

Appendix C

Tonight began the marriage ceremony of my 'brother' Konangil, who was one of my good friends back in 1953-55 and has always remained so. (He is my 'own' father's brother's son and the *di*, namesake, of Jimbin's father, the much admired Nambawan Konangil, the great *luluai* of Konumberga clan who died in 1955.) I gave him £2/10/- towards his marriage payments, acted as banker while he was accumulating his money, and he followed my advice to set aside £2 to pay his tax without expending ALL his money on 'buying' Ondugl.

We went to Tubnogl (the creek called Tub, pronounced Toob as in 'book'); nearly all the men of Konangil's sub-subclan (excepting those who are busy with death payments elsewhere in Konumberga territory), plus several women married to men of the sub-subclan plus Tunamp (member of another subclan, who came along for the heck of it and to wait upon me), plus myself. The houses belonging to Ondugl's family are quite close to the creek, on the far side of it. At the creek I noticed three long white things in the water, and they turned out to be tapeworms out of the pig Ondugl's family had killed and cooked for us to eat, so I began to pray that the meat was well cooked. At my 'true brother's' marriage ceremony I could not possibly refuse to eat pork! I had visions of visiting the European Medical Assistant tomorrow in search of a strong purge or emetic. The Konumberga relatives of Ondugl greeted us warmly, the men shaking hands and the women embracing, and we sat with them around a fire in a hole where a saucepan of some kind of 'stew' was cooking. We sat on logs which we had to move back from the excessive heat of the fire. Nearby was a tall fine fence of split bush paling set close together. This was the fence Ondugl's family had built to keep the chooks and ducks and turkeys a former European schoolteacher had given them (along with £200) as marriage payment for Tup, one of Ondugl's sisters. Tup was a pupil of his, and his downfall. I am not clear whether it was the affair with Tup or his affair or involvement with another girl pupil that occasioned his removal from the district when it became public. The family think it is Lucky, however, that they managed to bleed him for the livestock and fence (constructed by his schoolboys) and still retain their daughter. The Kugika presented a cooked pig, and the Konumberga presented a cooked pig in return. With the memory of the three tapeworms sharp and fresh in my mind, I found it hard to swallow the pork I was given. Nevertheless we all ate with enjoyment, even myself when I managed to blot out the memory of the tapeworms. Then Konangil stayed with his hosts while we went to find Ondugl and 'pull' her inside the house to be prepared for her marriage. I have seen lots of these Wailik ceremonies, and did not stay for the Wailik singing but just to witness the 'pulling'.

Ondugl was in a classificatory mother's house in company with her age-mates—girls who develop a close bond between them largely through giving each other support in fights against girls of other clans (over boys). They all looked sadly at Ondugl, a couple of them crying sentimentally because they were going to lose their mate, and some reminiscing about the times they had all combined to fight against the Ngeniga girls and so forth. Ondugl has long been a lover of Konangil and the marriage was initiated by herself going to stay with him with marital intent. Any protests she would make at this stage of proceedings would be purely ritual. The girls did, however, get her whipped up into some regret at leaving her single life.

Women married to men of Konangil's sub-subclan went inside the house and asked Ondugl to come with them. She said she was happy where she was. They held her arms and tried to persuade her to come outside, but her age-mates attacked the Kugika women with thumps and scratches. Ondugl and her age-mates were all robust young women, and they proved too much for the Kugika ladies, so the men had to enter the house and drag her out. She and her age-mates treated them to a few blows and scratches, which they proudly examined by the light of my lamp later.

The defeated women were old Yagumam, Ka's mother; Wamdi's youngest wife Aiyang; Kombuk's half-sister, the unmarried mother Muru; and one of Ka's wives, Komdilamp. Yagumam and Komdilamp are both from the bride's sub-subclan.

The men who brought Ondugl outside were Kabakl, who belongs to a different sub-subclan from Konangil but who has a wife from Ondugl's sub-subclan; Ka, the chap who was falsely reported drowned and has been something of a hero since his safe return; Kombuk and his younger brother Yuants; Pigip, an age-mate of Konangil's belonging to Kabakl's sub-subclan.

The men took Ondugl to her father's house, where the Wailik was to take place. They had to go through a fence on the way, and I was interested to watch this. Ten years ago men pulling a bride used to ignore the presence of a pig-fence and just drag her ruthlessly over the sharp palings, tearing her flesh. But this time Kabakl held Ondugl firmly while the other men pulled out a few palings to let her pass through without getting injured. She herself was twisting dramatically in Kabakl's grip, but when he got her to the fence she took care to edge herself through before she wriggled very hard again. It was plain that her protest was largely ritual.

This text taken from *Wives and Wanderers in a New Guinea Highlands Society:
Women's lives in the Waghi Valley*, by Marie Olive Reay,
edited by Francesca Merlan with additional introduction by Marilyn Strathern,
published 2014 by ANU Press,
The Australian National University, Canberra, Australia.