Introduction

In 1988 I made a brief visit to Rote. I had been given a cabin on board the *Asmara Lomba-Lomba*, an Indonesian-owned tourist vessel that visited the islands between Bali and Kupang, in exchange for providing lectures on the culture of eastern Indonesia. The *Asmara Lomba-Lomba* included Rote on its tour and put into the port town of Ba’a for a short stay. As it happened, at the time, there were several men from Termanu in Ba’a who had come to buy supplies. Among them was the former *Wakil Manek* of Termanu, Frans Biredoko, whom I had known since 1965.

The moment we were together, the *Wakil* began to recount for me the latest news from Termanu. One of the first things he had to tell me was that Eli Pellondou, whom we all knew as Seu Ba’i, had died. Termanu, we agreed, had lost one of its great poets but we had hardly begun to speak about Seu Ba’i when the *Wakil* introduced me to someone whom I did not know among the group, a cousin of Seu Ba’i, Mikael Pellondou. The *Wakil* assured me that Mikael was also a fine poet and would continue the traditions of his cousin.
The Rotenese place great stress on continuity. They express this in various ways, often in short poems that emphasise a continuation from generation to generation. A short poem, given to me by Old Meno, describes this continuity from father to son by describing the way a father’s mortuary monument—a tree ringed by stones—becomes a son’s place to rest.

1. *Nggongo Ingu Lai lalo*  
   Nggongo of the Highland dies
2. *Ma Lima Le Dale sapu*  
   And Lima of the Riverbed perishes
3. *De lalo ela Latu Nggongo*  
   He dies leaving Latu Nggongo
   And perishes leaving Engga Lima.
5. *Boe te ela batu nangatun*  
   But he leaves a stone to sit on
   And leaves a tree to recline upon.
7. *De koluk Nggongo Ingu Lai*  
   Plucked is Nggongo from the Highland
8. *Te Latu Nggongo nangatu*  
   But now Latu Nggongo sits
9. *Ma haik Lima Le Dale*  
   And grasped is Lima from the Riverbed
    But now Engga Lima reclines.
11. *Fo lae Nggongo tutuu batun*  
    They say: Nggongo’s sitting stone
12. *Na tao ela Latu Nggongo*  
    Was made for Latu Nggongo
13. *Ma Lima lalai ain*  
    And Lima’s resting tree
    Was placed for Engga Lima.

Another short poem, also from Meno, describes this continuity figuratively in a botanic idiom:

1. *Tefu ma-nggona lilok*  
   The sugar cane has sheaths of gold
2. *Ma huni ma-lapa losik.*  
   And the banana has blossoms of copper.
3. *Tefu olu beni nggonan*  
   The sugar cane sheds its sheath
4. *Ma huni kono heni lapan.*  
   And the banana drops its blossoms.
5. *Te bu bei ela tefu okan*  
   Still leaving but the sugar cane’s root
6. *Ma huni hun bai.*  
   And the banana’s trunk too.
7. *De dei tefu na nggona seluk*  
   So that the sugar cane sheathes again
8. *Fo na nggona lilo seluk*  
   The sheaths are gold again
9. *Ma dei huni na lapa seluk*  
   And the banana blossoms again
10. *Fo na lapa losi seluk.*  
    The blossoms are copper again.
In response to the Wakil’s praise of his abilities, Mikael agreed to recite something for me. I happened to have a small cassette recorder with me and I asked Mikael to recite *Suti Solo do Bina Bane*—a chant that I told him I had already recorded from Seu Ba’i. An opportunity had presented itself unexpectedly and Mikael was keen to demonstrate his poetic skills. The following is Mikael Pellondou’s version of *Suti Solo do Bina Bane*.

**Prefatory Lines**

Mikael’s recitation follows the format of a mortuary chant and its composition is similar to other such versions. Many of the features of his narrative are, however, distinctive, indeed idiosyncratic. Whereas most poets when they recite tend to press forward with their narrative as a revelation, in this recitation (and in others I have recorded) Mikael has a more repetitive style, often repeating lines in similar, sometimes almost identical, form.

The recitation begins with a few prefatory lines that situate Suti Solo and Bina Bane as creatures from sea:

1. *Sona leo iak lae:* Like this they say:
2. *Bina nai liun* Bina in the ocean
3. *Ma Suti nai sain dei* And Suti in the sea
4. *O tao Bina Bane le’e* What do you do with Bina Bane
5. *Ma o tao Suti Solo le’e* And what do you do with Suti Solo
6. *Fo o masena Suti Solo* That you may be a companion to Suti Solo
7. *Ma o matiak Bina Bane?* And that you may be a friend to Bina Bane?
8. *Te Bina nai liun* For Bina is in the ocean
9. *Ma Suti nai sain.* And Suti is in the sea.
The Introduction of the Chief Chant Character

The chief chant character in this version—the woman who eventually gathers the shells and engages in dialogue with them—is identified as Lole Holu // Fua Bafo (or Fua Bafa). This is a slightly different chant name from that used by Meno and Seu Ba’i in their recitations: Lole Holu // Lua Bafa. The recitation begins with Lole Holu // Fua Bafo tending her fields, which are ready for harvest. There is no explicit mention of an origin or harvest ceremony, but this is implied in the need to search for the appropriate ritual fish.

10.  Boe te inaka Fua Bafo  So the woman Fua Bafo
11.  Ma fetoka Lole Holu  And the girl Lole Holu
12.  Na-nea pelak  Cares for maize
13.  Ma na-nea betek  And cares for millet
14.  De ana oko boluk tunga seli  She shouts on one side
15.  Ma ana do-se’ek tunga seli  And she screams at one side
16.  Ma bafi na’a tunga seli  And the pig eats on one side
17.  Ma kode ketu tunga seli.  And the monkey plucks at one side.
18.  Boe ma ana dodo neu dalen  So she thinks within herself
19.  Ma ana dudu’a neu teina,  And she ponders within her insides,
20.  Nai du’a taon leo be  Thinking what to do
21.  Fo kode boso na’a pelak  So the monkey does not eat the maize
22.  Ma bafi boso na’a pelak [betek].  And the pig does not eat the maize [millet].
23.  Ah, ledo lama-tetetun  The sun is at its height
24.  Ma fai lama-hahanan  And the day is at its hottest
25.  Boe ma ana nggao na ndai tasin na  She takes up her sea fishnet
26.  Ma tenga na sekot metin  And picks up her tidal scoop-net
27.  Fo sekot matei besik  The scoop-net with iron-weighted insides
28.  Fo ndai mahamu lilok  The fishnet with gold-weighted belly
29.  Ndai ndai neu alun  Hangs the fishnet over her shoulder
30.  [Ma sekot matei besi-na]  [And the scoop-net with iron-weighted insides]
31.  Su’u sekot neu langan.  Balances the scoop-net on her head.
The Search for the Ritual Fish

In other recitations of *Suti Solo do Bina Bane*, the search for the ritual fish is said to occur at a sacred site known as Mae Oe/Téna Lai at the eastern end of Rote. By contrast, Mikael explicitly locates the search for these fish along the coast of Termanu at Fopo Sandika/Tefi Noe Mina, not far, in fact, from where both he and his cousin Seu Ba’i lived at Namodale.

32. *De ana lipa naka nanae*  
   She looks around carefully
33. *Ma ana lelu nala mumula.*  
   And she glances intently.
34. *De tasi Fopo Sandika*  
   The sea at Fopo Sandika
35. *Ma meti Tefi Noe Mina*  
   And the tide at Tefi Noe Mina
36. *Tasi la huka papa*  
   The sea shows its shallows
37. *Ma meti la si’unu.*  
   And the tide begins to ebb.
38. *Boe ma neu seko sisi’u engga*  
   She goes to scoop, lifting *engga* seaweed
39. *Ma neu ndai hnhuka batu,*  
   And goes to fish, overturning rocks,
40. *Neu seko sanga Dusu La’e*  
   Goes to scoop in search of a Dusu La’e
41. *Ma neu ndai sanga Tio Holu*  
   And goes to fish in search of a Tio Holu
42. *Fo Dusu la la’e ao*  
   For Dusu fish that support one another
43. *Ma Tio la holu ao.*  
   The Tio fish that embrace one another.
44. *Fo ana seko nala lifu esa*  
   So she scoops in one pool
45. *Ma ndai nala lek dua na*  
   And fishes in two waterholes
46. *Ta ndai nala Tio*  
   But does not fish up a Tio fish
47. *Ma ta seko nala Dusu.*  
   And does not scoop up a Dusu fish.
48. *De ana ndai ndano heni Dusu*  
   She fishes and throws for a Dusu
49. *Ma seko toko heni Tio.*  
   And she scoops and casts for a Tio.
50. *De ana ndai nala lifu dua*  
   She fishes in two pools
51. *Ma seko nala lek telu na*  
   And she scoops in three waterholes
52. *Bina nala lek dua*  
   Bina is in the two waterholes
53. *Ma Suti nala lek telu.*  
   And Suti is in the three waterholes.
54. *De ana ndai ndano heni Bina*  
   She fishes and throws away Bina

1 Implied in the following lines 41–42 and again in lines 57–58 is an interpretative play on words. The term *la’e* in the ritual name Dusu La’e is here interpreted as the verb *la’e* (‘to support, to care for’), and the term *holu* in the ritual name Tio Holu is interpreted as the verb ‘to embrace’—hence the lines about the Dusu and the Tio loving and embracing one another.
55. Seko toko heni Suti, Scoops and casts away Suti,
56. Ana seko sanga Dusu La’e She scoops, seeking a Dusu La’e
57. Ma ana seko sanga Tio Holu dei And she scoops, seeking only a Tio Holu
58. Fo ela Tio la holu ao So that the Tio may embrace one another
59. Ma Dusu la la’e ao. And the Dusu may support one another.

The Initial Dialogue with the Shells

In this version, the initial response by Suti Solo/Bina Bane to Fua Bafo/Lole Holu is of interest, particularly because the opening lines of this chant begin with the problem of pigs and monkeys stealing grain from the ripening fields. The shells propose that they be attached to a rock and tree and be used as clappers whose sound will drive away the pigs and monkeys. This is significant in terms of the wider traditions of Rote. Thus, according to origin versions of this chant from other domains, such as the domain of Ringgou, the shells are not made into objects for dyeing and spinning, but instead are used as clappers to drive away animals that disturb the fields.

60. Boe ma besaka ana a’e dasi na Now he [Suti] lifts her words
61. Ma ana lole bala na neu And he [Bina] raises her voice and says:
   ma nae:
62. ‘Bo senango nei ‘Oh, dear companion
63. Do bo tiango nou Or oh, dear friend
64. O ma bala You may say
65. Do o ma dasi mae: Or you give voice, saying:
66. “Kode ketu betek “The monkey plucks the millet
67. Ma bafi na’a pelak. And the pig eats the maize.
68. De ketu bei tolesi Plucking yet still some remains
69. Ma na’a bei ela.” And eating yet still something is left.”
70. Tahu mafa ndendelek So remember, do remember
71. Ma masa neredak And recall, do recall
72. Teu te isa au [nai] ai Go tie me to the wood
73. Ma pa’a au nai batu And fasten me to the stone
6. VERSION V FROM THE DOMAIN OF TERMANU

74.  *Fo au bengo bengo u ai*  That I may shake and shake with the wood

75.  *Ma toto toto o batu*  And knock and knock on the rock

76.  *Fo daenga kode ana tolo mu*  So that the monkey will run

77.  *Ma bafi ana nalai*  And the pig will flee

78.  *Lo nula daie neu*  Deep into the woods

79.  *Ma lo ai lai neu*  And high into the trees

80.  *Fo kode boso ketu betek*  So that the monkey does not pluck the millet

81.  *Ma bafi bo' o na'a pelak.*  And the pig does not eat the maize.'

82.  *De dasi leo la hala*  The words just like the voice

83.  *Ma deta leo dasi ma*  And just like the words

84.  *De ana oku-boluk*  She shouts

85.  *Ma ana do-se'ek de*  And she screams

86.  *Bafi ta na'a pelak*  The pig does not eat the maize

87.  *Ma kode ta ketu betek.*  And the monkey does not pluck the millet.

88.  *De sama leo hala*  Just like the voice

89.  *Ma deta dasi*  And like the words

90.  *Ma ana oku-boluk*  And she shouts

91.  *Ma ana do-se'ek.*  And she screams.

92.  *De kode ta ketu betek*  The monkey does not pluck the millet

93.  *Ma bafi ta na'a pelak.*  And the pig does not eat the maize.

94.  *De pela lai la lama-tasa*  The corn is ripe in the field

95.  *Ma betekala dio hu'u*  And the millet has ripened grains

96.  *Ma hade la modo peda*  And the rice is green-tipped

97.  *De ala dio hu'u kokolun*  They are ripe with grain to be harvested

98.  *Ma ala modo peda keketun.*  And they are green-tipped to be plucked.

99.  *De Bina Bane o fali uma*  Bina Bane, return to your home

100.  *Ma Suti Solo tulek lon.*  And Suti Solo, turn back to your house.
The Directives to the Shells

The number of directives that Mikael includes in this composition is limited compared with that in other versions. Some are similar to those of other versions but at least one is specific to his recitation.

101. _Boe ma kokolak no inaka_ Lole Holu

102. _Ma dede’ak no fetoka Fua Bafo, nae:_

103. ‘_Au u’u o se sama leo o bai?’_ ‘With whom—with the likes of you—can I go?’

104. _Boe ma nae:_

105. ‘_Mu mo pila kumea letek_’ ‘Go with the red _kumea_ grass on the hill

106. _Ma mu mo nggeo kuku telas.’_ And go with the black _kuku_ shrub in the underbrush.’

107. ‘_Boe ma malole lai ndia_’ ‘Such things would be good

108. _Ma mandak lai ndia,_ And such things would be proper,

109. _Te pila kumea letek_ But the red _kumea_ grass on the hill

110. _Ma nggeo kuku telas-a,_ And the black _kuku_ shrub in the underbrush,

111. _Timu lama tua dulu_ [When] the east monsoon grows great in the east

112. _Do fak lama nalu langa,_ And the west monsoon lengthens at the head,

113. _De lama dilu neu kalen_ Bends down its heavy top

114. _Ma lama sesu neu bu’un_ And breaks its heavy joints

115. _De au kokolak o se_ Then with whom will I speak

116. _Ma au dede’ak o se_ And with whom will I talk

117. _Fo sama leo Lole Holu_ [With someone] just like Lole Holu

118. _Ma sama leo Fua Bafo?’_ And exactly like Fua Bafo?’

119. _Boe ma nae:_

120. ‘_Mu mo titi’i letek_’ ‘Go with the _titi’i_ shrub on the hill

121. _Ma mu mo kai-hule mok.’_ And go with _kai-hule_ bush of the field.’

122. _Boe ma nae:_

123. ‘_Malole lai ndia_’ ‘Such would be good
6. VERSION V FROM THE DOMAIN OF TERMANU

124. *Ma mandak lai ndia* And such would be proper
125. *Lafada lae:* But they say:
126. “*Titi'i letek* “The *titi'i* shrub on the hill
127. *Ma kai-hule mok* And the *kai-hule* bush of the field
128. *Ndìa mesakana nai mok esa* It is all alone in the field
129. *Ma ndìa mesakana nai letek esa,“* And it is all alone on the hill,”
130. *De au dede'ak o se* So with whom will I speak
131. *Ma au kokolak o se* And with whom will I talk
132. *Fo sama leo Lole Holu* [Someone] like Lole Holu
133. *Deta leo Fua Bafo?“* And just like Fua Bafo?
134. *Boe ma nae:* So she says:
135. ‘*Te o mu mo se bai* ’But with whom will you go
136. *Ma sama leo au bai?“* And who is like me?”
137. *Boe ma nae:* But she says:
138. ‘*Nah, mu mo a dini ana nau.“* ’Nah, go with the fine *dini* grass.’
139. *Boe ma nae:* So he says:
140. ‘*Au u o dini ana nau“* ‘If I go with the fine *dini* grass
141. *O sama leo kumea letek* It is just like going with the *kumea* grass on the hill
142. *Ma kuku telas,* And with the *kuku* shrub in the underbrush,
143. *De fak lama nalu langa* [When] the west monsoon lengthens at the head
144. *Ma timu lama tua dulu na* And the east monsoon grows great in the east
145. *De lama dilu neu bu'un* It bends at its heavy joints
146. *Ma lama sesu neu kalen,* And it breaks at its heavy head,
147. *Nah, au kokolak o se* Then with whom will I speak
148. *Ma au dede'ak o se* And with whom will I talk
149. *Fo sama leo o boe* [With someone] just like you, too
150. *Ma deta leo o boe.“* And exactly like you, too.”
The Directive to Return to the Sea

The final directive to the shells is simply to return to the sea, specifically to the women Po’o Pau Ai/Latu Kai Do. There is no mention of following the birds through the forest and along the river to the resounding sea.

151. Boe ma inaka Fua Bafo So the woman Fua Bafo
152. Ma fetoka Lole Holu nae: And the girl Lole Holu says:
153. ‘Bo senango nou ‘Oh dear friend
154. Ma bo tiango nou And oh dear companion
155. Tè o mu mo se bai? But with whom will you go?
156. Au dū’a dodo doak I ponder on it with difficulty
157. Ma afi ndanda doak, And I think on it with difficulty,
158. Mo se fo o dedē’ak mon With whom for you to talk
159. Sama leo au bai.’ With someone like myself.’
160. Boe ma nae: So she says:
161. ‘Mu mo inak Po’o Pau Ai ‘Go with the woman Po’o Pau Ai
162. Ma mu mo fetok Latu Kai Do. And go with the girl Latu Kai Do.
163. Inak Po’o Pau Ai The woman Po’o Pau Ai
164. Ma fetok Latu Kai Do And the girl Latu Kai Do
165. Nai le bibifa At the river’s lip
166. Ma nai oli tatain.’ And at the estuary’s edge.’
167. Boe ma ana lole halan So he lifts his words
168. Ma ana a’e dasi na ma nae: And he raises his voice and says:
169. ‘Bo Fua Bafo o ‘Oh, dear Fua Bafo
170. Do bo Lole Holu o Or oh dear Lole Holu
171. Malole ndia This is good
172. Ma mandak ndia And this is proper
173. De fo au bonu boa For me to bob like boa wood
174. Ma au ele piko And me to float like piko wood
175. Fo fali u’ung lo liun For me to return to the sea
176. Ma tulek u’ung leo sain.’ And to turn back to the ocean.’
177. De leo halan ma leo dasin According to his word and voice
178. Tasi mai de nala oli dale The sea comes into the estuary
179. Boe ma ana bonu boa Then he floats like boa wood
180. Ma ana ele piko. And he bobs like piko wood.
The Brief Return to the Sea

In this version, the return to the sea leads to the humiliation of the shells as they try to dance at a celebration of origin. This leads to their return to Rote.

181. *De fali neu lei sain*  He returns to the sea
182. *Ma fali neu lei liun.*  And returns to the ocean.
183. *Neu de ana tongo lolo*  He goes and he meets
184. *De neu nda liliima,*  He goes and he encounters,
185. *Neu, te ali foti bus-alal*  He goes, but they are celebrating their origin feast
186. *Ma be'e Lipa*  And they are performing their *Lipa* celebration
187. *Leme liun ma leme sain*  In the oceans and in the sea
188. *Fo neme Ngusui Buin do Pinga Dale.*  From Ngusui Bui or Pinga Dale.
189. *Neu te inak liu-kala*  He goes but the women of the ocean
190. *Ma fetu sai-kala*  And the girls of the sea
191. *Ali pela ma ali longe*  They dance and they turn
192. *Ali pela nggangafu aon*  They dance, swaying their bodies
193. *Ma ali leno sosodo aon*  And they spin, shuffling their bodies [feet]
194. *De dae sopukala ta lapu*  Fine dust does not fly
195. *[Ma butu lutu la ta pela]*  [And tiny stones do not dance]
196. *Boe ma Bina Bane do Suti Solo*  Bina Bane and Suti Solo
197. *Ali pela nggangafu aon*  They dance, swaying their bodies
198. *Ma leno sosodo aon.*  And they spin, shuffling their feet.
199. *Besaka dae sopu-kala lapu*  Now the dust flies
200. *Ma butu lutu la pela.*  And the small stones spin.
201. *Boe ma ina liu-kala*  So the women of the ocean
202. *Ma fetu sai-kala*  And the girls of the sea
203. *Ali kokola ma ali dedei'ak*  They speak and they converse
204. *'Wah, te beuk Bina Bane hai*  'Wah, something new for Bina Bane
205. *Ma fe'ek Suti Solo boe dei.*'  And something strange for Suti Solo.'
The Return to Rote

The final trajectory of the shells is to the domain of Delha, at the southwestern corner of Rote, identified by its ritual name, Dela Muli/Ana Iko (‘Dela in the West’/‘Ana at the Tail’). It is at the far western end of the island that they obtain the companions they seek.

Mikael gives no explanation for the shells' return nor does he provide any indication of the relationship of Suti Solo do Bina Bane to the chant character Ka Lau Ao/Tena Hu Dulu, who becomes companion to the shells.

206. Bina lama toko isi  
Bina throws forth his insides

207. Ma Suti lama edo nggi.  
And Suti puts forth his pods.

208. Boe ma ala bi do mae  
They feel fear or shame

209. Boe ma ala tolu mu leo sain  
They flee into the sea

210. Ma lalai leo liun  
And they rush into the ocean

211. De ana leo Dela Muli neu  
He goes to Dela Muli [Dela in the West]

212. De ana leo Ana Iko neu.  
He goes to Ana Iko [Ana at the Tail].

213. Boe ma ana hapu senan  
He has a friend

214. Ma hapu tian  
And has a companion

215. Nade Ka Lau Ao ma Tena Hu Dulu  
Named Ka Lau Ao and Tena Hu Dulu

216. Boe ma nae:  
So he says:

217. ‘Bo senango nou  
‘Oh dear friend

218. Ma bo tiango nou  
And oh dear companion

219. Ita dua tia mai ia  
Let us two come here as friends

220. Do sena mai ia.’  
And come here as companions.’

221. Boe ma nae:  
So she says:

222. ‘Leo meme ia leon  
‘Stay here then

223. Do tapa-lasa teme ia leon.’  
Or let us stay here then.’

224. De ana leo neme Dela Muli  
He goes to stay at Dela Muli

225. Ma napalasa neme Ana Iko.  
And remains at Ana Iko.
Composition Analysis: Meno and Seu Ba’i Comparisons

Mikael Pellondou’s *Suti Solo do Bina Bane* is based on a repertoire of 75 dyadic sets. Twenty-eight of these 75 sets are shared with Meno’s composition and 26 sets are shared with Malesi’s first version of *Suti Solo do Bina Bane*. By contrast, 38 of these sets (51 per cent) are shared with his cousin Seu Ba’i’s composition. Because Mikael tends to repeat passages in his composition, it is actually longer—225 lines compared with 209 lines—than Seu Ba’i’s composition but it has fewer dyadic sets (75 compared with 85 sets).

Of the various repeated or partially repeated passages in Mikael’s composition, the one that is most immediately apparent is what might be called the ‘monkey plucks’ (*kode ketu*) formula. This formula is used four separate times in the composition. At the very beginning of his recitation, rather than announce the need for special ritual fish for the harvest ceremony, Mikael describes the ripening field that signals the coming of the harvest ceremony. He then proceeds to describe the hunt for the ritual fish, as if to imply that the search for the fish is the means to protecting the field. The first use of the ‘monkey plucks’ formula describes the way Fua Bafo//Lole Holu shouts to drive away monkeys//pigs from the field.

**First Passage of ‘Monkey Plucks’**

14. *De ana oko boluk tunga seli*  
   She shouts on one side
15. *Ma ana do-se’ek tunga seli*  
   And she screams at the other side
16. *Ma bafi na’a tunga seli*  
   And the pig eats on one side
17. *Ma kode ketu tunga seli.*  
   And the monkey plucks at one side.
18. *Boe ma ana dodo neu dalen*  
   So she thinks within herself
19. *Ma ana dudu’a neu teina,*  
   And she ponders within her insides,
20. *Nai du’a taon leo be*  
   Thinking what to do
21. *Fo kode boso na’a pelak*  
   So the monkey does not eat the maize
22. *Ma bafi boso na’a pelak.*  
   And the pig does not eat the maize.

The second use of this formula occurs in the initial dialogue between Fua Bafo//Lole Holu. The shells describe the situation that Fua Bafo//Lole Holu faces and instruct her to make them into sounding clappers that will
drive away the monkeys/pigs. As in the first passage, the formula is used twice, but in this second passage, line 80 is composed correctly, whereas in the first passage, line 21 is composed incorrectly.

Second Passage of ‘Monkey Plucks’

66. “Kode ketu betek” “The monkey plucks the millet
67. Ma bafi ná'a pelak. And the pig eats the maize.
68. De ketu bei tolesi Plucking yet still some remains
69. Ma ná'a bei ela.” And eating yet still something is left.”
70. Tehu mafa ndendelek So remember, do remember
71. Ma masa nenedak And recall, do recall
72. Teu te isa au [nai] ai Go tie me to the wood
73. Ma pa'a au nai batu And fasten me to the stone
74. Fo au bengo bengo u ai That I may shake and shake with the wood
75. Ma toto toto o batu And knock and knock on the rock
76. Fo daenga kode ana tolo mu So that the monkey will run
77. Ma bafi ana nalai And the pig will flee
78. Lo nula dale neu Deep into the woods
79. Ma lo ai lai neu And high into the trees
80. Fo kode boso ketu betek So that the monkey does not pluck the millet
81. Ma bafi bo'o ná'a pelak.’ And the pig does not eat the maize.’

Immediately after this passage, Mikael repeats virtually the same six lines twice. These repeated lines include the ‘monkey plucks’ formula and another formula, which could be called the ‘shout/scream’ (do-se’ek//oku-boluk) formula, which occurs in the first passage.

Third Passage of ‘Monkey Plucks’

84. De ana oku-boluk She shouts
85. Ma ana do-se’ek dei And she screams
86. Bafi ta ná'a pelak The pig does not eat the maize
87. Ma kode ta ketu betek. And the monkey does not pluck the millet.
Fourth Passage of ‘Monkey Plucks’

90. *Ma ana oku-boluk* And she shouts
91. *Ma ana do-se’ek.* And she screams.
92. *De kode ta ketu betek* The monkey does not pluck the millet
93. *Ma bafi ta na’a pelak.* And the pig does not eat the maize.

Malesi does not use the ‘monkey plucks’ formula in his version of *Suti Solo do Bina Bane*, but both Meno and Seu Ba’i do. Their use of this formula, however, differs from that of Mikael’s. Whereas Mikael’s formula is *kode ketu//bafi na’a*, Meno and Seu Ba’i’s formula is *kode ketu//bafi ka’a*. The difference is in the use of two verbs. Mikael’s /na’al/ (third-person singular) is the verb ‘to eat’, whereas Meno and Seu Ba’i’s /ka’al/ (third-person singular) is the verb ‘to bite or to chew’.

Both Meno and Seu Ba’i use the ‘monkey plucks’ formula in one of the directives to the shells. Meno’s usage is as follows:

**Old Meno**

170. ‘*Oo na mo bete pule kode ketuk*’ *Oh, go with the millet grains that the monkey plucks*
171. *Ma pela po’o bafi ka’ak.*’ And with the ears of maize that the pig chews.’
172. *Te hu Suti bei namatane* But Suti continues to cry
174. *Boe ma nae:* So he says:
175. ‘*Te leo kode ketu neni betek*’ ‘But if the monkey plucks the millet
176. *Ma bafi ka’a neni pelak,* And the pig chews the maize,
177. *Na Suti au o se* Then I, Suti, with whom will I be
178. *Ma Bina au o se?*’ And I, Bina, with whom will I be?’

Seu Ba’i’s usage is similar to Meno’s but includes the ‘shout//scream’ formula that Mikael uses in several of his similar passages.

**Seu Ba’i**

93. *Au o peu ai lasi* I will be with boundary tree of the forest
94. *Ma au o to batu nula* And I will be with border stone of the wood
There is, however, another remarkable similarity in composition between Seu Ba’i’s version and Mikael’s. In both compositions, this passage consists of 14 lines that make up one of the directives to the shells. The composition of this same passage is so similar that it could be considered as a distinctive ‘Pellondou’ family resemblance. A line-by-line comparison shows the use of exactly the same dyadic sets and formulae based on these sets throughout the two passages. Seu Ba’i’s version of this passage is as follows:

**Seu Ba’i**

109. ‘Au o pila kumea letek

110. Ma au o nggeo kuku telas.

111. Malole ndia so

112. Ma mandak ndia so.

...  

119. ‘Au o pila kumea letek

120. Ma au o nggeo kuku telas.

121. Malole ndia so

122. Ma mandak ndia so.

123. ‘Au o pila kumea letek

124. Ma au o nggeo kuku telas.

...  

130. ‘Au o pila kumea letek

131. Ma au o nggeo kuku telas.

...  

134. ‘Au o pila kumea letek

135. Ma au o nggeo kuku telas.

...  

141. ‘Au o pila kumea letek

142. Ma au o nggeo kuku telas.
6. VERSION V FROM THE DOMAIN OF TERMANU

131. *Ma deta leo Lole Holu?’* And exactly like Lole Holu?’

In Mikael’s version, this same passage is as follows.

**Mikael Pellondou**

105. ‘*Mu mo pila kumea letek*’ ‘Go with the red *kumea* grass on the hill

106. *Ma mu mo nggeo kuku telas.*’ And go with the black *kuku* shrub in the underbrush.’

107. ‘*Boe ma malole lai ndia*’ ‘Such things would be good

108. *Ma mandak lai ndia,* And such things would be proper,

109. *Te pila kumea letek* But the red *kumea* grass on the hill

110. *Ma nggeo kuku telas-a,* And the black *kuku* shrub in the underbrush,

111. *Timu lama tua dulu* [When] the east monsoon grows great in the east

112. *Do fak lama nalu langa,* And the west monsoon lengthens at the head,

113. *De lama dilu neu kalen* Bends down its heavy top

114. *Ma lama sesu neu bu’un* And breaks its heavy joints

115. *De au kokolak o se* Then with whom will I speak

116. *Ma au dede’ak o se* And with whom will I talk

117. *Fo sama leo Lole Holu* [With someone] just like Lole Holu

118. *Ma sama leo Fua Bafo?’* And exactly like Fua Bafo?’

Mikael is consistent in his reliance on this arrangement of formulae. He repeats a variant of this passage some 22 lines further on in his composition.

140. ‘*Au u o dini ana nau*’ ‘If I go with the fine *dini* grass

141. *O sama leo kumea letek* It is just like going with the *kumea* grass on the hill

142. *Ma kuku telas,* And the *kuku* shrub in the underbrush,

143. *De fak lama nalu langa* [When] the west monsoon lengthens at the head

144. *Ma timu lama tua dulu na* And the east monsoon grows great in the east

145. *De lama dilu neu bu’un* It bends at its heavy joints
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Line</th>
<th>English Translation</th>
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</table>
| 146. | *Ma lama sesu neu kalen,*  
And it breaks at its heavy head, |
| 147. | *Nah, au kokolak o se*  
Then with whom will I speak |
| 148. | *Ma au dedé‘ak o se*  
And with whom will I talk |
| 149. | *Fo sama leo o boe*  
[With someone] just like you, too |
| 150. | *Ma deta leo o boe.*  
And exactly like you, too.' |
This text is taken from Master Poets, Ritual Masters: The Art of Oral Composition Among the Rotenese of Eastern Indonesia, by James J. Fox, published 2016 by ANU Press, The Australian National University, Canberra, Australia.