake up, our stomachs will start to grumble, we will now eat a little bit.

Gel ka si ri yanie pu tamboh.

We will not eat a lot.

E kakahan kakahan kakahan kakahan ke bang tsuol te si na min de a tinetge, a min a tsiktsun e purek si na minmindintsik, ki dul ilel lu moktsien.

It went on and on and on and on until it reached another stage in the story, a certain person appeared to the little children, [the children of ] the two that are married.

E purek lu moktsien dul sa ka te ana tsio marmaret, i lai tsun i tele ai to-o.

He arrived and the couple, the two had gone out to do other things, in an area where there was water.

Ae nien i melel i lielien.

All the food was in that area.

Get ka si parketan dale ae mien i meh.

We did not know that there was food there.

Dul lu moktsien dul worlahe.

The couple found this out.

Ka ie ma tsiktun e purek—a tomat e purek leh dul, si na kandiek.

And this person that appeared—the man that came up to them at midday.

A lu tsik lel dul monde dul memelam.

The two children they were sound asleep.

Memelam, memelam ka ie e purek, purek ke sapandian dul, dul pan kele, “Gol yende?”

Sound asleep, sound asleep when he came up, came up and woke the two, they woke up and he asked, “Have you eaten?”

Dul ko wirse, dul ka si pite.

They shook their heads, they didn’t speak.

A nutsdul e pau te dul ka si pite.

Their mouths were shut tight and they didn’t speak.

Kape gel ka si yen, dul ko hertso.

No we have not eaten, they gestured.
They only made signs, they could not say a word, it was as if a tree had blocked off their mouths.

After a while, he sent one of the children, one small girl, a little girl.

“Hey, you go and get some leaves and bring them back.”

She went and got some small tree branches, half dry, and came back with them.

“Break them into pieces, break them into pieces and put them here.”

(This story is very long and it will take time, as I go on I shall sing to finish it.)

She came up with the little branches and put them down.

“You go and get some stones.”

And she got the stones and put them down.

“While I am lying down, get up and cut my head off.

Sever my neck, get my head and put it down on the stones that are there.

You sever my neck and put it [my head] over there.

And it must stay there amongst the stones, and you wrap it with leaves, you wrap my head in leaves and put it in the stones here.

And I myself will get up and I will shout inside the stone oven and then you will open it up.”

This child put a piece of fire there, there was no fire [before], this is how fire came to be.

“Get that something and put it here on the stones.”
How Lihir Came to Be

Talie, talie, talie, he hon ke le. She kept putting it there, the stones were covered.

“Ketste wa garetan pumaret iamen no talie. “Sit down and observe what it is that I have put there.

Wa se sangangoie na a ieh otien a men. You must make the fire just like that.

Ka ke talie, patso meh a ieh sa bek.” Pick it up, put it there, strike and the fire starts up.”

A ieh e bek i lielien ma lon, ka lon e sosoham, sosohan, sosohan ka he hothot die dal. The fire started inside the stone oven, and the stone oven kept on catching, catching, catching fire, until the stones were red hot.

“Ka wa gare na he hothot die na dal ka wana kelie. “And when you see the stones are red hot, you spread them out.

Kelie ka he hothot die na puok. You spread out the stones and separate them.

Kelie e hothot ka wana talie na a kong i lielien. You spread out the stones and you put my head inside.

Wa kiptie na a kong ka wana talie.” You cut my head off and you put it there.”

Talal e melte ka e kakets. After a while she separated burning wood from stones.

Tinan eka si purek. Her mother had not yet arrived.

Ie ni weh sam ok, ke tinan ni mang purek, ni ne piek ok, tinan ni mong a purek. She [the girl] would prepare the stone oven, and after it is complete, before she uncovers the stone oven, her mother will return [to assist].

A tsiktun meh e te tetgenie an meh, a punien meh ni talie la lon ni pike. This person told the whole story [to her], the food she would put in the stone oven and uncover.

Ka hon meh ni ri tetgenie, hok ne ri ke na. And his head, he told her, she would do the same.

“Wa ka na hong wa talie, ka wa ke io na wa ri talie la lon. “You get my head and put it there, and you pick me [my body] up and you put me in the stone oven.

Ka ie a wit io wa tel io i lielien a lon imon ka no do. You lift it up and you put me inside the stone oven and I will be cooked.
And then you open it up [the stone oven] and eat me.”

When it was ready, that stone oven, she wrapped that person without the head, without the head, wrapped that person and lay him in the stone oven.

She put the hot stones back on, she did all this, she did it all, the green leaves, like what the women do [today], with the green leaves covering the stone oven.

She covered with green leaves the body in the stone oven, and it remained there, and then the body began to expand and expand and the colour of the stone oven covering became lighter, and he sang out inside the stone oven.

As she opened it, he had become a pig.

A pig was now inside the stone oven.

It was not the person anymore.

It was now a pig that was there.

And the head which was chopped off had become a taro, a taro was in its place.

“You cut off my hair, you cut off my hair and you stand it up, and my hair will grow, and you will cut it like you cut my head.

“I cut off my hair, I cut off my hair and I stand it up, and my hair will grow, and you will cut it like you cut my head.

You have severed my neck.

You must continue to harvest it [the taro] and regrow it like my head, you grow it, you cut it off, like you have done now.
How Lihir Came to Be

Ka wan de parketan mah, a kong wan se wiwinie, ka io wa se wiwinie.”

Orait die ga arien a yanie a e bual, ka die arien a yanie a hesiktun.

Ie meh a tsiktun meh die sa yanie ma die sa arien a yanie e tsiktun, ma die ga parkian die a harien a ien ilio.

Die harien a ien ilio tete hi me, die sa harien a puka punien sa bek, a wonde a yen ilio te i meh a yen tsiktun.

Ie ma tsiktun e purek ke tetge olenie, ka weien meh e winie dul ne kasien, du winie …

Ka no de til sam, no til ka ni wet ka no de tetge tetemen ka mi de tsul tete iel.

And you should remember, my head is to be done this way always, and I must be done like this always.”

Alright, so they started eating pig, and they started eating people.

Having eaten this person they continued to eat people, having done so they continued to eat victims.

They started to eat victims then, they had this other food come up, the beginning of eating victims, that time of eating people.

This particular person came about and told his own story, and this girl did it like that [the cooking] together with her brother, they did it like that …

And now I will sing, I will sing and when I finish I will continue the story and it will finally end.

[sung]

Eee kere io pe, eee kere io pe

Io sa monde nako pu tiong

Io sa monde nako pu tiong

Ka i tameh kame teneng

Io sa monde nako pu tiong

Ka i tameh kame teneng

Eee it is me, eee it is me

I am sleeping on only my back

I am sleeping on only my back

And with one galip nut in my stomach

I am sleeping on only my back

And with one *galip* nut in my stomach

Eee kere io pe, eee kere io pe

Io sa monde nako pu tiong

Io sa monde nako pu tiong

Ka i tameh kame teneng

Eee it is me, eee it is me

I am sleeping on only my back

I am sleeping on only my back

And with one galip nut in my stomach
Io sa monde nako pu tiong
Ka i tameh kame teneng
I am sleeping on only my back
And with one galip nut in my stomach

Eee kere io pe, eee kere io pe
Io sa monde nako pu tiong
Io sa monde nako pu tiong
I am sleeping on only my back
I am sleeping on only my back
And with one galip nut in my stomach

Die se monde ta imeh kape die ka si yenyen.
Iok mek ma io se bur tetgenie.
Die na yanie e pumaret mel, die na melte ka e talal lamlam die de melte.
Ka talal wana yen ilio te i mel ma sa bek die sa yanyanie tete e tsiktun meh.
Die na yanie e pumaret mel, die na melte ka e talal lamlam die de melte.

Ka ie a halik mek e tele ai kapapets lik, ka i te monde, ka i ga ka putputio ai tinil meh, ie ni de yanyanie a sa.
Eka si petspets.
Ai kapapets lik i meh ugo harien a tilie a ho imeh ai tinil.
Taka si petspets, so ko memel biah kamok otien i meh.

I ga nase wirwir meh, a talal wana yen ilio tete.
I am sleeping on only my back
And with one galip nut in my stomach

Eee kere io pe, eee kere io pe
Io sa monde nako pu tiong
Io sa monde nako pu tiong
Eee it is me, eee it is me
I am sleeping on only my back
And with one galip nut in my stomach

They always sleep then, they do not eat.
It is like how I have told you.
They eat anything, and they remained for a long time going without.
And during the time of eating victims, when that came up, they ate people.

And this little fellow [who sang that song] was a little loafer, he sleeps, he composed that song, and he didn’t have anything to eat.
He does not do anything.
The little loafer was like that and so he started to sing this song.
He does not do anything, he does nothing like that all day.
He hangs around underneath the galip trees, the trees had just started bearing fruit.
And the galip tree, the breadfruit, and the tawan tree.

And they had fruit that started to bear.
He felt sorry for himself, this was during the time of eating victims.
It went on and on until the time of Christianity came, and these are the people who controlled us, they were the government, and they bound us together with Christianity.

With the arrival of Christianity we are getting wisdom like today as we are now.
How Lihir People Used to Marry

As told by Edmund Sanabel at Li, Mahur.

This story is considered entertaining and comical, and one that lends itself to dramatization. The story opens with the classic exchange: *meme – tete pots*. Two brothers are introduced as orphans, being raised by their grandfather, working alongside him tending their gardens and pigs. This harmonious and productive relationship is a positive model of Lihir social relations, and so we have some indication at the outset that this will be a happy story. The time comes for the young men to be married, and here we are introduced to a past cultural practice of shooting down dry coconuts to impress and win a bride. We hear how the people of Lihir adorn themselves, including the use of ginger (both worn, and spat onto them), which across Papua New Guinea is considered a powerful substance. The song the young men sing while preparing themselves to shoot is untranslatable, perhaps archaic, but at each singing of it (there are four renditions) tension builds. During the men’s preparation, two women are enclosed within the *tolup* house, a small temporary house that girls were once confined to during the time of their first menstruation; thus it is suggested that these women in the story are coming of age and ready to be presented to eligible males. Peering through gaps in the walls, the women become increasingly excited at the prospect of these two men (it is their uncontrollable excitement that is the humorous part of the story). As the last rendition of the song is finished, the two men shoot down the coconuts and the women rush from the house to embrace them. They live well together, with the women tending the homes and the men spending time in the bush. The grandfather ages and dies, a feast is held, and this is the segue to the narrator passing the pig’s head on to the next storyteller.
One day two brothers, they were living at their place, together with their grandfather.

Their mother and their father, they were already dead.

The two they both died, when the two were still small.

The grandfather looked after the two, and they grew bigger and bigger.

The two were there in the bush, the two were there in the bush working in their gardens.

The three had many gardens.

Some gardens they would dig up, in some gardens the three would cut the grass, in some gardens the three would do controlled burning.

The three just worked.

And the two small ones, those two were not naughty, when the three of them would go up into the bush.

The grandfather said that the three will work in the garden.

The three would work into the afternoon, and the two would dig food out of the mature gardens.

The three would then go down and down to their place [by the sea], the two would cook and the three including their grandfather they would all eat and sleep.

They all did this, every day, they all went up to the bush.
How Lihir People Used to Marry

Ka diee tool se ree enen bol ree, e bol ree diee tol.  
All three fed the pigs also, as the three also had pigs.

Teek kate mah a buen tem ah makil diee sa a diee sa makuets re mue.  
And so it went, and there comes a day people get married as well.

E muo diee se makuets ute ma diee sa ktakta e mlon ka diee de makuets.  
Long ago everyone married this way, they would shoot down the dry coconuts and then they would marry.

Makuatstse a lukluo tsiken sina makil.  
The marriage of two women to the men.

Teek diee na resis na kta a lakluo i mlon.  
And they would compete to shoot down the two dry coconuts.

Diee atskee tan sina yoo.  
They hung them up on a spear.

Die tsakie diee le a gar a o na pu yee.  
They call it gar or stick [the area where this event takes place].

Teek a makil sa kaka na kta a lukluo mlon.  
The men would all go to shoot down the coconuts.

Ko diee tool o tumdul diee ko tseeng tseeng ok to anio.  
So the three [including the grandfather] they would go up and up to the bush.

Kate kate a buen diee sa puetspuets la toon ka min a tkian a min a tkian sa weng le:  
This went on and on, and one day they were all working in the garden and one man, this one man said:

“ai gol, o si nap gol na tsake i kuli tumul le gol na komuli gee giet na na kta i mlon?”  
“Hey you two, can’t you tell your grandfather that you will follow us and we will go and shoot the dry coconuts?”

Teek a min e weng mle:  
And one [young man] replied:

“Eh, ka ble tumel ok ni weng puet te, yee me da ga bi ka.  
“Eh, if our grandfather says it’s alright, okay then we will go.

Yee ok ni tsakie.  
He himself will say.

Geel ba osre knon sna leh.”  
We will ask him in the afternoon.”

Dul i puetspuets kam, dul i puetspuets kam diee tool e tseiel le mueh diee e makil diee seree mielmiel diee ka er na kta a gar.  
The two worked, the two worked and the three all came down and all the men all started to come back from the place where they shoot at the gar.
Diee katkat ka diee kakat puil. They had all shot, but they had all missed.

Katekate a min sa osre tbuon: After a while one asked the grandfather:

“Hei, pu a min a tkian e weng le a makil diee ktakta a gar man me sina gom man diee le diee na kokneniee a lakluoo wen a gor.¹

Ka sloee e napte da tool na ka geel nag a koknenie a lakluoo wein lel?

Ka dul sga melte yeen sina mden anio kid a tool na sa sranie a mden anio.”

Ka yee le tumdul le: So what do you think, can we three go and get these two women?

“O-e puet te, i lua bangi lua sina owa katseep no ba tlue go na sgo yee e pnets ka da tool ba ka.”

Die tool muelam te muel diee tool a pan sina oowa.

Teek tumdul a tlue dul le gol tsieeng gol pte sa lakluoo kpee buoo.

Dul tsieeng dul sko a buoo, dul petpotkie dul tsal a lu kpee buoo.

Dul tsial te me.

E tumdul a tsialie ute yoo.

Etel a lakluoo yoo e sgo yee nie-e.

E plo na maket teek e polklekie na maket.

E tuoo a lakluoo kul lie tu lu ma dul.

E puets dul nie.

¹ In this pil the storyteller alternates between using gar and gor, which suggests a mix of dialects.
E le: “Da tool le”.
E pitsiee a lakluo pummel to nuandul.
Le: “Da tool le”.
Pitsiee a lakluoo pumuel.
“E lakluoo wok loon kin a loona pu gee tool na miel mok meen.”
Teek e yanyanie a lie teek e ibis dul nie.
Ibis dul teek e re bis yee a lokluoo yoo.
Teek, lo komuoo te.
Teek a lokluoo i tsiklik dul arien a pits teele dul arien a til temue:

He said: “We three will go now.”
He put two leaf adornments around their necks.
He said: “We three will go now.”
He put the two leaf adornments on.
“The two women belong to two of my forebears, so we three will come back with them.”
And the grandfather chewed ginger and spat it out on the two.
He spat on the two and then he spat on the two spears.
And he went first.
And the two youngsters started on their way and they started to sing:

[sung]

Soor pederpeder re susu o -
Soor pederpeder re susu o
Le wa de mas nige male
Le wa de mook mook mook
Mook mookie

Soor pederpeder re susu o -
Soor pederpeder re susu o
Le wa de mas nige male
Le wa de mook mook mook
Mook mookie

Dul i pitpits an pitspits an e tumdul se tu imuo se tu slo tiel i muo se bis dul.
E en en dul an ne tuatua.
Teek dul ne pitspits an dul se pits kaun tu muo dul re arien a til:

The two danced and danced up and down, and the grandfather stood in front of them and spat on the two.
And he did this to give the two power.
And the two danced up and down, the two danced in front and the two began to sing:

2. In cases where the Lihir text is untranslatable, it is reproduced in the English version.
And the two, their grandfather walked around close to the two dry coconuts and they were ready.

He stood up and spat on the two dry coconuts and he said:

“I spit and the power [of the coconuts] has died, my two ancestors will come and shoot these two dry coconuts into pieces.

And these two will get these two women.”

The grandfather turned back to the two, and he spat on them again.

And the two sang:

And the two youngsters stood up close.

And the two danced up and down close to the gor.
Teek ere yemsie yee tema kayee a lakluoo wok dul sa teten la lioom, dul le dul titarie a banis wana lioom i mul dul.

And he spat again and the two women cried now in the house, the two wanted to break the walls of the house apart and follow them.

Dul sa gerger ilie pal wana sua banis, diee sgo tan a lioom nie.

The two peered through the small gaps in the wall, the wall that they had made around their house.

Dul sa birbir potkie dul a gre a lakluoo tsik.

The two started to break a big hole to see the two young men.

Dul sa wengweng: “Go de tsap! Yee te moon, a lokluoo tikian ki geel.”

The two called out: “Open the door! That’s it, they are the two young men for us.”

Dul i tu tabuel sina gor.

The two moved closer to the gor.

Dul riee til:

The two began to sing:

[sung]

<table>
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<th>Song</th>
<th>Translation</th>
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<tr>
<td>Soor pederpeder re susu o</td>
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<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mook mookie</td>
<td>Mook mookie</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Dul le dul tiltil kle an te mue, dul pangsenie a lokluoo yoo.

As the two finished singing, the two threw their two spears.

Dul i kat potkie a lokluoo imlon.

The two shot down the two dry coconuts into pieces.

A lokluoo wok dul i lo tsool i lia lioom dul i roo poot dul.

The two women, the two ran out of the house and embraced the two men.

A min i lo klaie a min ka min e lo klaie a min.

One ran to one, and the other ran to the other.

Teek dul e ka kaknenie a lokluoo wok te lel torme ne tumdul.

And the two gathered the two women alongside their grandfather.

Teek diee miel te mel, diee ka tu sina anio ki diee toor.

And they all went back, they all went to their home.

Mel ma diee sa muel i anio.

They all live at home.
Dul is go yee a lokluoo lioom.
A min kin a min a tsik torme na min a wok ki yee a min kina min.

The two [men] made two houses. One for one young man and his wife, and another for the other and his wife.

Teek dul sa muel le a lokluoo wok dul sa tinen dan a mden anio torme na lokluoo tsik.

The two [couples] were there, the two women looked after the homes of the two young men.

Teek o tumdul sa tikien tikien kle kle an.

And the grandfather grew older and older.

Kate dul se tsieeng to anio diee tsieel tsieel o tumdul kopuee te si sosos.

So it went; the two went up to the bush, came down and down [to their homes], [but] the grandfather does not walk around anymore.

Sa keets a tiok te i lia lioom.
Kate kate e tumdul e muet.

He stays sitting down in the house.

So it went on and on, and the grandfather died.

Dul i tsak a karot dul i keer bol tbohtboh dul i pkee tumdul.

The two made a feast, the two got some big pigs, and the two made a feast for the grandfather.

Teek dul ok ten a lokluoo wok ki dul tnen dan a mden anio.

And the two themselves with their wives looked after the place.

Tumdul sa muet.

The grandfather had died.

Teek a pil sa weet: a tsboon bol ne Kamrai.

And the story is finished: the pig’s head to Kamrai.
THREE

The Brother and the *Ilio*

*As told by Michael Solgas at Malal, Masahet.*

In this story the *ilio* spirit is introduced (*iliu* in some dialects). An *ilio* is the spirit of a person who has suffered a tragic death, such as one who has been murdered or lost at sea; thus the term is understood and often translated as “victim.” In the first story, “How Lihir Came to Be,” the word *ilio* is translated as “victim” to refer to the body of the deceased and not a live spirit.

*Ilio* are said to hang around in trees, often in groups, and have an otherworldly home. They are also said to emit light, to glow. Certain foods are associated with the world of the *ilio*, such as coconuts with bluish eyes, and pink-coloured yams, as described in this story.

After the traditional opening, the story begins with a boy who lived with his sister and her husband; it is implied that the boy is an orphan. From the outset we learn that the boy is neglected—he is subjected to the anger of his sister’s husband and most significantly he is deprived of food—and so the scene is set for a tragic tale. He leaves his sister’s home, and, sitting under a tree, an *ilio* climbs down and offers to take the boy to its world, where he is raised. When the *ilio* take him back to the earthly world, they bring the various foods associated with them (and so we have a sub-story about the origins of these foods). The sister comes across this resplendent garden and discovers it belongs to her brother, who then provides her with food for herself and her husband. But the brother does not forget their ill-treatment of him and ultimately they are punished.
Once upon a time there was a boy, he had a sister.
The girl was married, and the boy was a child.
As they lived, the husband was always getting angry with the child.
The food she gave to him [her brother] made her husband angry with her.
She gives his [her husband’s] food to the boy.
The boy is always neglected, his sister says:
“Eh, you must go away and collect okari tree nuts for yourself and galip nuts.”
She cries with her brother.
One day she said:
“I don’t want to see you leave me.
If you have to go, just go.
I don’t want to see you [go].”
And the boy left, and made his home under the trees.
One night, as he was sitting under the boioh tree, an ilio came out from above.
As it glowed, the boy, the boy shivered.
He wanted to run, but he thought, why should I run?
If he wants to kill me, he can kill me.
The Brother and the Ilio

The ilio was climbing down, climbing down, all the way and sat beside him.

It was an ilio of his own blood [from his own clan].

His own blood.

And he [the ilio] said:

“What are you doing here?”

And he said:

“Eh, the man of the house, my in-law, he is always getting angry with me and my sister.

And I ran away.”

“Can I take you to our [the ilio] place?”

And the boy said:

“That is fine.”

He climbed onto the ilio’s back and put his hands around its neck, and the two went up.

They went high up into the clouds.

Where is the place where the ilio live?

We don’t know.

All the ilio saw the boy, and they said:

“A new person has arrived, is it our food?”

That one [the ilio] said:

“Don’t, this person is one of us.”

Other ilio arrived and they asked:

“Are we going to kill the boy?”

And that ilio said:

“Don’t.”

He stopped them and said:
“A turangiet men, ni de ok ien i kuil giet.”

“This is our friend, he will grow up with us.”

Tek die ohwo ye a tsik.

And they raised the boy.

E t(a)mboh, ke muele, e muele, muele, muele.

He grew bigger, and lived with them for a long time.

A buen de mue die le die de i kesmule.

One day they decided to take him back.

Die de kesmule te ien laka(n) a anio ki ye.

To bring him back into our world.

Die-e ka e nien, mon a e k(o)ko ma e k(o)ko bonbon, e lumues lon, e tupueka na lel, mue e her sina e ilio e patik bonbon lel.

They got all the food, all the yams, the pinkish yams, the coconuts with the bluish eyes, the pawpaws with that same [pinkish] colour, these came from the ilio world, and pinkish patik also.

Ye mue ki die, e her sina e ilio.

These came from them, from the ilio world.

Die i kasie l(a)kan a anio ki giet.

They brought [them] into our world.

E puk lel e pu bret giet le a bonbon, ye muel a her side a makil lel.

These things that we have that are pinkish in colour, these things came from them.

Die prek ka die i kasie sina anio.

They arrived and brought these things to our world.

Die sngo ie a t(a)niom muel.

They made a garden here.

Die sngoie a t(a)niom, e ka te lel i pang, ke die suwo e punien i l(i)lien.

They made a garden, and it was big and sprawling, and they planted food in it.

Ka ie te le kasien e le ni tsieng sina buen, ke r(a)bet tsket nie.

And his sister decided to go up one day, she got a big surprise.

Ae t(e)peka sa man de, ka e bainap ka ie a e pu unaunan ke le:

The pawpaws were ripe, and the pineapples and everything else that grows on trees and she said:

“Ki se gan t(a)niom men?

“Whose garden is this?

Eh! Ki se tsiktsin?

Eh! Which person?

No ga kle yo, ka ni ga liek t(e)peka ka ni pipit bainap ke win.”

He can find me, and gather paw-paws and break off pineapples and bananas.”
Later, the day after, she went up again and her brother suddenly spoke.

[She asked him] “Where did you come from?”

“You and your husband you threw me out before.”

He collected the pawpaws, he broke off pineapples and broke off sugar cane, and all the other food that was from the ilio.

And she went to her husband [with all the food] and her husband said:

“Hey you.

Where did you get all that food?”

And she said:

“I got it myself from the person who you were always cruel to.”

“Where did he come from?”

“He’s come back.”

And the two ate.

And every day she collects food from her brother.

And one day, her brother remembered when the two sent him away.

Her brother became angry with his continuous giving.

He dug a hole, he dug, dug, dug, deep down, like a drainage ditch.

He sharpened stakes from a tree and planted them there [in the hole].

He made a pig trap over the hole.

He said [to his sister]:

“Bring your husband and you two can come and eat here.”
He picked pawpaws and other foods and the husband sat on the bed, made of sugar cane and ate there, and kept on eating, and eating, and eating, and a sugar cane broke.

And he said:

“Ah! This bed is going to break under me.”

He [the boy] said:

“No it won’t, you sit there and eat.”

He kept eating, and eating, and as he was filling up, the bed collapsed, he fell down into the hole, onto the stakes, and the man [brother] got up, and he struck him on the head with a wooden club.

Then he killed the woman and that’s the end.

The pig’s head to Polan.
The Sister and the Mdualih

As told by Elizabeth Walis at Li, Mahur.

This story introduces the mdualih (or mundualih in other dialects). This tragic being originates from a foetus inside its deceased mother. It is understood in Lihir customary beliefs that if a mother is pregnant when she dies, the foetus will continue to grow, eventually exiting the body of the mother, and retreating to live in the bush. In this story, a mdualih meets her sister in the garden and looks after her baby while the sister works; the sister’s husband had refused to accompany her to the garden, leaving her to work by herself—or so he thinks. The husband is shown to be lazy and selfish, the mdualih fulfilling her filial duty. The mdualih sings a song to the baby while her sister is working (only part of this song can be translated). At the end of the working day the mdualih is given sugar cane to eat by her sister; a food not regularly consumed in Lihir. The mdualih instructs the sister to bathe the baby to remove the scent of her, thus keeping her presence from the husband a secret. On one occasion the sister does not wash her baby, and all is revealed. On the next visit to the garden the husband stalks the mdualih, captures her and locks her in the house. She escapes, never to help her sister again; punishing her for revealing her identity.
A woman died, she was pregnant with a child and died, and she was buried in a grave.

The body decayed.

And the child grew up eating the decaying flesh of its mother and it comes out, it was a female child.

It comes out and lives on the mother’s grave.

It was growing up, the child, a girl, she grew up, and grew big and went into the bush.

She was a big girl, like you girls [indicates to audience].

And she went up into a tree.

And her sister was already a woman.

She was married, and had given birth to a baby.

And the two [sister and baby] climb up there … she asks her husband to go up with them.

The two climb up, they go up inland to work in the bush.

And the man, he lied to them [about coming up], and only the two climb up to that place, they start to clear a garden.

And that woman that was a mdual-ih, she lives up in a tree in the bush.

And that woman, the big sister she has the baby lying down, and she works.
Tek ie a tsikien te mue, te tsol te me i mua laka ie, te me i mua.
And that [mdualih] girl, she comes down from the top of the tree, from the top.

Ke te tsol ke te ka a tsik ki kisien, a tsik te tenden.
She comes down and she holds her sister’s baby, as the baby is crying.

Tek ni tsol me, ka ni ka ie ma tsik ka ninde tilitil te me menie: And she comes down, holds the baby and starts singing to it:

[sung]

Ia waien ni rangrang o
I, woman, am working, oh

Ia waien ni rangrang o
I, woman, am working, oh

U yo gomsaru yo, gomsaru laru laru
U yo gomsaru yo, gomsaru laru laru

Gomsaru yo
Gomsaru yo

Wehen te puetspuets kam ok mel.
The woman is always working.

Ka kisien te muel te na tsik ki dul, te muemuel menie.
And her [mdualih] sister looks after their baby, she looks after it.

[sung]

Ia waien ni rangrang o
I, woman, am working, oh

Ia waien ni rangrang o
I, woman, am working, oh

U yo gomsaru yo, gomsaru laru laru
U yo gomsaru yo, gomsaru laru laru

Gomsaru yo
Gomsaru yo

Tsik te dok to mue sien le tinian me a mdualih te muel te menie.
The baby does not cry when that mother the mdualih stays with it.

Ie ma wehen me toko puetspuets kam ok kidul, ke puetspuets kam ka ie a wehen ie ok me ni tilitil kam menie a tsik, ka ie a tsik toko dok ok te mue, kupue te, te ka si ten.
And the woman keeps on working for them, she keeps working and the [mdualih] woman keeps singing to the baby, and the baby does not cry when she is with it, no, it does not cry.
[sung]

_Ia waien ni rangrang o_
_Ia waien ni rangrang o_
_U yo gomsaru yo, gomsaru laru laru_

_Gomsaru yo_

A wehen sa puets kle, tek se ka e punien, putuo e pu toh, ka sa hanie inie le kisien, ka sa ka tsik isien, ka le: [The woman finishes work, she gathers food, breaks off some sugar cane, gives it to her sister, and takes the baby, and says:]  

“Yel wande mielmiel to nasi, ka gel, gel de tsial tu m(a)lal.” [“Okay you can now go home, and we, we are going down to the yard.”]

Tek ie ma wehen muel te weng menie te le: [And the _mdualih_ woman says, she says to her:]  

“Gol na tsial, wana sulie ok na ma tsik re.” [“You two go down, and you must bathe the baby [to remove the _mduali_- smell].”]

Dul na slolel, dul na tsial to sina mden anio, ni sulie a tsik ok. [They do that all the time, they go down to their hamlet, she bathes the baby.]

Tek dul na muele na muelam. [They stay there to sleep.]

Tek buen de re mue dul de mon, le a buen de re dul na ni tsieng, ni ri koknenie a tomat mue ki ie, ni ri pek ok. [And the next day they sleep and wake up, and the next day they climb up, she asks her husband, and he says no.]

Tek dul keh dul na ri tsieng. [And so the two climb up on their own.]

Tek ni ri wilsie gen tsik, ka ni de ri arien a pinets. [And she lays the baby down to sleep, and she starts to work.]

_A tsik ni de ri tenden te ri muel, a wehen ni se ri tsol i mua lakan a ie, sa ri ka a tsik ki kisien, ka sa ri tilltil menie._ [The baby starts to cry, the _mduali_- woman comes down from the top of the tree, she holds her sister’s baby, and she sings to it.]
The Sister and the Mdualih

[sung]

Ia waien ni rangrang o
Ia waien ni rangrang o
U yo gomsaru yo, gomsaru laru laru
Gomsaru yo

I, woman, am working, oh
I, woman, am working, oh
U yo gomsaru yo, gomsaru laru laru
Gomsaru yo

A wehen e puetspuets kam, ka muel me tsik i sa muel ok te muel na tsik.
E tiltil kam menie.

The woman keeps on working, and the babysitter stays with the baby. And she sings to it.

[sung]

Ia waien ni rangrang o
Ia waien ni rangrang o
U yo gomsaru yo, gomsaru laru laru
Gomsaru yo

I, woman, am working, oh
I, woman, am working, oh
U yo gomsaru yo, gomsaru laru laru
Gomsaru yo

Wehen e re mnos ke ri sngoie ok ri ute lel, ka a tsik ki ie si kisien e ri hanie na e pusa lik li e ru ka anie.
Ie e kisien e ri weng mule dul sloilel:

“We tsiel menie, sulie ok, sulie ok a tsik na m(e)nelam de sina l(e)leh.”

Ka kupue dul si tsakie i kuli t(a) mandul.
Te muel ok te muel slolel.
Ni sulie gan tsik ok me ka dul te ri muelam.
Dul te ri pan de ri sina buen keh ka pan de me, dul te ri weng osrenie gan tomat, tele dul na tsieng.
Tomat me te ri pek ok ri me dul.

The woman stopped work and did as before, she took the baby from her sister and gave her a little food. And the [mdualih] sister reminded her as to their routine:

“You go down, bathe it, bathe the baby in preparation for the evening sleep.”

And they did not tell the father [of the baby].

The routine stayed the same.
She washes the baby and they go to sleep.
They always wake up the next day and when they are awake, they ask her husband, to go up with them.
The man always refuses them.
They alone go up to the place.

She lays the baby down to sleep, and she starts to work in their garden.

And the baby starts to cry again, and the mother is working.

And the other mother comes down from the tree.

[I am working, oh]

I, woman, am working, oh

I, woman, am working, oh

I, woman, am working, oh

I, woman, am working, oh

The woman finishes work, her sister finishes work, she gathers a little food, and she does everything as before and gives it to her sister.

The sister goes back to her place [in the tree] and the two, the two go down.

And she reminds her as before, that you go down with it and you bathe it in preparation for sleep.
They went down, and she didn’t wash the baby.
And she did not follow the normal routine.
The baby was out of the routine.
The father held the baby, and he said:
“Eh! This baby’s body smells.
Who was with this baby, to make its body smell unnatural?
This baby’s body smells.”
And he kept on asking his wife.
And the woman said:
“Why are you asking me?
We always ask you to come to that place and you refuse to come with us.
There is one person that stays with the baby so I can work.
You keep asking so what do you want to do about it?”
And the woman kept on saying the same thing.
And the man kept on demanding, demanding that she tell him who the person is that stays with the baby and makes its body smell.
And the woman told him who the person was.
She said, “This child, its other mother, my mother died with it, in her womb, and she went into the bush and grew up there in the bush, she lives up in a tree, and we, when I am working, she hears the baby crying, she comes down and stays with it.”
After a night’s rest, the next morning very early the man climbed up first.

While it was still dark.

He climbed up and hid himself in a cluster of sugar cane, he went in there.

And they the mother and child they climbed up afterwards, at the time they usually climbed up.

And she laid the baby down to sleep and she started to work.

And the guy remained in the cluster of sugar cane.

And the baby began to cry, and the woman came out of the tree.

She held the baby and sang to it.

[Music]

Ia waien ni rangrang o I, woman, am working, oh
Ia waien ni rangrang o I, woman, am working, oh
U yo gomsaru yo, gomsaru laru laru U yo gomsaru yo, gomsaru laru laru
Gomsaru yo Gomsaru yo

And she felt someone watching her, the woman.

She felt someone watching her, and she got up and started to sing to their baby from her sister.

[Music]
The Sister and the Mdualih

U yo gomsaru yo, gomsaru laru laru
Gomsaru yo

A kulien sa sangors(a)ngor t(a)mboh an de meh, a kon sa sortertu, ka ie a tomat te meh sa yoltan.

And the feeling that someone was watching her grew bigger, the hair on her head stood on end, and the man was watching her closely.

E toto le:
“Ai! De iak wa ka gi tsik, o kameh min sa iol te yo.”
Ka ie a wehen me kupe ok si lon, ko puetspuets ok.
Ka ie te ri til:
She called out:
“Ai! Come and get your baby, there is someone watching me.”
And the woman did not listen, she kept working.
And she [the mdualih] began to sing:

[sung]
Ia waien ni rangrang o
I, woman, am working, oh
Ia waien ni rangrang o
I, woman, am working, oh
U yo gomsaru yo, gomsaru laru laru
U yo gomsaru yo, gomsaru laru laru
Gomsaru yo
Gomsaru yo

Tek a tomat sa iol tan meh ie ma wehen.
And the man was watching the woman very closely.
Ka ie ma wehen a kulien sa sngosngor ka sa kopkop ne kisien:
And the woman felt strongly that someone was watching her and she shouted out to her sister:

“Hey wa de iak pe wan ka gen tsik.
O kameh me sa iol te yo.
A kuling sa ts(a)kol ts(a)kol.”
“Hey you come and get your baby.
There is someone watching me.
This feeling is frightening me.”
Tek le ie a wehen me a sortertu le ni ka tsik, tomat ma lo tsol la tum toh, ke nom i dadon ma wehen mue e puets kilie ok mue.
And when the mother got up to get her baby, the man charged out of the cluster of sugar cane, he grabbed the [mdualih] woman by the waist and held on tightly.
Ka dietol i tsiel menie. And they all went down [to the hamlet].

Dietol i tsiel te meh, dietol i teltan la liom. They went down, they locked her in the house.

E muele, die dakie a kulien ke muele. She was there, and they smoked her body while she was there [to try to cleanse and normalize her].

Tek sina lon de me, a wehen e ri miel ok ri meh. Now as night fell, the \[mdualih\] woman returned to her habitat.

E tsol muel la liom, e ri miel to ian to nasien l(a)kan a ie i mua. She came out of the house, and returned to her place in the tree above.

Ke le die pan sina owa, ka lu tinian dul sa ri tsieng, die sa gere a wehen ne sa ri in ok te meh. And when they woke up in the morning, and the mother and baby climbed up [to the bush], they had already seen that the woman had gone [from the house].

E le die ru pan de meh sina owa, ka dul lu tinian dul sa ri tsieng, dul le dul de ri puets, sa ri wilsie a tsik meh ka sa puetspuets te mueh. And when they woke up in the morning, and they the mother and baby climbed up, they went to work, she laid the baby down to sleep and started working.

Ka ie a tsik sa tenden, kupue ok te si tsol. And the baby started to cry, and she didn’t come out.

Sa muel ok te i mua l(a)kan a ie, ka ie e puetspuets kam ka ie a tsik e tenden kam, tenden kam. She stayed up in the tree, and she [the sister] kept working, and the baby kept crying, kept crying.

Ka ie sa weng i mua lakan a ie. And she called from up in the tree.

E le:

“Wa tenden kam ok ion, ma gol ne tinio gol bang hatser ie. She said:

Ka wa tenden kam ok ion, yo lel yo te ga muemuel me wa, ka wa de tenden kam ok ion.”

Dul i puets kle ka dul i miel ka a pil sa wet. “You keep on crying there, you two revealed my existence.

And you keep on crying there, it was me who looked after you, so you keep on crying.”

They finished working and they returned and that is the end of the story.
And they got ready and killed only one pig, and that is the end.

And they suffocated the pig and they cut it in two and the pig’s head was given to Sanabel.¹

The story is over.

¹ In this particular pil storytelling session, Sanabel followed this story by Elizabeth Walis with the story that appears second in this volume: “How Lihir People Used to Marry.”
Two Brothers and the Gesges

As told by Rosemary Tohielats at Lienbel, Aniolam.

We are introduced to the gesges in this story; a small, mischievous being who, like the mdualih, lives in the bush. He is described as grotesque, dirty, and wrinkled, with stringy hair, long fingernails and toenails, dreadlocks, and big eyes. In this story two orphan brothers, who live alone, go hunting. The older brother, Bereo, kills a pig and leaves his younger brother, Ulu, to watch over it cooking while he goes in search of another. A gesges smells the cooking pig and manipulates Ulu into giving him piece after piece of cooked pig until Ulu becomes so angry and afraid that he retrieves the remaining parts of the pig from the stone oven and calls out to his brother; his repetitive calling out constituting the story’s song. Finally Bereo arrives, but not before the gesges has consumed the remaining parts of the pig. Bereo saves his brother and the gesges meets his deserved end. The brothers celebrate with a feast, the narrator locating herself at the feast and then giving the head of the pig from this feast to the next storyteller.
Once upon a time there were two brothers.

Bereo and Ulu lived in a little hamlet at Unanotgiet, on the mountain they call Tarilo.

And the two lived there, and their mother and father had died.

The two lived there, and one day they decided to go hunting.

When they were hunting, they went up the other ridge, the one further up that they call Hon Elee.

They saw a wild pig.

And the bigger one, Bereo, stood up and speared it.

Once he had killed it, they bound it and carried it back home to a low-lying place they call the Ostolik River.

They got up and cooked it in a stone oven on the side of the river bank.

After they had put it in the oven and as they left it to cook, the big brother, Bereo, he said:

“Ulu, you stay here and I will now go hunting again.

I may or may not catch another pig, but you must wait for me here, keep an eye on our pig.”

When Bereo left to go hunting, he went up a mountain, travelling towards the Ostolam River.
And when he was there hunting, a gesges decided to visit Ulu.

He had smelt the aroma of pig cooking.

The aroma had found the gesges whilst he was at home in a stone cave.

Down there, close to the Ostolik River he caught a big whiff and said:

“Hehehe!

I can smell a pig roasting somewhere.

He smelt it and kept going and going and then he saw Ulu sitting down and watching over the stone oven.

And he said:

“Hey my friend, what is in the oven?”

And Ulu said:

“A pig for me and my brother.

We went hunting in the bush and we speared it, and we now have it in the oven.”

“Hey brother, it smells really good. Can you take it out and give me a small piece to eat?”

And Ulu said:

“Eh! Don’t you think my brother will be cross?

He will because it is our pig.

We have just put it in the oven and he has gone hunting again.”

“Eh! And he will be hunting and he will kill another so just take it out, just a little bit.”
You get it and give it to me and I will just try it first.”

Then Ulu uncovered the oven and got a leg, gave it to him:

“Eh! Go away!”

The gesges tasted it and said:

“Mmmm, it is very nice.

You gave me a small piece, can you give me another piece?”

“Hey, you must go away, I am afraid of my brother, I really think he will be angry with me because this is our pig.”

“Sss, you can give me another piece, perhaps another leg. The big share of your pig is in the oven.

You are lying now, the whole pig is still there.”

Ulu opened the stone oven, uncovered the leaves, took out a leg and gave it to him.

When he gave him that leg, the gesges gobbled up the whole leg, and it went down well into his throat and he said:

“Brother, I ate this piece and wish I had another.

This pig is really tasty.”

And Ulu he said:

“You must go away!

My brother will be angry with me over the pig.

You see, he killed it himself and asked me to watch over it.

---

"Wa ha wa en io inie ka no ko ha kanon sam.”

Talal e Ulu e ko e ko pi ke a lon ke ha ai kiak, e hanie:

“E! Wan de ka!”

A gesges e ko ianie, ke le:

“Mmmm, so ko ne pepet tsaket.

A ko putsunlik pel o enio, nap te wan ru henio sa puk?”

“Hey, wan de ko ka, yo tsaktsakol min si ne sunglik, yo le nine tsiner yon a si na bual ne gel.”

“You give me a small piece, can you give me another piece?”

“Hey, you must go away, I am afraid of my brother, I really think he will be angry with me because this is our pig.”

“The gesges tasted it and said:

“Mmmm, it is very nice.

You gave me a small piece, can you give me another piece?”

“Hey, you must go away, I am afraid of my brother, I really think he will be angry with me because this is our pig.”

“Sss, you can give me another piece, perhaps another leg. The big share of your pig is in the oven.

You are lying now, the whole pig is still there.”

Ulu opened the stone oven, uncovered the leaves, took out a leg and gave it to him.

When he gave him that leg, the gesges gobbled up the whole leg, and it went down well into his throat and he said:

“Brother, I ate this piece and wish I had another.

This pig is really tasty.”

And Ulu he said:

“You must go away!

My brother will be angry with me over the pig.

You see, he killed it himself and asked me to watch over it."
Ka wa o soko purek ko soko nunun io inie.”

“E! O soko kirkiri kam, a ko putsun ok pel o enio inie, yo le mulien burbale sai hal er.”

Tek ne Ulu toko gare ok mel a lolohon er tik e ulil te ka, er pitspitsi liman ke kakian e ko tike kuonkuon de, ke lolohon e ko tike kuir te ka matan e ko ri lalte e bakori tsakol isien.

“Eh! You are definitely lying, you only gave me a small piece, I want a foreleg.”

And Ulu looked closely at his [the gesges’s] hair because of its stringiness, his fingers and toenails were abnormally long, his hair was in dreadlocks, and his eyes were big and bright, and he [Ulu] was frightened of him.

[He thought:] “Eh! If I do not give him any more pig he will kill me.

Nasien, no ko ri ka sai hal ka no anie inie.”

Forget that, I will get a foreleg and give it to him.”

E ha ai hal e hanie nie inie, ke ri ien sosolakien.

Ke le,

“Sss, sunglik sa pepet tsaket burbile sa puk her?”

Ka ne Ulu e tu ke le,

“Wih! O soko ienien hure an a bual ne gel ne sunglik.

Burbile wan de ko ka?

Yo sa tsaksakul min e sunglik, ninde gare mel min osa ianie lui kiak, ka i hal, ka ninde laie tsaket mel min en yo, wan de ko ka.”

“Oo, sa ko putsunlik pah.”

Ka i ok mel soko tsakol, si na e lolohon e limliman e kakakian ka ni ko:

“Eh, no le no tot nenie min ka ni ko seyona.”

And you have just come here and are just nagging me for it.”

“Eh! You are definitely lying, you only gave me a small piece, I want a foreleg.”

And Ulu looked closely at his [the gesges’s] hair because of its stringiness, his fingers and toenails were abnormally long, his hair was in dreadlocks, and his eyes were big and bright, and he [Ulu] was frightened of him.

[He thought:] “Eh! If I do not give him any more pig he will kill me.

Forget that, I will get a foreleg and give it to him.”

And he got the foreleg and gave it to him, and he gobbled it up.

He said,

“Sss, brother this is very nice, why not another piece?”

And Ulu stood up and said:

“Wih! You are just devouring the pig belonging to me and my brother.

Why don’t you go away?

I am afraid of my brother, you have now eaten two legs, and a foreleg, and he will be furious with me, you must go away.”

“Oo, just a little bit more.”

And his [Ulu’s] fear heightened, looking at his hair and hands and legs, and he says [to himself]:

“Eh, if I do not give him any more he will kill me.”
E ri hai hal, e ri anie inie ke ri ien soso lakien ke ri tsial pet sinai konkon ne ie ka man sa ri kon mie ai kinemits.

“A bual minan gol a pete tsaket ka Burbale sa puk her.”

Ulu se laie ka hanie, ke tu ke pike hurehure ma bual ke ka hon, ka bal, ka tuan ke tuari lilien a piar ka e diar kaka ke gare ai pukia ka, se tsieng ka lakan mana a piar, ma a ko he pukte ka ie e puk lamlam isien ma bual a gesges sa ien dan.

E tsieng te mel lakan ai pukia tei mel ka, sa to te i mel lakan a pukia tete i mel ka sa arien a to en kesnalik.

“Ulu! Wan de yak a gesges min sa ienien ureure an do bual.”

Gesges e to ke:

“Si ka ei ienien ureure kam bul bual? O toko kirkiri kam.
Ka bual ho pa ok mon me lilien a piar.
E si e ianian nie kam ma bul bual?
Ka man miri to:

“Ulu! Wan de yak.
O a bual, a gesges min soko ienien ureure an do bual.”
Tsaktsaket ke ko arien a to ok te mel:

He got the other foreleg and gave it to him and he gobbled it up and it went down well into his throat and his mouth was watering.

“This pig of yours is very tasty, and I want another piece.”

Ulu became very angry with him, he got up and uncovered the whole pig and got its head, its stomach, its backbone, and put it in a basket and looked around and saw a fig tree, he climbed up with the basket, with the remaining pieces as the rest of the pig had been eaten by the gesges.

He went up the fig tree, stood at the top of the fig tree and started calling out for his brother.

“Bereo! You must come, the gesges here is finishing off our pig.”

The gesges stood up and said:

“Who is finishing off your pig?
You are lying.
The pig is still in the basket.
So who has been eating your pig?”
And he calls out again:

“Bereo! You must come.
Oh the pig, the gesges here is finishing off our pig.”
Feeling bad, he started calling out:

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1. The storyteller intended to name Bereo and not Ulu, here and below, where the names in the Lihir and English versions appear different.
Two Brothers and the Gesges

[sung]

**Bereo, Bereo-i**

*Bereo, Bereo-i*

*Bereo, Bereo-i*

*Bereo, Bereo-i*

*Bereo, Bereo-i*

Bereo e lol mi mel ai tinen kine kesnalik ka nase,

“Eh! Pu maret ok men sa sangotsaketan e sunglik.

E sa tenden mel, yo sa lol mie mel sa tenden.”

E tu mel ke to na gan e pul e ha ambat ke halotbialk he halotsieng ke halotsial.

Ke halotsial ke han to la Matenmon ke tsial to la ostolam e ri halotsiang ke tsial to la ostolik tete mel ke le ni giar to nasien a lon ka ne kesnalik a ka si mele.

E le ni ri lon tete mel ka ne, Ulu sa ri, to:

“Bereo, wan de yak a gesges sa ienien ureure an do bual.”

Ie ne gesges i ga to ok o ri:

“Kotkot kirim kam, se er ianienie masbual komul ne gol?

A bual ok mon me la piar mon.

Yo kasi ianianie sa pu bual min, o ko kirikiri hok mel, o le ni yak ka ni laie ienhenio.”

“Eh! Ko sa ien hurehure ko hon ok te kiri.”

E tu te mel te le:

Bereo heard the crying of his brother and thought,

“Eh! Something has gone wrong for my brother.

He is now crying, I can hear him crying.”

He got up and he called to his dogs, and he got his spear and ran down and ran up and ran down.

He ran up and arrived at Matenmon and ran down to Ostolam River and ran up again and ran down to Osto-lik River and looked to where the stone oven was and his brother was not there.

As he listened, Ulu called out again, he called:

“Bereo, you must come, the gesges is finishing off our pig.”

The gesges called out as well:

“You are falsely reporting, who is eating your precious pig?

The pig is in the basket.

I am not eating any pig now, you are just lying, you want him to come and be angry with me.”

“Eh! You have finished it, only the head is here [with other parts too].”

And he [the gesges] got up and said:
“Wa le, wa kotkot, no ien hurhure a bual mon, ka nosewa.

Ka yie ne kesnalik sa worwor mel nie, e le:

“Ie ka ne Ulu mel min, soko kate min ie ka nasien a lon mel min ne gel.

Ka sa ko kate min menie?”

E giargiar tete mel ka, ie ne gesges sa ien urure mel ka sa ri tsial pet sina i konkon ke le:

“Sss, burbile sa puk her ne i yo sa puk bual.

A tikan ke ri soko hinhin kam mana bual hon ka yo yo le mulien sa puk hok.”

E ka tete mel ke le:

“Henio na purion ha bual.

Ko kape a hon.”

Ka ie ne Ulu e le:

“Todun ok bele sunglik Bereo ninde yak min, ee, ninde laie tsaket ok min enio bikos osa ien ureure tan a bual ne gel.”

Tu ok tete mel ke, ha ma purun am bual ke lie, hanie inie ke pemin, gesges e kon puniaton a purun a bual mel ka, he tu e le:

“Ko hon de yo le ni ru iak.”

“If you, you report me, I will finish off the whole pig, and kill you.

And I demand that you give me the stomach and the head right now.”

As it was, Ulu got up and gave him the ribcage and backbone and stomach and only the tail end and the head remained.

And his brother was searching for him, he said:

“This Ulu, where has he gone, only the place where our stone oven was is here.

And where has he gone?”

As he was looking around, the gesges finished it off, and it went down well into his throat and he said:

“Sss, if only I had another piece of that pig.

This guy is taking off with the precious pig and I want another piece.”

As it was he said:

“Give me the tail end of the pig.

If not, the head.”

And Ulu said:

“Honestly if my brother Bereo comes back, ee, he will be furious with me because you have finished off our pig.”

He got up, he got the tail end of the pig and threw it at him, the gesges swallowed the tail end of the pig whole, he got up and said:

“The head, I demand it.”
“Ee, sore, ko hon ok te min ka ne sunglik ninde laie ok min enio.”

“Henio inie wan le wan ka si le wan henio inie, no ien wa.”
E Ulu he to e hanie na hon bual, ke konmie tete i mel ka, man sa ri tenden:

“Ee, I’m sorry, only the head remains and my brother will be angry with me.”

“Give it to me, if you don’t want to give it to me, I will eat you.”
Ulu up and gave him the pig’s head, he swallowed it whole, and he [Ulu] cried:

[sung]

Bereo, Bereo-i
Bereo, Bereo-i
Ulu sa ie, Bereo, Bereo-i
Ulu sa ie, Bereo, Bereo-i

Bereo, Bereo-i
Bereo, Bereo-i
It will kill Ulu, Bereo, Bereo-i
It will kill Ulu, Bereo, Bereo-i

When Bereo heard that his brother was up in the fig tree, he looked up and [saw that] his brother was at the very top of the fig tree.

As he wondered, as he looked closely, he saw that the gesges was next to him, sitting closely beside him.

He [the gesges] was laughing and the basket, when he [the gesges] looked down, it fell down next to him [Bereo].

“Oh!”
Ulu saw his brother Bereo under the fig tree and he said:

“Sunglik! Wa ko gare ok a piar mon sa puok e pek, kape te sa pu bual i lilien.

“Brother! You have seen the basket that has just fallen, there is no pig in it.
A tikan kere sa ketste me kuling a lolohon e ulil te ka e pitspitsi liman e kuatsil a kuon, ka matan e biete ke kuir ererbirte o garitan mel ie sa ian urure.

Ka ie mel min a tikan die se le gesges sa ketste me kuling.

Ie i mel e ien ururetan a bual.”

E Bereo e ko to ok mel e sangeni a bat mana e pol ke tsieng kemuli dul ok mel.

Mana matau.

E tsieng kemuli dul mel ke pe men e le ni pits to lakan i lak i laken pukia e Bereo ni tal wartie ai lak mel.

Ka man ni ru pits e sangsangoian sangsangoian ka i an de te i kurpien tete i mel.

E le tete i mel ni painim ples, e le ni pits ni ko han lai malat ni ga lo ka tu lakan a min, e le ni pits ni tan ges lakan a min kiar aie.

Pe men e ko pits ok mel ke ko ka ke puk ian i pakien ai pukia, ka he pol kine Bereo die herkor inie ka die ien herher ka inie i pakien ai pukia.

Tek ie tete i mel, dul tsul tete i mel ka dul le:

“Oo” ie ne Ulu e le:

“Sunglik, bele wa kape, e tel te a gesges sa ien de yo ok i lakan ai pukia.

Ka wa ok lel o to ko seivim nung tino.

Ka i min bara, e mel ok tete me si wa.”

Ka ie le kesnalik e ga tu ke le:

This guy sitting here next to me with the really long hair and the long fingers and fingernails, and the dirty face all twisted and wrinkled you see here has finished it all. And this is the guy they call a gesges sitting next to me.

He finished off the pig.”

Bereo got up, planted his spear in the ground amongst the dogs and climbed up after them.

With an axe.

He climbed up after them and his target [the gesges] jumped across from the top of one branch to another of the fig tree, and Bereo cut off the branches as he went. This went on and on until only the tip of the tree was left.

He [the gesges] looked for somewhere to go, he jumped across to reach the branch of another tree.

The target jumped across and fell under the fig tree, and Bereo’s dogs all rushed at him and they tore him apart under the fig tree.

And afterwards, the two [brothers] came down and they said:

“Oo,” and Ulu said:

“Brother, if you weren’t here, the gesges would have eaten me, on the branch of the fig tree. And so you saved my life. And I am here, because of you.”

And his brother got up and said:
“Oh sunglik.
Yo le mulien do nde tsakie ok sa punien i kuling, bikos a gesges sa ien de wa ok i mua, bikos sa ien ure a bual mel de ien wa ok.

Ke pete do de tsakie ok sa karot.”

“A talal die tsakie a karot tele i mel, tek yo yo ri purek si na karat mel.
Tek die ko le dien enio na hon bual, yo le gon hen Simon de na inie.

Sarsar balik pa tam.

“Oh brother.
I want us to have a feast to mark this occasion, because the gesges would have eaten you, because he had finished off the pig and would have eaten you [too].

This is good, we will have a feast.”

At the time when they had the feast, I myself went to the feast.
And as they were going to give me the head of the pig, I said to give it to Simon.

This is the end.
As told by Andrew Monka at Bulamue, Masahet.

This story does not involve any spirit beings or mythological figures; it focuses solely on human behaviour and what can happen to a person who deceives those around her. Dengmaladeng works alongside others in the garden, and as the day progresses, she is sent to collect drinking water. Instead of filling the bamboo containers with water from a creek, she cuts her breasts and fills the containers with drinking water that way. The people unknowingly drink from Dengmaladeng’s breasts several times before she is caught out by another woman, and her secret is revealed. The people are angry that she has deceived them in this way and refer her punishment to the leader of the community. He declares that a feast will be held once the garden has matured, and Dengmaladeng will be the victim (*iliu*); that is, she will be killed and eaten. Again, this story ending with a feast allows the narrator a clear passage to pass the head of the pig on.
At daylight the people go to work in the big garden.

This big garden is at Kali where they work.

They all cleared the big garden, burnt off and were ready to start cleaning up.

During the middle of the day there was no one to fetch them water, one woman agreed to go and so was sent to fetch water.

Her name was Dengmaladeng.

She asked who will fetch water, and the woman said “I will fetch it, I know where the water is.”
Dengmaladeng went to fetch water, she got a bamboo pole and went to where the water was, the place where there was no water, but looked like a creek bed. And she cut off a bamboo section and cut her breast and put it into the mouth of the bamboo container and filled it up.

And then she went ahead, and she cut another big bamboo piece, several sections long, and she cut off a breast and put it in the mouth [of the container].

And it filled up.

She took it back.

She took it back to them.

They drank but they did not know that it was from her breast, it was time to put in the yam stakes, they called out for the people from Ton and the people from Dot and they came, to cut and place them [the stakes] in the big garden.

And they said that the sun is drying them out and there is nobody and they need somebody to fetch them water and that one woman said “I, I know a place where water is and I will go and fetch it.”

And she went.

She cut two bamboo poles this time.

And she went and went up to the place, she cut off a breast again and put it into the mouth of a container and it filled up again.
She stood there ready to cut off the other breast, to put in the mouth of the other container.

Another woman went that way, looking for her.

She [Dengmaladeng] had not come back quickly, the other woman arrived at the place and held onto the breast that she was about to cut off.

The other woman [Dengmaladeng] was caught off guard.

She [the woman] said “What are you doing?”

And she [Dengmaladeng] found it difficult to reattach the other breast to where it was originally attached.

The piece that was left hanging was like a stump.

She went, and because she had been found by the other one [woman] the breast could not be reattached as usual.

The other [woman] went and told all the people.

She said “Look at Dengmaladeng we have been drinking from her because we thought she was fetching water but she was cutting off her breasts.

We have been drinking from her breasts.”

And because of what was said she [Dengmaladeng] started crying.

Because she was crying, this is what she was singing … she was crying, she was saying her own name.

She said:
Dengmaladeng / 85

[sung]

dengmaladeng o nga ktip yo e
yo nga ktip lap la puor
dengmaladeng

Dengmaladeng you have cut me off
I have cut myself into the soil
Dengmaladeng

E tlietlie a yasen ok te muel.
Sa tenden tsieng an te muel e le die sa
atser inie.
A gran a sus muelkie me kiptie.
Tek e ri tu tsieng lakan a i wis, ke ri
ten ko pue si til muel e tenden an de
muel a pu tinen muel.

She was singing her own name.
She was crying up the hill because
it had been revealed about herself.
The news of her breasts being cut.
And she stepped up to the top of
the ridge, she is crying, she is not
singing but she is crying, she is
crying because of her sorrow:

[sung]

dengmaladeng o nga ktip yo e
yo nga ktip lap la puor
dengmaladeng

Die die lol mue.
“Aiy, a wen min e tenden an, e sloi
min sa min ni ne sie.”
Ie a wen muel e le “kupue sa min si
sie.
Ngiet i yunyun mie a to wan a sus men
kie, ka yo kle rbatie ka, ie te mon sa
tenden tsiel an.”

Tek e ri rues tsial, si na gom muel giet
se lolol mie die se le mdaibuegre.

They heard her.
“They heard her.
“Aiy, a woman is crying, what hap-
pened did someone beat her up?”
The other woman said “No-one
beat her up.
We have been drinking water from
her breast, and I caught her off
guard and, that is why she is now
crying down there.”

And she [Dengmaladeng] jumped
down, to the place we hear about
that they call Mbaibuegre.
And she cried:
Dengmaladeng you have cut me off
I have cut myself into the soil
Dengmaladeng

And she went down and found them at Kali.

The people said “Now, you have been doing wrong by us, we didn’t know you were fetching us water by cutting off your breast.
And now we are making a plan for you.

We are going to put you in the hands of the chief.”

(In the past we lived under one chief, the old man looked after us.)

And this old man he will now plan for the woman.

This chief said “This big garden we are making will be the big garden for the woman.
For us she has cut off her breast, when it [the garden] is ready we will make a feast for her.
And she will be a victim, this woman.”

And the big garden became ready and they made a feast for her.
At Sirwirwir.

This plan of the big garden, the chief had planned a feast and it was carried out, the feast for the woman.
Iok te muel sa kle die yen. That is the end, they ate.

Yel sa kle ka tsbo bol ne ... a tsbo bol ne Agnes. Ok it is finished and the head of the pig goes … the head of the pig goes to Agnes.
SEVEN

Two Brothers and the Ailaya

As told by Theckla Inial at Londolovit, Aniolam.

In this final pil, we again have the story of two orphan brothers. The brothers live with their uncle and his wife, and the woman (the non-blood relative) is particularly neglectful of them, feeding them only scraps of food. Still, they grew, and one day they establish for themselves a garden alongside the couple. But before the taro of their garden has fully ripened, they are overcome with despair, thinking about the loss of their parents and the neglect that they have lived with for so long. They recall another uncle who is beside the Ailaya, and they decide to follow him. The Ailaya, as described in this book’s introduction, is understood as a portal to the afterlife and the place to where the spirits of the deceased travel. As such, following someone to the Ailaya suggests that they wish to meet death. Dramatically they dress themselves in their finest customary attire, including shell money given to them by their parents, and proceed to destroy their food garden. Their song is a lament on how they feel and what they plan to do. Their uncle hears their cry and follows them through the landscape. At every point where they stop to sing their song, he struggles to reach them but by the time he arrives they have moved on. Finally their uncle meets them at the top of the Ailaya, but his words have no effect, and together the brothers face their fate.
A tiniatge wana lu kes.
Tinandul ne tamandul dulmiat ine dul.

Ka dul mele i kuli motuandul.
Duli mele i kuli motuandul, ka motuandul i makuetste, a weien ki motuandul eka si tinen katedul.
Ni ka tu la pulolo, ni kel, ni puret ni tutuo elon niweh, e lauon ni tsial i tes ni sie e matsien.

Ni tsieng me ni ka ni tunio, ka ni ko pilie a kuliekulien, e punien ka e puniot ni ka ni turenie la iniap, mana e tuatuan e matsien.

Ka ni ka menie ka niendul inie ma lui keslik.
A lui tana lik ilel e tamandul ne tinandul sa miate.
Ka lui keslik dul na ko patsie—a ka sie tele a punien pet—ka dul na ko sango mese mesenie ok te mandul se ital te.

Ital se sate dul.
Se ko otien dan ok iel; dul na melan ni siat ni lan bin ar otien ok iel.

Lu moktsien dul na ine dul.

Dul na tsieng to la pulolo, dul na pitspits kam.
Dul na kel punien dul na tsial a tomat de tsial ertsip i tes na si e matsien.

A story of two brothers.
Their mother and father died, leaving them.

And they lived with their uncle.
They lived with their uncle, and their uncle was married, the uncle’s wife did not look after them well.
She goes to the bush, she digs food from the garden, she returns, she makes the stone oven and covers it with leaves, her husband goes out to sea to catch fish.

He comes ashore with the fish and cooks them, she removes the skin [of the fish and the vegetables], the peelings and the scraps she puts in a basket, with the bones of the fish.

She goes with that and gives it to the two little brothers.
The two little orphans, their father and mother already died.
The two little brothers will pick it up—it is not good food—and the two of them eat it anyway because they are hungry.
They are always hungry.
It is the same every day; the two sleep, daylight comes, night-time comes, every day the same.
The married couple, they leave them [the boys].
They [the couple] go up to the bush, they work in the garden.
The two dig for food, they will return [home], the man then goes out to sea to catch fish.
Sas matsien ka a weien ni tututun ni tutuo elon ni weweh.

While he’s out fishing, the woman cooks over the open fire and makes the stone oven and covers it with leaves.

Ni tunio e ka li ni kulie, e nien lel sa dote ni pilie a kulekulien ni talie la e pekelolo, ni ka minie na lui tsiklik,

She cooks and the food she cooks over the open fire, she scrapes the ash off it, the cooked food she peels, the peelings she puts inside leaves, she goes and gives it to the two little boys.

A lui keslik tek dul na ianie a kulekulien e punien lel ne dul e kali.

The two brothers eat the peelings of their [the couple’s] food, that which has been cooked over the open fire.

Ni pike elon ni ture nie e puniot lel ni ka menie en dul, tu kulien e matsien ka tuatuan.

She takes the leaves off the stone oven and puts in [the basket] the scraps and gives it to them, with the skin and the fish bones.

Sang sango ie an otien iel ie e binbin kindul ilel ie e talal lamlam ilel mandul melte, so ko utin dan ok iel dul sa ko ohoh an ok te imel si na e puniot ilel e pipia, e puniot wana e nien, e kulekulien e nien, e tuatuan e matsien, e kulekulien e matsien.

This goes on and on, day in day out, for a long. long time, when they were with the couple, although it was like this the two still grew up from the scraps and the rubbish, the scraps of the food, the peelings of the food, the fish bones, and the scales of the fish.

Ka tek dul sa biri tambohlik (otien ae dielalien), ae tambohlik sa biri tel ok na tomat sa ul tomat ka mien me pakien sa biri tambohlik.

And so they grew a bit bigger (about your age [referring to the audience]), the eldest one was becoming a man, like a man, and the younger one was also getting bigger.

Tek dul kemuli dul ma lu moktsien si na talal ka dul takie putaniomlik ki dul i baban a taniom ki dul ma lu moktsien.

And the two followed the couple on one occasion, and the two cleared land for a little garden for themselves beside the garden of the couple.
The two cleared the garden, the two burnt it off, the two raked the inside of it, and they prepared the soil for taro.

The two planted their own taro, the time came for their taro, getting ready [for harvest], almost ready for the two to eat.

And because the wife of their uncle was not good to the two, she wasn’t at all good to them, the two felt despair, they remembered their father and their mother and the eldest boy had enough sense, he thought: hey brother.

“You and me, our father and our mother they died leaving us behind and we are staying with our uncle and he has not done good by us. So we must go.

One of our uncles is over there beside the Ailaya, so we must go, we must follow him.”

It is now daylight but the conversation with his brother was in the evening.

It is now daylight, and the two went up [to the garden].

The couple went first to their garden, and the two [brothers], they followed later.

They went, they prepared their bilas, they prepared their finery.

They put on their finery; armbands, and they prepared and placed decorations around their necks.

They put on their finery and went up to the garden.
Ka dul rangsenie a wel wana taniom ki dul.

They destroyed the fence around their garden.

Ka dul wik katkat neni ae nien ki dul, dul sa tute ilien a taniom, du ka e le ki dul me taman dul ne tinandul dul miat ine te dul ma ni, dul bilasini, dul talie i luan dul, tek ai tsik tambohlik sa til sa ten, sa ten men dul:

They pulled out the food in their garden, they were standing in the garden, they got their shell money that their father and their mother left to them when they died, they decorated themselves, they put it around their necks, and the eldest boy sang and cried, the two cried:

[sung]

si si rurung ai
si si rurung ai kane tamo kane
tinong

who who are we?
who who are we? our father our mother
dul se mamalinio
they have forgotten me
dul dul e ia tsik re gel motuamil ok
they, they say I’m a boy, for we,
man me tamba ailaya tamba ailaya
our uncle is over there beside the Ailaya beside the Ailaya

si si rurung ai
si si rurung ai kane tamo kane
tinong
dul se mamalinio
dul dul e ia tsik re gel motuamil ok
man me tamba ailaya tamba ailaya

who who are we?
who who are we? our father our mother
dul se mamalinio
ty they have forgotten me
dul dul e ia tsik re gel motuamil ok
they, they say I’m a boy, for we,
man me tamba ailaya tamba ailaya
our uncle is over there beside the Ailaya beside the Ailaya

Motuandul e lon lendul, e a lotsial e kupendal a lui keslik dul sa purek te ian matan a lium.

Their uncle heard them, he ran down and shouted to them but the two brothers had already arrived in front of their house.

Ele, “ei luna nunglik go na miel ngol lil wirwir si na sa.

He said, “Hey my two nephews, you two come back, why the despair?" Yo, yo tinen de gol!” 

I, I look after you two!”
And the two boys said “You go back and find your wife.
You look after her very well but you feed us your food scraps.
You feed us rubbish food.
The peelings from your food you feed us, the bones from your fish, the scales from your fish you feed us.
And if you did look after us well, we would have stayed with you.”
They left the front of the hamlet and they started singing along the road.
They started off at Londolovit.
Their uncle, when he arrived there, the two had already arrived at Kapit.

As their uncle arrived at Kapit, the two brothers were already travelling to Kapit Lam.
As they stood there they sang, the eldest boy was crying:

who who are we?
who who are we? our father our mother
they have forgotten me
they, they say I’m a boy, for we, our uncle is over there beside the Ailaya beside the Ailaya
Two Brothers and the Ailaya

[sung]

si si rurung ai

who who are we?

si si rurung ai kane tamo kane tinong

who who are we? our father our mother
dul se mamalinio

do they have forgotten me
dul dul e ia tsik re gel motuamil ok

they, they say I’m a boy, for we,
man me tamba ailaya tamba ailaya

our uncle is over there beside the Ailaya beside the Ailaya

E motuandul ele ni purek i kuil dul ian i kapit lam a lui tsiklik dul de lan me pakien ai nes, pakien ai nes, ailaya.

As their uncle was arriving at Kapit Lam the two boys were already at the foot of the track, the track going up to the Ailaya [ridge].

Dul tu yel ka dul rutil ten:

They stood there and cried and sang:

[sung]

si si rurung ai

who who are we?

si si rurung ai kane tamo kane tinong

who who are we? our father our mother
dul se mamalinio

do they have forgotten me
dul dul e ia tsik re gel motuamil ok

they, they say I’m a boy, for we,
man me tamba ailaya tamba ailaya

our uncle is over there beside the Ailaya beside the Ailaya

E motuandul e lo purek i baran ai nes a lu tsik dul sa tsien dul sa a tan ian imua lakan ailaya.

Their uncle arrived at the bottom of the track but the two boys had gone up and reached the top of the Ailaya [ridge].

Dul tu yel i pek e lakan i purion a not (imuo a not e tute yel).

They stood there at the top under the not fruit tree (before, this tree was there).

Dul tu yel i hon ai nes te dul sa rutil yel:

They stood there at the top of the track and they sang there:
[sung]

si si rurung ai
si si rurung ai kane tamo kane tinong
dul se mamalinio
dul dul e ia tsik re gel motuamil ok man me tamba ailaya tamba ailaya

who who are we?
who who are we? our father our mother
they have forgotten me
they, they say I’m a boy, for we,
our uncle is over there beside the Ailaya beside the Ailaya

Motuandul tsatsing si na ai nes; ele ni hatan i hon ai nes ai maunten, i purun a not, a lu tsik dul tsieng dul tu lakan, i hon de ma ailaya, i pel ma pu hamlik ai hot me tsatsan otin lin.

Dul sa tu yel dul sa uson pet, dul sa ma e maremaret pet ki dul ka dul sa tu redi te imel.

Dul sa nes motuandul.

Motuandul e halo purek yel i hon ai nes ke kup endul.

Ele “hei lo na nunglik gol na ko miel.

E tundun de e motuamul se bung tsial iun ka io kasile gol na ine yo.

Yo le gol na miel ka da de mele ian.

Si na meten anio ki gitet.

Ka lukes dul pitimule dul le wan ko miel.

Wan tinendan a weien ki wa, ka gel gel de ka, gel de suer motuamil.”

Ka dul rutil.

Their uncle went up the track; as he was reaching the top of the track of the mountain, under the not fruit tree, the two brothers went up to the top, to the top of the Ailaya itself, where the ledge sticks out.

They stood there and adjusted their finery well, they got out all their wealth and stood there in readiness.

They waited for their uncle.

Their uncle arrived there at the top of the track [to the ridge] and shouted to them.

He said, “hey, my two nephews, you two come back.

It is true that your other uncle did go down there and I do not want you two to leave me.

I would like you two to come back and stay with me over there.

At our place.”

They replied, “You go home.

You look after your wife, we will now leave, we will go and find our uncle.”

And they sang.
Two Brothers and the Ailaya

Dul sa sango mana te imel dul de rues.

They were now prepared and ready to jump.

[sung]

si si rurung ai
si si rurung ai kane tamo kane tinong
dul se mamalinio
dul dul e ia tsik re gel motuamil ok man me tamba ailaya tamba ailaya

who who are we?
who who are we? our father our mother	hey have forgotten me
they, they say I’m a boy, for we, our uncle is over there beside the Ailaya beside the Ailaya

Motuandul ok ele ni tsieng ok lakan mai ot, a lu kes dul tu ka dul pits ok dul rues ian i tes.
Dul rues i tes ka dul kits matuk ok i kuli motuandul.

Their uncle, at the top of the rock, the two brothers they stood up and jumped into the sea.
They jumped into the sea and their bodies stopped near their [deceased] uncle.

Tek e rutel na o ok ai ot ka diet kets ok te yel, si na bom ri ok e iak te a rot sa kaka me lakan.

And they turned into stones and have been stationary there since, on this side [the Londolovit side of the Ailaya] with the road now built on top of them.

Ie ka mai pur die sa li aie me lakan ma laktul i ot ilel ka a nes sa kaka me lakan.
Tek i ok te imel.
A witwit nien.

That and the soil are on top of the three stones, the road is on top of them.
And that is all.
The end of it.
Index of Recordings


4. The Sister and the Mdualih, as told by Elizabeth Walis (Li, Mahur). Recorded by Kirsty Gillespie on 27 January 2010 (vol. 4, STE-003). Transcribed by Peter Toelinkanut over 9–10 February 2010, and translated with Kirsty Gillespie on 10 February 2010.


7. Two Brothers and the Ailaya, as told by Theckla Inial (Londolovit, Aniolam).
Transcribed and translated by Peter Toelkanut and Kirsty Gillespie on 15 and 18 January 2010, respectively.
The Lihir Islands have been the subject of much research over the years, and as a result, there is an extensive amount of literature available about the islands. Below is a compilation of this literature, provided to satisfy both the newcomer to Lihir, but also the Lihir reader who would like to know more about the publications that are a result of research conducted in their islands.

This list includes publications across a broad spectrum, covering Lihir culture, health, the environment, and mining. Publications that do not include Lihir as a focus, and publications that are not readily accessible, such as unpublished reports or conference papers, have not been included. The references, therefore, are not exhaustive, and new contributions will of course be made in the future.

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Ruchan, Bais
2009 Current Status of Agriculture on Lihir. Lihir: Department of Primary Industries.

Scheyvens, Regina, and Leonard Lagisa

Schlaginhaufen, Otto

Thomas, Séverine, and Sea Rotmann

TM Organics

Zial, S.
Apwitihire: Studies in Papua New Guinea Musics

Apwitihire [apwɪtəʔəre] is an ensemble consisting of three sets of raft panpipes and three single end-blown pipes, played by Angaataha speakers of Morobe Province. The ensemble performs in accompaniment to isaasarihire songs. The origin of the ensemble and songs is told by Nuseso of Otete:

The apwitihire ensemble originated in a hunting ground called Popiraatatihi. The wausaho or kirunkwa possum made the first set of instruments. He erected an enclosure with a gate and cleared a dancing ground called Woyaphantani. Then he called all the animals together in order to show them how to play the instruments. The wausaho passed out instruments to various animals and tried to teach them. The cassowary and dog tried, but were unable to play. The ntetîho pipe was learned by a lizard; the sanaati panpipes by a pig; the otaananati panpipes by a bird of paradise; the pupuho pipe by the mwisaati quail; the akihiri panpipes were kept by the wausaho himself and another animal played the sumsiho pipe. While these animals played, the nkone fantail sang:

I am a parrot, flying over the tops of wild pandanus trees and above rivers
I sing, and my voice echoes

While hunting, a man saw the animals performing. He stole the knowledge from them and taught other men to play. Now this music is performed whenever a group of young men is moving to the next stage of initiation.
This book is a collection of stories, known as pil, told across the generations by the people of Lihir, New Ireland province, Papua New Guinea. Collected between 2008 and 2010, and accompanied by sound recordings, these seven stories encapsulate much of Lihir culture, from mythological beings to everyday life in the islands.

These stories were recorded, transcribed, and translated in collaboration with the Lihir Cultural Heritage Association.

Kirsty Gillespie is senior curator in anthropology at the Queensland Museum and James Cook University, Australia. She received her PhD from the Australian National University in 2008 for research on the music of the Duna people of Koriago, Hela province, Papua New Guinea, and is the author of Steep Slopes: Music and Change in the Highlands of Papua New Guinea (ANU E Press, 2010) amongst other publications.