10. Manu Kama’s road, Tepa Nilu’s path

The ritual chant *Manu Kama ma Tepa Nilu*, a poem of more than 330 lines in strict canonical parallelism, is the oldest recorded chant in Rotenese ritual language. It offers a glimpse of a world created through the cultural imagination of the Rotenese. Here I wish to examine the underlying assumptions, conventional expressions and complex philosophy of life that give coherence to this poetic world.

My intention is to examine this text, selectively, at various levels, from its metaphysical allegory to the minutiae of the formulae embodied in it. As such, this reading, I hope, may provide something of an introduction to the literary possibilities of Rotenese poetry.

Introduction to the historical text

In 1911, the renowned Dutch linguist J. C. G. Jonker published the text of a long Rotenese ritual chant. He added this single chant to his collection of Rotenese texts as an ‘example of poetic style’ that he recognised was characterised by ‘sustained parallelism’. Instead of translating the chant, however, which he implied was ‘obscure’, he merely provided a series of notes to it with a translation of an ordinary-language paraphrase that accompanied the text (Jonker 1911:97–102, 130–5). In 1913, Jonker published another collection of texts in a variety of Rotenese dialects and, in 1915, his massive Rotenese grammar, but he never again gave further consideration to the chant, so it remained the only untranslated portion of his vast corpus of Rotenese material.

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1 This chapter was first published in 1988 as “‘Manu Kama’s road, Tepa Nilu’s path’: theme, narrative and formula in Rotenese ritual language’, in J. J. Fox (ed.), *To Speak in Pairs: Essays on the ritual languages of eastern Indonesia*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, pp. 161–201. The research on which the original paper was based spanned a considerable period. It involved extensive fieldwork on Rote in 1965–66 and again in 1972–73, as well as brief visits in 1977 and 1978. This research was supported by grants from the US National Institute of Mental Health (MH-10, 161; MH-20, 659), the US National Science Foundation (2NS-7808149 A01) and The Australian National University. In Indonesia, all research was conducted under the auspices of the Lembaga Ilmu Pengetahuan Indonesia and in cooperation with the University of Nusa Cendana in Kupang.

2 Jonker published the original text in double columns with unnumbered lines. I have numbered the lines for identification and made a number of minor corrections: line 43, *lelena* for *lelea*; line 103, *Lide* for *Lede*; line 131, *Doli* for *Dali*. In lines 163 and 164, *do* should probably be read as *o*, which would be grammatically correct. In lines 218 and 220, the same *do* appears again but is less easily interpretable. Only one line in the entire text made little or no sense—this was line 232, which originally appeared as ‘lope lea de neu’ and was corrected, on Rotenese advice, to ‘lelo afe de lope’, which is the correct formulaic parallel to line 231, ‘fo’a fanu de la’o’ (see lines 155–6). In addition, in lines 123, 126, 166 and 200, I have shifted the word *nae* (‘to say, to speak’) from the next line. Nothing is changed except line length, which is variable; the shift facilitates, however, overall phrasing. I have also simplified Jonker’s transcription of Rotenese words.
Far from being ‘obscure’, this untranslated text, entitled *Ana-Ma Manu Kama ma Falu-Ina Tepa Nilu*, is a clear, superbly structured example of Rotenese ritual language. It is a funeral chant that belongs to the broad class of chants for *ana-mak ma falu-ina* (‘orphans and widows’). In all probability, it was gathered in 1900 when Jonker visited the Timor area, or shortly thereafter, when he had returned to Makassar but continued to correspond with and receive written textual material from various local Rotenese informants. This makes the *Manu Kama ma Tepa Nilu* chant the oldest full ritual text available for comparison with present forms of ritual language.

My first purpose in this chapter is to provide a translation of the *Manu Kama ma Tepa Nilu* text. Rather than simply translate the words of the text, however, I would like to offer some explanation of the basic ideas expressed in it, since these ideas embody concepts that are fundamental to a Rotenese philosophy of life. At a more technical level, I wish to make comparisons between forms in this chant and those in current use in Rote, and thereby begin to explicate how the conventions of canonical parallelism interact with the syntactic requirements of an oral poetry to produce stylised phrases and formulae.

This chapter comprises three parts. I begin, in part one, with a personal preface to the text, describing its importance to my own field research on ritual language. I then examine the fundamental idea in the text—the concept of ‘orphan and widow’—and, with this as a background, give an outline summary and brief exegesis of the text itself. In part two, I discuss the formal structure of Rotenese ritual language and, to illustrate continuity in the language, I compare examples from the text with excerpts from compositions by contemporary oral poets, focusing specifically on formulae used to mark episodes and advance chant narration.4 I conclude this discussion with various remarks on oral intercommunication, narrative structure and verbal authority in Rotenese poetry. Finally, in part three, I provide a complete translation of the *Manu Kama ma Tepa Nilu* text. The translation of this text effectively completes the Jonker corpus of Rotenese texts, and is offered in homage to a Leiden scholar of great stature on whose work I have relied from the beginning of my research on eastern Indonesia.

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3 Jonker does not identify the chanter from whom he obtained the *Manu Kama ma Tepa Nilu* text. In his preface to *Rotinnesche Teksten* (1911), Jonker thanks D. A. Johannes, a native religious instructor in Keka, for his assistance in the gathering of the written texts, and J. Fanggidaej, the head of the native school at Babau, for checking and correcting the manuscripts.

4 With the exception of one short excerpt from the chant *Sua Lai ma Batu Hu*, all of the contemporary material I quote in this paper is taken from Fox (1972).
Preface to the text

On my first trip to Rote in 1965, I took with me a copy of Jonker’s *Rottineesche Teksten* (1911), which contains the untranslated text of *Manu Kama ma Tepa Nilu*. In the early stages of my fieldwork, as I was attempting to formulate a direction to my research, I was assisted by two poets: Peu Malesi, who would visit me occasionally in the hamlet of Ufa Len where I lived; and Stefanus Adulanu, ‘Old Meno’ as he was called, the ritual ‘Head of the Earth’ in Termanu, whom I visited in the nearby hamlet of Ola Lain.

Peu Malesi was the first poet from whom I was able to record a lengthy chant, and it took me several weeks of intermittent work to manage to transcribe, translate and comprehend what he had recited for me. A schoolteacher, J. Pello, assisted me with the transcription, while Meno and two elders from Ufa Len, Mias Kiuk and Nggi Muloko, helped in the slow, line-by-line translation and exegesis of the transcribed text. At the time, I had virtually no grasp of the Rotenese language, no idea of the structure of ritual language and no clear sense of what I was doing other than responding to what the Rotenese themselves insisted was the most important thing for me to do. During this period, Meno willingly answered my questions and allowed me to accompany him when he attended the local court, where he and other clan elders heard and judged disputes, but at no time, despite several promises, did he recite for me a chant of his own. As he explained to me later, he was uncertain of my intentions and seriousness and he was waiting to see how I proceeded.

When, eventually, I reached the point of understanding the Malesi chant and had begun to make sense of its structure, I realised that the *Manu Kama ma Tepa Nilu* text had much the same structure and, from the little that I could make out, was obviously of ritual importance. I therefore resolved to translate it. As a start, without any prior explanation of its origin, I simply read it, as carefully I could, to Kiuk and Muloko. They were indeed impressed but, to my surprise, they assumed it was another chant that I had recorded from Malesi. The language of the text was such that, without being alerted, their assumption was that it was a contemporary specimen of ritual language. Only when I explained the background to the text were they able to point to expressions that they felt were no longer commonly used by chanters.

After working on the text for some time, I offered to read it to Meno, but he instead proposed that I read it before all the assembled elders at the end of a court session. Without my fully realising it, he was arranging my first public performance as a chanter. With a suitable preface about how I was bringing back to Rote a chant that had been taken down and safeguarded in Holland for generations, my performance, even though it only involved reading a text, was
sufficient to establish some credibility to my endeavours and allow me to enter into an exchange of chants among the poets of Termanu. From then on, Meno and other poets were willing and indeed eager to allow me to record them.

The *Manu Kama ma Tepa Nilu* chant initiated a dialogue in another sense. Chanters regularly respond to other chanters by interpolating passages in their performances that allude to previous performances. In my case, even after having translated *Manu Kama ma Tepa Nilu*, its meaning remained elusive. On Rote, there are mortuary chants intended to fit all appropriate social categories of the deceased—nobles or commoners, rich or poor, those who die old or those who die unmarried—but the most general of all are ‘orphan and widow’ chants, of which there are many, which can be adapted to suit almost any mortuary occasion. *Manu Kama ma Tepa Nilu* belongs to this general class of chants. One of my difficulties, however, in discussions with Meno, was in understanding the significance the Rotenese attached to the concept of ‘orphan and widow’. It was in answer to my questioning on this subject, months later, that Meno interpolated a passage in his recitation of the chant *Lilo Tola ma Koli Lusi* that alluded to my queries about *Manu Kama ma Tepa Nilu*. This passage was the first of many dialogue exchanges conducted in ritual language as part of the process of my learning the language and its significance.

As in all skilful interpolations, it is difficult—and to some extent arbitrary—to designate where in the *Lilo Tola ma Koli Lusi* chant the interpolated passage begins or ends. Here, I quote 16 lines that are clearly the most pertinent part of Meno’s reply:

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**Se ana-mak?**
Who is an orphan?

**Na basang-ngita ana-mak**
All of us are orphans.

**Ma se falu-ina?**
And who is a widow?

**Na basang-ngita falu-ina.**
All of us are widows.

**Fo la-fada lae**
They speak of

**Manu Kama dala Dain**
Manu Kama’s road to Dain

**Ma Tepa Nilu eno Selan.**
And Tepa Nilu’s path to Selan.

**Na basang-ngita ta enon**
All of us have not his path

**Ma basang-ngita ta dalan.**
And all of us have not his road.

**Sosoa-na nai dae bafak kia nde, bena**
This means that on this Earth, then,

**Ana-mak mesan-mesan**
Each person is an orphan

**Ma falu-ina mesan-mesan.**
And each person is a widow.

**De mana-sapeo nggeok**
Those who wear black hats

**Do mana-kuei modak ko,**
Or those who wear green slippers,

**Se ana-ma sila boe**
They will be orphans too

**Ma falu-ina sila boe.**
And they will be widows too.
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Meno’s reply contains three elements that point to an understanding of the *Manu Kama ma Tepa Nilu* text and its underlying philosophy. First, Meno makes explicit the basic Rotenese conception of widowhood and orphanhood as a metaphor symbolising a universal human condition. Then, in alluding to ‘Manu Kama’s road to Dain//Tepa Nilu’s path to Selan’, he refers to various courses of human life, all of which imply mortality. From this follows his third point that since mortality is the fundamental cause of the condition of widowhood and orphanhood, it is at the same time the obliterator of all social distinctions of class or origin. The phrase ‘Those who wear black hats//Those who wear green slippers’ is an old formulaic designation for the Dutch. (This phrase probably dates from the period of the Dutch East India Company, ‘black’ and ‘green’ being the symbolic colours of the north and west quadrants from which the company was considered to have originated.) Powerful Europeans, like all others, are reduced to widowhood and orphanhood. Hence, despite differences in life course and origin, there are ultimately no differences in the human condition. Meno’s reply is thus a highly condensed statement of various closely related notions. From the several points he makes can be derived other notions that are equally important to an understanding of the concept of widow and orphan, and these notions are what I propose to examine in greater detail as a prelude to a consideration of the *Manu Kama ma Tepa Nilu* text.

The concept of widow and orphan

The concept of widow and orphan is a multiplex notion whose basis is to be found in the context of the funeral ceremony. On Rote, death’s disruption is regarded as affecting primarily the close relatives of the deceased, particularly brothers and sisters, parents, descendants and spouse. These relatives are the ‘bereaved’ (*mana-faluk*). They are responsible for providing the funeral feast, but must themselves fast until after the burial. Women among the bereaved are expected to bewail the deceased. Maternal relatives who are invited to the feast, on the other hand, are paid to perform ritual services at the funeral. They are supposed to cleanse the bereaved on the day after the burial and provide the foods that break their fast.

In ritual language, the bereaved are referred to as ‘orphans and widows’ (*ana-mak ma falu-inak*) and their condition is described as *ma-salak ma ma-singok*. The full formula for the bereaved is *ana mak ma-salak ma faluina ma-singak*. The Rotenese word *sala*(*k*) embraces many of the related senses of its Indonesian cognate *salah* (‘error, mistake, fault, guilt, wrong’) and has become, for Christian Rotenese, the word for ‘sin’. *Sala*(*k*) may refer, however, to actions that were done intentionally and those that occurred by accident, and in many contexts merely implies that something is ‘out of place’ or simply ‘displaced’. *Singo*(*k*), the term with which *sala*(*k*) is paired, has a similar sense. It refers to something
that is ‘off course, deviant or divergent’—something that has missed its target or strayed from its set path. Since the Rotenese conceive of an ideal order that is manifest only in the heavenly spheres, all of human life is condemned to disorder and imperfection. Death is merely the most prominent occasion at which the human condition is made evident.

Given this understanding, the metaphor of widow and orphan can be used in numerous contexts. In situations of dependency, and particularly in making requests for assistance, the subordinate party identifies his position as that of orphan and widow. Such a position is one of distress and requires compassion:

Te au ana-ma ma-salak
Ma au falu-ina ma-singak,
De au ana mak loe-loe
Ma au falu inak dae-dae.

I am an orphan displaced
And I am a widow astray,
I am a humble orphan
And I am a lowly widow.

The hope is expressed that the superior party will be generous and unstinting:

Fo ela neka lama-koko bafa
Na dai ana-ma tee,
Ma bou lama-lua fude
Na ndule falu-ina ingu.

Let the rice basket overflow its brim
To be enough for a clan of orphans,
And let the lontar jar froth over
To be sufficient for a lineage of widows.

Previously, the orphan and widow metaphor was used to characterise the relationship of all subjects to the lord of their domain. The same metaphor can still be used to describe the relationship of dependants to patrons within their clan or lineage. This short petition given to me by Meno is a good example of the imagery used in making requests. The images are characteristically Rotenese: the cooking of lontar-palm syrup and the cutting of leaves and leafstalks from the palm. The concluding image of a dense forest with branches touching one another is a common botanic metaphor for order and harmony in society.

Lena-lena ngala lemin,
Lesi-lesi ngala lemin,
Sadi mafandendalek,
Sadi masanenedak:
Fo ana-ma tua fude
Ma falu-ina beba langa la
Tua fude dua kako na,
Kako kao mala sila,
Ma beba langa telu te na,
Te tenga mala sila,
Fo ela-ana-ma bei tema

All you great ones,
All you superior ones,
Do remember this,
Do bear this in mind:
Save the froth of the cooking syrup for the orphans
And the heads of the palm leafstalks for the widows
When the froth spills over twice,
Scoop it up for them,
And when the stalk’s head droops thrice,
Lop it off for them,
So the orphans may remain intact
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ma falu-ina bei tetu,</strong></td>
<td>And the widows stand upright,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fo leo tema toe-ao lasin na,</strong></td>
<td>Intact like a dense forest,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Teman losa don na,</strong></td>
<td>Intact for a course of time,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ma tetu lelei nulan na,</strong></td>
<td>And upright like a thick wood,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tetun nduku nete na.</strong></td>
<td>Upright for an age</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Using more elaborate metaphors, a patron may be compared with a shepherd who tends a ‘herd’ of orphans and a ‘flock’ of widows, or with a great tree around which orphans gather and widows circle. Two examples of this kind of imagery—both taken from the same chant, *Ndi Lonama ma Laki Elokama*, which I recorded from the poet Stefanus Amalo in 1966—may serve as illustration. The first utilises the image of the herdsman:

**Te hu touk Ndi Lonama,**                                        The man Ndi Lonama,
**Ma ta’ek Laki Elokama,**                                         And the boy Laki Elokama,
**Tou ma-bote bilk**                                               Is a man with flocks of goats
**Ma ta’e ma-tena kapak.**                                         And is a boy with herds of water buffalo.
**De basa fai-kala**                                               On all days
**Ada nou ledo-kala**                                              And every sunrise
**Ana tada mamao bote**                                            He separates the flock in groups
**Ma ana lilo bobongo tena**                                       And forms the herd in circles
**Na neni te tada tenan**                                          Bringing his herd-separating spear
**Ma neni tafa lilo bote-na,**                                     And bringing his flock-forming sword,
**Fo te nade Kafe Sari**                                           His spear named Kafe Lasi
**Ma tafa nade Seu Nula.**                                         And his sword named Seu Nula.
**Fo ana toe tafa neu be na,**                                     Where he lowers his sword,
**Bote hae neu ndia,**                                              The flock stops there,
**Ma te’e te neu be na,**                                          And where he rests his spear,
**Tena lu’u neu ndia.**                                             The herd lies down at that place.
**Fo tena ta neu lu’u**                                            It is not the herd that lies down
**Ma bote ta neu hae,**                                             And not the flock that stops,
**Te ana-mak-kala hae**                                             But it is orphans who stop
**Ma falu-ina-la lu’u.**                                            And widows who lie down.

The second example is contained in the instructions of the dying Ndi Lonama//Laki Elokama. (Because of the rules of parallelism, all chant characters—as indeed all places—have double names. By convention, I refer to these characters in the singular but by their double name.) Ndi Lonama//Laki Elokama thus instructs his family to continue his practice of caring for orphans and widows:

**De tati mala bau ndanan,**                                       Cut and take a branch from the Bau-tree,
**Ma aso mala tui baen**                                            Slice and take a limb from the Tui-tree
**Fo tane neu dano Hela**                                           To plant at the lake Hela
Ma sele neu le Kosi
Fo ela okan-na lalae
Ma samun-na ndondolo
Fo ela poek-kala leu lain
Ma nik-kala leu feon;
Fo poek ta leu lain
Te ana-mak leu tain,
Ma nik ta leu feon
Te falu-ina leu feon.

And to sow at the river Kosi
That its roots may creep forth
And its tendrils may twine
For shrimp to cling to
And crabs to circle round;
It is not shrimp that cling there
But orphans who cling there,
And it is not crabs that circle round
But widows who circle round.

In virtually all widow and orphan chants, emphasis is placed on the wanderings of the orphan and widow: the quest of the displaced for sustenance, support and a proper abode. For example, in a chant by Meno that relates the death of the chant character Lusi Topo Lani//Tola Tae Ama, his widow, Bisa Oli//Ole Masi, is left to care for his orphan, Lilo Tola//Koli Lusi. Much of this chant is taken up with the search by the widow for food to raise her orphan child. Her need prompts her to seek ‘the early millet harvest//the first lontar yields’ in the domain of Medi do Ndule, and her request, as she journeys, is as follows:

Na kedi fe au dok
Ma dui fe au bifak,
Fo au ane neu lapa eik
Ma au sika neu sidi su’uk,
Fo au la’o unik ledo Medi
Ma au lope unik fai Ndule.

Cut for me a leaf
And strip for me a leafstalk,
That I may plait sandals for [my] feet
And I may open out a cover for [my] breast,
For I walk toward Medi’s sun
And I head for Ndule’s day.

In the Christian reinterpretation of traditional cultural themes, this quest is regarded as a kind of pilgrim’s progress—mankind’s journey to a heavenly home. The general structure of orphan and widow chants, as will be evident from the Manu Kama ma Tepa Nilu chant, lends itself to a variety of similar allegorical interpretations. There is a commonality between the narrative structure of these chants and the Rotenese conception of the course of human life.

Outline of the Manu Kama ma Tepa Nilu text

The text of Manu Kama ma Tepa Nilu runs to 334 lines and can be divided into five main episodes. Episode one (lines 1–34) begins with the marriage of the woman Silu Lilo//Huka Besi with the man Kama Lai Ledo//Nilu Neo Bulan, and the birth and early childhood of Manu Kama//Tepa Nilu (henceforth MK//TN). All chant characters have dual names and MK//TN takes the second portion of his name (Kama//Nilu) from that of his father, Kama Lai Ledo//Nilu Neo Bulan. His father’s name includes the names Ledo//Bulan (‘Sun’//’Moon’), which signify a high heavenly origin. Recognition of this origin is essential to appreciate what happens in later episodes when MK//TN is not given the respect he deserves.
Episode one continues in describing first the death of MK//TN’s father and then of his mother. This leaves MK//TN as an orphan and widow. Since in ritual language ‘father’ pairs with ‘mother’s brother’ and ‘mother’ pairs with ‘father’s sister’, being an orphan and widow is described as lacking these important relatives. The episode ends, as do subsequent episodes, leaving MK//TN with tears streaming from his eyes and snot running from his nose. This is portrayed with elaborate botanic imagery:

31. De lu ko boa na’u, Tears like bidara-fruit in the grass,
32. Ma pinu kaitio telan Snot like kaitio-[leaves] in the underbrush
33. Lama-noma oba-tula They pour like juice from a tapped gewang
34. Do lama-titi ate lasi. And flow like sap from an old ate.

Episode two (lines 35–98) describes MK//TN’s encounter with the woman Bula Pe//Mapo Tena, who finds him weeping and takes him in as his mother and aunt:

45. Bo ana-ma Manu Kama, Oh, orphan Manu Kama,
46. Do bo falu-inu Tepa Nilu, Oh, widow Tepa Nilu,
47. Mai, te Silu Lilok nde au Come, Silu Lilok am I
48. Do Huka Besik nde au. Or Huka Besik am I.
49. Boe ma ta nae Bula Pe So do not say Bula Pe
50. Te nae Silu Lilok, But say Silu Lilok,
51. Ma ta nae Mapo Tena And do not say Mapo Tena
52. Te nae Huka Besik. But say Huka Besik.

Then one day at dawn, MK//TN hears the ‘soft voices and gentle songs’ of ‘friarbirds and green parrots’ (koa//nggia). In Rotenese poetry, the set friarbird and parrot is the conventional metaphor for a young attractive girl, and, as these honeybirds and parrots approach MK//TN:

61. Boe ma ala kako dodoe hala-nala They sing with soft voices
62. Ma ala hele memese dasi-nala. And they warble with gentle songs.
63. De ala kako-lala Manu Kama dalen They sing to Manu Kama’s heart
64. Ma hele-lala Tepa Nilu tein. And warble to Tepa Nilu’s inner being.

At this, MK//TN wakes Bula Pe//Mapo Tena and asks her:

77. Muasa fe-ng-au koa halak Go buy for me the friarbird’s voice
78. Do tadi fe-ng-au nggia dasik Or get for me the green parrot’s whistle
79. Fo eta au a-hala nggia halak So that I may reply to the green parrot’s voice
80. Ma au a-dasi koa dasik. And I may sing to the friarbird’s song
81. Fo sama leo inang boe Sothat you may be just like my mother
82. Do deta lea te’ong boe. Or that you may be similar to my aunt.
In the conventions of the poetry, this is a request that Bula Pe//Mapo Tena provide the bride-wealth, consisting of water buffalo and gold, to allow MK//TN to marry. In reply, Bula Pe//Mapo Tena says that she has nothing of value except her person, which she offers in the place of proper bride-wealth.

83. Mu bola inam leo kapa, Go, tie your mother like a water buffalo,
84. Fo leo-leo leo kapa; Circling round like a water buffalo;
85. Ma mu tai te’om leo lilo, And go weigh your aunt like gold,
86. Fo benu-benu leo lilo, Balanced gently like gold,
87. Te au ina ndeli-lima-ku’u-tak For I am a woman without a ring on her finger
88. Ma au feto liti-ei-tak And I am a girl without copper on her legs.

On hearing this answer, MK//TN feels the ‘heart’s regret of an orphan and the inner grief of a widow’. He takes up his father’s bow and his uncle’s blowpipe and he leaves, with tears running down his cheeks and snot falling from his nose. ‘Bow and blowpipe’—material objects that have long since disappeared from use on Rote—are significant in poetry as the principal objects with which young men ‘hunt’ honeybirds and green parrots.

Episode three (lines 99–176) repeats and elaborates similar events to those in episode two. This time, MK//TN meets the woman Lide Muda//Adi Sole, to whom he reveals his plight and elaborates on his sorry condition:

111. Au ana-ma Manu Kama I am the orphan Manu Kama
112. Ma au falu-ina Tepa Nilu And I am the widow Tepa Niliu,
113. Au a -ina ingu inan, I have, as mother, the land of my mother
114. Ma au ate’o leo te’on, And I have, as aunt, the clan of my aunt.
115. Ala hopo kedok Manu Kama, Gruffly, they mix lontar syrup for Manu Kama,
116. Ma ala sode odak Tepa Nilu, Sourly, they serve rice to Tepa Nilu,
117. Ala lo tuluk Tepa Nilu They offer things with a shove to Tepa Nilu
118. Ma ala sipo le’ak Manu Kama And they take things with a tug from Manu Kama.
119. Au ana-ma dai-lena-ng, My orphaned state is increased,
120. De au ana-ma-ng boe mai, I am more an orphan than ever,
121. Ma au falu-ina tolesi-ng, My widowed state is made greater,
122. Au falu-ina-ng bee mai. I am more a widow than ever.

Lide Muda//Adi Sole offers to take him in, saying:

124. Bo Manu Kama-e, Oh, Manu Kama,
125. Mai uma-t-ala uma leon, Come to our house,
126. Ma fetok ia Adi Sole nae: And the girl Adi Sole says:
127. Bo Tepa Nilu-e, Oh, Tepa Nilu,
128. Mai lo-t-ala lo leon, Come to our home,
MK/TN settles in and is properly served rice and millet. He calls Lide Muda//Adi Sole ‘his mother of birth and his true aunt’.

Again, however, at dawn, come the soft voices and gentle songs of the honeybirds and parrots, and again he wakes his newly found mother and aunt and requests bride-wealth with which to marry:

153. Bo ina-ng-o-ne, Oh, my mother,
154. Do bo te’o-ng-o-ne, Oh, my aunt,
155. Fo’a fanu mapa-deik, Wake and stand up,
156. Ma lelo afe manga-tuk! Come awake and sit up!
157. Te siluk nai dulu so Morning is in the east
158. Ma hu’ak nai langa so. And dawn is at the head.
159. Buluk-a bei Manu Kama inan If you are Manu Kama’s mother
160. Do buluk-a bei Tepa Nilu te’on, Or if you are Tepa Nilu’s aunt,
161. Mu asa fe-ng-au koa Go buy for me a friarbird
162. Ma mu tadi fe-ng-au nggia! And go get for me a green parrot!
163. Te au ae-[d]lo Silu Lilo So I may call you Silu Lilo
164. Ma au ae [d]lo Huka Besik And I may call you Huka Besik

Lide Mudak//Adi Sole, however, replies in the same way as Bula Pe//Mapo Tena:

167. Au ina ndeli-lima (-ku’u)-tak I am a woman without a ring on her finger
168. Ma au feto liti-ei-tak. And I am a girl without copper on her legs.

So, once more, with snot and tears, MK//TN sets off on his quest:

169. Boe ma ana-ma Manu Kama So the orphan Manu Kama
170. Le’a-na kou-koa-n grabs his friarbird-hunting bow
171. Ma falu-ina Tepa Nilu And the widow Tepa Nilu
173. De neu tunga sanga ina bongin He goes in search of a mother of birth
174. Ma neu afi sanga te’o te’en And goes to look for a true aunt
175. Na te lu dua tunga enok Two tears fall along the path
176. Ma pinu teu tunga dalak. And three drops of snot fall along the road.

Episode four (lines 177–232) describes MK//TN’s next encounter, with the woman Lo Luli//Kala Palu, who offers to adopt him. This time, late at night, MK//TN hears the sound of drum and gongs, ‘the resounding buffalo-skin drum and the booming goat-skin beat’, and he is told that the Sun and Moon are
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giving a feast at Rainbow Crossing and Thunder Round. MK//TN asks Lo Luli//Kala Palu to lead him to the celebration and there he is recognised by the Sun and Moon. Instead of being served properly, however, MK//TN is insulted.

215. Boe ma la-lelak Manu Kama
They recognise Manu Kama

216. Ma la-lelak Tepa Nilu,
And they recognise Tepa Nilu,

217. De ala ko’o fe Manu Kama nesuk
They pick up a rice pestle for Manu Kama

218. De lae [dol] kana,
And they call it a small table,

219. Ma ala keko fe Tepa Nilu batu
And they push over a rock for Tepa Nilu

And they call it a chair.

221. De malole-a so
This was good

222. Do mandak-a so.
And this was proper.

223. Te boe ma ala ke te’i
But then they cut and divide the meat

224. Ma ala sode ndui,
And they spoon and scoop food,

225. De ala fe Tepa Nilu betek
They give Tepa Nilu millet

226. Ma ala fe-n neu lu’ak,
And they give it to him in a rice basket,

227. Ma fe Manu Kama bak
They give Manu Kama lung

228. Ma ala fe-n neu lokak.
And they give it to him in a meat bowl.

229. Boe ma Manu Kama nasa-kedu
So Manu Kama begins to sob

230. Ma Tepa Nilu nama-tani.
And Tepa Nilu begins to cry.

231. Boe ma ana fo’a fanu de la’o
He gets up and leaves

232. Ma ana lelo afe de lope.
And he stands up and goes.

This puts an end to this episode and MK//TN continues his search.

Episode five (lines 233–334), with which the chant concludes, is the longest and most complex segment of the poem. This time, MK//TN meets the woman Kona Kek//Leli Deak and together they go to live in Lini Oe//Kene Mo. MK//TN, who by this time become an able-bodied young man, begins to do work for his new mother and aunt, tapping lontar palms and working in the fields:

245. Ana pale mane fe inan
He taps male lontars for his mother

246. Ma lenu feto fe te’on,
And saps female lontars for his aunt,

247. Fe te’on Kona Kek
To give to his aunt, Kona Kek,

248. Ma fe inan Leli Deak.
And give to his mother, Leli Deak.

249. Neu lele bina fe inan
He goes to clear a field for his mother

250. Ma seku ndenu fe te’on
And he prepares a garden for his aunt

While MK//TN is working in a distant field, a ship appears and Kona Kek//Leli Deak, who sees it, goes to ask:

261. Baluk se balu-n-o?
This ship, whose ship is it?

262. Ma tonak se tona-n-o?
And this perahu, whose perahu is it?

263. Salem fua loba Selak,
[If] your ship carries loba-bark from Selak,
10. Manu Kama’s road, Tepa Nilu’s path

264. Tonam ifa lani Daik, [If] your perahu bears lani-herbs from Daik,
265. Na au asa ala fa dei Then, I’ll buy a little
266. Do au tadi ala fa dei! And I’ll get a little!

The perahu’s captain, Bui Kume//Lo Lengo, invites Kona Kek//Leli Deak on board, saying:

267. Au Buik balun-na ia I, Buik, own this ship
268. Do au Lok tona-na ia. Or I, Lok, own this perahu.
269. Lolek sio lai lain Nine fine things are on board
270. Ma ladak falu lai ata. And eight delightful things are on top.
271. Laba kae mai lain, Mount and climb, come on board,
272. Ma tinga hene mai ata. And step and ascend, come on top.
273. Fo dale be na asa, What pleases you, buy it,
274. Ma pela be na peda-n! And what displeases you, put it back!

While Kona Kek//Leli Deak is on board and is busy rummaging through the goods on the ship, Bui Kume//Lo Lengu sets sail for Sela//Dai. When MK//TN returns home at the end of the day, he is told that his mother and aunt have been carried away and are now on Sela//Dai. On hearing this, MK//TN climbs into a ‘pig’s feeding trough and giant clam shell’ and sets off in search of his mother and aunt on Sela Sule//Dai Laka:

307. Boe ma ana-ma Manu Kama So the orphan Manu Kama
308. Ma falu-ina Tepa Nilu And the widow Tepa Nilu
309. Hela hako hani bafin Pulls a pig’s feeding trough
310. Ma le’a kima lou metin. And tugs the tide’s giant clamshell.
311. Ana sa’e kima lou metin He perches upon the tide’s clamshell
312. Ma ana tai hako hani bafin. And nestles in the pig’s feeding trough.
313. De ana tunga inan Kona Kek, He searches for his mother, Kona Kek,
314. Ma ana afi te’on Leli Deak, And he looks for his aunt, Leli Deak,
315. De leo Sela Sule neu And goes to Sela Sule
316. Ma leo Dai Laka neu, And goes to Dai Laka,
317. Neu de nita inan Kona Kek, Goes and sees his mother, Kona Kek,
318. Ma nita te’on Leli Deak, And sees his aunt, Leli Deak,
319. Nai Sela Sule On Sela Sule
320. Do nai Dai Laka. Or on Dai Laka.

After having reached Sela//Dai, MK//TN rests for a while and then tells Bui Kume//Lo Lengu to take a message back to the lords and headmen of Lini Oe//Kene Mo from whence he has come. It is with this message that the chant ends:

323. Bo Bui Kume-e, Oh, Bui Kume,
324. Do ho Lo Lengu-e, Oh, Lo Lengu,
In Rotenese mortuary rituals, the coffin is described as a ‘ship’ and burial involves the launching of this ship of the dead on its voyage to the other world. Meno, in his response to my questions about this chant, referred to ‘Manu Kama’s road to Dain//Tepa Nilu’s path to Selan’. The context of this reference makes it clear that he interprets MK//TN’s journey as a passage to the grave. Although each person’s journey is different, the end is the same for all. This is the Rotenese equivalent of the medieval memento mori—the ultimate qualification on all human endeavour.

### A formal description of Rotenese ritual language

Rotenese ritual language is based on a variety of cultural conventions. To understand the language and to facilitate comparisons with other languages that utilise some form of parallelism, it is essential to specify these cultural conventions as precisely as possible. For this reason, in previous publications, I have attempted to fashion a formal terminology to describe the language. Here, I wish to review briefly my description of ritual language and indicate how far my present studies have carried me.

Rotenese ritual language is characterised by a strict canonical parallelism. This means, in effect, that apart from a small number of unpaired forms—pronouns, 

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5 In ritual language, Sela(n) do Dai(n) or Sela Sule do Dai Laka refers to a distant, unspecified land. Some Rotenese, however, claim that this placename refers to the island of origin of the Rotenese people, though this is in itself somewhat dubious since Rotenese disagree about their origins. The argument is based on sound similarity: Sela(n) is sometimes identified with the island of Ceram in the Moluccas and sometimes with the island of Ceylon (Sri Lanka). In the text, no such association is hinted at and Meno suggested no such exegesis.

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connectives, ‘prepositional’ and a few other invariant elements—all elements must be paired. In formal terminology, each individual element must form part of a ‘dyadic set’. In composition, dyadic sets produce parallel lines, whose overwhelmingly most common poetic form is the couplet, though other serial arrangements of lines are entirely acceptable and are often considered evidence of a greater mastery of the language. The elements that compose any particular dyadic set should, in their parallel lines (or occasionally in the two halves of a single line), correspond exactly in position and as far as possible in morphological structure. Paired elements often have the same number of syllables but, as far as I can determine, this is not a requirement. Parallel lines may thus be, and frequently are, of different syllable lengths. Lines may vary from seven to 11 syllables, with the majority hovering around the eight or nine-syllable mark.

On the basis of a systematic study of the lexicon of Rotenese ritual language comprising approximately one-third of my present corpus of texts (Fox 1972), it is possible to specify in some detail the linkages among elements of the language. Any element that forms a dyadic set with another element is said to be ‘linked’ to that element, and the number of an element’s links constitutes its ‘range’. An element that forms a set with only one other element has a ‘range of one’, whereas an element that forms sets with various other elements has a range equal to the number of its links. For example, on the basis of all the texts that I have so far translated and analysed, the word nade(k), the generic word for ‘name’, forms a set only with the specific word for ‘ancestral name’, tamo(k). Because of this single link, its range is one. Similarly, the word nafi(k) (‘sea cucumber’) forms a set only with sisi(k) (‘mollusc’); its range is therefore also one. In contrast, the word dae, meaning ‘earth, land, low, below’, has links with 11 other elements, as do ai (meaning ‘plant, tree, wood’) and tua (the word for the lontar palm and its products). All these elements have a range of 11.

From this point of view, linkages (and the semantic associations they imply) are more important than the dyadic sets themselves, since, on their own, individual dyadic sets tend to obscure more complex interrelations. It is critical to focus on linkages because the elements that form any one dyadic set may have a very different range of linkages. Thus, for example, the word meo (‘cat’) has a range of one since it links only with kue (‘civet cat’), whereas kue has a range of four, linking not only with meo but with kode (‘monkey’), bafi (‘pig’) and fani (‘bee’). Similarly, asu, the word for ‘dog’ that occurs only in ritual language, links with

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6 Formally, it is possible to define repetition as the linkage of an element with itself. By this convention, all elements would have a potential range of one. Repetition, though it occurs, is not an admired feature of ritual language and, since it would be difficult to differentiate between the potential for repetition and the real repetition of certain words, I have chosen not to adopt this convention.
*busa*, the ordinary-language word for ‘dog’; *busa*, in turn, links as well with *manu* (‘chicken’) and with other elements that form compound or complex dyadic expressions.

In the present dictionary of ritual language (Fox 1972), which consists of just under 1400 lexical elements, every element can be identified precisely in terms of its specific linkages. By conservative enumeration, that disregards all names and compound forms—46 per cent of all elements link with only one other element. If compounds were treated as single forms, this percentage would rise considerably, to well more than 60 per cent of the lexicon. In practice, this means that a Rotenese poet must know in remarkable detail exactly which words form obligatory sets: that *kedu* (‘to sob’) can pair only with *tani* (‘to cry’); or that *nitu* (‘spirit’) can pair only with *mula* (‘ghost’). On the other hand, a substantial portion of the lexicon has a range greater than one, allowing the poet some flexibility in composition. Only a small proportion of these elements, however—33 in the present dictionary—has a range greater than five. These multiple-linkage elements, which include various words for directional orientation, words for ‘earth’, ‘water’, ‘rock’ and ‘tree’, plant parts, body parts and verbs for expressing position or balance, may be considered to form a core of primary symbols in the ritual language.

Graph procedures are eminently suited to represent the formal semantic associations among elements with multiple linkages and it is possible to speculate that as the dictionary of ritual language develops it may yield one or two large networks that would encompass as much as half of the lexicon, leaving perhaps the other half as a particularistic array of single-linked elements. This would provide a more precise understanding of one aspect of the canonical structure of Rotenese ritual language.

Rotenese ritual language is, however, ‘canonical’ in another sense. In the terminology of Roman Jakobson, who devoted considerable attention to the study of parallelism, the required lexical pairing of semantic elements and the network of associations that underlies this pairing represent a canonical ordering of the paradigmatic or ‘metaphoric pole’ of language (Jakobson and Halle 1956:76–82). Strictly speaking, parallelism refers to this patterning based on ‘positional similarity’. Rotenese ritual language, however, is also remarkably well ordered along the syntagmatic, or what Jakobson called the ‘metonymic pole’ of language. In other words, phrases and lines in ritual language are frequently composed of recognisable formulae, which, because of the strict requirements of parallelism, become redoubled in parallel formulae. Thus a considerable portion of Rotenese ritual language consists of couplets and even longer sequences that are formulaic in a paradigmatic and a syntagmatic sense.
Within a large corpus of textual materials, the importance of these formulae becomes increasingly evident. Most poets—indeed all poets from whom I have been able to elicit a sufficient corpus on which to base a judgment—rely on what could be called, somewhat redundantly, ‘standard’ formulae, to which they might add some minor individual embellishment to distinguish their usage from that of other poets. Individual poets thus develop their own personal ‘style’ in relation to certain ‘standard’ forms of their dialect area. Variations in formulae occur because personal style is regarded as important; yet within the general radius of any particular dialect area rival poets are expected to gather on ritual occasions to take turns in leading a chorus of fellow chanters. This requires poets to ‘attune’ themselves to one another and to ‘play’ with variations on their personal patterns of expression.

The interaction of the formulaic features of ritual language with the rules of parallel composition creates further complexity. Since approximately 50 per cent of the lexicon consists of elements that may pair with more than one other element, it is possible and indeed common for a formulaic line to couple with two (or more) variant, yet equally formulaic, lines. Individual poets on their own tend to settle on a single pattern for their couplets, but, in the company of other poets, they can alter their set patterns to suit the occasion.

To define and demonstrate what is in fact ‘formulaic’ in Rotenese ritual language is a difficult task requiring a large and varied corpus and, equally importantly, a historical perspective. It is in this respect that the Jonker text is crucial, since it can be reasonably considered to represent the standard pattern of ritual language at the turn of the century. I therefore propose to examine selected formulae in the text and compare them with formulae from various chants I have gathered since 1965.

The continuity of formulae in ritual language

In some sense, all ritual language is formulaic. Certain formulae, however, occur repeatedly not simply as couplets but as a patterned sequence of lines. Invariably, these sequences mark the beginning of a chant and episodes within it. More exactly, they punctuate a narrative sequence, which, though strictly patterned, could have recourse to less obvious formulaic devices. Elsewhere, I have referred to these formulae as ‘formulaic chains’ and developed a simple notation that could be used to generate a beginning for any mortuary chant.

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7 The linguistic situation on Rote is one of diversity. Each of the 18 former domains on the island claims to have its own ‘language’. In turn, these domain ‘languages’ can be sorted into roughly six dialect areas. Although ritual language varies less than ordinary language across these dialect areas and, in fact, uses words from different dialects to form synonymous pairs, there are nonetheless noticeable differences in ritual language. Within each dialect area there are standard forms that affect the way specific formulae are phrased.
Because of the patterning of ritual language, it would be a relatively simple exercise to develop similar notational schemes for other formulaic chains—as indeed it is possible to devise a notational description for any sequence in ritual language. To indulge in such exercises, however, would be to overlook a crucial feature of ritual-language composition—namely, that certain sequences occur frequently and are, as it were, the basic stock-in-trade of all poets in a particular dialect area. These sequences—to adopt another metaphor—are the reliable subroutines of a poet’s program, whereas other sequences can be highly individual in their compositional phrasing.

A crucial step toward understanding the ‘formulaic’ is to recognise the degree of difference in composition among the various sequences of a chant. This can be done only by the comparison of a large body of texts from different contemporary poets or by the comparison of historical texts with contemporary ones. Each procedure provides its own view of the nature of composition. Since Manu Kama ma Tepa Nilu is the only text that offers the possibility of substantial historical comparison, I would like to devote my attention to a careful examination of some of the formulaic sequences whose continuity with contemporary forms makes them of particular interest. Specifically, I consider five examples of formulaic sequences in the text, some of which occur more than once. Comparisons—internally as well as with contemporary examples—are intended to highlight the way in which these sequences serve as recognisable, narrative markers.

Genealogical introduction

The first 24 lines of Manu Kama ma Tepa Nilu are composed entirely of common formulae. Many mortuary chants rely on an opening sequence that provides the genealogical and connubial affiliations of the chief chant character. In some chants, this can cover two or more generations. For purposes of identification, this might be called a ‘genealogical introduction’ sequence. Ostensibly, this sequence describes the marriage and birth of the chief chant character. What is critical, however, to a Rotenese audience is the information conveyed about this character by the succession of names. In MK//TN’s case, his heavenly origins are revealed by the addition of the words for sun and moon as part of his father’s name. As comparative illustration, the first eight lines of the text can be compared with the first eight lines of the chant Ndi Lonama ma Laki Elokama by Stefanus Amalo (Fox 1972:34–43).

**Manu Kama ma Tepa Nilu**

1. *Soku-lala Silu Lilo*  
   They lift Silu Lilo
2. *Ma lali-lala Huka Besi.*  
   And they carry Huka Besi.
3. *Lelete neu sao*  
   She bridges the path to marry
4. *Do fifino neu tu,*  
   Or joins the way to wed,
A trivial difference is in the use of verbal suffixes that indicate whether the subject and/or object of the verb are singular or plural. In ritual language, this distinction is regarded as irrelevant since, as Rotenese explain, ‘singualrs’ are always phrased as ‘duals’. Another minor difference is in the sequencing of the verbs ‘to marry’: sao//tu. The Manu Kama ma Tepa Nilu text first uses sao, then tu, whereas Amalo reverses this order, using tu, then sao. Both, however, use the same formulae: lelete neu sao//fifino neu tu. This appears to be a relatively stable formula in that tu and sao are not reversed (lelete neu tu//fifino neu sao*), though there is nothing in the rules of the language, except common usage, to exclude such a phrasing. Nor is this the only formula that relies on the dyadic set of lelete//fifino. For example, the chanter Seu Ba’i (Eli Pellondou) in the origin chant for a rock formation in Termanu entitled Sua Lai ma Batu Hu uses the following formula:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Ana tao lelete batu} & \quad \text{He makes a stone bridge} \\
\text{Ma ana tao fifino dae} & \quad \text{And he makes an earthen path.} \\
\text{De ana tu inak-ka Soe Leli,} & \quad \text{Then he weds the woman Soe Leli,} \\
\text{Ma sao fetok-ka Pinga Pasa.} & \quad \text{And marries the girl Pinga Pasa.}
\end{align*}
\]

It is also worth noting that there are less elaborate opening sequences. Meno, for example, commonly used a simpler sequence that substituted the verb ifa, which means ‘to carry by cradling’, for the verb lali, which has the sense of ‘shifting’ or ‘transferring’. Both verbs can be used to refer to the bridal procession by which a woman is physically carried or led (see the photograph in Fox 1980:103) to her husband’s house. An example of this is taken from the chant Lilo Tola ma Koli Lusi by Meno (Fox 1972:85–97):

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Ala soku-la Ole Masi} & \quad \text{They lift Ole Masi} \\
\text{Ma ala ifa-la Bisa Oli.} & \quad \text{And they cradle Bisa Oli.}
\end{align*}
\]
De ana tu Lusi Topu Lani
Ma ana sao Tola Tae Ama.
De bongi-na Lilo Tola
Ma ana lae-na Koli Lusi.

She marries Lusi Topu Lani
And she weds Tola Tae Ama.
She gives birth to Lilo Tola
And she brings forth Koli Lusi.

Death and abandonment

What might be termed a ‘death and abandonment’ sequence occurs twice in the text. Lines 13–16 recount the death of MK//TN’s father and lines 21–4 repeat this sequence, with only a slight variation, in reporting the death of MK//TN’s mother. As an episode ending, this sequence occurs in virtually all mortuary chants. As an example, it is possible to compare lines from Manu Kama ma Tepa Nilu with those from the chant Lilo Tola ma Koli Lusi, in which Meno has given a slightly different embellishment to this formula.

Manu Kama ma Tepa Nilu
13. Te hu Kama Lai Ledo lalo But Kama Lai of the Sun dies
14. Ma Nilu Leo Bulan sapu. And Nilu Neo of the Moon perishes.
15. De sapu ela Manu Kama He dies leaving Manu Kama
16. Ma lalo ela Tepa Nilu. And he perishes leaving Tepa Nilu.
17. Ela Tepa File no inan Leaving Tepa Nilu with his mother
18. Ma ela Manu Kama no te’on. And leaving Manu Kama with his aunt.

Lilo Tola ma Koli Lusi
Boe ma Lusi Topu Lani sapu So Lusi Topu Lani dies
Ma Tola Tae Ama Ialo. And Tola Tae Ama perishes.
Ana sapu ela Koli Lusi He dies leaving Koli Lusi
Nanga-tu no te’on To sit with his aunt
Ma Ialo ela Lilo Tola And he perishes leaving Lilo
Nasa-lai no inan. To lean upon his mother.

The first 24 lines of the Manu Kama ma Tepa Nilu text are remarkable for their sustained and repeated use of common formulae. Two death and abandonment sequences are deftly linked to a genealogical introduction by the use of what is probably the single most common episode-ending formula in ritual language: the couplet De malole-a so//Do mandak-a so (‘This was good or this was proper’), which occurs in lines 11 and 12 and again in lines 19 and 20. Between the genealogical introduction and the death of MK//TN’s father, only a single formulaic couplet is inserted as reference to MK//TN’s childhood. In many mortuary chants, this can be a subject for considerable elaboration.

The composition of these first 24 lines can be analysed in terms of the following formulae: 1) genealogical introduction (lines 1–8); 2) childhood couplet (lines
9–10); 3) good-and-proper couplet (lines 11–12); 4) death and abandonment sequence (lines 13–18); 5) good-and-proper couplet (lines 19–20); and 6) death and abandonment sequence (lines 21–4). The theme of ‘orphan and widow’ is then announced and the chant proceeds to a set of formulae that initiates the second episode in MK//TN’s life journey.

Grief and the tearful encounter

Various expressions of grief mark transitions in the Manu Kama ma Tepa Nilu text. At six different junctures in the text, MK//TN is described as crying, usually with tears and snot running down his face (lines 31–4, 40–2, 97–8, 175–6, 183–6, 229–30). By the conventions of parallelism, lu (‘tears’) and pinu (‘snot’) form an obligatory dyadic set, whereas idu (‘nose’) may form a set with either mata (‘eye’) or nasu (‘cheek’). Similarly, the verbs -sasi//-tuda (‘to overflow, pour down, drop down’) and the verbs -kedu//-tani (‘to cry, weep, sob’) also form pairs. All of the various descriptions of crying in the text use one or more of these sets, yet each is different and each expression varies.

The first of these expressions, which I have already noted, involves elaborate botanic comparisons with a number of sap and juice-yielding plants. Others of these expressions, however, conform with recognisable formulae. For example, when MK//TN leaves the woman Silu Lilo//Huka Besi, the following lines occur embedded in a set of other formulae:

97. Nate lu lama-sasi nasu
   But tears pour down his cheeks
98. Ma pinu lama-tuda idu.
   And snot falls from his nose.

These lines can be compared, for example, with lines in any of a number of compositions: Suti Solo no Bina Bane by the blind chanter of Ba’a, Lasaar Manoeain, or Meda Manu ma Lilo Losi by Meno.

Suti Solo no Bina Bane
Ala mai nda Bina Bane no Suti Solo, They meet Bina Bane and Suti Solo,
Pinu lama-tuda idu
Ma lu lama-sasi mata.
And tears pour from his eyes.

Meda Manu ma Lilo Losi
De inan leo Ona Ba’a,
Pinu lama-tuda idu,
Ma te’on leo Lusi Lele,
Lu lama-sasi mata,
Her mother like Ona Ba’a,
Snot falls from her nose,
And her aunt like Lusi Lele,
Tears pour from her eyes.

The only difference in the contemporary examples is the use of eye (mata) instead of cheek (nasu).
Similar comparisons can be made in regard to the formula for sobbing and crying. Thus, when MK//TN is served meat improperly at the heavenly feast, the following lines occur as MK//TN prepares to leave:

229. **Boe ma Manu Kama nasa-kedu**  
**So Manu Kama begins to sob**

230. **Ma Tepa Nilu nama-tani.**  
**And Tepa Nilu begins to cry.**

In the version of *Suti Solo ma Bina Bane* by Meno, similar lines occur at different junctures:

**Suti Solo ma Bina Bane I**

- **Te hu Suti bei nama-tane**  
  But Suti continues to cry

- **Ma Bina bei nasa-kedu.**  
  And Bina continues to sob.

**Suti Solo ma Bina Bane II**

- **Bina boe nasa-kedu**  
  Bina thus begins to sob

- **Ma Suti boe nama-tani.**  
  And Suti thus begins to weep.

Again, in a chant, *Doli Mo ma Lutu Mala*, that reveals the origin of rice and millet, Meno has utilised the same formula, repeating in an entirely different context the theme of the quest in *Manu Kama ma Tepa Nilu*:

**Doli Mo ma Lutu Mala**

- **Doli Mo nasa-kedu**  
  Doli Mo begins to sob

- **Ma Lutu Mala nama-tani,**  
  And Lutu Mala begins to weep,

- **Fo nasa-kedu sanga inan**  
  Sobbing for his mother

- **Ma nama-tani sanga te’on.**  
  And crying for his aunt.

These various expressions of crying and weeping do not, on their own, qualify as full formulaic sequences. At most, they involve the use of only a couple of dyadic sets; yet they invariably serve as transitional markers indicating the end of an episode or event and the beginning of another. In the chant *Suti Solo ma Bina Bane*, they mark each stage of an extended dialogue; in *Doli Mo ma Lutu Mala*, they mark the first encounter with the seeds of rice and millet. In these and other chants, including *Manu Kama ma Tepa Nilu*, they are themselves only part of a longer formulaic sequence. One version of this sequence could be described as the ‘tearful encounter’ sequence. It is possible to compare three examples of this in *Manu Kama ma Tepa Nilu*.

**Tearful encounter I**

97. **Nate lu lama-sasi nasu**  
  But tears pour down his cheeks

98. **Ma pinu lama-tuda idu.**  
  And snot falls from his nose.

99. **Boe ma lima leu la-nda**  
  Then arms go to meet

100. **Do langa leu la-tongo**  
  Or heads go to encounter

101. **Inak dua esa nade Lide Muda**  
  Two women, one named Lide Muda
102. Ma esa nade Adi Sole.  
_Tearful encounter II_  
175. Nate lu dua tunga enok  
176. Ma pinu telu tunga dalak,  
177. Boe ma langa leu la-tongo  
178. Ma lima leu la-nda  
179. Inak esa nade Lo Luli  
180. Ma fetok esa nade Kala Palu.  

And one named Adi Sole.  

Two tears fall along the path  
And three drops of snot fall along the road,  
Then heads go to encounter  
And arms go to meet  
A woman named Lo Luli  
And a girl named Kala Palu.  

In these tearful encounters, the women who meet MK//TN are able to strike up a dialogue and inquire about his condition and destination. These sequences can be compared with the extended sequence in _Suti Solo no Bina Bane_ by Lasaar Manoeain in which Suti Solo//Bina Bane encounters the women of Timor:  

_Boe ma ina Helok-ka mai nda duas_  
_Ma fetok Sonobai mai tongo duas-sa_  
_Boe ma lae:_  
_Sala hata leo hata_  
_Ma singo hata leo hatak,_  
_De ei pinu idu_  
_Ma lu mate?_  

The Helok woman comes to meet the two  
And the Sonobai girl comes to encounter the two  
So they say:  
What wrong like this  
And what mistake like this,  
This snot from your nose  
And these tears from your eyes?  

As always, the tearful encounter dramatically refocuses on the condition of the orphan and widow.  

**Desire and the dawn encounter**  

Besides these tearful encounters, however, there is another set of ‘encounters’ in _Manu Kama ma Tepa Nilu_. We can call these ‘dawn encounters’. In these encounters (lines 53–60, 137–46), green parrots and honeybirds come to sing
to MK//TN. In the conventions of Rotenese poetry, these birds are the iconic representation of sexually attractive women, and their most alluring songs are always heard at dawn.

The two encounters are virtually identical (lines 53–4 = 137–8, 55–60 = 141–50); the only difference is the addition of two lines describing the colour of the dawn in the second encounter (lines 39–40). The shorter of these two passages is as follows:

53. Boe ma faik esa ma-uni  Then on one certain day
54. Ma ledek dua ma-te’e  And at a particular time
55. Siluk ana mai dulu  Morning comes to the east
56. Ma huak ana mai langa.  And dawn comes to the head.
57. Boe ma koa bei timu dulu-la,  Friarbirds are still in the dawning east,
58. Ala meli ei de ala mai.  They lift their legs, they come.
59. Ma nggia bei sepe langa-la,  And the green parrots are still at the reddening head,
60. Ala la lida de ala mai.  They flap their wings, they come.

These lines merely set the scene for the birds’ songs. They are of interest, however, because they consist of common formulaic sequences and express crucial symbolic conventions about space and time. The first two lines, for example, contain one of the most recurrent episode-initiating formulae in Rotenese poetry. The following literal translation gives an idea of the specific dyadic sets that make up this formula:

*Boe ma faik esa ma-uni*  Then day one certain
*Ma ledo dua ma-te’e*  And sun two true

The sequence links the words for ‘day’ and ‘sun’, the numerals ‘one’ and ‘two’ and terms that assert ‘specificity’ and ‘truth’. With some variation, the formula is a recognisable part of the repertoire of all the poets I have recorded. For example, Amalo and the poetess Lisbet Adulilo use the following variant: *Faik esa ma-nunin ma ledo dua ma-teben* (manunin is an alternative form for ma-unin and mate’e for ma-teben). This usage is generally accepted as standard. On the other hand, Meno and Seu Bai, who learned from him, use the variant *Faik esa ma-nunin ma ledok esa mateben*. The repetition of the numeral *esa* (meaning ‘one’) is an obvious imperfect parallelism and, as far as I can determine, is used specifically by these two poets as a distinctive key signature to their compositions.

The second formula in these lines can be translated literally as follows:

*Siluk ana mai dulu,*  Morning, it comes east,
*Ma hu’ak ana ma langa.*  And dawn, it comes head.

The dyadic set *dulu//langa*, which links ‘east’ and ‘head’, is one of several dyadic coordinates that structures Rotenese symbolic space. Other sets link ‘west’ and
‘tail’, ‘north’ and ‘left’ and ‘south’ and right’, thus representing the island in the image of an outstretched creature that is variously conceived of as a crocodile, a buffalo or a man (see Fox 1973:356–8). In this symbolic structure, the east, as the source of the dawn and of the renewal of life, constitutes a privileged direction, and dawn encounters are potentially auspicious in contrast with midnight encounters, which are generally dangerous and inauspicious. Dawn encounters and midnight encounters are both standard poetic situations. There is even what might be called the ‘false dawn encounter’ in which a chant character misjudges the time by mistaking the dead of night for the early morning and so rises to meet his or her doom. Thus in the poem Meda Manuma Lilo Losi by Meno (Fox 1972:44–51), two chant characters enter into a dialogue about the dawn. Meda Manu//Lilo Losi says:

Te busa-a na-hou
De siluk lai dulu so,
Ma manu-a kokoa
De hu’ak lai langa so.

For the dog has barked
So daylight is in the east,
And the cock has crowed
So dawn is at the head.

Her mother, Lusi Lele//Ona Ba’a, replies:

Te siluk bei ta dulu
Ma hu’ak bei ta langa.
Besak-ka bolo-do neu dua
Ma fati-lada neu telu.

Daylight is not yet in the east
And dawn is not yet at the head.
Now night is at its height
And dark is at its peak.

In the end, Meda Manu//Lilo Losi disregards her mother’s advice and leaves the house, only to be attacked by wandering spirits.

Tomb guarding and planting

As a final example of the use of formulae to mark transitions in narrative structure, we can consider the way in which the Manu Kama ma Tepa Nilu text concludes. Unlike the elaborate formulaic sequences that were strung together at the beginning, the chant ends with a simple couplet:

333. De au lo-ai kada Selan,
334. Ma au late-dae kada Dain.

My tomb-house will be on Selan,
And my earthen-grave will be on Dain.

8 In lines 57 and 59, I have translated the double-dyadic set timu dulu//sepe langa as ‘dawning east’//’reddening head’. I have done so because these terms are followed by a pluralising marker, -la, which reflects back to the subject, the fairbirds//green parrots: ala mai (‘they come’). In other poems, this set might be better interpreted as a placename designating some region in the east. As a placename, this set can also be taken up as a personal name. This occurs, for example, in the poem Kea Lenga ma Lona Bala by Seu Bai. An auspicious pair of bats is referred to as Soi Ana Sepe Langa//Bau Ana Timu Dulu (‘Tiny Bat of Dawning East’//’Flying Fox of Reddening Head’), and they form part of a family with Timu Tongo Batu//Sepe Ama Li (‘Dawn Tongo Batu’//’Reddening Ama Li’) and his daughter, Buna Sepe//Boa Timu (‘Flower Reddening’//’Fruit Dawning’).
The reference here is to the wooden structure resembling a house that Rotenese once commonly built over the grave to form a kind of tomb. This ending is thus appropriate to a mortuary chant, but the use of this single couplet, on its own, gives no indication of the fact that in other mortuary chants similar couplets are generally part of longer, more elaborate formulaic sequences. At best, this couplet can be considered as a truncated evocation of these other sequences.

Two variant sequences, both commonly employed in mortuary chants, can be distinguished. One might be called the ‘tomb-guarding’ variant; the other, the ‘tomb-planting’ variant. A short example of ‘tomb guarding’ can be taken from the poem *Pau Balo ma Bola Lungi* (Fox 1972:192–211) by Stefanus Amalo. In this poem, a bereaved daughter, Liu Pota//Menge Solu, watches over the tomb of her father:

```
Pota Popo sapu                   Pota Popo perished
Ma Solu Oebau lalo.             And Solu Oebau died.
De au anga-tu late-dae          Thus I sit upon an earthen-grave
Ma au asa-lai lo-ai.            And I lean upon a tomb-house.
```

In this way, Liu Pota//Menge Solu is able to refuse Pau Balo and Bola Lungi’s overtures and he must go off in search of another woman. As an example of ‘tomb planting’, the final sequence of the poem *Kea Lenga ma Lona Bala* (Fox 1972:142–55) by Seu Ba’i can be cited. The NdaoNese chant character Kea Lenga//Lona Bala, whose wife has died while he is away, sends a coconut and areca nut back to Ndao to be planted at his wife’s grave. The poem concludes with these words:

```
Fo ela na la-boa langan         Let the coconut grow fruit at her head
Ma ela puu la-nggi ein,        And let the areca nut sprout stalks at her feet,
Fo ela au falik leo Ndao u     So that when I return to Ndao
Na au lelu u late-dae          I may go to look upon her earthen-grave
Ma au tulek leo Folo u         And when I go back to Folo
Na au lipe u lo-ai.            I may stare upon her tomb-house.
```

**Concluding remarks**

I proposed this chapter as an introduction to the possibilities of Rotenese poetry. Only in analysing a long poem do various of these possibilities become evident. Although I have focused on a single text, I have tried to indicate some of the strategic levels at which this poetry can be read. In conclusion, I would like to comment on the text in terms of three features of the poetry. These relate to oral intercommunication, narrative structure and verbal authority.
The fact that the *Manu Kama ma Tepa Nilu* text was originally gathered at the beginning of the twentieth century did not prevent it from being taken up immediately as part of a continuing dialogue among contemporary poet-chanters in Termanu. Meno responded to my public rendering and to my questions about the text by inserting comments in his own compositions. This is how chanters communicate with one another. Any chant can, and often does, relate to a variety of other chants—sometimes by the briefest of passing allusions (the change of a single word, for example, to imitate another chanter’s style) and, at other times, by taking up a theme and elaborating on it. All of this is part of a dense web of oral intercommunication, much of which is so specific that it is difficult to recover outside the immediate context of a particular performance. Ritual gatherings were—and to a lesser extent still are—the occasions at which chanters would gather to vie with one another in performance. This basic aspect of social life provides the means of maintaining oral intercommunication and collective textual elaboration.

The formulaic structures of *Manu Kama ma Tepa Nilu* serve to facilitate this oral intercommunication. Although Rotenese poetry is virtually all ‘formulaic’, certain formulaic sequences are distinguishable as markers at the beginnings and ends of episodes. These routine sequences are remarkably similar among poets and they stand out as such in contrast to the subtler composition of other lines. The fact that the *Manu Kama ma Tepa Nilu* text was mistaken for a contemporary chant by several Rotenese was due in large part, I suspect, to the prominence of these formulaic markers throughout its narrative structure.

The narrative structure of *Manu Kama ma Tepa Nilu* is similar in form to the structures that articulate virtually all long Rotenese chants. These chants invariably recount a tale of some sort and a high proportion of them feature a journey. Here, there is a coincidence between a formal narrative order and an image of the course of life. In the predominant Rotenese view, enhanced as it is with ideas from Christianity, life is conceived of as a successive movement, consisting of a series of transformations, leading to an eventual end. This progressive development from an initial base—a process that can be represented by various botanic metaphors—is not conceived of as turning back on itself or as ending in a cyclical return. Instead, it is articulated as an ordered sequence with a clear beginning and a definite end. Such sequences are a common occurrence throughout Rotenese culture and constitute what I would argue are a privileged image in the overall structuring of Rotenese cultural conceptions.9

9 Hints of an earlier view of life as a process ending in ultimate return can still be detected in Rotenese ritual, but these are now muted or reinterpreted to conform to contemporary views. In the late 1950s and early 1960s, a congregational rupture occurred in the Timorese Protestant Church (Gereja Masehi Injili Timor, GMIT). The split was largely Rotenese inspired and Rotenese based and the new group that was formed at the time called itself the Gereja Musafir (‘The Pilgrim Church’). The label ‘pilgrim’ typifies what has now become the traditional view that the Rotenese have of themselves.
This privileged status of the ordered sequence contributes to the authority with which certain texts are endowed. Although ritual language can be used in any situation of formal interaction, there are only two occasions for which there exist established canonical poems: celebrations of origin and celebrations of conclusion. Similarly, there are only two kinds of canonical poems: origin chants and mortuary chants. Origin chants bless the beginnings of specific activities. They recount the founding of these activities and the acquisition of the essential objects with which they are associated: the origin of fire and of tools, and the building of the first house; the origin of the first seeds of rice and millet and their transmission and planting; the origin of coloured dyes, of weaving and the creation of cloth. In contrast, mortuary chants recount the demise of an individual, but do so by comparing the individual with a character whose life course follows a definite pattern.

The formulaic utterances of ritual language are regarded as ancestral wisdom. A chanter is thus the medium of an authoritative cultural voice, which speaks decisively at the beginnings and ends of sequences that define an order to life itself.

Reference text

Ana-Ma Manu Kama ma Falu-Ina Tepa Nilu

1. Soku-lala Silu Lilo
   They lift Silu Lilo
2. Ma lali-lala Huka Besi.
   And they carry Huka Besi.
3. Lelete neu sao
   She bridges the path to marry
4. Do fifino neu tu,
   Or joins the way to wed,
5. Sao Kama Lai Ledo
   To marry Kama Lai of the Sun
6. Do tu Nilu Neo Bulan.
   Or to wed Nilu Neo of the Moon.
7. De bongi-nala Tepa Nilu
   She gives birth to Tepa Nilu
8. Ma lae-nala Manu Kama.
   And brings forth Manu Kama.
9. De na-lelak fiti fulik
   He learns to play with fulik-marbles
10. Ma na-lelak selo so’ek.
    And learns to spear the coconut shell.
11. De malole-a so
    This was good
12. Do mandak-a so
    Or this was proper.
13. Te hu Kama Lai Ledo lalo
    But Kama Lai of the Sun dies
14. Ma Nilu Neo Bulan sapu.
    And Nilu Neo of the Moon perishes.
15. De sapu ela Manu Kama
    He dies leaving Manu Kama
16. Ma lalo ela Tepa Nilu,
    And he perishes leaving Tepa Nilu,
17. Ela Tepa Nilu no inan
    Leaving Tepa Nilu with his mother
18. Ma ela Manu Kama no te’on
    And leaving Manu Kama with his aunt
19. De malole-a so
    This was good
20. Do mandak-a so. Or this was proper.
21. Te hu neu ma Silu Lilo ana lalo, But then Silu Lilo, she dies,
22. Ma Huka Besi ana sapu. And Huka Besi, she perishes.
23. De sapu ela Manu Kama She dies leaving Manu Kama
24. Ma lalo ela Tepa Nilu. And she perishes leaving Tepa Nilu.
25. De ana-ma Manu Kama An orphan is Manu Kama
26. Ma falu-ina Tepa Nilu. And a widow is Tepa Nilu.
27. Ana sala ama-na bai, He lacks a father too,
28. Ma singo ina-na bai, He misses a mother too,
29. Sala to’o-na bai, Lacks a mother’s brother too,
30. Ma singo te’o-na bai. And misses a father’s sister too.
31. De lu ko boa na’u, Tears like bidara-fruit in the grass,
32. Ma pinu kaitio telan, Snot like kaitio-[leaves] in the underbrush,
33. Lama-noma oba-tula They pour like juice from a tapped gewang
34. Do lama-titi ate lasi. And flow like sap from an old ate.
35. Boe ma inak ia Bula Pe Then the woman Bula Pe
36. Ma fetok ia Mapo Tena And the girl Mapo Tena
37. Lelu naka-nae nita-n, Looks and stares at him,
38. Ma lipe nala-mula nita-n, Gazes and inspects him,
39. De ana-ma Manu Kama, The orphan Manu Kama,
40. Lu dua-o dua, Tears falling two by two,
41. Ma falu-ina Tepa Nilu, The widow Tepa Nilu,
42. Pinu telu-o telu. Snot running three by three.
43. Boe ma na-le lelena So she calls out loudly
44. Mana-nggou ngganggali. And she shouts out clearly.
45. Nae: ‘Bo ana-ma Manu Kama, She says: ‘Oh, orphan Manu Kama,
46. Do bo falu-ina Tepa Nilu, Oh, widow Tepa Nilu,
47. Mai, te Silu Lilok nde au Come, Silu Lilok am I
48. Do Huka Besik nde au. Or Huka Besik am I.
49. Boe ma ta nae Bula Pe Do not say Bula Pe
50. Te nae Silu Lilok, But say Silu Lilok,
51. Ma ta nae Mapo Tena And do not say Mapo Tena
52. Te nae Huka Besik.’ But say Huka Besik.’
53. Boe ma faik esa ma-uni Then on one certain day
54. Ma ledok dua ma-tee And at a particular time
55. Siluk ana mai Mu Morning comes to the east
56. Ma hu’ak ana mat langa. And dawn comes to the head.
57. Boe ma koa bet timu dulu-la, Friarbirds are still in the dawning east,
58. Ala meli ei de ala mai. They lift their legs, they come.
59. Ma nggia bei sepe langa-la, And the green parrots are still at the reddening head,
60. Ala la lida de ala mai. They flap their wings, they come.
Then, they sing with soft voices,

And they warble with gentle songs.

They sing to Manu Kama’s heart.

And warble to Tepa Nilu’s inner being.

The orphan Manu Kama.

And the widow Tepa Nilu,

He wakes his mother,

And warble to Tepa Nilu’s inner being.

And the widow Tepa Nilu,

He wakes his mother,

And shakes his aunt,

And says: ‘Oh, my mother,

Oh, my aunt,

Wake and stand up,

Come awake and sit up,

Morning is in the east

And dawn is at the head.

Now have a heart

And be concerned.

Go buy for me the friarbird’s voice

Or get for me the green parrot’s whistle

So that I may give voice to the friarbird’s voice

And I may sing to the green parrot’s song

That you may be just like my mother

Or that you may be similar to my aunt.’

Then she says: ‘Go, tie your mother like a water buffalo

Circling round like a water buffalo;

And go weigh your aunt like gold,

Balanced gently like gold,

For I am a woman without a ring on her finger

And I am a girl without copper on her legs.’

So the orphan Manu Kama

And the widow Tepa Nilu

He has the heart’s regret of an orphan

And has the inner grief of a widow.

Now he grabs his father’s bow

And snatches his uncle’s blowpipe

He goes, swinging his arms, with dawn at the head,

And he goes, lifting his legs, with morning in the east,

But tears pour down his cheeks

And snot falls from his nose.
99. Boe ma lima leu la-nda
Then arms go to meet
100. Do langa leu la-tongo
Or heads go to encounter
101. Inak dua esa nade Lide Muda
Two women, one named Lide Muda
102. Ma esa nade Adi Sole.
And one named Adi Sole.
103. De lide Mudak na-nggou.
Lide Muda shouts out.
104. Nae: ‘Bo manu Kama-e,
She says: ‘Oh, Manu Kama,
105. Leo dae be mu?’
To what land are you going?’
106. Ma Adi sole na-lo
And Adi Sole calls out
107. Nae: ‘Bo tepa nilu-e,
She says: ‘Oh, Tepa Nihu,
108. Leo oe be mu?’
To what water are you going?’
109. Ma nae: ‘Aue! Lide Mudak
And he says: ‘Aue! Oh, Lide Mudak
110. Do o Adi Sole!
Oh, Adi Sole!
111. Au ana-ma Manu Kama
I am the orphan Manu Kama
112. Ma au falu-ina Tepa Nilu
And I am the widow Tepa Nilu.
113. Iau a-in ingu inan
I have, as mother, the land of my mother
114. Ma au ate’o leo te’on.
And I have, as aunt, the clan of my aunt.
115. Ala hopo kedok Manu Kama
Gruffly, they mix syrup for Manu Kama,
116. Ma ala sode odak Tepa Nilu
Sourly, they serve rice to Tepa Nilu,
117. Ala lo tuluk Tepa Nilu
They offer things with a shove to Tepa Nilu
118. Ma ala sipo le’ak Manu Kama.
And they take things with a tug to Manu Kama.
119. Au ana-ma dai-lena-ng,
My orphaned state is increased,
120. De au ana-ma-ng boe mai,
I am more an orphan than ever,
121. Ma au falu-ina tolesi-ng,
My widowed state is made greater,
122. Au falu-ina-ng boe mai.’
I am more a widow than ever.’
123. Boe ma inak ia Lide Muak nae:
So this woman Lide Mudak says:
124. ‘Bo Manu Kama-e,
‘Oh, Manu Kama,
125. Mai uma-t-ala uma leon’,
Come to our house’,
126. Ma fetok ia Adi Sole nae:
And the girl Adi Sole says:
127. ‘Bo Tepa Nilu-e,
‘Oh, Tepa Nilu,
128. Mai lo-t-ala lo leon,
Come to our home,
129. Te au lea inam Silu Lilo boe,
For I will be like your mother, Silu Lilo,
130. Ma au leo te’om Huka Besik boe!’
And I will be like your aunt, Huka Besik!’
131. Hu ndia de ala dengu doli
Manu Kama
So they pound rice for Manu Kama
132. De ala hao hade Manu Kama
And they serve rice to Manu Kama.
133. Hu ndia de ala tutu lutu Tepa
And they offer millet to Tepa Nilu
134. Nilu
135. De ala fati bete Tepa Nilu.
And they prepare millet for Tepa Nilu.
136. Boe ma nae do ina bongin
So he calls her his mother of birth
137. Ma nae do te’on teen.
And he calls her his true aunt.
138. Boe ma faik esa ma-uni
Then on one definite day
138. Ma ledo dwa ma-tee, And at a certain time,
139. Pila poe-oe-na-n Red as a shrimp in water
140. Ma modo masala-na-n, And yet still green,
141. Siluk ana mai dulu, Morning comes to the east,
142. Ma hu'ak ana mai langa Dawn comes to the head
143. Boe ma koa bei timu-dulu-la, Friarbirds are still in the dawning east,
144. Ala meli ei de ala mai. The lift their legs, they come.
145. Ma nggia bei sepe-langa-la, And green parrots are still at the reddening head,
146. Ala la lida de ala mai. They flap their wings, they come.
147. Mai boe ma ala kako dodoe hala-n-ala There, they sing with soft voices
148. Ma ala hele memese dasi-n-ala And they warble with gentle songs,
149. De ala kako-lala Manu Kama dalen, They sing to Manu Kama’s heart,
150. Ma Hele-lala Tepa Nilu Teín. They warble to Tepa Nilu’s inner being.
151. Boe ma Manu Kama Fafae Lide Mudak Then Manu Kama wakes LideMudak
152. Ma Tepa Nilu o’ofe Adi Sole. And Tepa Nilu shakes Adi Sole.
153. Nae: ‘Bo ina-ng-o-ne, He says: ‘Oh, my mother,
154. Do bo te’o-ng-o-ne, Oh, my aunt,
155. Fo’a fanu mapa-deik, Wake and stand up,
156. Ma leli afe manga-tuk! Come awake and sit up!
157. Te Siluk nai dulu so Morning is in the east
158. Ma hu’ak nai langa so. And dawn is at the head.
159. Buluk-a bei Manu Kama inan If you are Manu Kama’s mother
160. Do buluk-a bei Tepa Nilu te’on, Or if you are Tepa Nilu’s aunt,
161. Mu asa fe-ng-au koa Go buy for me a friarbird
162. Mu ma tadi fe-ng-au nggia, And go get for me a green parrot,
163. Te au ae: o Silu Lilok, So I may call you Silu Lilok,
164. Ma au ae: i Huka Besik.’ And I may call you Huka Besik.’
165. Boe ma inak ia Lide Mudak So this woman, Lide Mudak,
166. Ma fetok ia Adi Sole nata ma nace: And this girl, Adi Sole, answers and says:
167. ‘Au ina ndeli-lima [ku’u]-tak ‘I am a woman without a ring on her finger
168. Ma au fete liti-ei-tak.’ And I am a girl without copper on her legs.’
169. Boe ma ana-ma Manu Mama So the orphan Manu Kama
170. Le’ana kou-koa-n Grabs his friarbird-hunting bow
171. Ma falu-ina Tepa Nilu And the widow Tepa Nilu
173. De neu tunga sanga ina He goes in search of a mother of birth
Bongin
174. Ma neu ad sanga te’o te’en. And goes to look for a true aunt.
175. Na te lu dua tunga enok
Two tears fall along the path

176. Ma pinu telu tunga dalak.
And three drops of snot fall along the road.

177. Boe ma la nga leu la-tongo
Then heads go to encounter

178. Ma lima leu la-nda
And arms go to meet

179. Inak esa nade Lo Luli
A woman named Lo Lull

180. Ma fetok esa nade Kala Palu,
And a girl named Kala Palu.

181. Nae: ‘Bo Manu Kama-e,
She says: ‘Oh, Manu Kama,

182. Do bo Tepa Nilu-e,
Oh, Tepa Nilu,

183. O lu-mata leo hatik
Why the tears from your eyes

184. Do o pinu-ulu leo hatak?’
Or why the snot from your nose?’

185. Boe ma nai: ‘Au lu mata-
So he says: ‘The tears in my eyes seek my 
sanga inang
mother

186. Ma au pinu idu afi te’ong,
And the snot of my nose looks for my aunt,

187. Sanga inang Silu Lilok
Seeks my mother, Silu Lilok,

188. Ma aft te’ong Huka Besik,’
And looks for my aunt, Huka Besik.

189. Ma nai: ‘Ata uma-t-ala uma 
And she says: ‘Our home, come to our home
leon

190. Ma ala lo-t-ala lo leon!
And our house, come to our house!

191. Te au sama lee inam boe
For I will be like your mother

192. Ma deta lea te’om boe.’
And I will be similar to your aunt.’

193. Bolok-ala tao do,
Late in the evening,

194. Ma fatik-ala tao lada,
In the middle of the night,

195. Boe ma lama-nene lololo,
They constantly listen to,

196. Ma lama-nya ndanda,
They continually hear,

197. Labu kapa behoe
The resounding buffalo-skin drum

198. Ma dele bi’i bendena.
And the booming goat-skin beat.

199. Boe ma na-tane neu inan
So he asks his mother

200. Ma teteni neu te’om nai:
And questions his aunt, saying:

201. ‘Labu sila leme be mai
‘Where do the drums come from
202. Ma meko sila leme he mai?’
And where do the gongs come from?’

203. Ma nai: ‘Leme Elu Ladi mai
And she says: ‘From Rainbow Crossing

204. Do o leme Tata Feo mai,
Or from Thundering Round,

205. Te Bulan ana tati hani
For the Moon kills animals

206. Ma Ledo ana soe usu.’
And the Sun slaughters stock.’

207. Nae: ‘Na la’o le’a au dei,
He says: ‘Lift your legs, carry me then,

208. Ma lope nuni au dei.
And move your arms, lead me then.

209. Fo meko teu taka-neni
Let us go and see the gongs

210. Ma labu teu ta-nilu.’
And let us go and observe the drums.’

211. Boe ma lea Elu Ladi leu
So they go to Rainbow Crossing

212. Ma lea Tata Feo leu.
And they go to Thundering Round.

213. Leu te Bulan ana tao feta
They go, for the Moon gives a feast

214. Ma Ledo ana tao dote.
And the Sun has a celebration.
215. Boe ma la-lelak Manu Kama
They recognise Manu Kama
216. Ma la-lelak Tepa Nilu.
And they recognise Tepa Nilu.
217. De ala ko’o fe Manu Kama
They pick up a rice mortar for Manu Kama
nesuk
218. De lae [do] kana
And they call it a small table
219. Ma ala keko fe Tepa Nilu batu
And they push over a rock for Tepa Nilu
And they call it a chair.
221. De malole-a so,
This was good,
222. Do mandak-a so.
And this was proper.
223. Te boe Ma ala ke te’i
But then they cut and divide the meat
224. Ida ala sode ndui.
And they spoon and scoop food.
225. De ala fe Tepa Nilu betek
They give Tepa Nilu millet
226. Ma ala fe-n neu lu’ak,
And they give it to him in a rice basket,
227. Ma fe Manu Kama bak
They give Manu Kama lung
228. Ma ala fe-n neu lokok.
And they give it to him in a meat bowl.
229. Boe ma Manu Kama nasa-kedu
So Manu Kama begins to sob
230. Ma Tepa Nilu nama-tani.
And Tepa Nilu begins to cry.
231. Boe ma ana fo’a fanu de la’o
He gets up and leaves
232. Ma ana lelo afe de lope.
And he stands up and goes.
233. Boe ma lima leu la-nda
Arms go to meet
234. Ma langa leu la-tongo.
And heads go to encounter.
235. Mai tongo Leli Deak
Come to encounter Leli Deak
236. Do mai nda Kona Kek.
Or come to meet Kona Kek.
237. De na-ina Leli Deak
Then he has a mother, Leli Deak,
238. Ma na-te’o Kona Kek.
And he has an aunt, Kona Kek.
239. De noke nae Silu Lilok
She asks to call her Silu Lilok
240. Ma hule nae Huka Besik,
And she requests to call her Huka Besik,
241. Te bei Lini Oe bobongin
For she is still in Lini Oe’s birth group
242. Ma bei Kene Mo lalaen.
And she is still in Kene Mo’s descent group.
243. Boe ma ala leo Lini Oe leu
So they goto Lini Oe
244. Do leo Kene Mo leu.
Or they go to Kene Mo.
245. Ana pale mane fe inan
He taps male lontars for his mother
246. Ma lenu feto fe te’on,
And saps female lontars for his aunt,
247. Fe te’on Kona Rek
To give to his aunt, Kona Kek,
248. Ma fe inan Leli Deak.
And give to his mother, Leli Deak.
249. Neu lele bina fe inan
He goes to clear dry fields for his mother
250. Ma seku ndenu fe te’on.
And he prepares gardens for his aunt.
251. Ana-ma Manu Kama
The orphan Manu Kama
252. Falu-ina Tepa Nilu
And the widow Tepa Nilu
253. Nala neu lele bina
Goes to clear dry fields
254. Ma nita neu seku ndenu
And goes to prepare gardens
255. Nai tadu-hade dea
At a distant rice village
10. Manu Kama’s road, Tepa Nilu’s path

256. Ma nai nggolo-bete dea. And a distant millet spot.
257. Boe ma Buik tona-na toda Then Buik’s ship appears
258. Ma Lok balu-na sou And Lok’s perahu becomes visible.
259. De Leli Deak iipe nita-n Leli Deak looks and sees it
260. Ma Kona Kek leli’ hapu-n. And Kona Kek stares and discovers it.
261. Boe ma nae: ‘Baluk se balu-n-o? She says: ‘This ship, whose ship is it?
262. Ma tonak se tona-n-o? And this perahu, whose perahu is it?
263. Balum faa loba Selak, [If] your ship carries loba-bark from Selak,
264. Tonam ifa lani Diak [If] your perahu bears lani-medicine from Daik
265. Na au asa ala fa dei Then, I’ll buy a little
266. Do au tadi ala fa dei!’ And I’ll get a little!’
268. Do au Lok tona-na ia. Or I, Lok, own this perahu.
269. Lolek sio lai lain Nine fine things are on board
270. Ma ladak fau lai ala. And eight delightful things are on top.
271. Laba kae mat lain, Mount and climb, come on board,
272. Ma tinge gene mat ata. And step and ascend, come on top.
273. Fo dale be na asa, What pleases you, buy it,
274. Ma pela be na peda-n!’ And what displeases you, put it back!’
275. De inak ia Kona Kek The woman Kona Kek
276. Ma fetok ia Leli Deak And the girl, Leli Deak
277. Tinga hene neu lain, Steps and ascends on board,
278. Do laba kae neu ata. Mounts and climbs on top.
279. Mai de peda esa nggao esa, There, she puts one thing back, takes another,
280. Ma hoi esa nggali esa. And picks up one thing, throws another back.
281. Sek-o inak ia Bui Kume Indeed, this woman is for Bui Kume
282. Ma fetok ia Lo Lengu, And this girl is for Lo Lengu,
283. Ina malei selak A woman to increase the cargo
284. Alla fete ma tale banak. And a girl to add to the load.
285. Bee ma ala kale kola dua-dua, So they shake the oar-rings two by two,
286. De ala la’o, They leave,
287. Ma ala hela tuku telu-telu, And they pull the oars three by three,
288. De ala leu, They go,
289. Leko ia Selan leu Turning the sail toward Sela
290. Do pale uli Dain leu. Or guiding the rudder toward Dai.
291. Boe te ana-ma Manu Kama So the orphan Manu Kama
292. Ma falu-ina Tepa Nilu And the widow Tepa Nilu
293. Ledo neu hula manun At the time of the sun for gathering chicken
294. Ma fae neu hani bafin, And at the time of the day for feeding pigs,
295. Ma ana seku ndenu lolo-fali He returns from preparing gardens
296. Ma ana ilele bina diku-dua. And he comes back from clearing fields.
He reaches his home
And reaches his house.
There, the woman Lide Mudak
Or the girl Adi Sole speaks, saying:

‘Your mother is on Sela
And your aunt is on Dai,
Sela concealed behind great boa-trees
And Dai covered by great piko-trees.

They have carried her away
And have cradled her away.
So the orphan Manu Kama
And the widow Tepa Nili

Pulls a pig’s feeding trough
And the girl Adi Sole speaks, saying:

They have carried her away
And have cradled her away.

They have carried her away
And have cradled her away.

They have carried her away
And have cradled her away.

They have carried her away
And have cradled her away.

They have carried her away
And have cradled her away.

They have carried her away
And have cradled her away.