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CHAPTER 7

AN INTERVIEW WITH FR JOHN MANAS

JOHN MANAS, BRUNO DAVID, LOUISE MANAS, JEREMY ASH AND ANNA SHNUKAL

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Fr John Manas, Mualaig Elder, was interviewed about local history and culture at his home at Kubin on Mua on 15-16 November 2003. This paper documents these interviews. □ *Torres Strait, Mua, community history, dugong hunting, wolfram mining.*

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On the 15 and 16 November 2003, Fr John Manas (JM) (Fig. 1) was interviewed by Bruno David (BD), friend and archaeologist, and his daughter Louise Manas (LM; then Chairperson of the Mualagal [Torres Strait Islanders] Corporation). The interviews were undertaken at Fr Manas's house; they were attended on and off by his wife Loretta Manas, his daughter Ivy Manas (IM), several of his young grandchildren, and archaeologist Joe Crouch (JC). The interviews were recorded on a mini-Disc recorder and microphone. This paper is an edited version of a detailed transcription of these interviews; the editing consisted mainly of a smoothing of the text for ease of reading, and minor re-organising of the substance of the interview into themes. The edited text was then checked in April 2007 by Fr Manas with Louise Manas and Bruno David for accurate representation of Fr Manas' words. Extra information was added during this checking to clarify specific points made during the original interviews. Additional clarifications to the text are inserted in square brackets by BD, JA and AS, and some commentary for extra contextual information is added by these same authors in the endnotes.

Fr John Henry Manas was born on 12 January 1932 at Poid, the seventh child and fourth son of Zambo Manas or Ioane from Totalai and Gerain (Dugong clan) and Rosie Daima Waina. Zambo Manas' personal totem was the frilled necked lizard (*waleku*), who brought fire to Torres Strait from New Guinea (Lawrie, 1972).

Fr Manas and Daisy Asera Rattler are today (April 2007) the last people who 'can claim to

be true Moans as their parents on both sides were from Moa' (Teske, 1991: 16). Fr Manas' paternal grandparents were Samuki and Tuku, who were also the parents of Danie Dabita, wife of Asera Billy, whose children sign 'Asera'. His maternal grandparents were Waina Namargain (Waina Jacko) and Nedu.

Zambo Manas and Daima are recorded as among the early inhabitants of Adam and both were confirmed there in 1920. Their nine children were born there between 1916 and 1938: Jeremiah, Gada, Sara Rosie, Tuku Dorothy, Sam David, Inagie, John Henry, Joseph and Dama Jacko. Four of the children died young.

Fr Manas was baptised on 21 February 1932 at Poid (Adam's new name after the Kaurareg were forcibly removed there in March 1922) and on 1 October 1944 he was among the first people to be confirmed in the new village of Kubin, where the Poid people had resettled in August 1943. On 30 January 1957 he married Loretta Ivy Asai from Saibai, daughter of Iona Asai, who had come to Gerain to mine wolfram during World War II, and his second wife, Meripa Kuse.

Like most of his male relatives and peers, Fr Manas worked on the boats as a young man and was granted boat operating licenses in 1958 and 1959 (QSA SRS 731/1/1: Thursday Island court house bench record and summons book). However, he then changed careers and became a teacher at the Kubin State School from the early 1960s until his retirement in 1996. He greatly helped Margaret Lawrie during her visits

to Kubin in the 1960s and 1970s (Lawrie 1970, 1972) and was among those who attended the first Torres Strait Islander Teachers Training Seminar on Thursday Island in January 1965 (*Torres News*, 12 January 1965: 7). After his retirement from teaching, he entered the priesthood, following in the footsteps of his twin brother, Fr Inagie Manas, the first Mualaig to be priested. He and Loretta still live at Kubin and one of their daughters, Louise, continues her father's profession as a teacher at Kubin State School (Fr & Mrs John Manas, pers. comm., 1982, 2004).

USING FLAKED GLASS FOR HEALING

BD: *Kapu goeiga* [good day].

JM: *Kapu goeiga*. Alright, I will say a story about when I was at Poid when life was not too good because people died day by day. I was a kid then. And I saw that something was very sad at that time. People were sick. There were no doctors around then. So when people got sick, we would get bush medicine. But people got very badly sick, and people died.¹

BD: Do you know what kind of sickness it was?

JM: Diarrhoea sickness. Yeah, diarrhoea. It was curable but some children died because there was no doctor at that time. And some got toothaches; we got medicine and people were cured, they did not die.

BD: Was that bush medicine that was used or medicine from doctors?

JM: Bush medicine. Yeah. Every sickness we got was cured by bush medicine. Backache, bellyache and also headache too. Sometimes, people used to smash bottle and they would take a small piece of glass and cut when they had that sickness.²

BD: They cut?

JM: *Wa* [yes], small cut on, for example, the knee.

BD: They make it bleed or only a little bit cut with no bleeding?

JM: Just a little bit; they let the blood come out. Then the headache gets better. They cut with a piece of bottle glass. Sometimes they cut at your knees, two knees, and other places too.

BD: Does it leave a little mark when you do the cut? Does it leave a little scar or something? Or, does the mark disappear when it heals?

JM: Sometimes it disappears, sometimes it stays. Sometimes no mark. And sometimes the deep one they got mark. Yeah, just because sometimes they would cut deeper with that

piece of bottle glass, just something it's deeper, you know.

BD: Normally you make a little cut?

JM: *Wa*, only something like scratch. Very easy.

BD: Like a little surface scratch?

JM: Yeah like a little surface scratch. *Wa*. That was done to me at Kubin.

BD: Kubin?

JM: *Wa*. On my knee.

BD: Did you do it yourself?

JM: No, my mother. My mother did it.

BD: Was that when you were a little boy, or were you an adult already?

JM: Ah, no, not an adult. I was somewhere around 16, somewhere there. Sixteen. Yeah.

BD: Sixteen years old?

JM: *Wa*. Well I got cut on my sore knee. I had been riding a horse and then [laughs] [...]

BD: That horse throw you?

JM: *Wa*. Throw from the horse and it knocked me on that knee here. So my mother's sister – her name was Salome – she got the bottle glass so that she could take the bleeding from the right knee.

BD: She got the bottle glass?

JM: *Wa*. And put one cut on my back when I got back-ache. One.

BD: Near the middle of the back?

JM: Yeah, middle of the back. With Alima's mother. She do that. She knows about making a cut with a piece of glass and drawing the blood.³ Yeah.

BD: And when you break the glass to make the cutting tool, do you know how you break the glass? Do you break it in one special way, or just any way?

JM: When you break the bottle, you smash the bottle and you look for a very thin, sharp piece like a small blade. Very sharp like a blade. Yeah, that one.

BD: So how do you break the bottle? Do you just throw it on a rock, or do you hit it?

JM: No, no, you hit it with something. You put it on a white cloth, a napkin and you break it on that. You hit it with something like a knife or something like that.

BD: Do you tap it?

JM: Yeah. Take a tip off. Tip of the bottle. Small, small piece. Yeah.

BD: Is it like a hammer? Like a small hammer on top? You use the knife for hammer?

JM: *Wa*, a knife or a piece of iron or an *akul* or

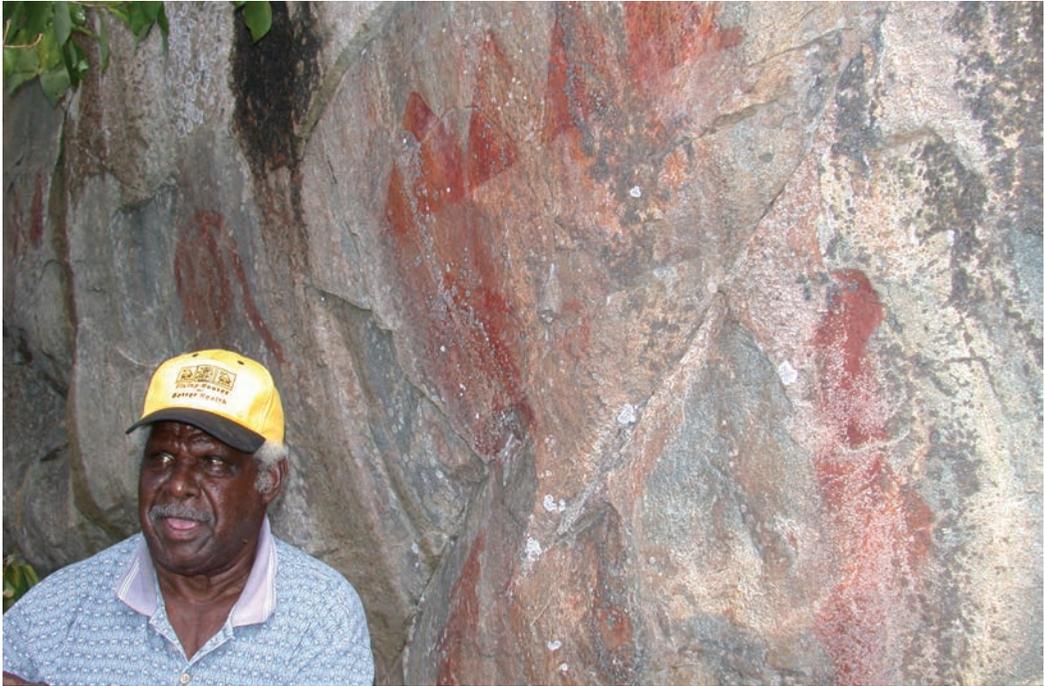


FIG. 1. Fr Manas at site Mua 40, 10 October 2002.

- mudu* shell, and you tap the bottle.⁴ When you do it you hold the bottle in your hand and you tap it with iron or shell or knife, and you look for small sharp broken glass tip.
- BD: What about underneath the glass? Where does the bottle sit as you are flaking it? Do you put the glass down on top of a rock or something, or do you just hold it in the air?
- JM: No, you put it on a rag.
- BD: You put a rag on the ground?
- JM: Yeah, rag on the ground.
- BD: And then on top you get a knife or something and you hit that glass, and a piece like a blade comes off?
- JM: Yeah, a little piece comes off. So you use that one to make a cut. Then you put a drinking glass over the area with the cut. That draws the blood. When the blood comes up, then it's finished. Then stop.
- BD: So is that like putting like a glass upside down on that part with the cut, and you lift it up?
- JM: Yeah. You lift it up. So the blood comes off. And at that moment, you're alright. You get better.
- BD: What part of the bottle do you make that small sharp blade from?
- JM: Ah well, when you break the bottle you take that small piece just for that purpose.
- BD: There's a plastic bottle in front of Fr Manas and I, so we're just using that as an example to show what part of the bottle he is talking about. And I'm just pointing to the top, near the neck of the bottle and I'm going to go down towards its base and ask Fr Manas about the part that is used to get the sharp flake. So I'm at the top of the bottle now. Fr Manas, when you make that small tool there for cutting, that sharp one, from the bottle there would you pick this part or that part here or this part here or this part?
- JM: This middle one there. When you smash the bottle, there are many pieces. And then you look for the sharp piece.
- BD: So Fr Manas has pointed towards the middle of the bottle.
- JM: Yeah, and sometimes you crack the bottle, you know, you smash the bottle. Then, when you find that little piece, well you use that one. And if not, you can chip that one too.
- BD: You can chip that one?

JM: Yeah, you can chip another piece of bottle. You then pick a good one, and you use that one.

BD: So there's a piece already broken and then you can make even sharper by tapping it and you use that one. I ask all of those questions about the glass because in some of the archaeological excavations we've done, we find small sharp pieces of glass, and we've never known what they was used for. So now there might be one reason.

JM: *Wa*.

BD: Especially some of the 'early' sites. And sometimes you might walk around the village of Totalai, for example, and you can see small pieces of glass where people have been using them.⁵

LM: The language name for that one is *woesan pugan*.⁶

BD: *Woesan pugan*.

LM: *Woesan pugan*, making the cut and the no-good blood goes outside. So I guess it's a form of healing. You know, because there's all that blood there inside, and when you tap or cut the sharp glass piece where the bad is, but you don't cut too deep, it goes away really quick. You have to do it quickly. That's right eh, Dad, you do it really quickly?

JM: Yeah.

BD: And that's just piercing the skin?

LM: Piercing the skin so the no-good blood come out, and then it's alright. It's a healing process. Yeah, like a medicine.

BD: And, *woesan pugan*?

LM: *Woesan pugan*.

BD: Is that the process itself? The healing action itself, the cutting? That's called that?

LM: Yeah, the cutting and letting of the blood come out, so that the no-good blood comes out and all the swelling goes down and then you're alright again. You can walk about. So it can happen for example on the leg and the ankle. Yeah, I know an auntie I was talking to. She wanted to heal her leg in that way. She's here and she was just telling me. Whenever she gets a swollen foot, she still practices that kind of way today.

BD: With glass or with other things?

LM: With glass. You break a small chip of glass, and you start tapping it in at the appropriate spot.

BD: So do you find a bottle when you want to do that today? And do you just break it, or

is there a special kind of glass today?

LM: Um, I think it's a bottle, yeah.

BD: Do you use bottle glass for anything else? Since you were a kid, did you ever see people using bottle glass for something else, for cutting other things? Or was it only used for healing?

JM: No, it was only used for healing: for swell up, and for headache.

BD: When used for headache, is that when you make a cut on the forehead?

JM: *Wa*.

CHILDHOOD

BD: Fr Manas, can we go back in time a bit? Can you say something about where and when you were born?

JM: I was born at Poid in 1932, and when I was six or seven years old, I realized that there was sickness happening on Poid: diarrhoea, flu.⁷

BD: So you were about six or seven years old at the time when that happened over there at Poid?

HM: Yeah.

BD: Did you get sick yourself?

JM: No, I didn't get sick at all. Nothing happened to me until I grew up, when I was already big – when the White teachers and native teachers were there. So I never went to school until the White principal was there, only when the principal had returned from Poid. There were two principals, Mr Armstrong⁸ and Mr West.⁹

BD: And were they principals at the same time, or at different times?

JM: Different principals. But I was kid when they were there. These two, Mr Armstrong and Mr West.

BD: You were too small to go to school?

JM: *Wa*, too small so I didn't go to school. But Mr Western, he was with Mr [Wees] Nawia. Mr Nawia took him to the big creek there, Koey Koesa, where we get water from there and go for washing there, because we ran out of water, no water.

BD: Is that that the spring at Arkai, near Kubin village, or is that a different water?

JM: No, it's at Poid.

BD: What about when you were young. Could you say something about your parents, or would you rather not? Or about the people who brought you up?

JM: Well my dad was a farmer; he planted.
 BD: At Poid?
 JM: On top of the hill near Twin Spring at Uma, that's where he was. He made gardens there.
 BD: Past Uma?
 JM: *Wa*, past Uma.
 BD: Behind Uma?
 JM: Yeah, just behind the other side there. When you look, where its high like high hill, well it's there. Right on the top.
 BD: So that's inland from Poid?
 JM: *Wa*.
 BD: Do you know the name of that hill?
 JM: The name where my father made garden there is Waikapnamui.
 BD: Waikapnamui.
 JM: Yeah, that's it.
 BD: Can you say something about the garden and how your dad made that garden? Like what did the garden look like?
 JM: Well my Daddy planted lots of mangos, from one side to the other.
 BD: From one side of the hill to the other side?
 JM: *Wa*. They came out to Twin Spring. Twin Spring, just on the other side there. And all bananas from there and mangos from there, come down. And we got our own water there, at Twin Spring. It never dries up, so we don't have to wait for the next wet season.
 BD: It's a spring that one?
 JM: Spring well.
 BD: And does that spring well have a name?
 JM: *Wa*. That one Adag that one. Spring well.
 BD: Adag.
 JM: *Wa*.
 BD: That Adag is at Waikapnamui.
 JM: Waikapnamui, there on top of that hill, where all the gardens were. And then you came down at that place where Adag is and put another plantation there. Bananas, pawpaws, pumpkin [laughs] and yams.
 BD: Is the garden in thick scrub, or more like in the open? Is it in the forest, in the thick scrub with that black soil, or is it somewhere else?
 JM: Yeah, up on top where there's black soil.
 BD: On top, at Waikapnamui?
 JM: Waikapnamui. And all the fruit trees there with all the bell-fruit *uzu* and other trees.
 BD: You planted those, or were they already there?

JM: No, they already grew there.
 BD: What do you call those fruit trees again?
 JM: *Uzu*. It's another name for *sorbi* tree. Like a bell-fruit.
 BD: Can you eat that one?
 JM: Oh yeah! When you go up there you carry a basketful from there [laughs]. It starts in February.
 BD: And the garden itself, is there any way your dad marked it. Did it have, like, a side edge on it made of rocks, or was it just planted wherever the soil is good.
 JM: Well it's got rocks up there, and on the other side it's got *turau kula* there. Big rock. Outside. *Wa*, north side, where maybe some people from Mua and someone maybe come from Badu and sisters, Mabuyag. Got that rock there, like, to watch. *turau kula*.
 BD: So people stand up on top?
 JM: *Wa*. To look out for warriors.
 BD: Warriors coming from Badu and Mabuyag.
 JM: *Wa wa*, like with the Goba story.¹⁰ Yeah.
 BD: So people look out for warriors from Badu and Mabuyag from there?
 JM: *Wa*.

POID

JM: Before its name been given to Poid, it was called Adam.
 BD: Adam.
 JM: *Wa*, Adam.
 BD: Is that a missionary name or a language name, Adam?
 JM: Well, when that boy was born there, my mother was a midwife to him.
 BD: What was his name?
 JM: Adam. They call him Adam. And that place where they stay there, Adam. Yeah.
 BD: And Adam, was his family the first to live there? Or were there other families already living there.
 JM: Oh his mother came from the South Sea. They came up there and she was already pregnant.
 BD: And she lived at Adam.
 JM: *Wa*. And Mua people were already living at Adam then.
 BD: Did she first come to the place called Adam after he was born or before he was born?
 JM: Before he was born, and they gave him that name, Adam; Adamu was proper language name for that place before Christianity.

English name for that place is Adam.
 BD: Adamu
 JM: *Wa*, Adamu, yeah.
 BD: So the boy was named after the village?
 JM: *Wa*. Then when he grew up, he went back to his place.
 BD: Which place is that?
 JM: South Sea; Samoa or, yeah, Samoan.
 BD: What about his mother, what happened to her? Do you know?
 JM: Ah, well, I was never told that about his mother by my mother. But eventually Adam and his wife came to live on Badu. When my knee was injured, I went to the Badu hospital. And he was there [laughs].
 BD: With his wife?
 JM: Yeah with his wife.¹¹ Adam. And my mother was there too because my mother took me down to the hospital on Badu.
 BD: You met him, Adam?
 JM: No, my mother met him when they were feasting and dancing opposite the church.
 BD: And you were a child then?
 JM: I was a child then, but a big boy at the same time, big. Yeah.
 BD: Was your mum working as a nurse or something like that there? Is that why she met him or how come she met Adam?
 JM: She took me to the hospital from here, from Kubin. I was a big boy. Well I was somewhere about 14 years old.
 BD: And Adam was up there at Badu?
 JM: Adam was there at the same time; he had come to Badu with his wife.
 BD: Do you know where Adam lived on Badu?
 JM: Ah maybe where the Nonas lived, I think. Mr Nonas' wife, Naianga, and Mr Tanu Nona. He was chairman, Mr Nona, and all the Nona family was there.
 BD: Is that near Wakaid side, or on a different side of the island?
 JM: It's down at Surum, but near the Church. His house was there.
 LM: Makan Kula?
 JM: Makan Kula. Yes. His house was there, along that front beach there.
 BD: Is that on that south side of that front beach or more centre, more middle part of it?
 JM: Just in the middle, along beach. Yeah. Just near the church. And before they go out they find a new site up in there. On the top-end of the village, in the area called Top Gear,

where those new houses are today.
 BD: Those colourful houses? Those brand new ones now.
 JM: *Wa*, new ones. Two houses were there before them, before Mr Nona moved everybody, there were two houses there.
 BD: Near where that motel is now, on Badu?
 JM: *Wa*.
 LM: Behind the football field.
 BD: Behind the football field there, where that pub is and all that area.
 JM: *Wa*.
 BD: And Dennis Nona's mum lived there.
 JM: Yeah.

DUGONG AND TURTLE HUNTING

BD: Fr Manas, I might just change the topic now. Just to ask you a question before I forget. Just a few days ago you said to me something about the *dhangal* [dugong] brain, that when you eat the *dhangal* brain for that special purpose. You want to say again about that same thing you said to me last time?
 JM: Well, that thing is, something like when we eat fish and then smash the head and get the brain for that purpose. For *dhangal* will tell you where to go and you go where *dhangal* says go there. And you meet dugongs there. You know that thing works for you, that brain *blong* [of the] *dhangal*.
 BD: So when you have that *dhangal* head, what do you do? How does it go? What do you do?
 JM: Well you cook the brain. We boil it. I get the word from there.
 BD: So you break the head? You break the bone or by itself it breaks open?
 JM: You have to take the jaw out.
 BD: Take the jaw out?
 JM: *Wa*.
 BD: First you cook it?
 JM: Bottom.
 BD: Bottom jaw?
 JM: *Wa*.
 BD: So first you cook the head, or do you do that afterwards?
 JM: First you can take the jaw off, you cut the jaw off – both of them – and then you cook the head.
 BD: So one cooked head.
 JM: You cook the head and the jaw together. Then when it's really boiled then it's chopped. But

- if you cook in *amai* [sand oven], you leave the jaw on with the head. Then it's easy to pull out the bottom jaw.
- BD: So after it's cooked, it's easier to take out the bottom jaw.
- JM: *Wa*. Yeah.
- BD: And what happens after that? You were saying you eat the brains? Is that right? Or you eat like [...]
- JM: Well, someone said that if you eat a fish head, well when you go fishing, you know the fish will come to you. Same with dugong, if you eat that dugong brain, dugong will then come to you when hunting. Same with turtle; turtle is easy one.
- BD: Easy one?
- JM: *Wa*, easy one to catch, but dugongs go everywhere. They don't stay in one place like a turtle does. Killing them is very hard. Sometime they go far away. And when the time comes, they come here. They go around to where they feed, to their feeding area. But that thing, that dugong brain, leads you to where the dugong is. The dugong has a throat here.
- BD: Fr Manas is pointing to the throat, near the Adam's apple area.
- JM: *Wa*. You cut that one, and you can roast on fire and eat that one. About 30cm or 15cm.
- BD: And you eat that one?
- JM: You eat that one.
- BD: So you eat the brain or [...]
- JM: Well, if you want to eat that brain, but usually it's like a road. Road to catch dugong.
- BD: Like one that helps you catch dugong.
- JM: Yeah. That pipe yeah. That throat pipe, you eat.
- BD: And what happens once you've eaten it. You have special knowledge or you have [...]
- JM: Well, special knowledge is this: you know where they're feeding, and you go there.
- BD: So wherever they are [...]
- JM: *Wa*, wherever they are, that thing leads you. Something like, he change you, change your mind to go up there. And then you say, 'something tickles, we go up that area there'. Some place there. Like Dollar Reef,¹² well it's some dugong feeding there. Down here, and front there where the harbour, is for example.
- BD: So then if you eat that one you know where they are and you can go straight to them. Do they come to you also?
- JM: That thing leads you. That thing leads you.
- That throat pipe makes you see where the dugongs are, it leads you there, it calls you to there where they are. That throat pipe is a road, when you eat it you know that road. That throat pipe is *yabu* [road], it's the path taken by dugong.
- BD: It leads you to them?
- JM: *Wa*, leads you to them. And I noticed some boys, big men and they talk together about that one, that pipe. And I see some boy eating it, and sometimes I eat that one. We learn from one another, boy and big man, because some boys copy from their parents, dads or grand-dads. 'Look, I ate it' [laughs]. Yeah.
- BD: So the dugong hunters, they know about that one. Today?
- JM: *Wa*. Oh they know, very well. They do everything.
- BD: Now what about the brain one you were talking about before? Is that same story again or different again?
- JM: Well, that's same story about the brain, you know. It's something like it gives you ideas. And it's got stuff there, brain, well you eat that one. During feasts, turtle and dugong are the main ones. And also pigs, anything.
- BD: So if you eat that brain then you know where *dhangal* are, and that draws you to the dugong. Is that right?
- JM: Yeah, and this one too [pointing to the windpipe].
- BD: And the windpipe too?
- JM: Yeah, because it leads you, you think, 'Oh I go there'. Then you decide whether you want to go there. Pipeway you eat. And then I will know, or you will, like it will remind you. *Dhangal wakaitoedaik* is the language name for this throat-pipe here. You will know that dugong goes there, when you eat *wakaitoedaik*.
- BD: So if I eat it [...]
- JM: So if you eat that one and then you go hunting [...]
- BD: I will know where it is. I can go straight to it.
- JM: *Wa*
- BD: Does that mean I can communicate with that dugong, or we link somehow, or I just know where the dugong is?
- JM: *Wa*. You will know where that dugong is eating.
- BD: So I'm linked, same mind?
- JM: *Wa*, same mind. It will lead you to go there

- [laughs].
- BD: And the same with the brain as well as the windpipe?
- JM: *Wa*, same as brain everywhere. Like fish, any brain, yeah.
- BD: They say that in the *dhangal*, in the head, that there is radar bones. Ever heard that one, in the *dhangal*? Radar bone? The ear bone. You ever heard of that one in *dhangal*? The bone behind the ear there?
- JM: No, I never noticed but I only know the ear but it's not a big hole, just a small one.
- BD: Is that special, or not special for the *dhangal*? That ear?
- JM: That ear, the way that they got?
- BD: *Wa*.
- JM: *Wa*. Dugong can hear from long way or near. This ear tell the dugong. And he is smart, and when you go near, it's something like, something without any touch and then dugong disappear.
- BD: Sensitive?
- JM: *Wa*. But can't see very well.
- BD: Haven't got good eyesight, eh?
- JM: *Wa*. But this one here has eye.
- BD: Ears.
- JM: *Wa*.
- BD: Fr Manas is talking about ears.
- JM: Yeah, yeah. It's very, it's something like, smart. Something they have like touch when you come too near. Come too near the dugong, and [...]
- BD: It hears you?
- JM: *Wa*. Very clearly. Even if there is no noise on the dinghy. Everyone is still. It hears every noise, and then it goes away.
- BD: I ask those questions because in some of the excavations we've done, we find plenty of ear bones of the *dhangal*, but nearly nothing else. And we're wondering – and these are in special places – so we're wondering why is it that you get plenty of ear bones but not the other parts of the dugong. And we think that it might be something to do with hunting, a special magic place, for attracting the dugong or something. But we're not sure, so that's why we are asking about that one, about the ear. Do you know why there might be plenty of ear bones in a pile of *dhangal* bones in some of the old places?
- JM: Sometime when a boy catches his first dugong you can make bones as souvenir because he
- is the first one to spear the dugong.
- BD: Special time that one?
- JM: *Wa*. Like a son, when you first hunt for dugong. He gets the first one, youngest. Yeah and he will keep as a souvenir that dugong head, and turtle head too, or back of the turtle. These two things.
- BD: So when a boy catches his first dugong, or first turtle, he can keep the dugong head or the turtle head as a souvenir.
- JM: *Wa*. When a boy catches his first dugong, he keeps *bera* [rib] – short rib, short *bera* at end of the set of long ribs; sometimes they are fused.
- BD: *Wa*. Fr Manas, do you want to tell us what happened when you caught your first *dhangal*?
- JM: First *dhangal*. Well I been get first *dhangal* here on Kubin and well, we didn't make a ceremony, big feasting and dancing.
- BD: You didn't?
- JM: *Wa*, because is this. If I go to the feasting, they'll go to my house and take everything out.
- BD: So for the first dugong, people are allowed to take anything that belongs to you, when you catch your first *dhangal*?
- JM: Catch anything. My mother catch anything because that first one I get dugong or turtle.
- BD: So what did you do? You didn't tell anybody? [laughs].
- JM: [Laughs]. Yeah. If we ready for get dugong – if I'm ready – well I get dugong and then everyone will make ceremony, feasting and dancing. But before that, they will come and take everything out from my house. Nothing is left [laughs].
- BD: That's old culture way?
- JM: Culture way, yeah culture way [laughs].
- BD: Do you want to tell us what happened when you caught your first *dhangal*? Can you remember going in the dinghy or in the boat or something?
- JM: Well, got my first dugong when I was married. I was married here on Kubin.
- BD: First dugong?
- JM: *Wa*, first dugong. I didn't do things, I just cut it, I just cut the dugong. Because I remember, I think, I caught dugongs two or three time. Two here and one down there, at Tuin.
- BD: Tuin?
- JM: *Wa*. But we didn't catch turtles.

BD: Not turtle.

JM: *Wa*.

BD: So that time you got your first one, you caught three of them or one, did you say? That first day?

JM: Only, I think three. One was at night, another one was another night, and another down on there.

BD: But nobody knew?

JM: Nobody knew [laughs].

BD: Was it night-time hunting or day-time?

JM: This one was day-time, night-time down on that beach there, the rocks up there.

BD: Arkai?

JM: Arkai. In the front. When you go to the front you look at those stones a little bit out to sea: Kilbut island, the small rock on the beach opposite where the motel is today. Just nearby. I got two from there during night-hunting, and on another week I go down Tuin, in the middle, I caught another one there. Speared another one there.

BD: You speared with *wap* [dugong spear]?

JM: *Wa*. Somewhere around three or four o'clock in the afternoon. With the tide running east. That's when the dugong, all the dugong come in.

BD: When the tide is running east.

JM: *Wa*, *guthath*, that name for that tide, *guthath*.¹³

BD: *Guthath*.

JM: *Wa*, *guthath*. That's the eastward running tide. Tide running, yes. That's the tide where dugong go everywhere, Dollar Reef or Mabuyag other side dugong places there. That tide. *Guthath*. Yeah.

BD: So when you brought back your first dugong, you just put it in the bag and just take it straight to the house? Or [...]

JM: Well we cut it down in front there. Norman's dinghy there, we cut it there and this one here we cut down here, down on Mipa, because there are branches and leaves there where we can lay down the meat before sharing it with everyone, with family.

BD: Mipa.

JM: *Wa*, where Mattie's house. That place called Mipa.

BD: Ah, Mipa. That's where Matilda Neliman is staying at, where her house is.

JM: *Wa*.

BD: And nobody saw it?

JM: No, people saw; that wasn't first time.

BD: Did anybody come to the house and take things? Or no, it was too late.

JM: No that's only for that first time ceremony. That's a different one. When I'm ready, so we make that way, anyone take first boy get dugong and we do that one, for that boy. Get to his house and take all [laughs].

LM: You just call it in *langgus* [language] *zugumurpai* when you take someone out dugong or turtle hunting for the first time, because it's like a man's initiation ceremony. *Zugumurpai* means going to teach the boy to hunt dugong.

JM: *Wa*.

LM: When you take them out you say, *zugumurpai*. The uncles will take him out for learning how to spear *waru* [turtle] and teach him how to spear *dhangal*. And then when that *dhangal* or *waru* come back then they cook it and everybody eat, but like dad said, there's another side to it too, like all the families can come and raid the house. Take all the things from the house. Yeah. Just recently Donna and Roley Darr who own the shop said to me that someone caught his first turtle when he was 14 or 15, but because they know of the culture, they didn't let anyone know. They just cut the turtle and secretly they didn't let anyone know in the community because they knew if they did, or if they shared it out, everyone would go to their house, their shop, and raid the house and the shop [laughs]. They would have nothing left, so just they kept it secret.

BD: Fr Manas, can I ask you one more question about this? The *wap*, was that your personal, your own *wap* that you used for hunting, or somebody else's?

JM: Well, it was my own. My own *wap*. That *wap*, I got it when my wife's relations came from PNG.

BD: Your wife's relations?

JM: My wife's relations. And I was a teacher when we went down to meet all the canoes, down on the beach.

BD: At Arkai?

JM: Yeah, at Arkai. There were eight canoes down there.

BD: Wood ones?

JM: *Wa*. They got their trading things too, mud crabs, bananas, yams, turtles, and beads, they got.

BD: Beads?

JM: *Wa*, beads.

BD: Glass one or shell one?

JM: Glass one. I know them beads here too, where they come through. Well, I got that *wap*, that man come here Saibai. His surname was Aza.

BD: Aza.

JM: *Wa*. When I go down to Arkai, I met that old fella. And he spoke Papuan and Saibai language. And he was very old. And when I stand there I thought, 'he don't know my lingo, my language'. And I talk to my wife.

BD: Were you married already?

JM: I had married already. And Mrs Manas's brother Francis Ober sent them come here to Kubin for trading, from St Paul's. There were two families come from Saibai and PNG, via St Paul's here to Arkai: Aza family and Kabay family. Francis Ober had told them that if they go to Kubin, his sister live there. Francis Ober was Mrs Manas's eldest brother. He said, 'when you go there, you ask for that woman Loretta and her husband'. But she was sitting down there at Arkai without knowing; Mrs Manas was pregnant at the time. And that old man Aza had arrived at Arkai and he was down there without telling her, just by himself. He was smoking pipe while the other PNG people were trading.

BD: Smoking pipe.

JM: *Wa*, smoking pipe.

BD: What kind of pipe? A wood one or [...]

JM: A wooden pipe. Yeah.

BD: Bamboo?

JM: No, no. A clay pipe, clay pipe, short.

BD: Short.

JM: Not the long one. Short.

BD: Short one.

JM: Yeah.

BD: So he got design on it or plain one?

JM: No, just plain one.

BD: Plain one.

JM: *Wa* plain one. But it's been broken.

BD: He still smoke it after it's been broken?

JM: He still smoke it. And Deacon Charlie, who was talking to me at Arkai during this trade event, said to me, 'Bala [brother], this turtle spear very good one', and I said to him that I didn't have enough money. I didn't have a *wap*, but I didn't have enough money to buy this one [laughs]. And that old man Aza hear what I said and he understand, and he talked to me in language. He said, 'Boy, I got one *wap* there in my canoe. We go

there' [laughs].

BD: A trading one?

JM: *Wa*, from there.

BD: From Saibai?

JM: *Wa*.

BD: Buzi

JM: *Wa*, Buzi or somewhere there. And then he let me know, 'That boy there up in St Paul's', he calls his name, Francis Ober, that's my brother-in-law. Aza said, 'I talked to him and he told me to come here. And after that I come around to here. I say to Francis Ober, "Boy we go there, by canoe"'. When they come here they had everything, and a big dish with flower design. Big one. And all the mats, bananas, up to the shore at Arkai. And they got families; one Aza family and one Kabay family. Yeah, brothers and sisters, family that one. Everyone. They off-loaded up to the beach, and that spear too for trading.

BD: *Wap*.

JM: *Wap*.

BD: Was that a decorated one? Did it have decoration on it? Or plain one?

JM: Plain one. Just a plain one like this red colour here [points to table cloth], pink there.

BD: What kind of wood?

JM: Ah. Something like red, like *wangai*.

BD: *Wangai*.

JM: Like *wangai*.

BD: Different one, or like it? Or a bit different?

JM: Um, bit different from that. They got that tree.

BD: It's a tree over there?

JM: *Wa*, tree over there.

BD: Does it grow here? On Mua?

JM: No, no, no. Not here, different one. Yeah.

BD: Heavy one or light one?

JM: Um, well, it's been dried up, light.

BD: Light. Not heavy then?

JM: You can throw it a long way. *Wa*.

BD: Did it have bamboo at the end? A float?

JM: No, I put bamboo.

BD: You put bamboo?

JM: I put bamboo, yeah. And when Mattie's father [...]

BD: Mattie Neliman?

JM: Mattie Neliman. Her father, he was pearl shell diving. Yeah he take that spear with him after. That spear, I lent it to him, because Mrs Neliman was the younger sister to Mrs Manas.

BD: He took it with him.

JM: *Wa*.

BD: Did that spear come back to you after?

JM: No. Mr Bosun borrowed it from Mr Neliman and some boys stole it from his dinghy on T.I. They took that one from the boat, some boys.

BD: And do people give names to a *wap*? Like your personal one or you don't give it a name?

JM: Well, with *wap* some are from *wangai* tree. Some are from *thoelu* [bloodwood] tree. That's the wood from which Gelam been made. *Wa*. Some have been from mangrove, young one.¹⁴ You call the *wap* by the kind of wood it's made from.

BD: White mangrove? Or different one?

JM: Different, black.

BD: Black.

JM: Black mangrove, yeah.

BD: What's that name of that mangrove? Language name?

JM: *Kubikub* mangrove.

BD: *Kubikub* mangrove?

JM: *Wa*, is a language name. In Pidgin it's black mangrove. *Wa*.

BD: And when you have *wap*, like in the old ways [...]

JM: *Wa*.

BD: Can you lend a *wap* to anybody? Or do you always look after it yourself? And is there special things you do to make it good?

JM: Well, if I talk to them, I make my own. I can say, I can give it to you, or I can keep it. It's up to you.

BD: So some people can give them away, and other people they hold on to their *wap*?

JM: *Wa*. Very hard to make a *wap* with *thoelu* wood, because it's a very hard wood. And when you make the *wap* you always have to talk to the wood before you cut it down to make the *wap*.

BD: Very hard to make a *wap*?

JM: *Wa*. *Wangai*, easy one.

BD: *Thoelu* hard?

JM: *Wangai* easy to cut, easy to make.

BD: So a *wap* made out of *wangai* tree easy to make.

JM: *Wa*.

BD: But *thoelu* tree is hard to make. And do you ever make any magic or anything, with a *wap*, so that it works better? In the old days?

JM: Well, you give your magic as this: When you make it and then you give him spirit. You pretend this way, this way, put him down, grab him. Then the *dhangal* come close. Maybe some distant there, you aim, you aim, the dugong, this way – you make actions with the spear when you finish making it. You aim, pretend you throw it at a [imaginary] dugong.

BD: It's a pretend one?

JM: *Wa*.

BD: On the land or [...]

JM: Well, well on the land. Where you made it.

BD: Oh, at the place where you made it?

JM: *Wa*.

BD: You pretend that there's *dhangal* coming and you just pretend you throw it.

JM: Yeah.

BD: And that gives it special powers? Or [...]

JM: *Wa*, that puts special magic in the *wap*. Make that for that *wap*. And you talk to the spear when you begin to pretend to aim. And women are never allowed to carry that spear, only you, you make it as your first son. So as he's go hunting, he go get dugong for you, he go get turtle for you [laughs].

BD: You make *wap* as a son?

JM: *Wa*, you make that *wap* as a son for you. And you feed him. You feed him with the meat, put meat inside the *wap*.

BD: Inside the bamboo?

JM: No, inside where you bore a hole for the harpoon.

BD: Oh, in the front?

JM: In the front. Small meat. Put him inside. Feed him that one. And no-one to take that *wap* to the dinghy. Only you, man. Not woman, not girl, not boy. [Laughs] *wa*.

BD: What about bone? Do you ever put bone inside?

JM: No, no.

BD: Only meat.

JM: Only meat. That you feed him. Give him meat, give him *kaikai*.

BD: Any kind of meat? Or *dhangal* only?

JM: *Dhangal*. Only *dhangal*. *Dhangal* meat you give him.

BD: You cook him first or raw one?

JM: No just raw one, put him inside.

BD: Small piece.

JM: *Wa*.

BD: And then, sometimes it falls out or it just

stays in [...]

JM: It stays there. *Wa*. You put him inside, that meat.

BD: And then you put in a little bit more another day? Or only once?

JM: No, every time you catch a new dugong with that *wap*, you feed him at same time; you replace the meat with a new piece from the newly speared dugong caught with that *wap*. You eat dugong meat, that night, well you go feed him too.

BD: Every time you catch a dugong with it. Every time you put a little bit, or?

JM: *Wa*, every time you catch dugong with that *wap*, you put him in there.

BD: Plenty people do that? Still today, or not now?

JM: Ah, well, I saw a man do that; that's how I learned. When he speared dugong, then they cut some small meat and put him inside. I ask, 'what's that for'? And he say, 'well you feed him, as a boy, give him food, give him *kaikai* because you take him go. He'll catch a dugong for you'. Some boys today have that knowledge, but some don't have that knowledge.

BD: How old were you when you saw that man do that? How old were you when you saw that man?

JM: Old man, I was married already. You know my sister, Daisy Rattler [her maiden name was Asera] came yesterday. Her husband do that.

BD: What's his name?

JM: Maki Rattler.

BD: Maki Rattler.

JM: Yeah, Maki Rattler [laughs]. He did two things when dugong hunting. One thing, he tied a small bag of dugong meat, about a tea bag size, on front of dinghy, inside dinghy on the upper part of the anchor rope inside the front of the dinghy. And under the seat at stern of dinghy, inside the dinghy. This way there's a small piece of dugong meat at front and back of dinghy. He did that to make the boat go straight to the dugong. The meat steered the dinghy straight to the dugong.

BD: Is he from Mua?

LM: Kaurareg.

JM: His dad is Kaurareg. But he's married to woman, my sister, from here.

BD: From Mua.

JM: *Wa*.

BD: Big *eso*. We stop now Fr Manas. We start again another day. Do some more.

JM: *Wa, eso*.

WARTIME EXPERIENCES¹⁵

BD: When was Gunagan used? When did people live there? Was that before Totalai?

JM: After Totalai. When people lived everywhere [...]

BD: During the war, World War II?

JM: Before the war.

BD: And Ith? What about Ith?

JM: Ah, well no-one lived there at Ith.

BD: Did anyone ever live at Ith?

JM: No, no.

BD: And Wag. Was that before the war?

JM: Yeah, people were there at Wag. In World War II, people were there. At the same time that wolfram started,¹⁶ everybody worked at Gunagan and on Ith [Hill]. People from St Paul's – there were no trucks, so people walked from there. And people from Poid walked from there to work wolfram here at Gunagan. Wag was there before the war started. And when World War II began, boys from Wag and from Poid went to the army. We've been here at Kubin since that war, 1945. We been here at the same time that plane crash. American bomber.¹⁷

BD: American bomber crashed here on Mua?

JM: Yeah, we saw it. It crashed because something happened. Maybe fuel shortage. It was heading here, saw the light.

BD: Did you see it?

JM: It was night-time. The mothers saying, 'Just keep still. No lights!'; lights were off everywhere. And there was someone inside, where that spring at Balbup is. Someone been there at the spring when that plane crashed. At the time, we were schooling here. And those boys who been in church they all survive; there were six to eight people in the plane. *Wa*. While civilian man go down to meet them, night-time. They got out of the plane in rubber dinghy and someone found parachute floating afterwards. *Wa*.

BD: And they came here, to Kubin?

JM: *Wa*, they land on beach there at corner, at Buabun Kupai; that's the name of that corner, with mangroves, along mangrove. Where those coconuts are.

BD: Arkai?

JM: *Wa* Arkai. Yeah. And they overnight with us in the school. And Mr Jacob Gabey¹⁸ was principal at the time. He was a native teacher. He had been transferred from Murray to Poid. When he came to Kubin, he taught me here, and he sent us – me and my twin brother – to Torres Strait Secondary School on Badu. And on Sundays we go from here to church. The church was a temporary one down on where Lucy's house is. Like *zarzar*, long church there. First the church was built where the motel is today, but that was a temporary church, open air church. It's got that area there with the stone today, where the temporary church used to be. First one that one. Just a temporary one. And from there, when we came here at Kubin, we came to stay, where Lucy's house is now, that small bush there, where the gum tree is. Before that, well we were here before the teachers were moved from Poid to come here, but the school remained at Poid for a while; we walked back to Poid from Kubin when Mr Gabey was school teacher. Later, the school at Poid was pulled down and moved here at Kubin; that school been moved from Poid. Built here where that recreation area is, where the concrete – the basketball court – is there now. Second school that one. Something like army barrack. First one from Poid was like, PNG, leaves.

JC: From leaves that one?

JM: *Wa*, on top it had iron, but wall made from woven leaves, they were brought from PNG by pearl lugger bringing cargo in. The lugger was called the *Dogai*, which was then skippered by Yopeli Panuel. Well how PNG make their houses.

JC: Traditional?

JM: Traditional. *Wa*.

MARGARET LAWRIE AND THE
RECORDING OF THE STORY
OF YELUB AND HIS DOG

BD: Can I ask you a question about something you told me yesterday, about the time when you met Margaret Lawrie?

JM: *Wa*. When I met Margaret Lawrie here, she was going around all the islands recording all the legend stories. Some stories were from Badu, some from Mabuyag, some from Dauan, Saibai, Boigu, Eastern and Central Islands, everywhere. And she went to the long radio. And I'm one of the radio operators at that time. I was a teacher and wireless

operator. At that time, every year before Christmas, or up to Christmas, up to the New Year, we would assemble at Thursday Island. All the government teachers, White and Black. There was a White teacher on Mabuyag and a White teacher on Murray. These two islands. Maybe one Yam or somewhere around there. Maybe three White principals altogether. But everyone else was a coloured teacher, native. *Wa*. And when we went up to T.I. we would assemble up there, and an advisory teacher from down south would also come there, they'd do their work at T.I. with us. And Margaret she would be good for giving us stories, and singing too. Everywhere she held a seminar, everyone would be there, male teachers and female teachers. Yeah. I was young at the time. Now, I'll yarn about that dog story, yeah. It's inside that legend book.¹⁹

BD: You want to tell us that story here again? That same one you told Margaret Lawrie?

JM: Well. I'll yarn that dog story before talking about how Kubin was settled. *Wa*. That man named Yelub and his dog. Ah, and Yelub, he is the man to go everywhere to find food. Fish, yams, well he just ate it all. He went everywhere, to Farewell Rock, Wag, Totalai, Purbar, Dabu. And that dog, he came with him everywhere. And Yelub make camp at Palga, at a place called Raramai, at the mouth of Palga Creek. Down near Palga. Palga, that's a garden place. Poid people, they make garden there, yam, banana.

JC: And that one called Us?

JM: No, Us is that hill where that Papuan man lives.²⁰

JC: Oh.

JM: But then you just come this way. Where you see that thick scrub. That one.

BD: That's Palga.

JM: *Wa*. Palga that one. So[...]

IM: That's where they get the bamboos from. It's a bamboo place. They get for spears.

JM: *Wa*. Everything there. Big bamboos. Alright. He was staying at that place called Raramai, that name where he stayed there, small village, small hunting camp there.

IM: Nararai?

JM: *Launga* [no]. Raramai. Well he was going down to Arkai. While he was going, a man who knew the dog noticed him. 'Every time you eat, you only give me bones', the dog talked to himself there. And some people

heard the dog talk. The dog said, 'There he goes to get fish. And when he comes back, he will eat good *kaikai* and will only give me bone.' Then he went to sleep.

BD: He went to sleep?

JM: *Wa*. Then boss, Yelub, came back. When he arrived the people let him know, 'Hey, when you were gone, your dog talked here'. 'Yeah how he talk [What did he say]?' They replied, 'He talked about you. Your dog said, "When you come back, you will eat good food and leave only the bones for me, I only eat the bones."' Alright, when it was time for eating now, Yelub made good *kaikai* for him, oh plenty! And he talked to the dog now, 'You eat now, you were talking about me here saying I only give you bones, but this is good food now! You eat' [laughs]. Now the dog he said good things to neighbours about the food he was given. *Wa*, that's why good dog [...]

IM: Man's best friend.

JM: Man's best friend. *Wa* [laughs].

EARLY MEMORIES OF POID, FISHING & KAURAREG

JM: People from Poid came here to Kubin when the school was moved. We pulled it down. And the church too at the same time. We moved the church by dinghies and canoe, long canoe; all the timbers, the stools and other things were moved that way. Yeah.

JC: So everything in the church was moved over to Kubin?

JM: *Wa*. From church.

JC: From Poid?

JM: *Wa*.

BD: Were you a young boy when you lived at Poid?

JM: Yeah. I would play with the boys and we go fishing. Sardines, spear sardines. And catch fish there, right up where the mouth of the river is Koey Koesa.

BD: The big river there?

JM: *Wa*. We'd walk outside along the mangrove and throw line for fish.

BD: Who made the fish spear, where did you get the spear, the fishing spear? Did you make it yourself or did your dad make it or [...]?

JM: Well, ah. Well my dad made it. He used to get a 'one iron' spear, this spear [is called] *baiwa koelak, baiwa*.²¹

BD: *Baiwa*?

JM: *Wa baiwa, baiwa koelak*. That 'one iron' spear. He can spear the fish or whatever. Only one iron.

BD: Only one tip?

JM: *Wa*. I used that spear: sometimes I used 'five finger', but sometimes when using 'five finger', the spear comes out of fish. But this 'one iron' spear I made myself. See my daddy said to me to use that one. You can catch every fish with it!

BD: When you fish for sardines, how many iron prongs on that one? On that spear?

JM: Oh, only three. Three iron, a small spear. It's used for bait.

BD: Is that made of bamboo or something else?

JM: Bamboo one, yeah. Those boys from Kaurareg village there, when they come down and spear at my place there they use that three iron spear.

BD: From Taigan?

JM: No, they were at Poid.

BD: There were Kaurareg boys already at Poid?

JM: *Wa*. When they moved from Hammond Island, they would be living on that side there and they called that village 'New Village'. Proper name for that one, 'New Village'. All Kaurareg would go there. Where the church is, just like a partition, 'New Village' lot *blong* to Kaurareg and the other side *blong* to Mualgal. There were many at Poid.²²

JC: So New Village is behind Poid itself?

JM: *Wa*. To the east of church. Poid itself where Mualgal lived was on the other side, on south side.

JC: Same side, but just behind?

JM: *Wa*.

BD: Side by side then?

JM: *Wa*, side by side. Yeah.

KUBIN, PEARLING, SCHOOLING & THE CHURCH

JM: Come here now: school from Poid was moved here, church was moved here.²³ We say to him now 'school here and that church there'. That church been built in 1945.

BD: That's Kubin church?

JM: *Wa*. Kubin church. Temporary one. Just wood. Bloodwood.

JC: Bloodwood?

JM: *Wa*. Bloodwood. It was made before timbers were issued. Before-time, all wood, even after army, instead of going to the store at Badu to buy wood, we went to get it from

- the forest here on Mua. That's in army time. I was schooling there on Badu. Me and Fr Manas [Fr Inagie Manas, Fr John Manas' brother]. We three boys – with Billy Hammond – were schooling there from Mua. And that school was Torres Strait Secondary School, not High School. Torres Strait Secondary School. From every island we school in there. Today they got married, everyone married, everyone been get *picaninny* [children]. Then when it was time for holiday we left Badu, and we stayed here at Kubin.
- LM: The two of you.
- JM: *Wa*. Me and Fr Manas. Fr Manas been trained as a [store] branch manager.
- BD: Fr Manas, is that your brother?
- JM: *Wa*. We been schooling there. He trained for branch manager, and I trained for teacher. He first been there at Badu and then come here to Kubin. I was still schooling there at Badu [laughs]. He was an assistant; work here and go back again. Store down there where Addie's this place there [near the Kubin ramp, which at the time was only a pile of rocks going down into the sea]. And from there on Badu, I been come here as a teacher. No, more like a monitor. *Wa*. When I come here, Fr Manas made up his mind to attend Theological College, St Paul's Mission,²⁴ to train as priest. I was acting principal here [laughs] and on scholarship; Mrs [Loretta] Manas, Mrs [Flora Roseline] Joe, Mrs [Lilian] Bosun, Mr [Oza] Bosun were all students on scholarships; that was before Lilian and Oza were married.
- IM: His students.
- JM: My students. *Wa*. They were all new students. New, everyone. From there I still teach. I teach them well. They made me acting principal. No Whites were here. White teachers only on Mabuyag, Badu, Boigu, Saibai, only White principals. I was the only Black principal, here. After that, Mr. Gabey was very old so I replaced him. But he still talked to me [laughs]. We been together when he come home, very old. He used *lavalava* [male sarong], a one metre calico.²⁵ Very old! We stayed there with his daughter Mobe Savage, Alima's mother.
- LM: Nazareths' mother too.
- JM: Boy's been dead, Alua Savage junior, son of Napota and Mobe Savage, been dead. Only these two were left, Nazareth and Alima. We stayed together but, Nazareth was small, somewhere about 10 or 11 years old.
- But, she was adopted to Mr Nawia. She and Morris were schooling at St. Pauls, while I was teacher here.
- JC: So this was when you went to be a teacher on Badu?
- JM: *Wa*.
- JC: And you came here and your first job as a teacher was on Kubin.
- JM: *Wa*. I never was transferred to another island. I was here all my teaching. Those other teachers belonging to other islands were all transferred. Someone go Badu, someone go Mabuyag, someone go Yam. Yeah. And I was teaching here until my retirement when that new school was built. The new school was built in 1984 on the new site there. Education. This one, DNA building been here and we go there for school education. *Wa*.
- BD: What's DNA? Department?
- JM: Department of Native Affairs. Director of Native Affairs, DDNA; DNA. DNA office that one there. At that time. You go to the DNA office, that's where we get pay; teacher's pay and trochus pay, beche-de-mer and pearl. *Wa*. Before, some boys came to talk to me, 'We go work *kabar* [trochus]'. I say, 'no no, I no go. First I go pearl shell'. I work in pearl shell with Mr. Nona's brother, Manu Nona. His brother, Ben Nona, he was store manager both for Badu and Kubin.
- BD: Did you ever work for the Chairman on Badu side, for Mr Nona?
- JM: When he was a skipper on Badu I worked for Mr Manu Nona.
- BD: You worked for him then?
- JM: I worked for that pearl shell. Just for one year. And he come to me December and teach us how to get pearl shell. Everybody worked on Kubin crew, one boat.
- BD: One boat? You work on one boat or different boats?
- JM: We from here, one boat. *Minerva*, that's the boat name.²⁶
- BD: *Minerva*?
- JM: Yeah, *Minerva*. Mr. Manu Nona he was skipper. And they had another pearling company. And we got Duffields company.²⁷ Boating company. Build boats. And, where Rebel Wharf is, that's where Hockings was.²⁸ Hockings' building. *Wa*. Three. And DNA, that's all 'red eye' boat. DNA. So when I finished from pearling, I worked trochus. Pearling one year, trochus for three years. I went trochus fishing first on the *Phaleron*;²⁹

- then on the *West Aussie* – first for trochus, then for pearl shell – and the *Antonia*.³⁰ Samuel Wasaga was the first skipper and Billy Wasaga was the second skipper of the *Phaleron*; I worked for both of them.
- JC: Three different ships?
- JM: Yeah.
- JC: Yeah.
- JM: And I come to number three for trochus on *Antonia*, I go back. I become teacher again and go back to school. I go teach again. At the same time I did church and made up my mind to marry Mrs. Manas.
- JC: What year was that? When you finished trochus and you decided to come back and teach?
- JM: Yeah, come back and teach.
- BD: What year was that about?
- JM: Year 1957. We get married on 30 January. [Laughs]. My birthday is on the 12 of January. Yeah. And I married on the 30 January 1957. That's our anniversary. No picaninny at that time, no picaninny. In 1963, the first one, Louise [laughs]. The others come after. So, from there, I teach and go on until I retired, in October 1996. I was schooling on 4 of March; that's the commencement of teaching for March 1957. *Wa* [laughs]. Then we had teaching seminar at T.I. and on Badu. New advisory teachers come out from Education and they all stay here with us in those two houses there [points], Mr Crossfield Ahmat's house in Centre Village and Mairu Savage's house at Dobby Town on Badu. All advisory teachers.
- JC: And that's where you met Margaret Lawrie?
- JM: *Wa*.
- JC: One of these seminars?
- JM: *Wa*. She made seminars. And when advisory teachers come in, then she handed over two advisory teachers, yeah.
- LM: That's when you produced, you told them the stories.
- JM: *Wa*.
- LM: To put in the legend book.
- JM: I gave that Yelub story at that same time [laughs]. Yeah. So, people here at Kubin, some come for jobs. Yeah. They start to find good jobs with the nurse, as temporary nurses at health centre. Old one there at the next house there, opposite. That temporary one was there run by Mrs. Nawia.
- JC: Mrs. Nawia, she ran the temporary health centre?
- JM: Yes, *Wa*.
- BD: *Wa?* *Aka* [grandmother]?
- JM: *Wa, Aka*. She got Flora and Lillian to open that temporary one. And then they would go in turns; sometimes Flora, sometimes Lilly. You know, take that or put that there. *Aka* gave them work.
- IM: You were also church warden.
- JM: When we came here I was a lay preacher. I was a church warden before, and then afterwards became a lay preacher. Mr. Gabey was teacher and he was also lay preacher and his brother was priest at Mitchell,³¹ Sailor Gabey. So, he was a lay preacher and then I take over as lay preacher. Church warden, lay preacher at St. Peter in Kubin.
- BD: At Kubin, mainly?
- JM: Yeah. Kubin. When I was teacher, at that same time Fr Manas was ordained deacon at this church here.
- BD: At this one here at Kubin?
- JM: *Wa*. Kubin before he went up to the cathedral at T.I. for priest ordination. Fr Manas, Stanley Waigana and Bishop Tony Matthews [Anthony Hall-Matthews]. Those three priests ordained at the Cathedral.³²
- BD: At the same time?
- JM: *Wa*.

DUGONG & TURTLE: FEASTING AND HUNTING

- BD: Sixteenth of November 2003, Joe Crouch and Bruno David. Fr Manas, you were talking about *mudu* shell [*Anadara antiquata*] found near Arkai.
- JM: Yeah, down at Arkai where those dinghies anchor. It was everywhere there, before-time. And little pearl shell there too. There are two kinds of shell. A small pearl shell we call *awidh*. And another, large pearl shell which has a black lip. We call it *awidh* too.
- BD: *Awidh?*
- JM: *Awidh*. And another one, black lip.³³ Two types.
- BD: And that live there too, near Arkai?
- JM: *Wa*. Yeah, down where that stone is outside, at Kilbut. Maybe this time it's there but I am talking about before-time. You can go everywhere from here to Farewell Rock, up front and come back down Karbai along the mangrove. Yeah, you can see those green grasses, and you can pick them up. And all big one; big *mudu* down on Karbai. Big one

- about that size.
- BD: Whoa, that's[...]
- JM: *Wa*. And this one small size, this one down here at Arkai are smaller, those *mudu*.
- BD: Arkai is smaller?
- JM: *Wa*, smaller. *Wa*.
- BD: Always smaller?
- JM: Always smaller. About that big. But here down on Karbai, whoa, too big! I fill up the ice cream bucket down there. Maybe twelve inside. Twelve! That's the big one! [laughs]
- BD: *Mudu*?
- JM: *Wa, mudu*. And we got that white ice cream bucket. *Wa*.
- JC: Twelve fit in there?
- JM: *Wa*, twelve fit in. But here you get twenty or thirty inside.
- JC: You said that those *mudu* shells all along to Farewell Rock stopped. Did they die?
- JM: *Wa*. That same time, turtles and dugong died too. Grass died. Where turtle feed, and dugong. Some dugong been waste, no fat. Dugong and turtle same thing. And we speared them turtle, but, in our language, *gathau waru* [reef turtle],³⁴ they never go out deep sea, just feed there on 'land', homeland, home reef. Yeah. It's not really good, some dugong you only just waste. But cruel, turtle and dugong waste along everywhere. Same thing applies to every island. When someone young says he talking to you, he mention about that turtle or dugong, you got *gathau waru*.
- JC: *Gathau waru*?
- JM: *Wa, gathau waru*. You Puapun [laughs]. Call you Puapun.
- BD: Puapun, like bird?
- JM: No no, Puapun that man.
- BD: Oh, that man from Totalai?
- JM: *Wa*, that man.
- BD: *Wa*.
- JM: Because he made, when he made his spear, sharpen, he don't want to blunt that spear on ground [laughs]. When man is hunting and he come back with nothing, you are Puapun [laughs].³⁵ *Wa*. So, no dugong be there that time, or turtle. There was some sickness because it's only water, the dugong fat, it's only water. The meat is alright but he's not really fat.
- JC: So, first there was plenty? Plenty of *mudu, dhangal, waru*.
- JM: *Wa*.
- JC: But then they all stop?
- JM: Yeah.
- JC: The dugong sick?
- JM: *Wa*. Yeah. So, when dugong died, you know, turtle died too, because there was no seaweed.
- JC: When was that?
- JM: Well, around the 1970s, I started teaching around 1978. I moved to the new school site there 1984.
- BD: 1984?
- JM: 1984, *Wa*. Some people from the university came here? They said you can't spear more dugong and turtle. For feasting you can only get one.
- BD: Why did they say that?
- JM: Well, they said it was a waste when get many dugong and turtle. When feasting takes place, marriage, tombstone, twenty-first, well maybe three dugongs or four dugongs are needed because people are invited to that feasting. Tombstone is the main one, marriage and twenty-first.
- BD: So, what do you think of that advice that the university people said?
- JM: Well, we told them that this is our custom. You can't stop. We feed on the turtle and dugong, that's OUR meat. They say we should buy meat from the store. We want our own sea cow. And tender one too those dugongs. Number one!
- BD: So, when was this? When did those people come up and say that?
- JM: Well, somebody told me that around, 1978 to '80s. They met us at that CDEP³⁶ office where the almond tree is, near *zarzar*.³⁷ *Wa*. And that time there was no dugong. And I prove, myself, when dugong comes. But they don't understand. Because, I found out myself about the new crescent.
- BD: New crescent?
- JM: *Wa*, new crescent.
- BD: Moon?
- JM: *Wa*, moon. One, two, three, four days old, dugong come here.
- BD: So when that moon is four days old, that's when the dugong comes?
- JM: Dugong comes.
- BD: And that's a small crescent moon?
- JM: *Wa*. It gives a limit of time. I proved it myself and I talked to them. When number four comes, you go to Farewell Rock, that's like a bay there. Turtle, dugong there. You go there, turtle, dugong. When moon comes up,

- one, two, three, four days old that moon!
- BD: So, that means that *dhangal*, turtle, they don't come here at that time, and they go on the other side? Or they come here too?
- JM: No. Both ways.
- BD: Both ways?
- JM: *Wa*. Both ways. You might go there, you might see dugong there, or you might go there you might see dugong there down. Or, Dabu, Purbar, Totalai [laughs]. On that fourth-day moon, dugong everywhere.
- BD: Everywhere?
- JM: Everywhere as long as you see that crescent moon. Then you take timing, count days. Right, one, two, three day old. That's for hunting, night hunting, three days after first crescent moon.
- BD: What did those university people say when you told them that?
- JM: Yeah, they said people from Papua took plenty; 76 they caught. Traditional, sell them up in PNG.
- BD: Seventy-six turtle they caught?
- JM: Seventy-six dugongs.
- BD: Seventy-six *dhangal*?
- JM: *Wa*. There's plenty up there. Yeah, I saw with my own eyes too when I go up for church opening at Boigu. A boy from there went to Saibai to pick up some relatives for opening of the day. And he saw dugongs, by himself, only him, no-one was with him. And he slowed down that motor, just float. And then got ready with his *wap*, speared one. Take him come back. We just sit outside on church, and he say that story, 'Plenty, plenty up there' he said [laughs]. That place where dugong tail and nose marks in the seabed can be seen on the ground. Not the deep water. Very shallow. And the wind was blowing too, blowing rough. And that dugong was caught for that feasting; we put him in *amai*. An old priest was there, a bishop, for that opening, Bishop Hankin. Every Torres Strait priest was there, deacons and all, for that celebration at the opening of that church. *Wa*. And first dugong, when dugong been died, I was sitting here[...]
- BD: At Kubin?
- JM: At here, at my place for the good moonlight, and something came to my mind to go night-time hunting while the moon is right. And the boy, Dugui, came here, he is Dougie's youngest brother. He comes here and he said, '*Athe* [grandfather], you go hunting'. I get up and I talk to my wife, 'You go down to Fr [Inagie] Manas and stay there until I come back from hunting.' We ran down to that place inside Badu. That little point where the houses are, on this side here [points]. I don't know what they call that place there.
- BD: Wakaid?
- JM: No Wakaid the place near the airport. This one here was near the ramp.
- BD: Near Dogai?
- JM: Near Dogai, yeah. From the point, you go outside. Upai.
- BD: Upai?
- JM: Yeah, Upai. We go there, and it's too dry [shallow]. Not enough water for dugong to come. Dugui's uncle, Steve Solomon, said, 'We go to Farewell Rock.' At night-time you go there. And then we go inside, to that corner there. Many turtles. We get one. We speared one. We can spear another one.
- BD: With a *wap*?
- JM: *Wap*, yeah. Put him inside. And we have no harpoon. No *kuyur* proper *kuyur*. And then the harpoon we make from 20 litre drum. We made that one but, only two of us [Fr Manas and Steve Solomon], and I forget my gear here. All the knives, butcher knife and harpoon [laughs].
- BD: When was this? What year?
- JM: Ah, '79, '80s somewhere around the '80s. Then we take out that harpoon from the turtle and make it straight.
- BD: From the kerosene can that one?
- JM: *Wa*, that one made from kerosene can. Twenty litre drum. No wind, very calm.
- BD: October time?
- JM: No, somewhere around April, May, June because the weather wasn't rough. Where they go, would be up there. When the moon comes up there is no wind. We just float there, along the mangrove we float. Then we hear the noise of dugong [Fr Manas makes the noise of dugong coming up for air], we can hear dugong blows [laughs]. And like when I said here before, at that time dugong died away and turtle too because their fat was like water. We were at the mouth of that small creek, Tawaniu Koesa then. And there we get turtle inside the dinghy and then the dugong comes. And he said, 'Daddy, we got dugong here.' 'Yeah, alright', and I am not quite sure. I said 'Hey, no it can't be.' He said, 'No, you listen.' He comes up again. There's only a tip of nose, pssssh

- [laughs]. Now we're not rowing, just float. And he said 'Don't move, stay still because this one is too sharp.'
- BD: Hearing?
- JM: Hearing, yeah. Just like eye. He was about that close [points].
- BD: About 4 metres?
- JM: *Wa*. Steve speared it. Break one rib. Just short one from here to the coconut there [points]. Tangled up.
- BD: Whoa. That's 5 metres?
- JM: *Wa*.
- BD: Did that *dhangal* float that way or was it turning?
- JM: Turning.
- JC: Tangled up.
- JM: The dugong got tangled up on the harpoon rope. Broke the rib. We put him inside.
- BD: Inside the dingy?
- JM: Yeah, inside the dinghy. Make a rope, tie a rope around dugong and pulled it up into the dinghy. We put dugong inside.
- BD: Who else was with you then?
- JM: We were three.
- BD: Three of you?
- JM: Yeah. Steve Solomon and Dugui Tomsana. He's on Masig, Dougie Tomsana's brother. Yeah, Josie's brother and Gertie's brother. We come back from there, and one dinghy been hunting there behind Poid up near Purbar.
- BD: Where's that one?
- JM: Up near Totalai. Yeah, we could see a spotlight when we passed. Then, at morning we come back. Six o'clock in the morning. Quarter to six we come here and the dinghy was outside on Takamulai there. Takamulai is that stone. They went towards St Paul's, and we came this opposite way [laughs]. We caught dugong and turtle. That's the first one after the university came here. There were two of them from the university.
- BD: Were they, can you remember their names?
- JM: Ah, I forgot their names, yeah[...]
- BD: Man? Woman?
- JM: Men. Two men.
- BD: Heinsohn?
- JM: *Wa*, from James Cook.
- BD: Last name Heinsohn?
- JM: I think so. And they talked about PNG, about those dugongs. They got more dugongs in PNG. They speared more dugong than we did.
- BD: About 1979 you said?
- JM: *Wa*. But 76 they speared in Port Moresby and Daru. Those two university people tried to stop us from spearing more dugongs and turtles. 'That's our food, not yours' we said [laughs]. Yeah, and that dugong and turtle we put down on Mr. Tomsana's landing there.
- BD: At Kubin?
- JM: *Wa*, Kubin. Then we cut dugong in the morning. It was Sunday morning, and Mr. Steve Solomon said, 'It's alright daddy, you go make amen, you go pray at church. We will cut these dugong.' After then, I supplied for everybody.
- BD: Everybody?
- JM: *Wa*.
- BD: How many house got that dugong?
- JM: Well three: Mr. Savage, Mrs. Nawia and Fr Manas.
- BD: Your brother?
- JM: *Wa*. And some for Mr. Bosun, he's my brother. Brother, other cousin-brother. Y'know, just for taste. And they all said to me, 'Where you get this dugong?' [laughs]. They were all surprised, because at that time we couldn't get dugong or turtle because they were too skinny at that time. I didn't tell them where I got it. That's my secret.
- BD: Oh, you knew where the dugong was to be found?
- JM: *Wa*. About that morning.
- BD: Are you the only one that goes hunting at that three- or four-day moon?
- JM: *Wa*. Because I saw when I came from Badu with Steve Solomon, that time when I got those dry coconuts from church at Badu, for planting and for scraping. That's when I saw the dugong at Karbai. In the afternoon, around 6.30pm, I got to Karbai and I saw them. When the tide was running east, *guthath*. And I'm not sure what was there, maybe turtle or shark. But I stopped the motor, 6-horse.
- BD: Six-horse?
- JM: Six-horse. Johnson. And I only float. But it was dugong, that afternoon around 6.30 and the new crescent was there [laughs]. Oh, another one and another one. One banged on the side of the boat. So, I noticed the time up in the moon.
- BD: And that day did you have a *wap* in the dinghy?

JM: No, no *wap* [laughs]. I only had some dry coconut from the church. I had asked one of the church wardens there, Deacon Charlie and Fr Mene for those coconuts.

BD: Fr Mene?

JM: *Wa*. They are the church wardens; Deacon Charlie, and the newly ordained Fr Mene. Yeah. So I asked them for dry coconut.

BD: What did you do with the dry coconuts?

JM: Well, for service hour. Everything, feasts, clam, clam shell, and the papaya, pumpkin, yams, sweet potatoes. *Wa*.

DUGONG HUNTING: SEA-GRASS TRAILS, *NYETH*³⁸
[HUNTING PLATFORMS]

BD: So, did you want to go back and get a *wap*?

JM: *Wa*, I said to them that I would go night-hunting. Because night-time they must be on that same spot [on the seagrass bed]. Yeah, it's true! It's just like a backhoe when they[...]

BD: When they push through [the seagrass]?

JM: *Wa*, when they push through. Morning-time is a good time down at the corner side to see if a dugong has been feeding.

BD: Other side?

JM: Other side in the corner.

BD: Near the hill at Meth?

JM: Oh, no, here Arkai side. *Wa*, we'll go look there. It doesn't matter if he has been there eating before, as long as you see that eating place.

BD: That trail?

JM: *Wa*.

BD: In the seagrass?

JM: *Wa*. Straight down by the Kubin cemetery there. On that corner. *Wa*. When you see that out there, they [the ancestors] used to make platform. The *nyeth*.

BD: *Nyeth*?

JM: *Wa*, *nyeth*. When they see that dugong eating.

BD: Where do they make that one?

JM: Well, the dugong has got to be there at night-time when the tide is coming up. And, platform in the middle [of the trail] and you put up two mangrove sticks, like an X.

BD: Like an X?

JM: And another one next to it, parallel to the other X-sticks. Two of them with the platform on top.

BD: Two X-shapes?

JM: *Wa*.

BD: With mangrove wood?

JM: *Wa*, mangrove.

BD: And then platform on top?

JM: Platform on top, and another two sticks perpendicular to the X-sticks at the bottom, linking up the two X-sticks. That way when dugong pulls rope the *nyeth* can't move. And it got a name too, that platform. Its name is *walnga*, I think.

BD: And that's the X one?

JM: No, platform I think is *walnga*.

BD: Platform is *walnga*?

JM: Platform is *walnga*. The schoolboys write that story; platform, rope, man with a spear.

BD: Have you seen that one?

JM: *Wa*. I got that book, yeah. School kids from here did it when they were up in high school.

BD: And that X, the leg there for the platform, does it have name too?

JM: Yeah, it got name too. Because every part has a name: those sticks, like X there, and platform here, two Xs there, and another one here on top, down here, X too. That one, it got name too, that end of that rope it's tied up there to that bottom X [points to drawing]. So the dugong can run, but, when it's tied up he comes back when the harpoon rope is tight. And that rope won't come out because it's tied up there.

BD: Is the bottom X underneath the water?

JM: Underneath the water. The water can come up to the top, cover the bottom X [as the tide comes up].

BD: So, the platform is about 2m high?

JM: *Wa*, 2m high. The platform is on top. And water may come to just under the platform, because the hunter takes into account the tide level when he builds the *nyeth*.

BD: Water might come about halfway up?

JM: Yeah. And only the dugong's nose comes up. Yeah, so, I have only heard this. A big man talked about this platform, and so they wanted to use it and see it so they would know too. Well, I went with them night hunting with the platform.

BD: Have you been night hunting on the platform yourself?

JM: *Wa*. I went in the dinghy. And we tie the dinghy on the mangrove. And, one, oh he was very old, he's Uncle Rattler.³⁹ He was sitting there night-time at Karakar Kula. We dropped him there and left him there.

- He said, 'If I whistle, then you know that I caught dugong. When I sing out and holler' [laughs].
- BD: And he stopped on that?
- JM: He stopped on the platform.
- BD: You've seen the platform?
- JM: Yeah. We dropped him there and we go up in the mangrove and tied up the dinghy.
- BD: What year was that?
- JM: Oh, this was when people settled at Kubin while some people went to Horn Island and Townsville.
- BD: You were a young man at this time?
- JM: Young man and not married.
- BD: And that old man who was on the platform was from Mua? He is Mualaig?
- JM: He's Kaurareg. And he knew how to make that platform. And that old man is my uncle.
- BD: That old Kaurareg man who was hunting *dhangal* on that platform.
- JM: Yeah. He knew about that *nyeth*; how to make it, and how to tie the rope on the cross-wood and platform. So he made that one because, before-time, nobody use that *nyeth*.
- BD: Fr Manas, we were talking about your uncle hunting on that platform, hunting dugong.
- JM: *Wa*.
- BD: Do you remember your uncle's name?
- JM: Uncle Rattler. And my sister married his son, Maki Rattler.
- BD: What was uncle's first name?
- JM: Rattler.
- BD: That was his first name?
- JM: Yeah, Rattler but I think his surname was Tom.
- BD: Tom?
- JM: Yeah, Rattler Tom. Yeah I only knew him by that name but Maki, his boy, used that surname, Rattler. Maki Rattler. He's married to my sister. And I said to my father-in-law Uncle Rattler, 'I want to know that knowledge about *nyeth*'. I mean, I had only heard someone talk about *nyeth*; where, how they make it. They give you some teaching about that *nyeth*. So when he said to me, 'I agree with you about that night hunting and where to make that *nyeth*. I will go with you.' So we went.
- BD: He made the platform?
- JM: He made that platform. And he made it quickly. He did it quickly before the tide came up. And we were there just at the right time. Not late.
- BD: And do you make that platform at low tide, high tide or middle tide?
- JM: He made that one on 'dead dry'. The water was right down to the edge.
- BD: Just before the tide starts to come up?
- JM: Just before the tide come up, night-time. He made that in the morning-time, early in the morning.
- BD: Sun still up?
- JM: Oh yeah. But he made that one early in the morning around 7 or 8am.
- BD: And he went away then and came back the next night?
- JM: No. Only for that night.
- BD: So you only use it at night-time?
- JM: You use that one at night. Then we go there that night. We stop at the last one [feeding trail] that the dugong marked and then Uncle Rattler made that *nyeth* there. Then we arranged for a *wap* and we left him on that *nyeth* and we go along side of mangrove nearby, near the mouth of small creek called Imusulai, where bamboos are.
- BD: You go inside the mangrove?
- JM: Just outside on mangrove and listen for the yelling.
- BD: He call to you.
- JM: *Wa*, he call to us.
- BD: When he catch it.
- JM: *Wa*.
- BD: And how long did he take before he caught it?
- JM: Well. He was smoking a bit during that time, watching that tide-water come up. That name I forgot. Maybe *walnga*. It means something like tying the rope under.
- BD: Tie the rope under.
- JM: *Wa*. But also it looks like a man's shape. That *nyeth*, with the two legs. This one here. You go put here, that rope.
- BD: Underneath the platform?
- JM: Underneath the platform.
- BD: And that rope linked *wap* up with that [...]
- JM: Yeah, it's got an end on the harpoon and you tie up on the other end. On this one, it tied here [points]. So as he runs when tied up, he fall back. When the hunter spears a dugong, he holds on to the rope so that he puts his weight on that rope. Then he calls out while he strains on the dugong rope and

- the dinghy comes over and he jumps on the dinghy; he tries to kill the dugong, pull the dugong to bring it in to the boat. And when the dugong runs he strained that rope. Then he strained dugong, fall backward. Yeah, by himself. Yeah and he sing out, sing out for us. All right, we go there. And he jump inside. He just roll over dugong flat out. Yeah. Then we tie our rope to the tail part.
- BD: Around the *dhangal*?
- JM: Around the *dhangal* and pull up the tail. And make him dead. Bend him down, upward.
- BD: Drown him, or bend?
- JM: *Wa*, bend him.
- BD: Underwater?
- JM: No, on the dinghy. But only the tail part. Bending. Belly up so he can't move. When his belly down he can [...]
- BD: He can run away. He can move.
- JM: *Wa*, he can run away [laughs]. That's the way to kill dugong, with bending his tail upwards. Then it's knocked out.
- BD: Inside the dinghy.
- JM: Outside the water. Oh, only the tail is put inside the dinghy, on the side of the dinghy; the dugong is put belly up with its head in the water and that way he drown, he can't turn round and breath.
- BD: Only the tail?
- JM: Yeah, on the tail you bend him down, you caught him.
- BD: And when your uncle goes hunting on the platform does he ever use any hunting magic for hunting? *Dhangal* magic?
- JM: No. He might be, but I don't know how he been do that before. I don't know what he did with his grandpa or maybe his father. They use platform before, in old days. *Nyeth* everywhere: Badu, Mabuyag, Kubin, Saibai, Dauan, Boigu. All *athe*, all use *nyeth*. This one happen at Kubin with Uncle Rattler. Twice I went hunting. The second time I went with a man who had been before with his father, he knows very well how to do it. That was another person, another man, Wasaga.
- BD: Wasaga. He was a great hunter. He knew all about the tides, where dugongs go, he knew all the places.
- JM: *Wa*. Wasaga Billy.⁴⁰ He was another old man. Same age as Uncle Rattler. They both had the same knowledge from Kaurareg.
- BD: And underneath that platform, that cross-wood under the water, does that have any special meaning?
- JM: Well, that one has special meaning. When the dugong runs, it holds the rope. The hunter pulls the rope and it's tied up.
- BD: And you said before that the *nyeth* was like the shape of a man? Is there a reason for why you say that?
- JM: Well I make the reason for that because when a man stands on dinghy, that's his leg. But that *nyeth* is a man because that man is on top, on the platform. So two legs there where he stands. It takes all the grip, whether the dugong go this way or that way.
- BD: And underneath the platform is there something hanging?
- JM: No. Because if you go put something there hanging, it will make a whistling or wooing sound. And the dugong will hear that noise. Even a *wap*. He put it straight for that wind [the hunter orients the *wap* lengthways into the wind], so it won't make that wooing sound. Same for the man too. Man straight for that wind too. He can only sit straight to where the wind blows.
- BD: So he can't stand sideways?
- JM: So the dugong can't hear any noise. Even if you move too hard, like when you get excited, the platform moves and the dugong [...]
- BD: Dugong goes away.
- JM: *Wa*. He must stand still. No movement and the *wap* positioned here in action. Then the dugong comes here – psssh, psssh [sound of the dugong breathing] – right, and the dirt comes up and you can see it [in the water] that he is eating. Then she blows psssh. BANG, speared [laughs].
- BD: You wait till they come up to the top of the water?
- JM: *Wa*, just a little bit, the tail still touches the ground. Only the nose comes out. So before, you go put those woods, before you build the *nyeth*, you hold a piece of paper in the air, or you spit to see which way the wind is blowing, and you build the *nyeth* straight so that it doesn't make a wooing noise when the wind blows. *Wa*. You get some paper and hold him straight into the wind or we spit out, and see where it goes.
- BD: Ah, so you work out where the wind is?
- JM: When it is straight, that's the direction.
- BD: So when you build the *nyeth*, you know which way the wind is?

- JM: *Wa*.
- BD: And you build it in a way so the wind doesn't whistle through the wood?
- JM: *Wa*, wood or platform or stick.
- BD: And on top of the platform when you put that *wap* down, you put it straight into the wind?
- JM: *Wa*.
- BD: Not crossways?
- JM: Not crossway, no. Yeah, straight to the wind. You sit down there with the action ready.
- BD: And when the dugong arrives, you are ready?
- JM: *Wa*. Sometime you have only one shot, and sometimes [you wait] one, two, three, let you know [as the dugong comes up for air again]. It depends on the tide, which tide that one. Maybe only one time or two time, you need a sharp eye, and sharp ear too to hear. Sometimes you go moonlight hunting, that's when you can see clear, and you can wait for the dugong; the dugong can come up one, two, three times before you spear it, during moonlight hunting. You can also go *nyeth* hunting when there's no moonlight, because the dugong makes lights when it disturbs the *zagu* [phosphorescent forams] in the sand.
- BD: So sometimes the dugong comes up, stop, go down again; maybe two or three times?
- JM: *Wa*, two or three times. And it makes only a little noise pssss. That's all. You never see the body, only the nose. But, you can see clear with the right moonlight. You can see clearly when it comes.
- BD: So when you build that platform and get ready, is it always full moon?
- JM: Sometimes with moonlight, sometimes without.
- BD: So that time when you went hunting with your uncle, was that full moon?
- JM: *Wa*. First, you make out direction of the wind before you make that *nyeth*. The *wap* is straight and you sit straight for the wind. Not sideway because dugong might hear you. You sit still.
- BD: *Wa*, I was asking before, if your uncle did any hunting magic to catch the *dhangal*. Did he call the *dhangal* in any way or put anything on the platform for magic?
- JM: He might say a word before you build that platform, yeah. Because they know, they must talk first, maybe magic talk, but I never ask question. That's their secret. But I understand how we made and how we yarn story about *nyeth*. And that *nyeth*, we could make down near motel there.
- BD: Arkai?
- JM: *Wa*, we can make *nyeth* there.
- BD: Can you make one?
- JM: Well, [laughs] if I am good for the climb up. *Wa*.
- BD: You got to climb up?
- JM: *Wa*. I can climb up there and sit on top and then. And maybe someone will be with me and we sit together. And sometime, the first night [...] [laughs].
- BD: First night you might tremble?
- JM: *Wa* [laughs]. Shake that *nyeth* too! That night might be different, have a different power [laughs]. Sometimes they yarn story about what they've seen in the books. It's like, whether your heart is strong to do that. *Wa*, as you know I don't go [laughs].
- BD: So you got to be strong to do night-time hunting?
- JM: *Wa*, you've got to be strong to hunt with the *nyeth*: by yourself you've got to sit down there at night-time. But, it is good: make your heart strong and you know that movement of the *nyeth*. Because the youngsters here, they don't know. I've been with these two old fellas, Mr Rattler Tom and Mr Wasaga Billy. They are two hunters and knew everything: water, dugong, turtle, where to go. Mr Wasaga Billy learned from his father and knew it well. In language he is *zogoamoebaig*, an expert hunter, *zugubaumoebaig*⁴¹ too.
- BD: *Zugubaumoebaig*?
- JM: *Zugubaumoebaig*. He knew everything: weather, stars, tide in night-time, tide running east, tide running west. Now, when they were here, they made that *nyeth*. Well, at that time, I went with them and I prove them about that *nyeth* hunting and caught a dugong. Two ways *blong* dugong: male and female. And these two men know which one is a female dugong eating and which one is a male dugong eating.
- BD: How do they know?
- JM: Well, they mentioned to me, if it goes like a dozer then that's a male [laughs]. Alright, if it goes like a boomerang, it's a male. When it [the trail in the seagrass] stops and it makes another one with its chin, you know that is a woman.
- BD: The woman eats with the chin?

- JM: When she rest that chin on the ground and she leave it there for tomorrow, morning-time you come make *nyeth* there. I will make *nyeth* there where she starts here again tonight.
- BD: The woman dugong leaves a chin mark there, while the chin rests on the ground.
- JM: Yeah and this one too. This one [...]
- BD: Ah the flippers too?
- JM: *Wa*, the flippers too.
- BD: And the man, he doesn't put his chin down on the ground?
- JM: No, he just goes like a dozer [laughs].
- BD: Like a dozer.
- JM: And you can also know if the woman has got baby.
- BD: How do you know that?
- JM: That, that one there. *Wa*. They told me.
- BD: So if the woman put the chin and her flipper down, does that always mean she has a baby inside?
- JM: *Wa*. That one means she has a baby due. She might be eating there and then, when [she] leaves that one, she makes a mark for next night.
- BD: Little bit?
- JM: Little bit and leave it there.
- BD: That's a woman? Pregnant woman?
- JM: Woman that one, yeah. Any kind, *Wa*. Male too he make mark for next night. But some-time male makes it something like a dozer or the digger.
- BD: So the different kinds of marks along the feeding trail indicate whether the dugong is male or female. Both males and females make a chin mark in the sand, so that they can come back to that same spot the following night.
- JM: *Wa*, as long as you see that [eating] strip. Yeah, but for female, you have to listen carefully for the noise. A male dugong goes [makes the sound]. Woman dugong have a short noise [makes a quieter sound].
- BD: And just to finish off this story, where was that platform built? That one you are talking about now?
- JM: Down at Karakar Kula.⁴² And uncle was there looking for feeding marks. Morning-time, big dry, we go there.
- BD: And where did he get the wood from?
- JM: Mangrove. *Wa*. He cut it there inside where we had been cutting wood for house, houses. The straight, black mangrove, straight one. Not the white mangrove, the white one is different. We use that white mangrove for fire, *kapmauri*,⁴³ white mangrove with *biyu*.
- BD: *Biyu*?
- JM: *Wa* and this black one is used for house timber.
- BD: Is there a language name for black mangrove?
- JM: *Kubikub* mangrove, meaning black.
- BD: But different language name for the tree normally?
- JM: *Wa*. And white mangrove, that's for *kapmauri* and stove, where Crown stove was issued before.
- BD: Wood stove?
- JM: *Wa*. That white mangrove good for that one and for *amai* and for damper.
- BD: To make fire?
- JM: *Wa*, ashes damper. *Wa*, when you taste that one, you want more [laughs].
- BD: When you make that ash from the white mangrove, does it give a special flavour?
- JM: *Wa*, special charcoal.
- BD: Soft charcoal or hard one?
- JM: Hard one. Very hard. That one for damper, *amai* damper, *kapmauri* damper, *kapmauri* turtle, *kapmauri* dugong, yams and potatoes.
- BD: It's a hot charcoal or a cold charcoal?
- JM: Hot, hot charcoal. More hot than other wood. That other wood, they go quick and go out.
- BD: Make ash?
- JM: *Wa*. This one here, number one. It stays there. Only you must time how long it's going to cook, maybe 15 minutes or half an hour. See? *Wa*.
- [Singing]

AMAI: SHELLFISH AND
FOOD PREPARATION

- JM: I'll talk about *mudu* [*Anadara antiquata*]. *Mudu* been here before, too many. How many bags do you want? [laughs]. Yeah, there at that front beach here, down where those stones are at Kilbut, in the shallow sea opposite the beach.
- BD: At Arkai?
- JM: *Wa*. Plenty and *awidh* too. *Awidh*.
- BD: *Awidh*, that's that pearl shell?
- JM: Pearl shell yeah. And, when you collect them, you make a fire or *amai*, small *amai*. Two things, if you want a quick one you roast it, or you can put them all together in a small *amai*, up to you. *Awidh* and *mudu*. Another way is you boil it. You take all the meat out,

- and have it with gravy. We always take it with gravy. Gravy good [laughs].
- BD: And you can do the same with *it*?⁴⁴
- JM: *Wa*, oh, *it* number one! That *it* is found at Koey Koesa. They're all big ones. And also, you can put small ones in a bottle, put in vinegar and put them inside. *Wa*, they're good alright, you smash them on stones, them small *it*. But the ones found at the big creek there, Koey Koesa, all big ones, well you roast that one on the fire. Pick up and put him in bag, and then make a fire, it cooks quickly.
- BD: How do you break that *it* from the rock?
- JM: Well, you use a hammer, a good one. Just take off the top part, then take out the meat and put in a small bottle, for *namas*.⁴⁵ And also you can put him in fire. And if there are many, you can put them inside small *amai*.
- BD: How do you make that small *amai*?
- JM: Well, you make a hole, about 30cm deep.
- BD: And how wide?
- JM: Yeah about 50cm wide, because you got to put something in there. You can put in sweet potato or *manyota*, cassava, with the *mudu* or *awidh* or *it*, oyster. Yeah so for these *amai* is alright, *kapmauri* is alright. It [that style] cooks every one. *Wa* and you have a good *sausau*, good *kaikai* [laughs]. And also when you make that *amai*, you must prepare the cover. So for covering, well you got ti-tree. Maybe you find ti-trees, and you take the bark.
- BD: How do you take out the bark?
- JM: You cut two lines right around and then you split the middle, then you take it off the tree.
- BD: So you cut: right on top, right around it?
- JM: Right around.
- BD: And then in the middle?
- JM: Yeah.
- BD: You make that, you cut in the bottom?
- JM: Yeah.
- BD: And then make a vertical cut?
- JM: Yeah
- BD: And then you peel it off
- JM: Yeah and you peel it off.
- BD: About a metre high?
- JM: *Wa* and it's good for turtle, damper. It needs to protect it from the sand outside. If you use a bag, sometimes the sand go inside.
- BD: So that ti-tree is better than a bag sometimes?
- JM: *Wa*. It's thick. Before we used it to make houses, for covering houses on top and on the side. And the same thing applies for that special grass for grass house – grass bundles for round houses, and for long, rectangular houses also.

HOUSING

- BD: Old time house?
- JM: *Wa*, old time house. Before-time.
- BD: What kind of grass?
- JM: Well, it's that grass up the road. So, we make it into 1m [sections] then put that grass on to houses. Humpy houses, picnic houses, yeah.
- BD: Does that grass have a language name?
- JM: *Wa*, that grass is called *yalalai* and *magadh*. Two names for that grass, *yalalai* and *magadh*. Another grass, *brumad bai*. It is very long grass, yeah.⁴⁶
- BD: You can make house with that one too?
- JM: Oh yeah, that one too and this one make three; ti-tree and coconut leaves also were used.
- BD: Who made the house? Is that man or woman or anybody?
- JM: Well only man. Woman just for cutting the grass. And man he knows how to put up house; make it tidy and strong. And know where to tie up the bush string.
- BD: Bush string?
- JM: We got name too, *buz*. Sometime they call *buzi*, *buzi*, *wa*.
- BD: Like Buziawar?
- JM: *Wa*, like Buziawar,⁴⁷ [laughs] *Wa*. That's for tie up; you tie it with *buzi* rope.
- BD: How do you prepare that rope? Is there a special way to cut it?
- JM: *Wa*. You cut long one about 1m. Then you twist, you twist that *buzi*. Maybe when you twist it, it comes out like a rope.
- BD: So is that like a vine?
- JM: *Wa*, it's a vine.
- BD: So you don't have to peel it?
- JM: No, you just cut with knife and then make as many as you want. You might make a bundle of them, them *buzi*, or *buz*.
- BD: So do you get two vines and twirl them together, or three or four?
- JM: No, only one. They might be 3m or 4m long. Sometimes you allow for 2m, but it's very long. And about that size [makes hand gesture], 2cm thick.
- BD: About 2cm diameter?

- JM: *Wa*, *buzi* rope. And man he made it, and twists it make it short and so strong. *Wa*, then we tie up.
- OLD VILLAGES: POID, TOTALAI
- BD: Fr Manas, can we talk again about the old villages, Poid, Totalai, Awidh, all the old places.
- JM: *Wa*. That Awidh, that's where we camped there at Awidh, and some people were at Udi Koesa.
- BD: Udi Koesa?
- JM: *Wa*, Udi Koesa. And Awidh is a creek, near to dugong tail at Koey Koesa, along road to Dabu from Poid. Udi Koesa on one side of dugong tail, Awidh on other side. Awidh there on one side, in middle is dugong tail [dugong tail is a special place in the river bed at Koey Koesa, part of Awidh], and Udi Koesa on other side. And there were three small villages there, right on the top. Family Village.
- BD: Family Village on top?
- JM: *Wa*.
- BD: Inland?
- JM: *Wa*, that's inland. The people living there all Genai, Nawia and Misick family. The Savage and Nawia families were living at Udi Koesa; Nawias lived both at Family Village and at Udi Koesa.
- BD: So all the different families live in different places?
- JM: *Wa*, and Manas is here. Manas and Asera on Awidh.
- BD: You, Manas at Awidh?
- JM: Manas at Awidh.
- BD: And Savage family at [...]?
- JM: Savage family at Udi Koesa, Alima's mother, Mr and Mrs Savage.
- BD: Udi Koesa.
- JM: *Wa*.
- BD: Is that during the war or before the war?
- JM: During the war.
- BD: And last time when we were talking you were saying that before the war [World War II] everyone was living at Poid?
- JM: Everyone was living at Poid, after they moved from Totalai.
- BD: So: there was first a village at Totalai, and then they moved from Totalai to Poid?
- JM: No, first Dabu, then Poid. First Totalai, then Dabu, then Poid.
- BD: Then from Poid?
- JM: Poid, that's when war began. Then we move inside bush.
- BD: For protection?
- JM: *Wa*. And some move at the same time from Hammond Island [Kirriiri], all Kaurareg lot.
- BD: During the war?
- JM: *Wa*. Before the war.
- BD: Before the war. And then?
- JM: Before the war we live at Poid together. Before the war begins, we got Kaurareg people on the other side. They came to Poid and where they stay, we call it 'New Village.'
- BD: In Poid itself?
- JM: *Wa*, in Poid. And some Mua people and some Kaurareg people live at New Village, and there was inter-marriage there, Kaurareg and Mualgal.
- BD: And that New Village, is that a part of Poid or outside of Poid?
- JM: *Wa*, no no, it was part of Poid. You see in Poid, Poid village there [points].
- BD: And that was just before the war, or [...]?
- JM: Before the war when they shifted from Hammond Island [1922]. There is that story about moving from Hammond Island, from there. And the Adam – later called Poid – lot, the Mualgal, gave them piece of land to build their houses, and we made houses for them before they come.
- BD: Totalai was finished then already?
- JM: Yeah, Totalai. From there Totalai come, yeah. Some people came from Dabu too. Anu Namai came from Totalai to Poid.
- BD: So some Mualgal come from Totalai to Poid?
- JM: Poid.
- BD: And after that happened, Kaurareg came?
- JM: Kaurareg come.
- BD: To Poid?
- JM: *Wa*.
- BD: And that part of Poid called New Village?
- JM: *Wa*.
- BD: That made especially for them that New Village?
- JM: Yeah, especially. So we make old village there down at Poid, and this New Village for Kaurareg, Hammond Island lot [makes hand gesture]. Yeah.
- BD: How come they moved from Hammond Island?
- JM: Well, something happened there, moving them with a fist.

- BD: With a fist?
- JM: Yeah, White fist. *Wa*, that's right. It's a very horrible story, yeah.
- BD: You want to tell that story, or [...]?
- JM: Well, this one I just heard that from Baba Wees, the Chairman.⁴⁸ He was part of the movement. He saw.
- BD: He's from Hammond himself?
- JM: Yeah, he's from Hammond, yeah. And they come with the boat from Hammond Island to Poid.
- BD: Was that the police or something like that make them move?
- JM: *Wa*.
- BD: Did they put chains around their hands?
- JM: No, just moving them with fists.
- BD: And when they come, there was White people come too or did they put them on boats and they tell them to come here?
- JM: No, police didn't come; Kaurareg all came in boat called the *Goodwill*. No-one left. Everyone from Hammond Island and T.I. and Waibene. Some stay there on T.I. But there, Hammond and Waibene and all the small islands there, they come here.
- BD: And when they come here to Mua, were you a little boy then or was it before your time?
- JM: They come before me. I was born in 1932, but I saw them.
- BD: What day were you born again?
- JM: I was born in 1932, 12 of January.
- BD: And you marry on 30 January?
- JM: 30 January, 1957 I was married.
- BD: So when Kaurareg come here, everyone lived in Poid. Then the war came and everybody moved inland at Awidh and other places. Who made the decision to go inland?
- JM: Well, some of the big people, like chief people.
- BD: Community people?
- JM: *Wa*, community people, decided to move to inland and make all the houses and painted them green. Under the shady tree, big shady tree, where plane never see.
- BD: Make all the houses under the trees and paint them green?
- JM: *Wa*.
- BD: So that the plane doesn't see them
- JM: *Wa*.
- BD: Japanese plane?
- JM: Japanese plane. Because that war began with Japan and Australia, American, yeah.
- BD: And how many houses in one village normally? In the inland one?
- JM: We at Union Camp, Union Village, on the side of Udi Koesa, where the landing is. We live at three camp-house I think, three camps, yeah little camp. And Udi Koesa, there were four, four houses. Family Village on top, there might be two or three long houses like *zarzar*, long one like this one here, yeah. Three families there: Misick, Genai and Ibida Kanai, Nawia as well, because they have Genai daughter married to Nawia.
- BD: And Awidh? How many houses?
- JM: Awidh. Yeah that's got two or three houses there, three houses.
- BD: And how many people lived in one house, roughly?
- JM: Well we got two families there, Asera and Manas. We got, there might be seven, seven people there.
- BD: Seven people?
- JM: *Wa*.
- BD: All adults or children too?
- JM: No, four adults and seven children. Eleven people altogether.
- BD: In one house?
- JM: No, in two small houses, two families, Manas and Asera.
- BD: Was that number normal for other houses too?
- JM: Yeah, others too, yeah. Those who have no children they fitting there. Those have no children.
- BD: So at Awidh, was there Manas family?
- JM: *Wa*.
- BD: And what other families at Awidh?
- JM: Asera.
- BD: How do you spell that one?
- JM: A-S-E-R-A. Asera, yeah. Billy. Asera Billy.⁴⁹
- BD: By himself or his family? He had family?
- JM: Oh yeah. Asera's wife was my father's sister. That's why we lived together.
- BD: In the old days, you know how you said your father's wife's family lived in the same house. Is that custom for the father's sister's family to live together, or is it normally brother or father's brother? Who decides how people move from one house to the other, when they get married?
- JM: Before-time?
- BD: *Wa*.
- JM: *Wa*. They live together with the family. So, where he married, she married, they go work for that mother and father. He boy married from outside, boy married with a girl then they

- work together. That girl go work together for mother and father. Woman come to live with her husband when she get married. Because after marriage she belongs to man's family.
- BD: For the boy's mother and father?
- JM: For boy's mother and father.
- BD: How long do they do that for?
- JM: Well, they work for father and mother *blong* that boy or girl. They work for their living. So when they come, themselves go like mother and father. They go work as a mother and father. Garden, fishing. Boy, he go do what father do; gardening, fishing, hunting, that's boy's work. Girls, she help mother; washing, cooking.
- BD: So they help the boy's father and mother or the girl's father and mother?
- JM: Boy's father and mother, sometimes girl's father and mother.
- BD: And they come and live with the boy's family or with the mother's family?
- JM: Boy's family before-time. Boy must make home for his new family when married, so when he gets married he go straight in that house with his new wife, before-time.
- BD: Before-time?
- JM: Yeah, but this time now, boys stay with the girl's family.
- BD: So it's all changed?
- JM: *Wa*, it's changed now.
- BD: So now the boys go and live with girl's family?
- JM: *Wa*. Boys live with the girl's family now.
- BD: That's today, yeah?
- JM: Girl's father and mother, today. Life has changed now.
- BD: So before-time, when the girl come over to the boy's family, she move from her village to the boy's father's and mother's village?
- JM: *Wa*. Before.
- BD: Before-time?
- JM: Yeah because boy there, boy, he married her so he take her to *his* mother and father.
- BD: And, do they have to give something to the girl's mother and father in the old days? Did they have to give something in return?
- JM: *Wa*. Because for that boy, he is working. He is, something like work to that girl, he give something.
- BD: You *savee* what they give?
- JM: Well, they give, before-time. Might be something like mat, clothing, and gardening tools. Axe, shovel, pick, crowbar for making garden, before-time. But when this new, home-style, home-life grow up, I go buy you, I go earning money, and I give it to the girl when I marry. Then girl distribute the money to her family: so, I been work for that money, for that marriage to give that cash to girl, that *sibwanan*. *Buzarthayai*, that means *sibwanan*.⁵⁰ I go buy girl with the money. I go work first for money and then I marry, what I get, what I earn I give to my wife. Then wife share with her family – like uncles, sisters, aunties, brothers, father, *akas* and *athes* and all family. I give it to her and then she can give to her father and mother and other family members.
- BD: And that's now or is that early like during the war?
- JM: After the war, yes. And now when they married. We make, people make something like *sibwanan*. They go give something for both boy and girl.
- BD: Who gives something?
- JM: That boy who gets married. Boy gives the money, because he been work for his wedding. And at wedding ceremony all families give husband and wife presents. *Wa*, when feasting, after that eating, up to that *kaikai*. So everyone comes together with the presentation [laughs].
- BD: Marriage ceremony?
- JM: Marriage ceremony, that one. Yeah, they give all, like starting their life with it. Somebody might be give them like mat.
- BD: Is that before-time too or only after missionaries come?
- JM: After, I think, after. Before-time, only something like clothes or something mat, something like that, before-time. But this is money time now, money. Because I go work money, if I get married, I go work first. And during that feasting at marriage ceremony, the husband gives woman the cash he made to give to her for that marriage.
- BD: So going back to the villages, after Poid when the war came, can you tell us again the name of all the different villages inside the bush that people went to?
- JM: *Wa*, yeah. Awidh
- BD: Awidh.
- JM: Udi Koesa.
- BD: Udi Koesa?
- JM: Yeah, Family Village. Awidh, Udi Koesa and Family Village all on Koe y Koesa. The other villages elsewhere.
- BD: Family Village. New Village? Or that New

- Village in Poid?
 JM: *Wa* that one New Village in Poid. Palga another place.
 BD: Palga
 JM: Well yes, Palga. Then come down, Dabu.
 BD: Dabu.
 JM: Purbar. Totalai.
 BD: What's after Dabu? Did you say Purbar?
 JM: Purbar that point there. When you look from Totalai come down, you can see that point, Purbar that one.
 BD: That's that one with all the coconut trees at Purbar?
 JM: No, Purbar that landing. Then Totalai.
 BD: Totalai.
 JM: *Wa*. Totalai that one, missionaries been there.⁵¹ With all the coconut. And Baua there front.
 BD: Baua.
 JM: *Wa*.
 BD: Was there village there on beach at Baua?
 JM: *Wa*, it's got village there, camping one.
 BD: Camping like all the time people stop before?
 JM: *Wa*. Big plantation been before, there at Baua. Amo Kanai⁵² and Kaitap wrote their names on the coconut trees there when they lived there. Those names still on those coconut trees. That plantation, plenty of coconut trees at Baua, more than Totalai. Totalai only got few coconuts there. It got church there at Totalai. They build church.
 BD: Baua?
 JM: No, Totalai.
 BD: Totalai.
 JM: *Wa*. That Baua; that a new name given to Baua, Gerain.
 BD: Oh Baua is the same as Gerain?
 JM: *Wa*.
 BD: On that left-hand side
 JM: *Wa*. Baua, that Baua that one native name. They put that to Gerain there, Gerain for that Baua.
 BD: When did they put that Gerain name?
 JM: Well, when we been here, Mr. Chairman [Wees Nawia], he's put that name on radio to the DNA. So he mention about that Baua there, but he called it Gerain.
 BD: To the Department of Native Affairs?
 JM: *Wa*. He said that to the Department of Native Affairs.

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ENDNOTES

- 1 This probably refers to the serious epidemics of malaria, whooping cough, tuberculosis and influenza which occurred at Poid during 1938 and 1939 (see Shnukal, 'Historical Mua' chapter 4, this volume). Whooping cough was thought to have been introduced by trochus boat crews returning from southern ports after the people had lost their earlier immunity. In 1938 there were many deaths at Poid, not all of which were officially recorded, mostly of older people from malaria and children from whooping cough. Among them were Fr Manas' older sister, Tuku Dorothy, who died at Poid in 1938 at the age of 15, and his cousin, Louisa Asera, who died in 1939. In 1939 an outbreak of malaria at Poid caused the deaths of several people and schooling was severely disrupted. In order to improve the situation and destroy mosquito breeding grounds close to the village, the nearby swamp was drained that year (Annual Report of the Chief Protector of Aboriginals 1939: 4).
 - 2 The use of broken glass or other sharp instruments to cut the skin to relieve pain was common among Torres Strait Islanders and Papuans. Haddon (1904: 322) refers to it as 'the universal panacea for all ailments in Torres Strait' and coastal New Guinea. In c.1892 Ellis Rowan (1991: 126) visited Mabuyag where the people were in mourning for a child who had died the previous night: 'they had cut its forehead and body to draw blood when the pain came on, and this seems to be their only remedy'; and during the first decades of the 20th century, there are numerous inquest references to this practice among Papuan divers. The bloodletting was useful in relieving symptoms of beriberi such as swelling of the gums, limbs or stomach but could be used on any part of the body to ease pain. The Government Medical Officer at Thursday Island told one inquest that he found 'numerous small cuts self inflicted on the body and legs. It is not an uncommon thing for Papuans to mutilate themselves in that way when in pain' (QSA JUS/N376/07/314). The government authorities proclaimed the practice an offence but this did not prevent the people of Saibai 'revert[ing] to their ancient customs of cutting themselves with pieces of glass bottle for the purpose of letting out the pain and heat, as they say' during an outbreak of malaria in April 1934 (Annual Report of the Chief Protector of Aboriginals 1934: 13-14).
 - 3 Ian McNiven has also noted that the practice of using small fragments of glass for curative bloodletting is known today in western Torres Strait. He hypothesised that the small bipolar quartz artefacts excavated on Dauan (northwestern Torres Strait) – typical of the stone tool technology found in western Torres Strait – may also have been used for therapeutic purposes (bloodletting) and/or for social purposes such as body scarification (cicatrices) (McNiven, 2006: 5-8).
 - 3 Fr Manas is probably referring to Alima (Elma) Tamate born in 1936, whose mother was Lima Hammond Nawie.
 - 4 *Akul* and *mudu* are common shells found on Mua: *akul* is the mussel shell, *Polymesoda erosa*, a black bivalve found in mangrove swamps and formerly used as a knife and scraper; *mudu* is a greenish bivalve, identified as both *Anadara antiquata* and *A. scapha*. It is usually translated as 'clam shell' or 'cockle shell'.
 - 5 For a brief history of Totalai, Adam, Poid and Kubin, see Shnukal ('Historical Mua' chapter 4, this volume); Ash & David (chapter 10, this volume); Ash et al. (chapter 11, this volume). Fragments of glass (some exhibiting signs of flaking) were found at Totalai during detailed archaeological surveys and excavations.
 - 6 The expression *woesan* (or *usan*) *pugan* means 'to cut with glass': *woes(a)* is the Kala Lagaw Ya term for 'quartz, quartz chip, glass chip, glass flake, sharp broken piece of glass (used for cutting)', the suffix *-n* means 'with' and *pugan* means 'to cut'. Ray (1907) notes that *usal*, the plural of *us*, refers to the small linear scars made by the cuts. Fr Manas (pers. comm., 16 April 2007) has identified two kinds of cuts made during blood-letting: one kind he compares to a centipede, pointing out numerous closely spaced small dot-like parallel marks (these are all very shallow marks). The other kind is a longer cut, usually slightly deeper (but not really deep), for example made to treat back-aches. According to Fr Manas, *woesau kula* refers to a sharp rock used to pierce the skin. Laade (cited in McNiven, 2006: 7-8) translates *usau kula* as both 'small cutting tool' and 'piercing the skin'.
 - 7 See also Shnukal ('Historical Mua' chapter 4, this volume).
 - 8 Henry Norman Armstrong from Rockhampton was appointed as head teacher to Poid on 30 July 1930 (QSA A/15994: Mission schools 1927-1935: Reports of Inspection, 1932-1934). He married Edna Mabel Dunning on Thursday Island in September 1930 and took up his position shortly afterwards. The first three of their four children were born in Torres Strait: Colin in 1931, Ian in 1934 and Patricia in 1935. All were baptised in the Anglican church at Poid (Patricia Armstrong Andrews, pers. comm., 2004) and Mrs Armstrong became President of the Poid branch of the Mothers' Union.
- Armstrong had previously taught at Saibai and was commended for his 'fine work' there by the Governor (Letter from Sir John Goodwin, Government House, Brisbane, to Henry Norman Armstrong, 29 May 1929, in possession of Patricia Armstrong Andrews). Like the other European superintendent-teachers of the time, he also served as advisor to the village council and as local medical officer, visiting each individual house once a week and dispensing medicines and food to the sick (JUS/N934/31/685: Inquest into death of Mami at Poid, Moa). He also supervised all the village construction during his time at Mua. In 1931 the people of Poid

wrote to the Protector, asking for improvements to their school but requesting that Armstrong stay on 'because [we] love this teacher better than any teacher been here in Poid' (QSA A/69460: Complaints from Aborigines, 1931-1932).

During his tenure at Poid, Armstrong also supported the people by writing letters and petitions on their behalf. After they expressed a desire to relocate to a healthier site at Kubin, he wrote a report advocating the move in November 1931 and attaching a sketch showing 'elevation, water supply, building sites, anchorage, gardens, swamp areas, etc.' (O'Leary, 1932). The people's wishes were ignored and relocation did not occur until August 1943.

Armstrong's temperament was not suited to the increasingly harsh demands of the Chief Protector, who was anxious to improve Poid's infrastructure to bring it into line with the other islands (see Shnukal, 'Historical Mua' chapter 4, this volume). He referred repeatedly to Poid's lack of progress, blaming Armstrong's 'apparent negligence' and the people's 'inferior[ity] in industry and progress to most other natives' (Bleakley, 1934). Local protector H.T. Green openly criticised Armstrong's failure to organise the villagers into efficient working gangs or compel them to carry out desired improvements. Matters improved after the arrival of a new local Protector, J.D. McLean, and a great deal of new construction work was carried out at Poid during 1934-1935. Armstrong, however, left Torres Strait for Brisbane in September 1936, several months after the end of the maritime strike.

- 9 The man referred to here is probably James Edward Western, head teacher at Thursday Island State School, who was appointed as the Department of Public Instruction inspector of schools in April 1929 to succeed Clement L. Fox. Each year for six years, beginning on 3 June 1929, Western inspected the 12 'Aboriginal' schools of Torres Strait run by the Department of Native Affairs – on Badu, Erub, Mabuyag, Saibai, Masig, Poid, Mer, Boigu, Iama, Poruma, Dauan and Ugar (St Paul's school was run by the Church of England mission authorities) – reporting on enrolments, staff, physical conditions and progress made under the recently-adopted curriculum and reading materials designed specifically for Torres Strait Islanders. The average enrolment in the Poid school during this time was 69. Western was succeeded as school inspector by Michael Portley in 1935.
- 10 See David et al. (2004) for details.
- 11 Fr Manas does not know Adam's wife's name; he never knew it.
- 12 Dollar Reef is a large reef south of Mua which is an important dugong feeding and hunting place.
- 13 According to Margaret Lawrie's notes from Badu (Lawrie, 1967), *guthath* is the name given to the tide which flows from west to east, whereas *kulis* flows from east to west. *Usalai* is the name given to *guthath* when it flows high and strong in the afternoon – *usalai* is the tide for catching turtle. The tide that runs towards the east in the morning is called *ura* 'morning tide'. *Magani* is the very strong tide, which Getano Lui called the 'master current'. Rod Mitchell (pers. comm., 2004) defines *guthath* or *guthath boebu* as 'upwind current' (*boebu* meaning 'flow of water') and *kulis* or *kulis boebu* as 'down-wind current', which he considers to be a more correct translation than 'eastward and/or westward flowing.'
- Bani (2003: n.p.) notes that the eating habits of the pack of dugong (*ulakal*) are imprinted in the seaweed they eat and the professional hunter 'must know the pattern

of tides to come up with a good prediction and to accurately pin-point the exact location of the dugongs'. Knowledge of this tidal pattern is an important part of the instructions given during the initiation period so that the hunter can make his calculations. The east-to-west-flowing *kulis* is the usual daily tide in Torres Strait and thus the sea grass and some sea trees are always tilted towards the west. However, when the west-to-east-flowing *guthath* dominates from December to February, 'the sea grass is disturbed and stands erect'. Bani (2003: n.p.) continues:

The feeding ground of the dugong or the pasture is called *nara*. When the dugong eats it cuts the grass in two ways. For *kulis* the dugong eats facing east. Since the sea grass are always tilted in the westward direction the dugong has full advantage to snap eat the grass and leaves a clue which is a horizontal cut.

At *guthath* the dugong graze differently. It does not fall in with the tide, instead it eats the grass by positioning itself across the tide. The dugong does this because this is the only time the sea grass lifts itself from the westerly lying position. When the current slows down this is the interval between the turning of the flow of tide the sea grass automatically settles on the bottom in the direction of the daily usual westerly tide *kulis*. During this time the dugong is disadvantaged. The west to east current *guthath* gives the dugong an awkward access to eat so the dugong when eating cuts the grass in a different manner. It now leaves the clue of a diagonal cut.

This grazing has a very special name to distinguish it from the normal grazing. It is called *balpudhi*. Sometimes the hunter tells by the way the dugong swims. If it swims across the south to the north or as in the early days across the pathway of the sun the hunter will know the current will soon flow towards the west *kulis*.

- 14 The *thoelu wap* (bloodwood harpoon) might be as long as 3½ metres and was made from bloodwood 'half way to the tip, to give the force to drive the harpoon, bamboo the rest of the way for balance' (Tennant 1959: 187). The hard wood used to make spears and dugong harpoons was generally cut from the trees at Tabungnazi plantation on the slopes of a hill in the southern part of Mua (Haddon, 1904: 312; Lawrie, 1970: 25).
- 15 A brief account of World War II as it was experienced by the people of Mua and a list of men from the island who served in the war are found in Shnukal ('Historical Mua' chapter 4, this volume).
- 16 The story of wolfram mining on Mua is told in Shnukal ('Wolfram mining' chapter 6, this volume).
- 17 In late 1945 or early 1946 an air force plane circled around Kubin in the late afternoon. After circling a few times it headed off towards Thursday Island. However, it quickly began to run out of fuel, returned and circled for some time. The pilot was unable to land on the beach but eventually landed smoothly in the water at Tepai, just east of Kubin. Some men from the village went out in a dinghy to help but, by the time they got there, the airmen had inflated a raft and managed to reach the shore. The plane sank in the shallow water on the edge of the reef at Tepai. The six men on the plane spent the night on shore before coming up to the village the next day. The next morning the people found parachutes and many other things washed up on the beach. That same day Napota Savage and his younger brother Poey went out to the plane. Napota dived on the plane wreck and, as he surfaced, an army barge from Thursday Island came round the headland to pick up the plane crew. Napota and

- Poey hid in the mangroves until the army had gone. The army took the bombs, guns and other things from the plane and warned the villagers not to go near the wreck. In the late 1950s Wees Nawia, Napota Savage and other men from Kubin raised one of the propellers by using empty 200 litre petrol drums and floated it back to Kubin. It was placed near the old council shed but in the 1980s was mounted on a cement base opposite the store. At low tide parts of the plane can still be seen and it is still used as a fishing spot (Edwards & Edwards, 1979:14; St George, c.1965: 66; Teske, 1991: 18-19).
- 18 Fr Manas is here referring to Jacob Gabey (1884-1961), who taught at Poid for many years, and his younger brother, Revd Sailor Gabey (1886-1945), who was priested on 20 September 1931. Sailor Gabey was born on Erub to a Murray Island chieftain family but his other siblings were born at Mer.
- Jacob Gabey was transferred to the Poid school to take charge of its approximately 61 pupils in 1939 and remained head teacher until his retirement in 1950, continuing to teach throughout the war and the move to Kubin. He died on 8 May 1961 at Kubin aged 76. His younger brother, Revd Sailor Gabey was serving as resident priest at Poid when Jacob arrived, having taken up his duties there in mid-1934. They already had family connections with Mua: their sister, Lily and her Fijian husband, John Wesley, had made their home at St Paul's Mission in 1912; and through their mother they were related to the first Torres Strait Islander priest, Revd Joseph Lui, who had trained at the mission's theological college. Revd Sailor Gabey supported the maritime strike of 1936 and in 1938 he was sent to Mitchell River Mission, where he ministered during the war until his sudden death on 28 August 1945 (A.B.M. Review 1 October 1945: 154; Bayton, 1965: 138, 161, 217; see also Shnukal 'Historical Mua' chapter 4, this volume).
- 19 For Fr Manas' story, see Lawrie (1970: 42).
- 20 A man from Buzi in Papua New Guinea is said to have lived by himself in the hills of northeast Mua. He calls himself Jack, although he also has a language name from Buzi. Some people say that he is still there today; others say he has died.
- 21 *Baiwa* means waterspout, *koelak* means spear.
- 22 In early March 1922, 81 Kaurareg were forced to leave their home on Kirriri (Hammond Island) and relocate to Adam on Mua (Sharp, 1992). Shortly afterwards the village was renamed Poid (Sharp, 1992; Shnukal, 'Historical Mua' chapter 4, this volume). After the end of World War II several Kaurareg families resettled on Horn Island and by the 1960s Kubin had lost much of its Kaurareg population to Horn Island and the mainland.
- 23 The interior and roof of the church at Poid were dismantled and relocated to Kubin.
- 24 See Shnukal ('Historical Mua' chapter, this volume) for the development of St Paul's Theological College.
- 25 The custom of wearing the *lavalava* was brought to Torres Strait from Pacific Islanders in the 19th century and widely adopted.
- 26 The large pearling lugger *Minerva* was newly commissioned after the end of World War II, and skippered by Buwa Mene from Mabuyag from 6 February 1947 (O'Leary, 1947).
- 27 The Duffield brothers, Arnold Ernest Duffield and William James Duffield, registered their pearling company, A.E. and W.J. Duffield, on Thursday Island in April 1952 and various family members were connected with the pearling industry until at least 1975 (QSA QS 744/1: Register of firms, Thursday Island, 1903-1961; QS 745/1/6/1975: Inquest into death of Ronald Nona). Among the five pearl shell luggers they owned during the 1950s were the *Hespia* and the *Envy* and they employed other crewmen from Kubin, including Maki Rattler and Peter Bagie (JUS/N1264/494/55: Inquest into death of Douglas Billy; JUS/N1324/420/58: Inquest into death of Chusei Gushi).
- 28 The Hockings family of master pearlery was once widely known in Torres Strait: Reginald Augustus Charles Hockings is one of the names 'synonymous with T.I. history' listed by Ganter (1994: 32). The firm referred to here is almost certainly the Wanetta Pearling Coy, which Hockings founded in the 1890s and which owned 'a hundred' boats before World War I (Burchill, 1972: 113; Baird, 1970: 192); after pearling returned to the Strait after World War II, the firm was again registered in May 1947 by Harold Norman Hockings and Francis Edgar Hockings. Another family firm was H.O and R.N. Hockings, registered in September 1949, with Harold Ormsby Hockings and Reginald Norman Hockings as owners. Both companies continued until at least the 1960s (QSA QS 744/1: Register of firms, Thursday Island, 1903-1961). Their station and boat slips were located at Hockings Point on the southeast shore of Thursday Island past the Japanese quarter.
- 29 The pearling and trochus boats *Phaleron* and *West Aussie* were owned by the Whyalla Shell Company and in the 1950s had a mostly Kubin crew. The two boats used to journey as far south as Cairns.
- 30 The lugger *Antonia* was owned by the Antonia Pearling Company. On 8 June 1958 the *Antonia's* Kubin diver, Wasaga Miskin, died at Darnley Island Hospital from decompression sickness. Other Kubin men on the *Antonia's* articles were John Rattler (diver); Tamat Billy, born at Poid but then living at Horn Island (tender); and crewmen Nagibu and Niki Makie (JUS/N1327/483/58: Inquest held into death of Wasaga Miskin).
- 31 Mitchell River Mission (formerly Trubanaman Mission, now Kowanyama), was an Anglican Aboriginal mission on the west coast of Cape York Peninsula.
- 32 Fr Inagie Manas, Fr John Manas' twin brother, was the first Mualaig to enter holy orders after completing his training at St Paul's Theological College. He became a deacon on 20 December 1963 and a priest on 13 December 1964. Together with Anthony Hall-Matthews (later Bishop of Carpentaria) and Stanley Giro Waigana from Saibai, Fr Inagie Manas was ordained in the Thursday Island cathedral by Bishop Seering John Matthews. He served at Badu and Kubin in 1965, Thursday Island 1966-1967 and Mabuyag in 1968 (Bayton, 1965; Year Book of the Diocese of Carpentaria 1965-66: Clerical Directory; QSA QS 745/1/38/1968: Inquiry into death of Daima Manas). Fr Inagie Manas died in 1992 and is buried at Kubin.
- 33 The blacklip pearl shell, *Pinctada margaritifera*, is a small, flat pearl shell with a black lip. In Torres Strait Creole it is also called *tamyok sel*.
- 34 The phrase is used for a turtle that has become marooned on the reef at low tide, usually has little fat and is therefore not good to eat. The phrase has become *gathawar* in Torres Strait Creole, a pejorative expression used for a drifter, a person who cannot find a permanent relationship or job.
- 35 Fr Manas is making a humorous reference to the culture figure, Puapun (see Lawrie, 1970: 24-27).

- 36 CDEP refers to Community Development Employment Project, a 'work-for-the-dole' scheme introduced by the Commonwealth government in 1977. According to Geoff Meadows and John Scott, Commonwealth Department of Aboriginal Affairs (pers. comm., 1982, 2006), the CDEP was introduced on Erub and Dauan that year and by 1980 all the island and Cape York Peninsula communities participated. The Department of Social Security paid each island council the residents' unemployment benefits as a lump sum, not as individual payments, and the people were required to work for part of their entitlement. The scheme was administered by the DAA but ultimate control and responsibility rested with each Council, which decided what work would be undertaken, who was required to work and whether, if people refused, they would still be eligible to receive their unemployment benefit. There was considerable criticism of the scheme on the grounds that it was a 'welfare trap', but the prevalence of nepotism and settling of family scores, the unsuitability of the community work being offered and, in some cases, Council mismanagement of the funds were also cited as failings.
- 37 The zarzar is not there any more; it was pulled down around 2004.
- 38 Father Manas pronounces the word as 'nyeth' with initial palatalised 'n', whereas other Mualgal tend to pronounce the word as 'neth'.
- 39 Rattler Tom (c.1890-1958) from Muri (Mt Adolphus Island) was the son of Tom Muri or Tom Somerset and Kaita Goni and the ancestor of the Rattler family. In 1921 he married the widow, Kapai Bagie Yamazi, and they had four children. Rattler Tom was among the Kaurareg removed to Adam in 1922 but went to live at Horn Island after the war. Known as a great hunter, harpoonist and renowned maker of *thoelu wap*, he was the last man from Muri to pass away, collapsing during a visit to Thursday Island and dying a few days later in the local hospital (Burchill, 1972: 33-34; Tennant, 1959: 186-188).
- 40 Wasaga Billy (1895-1960) was born at Kirriiri, the son of Amabi or Billy Prince of Wales from Muralag and Pati, and the ancestor of the Wasaga family. He married Kias Genai Tam Bosun in 1917 and had 12 children. His second marriage was to the widow, Newcamp Namai Kanai, in 1951. Wasaga Billy, a skilled hunter with specialised knowledge, was among the Kaurareg transported to Mua in 1922 (see Shnukal, 'Historical Mua' chapter 4, this volume).
- 41 The term *zugubaumoebaig* 'star gazer, astronomer' come from *zugubau* 'belonging to the *zugubal*' and *moebaig* 'person'. The *zugubal* resembled men but were possessed of supernatural powers by which they could control the elements; they could summon thunder, lightning, wind and rain and could calm or stir up the sea. Soon after human beings came to Torres Strait, the *zugubal* became bright stars or constellations, ushering in the seasons, causing rain, wind, tides and calms, and guiding men at sea and in their gardens. According to Matsumoto (1983: 350), Islanders believed that all 'meteorological phenomena' were caused by the actions of the *zugubal* (later commenting that the relationship was rather one of ownership). They therefore paid great attention to the stars and constellations at dawn and dusk, because only then did they expose their otherwise hidden existence to humans. The configurations and movements of the stars were part of the way that Islanders understood, organised and predicted the yearly cycles of their physical universe. Changes in the night sky could be read as practical aids to navigation, planting, food-gathering, ceremony and story-telling and the continuing significance of the star as navigational aid for a seafaring people can be seen in its presence on the Torres Strait Islander flag. More information can be found in Eseli (1998), who closely observes and records the multiple connections among stars, wind, rain, tides and other signs from nature which each year usher in the major seasons and associated activities and ceremonies.
- 42 Karakar Kula was a giant culture hero who transformed into a large rock offshore between Kubin and Karbai Point. Lawrie recorded this story (Lawrie, 1970: 23-24).
- 43 The Torres Strait Creole word *kapmauri* comes from 'copper Maori' and is a equivalent to the Torres Strait language word *amai*.
- 44 It (*Chama limbula*) is the round oyster, which gave its name to the Italgai, the coastal people from the western side of Mua (Moore, 1979: 211).
- 45 *Namas* comes from the Japanese word *namasu*, meaning 'marinated raw seafood or vegetables'. This method of 'cooking' raw seafood by marinating it in vinegar and/or lemon juice in a sealed container, often with the addition of chili, sugar, ginger and garlic, was brought to Torres Strait by Japanese divers who dominated pearling before World War II.
- 46 *Bai* is the general word for 'grass'; but for building houses the specific grasses used are *yalalai*, *magadh* and *brumad*. Several of the grasses and vines which grow on Mua and were used for traditional house-building are mentioned here: *magadh* 'spear grass'; *yalai* 'soft grass' (lit. 'soft hairs'); *brumbayi* 'swamp rushes' (from *brum* 'broom' and *bayi* 'swamp grass'); *buzi* 'lawyer vine, *Flagellaria indica*', which was traditionally used to make a strong bush rope. Although sturdy, the traditional Muan grass houses were easily fired: Haddon (1904: 310) tells us that the Mabyuag warriors burned the houses and gardens of Ith during a battle leading up to the final massacre.
- 47 Fr Manas points out that *awar* means 'fingernail' or 'claw' in Kala Lagaw Ya.
- 48 Wees Nawia was only 14 when he was removed with his family from Kirriiri to Adam in March 1922. One of eight children born to Nawia from Muri and Garagu from Muralag, he traced his paternal descent from Gau Gaburui from Muri, the last mamoose of Kirriiri, and Api from Ngarupai. He and his brothers, Parisa and Kosam Nawia, crewed aboard the luggers *Manu* and *Wakaid*, skippered by Tanu Nona from Badu, which in the 1920s won competitions as the best-performing boats in Torres Strait. In the early 1930s the crew insisted on his selection as skipper of the *Manu* and in 1933 he became Poid's longest-serving Council Chairman, a position he held until his death on 11 August 1981. One of the most highly respected Torres Strait leaders, Wees Nawia supported the maritime strike of 1936 and he unceasingly sought self-government and economic self-sufficiency for Islanders. To that end he promoted wolfram mining and the Christian cooperative movement on Mua, becoming a Director of both the Torres Strait Wolfram Company and Moa Island Investment Cooperative. The writer Kylie Tennant (1959: 186) met Nawia in the late 1950s and was greatly impressed by his charm and leadership qualities. She found him 'thoughtful, courteous, efficient and unpretending, with a shy sense of humour'. For Wees Nawia's historical importance as a leader see Sharp (1992) and also Shnukal ('Historical Mua', 'Wolfram mining' chapters 4, 6, this volume).
- 49 Asera (c.1895-1943) was the son of Billy Hammond

and Kausa. In 1920 he married Danie Dabita Samuki, daughter of Samuki and Tuku and Fr Manas's paternal aunt, and they had at least five children, all born on Mua. Their only surviving daughter, Daisy Asera, married Maki Rattler, the son of Rattler Tom and Kupai.

50 Buzarthayai comes from buzar 'fat' and thai 'feast'.

51 An account of early missionary activity on Mua is found in Shnukal ('Historical Mua' chapter 4, this volume).

52 Fr Manas may be referring here to Waiat Amo Kanai

(c.1888-1949), son of Kanai or Pagai and his first wife, Nema, both of whom came from Mua; and Sem Kaitap or Sem Aken (c.1888-1940) son of Kaitap or Sabei and Mekei Sari. Amo Kanai married twice, to the widow, Latta Anita Kara Savage Christo, in 1921 and then Newcamp Namai in 1932 and served as church warden of St Peter's Church, Poid. After his death, Newcamp married Wasaga Billy. Kaitap married Kaki Kadau Kanai in 1909 and they had 11 children, all born on Mua.