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## *Suti Solo do Bina Bane:* Version V from the Domain of Termanu

### 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.

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|-----|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1.  | <i>Nggongo Ingu Lai lalo</i>      | Nggongo of the Highland dies          |
| 2.  | <i>Ma Lima Le Dale sapu</i>       | And Lima of the Riverbed perishes     |
| 3.  | <i>De lalo ela Latu Nggongo</i>   | He dies leaving Latu Nggongo          |
| 4.  | <i>Ma sapu ela Engga Lima.</i>    | And perishes leaving Engga Lima.      |
| 5.  | <i>Boe te ela batu nangatun</i>   | But he leaves a stone to sit on       |
| 6.  | <i>Ma ela ai nasalai.</i>         | And leaves a tree to recline upon.    |
| 7.  | <i>De koluk Nggongo Ingu Lai</i>  | Plucked is Nggongo from the Highland  |
| 8.  | <i>Te Latu Nggongo nangatu</i>    | But now Latu Nggongo sits             |
| 9.  | <i>Ma haik Lima Le Dale</i>       | And grasped is Lima from the Riverbed |
| 10. | <i>Te Engga Lima nasalai.</i>     | But now Engga Lima reclines.          |
| 11. | <i>Fo lae Nggongo tutuu batun</i> | They say: Nggongo's sitting stone     |
| 12. | <i>Na tao ela Latu Nggongo</i>    | Was made for Latu Nggongo             |
| 13. | <i>Ma Lima lalai ain</i>          | And Lima's resting tree               |
| 14. | <i>Na peda ela Engga Lima.</i>    | Was placed for Engga Lima.            |

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

- |     |                                    |   |
|-----|------------------------------------|---|
| 1.  | <i>Tefu ma-nggona lilok</i>        | The sugar cane has sheaths of gold      |
| 2.  | <i>Ma huni ma-lapa losik.</i>      | And the banana has blossoms of copper.  |
| 3.  | <i>Tefu olu heni nggonan</i>       | The sugar cane sheds its sheath         |
| 4.  | <i>Ma huni kono heni lapan.</i>    | And the banana drops its blossoms.      |
| 5.  | <i>Te hu bei ela tefu okan</i>     | Still leaving but the sugar cane's root |
| 6.  | <i>Ma huni hun bai.</i>            | And the banana's trunk too.             |
| 7.  | <i>De dei tefu na nggona seluk</i> | So that the sugar cane sheathes again   |
| 8.  | <i>Fo na nggona lilo seluk</i>     | The sheaths are gold again              |
| 9.  | <i>Ma dei huni na lapa seluk</i>   | And the banana blossoms again           |
| 10. | <i>Fo na lapa losi seluk.</i>      | 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:

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|----|--------------------------------|---|
| 1. | <i>Sona leo iak lae:</i>       | Like this they say:                           |
| 2. | <i>Bina nai liun</i>           | Bina in the ocean                             |
| 3. | <i>Ma Suti nai sain dei</i>    | And Suti in the sea                           |
| 4. | <i>O tao Bina Bane lè'e</i>    | What do you do with Bina Bane                 |
| 5. | <i>Ma o tao Suti Solo lè'e</i> | And what do you do with Suti Solo             |
| 6. | <i>Fo o masena Suti Solo</i>   | That you may be a companion to<br>Suti Solo   |
| 7. | <i>Ma o matiak Bina Bane?</i>  | And that you may be a friend to<br>Bina Bane? |
| 8. | <i>Te Bina nai liun</i>        | For Bina is in the ocean                      |
| 9. | <i>Ma Suti nai sain.</i>       | 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.

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

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|-----|-------------------------------------|---|
| 32. | <i>De ana lipa naka nanae</i>       | She looks around carefully                          |
| 33. | <i>Ma ana lelu nala mumula.</i>     | And she glances intently.                           |
| 34. | <i>De tasi Fopo Sandika</i>         | The sea at Fopo Sandika                             |
| 35. | <i>Ma meti Tefi Noe Mina</i>        | And the tide at Tefi Noe Mina                       |
| 36. | <i>Tasi la huka papa</i>            | The sea shows its shallows                          |
| 37. | <i>Ma meti la si'unu.</i>           | And the tide begins to ebb.                         |
| 38. | <i>Boe ma neu seko sisi'u engga</i> | She goes to scoop, lifting <i>engga</i> seaweed     |
| 39. | <i>Ma neu ndai huhuka batu,</i>     | And goes to fish, overturning rocks,                |
| 40. | <i>Neu seko sanga Dusu La'e</i>     | Goes to scoop in search of a Dusu La'e <sup>1</sup> |
| 41. | <i>Ma neu ndai sanga Tio Holu</i>   | And goes to fish in search of a Tio Holu            |
| 42. | <i>Fo Dusu la la'e ao</i>           | For Dusu fish that support one another              |
| 43. | <i>Ma Tio la holu ao.</i>           | The Tio fish that embrace one another.              |
| 44. | <i>Fo ana seko nala lifu esa</i>    | So she scoops in one pool                           |
| 45. | <i>Ma ndai nala lek dua na</i>      | And fishes in two waterholes                        |
| 46. | <i>Ta ndai nala Tio</i>             | But does not fish up a Tio fish                     |
| 47. | <i>Ma ta seko nala Dusu.</i>        | And does not scoop up a Dusu fish.                  |
| 48. | <i>De ana ndai ndano heni Dusu</i>  | She fishes and throws for a Dusu                    |
| 49. | <i>Ma seko toko heni Tio.</i>       | And she scoops and casts for a Tio.                 |
| 50. | <i>De ana ndai nala lifu dua</i>    | She fishes in two pools                             |
| 51. | <i>Ma seko nala lek telu na</i>     | And she scoops in three waterholes                  |
| 52. | <i>Bina nala lek dua</i>            | Bina is in the two waterholes                       |
| 53. | <i>Ma Suti nala lek telu.</i>       | And Suti is in the three waterholes.                |
| 54. | <i>De ana ndai ndano heni Bina</i>  | 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.

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|-----|---------------------------------------|---|
| 55. | <i>Seko toko heni Suti,</i>           | Scoops and casts away Suti,             |
| 56. | <i>Ana seko sanga Dusu La'e</i>       | She scoops, seeking a Dusu La'e         |
| 57. | <i>Ma ana seko sanga Tio Holu dei</i> | And she scoops, seeking only a Tio Holu |
| 58. | <i>Fo ela Tio la holu ao</i>          | So that the Tio may embrace one another |
| 59. | <i>Ma Dusu la la'e ao.</i>            | 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.

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| 60. | <i>Boe ma besaka ana a'e dasi na</i>       | Now he [Suti] lifts her words            |
| 61. | <i>Ma ana lole hala na neu<br/>ma nae:</i> | And he [Bina] raises her voice and says: |
| 62. | <i>'Bo senango nei</i>                     | 'Oh, dear companion                      |
| 63. | <i>Do bo tiango nou</i>                    | Or oh, dear friend                       |
| 64. | <i>O ma hala</i>                           | You may say                              |
| 65. | <i>Do o ma dasi mae:</i>                   | Or you give voice, saying:               |
| 66. | <i>"Kode ketu betek</i>                    | "The monkey plucks the millet            |
| 67. | <i>Ma bafi na'a pelak.</i>                 | And the pig eats the maize.              |
| 68. | <i>De ketu bei tolesi</i>                  | Plucking yet still some remains          |
| 69. | <i>Ma na'a bei ela."</i>                   | And eating yet still something is left." |
| 70. | <i>Tehu mafa ndendelek</i>                 | So remember, do remember                 |
| 71. | <i>Ma masa nenedak</i>                     | And recall, do recall                    |
| 72. | <i>Teu te isa au [nai] ai</i>              | Go tie me to the wood                    |
| 73. | <i>Ma pa'a au nai batu</i>                 | 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 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 dei* 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.

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| 101. | <i>Boe ma kokolak no inaka<br/>Lole Holu</i>   | So he speaks to the woman Lole Holu                            |
| 102. | <i>Ma dede'ak no fetoka Fua<br/>Bafo, nae:</i> | And he talks to the girl Fua Bafo, saying:                     |
| 103. | <i>'Au u'u o se sama leo o bai?'</i>           | 'With whom—with the likes of you—<br>can I go?'                |
| 104. | <i>Boe ma nae:</i>                             | So she says:   |
| 105. | <i>'Mu mo pila kumea letek</i>                 | 'Go with the red <i>kumea</i> grass on the hill                |
| 106. | <i>Ma mu mo nggeo kuku telas.'</i>             | And go with the black <i>kuku</i> shrub in the<br>underbrush.' |
| 107. | <i>'Boe ma malole lai ndia</i>                 | 'Such things would be good                                     |
| 108. | <i>Ma mandak lai ndia,</i>                     | And such things would be proper,                               |
| 109. | <i>Te pila kumea letek</i>                     | But the red <i>kumea</i> grass on the hill                     |
| 110. | <i>Ma nggeo kuku telas-a,</i>                  | And the black <i>kuku</i> shrub in the<br>underbrush,          |
| 111. | <i>Timu lama tua dulu</i>                      | [When] the east monsoon grows great<br>in the east             |
| 112. | <i>Do fak lama nalu langa,</i>                 | And the west monsoon lengthens at<br>the head,                 |
| 113. | <i>De lama dilu neu kalen</i>                  | Bends down its heavy top                                       |
| 114. | <i>Ma lama sesu neu bu'un</i>                  | And breaks its heavy joints                                    |
| 115. | <i>De au kokolak o se</i>                      | Then with whom will I speak                                    |
| 116. | <i>Ma au dede'ak o se</i>                      | And with whom will I talk                                      |
| 117. | <i>Fo sama leo Lole Holu</i>                   | [With someone] just like Lole Holu                             |
| 118. | <i>Ma sama leo Fua Bafo?'</i>                  | And exactly like Fua Bafo?'                                    |
| 119. | <i>Boe ma nae:</i>                             | So she says:   |
| 120. | <i>'Mu mo titi'i letek</i>                     | 'Go with the <i>titi'i</i> shrub on the hill                   |
| 121. | <i>Ma mu mo kai-hule mok.'</i>                 | And go with <i>kai-hule</i> bush of the field.'                |
| 122. | <i>Boe ma nae:</i>                             | So he says:  |
| 123. | <i>'Malole lai ndia</i>                        | 'Such would be good  |

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. *Ndia mesakana nai mok esa* It is all alone in the field
129. *Ma ndia 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.

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

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

## The Return to Rote

The final trajectory of the shells is to the domain of Delha, at the south-western 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. | <i>Bina lama toko isi</i>                 | Bina throws forth his insides           |
| 207. | <i>Ma Suti lama edo nggi.</i>             | And Suti puts forth his pods.           |
| 208. | <i>Boe ma ala bi do mae</i>               | They feel fear or shame                 |
| 209. | <i>Boe ma ala tolu mu leo sain</i>        | They flee into the sea                  |
| 210. | <i>Ma lalai leo liun</i>                  | And they rush into the ocean            |
| 211. | <i>De ana leo Dela Muli neu</i>           | He goes to Dela Muli [Dela in the West] |
| 212. | <i>De ana leo Ana Iko neu.</i>            | He goes to Ana Iko [Ana at the Tail].   |
| 213. | <i>Boe ma ana hapu senan</i>              | He has a friend                         |
| 214. | <i>Ma hapu tian</i>                       | And has a companion                     |
| 215. | <i>Nade Ka Lau Ao ma Tena<br/>Hu Dulu</i> | Named Ka Lau Ao and Tena Hu Dulu        |
| 216. | <i>Boe ma nae:</i>                        | So he says:                             |
| 217. | <i>'Bo senango nou</i>                    | 'Oh dear friend                         |
| 218. | <i>Ma bo tiango nou</i>                   | And oh dear companion                   |
| 219. | <i>Ita dua tia mai ia</i>                 | Let us two come here as friends         |
| 220. | <i>Do sena mai ia.'</i>                   | And come here as companions.'           |
| 221. | <i>Boe ma nae:</i>                        | So she says:                            |
| 222. | <i>'Leo meme ia leon</i>                  | 'Stay here then                         |
| 223. | <i>Do tapa-lasa teme ia leon.'</i>        | Or let us stay here then.'              |
| 224. | <i>De ana leo neme Dela Muli</i>          | He goes to stay at Dela Muli            |
| 225. | <i>Ma napalasa neme Ana Iko.</i>          | 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. | <i>De ana oko boluk tunga seli</i> | She shouts on one side               |
| 15. | <i>Ma ana do-se'ek tunga seli</i>  | And she screams at the other side    |
| 16. | <i>Ma bafi na'a tunga seli</i>     | And the pig eats on one side         |
| 17. | <i>Ma kode ketu tunga seli.</i>    | And the monkey plucks at one side.   |
| 18. | <i>Boe ma ana dodo neu dalen</i>   | So she thinks within herself         |
| 19. | <i>Ma ana dudu'a neu teina,</i>    | And she ponders within her insides,  |
| 20. | <i>Nai du'a taon leo be</i>        | Thinking what to do                  |
| 21. | <i>Fo kode boso na'a pelak</i>     | So the monkey does not eat the maize |
| 22. | <i>Ma bafi boso na'a pelak.</i>    | 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. | <i>“Kode ketu betek</i>           | “The monkey plucks the millet                   |
| 67. | <i>Ma bafi na’a pelak.</i>        | And the pig eats the maize.                     |
| 68. | <i>De ketu bei tolesi</i>         | Plucking yet still some remains                 |
| 69. | <i>Ma na’a bei ela.”</i>          | And eating yet still something is left.”        |
| 70. | <i>Tehu mafa ndendelek</i>        | So remember, do remember                        |
| 71. | <i>Ma masa nenedak</i>            | And recall, do recall                           |
| 72. | <i>Teu te isa au [nai] ai</i>     | Go tie me to the wood                           |
| 73. | <i>Ma pa’a au nai batu</i>        | And fasten me to the stone                      |
| 74. | <i>Fo au bengo bengo u ai</i>     | That I may shake and shake with the wood        |
| 75. | <i>Ma toto toto o batu</i>        | And knock and knock on the rock                 |
| 76. | <i>Fo daenga kode ana tolo mu</i> | So that the monkey will run                     |
| 77. | <i>Ma bafi ana nalai</i>          | And the pig will flee                           |
| 78. | <i>Lo nula dale neu</i>           | Deep into the woods                             |
| 79. | <i>Ma lo ai lai neu</i>           | And high into the trees                         |
| 80. | <i>Fo kode boso ketu betek</i>    | So that the monkey does not pluck<br>the millet |
| 81. | <i>Ma bafi bo’o na’a pelak.’</i>  | 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. | <i>De ana oku-boluk</i>       | She shouts                                   |
| 85. | <i>Ma ana do-se’ek dei</i>    | And she screams                              |
| 86. | <i>Bafi ta na’a pelak</i>     | The pig does not eat the maize               |
| 87. | <i>Ma kode ta ketu betek.</i> | And the monkey does not pluck<br>the millet. |

### Fourth Passage of ‘Monkey Plucks’

- |     |                               |                                      |
|-----|-------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 90. | <i>Ma ana oku-boluk</i>       | And she shouts                       |
| 91. | <i>Ma ana do-se'ek.</i>       | And she screams.                     |
| 92. | <i>De kode ta ketu betek</i>  | The monkey does not pluck the millet |
| 93. | <i>Ma bafi ta na'a pelak.</i> | 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 ketull/bafi na'a*, Meno and Seu Ba'i's formula is *kode ketull/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. | <i>'Oo na mo bete pule kode ketuk</i> | ‘Oh, go with the millet grains that the monkey plucks |
| 171. | <i>Ma pela po'o bafi ka'ak.'</i>      | And with the ears of maize that the pig chews.’       |
| 172. | <i>Te hu Suti bei namatane</i>        | But Suti continues to cry                             |
| 173. | <i>Ma Bina bei nasakedu.</i>          | And Bina continues to sob.                            |
| 174. | <i>Boe ma nae:</i>                    | So he says:   |
| 175. | <i>'Te leo kode ketu neni betek</i>   | ‘But if the monkey plucks the millet                  |
| 176. | <i>Ma bafi ka'a neni pelak,</i>       | And the pig chews the maize,                          |
| 177. | <i>Na Suti au o se</i>                | Then I, Suti, with whom will I be                     |
| 178. | <i>Ma Bina au o se?.'</i>             | 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. | <i>Au o peu ai lasi</i>     | I will be with boundary tree of the forest  |
| 94. | <i>Ma au o to batu nula</i> | And I will be with border stone of the wood |

- |      |                                |                                   |
|------|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 95.  | <i>Te bafi ka'a neni pelak</i> | But if the pig chews the maize    |
| 96.  | <i>Au dedè'ak o se</i>         | With whom will I speak            |
| 97.  | <i>Ma kode ketu neni betek</i> | And if monkey plucks the millet   |
| 98.  | <i>Au kokolak o se</i>         | With whom will I talk             |
| 99.  | <i>Do se'èk o se</i>           | Or be noisy [scream] with whom    |
| 100. | <i>Ma oku-boluk o se</i>       | And shout with whom               |
| 101. | <i>Sama leo Lua Bafa</i>       | [With someone] just like Lua Bafa |
| 102. | <i>Ma deta leo Lole Holu?'</i> | And exactly like Lole Holu?'      |

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. | <i>'Au o pila kumea letek</i>    | 'I will go with the red <i>kumea</i> grass on the hill       |
| 110. | <i>Ma au o nggeo kuku telas.</i> | And I go with the black <i>kuku</i> shrub in the underbrush. |
| 111. | <i>Malole ndia so</i>            | This is good   |
| 112. | <i>Ma mandak ndia so.</i>        | And this is proper.  |
|      | ...                              |  |
| 122. | <i>Te timu lama-tua dulu</i>     | But when the east monsoon grows great in the east            |
| 123. | <i>Ma fak lama-nalu langa</i>    | And the west monsoon lengthens at the head                   |
| 124. | <i>Fo pila kumea letek-kala</i>  | The red <i>kumea</i> grass on the hill                       |
| 125. | <i>Lama-dilu leu kalen</i>       | Bends down its heavy top                                     |
| 126. | <i>Ma nggeo kuku telas</i>       | And the black <i>kuku</i> shrub in the underbrush            |
| 127. | <i>Lama-sesu leu bu'un-na</i>    | Breaks its heavy joints                                      |
| 128. | <i>Au dedè'ak o se</i>           | Then with whom will I speak                                  |
| 129. | <i>Ma au kokolak o se</i>        | And with whom will I talk                                    |
| 130. | <i>Sama leo Lua Bafa</i>         | [With someone] just like Lua Bafa                            |

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

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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.'

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.