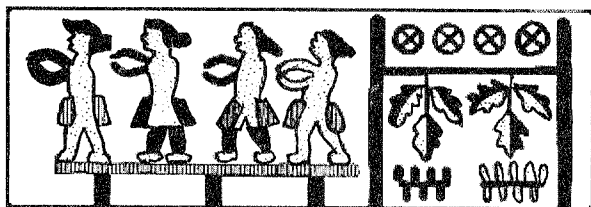


Entertainment: Sports and Games Dances and Songs



Bureau of Arts and Culture
2002

Entertainment

by

The Palau Society of Historians

Bureau of Arts and Culture
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Koror, Republic of Palau

Traditional and Customary Practices

English Series 8

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Table of Contents

Entertainment in Palau.....	1
<i>Mur</i> - Feasts.....	3
<i>Mulbekel</i> - Village Feast.....	3
<i>Chelsimer el Mur</i> - Closed Feast.....	4
Dances.....	7
<i>Ruk</i> - Men's Dances.....	9
<i>Ngloik</i> - Women's Dances.....	13
Children's Dances.....	17
Chants and Songs.....	18
<i>Derubesbes</i>	21
<i>Kerrekord</i>	22
<i>Rebetii</i> - Love Song.....	23
<i>Kesekes</i> - Lullaby.....	24
<i>Beritotou</i>	25
<i>Derebechesiil</i>	25
<i>Delang and Lall</i>	26
<i>Boid and Omengerdakil</i>	27
<i>Klekool</i> - Games.....	29
<i>Kedam</i> - Flying Kites	29
Children's Games	34
<i>Cheldech duch el Chelid</i> - Storytelling.....	39
South Western Islands.....	41
Sonsorol.....	41
Hatohobei.....	50
Footnotes.....	58
Credits.....	60
Further Reading.....	62
Illustrations.....	64

***Ongelaod* – Entertainment**

Many of the customs, once so dear to Palauans, are no longer practiced. For easier understanding this text is in the present tense.

The word *ongelaod* literally means ‘matters that take your mind off seriousness’, but we translate it as recreation or entertainment. It represents an important aspect of the culture and lifestyle of Palau. It is essential for people to participate in recreational and entertainment activities not only to restore their energies and relax from their duties and responsibilities but also because such activities unite the village. The opportunity to come together and participate in festivities or competitive events brings the population together for some days of enjoyment and peace. They have a chance to meet guests from other villages and to actively participate in the festive events. We can distinguish between official entertainment, such as *mur*, feasts, where *nglikir a sechal ma redil*, dances (for men and women), accompanied with *chelitakl*, singing, is staged. *Klekool*, games and sportive competition, are also officially scheduled by the chiefs. Every Palauan village is divided in two *bital beluu*, village sides. At such official occasions these sides will compete against each other. Even though competition is taken seriously, the important aspects are enjoyment and a change from everyday life.

Another aspect of *ongelaod*, entertainment, is *omilil a buil*, which can be translated as ‘to play through a full-moon-night’. This is one of the favorite pastimes in Palauan village life. Then games and dances of a more unofficial character take place for personal entertainment, where young men and women meet in the cool and moonlit nights on the beach, or on the *ked*, the grassland, outside of the village. Due to bad weather, warfare, or village events not every full moon phase can be used to practice this tradition.

An entirely different sort of entertainment is *cheldech duch*, storytelling, which is practiced mostly within the family. The best time for storytelling is at night when in the light of an oil lamp, elders tell about times long and not so long ago. They tell stories that will astonish, educate, but most of all entertain.

Mur - Feasts

In traditional Palauan life feasting plays an important role. There are occasions when *klechedaol*, honored guests or clubs, visit or when simply the village people come together to celebrate. From eyewitness reports we know that in the 19th Century some of the big festivities in Palau lasted several days. Together with the necessary preparations it kept a village busy for weeks or even months. Dances had to be rehearsed, the dancers fed, and taro and *ilaot*, coconut syrup water, accumulated in order to accommodate all guests and spectators. Thus, in 1909, when the German ethnographer Augustin Krämer attended a dance celebration he was impressed by the presentation.¹ As much as he admired it, the German government disapproved of such merriment. Therefore, feasting declined and became rare.

Only two feasts are mentioned here, *mulbekel* and *chelsimer el mur*, as examples for all those festivities when Palauans celebrate to honor and entertain the gods or to rejoice in a victory, the accomplishment of a major enterprise such as the building of a *bai*, meeting house, the installment of a chief, etc. Besides Krämer also mentions small feasts without any dances, as for instance *odoim tuu*, when the first bananas are ripe.²

Mulbekel - Village Feasts

It is the *rubak*, chiefs' decision to hold a *mulbekel*, village feast. Their resolution is made public by breaking a round taro bench, normally used for offerings to the gods, and hanging the broken pieces outside on the village *bai*. Now everybody knows about the upcoming feast

and the necessary preparations begin.³ While one side of the village will rehearse and stage the dances, the other side will prepare the food. At such a big event the members of one men's club present a *ruk*, dance, which needs training and experience in order to perform it to perfection. The club *bai*, meeting house, is their training center where they are enclosed to concentrate on their presentation. Also female dancers can be secluded in order to prepare for their performance. They move into one of the *bai* or canoe houses of the village to live and train there.

These dancers that were secluded and trained perform their dances on special stages, whereas the other dancers perform in the *bai*, or in front of it on the ground. Usually men will dance first, then the women will follow.

Food, its production and distribution, is an important part of a Palauan festivity. It is a requirement to have more than enough food to feed the crowd that gathers for the entertainment. A designated chief of each village side makes sure that people receive their shares. Food is also necessary to be presented and exhibited. Taro is heaped on taro benches, for effective presentation, and the syrup water is stored in *ilengel*, big containers.

***Chelsimer el Mur* - Closed Feasts**

A feast of a more private character which, nevertheless, can be celebrated on a grand scale is *chelsimer el mur*, a feast staged by a husband who wants to honor his wife. This is an important celebration also mentioned in Palauan legends. Terkelel first honored his

wife Sachgalai and is therefore considered the inventor of this feast⁴ and in the story of Olungis, Tarisel, the wife, is sent home by her husband to prepare everything for her *chelsimer el mur*.⁵ The feast takes place in the wife's home village, where all her family and relatives can participate as well as some of her husband's relatives who come and partake in the festivity. Only high clans and wealthy families practice this tradition because all the expenses have to be paid by the husband. He pays for food, the dancers, the dancing stage, and he gives a piece of money to his wife's family, too. In 1860, Kubary noticed that hundreds of baskets of taro were consumed during such a celebration and the expenses were so high that usually an *chorau* was held where all related women of the female side of the family gave the man, who held the feast, some money.⁶

During the *chelsimer el mur* only women perform dances and the participants are chosen with great care. Preferably, the group of dancers should consist of *ochell*, female descendants of the celebrated women of the clan of the honoree. But if there are not enough *ochell* women in the village, then *ulechell*, female descendants of the men of the clan, will join. If there are still not enough dancers then *rrodel*, adopted children, will be accepted, though only when the four *saus*, the four highest ranking chiefs (also called the four corner posts of the village) approve. An *ochell* woman who married a man of a lower ranking clan is considered *tilorech*, which means she slipped. Therefore, she as well as her daughters can only participate in the *chelsimer el mur* after traditional Palauan money has been given to the corresponding

family on the other village side. When, at last, the chosen group of women has been selected, they stay for the next month in one of the canoe houses. There they live and train for their dance performance.

When the day of the feast finally comes, all the food has been prepared, the guests have arrived and a *diangel*, dance platform has been erected in front of the canoe house, then the side wall is lifted and the dancers are released from their confinement; they are ready to dance and the feast can begin.

When Augustin Krämer and his wife attended a feast with female dances, he described it like this:

From July 28 to 30, 09, together with E. K. I participated in the first three days of a dance celebration of the women of *a Irai*. In front of *blai* No. II, Gesuroi, ... a long stage, *oilaol*, was built, where during the first afternoon 4 dances of the women were staged. ... The stage *oilaol* had a roof, thus was a dance house *diangel*. In the beginning, before the start, the side of the dance house, about 25 m long and opposite of the spectators, was lifted with long poles just like a trapdoor, so that a leaning wall of about 6 m height was created. Here about 40 colored and beautifully decorated female dancers were standing who then started the dance. A lot of taro was heaped in front of them for the feast (Krämer 1926:309-310).

Dances

Since ancient times dancing is an essential part of entertainment in Palauan culture because it represents a pleasure for all the senses. Often dances are staged for a big feast where people meet and sumptuous meals are distributed. With great pleasure the spectators watch the decorated dancers perform graceful choreographed movements. With interest the audience follows chants and songs about mythical or historical events revealing deep feelings of happiness or sadness, and they are amused and proud to see their relatives perform in front of the village. No wonder, thus, that dancing is a favorite pastime and is taught from early childhood on. The first training starts at home where parents or other relatives teach the child. Later on expert dancers take over the training and will be compensated for their efforts.

In Palauan dance etiquette a strict distinction is made between *ruk*, the men's dances, and *ngloik*, those of the women. Thus also the verb dancing makes a distinction between male and female dancing. When women dance it is called *meloik* and when men dance people will use the verb *ouruk*. Not even verbally do men and women dance together. Another distinction among dances is that between official dances during some of the celebrations in the village and the more informal and spontaneous dances, which are staged on moonlit nights outside the village, along the beach or in the open *ked*, grassland.

For an official dance the participants coordinate outfits; men wear new loincloths and women wear colorful grass skirts, and matching decorations. Then the

decorated dancers walk in line to the dancing place. They are accompanied by four *lebuchel*, leaders, each of them a member and representative of one the four *saus*, the four highest clans in the village. They are positioned in the middle of the line of dancers. For a men's dance the *lebuchel* are four men while for a women's dance they are four women. One of them, chosen because of a good voice, is the *mesuchokl*, the prompter calling out loudly to the dancers.

Each group of dancers has to be even numbered so that it can split in halves, should the type of dance demand it. When the dancers line up for the performance as a group they have to follow the ancient choreography, predetermined by the ancestors. Their movements, executed in unison, especially those of the upper body and the hands, transmit the expression of the dance. Hip movements are only important in the women's dances and also have to be executed simultaneously. But a good dancer still can excel in physical presence, standing with slightly bent knees and moving with supple and smooth motions, while keeping eye contact with the audience, even flirting with the spectators.

When dancers train in seclusion, it means that they move into a *bai*, meeting house, or a canoe house and their training will take from one to three months; then their dance will be performed on a specially built *oilaol*, stage. In case the training takes place without seclusion, then the dance is performed on the bare ground. It can be staged inside the *bai*, where the dancers are lined up along one side of the house, with the chiefs and the audience

on the other side. Or in case there are too many participants, the dance is staged in front of the *bai*. When dances are performed in the open air in the night, then the show is lit with torches, but when they are held inside, the *bai* is lit with oil lamps, providing a flickering warm light for the performers.

***Ruk* – The Men’s Dance**

God Uchelchelid invented the *ruk*, dance. Once he sat at the beach of Uchelbeluu watching an *oruidel*, trevally,¹ jump after a *teber*, silverside.² He found these jumps so amusing, that he decided to take the *oruidel* as a dancing sign. The *ruk*, thus, became the most elaborate men’s dance in Palau³ and dates back to a time when gods and humans still co-existed on the islands of Palau.

Uchelchelid created a dance that is unique because it is the only dance in Palau that is not accompanied by singing and stamping of the feet. Consequently, the dance is rather quiet. Nevertheless, it is an important event for a man to participate in. The performance of this dance is a rare occasion, performed only during big feasts as for instance a *mur beluu*, village feast, and the *ruk* is considered to unite the people, the communities, and villages. From old reports we know that formerly it was the duty of the oldest men’s club to perform this dance and in some states, like Airai, the dancers would hold a wooden replica of the *oruidel*, trevally, in their hands.⁴

The *ruk* dancers have to train hard in order to achieve perfection in their performance. When the day of the *ruk* dance comes, their skin color has become light as a result

of their indoor training. Their bodies are rubbed with turmeric-oil and each man wears an *ebakl*, adz, a *tet ma aus*, a betelnut bag and a lime container, made of bamboo; now they are ready to dance.⁵

In 1901 the “Deutsche Kolonialblatt”, a German newspaper, reported on p. 449 about the performance of a Palauan *ruk* dance:

“The dance was performed only by men and boys on a 200-300 m long and only a few meter wide wooden construction. In their black hair was the red hibiscus flower, around their shoulders and their hands were strips of reed like leaves that were moved while dancing just like castanets. The right hand held a spear-like bamboo pole that was swung and held in a rhythmic motion of the body. The dance started with a spearing combat of two solo dancers depicting a historical event, where one of them, without throwing spears himself, skillfully caught the ones that were thrown at him until his enemy had no more weapons and gave up the fight disappearing into the crowd. Then about 60 men stepped on the dance construction, moving in slow dance steps and accompanying their movements with a deep melodious chant and performed in a very artistic way frontal and side dances, so that you could immediately see the careful training. The erotic aspect was only slightly apparent at this dance. Altogether it made a very ceremonious and strange impression, such as I had never before experienced ...”

On closer inspection the *ruk* consists of several parts: *Ongurs* means, literally translated, “pulling,” but in the men’s dance it is the entry dance where men are aligned. Led by the *lebuchel*, the four leaders, they perform the

ongurs while moving in rhythmic motions to the dancing place. One of the leaders carries *meolt*, young coconut fronds.

At the dancing place, be it a stage or dancing ground outside the *bai* or in the *bai*, the dancers settle down, facing *madelbai*, the front of the *bai*. The one who carries the young coconut fronds puts them carefully on the ground so that the tips point to the *madelbai* and the stem to the *butelbai*, the back of the *bai*. He removes the leaves and hands them to the person next to him. They are distributed among the dancers and used for decoration. Worn around the neck or wrapped around the head it is called *lebuu*. Coconut fronds tied to the middle finger, to make clicking sounds, are called *cherderid* and when they are tied to the upper arm, wrists or ankles they are simply referred to as *bésiich*, decoration.⁶

Now *derreder ra ruk*, sometimes also called *ulemechall ra ruk* can start. This is considered the introductory part of the men's dance. The dancers remain at their place, but they no longer sit on the floor, because they perform this dance squatting. When the lead person gives his calls, the dancers start with their performance, swaying back and forth and clapping their upper arms. They answer the calls, shouting back rhythmically. When the lead person utters a shrill shout, the dancers assume a standing position and the *derreder ra ruk* is finished.

The main part of the *ruk* dance is *oruidel*, also called *delal a ruk* by some people. Here we find reference to the pleasure the *oruidel*-fish once gave to the god who

invented this dance; hence, this most important part of the dance is named after it. Again the *mesuchokl*, the prompter, calls out to the dancers, but now his calls are different. With a loud clear voice he tells in a rhythmic tone about the event that is celebrated in this specific *ruk*. In order to convey the message an old chant can be used or a new one composed just for this occasion. While this chant is narrated the group dances and answers like a choir. The men perform the *oruidel* standing with knees slightly bent. With careful steps they pace forward and back, in a well-trained choreography.

The following chant of a *ruk*, dance, was recorded in 1909⁷, its meaning was already then no longer understood: *takebud tálangak kemó lómemei*

rangatél lemëréóu ra ilangë túmetái
sokevi silo mekeló ohú, ohúi e / e hú
ei / ei / ei iéng hó, ei / ei / ei iéng húi
ei ieng ho ei ieng hui uiririririri
ei iéng hó ei iéng húi
petkëleg tperekelú dësuókl eng hú
ei ei ho ei o hui

The last part of the *ruk* is called *chetakl el tet*, which literally means ‘carrying a betelnut bag’, and this is what the dancers do. Instructed by one of the *lebuchel*, leaders, they pick up their *tet*, betelnut bag, place their adzes on their shoulders and hold their *aus*, lime containers, in one hand. Following the choreography they split into two groups and face each other dancing all the while with slightly bent knees. Moving one step forward and back, they hold their bags with one hand and move the bamboo lime container like spears with the other hand. This is the end of the *ruk*.

After such a group performance as the *ruk*, the dancers have a chance to show their skills by dancing *omengereal*, a solo dance. But they can only perform with the approval of the *lebuchel*, leader. The most important feature of this dance is the singing of a *rebetii*, love song, while dancing at the same time. *Omengereal* can also be staged spontaneously though the consent of the audience is always necessary. It is a chance for a man to dance alone in front of the audience singing a song that is only meant for one person. *Omengereal* can also be performed when young men and women meet at informal meetings at night, but even then the approval of the crowd is necessary before the dance can begin.

Oeang, the war dance, is not described here, as it is not performed for entertainment, but by the members of the warring party.

***Ngloik* - Women's Dance**

In Palau the dances of women are unlike those of the men. Their movements are different and most of all the motion of their hips that makes their grass skirts sway from side to side is important. A second feature that distinguishes them is that women sing songs while dancing. They might even compose a special song for a certain dance and later on, after the performance, they will simply 'throw it away'.

Women adorn themselves for the dance with *reng*, turmeric, and decorated with flowers in their hair and earlobes, *elilai*, plumeria⁸, *chial*, climbing pandan,⁹ *iaml*,¹⁰ *ksid*,¹¹ *rur*,¹² they present a spectacular sight in their

new and brightly colored grass skirts. They also need a *lild* or *bruchel*, a thin stick about one or two feet long. Holding it in their hands they are fully equipped for their performance.

The first part of a *ngloik* is *ocharo*, the entry dance to the dancing area. Led by the calls of one of the four *lebuchel*, leaders, the women dance in without singing, just holding the decorated *lild* in one hand and moving in rhythmical motion. Following the instructions, they place their sticks on the ground and position themselves for the second part of their dance called *ulerratel* or *delal a ngloik*. This is the main part of the dance and its message is expressed here. The calls are now different because the dancers are singing while they dance. They face the audience with knees slightly bent, their upper bodies leaning just a little bit forward. In this position they perform a chopping motion with one hand while their bodies move in unison very subtly from side to side. During the *ulerratel* the women sing about their village, its importance and significance.

Now the *lebuchel*, leader, instructs the dancers to pick up their *lild*, stick. They utter a shrill shout – the third part of the dance called *lild* or *bruchel* has started. With the sticks in their hands they turn to the side, thus forming two groups, whose leaders face each other. Again their knees are bent and their upper body is slightly leaning forward. While their hands, holding with the *lild*, perform the chopping motions and their hips move slightly from side to side, they sing about the very event that brought

them together. Finally the women perform *ocharo* again; this time it serves as their exit from the dancing ground.

Another occasion to do an *ocharo* is at the beginning of a *klechedaol*, village feast, where visitors from an allied village are invited. Then *osako* and *beruadel* dances are also performed, but it all starts with an *ocharo*.

When, for example, Ngchesar invites people from Koror to come and attend the feasts, the women among the guests arriving at the landing dock will align and perform an *ocharo* while walking to the *bai*, where they are met by the women from Ngchesar also doing an *ocharo*. Even though this is an official dance occasion, each group has only one leader, usually a woman renowned as a good dancer. When the two groups meet and the leading dancers face each other, those two women start dancing *osako*, while the rest of the women continue with the *ocharo*.

The word *osako* comes from *melkesako*, to crawl, and while performing this dance both leading women will squat and dance on their haunches. Facing the leader of the opposing group, they tease each other in a friendly way. Their upper bodies swing rhythmically to and fro while they slap their arms as an accentuation of their song. The host women sing a welcome song while the guests sing about their invitation and journey to the feast.

Then, when the guests have finally settled in the *bai*, meeting house, the host women perform outside the *bai* a *beruadel*, sitting dance, for their entertainment. Now

the women of the village are seated cross-legged in a row on the ground. In the flow of their singing, their upper bodies move from side to side, they rhythmically clap their hands and their thighs. Later on, the female visitors will also partake in the entertainment, taking turns in the performance of *beruadel*, praising their hosts in their songs.

Following an official dance performance and after they have received permission, the women can also claim the stage for an *omengereall*, a solo performance, where they sing a *rebetii*, love song while dancing. A more spontaneous *omengereall* can be performed in the moonlit nights when men and women meet outside of the village. This is also the right occasion to dance *bullechang*, which is a favorite of the younger generation. Either men or women or both together can perform it. Thus this dance, performed purely for social entertainment on moonlit nights, is the only occasion when men and women can dance together. But a single dancer, moving simply for his own pleasure, can also perform *bullechang*.

A performance with great entertainment value is *klakelall*, because it involves singing and dancing as well as playing *klaiskurs*, the well-known tug-of-war game. In the story of *klakelall ra* Ngarabau, the attraction of this particular entertainment is recounted:

Once upon a time some rubak slept in the *bai* of Ngarabau, while the young people enjoyed playing in the moonlight, the so-called *melil a buiel*. When Rubak no. 1 Gobak woke up from the noise and could not go back to sleep, he sent another rubak outside to chase them away.

But his messenger did not return and the play continued. The same happened with the second and third messenger, finally Gobak himself went outside had a look and joined the game.¹³

In the full moon nights when the young people meet in groups outside the village, some men will dance in front of the women. After their performance they return to their group then several women start dancing in front of the men. These dances create much laughter and merriment because men and women tease each other in their songs. The men sing about lazy women, how small their taro corms are, inedible because of the worms. In the songs of the women the emphasis is placed on men's cowardliness, their poor performance as fishermen and their small catch. For those who listen carefully these songs are filled with sexual innuendoes. In this way the night is spent. The next day either the men or the women bring a *klbochel* (broken tree branch) to the other group. This is an invitation for another night's entertainment in the moonlight. In the second night not only dances are staged but also games such as *klaiskurs*, tug of war (between men and women) or something similar is played.

Children's Dances

Children are trained to dance at an early age. They like to perform and show their proficiency. One efficient way to demonstrate their skills is dancing *uatechutem*. A group of children go to the house of a *rubak*, chief, where each will do a solo dance. They sing while slapping their upper arms and stamping their feet. If their performance was pleasing they will get some food as a small reward.

Chants and Songs

In pre-contact times the music of Palau was entirely vocal, as no musical instruments were known. Only later the jew's harp and the nose flute were introduced. Therefore, when we talk about the music of Palau, we talk about *chelitakl rechuodel*, chants (created in the past) and *beches el chelitakl*, new songs. It is commonly believed in Palau that no new *chelitakl rechuodel* have been composed since probably the 18th Century. In other words, the repertoire was determined during an earlier period in history and has not been enlarged any more.

According to oral tradition women were more active and composed many songs; this concept is based on an old legend.

God Uchel er Chulsiang and God Ngirchongor were intimate friends. Ngirchongor was living in Beliliou Island (Peliliou) with his wife, Ngerebluut. One day he fell down from a breadfruit tree and died. Ngerebluut buried him and sent two men for Uchel er Chulsiang asking him to compose a song for her dead husband. He came from Ngerechelong and arrived in Beliliou. Some people were waiting for him on a high hill. They ran to the bai and immediately asked him to sing a Dalang. He did but they were not satisfied with the song. They thought it was bent and distorted. Suddenly it occurred to them that this must have had something to do with bent leaves of betel nut trees, whose nuts men are obliged to get, climbing up high. It should be women's work to compose songs, they thought. So it was decided from that time. (Yamaguchi, 1962:31)

But there are some chants people can not compose such as *esols*, *derubesbes*, *kelloi*, and *cheldolm*. These were brought by *bladek*, spirits of the dead, through spirit mediums.

After European contact the Palauan music changed and when in 1891 a Catholic mission was established, European church music was also introduced. During the German time many customs faded and with them their accompanying songs. In the Japanese time an acculturation process started and this was the time when contemporary Palauan music began to bloom.¹

Some families are renowned for their good singers, males as well as females. But even with talent, you have to train and learn how to sing. The training has to be conducted by a teacher, who himself was once a renowned vocalist. He is usually chosen from the pupil's own clan. It often happens that a good singer appoints a younger person among his relatives to come for learning because he is eager to transmit his knowledge and technique to another generation. But he will choose his students with care. Simply from the way somebody is talking he can deduce if the person has the potential to be a good singer. During the vocal education the teacher will study the songs with his student, first the lyrics and then the melody. Such teaching is infrequent, secret and expensive.² Many songs and chants, though, are transmitted through participant observation, watching dances and listening to men and women sing at informal gatherings, but most of all you have to sing yourself in order to train your voice, build your repertoire, and to find your own style.

An accomplished singer can earn money not only by teaching his skills, but also by singing the right chant at the right time. At social gatherings someone sings *chesols* about a hero who was in the same kinship lineage of a person present. If the song is executed without fault the singer is paid by that person, or in case of a funeral by the family of the deceased. In former times a prepared betelnut chew would be given as a reward, today the appreciation will be shown monetarily. Performing as a singer can be dangerous, because if you execute your chants not faultlessly during an official performance this might be pardoned once, but if it happens again, it will be regarded as a sign of disrespect and the singer will be killed.

In Palau you do not need an outstanding voice to be considered a good singer, because other characteristics are important. The lyrics should not only be pronounced clearly and understood over quite some distance, the words also have to correlate with the respective musical phrase contour, and a good singer has to be able to sing long musical phrases without losing his breath. It is significant that the singer develops his own personal style, which distinguishes him from the other singers. And finally it is of vital importance that the musician chooses the right song for each specific occasion from his repertoire, and that he has a large repertoire which he remembers well.³ In order to comply with all these demands a good singer is about 30 – 40 years old, has a strong voice that is clear and straight, and, as Palauans say, comes from the throat.

On official occasions men or women usually perform as a group. As mentioned before, a group has four *lebuchel*, leaders. Among them is the *mengeseb*, singer. The performance of the group largely depends on him. It is his duty to make important words clearly distinguishable to the audience. Therefore he tries to sing higher or to make earlier entries than the chorus, singing often falsetto, head voice, or speaking voice. He is also the one who trains the group and he receives good payment for his instruction.⁴ Not all the participating dancers of a group will sing, only the ones who can sing and got trained singing the songs.

There are different old chants sung in Palau, most of them telling stories. Not the entire legend is told in the song, only a part that stands for the entire well-known narrative. Thus songs tell about ancient gods, heroic deeds of the past, such as battles and warfare, about events in everyday village life like the work of a village club or the completion of some community task. Singing a song also offers the possibility to express feelings.

Derubesbes

*Odanges el Mora Rubak
kau el tara rubak el ungil a kelulum
el di omduu er kid / ma dora el e kede di
mead / e se merermeriar er kau
mal duu tekoi / eng di soak el mora
eanged / iiang*

--

Praise for an Old Man

you noble man / always praising us / making us feel
proud / so we anticipate your return / what ever you
say / makes me want to go to heaven / *iiang*

Derubesbes or *chesols* are terms that both mean chants; while *derubesbes* is a very old name, *chesols* is the more modern expression. In these chants good governing policies or relations between villages, amongst chiefs, and their female counterparts are praised. For instance, after the completion of a *bai*, meeting house, an *osebekel a melech* has to be performed, where the god Melech is freed from the new *bai* and somebody will sing a *derubesbes*. Also honored guests are welcomed and bidden farewell with a *derubesbes*. Singing *derubesbes* at an official occasion helps to unite and strengthen the community, not only because of the content of the song, but also because the audience actively participates when at the end of every chant, the singer shouts “*iiang*” and the crowd responds “*huei*”.

Kerrekord
so soak sel lius
ra Imekang
el betok el di deldalm ma
lechul mak mo me denges er ngii

my favorite coconut / from Imekang / so many have
taken root / and this is why I collect syrup from it

These are songs of entertainment. *Kerrekord* are vocalized jokes and are sung by older people among their own gender group, because the joking is done about the other sex. A *kerrekord* is sung in a very high pitched voice while a prompter sings a part of the song out of tune in order to emphasize the joke.

Rebetii

*u-kerelii / ng uoi kebesesengei / aki tobeda ra
medal a rael / a kumerk e meluluuta a renguk /
el melatk ra tal chad / el kulkemetii ra kibong / e
ulekerii ra kimei / obong ma loduis e lolai /
malechub a tal chad el ngarsel Dilong / me
lodurokl a sesel sau el mer Ioueldaob / el di
ungil edang / e delkong e kuk de medei / “u-
huoi”*

*u-kerelii / later in the evening / we are coming up
towards the front of the road / I look around with
thoughts of returning / and thinking of someone / I did
not see when we went / nor when we came / when we
go and black magic is placed let him take it / or a
person in Dilong / could send a little love down to
Ioueldaob / it is fine father / let us go there then we
will come back/ “u-huoi”*

Rebetii, usually translated as love song, is, not surprisingly, a very popular song form. But not only matters of love are expressed in *rebetii*, individuals or village clubs can also be praised. A *rebetii* always begins with the shout “*u-kerelii*” and ends with the shout “*huoi*” while the audience responds with “*okuii*”. Not only the content of the song but also the interaction between singers and audience help to strengthen the community spirits. Even though *rebetii* is sung in one voice register, it can have a stark and powerful appeal as, for instance, in Melekeok where a *rebetii* once saved a man’s life.

The legend holds that a long time ago, the chief of Melekeok gave the order that nobody was allowed to enter the village. A man, unaware of this rule, came to deliver betelnuts. Only when he heard the men's club singing that they were going to kill him and take his head, did he realize the imminent danger he was in. When he was about to die he asked the Reklai, the high chief of Melekeok, if he could sing a last *rebetii*. On the spur of the moment the desperate man composed a song in which he begged the Reklai for mercy and explained his ignorance of the newly imposed law. His *rebetii* was so well composed and performed that the Reklai granted him his life.

Kesekes- Lullaby

*kesekes er a Uab / delad ra Uab a ngar uchei
 el mesaul e nguchud kid / e ma luchel ngarbab /
 ngulmeob a beluu e remuul a mesei /
 e mo mechell ra ruchel / e mechellid / mekid a
 me chad / mekid a mechad /
 eng mo kiei ra Ngeaur /
 e me remuul ali me Choitab a ulebengelel /
 eng mora Ngedech el mora Milad e kuk /
 tara blekerdelel*

Lullaby of Uab

our mother Uab is first / thankful she is the reason we
 exist / and demigods above / she created the island and
 formed the taro patch / she gave birth to the demigods
 / she gave birth to us human beings / as we came alive
 she left to live in Angaur / she made the caves and the
 Choitab as the ending / then she went to Ngedech and
 there was Milad / who was different

Kesekes are songs about heroic deeds. Heroes of the past and victorious warriors are remembered in these songs, but also tales of defeat and death are told. Because of their monotonous character they are mostly used as lullabies for infants.

Beritotou

*motekak ra mlim e Ngetkemei
e bo dolouch re Ngerenger
e bo mo mub e mem boderei*

-
give me a ride Ngetkemei
let us go and cut trees at Ngerenger
go trap fish and we will go home.

A very simple form of vocal entertainment is *beritotou*. When older people sit together they will sing it for their own entertainment. Small stories are made up and told in these songs.

Derebechesiil

*derebechesiil boruchei me ngak
kuiak uriul le sosoak lomchur a blekeklem*

-
*derebechesiil / go first and I will follow you / I wish to
count your footsteps*

Another form of a love song, a more intimate one, is *derebechesiil*. Here stories of hidden love affairs, broken hearts and hurt feelings are expressed, singing them alone or in groups. In contrast to *rebetii* this song has a very melodious tune and all start with: *Derebechesiil ...*

Delang and Lall

*mak medederboreb bere Ngesang ra uchul a mei
e ngii a meltechakl el mei / chisel a oterebek ra
Ngurang / rar ngelekel a Adelbai e / meche-chech-ech
e ke mermang / me kora abol suelb eke de mora ked el
ngar tiar bab / el ngar ngii a ongulam er ngii / el dung
ra chudel ma kerdeu / ma odimel el sengall / chedal
kikii / chedal kikii / nak a mermang el lungil redil
el kora oudelbedobech ma orsum olkaki el kot ra soak*

I sat around in Ngesang next to a tropical almond tree /
news drifted / about a rape in Ngurang / one child of
Adelbai / then you came along / when lunch
approaches we go up the hill / up there because our
lunch is there / young taro and seafood / hurray /
hurray / it is me who is coming a beautiful woman /
with decorated skin wearing a beautiful comb that is
my favorite

These songs are delivered in a speaking voice, to mock, annoy, or even shame someone. It can be an unforgettably humiliating experience when you are the subject of a *delang* and your shame will be remembered for a long time in the form of this song. But *delang* can also be used for harmless sexual teasing between gender groups, clubs, or, in a more intimate way, between a man and a woman. When the others answer with an equally teasing song then this is called *llall*. *Delang* and *llall*, thus, are sung in a constant to and fro.

Boid and Omengerdakil

*aleko ngesiil a renguk / a di merolung el dikeal mol me
che terchokl / ele kemelbedebek er Ngerdis
dilungil a buile e bol langel a ngas er Oreki el more
Ngermaml / e sechelei ngkuk kmo / ng mo kelsakl a
renguk / Odesangel a rengum a kor er sech
el di ngara deleuilere er Ngeriabed / mei eim el choll /
al kol ngartiang medi de kasoel / medi de kaseues
meloika el mong / ngomechelaod a rengud.*

my heart is sad/ leaving and undecided / thinking about
Ngerdis / the moon is still good and the cone pine tree
of Oreki will cry all the way to Ngermaml / friend
what will happen to my heart / there are so many
things Odesangel your heart is thinking about / staying
in a relationship in Ngeriabed / come / Eim el choll / if
he was here we could see each other / we could see
each other / dancing over there / our hearts would be
entertained.

Boid is a song composed about the relationships between villages, clubs, or individuals; they can be praising as well as teasing. Usually the group addressed in the *boid* will answer alike, also teasing, and this is then called *omengerdakil*. One of the characteristics of *boid* and *omengerdakil* is that such songs have to be sung by many people. One singer will act as a prompter and, while he is accompanying the *boid* in a speaking voice, he is dancing at the same time and clapping his hands. *Boid* can be performed at happy as well as sad occasions, but people can also sing it to pass the time and listen to its melody.

Kelloi and *cheldolm* are two types of wailing songs. They can only be performed at funerals and will bring death to those who sing them otherwise. Even writing or recording *kelloi* or *cheldol* is strictly forbidden; therefore, they are only briefly mentioned here.

Only very late, probably in the 18th Century, two instruments were introduced from the Philippines. They added instrumental music to the generally vocalized musical style of Palau. *Ngaok*, the whistle flute made of bamboo, has four finger holes on one side, and none on the other. The flute is open at both ends. The performer's breath is blown against the air hole cut in the front side of the upper end. The second instrument introduced to Palau is *tumtum ra lild*, the jew's harp. It is a plucked idiophone made from bamboo. A thin tongue vibrates when twanged by the thumb. The performer puts the middle of the frame to his lips and breathes in and out through the slit to the rhythm of the plucking.⁵

***Klekool* - Games**

When children play their joy is immediate, and pure. When a day of games is announced in a Palauan village it means a day full of fun and carefree enjoyment for adults as well. Officially, games are staged after the completion of a big village enterprise, such as the building of a new *bai*, meeting-house, or the construction of a canoe. Thus, when the work is finished and people are happy about having accomplished something, the chiefs will dedicate a day of fun, games, and competition between the two village sides. Most of these games have a sportive character and are of a competitive nature. Therefore, men are the participants while women, children, and old people are the cheering spectators. The prevailing sentiment during such a day of games is fun and enjoyment but it is also a moment where a man can exercise his skills and impress the audience. Games usually take place during the day outside the *bai*. But there is also a time for games of a more informal character. It is a popular tradition to play in moonlit nights when men and women meet outside the village. Then there is a vast amount of children's games played wherever you can hear kids laughing and screaming.

Many of the below mentioned games are practiced throughout Palau but their rules and regulations can differ from state to state or even from village to village.

***Kedam* - Flying Kites**

In Palauan the name of the frigate bird is *kedam*, but it also stands for a popular toy, the kite. The right season to fly kites is when strong winds blow from the east,

then the villagers go to *olsebokle el kedam*, flat topped hills with broad terraces around, where they find excellent conditions to let their kites soar in the air.

The kite-flying tradition is very old, and was invented by Uchelchelid, one of the gods of Palau. He loved to play with his messenger, the *kedam*, frigate bird, which was also his favorite pet. But one day it flew away and did not return. So he carved a similar one from wood and created a Palauan tradition. According to this story we can assume that the original form of a Palauan *kedam* depicted a bird. But no pictures or detailed descriptions of these early kites flown in Palau exist. Already during the time of the German administration they were no longer produced.¹

Some other popular forms of kites replaced them. Obak and Mc Knight report: The most spectacular kite, by far, is the *kedam el bekel*, the kite of the group. For the construction of such a kite (about 20 to 30 feet tall) the resources of a men's club are necessary. In some places the first seasonal flying of it is a major village feast. Another kite is the *kedam el belau*, a typical family kite, built by a father for his sons; it measures about one arm span. The name *elleiokl* describes a kite with a 'waist' and curved sides, whereas the *kedam el buil* is called the moon-kite because it has a circular shape. *Kedam el beluulechab* is actually the type of kite flown on Yap. Around 1860 a man named Erangas served as a crewmember on Captain O'Keefe's ship and visited Yap. Back in Palau he taught the Yapese form of a kite to the people of Palau.²

All kites are made of the same materials. Their frame is made of *lild*, bamboo, or of *raod*, the aerial root of *tebechel*, the mangrove tree.³ It is filled with wickerwork of *buuk*, pandanus.⁴ *Ukereel*, the kite string, is made of twisted fibers and about 2000 *reiongel*, arm spans, are needed. Many of the Palauan kites are outfitted with a tail, and some also have *besebesechel*, noisemakers, attached.²

A good kite is considered to be one that has a steady climb, which does not weave back and forth and thus reaches the highest elevation. Ideally, the operator should fly it to the fullest extent of the string, pound the stake of the string into the ground, and relax while the kite is sailing high and steady in the sky - like a *kedam*, a frigate bird.²

Traditional Palauan lifestyle requires men to use spears not only in warfare but also for fishing and hunting. Not surprisingly javelin-throwing is also a popular sport, since men can show off their skills. There are different disciplines where they can excel. *klaidechedang* is a spearing competition where spears with sharpened tips are used and the competitors aim at coconut fronds on the ground. In this way they can improve their accuracy in spearing. In contrast, *uloech ma chetkongel* is an athletic event where young men throw a spear with the help of a *chetkongel*, spear thrower, made of bamboo. In a contest, called *klaibengebang ma omang*, young men throw long sticks, skimming them along the ground. *klaiberburech* is another spearing event where each javelin-thrower takes his turn to hurl a spear with a blunt

tip, made from light wood such as *sui*⁵, at his opponent. The targeted person has a branch in his hand to deflect the oncoming spear. When competing in *kaiuechit* the contestants try to throw sticks of *lild*, bamboo, *akessel*,⁶ *bangernguis*, flagelleria⁷ or *temring*, donax⁸ as far as possible. *klaitukall* is a spearing competition of a different nature. It is a rather spontaneous contest; for example, when men go spear fishing one of them will say, "Let us see who can spear more fish".

Another sort of competition to display skills and physical strength is *klaiuengall ra uetech*. In this contest men throw stones or rocks in order to find out who can throw them the farthest.

Racing also plays a part in Palauan games. There is for instance *rurt* where young men compete in running, or *bekai*, the 'race with the child in the cradle'. Here two adults clasp their arms, forming a cradle where a child is sitting while they race. This is one of the few games where adults and children play together.

A contest where men directly compete with each other is *kaibedeckakl*, a wrestling match. The participants wrestle until they are exhausted. The winner is the wrestler who can hold down his opponent so that he cannot move any more.

Some very popular games were invented rather recently. *Klaidesachel er omeius*, a race of *kabekel*, war canoes, was created when the German colonial power

ended inter-village warfare. But the villages still had war canoes and the crew to handle them. Now they are effectively put into action in a competition held between two villages, which send their canoes to participate. One Palauan war canoe is about 43 to 45 feet long and can hold a crew of 30 to 40 men. During the competition the canoes race out into the lagoon, where they have to turn around and return to shore.

Blutek ra mlai sailing races, are also held. Several *kaeb* or *koteraol*, canoes, formerly used for sending messengers, take part in such a sailing competition.

Klaitmalk, which is today translated as cockfight, was already a popular game in pre-contact Palau. But then the game was played entirely differently. Two teams of men would participate. While one man was sitting on the shoulders of his partner, they would attack the other team, trying to topple them. During the Spanish time the real cockfight, where two tamed roosters fight each other, was introduced from the Philippines,⁹ and this *klaitmalk* is still very popular in Palau.

Klaiskurs is the well known tug-of-war. When played officially it is a game for young men. Two teams, one from each side of the village, compete against each other by pulling on a rope and trying to topple the members of the other team. *Klaiuetamet* is just another version of playing this game. Again two groups of participants face each other. The front persons grasp each other's arms and, held by their group at the waist, pull at each other.

Besides official games there are many ways of entertainment for young men. They *bedikl*, trap flightless birds. They play with a burnt coconut husk, *klaitonget*, tossing it at each other. The participant who fails to catch the husk and is touched by it loses. Or they play *klaitouetech*, throwing soft fruits, such as *doko*¹⁰ or breadfruit blossoms at each other, trying to avoid being hit. A more personal competition, popular with young men to show their strength, is *kaidebedubech*, arm wrestling.

As already mentioned, playing on full moon nights is a favorite pastime for young men and women. Actually it is the only time when women can participate in some games. Accompanied by much teasing and laughing, they can thus also compete against men. In the strict gender-divided life of Palau this can only happen at such an informal occasion as *omilil a buil*, playing in a full-moon-night. Thus in the light of the full moon another version of the above mentioned *klaiskurs*, tug-of-war, is played where a team of women competes against men. Some of these informal meetings at night take place on the beach and here *klaidebangel* is played where young men dig small holes and camouflage them in order to trick people into stepping into them.

Children's games

For children life generally is a time of play where they learn social relationships and develop their skills. With personal ambition so highly valued in Palau, many of the games have a competitive character. Already in the games of children the later gender segregation of the

society is noticeable because in many of them girls can only participate until they reach puberty.

For many games kids do not need any toys or equipment, only good company as, for instance, when small children play *klaibiblai*, imitating family life, raising children and being an adult. Another popular pastime, which can also be played indoors, is *klaibebelau*, telling riddles. Two or more children try to guess each other's riddles, like this one:

When young he wears cloth
but none when he is old.

Answer: Bamboo.

An entirely different game is *kaititngot* where the contestants engage in a hopping race on one foot while holding one leg with a hand. Before the game starts a *tuu*, goal, is designated and the first one who reaches it wins.¹¹

Klaiberbart, the well known hide and seek, is an all time favorite with children. Once they are hidden they shout "*chuuch!*" and the play can start and the seekers look for the hidden player. If they give up because they cannot find the hidden children they shout "*mo ouchuuch a terruchellei, get terruchelle!*" Then the well-hidden participants come out from hiding and say: "*terruchellei, ng chimo el keliu, terruchellei, one of your food.*" The meaning of *terruchellei* is unknown today.¹²

One of the favorite places for children's games is the beach at the sea, where they frolic in the water, holding a *klaidesachel ra omengikai*, swimming contest for small boys. Or playing *klaidelduleb*, trying to dunk each other into the water. Another popular entertainment in the water is *klaikedaob*, creating waves, and splashing each other.

Most boys love to play *blutek*, racing their model canoes in the sea. These boats are made of light wood awith a sail made from pandanus leaves. An outrigger is attached so that the toy boat does not capsize and the race is on. Playing *blutek* teaches children how to handle boats. Another game that is also played in the water, but in a *diong*, fresh water bathing pond, is *oltak a riamel*. Here the children try to float with interlocked legs, where they hold a *riamel*-fruit, *payan*¹³ as their float.¹⁴ To play *uul* you need a lot of space and thus it is played in the stream. A chaser tries to catch the other participants, The one he can touch become the new chaser. When fleeing and swimming the children shout, "*uul, uul.*"

The beach is also the right place to play *klaibibrang*. There are two popular versions of this game. In the simple version the contestants dig two feet deep holes. Each player has to fill his hole with rocks and shells found in the immediate surroundings; whoever finishes first wins. In a more elaborate version two teams participate. One person from each team holds a token. Both teams divide the rest of the players into an offensive and a defensive group. The offense group attacks the token holder of the opposing team, trying to capture the game piece, while the defensive group tries to fight them off. The token can be a small nut, a shell or a stone.¹⁵

In order to have real fun, quite a few children are needed in order to play *melaitul*, the caterpillar. The children line up, bending their backs forward and holding the child in front by the waist. They all stand with their legs spread wide apart. The last child in line will crawl through the legs in front, while the other children sing: “*melaitul, melaitul mteteu oim el rebetatang, melaitul, melaitul*” “spread your legs and let one drop to the ground”.

Toys, necessary for some games, are easily obtained from local materials. All sorts of vines, such as *kesebekuu*, Thomas bean,¹⁶ *kebeas*, yellow flower merremia,¹⁷ and *iuetekill*,¹⁸ are used to play *bir*, to jump rope. But when hanging from a tree these vines can also be used to play *btar*, swinging. In another game, *oltitenganged*, children use the spade of *chebouch* (*Pinanga insignis* Bell.) to sit on when racing down steep slopes. Spinning tops, *chebis*, are made from the fruits of *churur*¹⁹ or *kesebekuu*, Thomas bean and are an easily obtainable toy for all kids. When children play *klaibtuu*, a ball game, they need nothing other than coconut fronds to weave the ball. In their play they toss it in the air, and the players try to keep it aloft because the ball should not touch the ground.

Chelidebaol, cat's cradle, is a game that the gods brought to Palau. All you need is a string, made of hibiscus fiber. There are two ways to play *chelidebaol*. When two persons play they form a string-pattern with their hands, changing it every time it is transferred from one person to the other. This is the simple way to play this game and it is a favorite of children. The more difficult and intricate way is to play it on your own, using hands, feet and teeth

to form the string patterns, and usually adults play it. While creating a figure they tell the legend that is depicted by the string pattern. Thus an event can be portrayed by creating just one figure or in steps where each new figure represents another event and a story in several string pictures can be told. As for instance in the story of '*Rois a Rkiklau el mlechirt a telia lo tellechi Ngartik*': The first string figure depicts the collapse of the rock face on the village Ngartik, and the second one '*Eirachal ma Chringoi el dikasoes*' shows the only two survivors, who watch the destruction of their village from their boat at sea.²⁰ There is also a very popular string pattern for children called *chelidebaol*, the cut-off-head of the *chelid*, spirit, where the string figure is placed over the head of one of the players. Then the string is tightened and miraculously loosens and falls off.

Boys' games are of a more physical and competitive nature. For instance *klekool boes*, where they play with their blow guns, aiming at each other. Their pellets are the small fruits of *demailei*, Palma brava,²¹ *bars*²² or *chosm*.²³ When the blowgun is made of bamboo and is specially designed then it can also be used to shoot water. Boys also love to do *omaitarkub*, summersaults. Young men as well as boys like to compete in *outitmekall*, branch shaking. They climb up to the highest branches of a tree shaking them, thus showing their skill and daring. Another favorite entertainment, called *omuitongolel*, takes place in a tree where children hang with both hands from a tree branch. They raise their legs through their arms, then they drop to the ground and have to stand upright, without faltering.

***Cheldech duch el chelid* - Storytelling**

Palau has a rich tradition of storytelling, and, therefore, not surprisingly, many legends and stories circulate in the islands, being passed on from generation to generation. They depict past events that have significance in people's lives and relate a message concerning respect of customs, etiquette and the traditions of the village.

There are *cheldech duch el enelid*, legends from the time when gods were still roaming the islands of Palau, and there are *cheldech duch el chad*, stories about human beings and their adventures. They tell of warriors, wars, battles, great love affairs, good and bad leaders or animal characters. Even though they have been told over and over again, people enjoy listening to them.

True stories, told with an exaggerated voice, gestures and movements are called *klsekang*. When they are presented in this way, they become exciting and funny. In other words, they are like a comedy and performed for comic effect. Those who are experts in telling such stories are known as *kese kang el chad*, comedians.

Palauan stories are omnipresent, even in daily life. The protagonists of these stories can be encountered in the form of stone faces, they are depicted in the storyboards of the *bai*, meeting-houses, and they are the content of many chants. But in these art forms only a part of the story is depicted or related, whereas when the stories are told orally the entire narrative will be transmitted.

The best time for storytelling is at night. The scene is illuminated by the flickering light of an oil lamp. Family members sit together and legends from times long past are told, as well as stories from not so long ago. For an audience of children these stories, told with an exaggerated voice, are like fairy tales, but for a grown up their deeper meaning becomes apparent. Storytelling thus is an important feature in keeping traditions alive, bridging the past with the present and the future. Storytelling keeps Palauan history alive and breathing.

South Western Islands

The South Western Islands are situated 180 miles in the south of Palau. Traditionally its inhabitants belong to a different ethnic group than the people from Palau. They have different customs and speak a different language.

Sonsorol

Four islands Sonsorol, Fana, Pulo Ana and Meriil are the islands of Sonsorol State, where all people speak the same language though in different dialects. Sonsorol and Fana, as well as Pulo Ana and Meriil have close relationships. People from Sonsorol go to visit those of Fana and vice versa; such visits are called *hadai rap*. When people from Pulo Ana and Meriil visit, this is called *wai red*, literally translated 'big travel'. In former times these visits were done by canoe. Two or three canoes, each with six people on board, made the journey. Such visits are rare and happen only once or twice a year; thus they are a big event and occasion for a feast. Visitors are greeted with *malemal*, flower garlands, and food. Then the festivity starts with dances, singing and games.

Songs and Chants

On Sonsorol there are no musical instruments. The human voice in form of chants and songs is the only musical expression. Due to the close relationship, Sonsorol and Fana share the same songs and chants, as do Pulo Ana and Meriil. Some of the chants are so old that today their texts are no longer understood.

Lullabies - *Hasiuesiwe or Hasuesue*

Hapingeri Laturi Peimal

*lapie lada sorah mani were faroa / lai teri
lodipao laluwara hafatiro yalahabonga tiror fidi
raola paroa / laparue yare mangau osirahorak /
nga etaol tiroyael / haupouraho la ba / ebe
uolong demar / lato dae ra ra e pie tiroyar / bae
be tautoutake faruer / hotiua fang e ma ratue
tabaritek / e wai fatare dukukur / hotauke yafa
faroya nga e piepie tahaor / e rau mire bai tamo
/ masaya raho ri weliyah fare yamo dalaki /
lapie ladasoraho nga todumerei lee*

there are so many people living on the land / they call themselves the people who study navigation / they really know their stars / these navigators / so they eat the food of the navigator / but told to say nothing of their secrets they do not say anything and let the navigator do the talking / he will do the talking / because he always has stories when he returns from trips to the South West Islands / the island where we cannot go around it / so he had to go to explore it / this strange island was found after the grass cutting / your name will remain forever and this is the true story

Kaseri Hapala Ri Baluk

*nga hau ba tai fatohara ma uar / nga ftofato ri
ham we ekurat re yar hapar / sau labra haol
weki mal rareya / pareta ta haulul weki
bosararp a re ramar / fato ha e a taf / a we la
tibe sikie yariwe lahareya ya rae latafa la duk /
ba haholora ori ukupi maro laduk*

you are the tips and fruits just like your dancing / relatives have been teaching you from an early age / the villagers come to see you / like stringing flower garlands the audience is focusing on you / they watch you from every angle as if you were a turtle shell or

money / the comb that is decorated on top with carvings, white – tailed tropic bird feathers, and flowers

Such a *kaseri hapal* is performed alone among the spectators, while a relative is dancing alone in front of the audience. The singer praises the accomplishment of the dancer in the *kaseri hapal*, all the time holding *hapal*, a present, and showing it to all the people present. When the song is finished the *hapal* is presented to one of the elders of the community. Today this custom has changed and *hapal* is presented to the dancer.

Haping

*fahoro de maro mare bae dapou / nga e daroku /
piseri ramo yolu / horokuku-tengil e laumar ma
tawa ri bor / hopoura pori Hoism / horane
Haleyat ar mar / ba homanilud we iayapetas /
nga e darap hura / ba Ismam ma Horomam
we iayayari / hodalawalawa ho taborobor
horane pahoware matao*

a muscular and athletic man is coming from the south (Meriil) / he is the fastest among the people of Ipor / he has the strength of Hoism and the heart of Haleyat ar mar / he fought against the foreigners and had killed many / he resembles Ismam ma Horomam that can fly and his body changes color into blue / he even has the heart of a shark on the outer reefs

Haping tells of praise. When children are strong, diligent and industrious a song praising them is composed. The same sort of song can be used praising the accomplishment of a chief or a canoe. In another form of song, *hapangak*, the gods are praised. This is a traditional song of Pulo Ana and Sonsorol.

Hamalahala

*mou tataribong wa ya maro / ya ya roya Hapi
dadari yamaroya yamaro ya ha Meler / larukue
riya er ma tepar / nga la dahora ho pongori e
hamale / nga Dahora ma ping / lei waru ma saor
matara kara hamale / iaduko reni bengiri
hosowa ri ei datar /
ba iao dao ya tiro ba lada dao yatiro yaraladao
tukume*

the weather is calm there is not a wind or anything /
Hapi dadari forgot Malerasak / they keep thinking
about this girl all alone in the house / they don't know
that she has other ideas and plans / Dahora ma ping lies
next to her keeping an eye on her / they were fooled by
the woman's trickery but they don't know how I do it

Hamalahala are very popular love songs on Sonsorol and there are several ways to express your feelings. In *hamalahala* you sing against loneliness, or to fight sleepiness while fishing. Such a song should make you happy and be entertaining. On the other hand *bohoro* is a love song that cannot be sung in a mixed gender company, especially when you are a man and your mother or your sister is present because the text is often very sexual. It is usually composed and sung when the singer is deeply in love and courts someone. A rather sad love song is *tangi*. It is composed when a sweetheart has gone away and it is full of love and heartache. When the composer of a *tangi* dies, his song will be sung during the funeral by the relatives.

In Sonsorol people like to tease and can do so in different ways. *Hamati* is a satirical song to tease other people whereas *tohotoho*, another teasing song, will be

sung at competitive events. For instance when a meeting house is built and the northern and the southern part of the village compete against each other. *Tohotoho* can be sung in a playful competition between lovers as well as between men and women on a communal basis.

Recently, when the islanders became Catholics, *singen*, church songs, have been introduced. *Singen* is actually the German term for singing.

Baluk – Dances

Celebrations are held in front of and inside the meeting house. Each single village performs its own dances while the others look on. The dancers decorate their faces with *lang*, turmeric. They wear a comb, which is decorated with feathers and flowers according to the family tradition. Further on they wear *malemale*, flower garlands, on their heads and necks. A flower is usually worn in the ear. A final category of decorations are made from *ubut*, young white coconut fronds. They are called *latar ri pou* when they are placed on the arms, *rak ri* on the fingers, and when formed like a loop and worn like a tail they are named *haduk ri*. On the legs they are called *latar ri kub* and on the head, *yari warang*.

Baluk means to sing and dance while moving your hands in order to interpret the text of the song. Today this term is generally used for dancing. At an early age children learn at home the basic Sonsorolese dancing, where the upper body remains straight and only the hips are swaying from side to side or back and forth. In order to teach their children parents will tie coconuts around

the waists of the kids to make them conscious about the smoothness of their movements. Once this is accomplished the training of the different choreographies starts in the meeting house under the supervision of a knowledgeable elder. During a performance each individual dancer should dance gracefully and smoothly and the group should perform in harmony and act as one body. Big dances are held when the completion of a meeting house is celebrated or when visitors come to the island. Then a fixed dance order is followed, where men and woman of the different villages would dance separately:

1. The men of Damale.
2. The women of Damale.
3. The men of Maiol.
4. The men of Hanotio.
5. The women of Maiol.
6. The women of Hanotio.

People from the small village Hatoru dance together with those from Hanotio.¹

Baluk ri rukuri far is performed in form of a competition of village sides, and therefore rather strong words and gestures are used. During the dance love songs are sung, the knees are bent deep and the hips are moved not only from side to side, but also back and forth. Because of such explicit sensuality such a dance can not be performed inside the meeting house, but only outside. Inside the meeting house *baluk ri nifar* is performed. Out of respect the movements and songs are not as expressive as in the before-mentioned dance. First the family of the chief performs a *hapangak*. This is an old song and dance from ancient times in which one of the two gods of the island is praised. Then a second praising song, called

haping talau is performed to honor the other god Talau. A dance of courtship follows, where love songs of a more refined sort are sung. The knees are only slightly bent and the subtler dance movements are performed. Then a *baluk mato* follows, where the dancers start dancing in a sitting position and while dancing they slowly have to rise. This is the most difficult part of the dance, and those are acclaimed who accomplish it gracefully.

Children frequently dance ring-a-ring-o'roses on the beach.

Hakam - Games

Not all the games are competitive, many are only for enjoyment. Sonsorol, Fana, Pulu Ana and Meriil are small sandy islands and the children's playground is the beach. Adults also spend the moonlit nights there amusing themselves with singing and games, but mostly men and children participate in the playful merriment. The only playful entertainment women have is *hakamori fadu rourou*, which is a tradition from Pulo Ana, and it is a 'house play'. Sitting on the beach, women tell each other stories. Dotted cone shells represent the female protagonists and white shells the men. Old and rough shells depict old people while small and shiny shells represent children. In this fashion the stories are enacted and told.

The entertainment of the men is *peipe*, to wrestle on the beach. The one who falls first is the loser of the game. *Hamaiya fitoh*, tug of war, is also a popular pastime for men.

Running is a favorite sportive activity. *Kilim*, running competitions, are staged, or *tabeya* chases, where you have to catch someone. Children love to race along the beach playing *kilim ra hataris*, chasing half a coconut or *palem*, a nipa² leaf that is rolled by the wind. A race of an entirely different nature is *hakamori uman*, the race of the hermit crab. A hole is dug in the sand and a stick with branches at its upper end is placed inside. *Uman*, hermit crabs, are put in there and the fun to watch them, how they try to get out of the hole, begins.

Another popular entertainment, staged on the beach and in the water, is *kilim ra maladau*, a race with small models of canoes with sails (only 1-2 feet long). The canoes are made of *kikifou*, hibiscus,³ whereas the sails are made of leaves. Another water sport is *haparapara*, surfing. Several persons surf with a canoe or a piece of wood through the surf of the island.

Also on Sonsorol *kamaromaro*, hide and seek, is enjoyed by both girls and boys. They also play together *rut fari tari*, when two people swing a vine or a rope while others jump over it. Even men will sometimes join this game.

Ukur wari yalo, a blow gun, is a toy for boys. It is shaped from a piece of bamboo, found as driftwood on the beach, from the stem of a papaya leaf or from the stem of *mokumoku*, arrowroot.⁴ Different seeds such as from *uwa ri yalo*, verbena-tree⁵ are used as pellets.

When children sit around a heap of sand, they play *pikirom*. They place one hand on it and when one child starts singing *pikirom* ... All children slap the sand alternately with the palm and the back of their hand. The one whose palm is on the sand at the end of the song wins the game.

A rather spooky game is *rake ra mat*. One person pretends to be dead. The others sit around the 'body' and lament their loss. Suddenly the dead one jumps up and everybody runs away.

***Fiang* - Storytelling**

When a mother is breastfeeding her small baby she will sing lullabies. Later on when the baby starts to talk stories just like lullabies are told. The older the child gets the more information is transferred by the stories. How a good child should behave, how to be modest and humble, how hard work is accomplished and how the community always has to be considered. Later on stories about men and women as well as life on the islands will be told. Through these legends the love and respect for your island, for your village, for your parents, etc. are transmitted. Thus children are trained to become valuable members of the community and the most important virtues, modesty and sharing, are transmitted.

Hatohobei

This small island is also called Tobi. People live so isolated they take any event as an occasion to celebrate, sing, and dance.

Habungur – Feasts

There are several occasions to hold a feast. They are usually accompanied by the distribution of a lot of food as well as performances of dances and chants. Generally women sing and dance first then the men dance.

Witeri tamor is the name of the feast when a new chief is inaugurated. It starts with a prayer. Again the women dance first, because they were the ones who chose the new chief. During these dances *haping tamor*, songs about the chiefs, are sung. Afterwards the new chief receives from Romohoparuh, the highest title-holding woman of the island, a necklace made of turtle shell. This necklace has been handed down to him and is a sign of his title. Only the chief himself can eat the food prepared for him. Then *koritamor*, the second part of the inauguration feast for the new *tamor*, chief, is celebrated. It can also be held in honor of the chief's birthday or when he is leaving the island. The food prepared for this feast can be distributed and consumed by everybody.

A very special feast is the one held for a *taungch*, a girl that has her menarche. This is a feast that is celebrated within the family. The girl spends this time in the *imeriporu*, menstruation hut, where Romohoparuh, the highest title-holding woman of the island, takes care of her. She and the other women will sing a sort of lullaby

for the young girl, telling her that soon she will feel better, that she should have a good night's sleep, and that she soon will go home again.

A rare feast is *hoho*, which happens only once a year and no incidents such as accidents or deaths should have happened before it. When the chiefs announce *hoho* the women prepare taro, which is considered a value on Tobi Island, and the men go fishing. The oldest woman of the family brings her taro to a man who is no relative of her. She approaches him on the beach when he returns from his fishing trip. When the taro is presented the woman sings *taiau*, a song in which she will sing about herself and her feelings, generally depicting herself. This song is accompanied by a dance where she sways her hips, while the man shouts "*merio itetiu*" – "go down" (meaning dancing with more bent knees). Older women can dance more daringly than young ones. In the end the man has to give his catch of fish for the offered taro.

A feast without any dancing is *pau ri wa*, where the completion of a canoe is celebrated with the distribution of a lot of food.

Dances

On Hatohobei there are many kinds of dances and many names for them. There are no sitting dances. All dances are performed standing. Dancing is taught in the family; the mother will teach her daughters and the father his sons. During the dance training, drinking coconuts are worn around the waist in order to help to study the hip movements. A good dancer has smooth movements,

is mobile in the hips and has coordinated hand movements with the other dancers. Men and woman perform separately. The dances performed by women are called *bahuh*. In contrast to the men the movements of the women are smoother, they slap their backside and their thighs. During the dance of the men, called *pong*, the dancers are moving their hips in the rhythm of the song they slap their upper arms and make bold movements.

Before the dances start the dancers are decorated. Their arms, legs, waist and head are adorned with strips of *ubud*, the young fronds of the coconut tree. Women paint their face and body with *heng*, turmeric. The men also use feathers of frigate birds as decorations.

All the dancers stand in one long line facing their teacher, who is sitting in front of them and singing ahead of the others. In the middle of the line stand the oldest dancers, while the young ones, who are just learning how to dance, stand at the end of the line, looking carefully and imitating the others. During the performance clowning persons will appear, focusing their attention on the best dancers of the group and trying to confuse and distract them. When the women dance, men bring presents and vice versa. Thus a dance on Tobi is a very merry occasion.

Peter Black¹ mentions the *wari hoho* gift dance, performed only once a year on Christmas day. After the women have performed their dances they slip away to their houses and tie cords around their waists from which they hang valuables such as fishhooks, bars of soap,

parcels of food, sometimes even a live rooster tied by his feet. Decked out like this they return to the dance ground. They form a circle, face inwards and begin to dance, swaying and stomping in unison. They chant a special song, heard only in this one dance, insulting and teasing the men:

*nga hichaho shifire / nga sibe uheri bangora ba
mangi / mangare chamahe / ba ibe buhau
iyahomu / wore mahahaera ba hobe faisai /
ngoyae faisong hoho / nga euteri sohu wamo
nga chataliato rotor*

we, the women dancers / we dance early in the morning / in anticipation of meeting our lovers who went fishing / he will kiss me when his canoe has been filled with his catch / and he will bring forth his canoe

The men, who were until now in the canoe house, come out and one by one join the dancers. While teasing the women they untie the presents and actually dance this once together with the women.

Before the men go fishing they perform a *pongori iafiefirih*, fishing dance, to make sure that they will have a good catch. The movements of this dance imitate those of the actual fishing. *Pongori totogoriuor* is a turtle dance also performed before the men go turtle hunting. While dancing they sing songs about their hunting skills and former hunting events. Women also have a dance to make sure that their taro is growing well; this is the *gesibemir ueni farohach iuane yach purpur*, female taro patch dance. They dance it before going to their taro patch to work.

Songs

People on Tobi like to *mauhari*, sing, as this is one way to express feelings. Women sing while working in their gardens or taking care of their children. Men sing when they go fishing but also at night when they meet for their *tuba*-circle on the beach, where they drink fermented palm wine. They will sing about their girlfriends, wishes and dreams. But the singers do not *hur*, compose, their songs themselves, they have them created by some old men who are renowned for such talent. Provided with all the information needed, they will create a custom-made song for the client and get payment in form of *horohor*, rope made of coconut fiber, and food. Then the song will become the property of the customer. Nevertheless, everybody who likes the song can sing it; thus, a good song is widely sung and popular.

Hureri Fariuou

*mechichetahe mar simoto matari farech sihator
/ tirareor toborior neiahafi / efosonguchich
meraoch eyahuyohungara hech / ba etiue bisiria
hem / etiue mahaeiruh eitiudu meniuar / sieri
taheahaos sihesia ueri faroh / hoia me
hamahemam / emousu ma tarifarech nieri
hango riaer / uan tap itpna / ehasoias me tipei
ematahutohu ngaroch / iueni peih yahem itiro
haugerih uuei mamatareahaua / hobe hatoh
hamahech ba samane hapitehi /
beteingamihousaho / ba rangirae hasafarea
eitara rani pepa / ebuk ngarahech wait man ri
hapeach ba sarue rangir / ema serap iuaoch /
ngayauari bonguto ho meuari ra touauh / eyah
bahoni fangoch ngae tiua uerifaroh
kebesengeiri bongur*

we young men, we sit in front of our boathouse
looking at the sunset / children are shouting informing
us that there are groups of people coming on shore /
I am calling and asking for my loved one in the crowd
/ I made a stop in front of our boathouse and my
sweetheart was standing in front of a women's group /
I screamed in fear with my heart pounding while
standing in the crowd / I called to my friend to give me
my sweetheart because I love her very much / it is not
your decision for it is written in heaven that we will go
there someday / tonight is our moment

Hureri fariou, love songs, are usually sung at two occasions. First when you have a heart full of love or a broken one and want to express your feelings, you have such a song composed for you. Later on this *hurerifariouu* will be sung at the funeral of its owner as a *tangi*, a funeral song, chanted in order to remember the person, who was once alive and in love.

Hachuhochuh, lullabies, were written a long time ago. They are sung while children are rocked to sleep in the cradle. Lullabies describe how beautiful, strong and diligent the children will be one day. During funerals lullabies are also sung, as *tangi* or wailing songs.

When men go fishing they not only sing love songs to pass the time but also *hureriseiroho*, fishing songs, in order to lure the fish to the boat.

The island of Tobi is divided in two halves, the north and the south. At the time of big feasts these halves will have competitive performances and will tease each other with *haping*, teasing songs.

A special song connected with a game played by children is *ueicherier*, the fire-ant-pain-song. While singing this song, children squeeze the skin of each other's hands. The child who cannot tolerate the pain any more will run away and has lost. Such songs are composed by old women.

A recent introduction is *singen* church songs. Today Tobi has an extensive canon of church songs, also comprising Christmas songs, like this one:

Haifouri Hamau Hari Fasari Tamor

*sibe mayahamo hehei bis / sibe mayahamo
heihai bis sibera Bethlehem / ifiri Hesus ue
sibera hauenger /ngae masuh Tamor rani
imerimer / etai tipar me ebetaitei esaraha ho
fahol / sina ue, esahoharangeraur ariweich /
irenitepieni henimer raetaimoh / erap seua yar
homouer / ariweich hahofahof / engei seua ifiri
yar fou / emamayahih / esasohuriweich / bito ba
hobe hahapaipai ba hobe hamama uh / hobe
hatahama / faringorongorum / ba hobe fahoho
hariweich hobe hari me bechi /*

*Chorus: Dios yeai / tipei emesari seuaho /
efasato ngae hahofahof / nga tipei ehamarie*

look up to Bethlehem and learn from Jesus / our father
sleeps in a manger and does not care for wealth as he is
modest / the mother places the baby in rugged bedding
/ the poor baby shivers from the cold of the night / the
baby looks upon you and says, " come closer so you
will care for me" / open your heart and have pity for
the child and give him warmth

Chorus: my god / I love you very much / if you were
poor or just a baby I would still love you very much

***Kokom wer i pie* – Games on the Beach**

Many of the below mentioned games are played in the cool of the night on the beach as a favorite pastime.

Competitions are called *hihim*. The whole population enjoys them. Women have special competitions, like basket or mat weaving, whereas the men compete in climbing coconut trees and husking coconuts or they hold a *hihim merir fatur*, a paddling race.

Children have many of their own competitions. They hold *hihim merir iaf*, a swimming contest or play *hapesi*, where they dive down and hold their breath as long as possible. Another game played in deep water is *rumoh*. Boys dive deep down under water, where they stand on each other's shoulders until the head of the last one surfaces above the water. The one who can no longer hold the others or his breath will be the last one, whose head is sticking out of the water in the next game.

When children play *hatri moromor* they bury one child in the sand so that only the head looks out, and then run away. The buried child has to struggle out of the sand in order to get free and chase after them.

Storytelling

Often old people tell stories to the young ones, but adults also enjoy listening to them. The legends from the past talk about the many ghosts of the island, about the ancient times of Tobi and past historical events. Storytelling is a nightly entertainment, to educate and entertain at the same time.

Footnotes

Mur - Feasts

- ¹ Krämer, 1926:309.
- ² Krämer, 1926:307.
- ³ Krämer, 1926:313.
- ⁴ Krämer, 1926:309.
- ⁵ Krämer, 1929:129.
- ⁶ Krämer, 1926:312.

Dances

- ¹ *Caranx melanpygus*.
- ² Fam. Artherinidae.
- ³ Krämer, 1926:315.
- ⁴ Krämer, 1926:313.
- ⁵ *Curcuma domestica* Valet.
- ⁶ Hijikata, 1993:193.
- ⁷ Krämer, 1929:294-295.
- ⁸ *Plumeria* Spp.
- ⁹ *Freycinetia villalobosi*.
- ¹⁰ *Limnophila aromatica* Lam.
- ¹¹ *Fragraea galilai* G. et B.
- ¹² *Bikkia Palauensis* Val.
- ¹³ Krämer, 1922a:79.

Songs

- ¹ Yamaguchi, 1963:20-21.
- ² Yamaguchi, 1963:35.
- ³ Yamaguchi, 1963:41.
- ⁴ Yamaguchi, 1963:60.
- ⁵ Yamaguchi, 1962:56, 58.

Games

- ¹ Krämer, 1926:322.
- ² Obak and McKnight.
- ³ *Rhizophora mucronata* Lam.
- ⁴ *Pandanus kanehirae* Mart.
- ⁵ *Alpinia pubiflora*.
- ⁶ *Phragmites karka* Loxb.

- ⁷ *Flagelleria indica* Linn.
- ⁸ *Donax canniformis*.
- ⁹ Krämer, 1926:321.
- ¹⁰ *Hernandia sonora* L.
- ¹¹ Hijikata, 1993:187.
- ¹² Hikikata, 1993:184.
- ¹³ *Pangium edule* Reinw.
- ¹⁴ Hijikata, 1993:189.
- ¹⁵ Hijikata, 1993:184.
- ¹⁶ *Entada pusaetha* DC.
- ¹⁷ *Mekeiah Umbellah* L.
- ¹⁸ *Lophopyxis pentaptera* (K. Schum. Engl).
- ¹⁹ *Sonneratia alba* J. Smith.
- ²⁰ P. Raymund, 1911:40-61.
- ²² *Vitex coffassus* Reinn.
- ²³ *Premna obtusifolia* R. Br.

Sonsorol

- ¹ Eilers, 1935:74.
- ² *Nipa fruiticans* Wurmb.
- ³ *Hibiskus tiliaceus* sp.
- ⁴ *Tacca leontopetaloides*.
- ⁵ *Premna obtusifolia* R. Br.

Hatohobei

- ¹ Peter Black, 1992.

Credits

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Illustrations:

Cover: Krämer, 1929b, Doppeltafel 14,
Women dancing.

Fig. 1: Krämer, 1926:119, Abb. 116, 117.

Fig. 2: Krämer, 1926:119, Abb. 118, 119.

Fig. 3: Krämer, 1926:120, Abb. 120.

Fig. 4: Krämer, 1929b:Doppeltafel 10.

Fig. 5: Krämer, 1926:209, Abb. 187.

Fig. 6: Krämer, 1929b:Doppeltafel 21.

Fig. 7: Krämer, 1926:Tafel 17.

Fig. 8: Krämer, 1926:28, Abb. 15.

Fig. 9: Krämer, 1926:119, Abb. 211.

Fig. 10: Krämer, 1926:313, Abb. 210.

Fig. 11: Krämer, 1929b:Doppeltafel 23.

Fig. 12: Krämer, 1926:209, Abb. 187.

Fig. 13: Krämer, 1926:Tafel 18.

Fig. 14: Krämer, 1926:Tafel 16.

- Fig. 15: Krämer, 1926:Tafel 16.
Fig. 16: Krämer, 1926:Tafel 17.
Fig. 17: Krämer, 1926:Tafel 17.
Fig. 18: Krämer, 1929b:Doppeltafel 5.
Fig. 19: Krämer, 1926:Tafel 16.
Fig. 20: Krämer, 1929b:Doppeltafel 26.
Fig. 21: Krämer, 1929b:Doppeltafel 15.
Fig. 22: Krämer, 1926:319, Abb. 212.
Fig. 23: Raymund, 1911:55.
Fig. 24: Krämer, 1929b:Doppeltafel 32.
Fig. 25: Eilers, 1935:Tafel 8.
Fig. 26: Eilers, 1935:Tafel 8.
Fig. 27: Eilers, 1936:Tafel 6.

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The following illustration was provided by the courtesy of the Hamilton Library of the University of Hawaii: 23.

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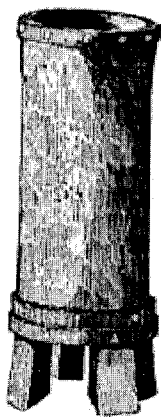
Die Faden und Abnehmspiele auf Palau

Anthropos p. 40. 1911

Osamu Yamaguchi

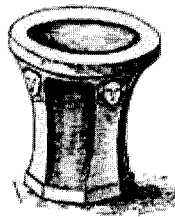
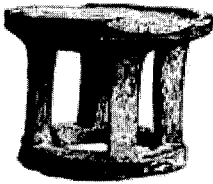
The Music of Palau: An Ethnomusicological Study of
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Thesis, 1963



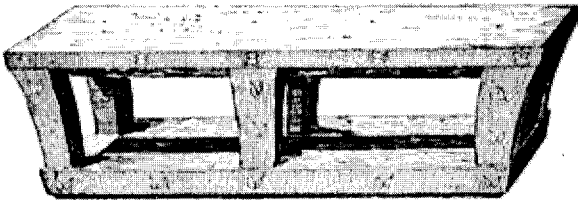
1. Two *ilengel*, wooden vessels for coconut syrup water.

Teblong el ilengel, delsachel el kerrekar el blil a ilaot.
(left: h. 15,7 inches, right: h. 8 inches)



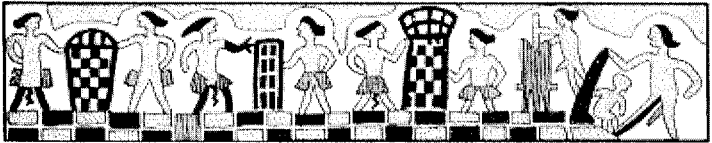
2. Round, wooden tables for offerings to the gods.
The one with faces as decoration is from Ngatpang.

Teblong el chaibibeob el tebel el blil a uldars el mo ra rechelid.
Sel ngarngii a blotk el medal chad er ngii a klalo ra Ngetbang.
(h. 23,5 inches)



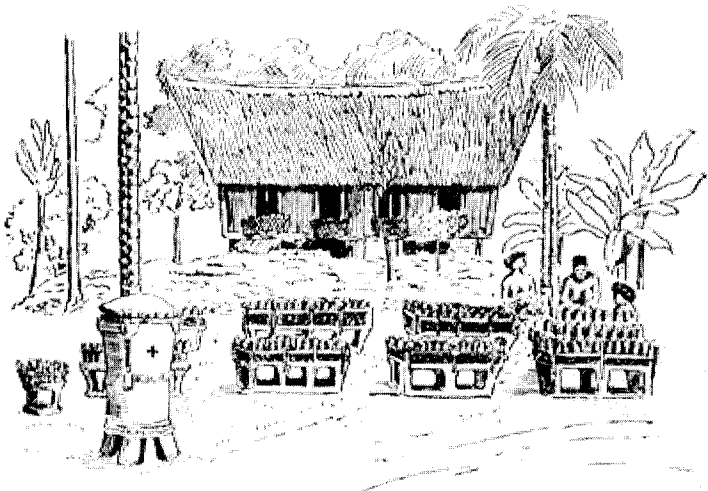
3. During big feasts taro corms are exhibited on such taro benches.

A kall ra mur a ngarnyii osengelel ma kukau a le ngai el mechobech ra bebul tial oleketokel.
(l. 50,5, w. 15, h. 13, 5 inches)



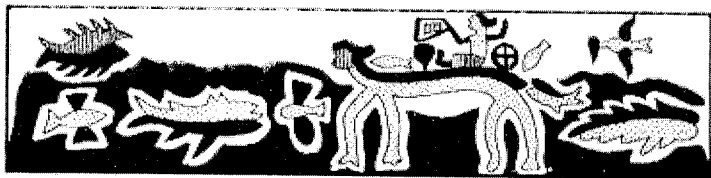
4. This storyboard shows the preparations of a feast, where Ngirakerenguang, from Elab, put his magic into an *ilengel*, coconut syrup vessel, so that all participants of the feast got very excited.

Tial Itabori a olecholt a teletelel a okedmeklel a mur. A Ngirakerenguang ra Elab a ngilai a olai el smuk ra ilengel ma rechad el mla ra mur a di miltebeall.



5. Feast held by Rubasag of Koror. On the left hand side there are some round tables with offerings to the gods. On the right hand side women place taro corns on the taro benches. In the middle is a big *ilengel*, vessel, for coconut syrup water.

Mur el Rubasech er Oreor a merruul er ngii. Ngara katur a mechaibibeob el tebel el ngarngii a uldars el mo ra rechelid. Ngara kadikm a redil el omechobech a kukau ra bebul a oleketokel. I'a ngara belngel a ilengel el blil a ilaot.



6. The wife of Olungis is traveling on the back of a water strider (fam. Gerridae) to her native village for the celebration of her *chelsimer el mur*, feast for a woman. She has provisions for the journey and some money with her. (detail)

Bechil a Olungis el ngara ulkel a charmndiong el mora belual el mo merruul ra merngel, chelsimer el mur. Ngullab a sesei el bengtelengel ma sesei el udoud.



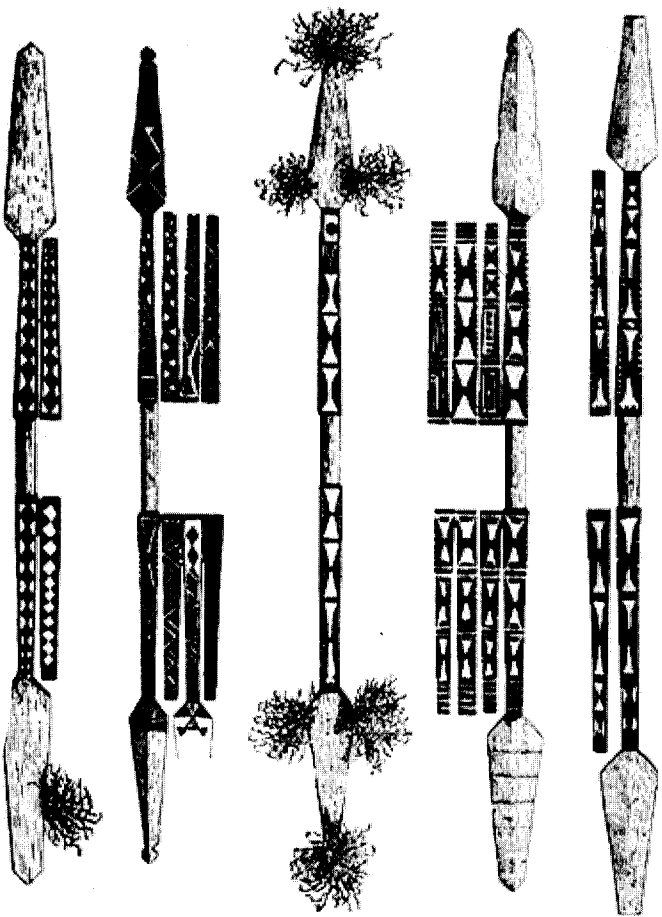
7. Women bring food for the guests of a feast in Sechemus, Koror.

Redil el olab a kall el me ra mur ra Sechemus er Oreor.



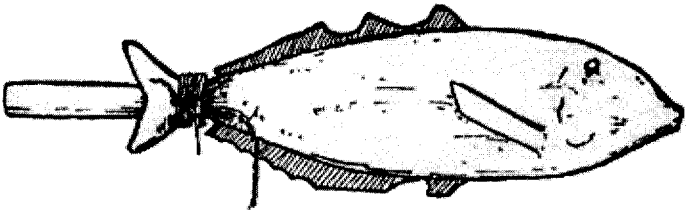
8. Body ornaments for female dancers made with *reng*, turmeric.

Besiich ra bedengir a redil el meloik el meruul ra reng.



9. Decorated ceremonial paddles, used for dancing.

Belsiochel el besos el lolab el meloik.
(ca. 23,5 inches)



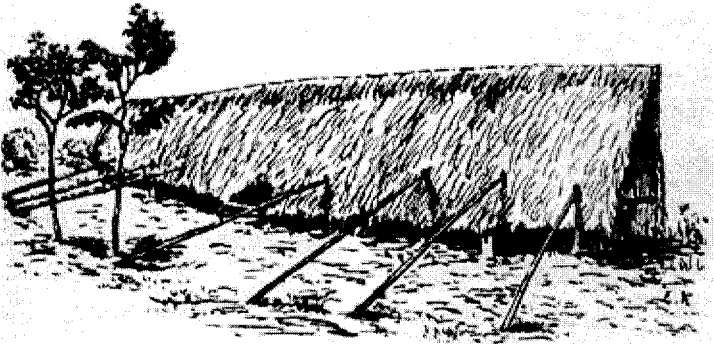
10. Dance object in form of an *oruidel*, fish.

Klekedellel omeloik el teletelel a oruidel.



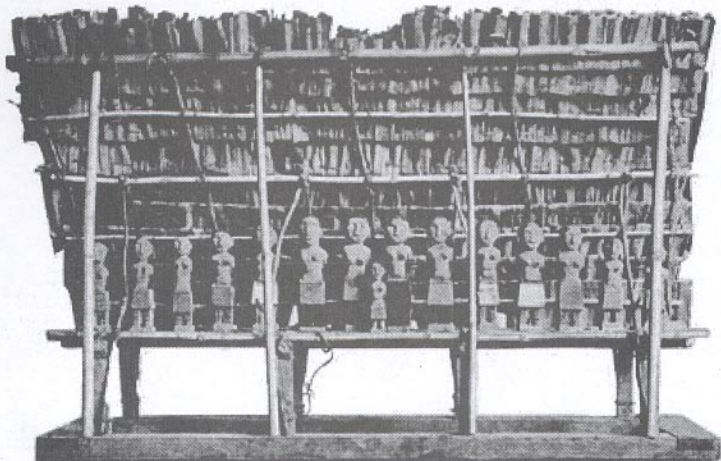
11. Men dancing the *ruk*, dance. (detail)

Sechal el ouruk.



12. *Diangel*, dance house, still closed for the training of the dancers inside.

Diangel el ngar ngii e mesuub a ngloik. Ng chelsimer ele te ngar ngii ar mesuub a ngloik ra chelsel.



13. The model of the dance house shows the dancing stage and the roof, held up by poles. Underneath the women are lined up for their dance.

Tiang a okesiul a blil a ngloik. Ngo le cholt ra oilaol ma chadeuel el seluches ra kerrekar. Ea redil a blechobech el kirel a nglikir.



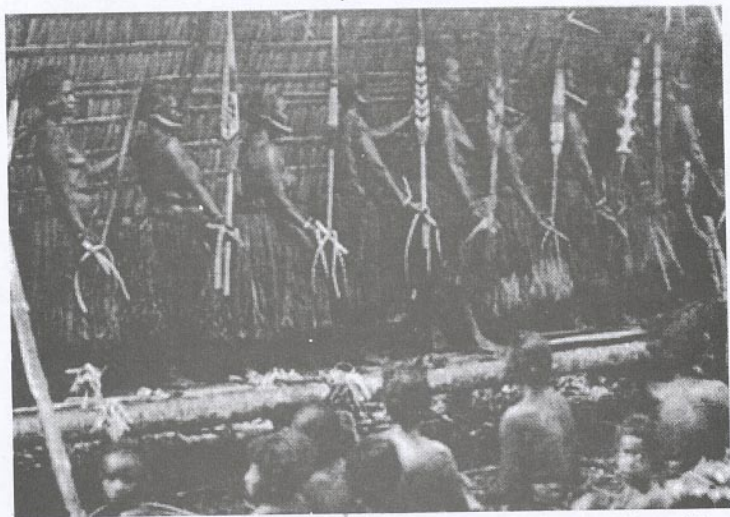
14. Women dancing on the stage of an open *diangel*, dancing house in Ngeruikl.

Redil el meloik ra bebul a oilaol ra diangel el seluches a chesmerel, tiang a ngara Ngeruikl.



15. Group of women decorated for a dance in Sechemus, Koror.

Cheldebechelir a redil el belsiochel el mo meloik ra Sechemus er Oreor



16. Women dancing with dance paddles in their hands, Ngeruikl.

Redil el meloik el olab besos. Ngar Ngeruikl.



17. Women dancing in front of a *bai* in Sechemus, Koror.

Redil el meloik ra cheldekkel a bai ra Sechemus er Oreor



18. This storyboard depicts the story of the land *Bikaket*, which is divided into two parts. In *Ongotakatl* dance the women, while the men dance in *Ngeanges*. They cannot meet each other because of the dangerous strait between them. (detail)

Tial Itabori a olecholt ra cheldechedechal a chutem el *Bikaket* el bliongel el mo teblong. A ngar *Ongotakatl* a redil el meloik ear sechal a ouruk ra *Ngeanges*. Ng diak el sebechir el mo kebetechele ngarngii a kengaol el daob ra delongilir.



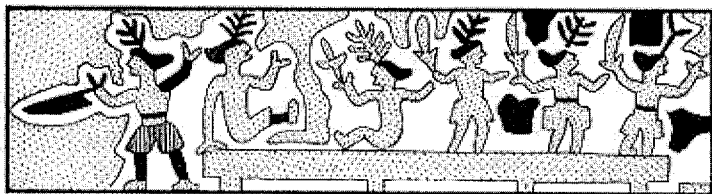
19. Girls dancing in front of the *rubak bai*, chief's meeting house, in Chelab, Ngaraard.

Ngalek el redil el meloik ra medal a bai ra rubak ra Elab er Ngaraard.



20. Choldechol was a famous singer in Kayangel. One day the men's clubs from Koror wanted to built a new stone-bridge in Ngerkemais and sent for him to come and entertain the workers with his chants. He came in a *kaberruuch*, boat where he had 8 baskets filled with songs on board. (detail)

A Choldechol a ungil a chiklel el chad ra Ngcheangel. Ar cheldebechel er Oreora telib el mo meruul ra did el bad ra Ngerkemais mete milsumech el mo melai ra Choldechol el me mengelaod er tir. Ng ka mlei el ngara kaberruuch el loltak a kleai el sualo el mui ra chelitakl.



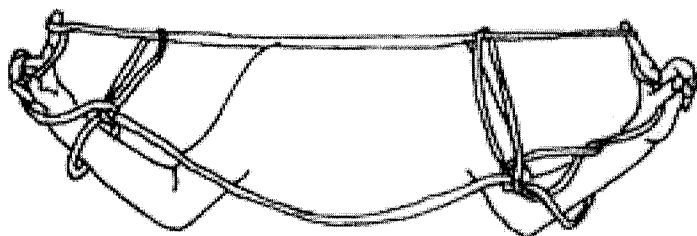
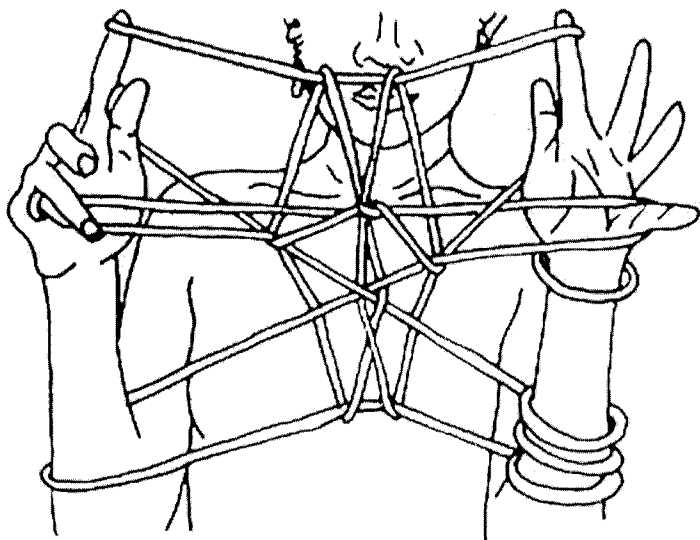
21. The storyboard depicts the story of the slipshod *mengeseb*, lead singer of Ngerdelolk, on Peleliu. Once upon a time a *ruk*, dance, was held in Ngerdelolk, and the *mengeseb* did not pay attention when the men got up to all kinds of mischief, playing around on stage in female clothes. Finally the wife of the *mengeseb*, lead singer came calling him. Then he had to leave and the other men as well. (detail)

Tial Itabori a ouchais a chisel a mengeseb el chad ra chelitakl ra Ngerdelolk ra Beliliou. Ng mla er ngii a ruk ra Ngerdelolk, eng kal mengeseb a dimlak el lomtab a teletelir tirkal ouruk el mla mekiis mete mengebelung ra bebul oilaol e mla tuu a bilir a redil er tir. A bechil ngkal mengeseb a mlei el mekedongii a bechil meng merael me tirkal ouruk mete dirrek el mirrael.



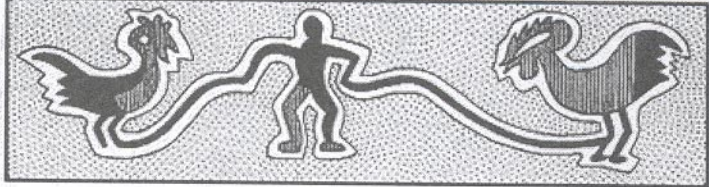
22. The jew's harp is made of bamboo.

Tiang a jew's harp el tumetum el rruul ra bambuu.



23. This cats cradle depicts an event that happened in Ngaraard. The first string figure is called *'Rois ra Rkiklau el mlechirt a telia lo tellechi Ngartik'* and depicts the collapse of the rock face of a mountain on the village Ngartik. The second string figure is called *'Eirachal ma Chringoi el dikasoes'* and shows the only two survivors who, coming home from fishing, watch the destruction of their village from their boat.

Tiang a chelidebaol el ouchais a chisel a tekoi el dilubech er Ngaraard. Mesel kot el chelidebaol a olecholt ra Rois ra Rkiklau (Ngkeklaul) el mlechirt a teliang er ngii el otelechii a beluu ra Ngartik (Ngertik). E tiang el ongerung a Eirachal (Irachel) ma Cheringoi. Chisir tirkal terung el chad er tial beluu el silobel, te mla ra chei e mrael el mei e mesa tial kerrior el mlo ra blurir.



24. Cockfight

Klaidmalk



25. Children play with their toy boats on the beach of Sorsorol Island (detail).

Rengalek el lorrael a klekool el mlai (omlutek) ra kederang ra Sorsorol.



26. Decorated children dancing a ring o' ring of roses on the beach of Sonsorol Island (detail).

Rengalek el meloik ra ring o' ring of roses ra kederang ra Sonsorl.



27. Children dancing on the beach on Hatohobei Island (detail).

Rengalek el meloik ra kederang ra Techobei.