Stories and Poems of New Guinea read by Bernard Barshay

CONTENTS:
1 LP
1 text (8 p.)
NOTES ON "STORIES AND POEMS OF NEW GUINEA"

The connection between black culture in Africa and black artistic expression in the United States has been recognized for some time. Bernard Barshay, however, has also been aware that other continents had their own outstanding black artists, including writers.

A long-time world traveler, both in his role as foreign correspondent (North American Newspaper Alliance and the Long Island Press) and as scholar of comparative literature (Long Island University professor), he was especially impressed by the rich literary tradition of Papua, New Guinea.

Based on the tales and legends of its tribes, this tradition was diversified because of the more than 700 languages and dialects still spoken in that country just off the coast of Australia. In recent years, with the advancement of education in New Guinea, the retelling of the great stories and poems of the past by oral means has been replaced, in part, by publication of the more talented writers in the island. This is mostly done in standard English due to the influence of Australia, which controlled New Guinea until very recently, as well as in Pidgin.

Mr. Barshay collected, and edited, the best of these stories and poems with the result that the flow of language is clear and easily understandable as well as a joy to hear.

SIDE 1
1. Lonely War by Alois Jerewai
2. The Musical Kidnappers by Alber Toro
3. Wantoks by Joseph Saruva

SIDE 2
1. The Breeze by Gwen Toleau
2. Liberation of Women by L. Laepa
3. To Her Majesty (Elizabeth II) by Jack Lahui
4. Lovely Bed by Martin Balthasa
5. Past and Present by Arthur Matlabe
6. Expatriates by L. Raepa
7. Papua New Guinea by Nende Ipagongnaik
8. The Last Kuanande by Benjamin Umba
in the darkness, he could just discern four dark figures moving toward him. Had they seen the fire? he wondered. A night breeze brought the faint scent of the tobacco the enemy used— it clung to their uniforms. Kalig could tell Australians from Americans the same way.

In the dark, he pressed his elbow to his waist and felt his knife in its sheath.

The enemy scouts, about twenty feet apart, advanced slowly and passed a few feet from him. Kalig lay still until the first three men were out of sight before he moved. Silently his left arm went around the fourth scout's neck and with his right he drove the cold knife into the heart. He twisted the blade and withdrew it. The other three men were still moving away.

Kalig carefully undid the uniform of his victim, donned the clothing, took up the enemy rifle and helmet and was soon following the others.

At the Japanese camp a sentry halted them and whispered the first part of the password. The first scout replied with the second half of the password and they were told to advance.

Kalig could not guess which one-man tent fly he should crawl into, so he strolled around the camp in a small circle before retiring.

There were four large machine guns each set a few yards from the centre of the camp, but unmanned. Kalig remembered that on entering the camp they had met a sentry and passed a machine gun. This meant there were four sentries, one stationed in the bush beyond each gun. If the camp was attacked, a sentry could raise the alarm and then run back to his machine gun. The other three sentries would do the same, protecting the entire camp while the other troops made ready for battle. It was quite clever strategy, thought Kalig, but it could also be used against the Japanese.

All was quiet but for the tiny sounds of the scouts settling down to sleep. Kalig started towards the row of tents, but some distance from them he noticed an odd pile of brush. Reaching through the grass and branches, he felt the cool metal of ammunition boxes.

Then he moved along the row of tents, and at the first one not showing protruding boots he bent low and ducked inside. Sitting with his Japanese boots sticking out, Kalig waited for the sentries to change watches.

After what seemed an interminable time, Kalig saw a soldier moving silently toward the row of tents. The man made for one of the tents but stopped and looked at the one occupied by Kalig. There was a muttered curse and Kalig was pleased to know he had picked that man's tent.
The soldier marched over and kicked Kaige’s boots and swore in a whisper. He lifted the edge of the tent-fly to look in but saw only the flash of a knife blade as its tip flicked through his windpipe. Then his head was suddenly drawn down between Kaige’s knees and his gurgling screams smothered in the soft, wet earth.

Kaige took only grenades from the body and added them to the four he had appropriated from his earlier victim. Then he walked resolutely to one of the machine guns and beyond it to the sentry whom he found sleeping. The man died without waking and Kaige strode on to the next sentry. This man was awake and spoke to him. Kaige answered with the password he had heard earlier and the sentry started for his bed.

Kaige tripped him and brought his rifle butt down in a murderous blow that broke both the man’s neck and the stock of the rifle. Kaige picked up the victim’s rifle, checked it and went to the fourth sentry—but the man was not there.

Kaige turned and ran toward the camp, but as he ran he heard the first shout of alarm among the tents. The fourth guard had become impatient to be relieved and would soon confirm several men missing.

Kaige pulled the pins of two grenades and hurled them at the ammunition dump, then ran back to the nearest machine gun. As he turned the gun and dropped face down beside it, the stockpile of ammunition exploded with a thunderous blast that flattened running men and all the tents.

Kaige fired three bursts from the machine gun, spraying bullets through the camp. In a state of shock, the enemy made no attempt to return his fire. He dropped an armed grenade under the gun and ran to the next one.

Kaige loosed a hail of bullets from the second gun, dropped a grenade under it and sprinted for the third gun. By the time he reached it, the remaining enemy soldiers were beginning to fire in the general direction of the two guns he had used and destroyed. Now as he unleashed the fury of the third gun he knew he was shooting at their backs; and as he ran for the fourth gun only a few shots rang out, the bullets winging harmlessly through the trees. Kaige could imagine the confusion of the few Japanese who remained alive. As he swung the fourth gun and started pouring bullets into the bewildered enemy, he knew they would never understand that they had been attacked and beaten by just one man.

**THE MUSICAL KIDNAPPERS**

by Albert Toro

We knew every sailing ship calling at our harbor—we traded with them and gave them fresh water—but one day an unusual schooner appeared. On her decks were black-robed figures with big red books. They sang as the schooner neared the shoreline, and while the heavy anchor was lowered sailors brought glittering trade goods from the hold.

Above the singing we could hear music from something like a ukulele played by scratching a stick across its strings. It was the first time we had heard the enchanting strains of a violin.

We had often been on schooners to trade and men, women and children would go aboard, but this time only men were allowed. Seeing the beautiful goods displayed, our warriors rushed aboard.

One of the robed men spoke to us and we heard the word ‘Padre’ which reassured us, as there was a missionary already stationed near our village. We were told by signs to be seated. The man opened his red book, slowly turned the pages and began to talk in soothing tones. We could not understand him as he was speaking in his own language, but when he indicated we must kneel and close our eyes to pray, we did so and the prayer went on a long time. While we were praying, the crew pulled up the anchor. The sails silently filled and the vessel began to move.

Some miles from shore the lengthy prayer ended and we opened our eyes. But were there the exciting axes and mirrors? Instead we saw pistols pointed at us.

When we saw the vessel had left our island we felt little hope of escape. The captain ordered everyone to be still. One protesting man was shot and hot blood ran on the deck.

At gunpoint we were herded forward where an open hatch waited to swallow us. We descended into the hold with tears in our eyes. There were other prisoners from another tribe. Our hands were fastened to the vessel’s ribs with chains. The smell from slowly dying bodies made me sick.

The ship began to sway and toss and I knew we were now far out on the fierce waters. In the darkness we did not know whether it was day or night. I leaned against the hull and my mind wandered back to my mother; I was her only son and I could imagine how she would miss me. Then I cried until I was empty of tears and dosed off to forget everything.

My sleep was disturbed by a sailor opening the hatch. He cracked a whip as he descended and ordered us to climb to the deck. The dead man was no longer there, and I guessed he had been thrown overboard.

We were each given a packet of dry biscuits, and as I chewed the stone-like food I thought of home and the good yams, bananas and taros growing there, the good food of our people. I knew a few more days of this treatment would rob me of the little flesh I had on me.

Land was out of sight and the deep blue sea stretched for miles to the end of the sky. We finished our biscuits in silence and were
looked below again, where the lack of fresh air sickened me.

For two days we received no food and a number of my fellow tribesmen died. Their bodies were left in the hold with us.

One night we were again ordered to the deck for biscuits. This time the sea was calm, the moon shone and stars twinkled. The cool breeze seemed to whisper in my ear, and I imagined Mother telling me to sing her a song from her clan. We were allowed to sleep on deck that night, and I lay with my eyes fixed on the stars until I drifted into dreamland.

"LAND HO!" came a loud cry from the crow's nest. We woke and rubbed our eyes. We saw the land, but the ship sailed along the coast, just keeping it in sight.

The next day we were lined up on the deck and given laplaps to wear, but none of us tried to wear them as they were too heavy and strange. Our traditional dress was a few leaves at front and back. These had withered and fallen off and we were now naked except for arm-bands.

On the morning of the following day we sighted a harbor. The wind was good and by midday we pulled up at a wharf. We were inspected and stabbed in the upper arm with a spear-like thing, its contents emptying into our flesh. I know now it was an injection against disease.

We disembarked and walked into the country along a bush track. The land was similar to home but the air cooler.

We reached a settlement and a man in khaki shirt and trousers appeared.

The captain greeted him and looking at us they both laughed. I suppose at our nakedness. We stood and talked among ourselves in soft whispers, and then we saw the owner of the plantation hand over some papers. The captain departed quickly.

Again we were issued laplaps, but this time a whip was held ready and we were forced to wear the strange clothing.

We were allocated houses and issued food including a big pot of some strange seeds in large quantities, which we later found were rice. On a routine check the boss noticed the rice was unused. He demonstrated, putting water with the rice and placing pot on a fire. Soon we learned to like rice.

Early next morning we were assembled for our first day of work in Queensland. It was in a large sugar plantation that stretched far inland, and we were forced to cut the cane with special knives from early morning to late evening.

Within a week two comrades died, no doubt from dreadful homesickness. Their bodies were taken away and buried before we could conduct the proper ceremonies over their deaths.

Days and months passed while we did the same job, and after three years the plantation manager announced we were to go home.

We received money and a bonus of laplaps, shorts, shirts, sticks of tobacco, mirrors and packets of salt. We were taken to the harbor and put on a schooner.

When the ship reached our home harbor, there were canoes positioned to attack. To stop them, I was asked to speak to the warriors in our language. They cautiously neared the vessel until they saw I was one of them. Also they saw the crew were not dressed in robes and there was no music, as was the case when we were kidnapped, and our warriors relaxed.

My family was happy to see me, but when I told them of those who had died they broke into tears.

As I stood there in our family house, I felt a terrible uneasiness coming over me. I looked around, noticed I was the only one wearing European clothing and wondered if I could ever return completely to traditional village life.

WANTOKS
by Joseph Saruva
(A wantok is a person who speaks the same language as another.)

Frightened by the silence of his room in Konodobu, Laki decided to go for a bus ride. At Koki, he alighted and had started toward the market when he heard someone calling his name.

"Laki! Hey! Wantok!"

Laki turned and saw his friends, Piara and Tura, coming out of the market.

"Nothing to see there," said Piara. "Tura and I are going to Boroko."

"To watch football?" asked Laki.

"No, make a guess," was Piara's reply as he bent his elbow and lifted his right hand toward his mouth, the sign of drinking beer.

"Why don't you join us?" asked Tura.

"Might as well," said Laki, "I've just about forgotten what beer smells like."

"Oh, how could you forget in just one week?" Tura asked jokingly.

Laughing and talking the trio took a taxi to Boroko and stopped near the public bar. Shouting and singing could be heard from a distance.

The stench of stale beer was strong as they entered the bar. Drinkers stood in small groups around tables loaded with brown and green bottles. A closer look revealed that each group comprised of men of the same tribe or language.

The trio stood near the entrance looking at the people and the premises before making their way into the lounge.
The lounge was different from the public bar. It was cleaner and quieter and possessed an atmosphere that appealed to well behaved customers. Except for a few well dressed indigenes the lounge was empty.

"Here you are, fellows," said Piara as he carefully put bottles on the table. Tura lifted his bottle and gulped half of it down.

"Really feels good," he said, rubbing his stomach as if following the descent of the cold beer into his system.

"You know, fellows," said Piara, "because of these green bottles I never feel like going home." They all laughed, then Piara told them about a wantok with no money who had arrived in the city recently.

"Nowadays wantoks are lucky to have a number of us to house and feed them. But when I arrived in Moresby, there weren't any wantoks. I could rely on and I had to take the first job available, stone-breaking at 9-Mile Quarry. It was no easy job, I tell you, cracking stones with sledge hammers when your hands are covered with blisters. I reckon that job broke me in. I don't regret it at all."

The other two looked at him in amazement. The quarry still operated, but machines now did most of the work. Tura reached for his beer and drank it up.

Just then their attention was drawn to a group of men near the door. One man was talking loudly and trying to free himself from the grip of the others.

"Mi painim wantok! Em bai baim bia bilong mi." (I'm looking for a friend who will buy me some beer.)

The man had been drinking in the public bar until his money ran out, then he tried to force his way into the lounge but had been stopped as his dress was not acceptable. He was very drunk and could hardly stand. Eventually he was subdued and dragged out by the bartenders.

Tura related the various jobs he had done, mostly hard menial ones. When he joined a big construction company, he became interested in carpentry and over the years had accumulated a complete set of tools. Through observation and practical work he had become a first-class carpenter.

Laki knew Tura as a long-time resident of Port Moresby who had never been home and asked him if he ever thought of going home one day. Tura shook his head.

"I have no one to see there. My parents died while I was small and my dear old grandmother brought me up. She was fond of me. She passed away soon after I left-- through grief. I believe. My fault. I did not even tell her I was leaving." Tura seemed sad about the past, and Laki and Piara regretted their questions.

"Anyway," said Tura, abandoning his look of gloom, "that's all past now. I've got nothing to look back on and nobody to worry about except myself. I don't know why I have few wantoks. They say I'm just 'One-piece.' (a loner). I'm only. I worry for myself.

"Anyway we are in a hidden place where you won't find wantoks loitering around," said Tura. "I mean those who show up expecting others to buy for them. We've seen only that one unfortunate fellow so far."

"You know, Tura," said Laki, "this wantok system is gradually but surely becoming a problem. But what can you do? If a wantok turns up here or at your house, you just can't tell him to go away, can you? Then, sometimes, I am glad to have wantoks around.

"Well, I'm not saying having wantoks is a bad thing, not completely. But this is a city, not a village. Back in the village yes, giving and taking is part of life. But here it's every man for himself.

"It's all right for people with well paid jobs. They can afford to part with some of their earnings. But a person like me, the dollar I earn is for my food, clothes and my occasional green bottle."

Laki agreed. All the same, the wantok system, though desirable and beneficial, was posing numerous problems in the towns and Laki wondered just what could be done to solve it. Could it be solved by law? Piara echoed his thoughts. "Perhaps the Government could do something.

It should be easy to make the necessary laws."

"Yes, but how can you enforce such laws?"

"I guess you can't and those responsible for legislation are so well paid the wantok system doesn't worry them.""

"Right," said Laki, "so I guess we'll have to put up with it until the whole national economy makes it unnecessary."

The three sat silently, their faces registering individual mental calculations. They finished their drinks and started for the bus stop.

With a bit of luck, the bus driver would be a wantok of theirs and would give them a free ride.
LOVELY RED
by Martin Balthasar

Oft there you lie motionless,
So beautifully decorated,
but people cannot observe
the mighty help you grant.
Oft the giver of dreams,       Of dreams lovely and sweet,
Or dreams of wish and longing,
Of dreams so frightening and threatening.
The Goodness of love,
You comfort us
When we are sick and weak,
When we are cold and trembling.
When we are tired and weary.
But, how strange you are during the nights,
When the world is asleep like dead.
And the fairies begin their duties,
While the people are sleeping with
unreflecting minds.
Some moaning, some grunting, and others,
Talking away with the Night Ghosts.

If one lay awake for so long,
One would begin to dig in the world around,
At memories of the "Happy Past,"
Or with thoughts of an unforeseeable future,
And of things to be done after dawn.

PAST AND PRESENT
by Aruru Matiaka

As I sit in despair
resting my head on this wooden desk
I feel consoled by worries
and the anxiety of my future life.
There is an eternal conflict
between my past and present life
when I think of my parents' homeland
hemmed in by gigantic mountain ranges
and the gurgling sounds
of swift flowing streams through the gullies.
The things I used to do freely ten years ago
in that remote part of Huiland
have not departed from me.
I wish I were living there.
On the other hand
the desire to keep up with the modern world
which really means that I would be cut off
from my beautiful homeland
completely crushes me down.
The two still like two flames of burning fire
within me.
What shall I do? is the question
which I have in mind.

TO HER MAJESTY (ELIZABETH II)
by Jack Lahui

When I heard you were coming
I got busier and busier.
I fasted and prayed my ancestor
would give me some luck
So that I could find a Bird of Paradise plumes to dress up in
to ensure my appearance.
Then I knew you were here
to look at us.
Maybe to mingle with us
Only to find that you were
a very busy woman
and could not stay even a week.

EXPATRIATES
by L. Aepa

If you go away,
You will find yourself,
in a strange place.
In a new world to settle.
There will be no peace in your heart,
Nor love in your new neighbor's soul;
all you have is a chance to start.
your life all over again.
I'll show you where paradise is
If you come with me,
A place to work, someone to talk to.
We'll even tell side by side.
If you go away,
Leaving all memories behind.
You never find the day
to relive what once you treasured as home.

PAPUA NEW GUINEA
by Hermes Tipongnaik

Progressing land of peace and freedom
Appealing with her beauty,
Proof little nation shining in the Sun,
Unknown tribesmen welcoming every tourist.
Attracted to our island.

Noticeable in the Pacific
Envious of our Paradise Bird and tropical forests,
Wealthy in economic potentials and Politics finding a place.
Growing rapidly with wisdom
Under the tall palms, close to the sea.
Island of lovely mountains and beautiful rivers,
Nowhere else in there an island so attractive.
Encouraging the smiling people to grow
And retain independence.

THE LAST KUASANE
by Benjamin Umbo

When the Sunday morning service finished, Tora and I went straight
to the shop where I got a loaf of bread and he bought some black twist
tobacco and a piece of newspaper.
Sitting on a boulder I munched my bread with a roll of his tobacco in newspaper and lit up his foot-long cigarette and we surveyed
the scene.

Adjusting my red and white Isuzu cap so I could see better, I
noticed our elders sitting ceremoniously in the churchyard, their
faces inclined as they meditated on the wisdom crammed into their
heads during the service.

Other villagers sat smocking, talking or eating sweet potatoes
they had brought along. Beyond were the young boys and girls
sitting in small groups exchanging jokes and stories.

My wandering eyes suddenly fixed on an outstanding girl.
She was incredibly beautiful, so much lovelier than the other girls
I imagined she had dropped at that moment from the blue sky.

She must have been watching me before I saw her, because she called right away. In surprise, I called too and then looked away in embarrassment.

I tried to keep around at other things, but my eyes were drawn again to the girl. I found her smiling radiantly and I had to smile at her, this time without looking away. In those few moments I had become enchanted.

At least I knew my gaze and at a loss for anything else to do, I looked down, eliminated my face, my ragged pair of shorts and finally my fingernails. My head was spinning and I breathed with difficulty.

I turned to Tora to ask about the girl, but he had left me. Then I saw him heading for the young and lovely lady. I leaped up to follow, but when I saw them talking together I was shy again and stopped to watch.

Like the other girls she was dressed in traditional costume, but something about her made the ornaments more attractive. She sat on a bench, her deck legs dangling to the ground. The long heavy purpura (a kind of top) intricately woven with yellow, black and gray fur of the possum, ran smoothly over her thighs and disappeared between her knees.

Her hands rested on her lap, the wrists decorated with bands of possum fur. A wide, black, polished belt hung loosely around her waist and above it her breasts, large and firm, stood out proudly. There were three strings of colorful beads around her neck and below them hung a shiny fruit shell. A longer string of beads with a beautiful sun shell hung down to the purpura.

The natural beauty of her face was enhanced by designs in red paint on her forehead, cheeks and nose. Bush flowers were planted in her short, curly hair and a transparent, silky cloth was tied around her head with a knot at the back.

As I stood there enchanted, frantically trying to recall her name, Tora turned and motioned me to join them. My desire to meet the girl overcame my shyness and I strolled over.

"Good evening, Greg," she cordially greeted me, her hand extended and her face radiant with that winsome smile.

"It's a wonderful morning," I replied, and had another pleasant surprise as I shook her hand; it was cool and firm, quite unlike the dead-fish limpness of most girls' hands. My admiration increased.

"When did you come back, Greg? I haven't seen you for two years."

"I arrived yesterday. Last Christmas I went to Kunganda."

"Oh, yes, you must have been tied down by those Kunganda girls. We heard all about it."

"No, no, I was staying with my uncle..." But she laughed at my protests and I realized she had been joking. I was not used to being with girls because my parents had told me to stay away from them until I was grown up, and I had taken their warning seriously.

Now, faced with this lovely lady, I was at a loss for conversation and her brightness and ease of manner made me feel even worse. I looked to Tora for assistance, but again he had wandered off.

"Greg, have you ever been to a Kunganda?" she asked.

"No, never, but I've heard about it."

"Would you like to go? There will be one tonight at Dinigana, arranged by Manakale boys and Dengilaku girls."

"Well, I don't know," I hesitated, "it's a long way to go in the night."

"Oh, Greg! Don't be such a child! It is not far at all, and some of your brothers will be going. You can go with them."

"Yes, I suppose I could..." why on earth was I hesitating?\n
"Greg, please come to the Kunganda tonight!"

"All right, if Tora and Kindua are going I'll go along with them."

"I will have some food for you in case you get hungry. I live in the girls' house near the Kunganda place."

"That's very kind of you," I said, really impressed, "I didn't expect you to take such trouble."

"Normally I wouldn't," she said with that dazzling smile, "but I feel this will be a special occasion."

At that moment my liftu cap was suddenly lifted from my head, and I turned to see the culprit was my eight-year-old sister. She was my favorite sister, so I grinned and did not scold her. But then the lovely girl spoke to her.

"Little sister, you are my friend. Give me that cap!"

"No! Don't give it to her," I protested, but my sister tossed the cap to her. I jumped to catch it but missed and fell against the boulder. I was instantly angry.

"Give me my cap!" I demanded.

"Your cap? It is mine, a gift from your sister." I felt like grabbing her and forcing her to return the cap, but there were a lot of people around so I begged her to return it to me.

"Greg, what are you worrying about? I won't eat this cap,
I won't burn it. I'll keep it for you. You can reclaim it tonight at the Kuanandé."

"I won't go to the Kuanandé!"

"All right," she said with mock coyness, "no one will be hurt or die if you don't." Then the sweetness returned to her voice.

"But you can get it some other time. I'll keep it in my house for you." She walked away, leaving me standing there, angry and feeble. I went to Tora and told him what happened.

"Well, don't worry about your dirty old cap. Can't you see it is Segeré's way of getting you to visit her?" Segeré, that was her name, of course.

"She did say I could recover it at her house tonight . . . ."

"There you are then," laughed Tora, "she is making sure you attend the Kuanandé."

"But, brother, I don't know what to do at a singin' with all those girls."

"Then it is time you learned. Don't worry, they'll show you what to do. You can sit and sing and 'turns-head' with Segeré tonight and maybe you will find you like each other very much. She certainly is a favorite of the boys here; many have fought for her but none has won her affection. Her father is a hard man and has tutored and disciplined her carefully. To be invited to her house is a great privilege, a chance you must not miss."

"She seems well behaved," I murmured, "except for taking my hat!"

"Man! Everyone here knows she is the ideal girl; she is kind, hard-working, friendly, helpful to her parents and, above all, exceptionally good looking. You must have been using love-charms to attract her so easily."

I nearly told him I had no idea why she was taking an interest in me, but by now I was feeling much less like a young secondary student and more like a man of the world.

"All right!" I said with determination, "we will go tonight."

That evening Tora and I started toward Dinipene with some other boys. As we traveled others joined us until there were a hundred young men marching to meet the girls. We practiced the Kuanandé songs as we went along, and I discovered my voice was deeper than the others. The Kuanandé songs required a soprano and, attempting them, I sounded like a young cock crowing for the first time.

The boys were traditionally dressed in the Koaikai, a large heavy bark garment at the front, and a bunch of fresh leaves at the back, both held by bark belts. Their faces were covered with red ochre, with spots of white powder here and there. Each had a cap of possum fur on his head, and from each cap sprouted two yellow feathers of the Bird of Paradise which bobbed up and down as we walked. Some had the beautiful traditional blue breast-plates also of Bird of Paradise feathers. I had been excused from dressing traditionally since I had just arrived from the city.

We arrived at Dinipene and saw fires had been lit around the big house where the Kuanandé would be held. There were many men, women, girls and young children, but I could not see the beautiful Segeré.

"Make one straight line!" came the order from the man next to me in an urgent whisper. We formed a line and the 'Pawali' started. The young man at the head of the line began the introductory chant, then turned to the next fellow who took it up. When it reached me, I made a feeble attempt at it and turned to the man behind me, and so it went to the end of the line. As soon as it finished it was started again at the head of the line. This stage of the Kuanandé was called the 'Tominque' and, as we went through the third round of the song, we climbed over the fence into the small compound and moved toward the house.

Now another chant began with a very fast rhythm, but the words were loud and distinct. It was unfamiliar to me and I could not contribute to the singing.

Maima, the man at the head of the line, approached the fires and one by one we were welcomed by the girls' mothers. The girls were then given last minute instructions on good behavior and sent into the house. I hoped to identify Segeré by the Isuzu cap, but I did not see it.

Then Maima led the way into the house, and as we entered the mothers wished us a pleasant and enjoyable evening.

Now the Pawali chant was sung again, with a faster beat, and as we moved into the house the girls took it up. When we were all inside and settled on the floor, a strong voice addressed us. The speaker was Saiq, the only Dengaku boy among us. He enjoyed organizing and speaking to crowds and was the equivalent of the 'Master of Ceremonies' of the Western life-style.

"As you know," Maima said, "at the last Kuanandé a boy was killed when things got out of hand. Therefore, I will be here to see order is maintained. Whether you stop after a few hours or go on until morning depends upon your stamina. Now you may begin."

For the sixth time the Pawali chant began and the boys sat in a circle with their backs to the fire, facing the girls who sat against
"My girl, I could eat them and the pot also!"

In her house, she heated the leftovers and handed a plate of food to me. I gobbled it up quickly and she gave me more.

Then we smoked and talked quietly for a time and finally, in utter weariness, I said I would go home. We stood and went to the door, but as I began to move away she spoke once more.

"Greg, you have forgotten what you came for tonight. Don't you want your cap?"

"Oh, yes," I said in a daze. We stepped back inside and she brought the tattered headgear to me. In the faint glow from the fire I saw her traditional paint had disappeared from her beautiful face, but the eyes and lips retained their delicacy and tenderness.

I took the cap from her hand and with my other hand touched her chin. She did not resist, and I brought her face forward until our lips met.

"You had better keep the cap," I whispered in her ear. "Then I will have a reason to see you again." When she looked at me, the firelight reflected a trace of tears in her eyes.

"If you think you want to visit me often," she whispered, "I could tell my parents I have had my last Kuanande. If I say that, it means I have found the man I want to be with forever."

"Make it your last Kuanande," I whispered, then stepped quickly out the door and walked fast to catch up to my clan brothers.

The End

BERNARD BARSHAY BIOGRAPHY

Bernard Barshay received his B.A. and M.A. degrees from Brooklyn College. He then won a scholarship to the New School for Social Research in New York where he studied under John Gassner, noted literary critic and drama historian.

Following this, Mr. Barshay began a newspaper and free lance writing career, highlight of which was his intensively researched "Interview with Abraham Lincoln on the problems facing America."

His aptitude for historical research was also utilized in documenting a series of true murder mysteries. International syndication of these narratives was succeeded by their radio and TV adaptations. (Folkways Records and Folkways Cassette 79761 feature these stories as FOUR AMERICAN MURDER MYSTERIES.) Later the academic world claimed him and he became a journalism professor at Long Island University.

For the past few years Mr. Barshay has been writing and producing shows for radio, TV and the off-Broadway theatre. Recently he hosted his WORLD TRAVEL television program, with interviews of leading personalities from some of the 86 countries he has visited.