

Polele

I wonder what? Polele the child, this is the beginning of the story, the story of Polele. He also had a grandmother and a grandfather. And he had a father and he had a mother. Once he wanted to go hunting with his bow; he already knew how to shoot with the bow. So he went to his grandmother and said:

"Grandmother, make me a bow."

"Oh, I can't do that. Go to your grandfather, the old man."

So he went to his grandfather, the old man:

"Grandfather, make me a bow."

And the grandfather made him a bow from bamboo like the ones made for children. After he made him the bow, he made bird arrows. And then Polele went shooting birds. He went across the undergrowth and shot a bird. It was called *satsat*.



He shot it, and because he felt happy in his heart, so to speak, he sang the thanksgiving song for the prey:

"Favour be unto you too,
who did not make my bow,
as now to the one who made it."

But when he came back to the house, he was moody. He didn't speak or make a sound. Then his grandfather said:

"You're moody, my friend."

"I'm moody because I shot the hens of the spirits, my mother's brothers."

"What did their call say?"

"*Tsat! Tsat!*"

"Yes, yes my grandson

Happy are our hearts

Badjuo, badjuo.

The broth for me, the body for you."

Then they went and singed the *satsat*-bird. They put it in a bamboo tube, they cooked, and then they ate: The grandfather drank the broth, the boy ate the body. And after they ate, Polele left again. He went across the undergrowth and shot again with the bird arrows, this time a dove. Whoosh! - he shot it, and then he sang the thanksgiving song:

"Favour be unto you too,
who did not make my bow,
as now to the one who made it."

Back home, he was moody.

His grandfather said,

"You're moody, my friend."

"I'm moody because I shot my mother's brothers' chickens."

"What did their call say?"

"*Uon-u-u-u-on-oo.*"

"Yes, my grandson,
happy are our hearts all two
Badjuon badjuon,

the broth for me, the body for you."

So they went and singed the bird. They put it in a bamboo, cooked it and then they ate it. The boy ate the body, his grandfather drank the broth. And then Polele went hunting again. Again he shot a bird. A hornbill. Whoosh! - he shot the hornbill, it hit his head, and the bird fell down. He went and got it. And as he walked back, he sang thanks for the prey:

"Favour be unto you too,
who did not make my bow,
as now to the one who made it."

But when he came back to the house and arrived, he was moody. His grandfather said:

"You're moody, my friend."

"Yes, I shot my mother brothers' chickens."

"What did his call say?"

"*Kang, kang, kang!*"

"Yes, yes my grandson

Happy are our hearts

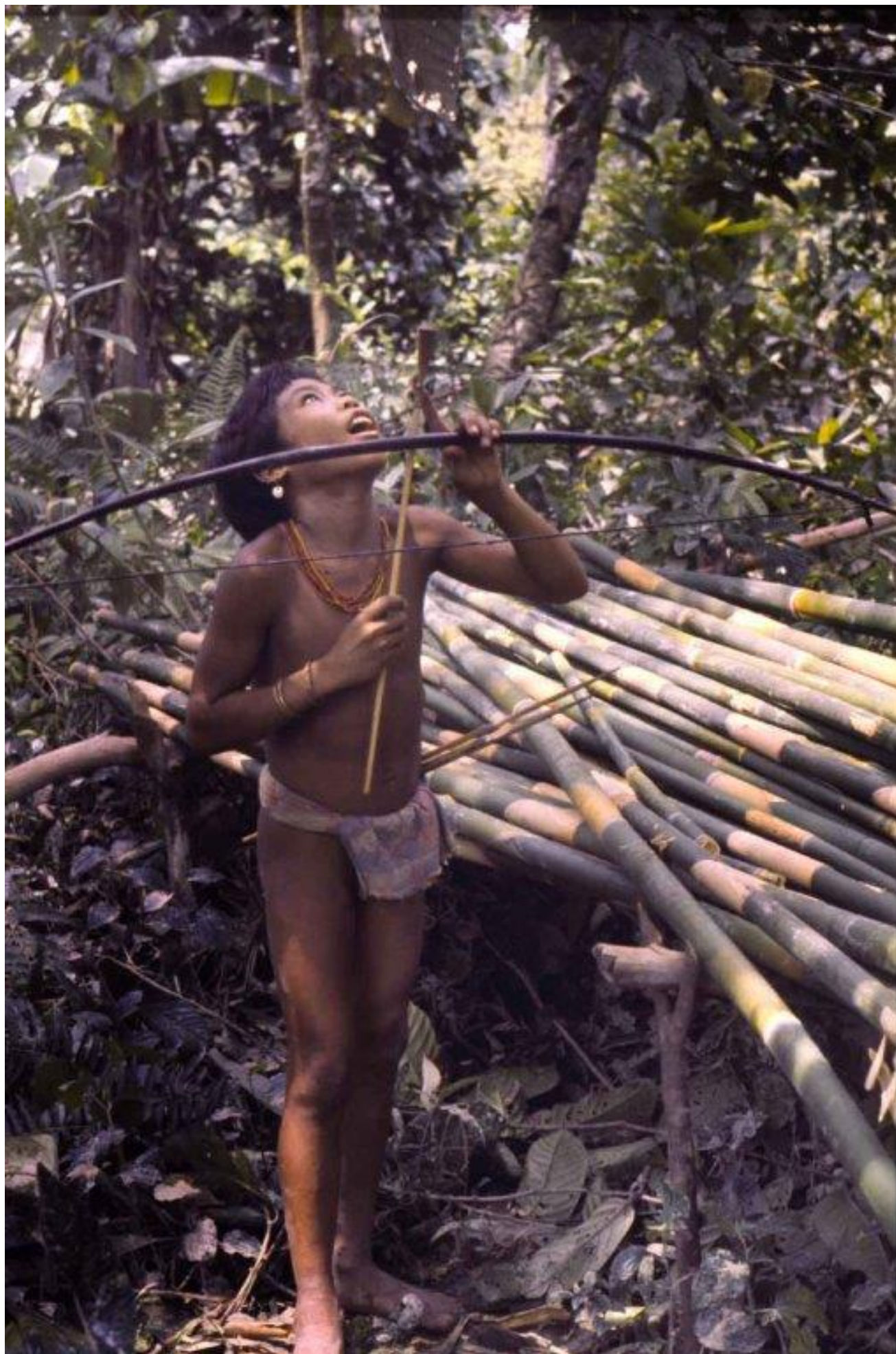
Badjuon, badjuon.

'The broth for me, the body for you."

And they singed the bird. They cooked it, and then they ate it: The grandfather drank the broth, the boy ate the body. Then said Polele:

"Make me a bow again, Grandfather, a bow like the grown-ups have, made of hard sugar palm wood."

The palm bow was made, and then Polele made arrow poison and poisoned his arrows until they were good. So he went into the forest. But what does a *simakobu* monkey look like, he did not yet know. When he saw a black stalk of the *nibung* palm which looks like a monkey fur, he shot at it. Whoosh! - the arrow came out on the other side. It fell down there and hit a crocodile in the river.



And again he shot: Whoosh! - the arrow came out on the other side and hit the crocodile. Other arrows also fell on the crocodile. When nothing more was in his quiver, Polele went and collected his arrows. Then he saw the crocodile - it had died.

"Oh, that's what I shot!" And he cut up the crocodile and packed the pieces into leaves. Packed it all up and started to carry it. "Well, what I first wanted to shoot that wasn't an animal after all." When he got home they were eating. They ate all the crocodile meat until it was gone, and some of it they gave to relatives in the neighbourhood as their share.

But the crocodile's father was waiting. He waited for his child, waited and waited, and it did not return. So he went to look for it. He set out for the headwater of the river. He came upstream and arrived at a house where people lived. He called them:

"Hey, hey!"

Then they answered in the house:

"What is it?

Mushrooms-oh, ferns-oh,

Mushrooms until evening."

"Oh, if you've eaten nothing but ferns, my grandchildren, nothing but mushrooms, puke it out." Then they vomited out everything they had eaten. They vomited, and the crocodile watched. But it was only fern, it was only mushrooms, so it went back to the river and moved further upstream. Upstream, upstream, and stopped at a landing place. There it called:

"Hey, hey!"

"What is it?

Mushrooms-oh, ferns-oh,

Mushrooms until evening."

Then they, too, obeyed and vomited, and the crocodile watched - there was some of the meat of the crocodile that Polele had shot - the share, which the people had gotten.

"Oh - where did you get your meat?" asked the crocodile.

"It comes from there, from our nephew, from the headwaters."

"Who shot it?"

"His name is Polele"

There the crocodile had learned his name! "Oh - do they live far away?"

"No, not very far. »

"Oh."

And the crocodile father went further up the river and came again to a landing place. He went and called:

"Hey, hey!"

"What is it?

Mushrooms-oh, ferns-oh,

Mushrooms until evening."

"Oh - ferns you ate, mushrooms you ate, puke it out, my grandchildren!"
When they had vomited, there was a lot of meat from the crocodile, his child. And when he looked around for the skull, there it hung down from a crossbeam.

"Oh - where did you get your meat from?"

"Your nephew, Polele, shot that."

"Where is he, the shooter?"

"That's the one."

"So."

And then said the people: "Prepare sago to eat for our grandfather, and split for him a cooking bamboo with meat." So they made sago and called the crocodile to eat.

"Oh, don't give me my share out here, on the porch, let me have it in the interior."

So the crocodile went to eat inside the house. And when he sat there alone, he wept over the flesh of his child. He wept and let it fall down through the slats of the floor between the posts, wept and let the flesh of his child fall down, he did not eat it. When everything had fallen down, the crocodile came out again.

"Are you finished too, Grandfather?"

"Yes, I'm done, I have finished the meat there." But it hadn't eaten anything, it had pity. Then it went back to the river. "I'm going now, and you stay here."

"Yeah, go ahead, Grandfather."

So it went to the river and further upstream. When it had reached the upper reaches, it made a magical call for rain:

"Liana leaf, napped off from its vein, give rain! »

There came a tremendous rain, pouring down, nothing but rain, and there was a great flood. It flooded the houses further downstream, and the people there could only save themselves climbing up on the roof's ridge. So they became hungry and thirsty.

But the crocodile, which was still on the upper reaches, went and fetched a trunk that was growing mushrooms. It laid it on its back and floated with the trunk and the mushrooms down the river. It drifted off and came to the house of the people who had shot its child. And because they had become hungry and thirsty since they were flooded, when they saw the mushrooms drifting, they cried out:

"Oh, there are mushrooms, there are mushrooms, some food for us, some food for us!»

But when Polele wanted to swim there, the trunk with the mushrooms had already drifted far away and so he did not go any more.

"Too bad!"

Then the crocodile said: "They can't catch up, they don't want it anymore. I'm going to try again." And so it went again upstream to the upper reaches, and there it was looking for especially good mushrooms. especially soft ones, so to speak. And again it carried the trunk with the mushrooms on its back, drifted off, drifted off.

"Oh, there are mushrooms again, get them for us to eat, go, Polele!"

And Polele got up, swam and fetched the tree trunk with the mushrooms and dived under. The crocodile grabbed him! But it did not devour him. It did not kill him. It took him and carried him on its back. Carried him to the lower course, and while they came downstream, they saw other animals. Then the *kapala* fish said compassionately:

"What a big mouth you have, Mr Crocodile, you take a child who still has his father, you take a child who still has his mother!"

"Don't talk so much. Come on, let's wrestle!"

Then they wrestled and the crocodile bit the fish in two. Rip! And gave it to Polele: "Here is meat for you, my son." But Polele didn't accept it, he was afraid and threw it behind his back.



"What are you throwing away Polele?"

"Oh, well, weeds only, wood only," lied Polele. But he had thrown the fish away.

And they came further downstream. Then the crocodile saw a sawfish, they met a sawfish. It said:

"Oh you, crocodile, you have a big mouth, you got a child who still has his father, you got a child who still has his mother."

"What, don't talk so much, let's wrestle."

But the sawfish said, "First, let me see your tongue."

So the crocodile opened his mouth. But the sawfish went and cut off the crocodile's tongue - rip! It fell off and the crocodile swam away. And since then, crocodiles have no tongues.

Indeed, the crocodile did not carry Polele in its stomach but on its back. It held him tight, so to speak. It carried him, came out to sea, still carried him and came to an island. On this island it put Polele down.

And then it went in search of food. It went in search of food, the crocodile, and when it returned, it gave Polele eat. It gave him meat. "Here is meat for you, my son, I have sought meat for you. Do not worry." And then it searched again and gave Polele meat. And Polele in turn ate.

While the crocodile once again was looking for meat, the pointed-shelled snail said to himself: "Really, so it's feeding the man cub, this crocodile." And then the snail said, "Devour me and my children, your nephews, and after you have devoured us, throw your body back and forth."

So the crocodile went and devoured the pointed-shelled snail. It devoured it, and its stomach became full. And then it threw its body back and forth – and the pointed back end of the snail pierced the stomach of the crocodile, pierced its stomach - and the crocodile died!

But Polele waited, and his grandfather did not return. He waited but he did not come, it was getting dark.

At night he dreamt . The crocodile's soul came to Polele, to the dream of Polele. The crocodile said: "I, my son, I have died. There is no one left now to feed you, to give you food. I am dead now, because the snail killed me, and so it went, it cheated me. I swallowed it, and then I threw my body back and forth, finally its sharp ended shell damaged my intestines, and I died. Now when morning comes,

you have to leave the island, but there's no dugout canoe for you. Make a signal drum, and call up a vehicle for you, a sea turtle.



Say with the voice of the drum:

'Bag, bag, bag, listen,
my little boat
sea turtle afloat.'

'Then when a small one comes and you get on its back and it goes under, do not go with it. Then drum again. In time, as you drum, a big one will come. Only then go with it.' That's how Polele slept, and what the crocodile had said went into his dream.

When Polele got up in the morning, he said: "Oh, my grandfather is no longer alive. I'm making myself a drum." And so he made the three-part signal drum out of wood to drum for a vehicle, a sea turtle, that is, a large sea turtle.

And he announced with the voice of the signal drum what his grandfather had told him to do:

*"Bag, bag, bag, listen,
my little boat
sea turtle afloat.
Ta ku ta ku ku!»*

Then a vehicle appeared for him, a sea turtle. A small one! When he saw it, it first looked like if it was big. But when it came closer, closer to the beach, and he got on its back, it sank, and he went back to the shore while this little one swam away. And he drummed again:

*"Bag, bag, bag, listen,
my little boat
sea turtle afloat.
Ta ku ta ku ku!»*

There was another one. Came, and this one was a bit bigger. It came, but when he went and climbed on its back, it also went down, it didn't go well yet, it was submerged. Still the body of Polele got wet. And when he arrived back at the shore, this sea turtle swam away, too. Now Polele began to cry. He had longing in his heart, so to speak, because he wanted to go home but had no vehicle, he was alone on the island. And after he had cried, he was drumming again:

*"Bag, bag, bag, listen,
my little boat
sea turtle afloat.
Ta ku ta ku ku! »*

Then finally the big vehicle appeared for him. When he caught sight of the turtle, her back was almost not visible, only a little bit was to be seen while she came. Her heavy body was almost completely under water. She came, she came - "oh, there is finally the right vehicle for me, it is certainly big, it has such a heavy body!" The turtle came and reached the beach, while Polele went there, and there it straightened up and suddenly loomed large.

"What, so you're the vehicle for me, grandfather! Stay here, I'll get my things, my sleeping mat and whatever else is there." So he went to get his things and came back. The turtle said:

"So now I am your vehicle, my grandson. If during the journey you see people on your left who are hunting turtles in their dugout with torches, then knock on my tail on the right side. We go then to the right so they don't shoot me with their hunting spears as meat for them."

"Yes, Grandfather."

"And when you see them on the right, knock on my tail on the left, then we'll go left."

"Yes, grandfather."

So the turtle swam off and carried Polele.



And in the night he saw people hunting turtles, he saw them on the left, so he knocked on the right, and they went to the right. And others he saw on the right, so he knocked on the left, and they went to the left. Slowly they proceeded, and finally came into the mouth of the river. There the turtle put Polele ashore.

"Here I am good, Grandfather. You brought me here, my heart is grateful."

The turtle said, "I have brought you here, my grandson, but I am also edible."

"No, Grandfather, no, I won't eat you. You are edible, you are a game animal, but I don't want to eat you. I came here only with your help. In whom did I trust: in you alone, who showed me a compassionate heart: you alone,"

"No, my grandson, eat me, I'm meat, I taste good!" - So people learned that the turtle is edible. - "If you eat me, my grandson, don't spoil my bones, don't smash them to pieces, don't throw them away. When you're done, get my shell there, my skin, and get my bones and what's left of my flesh, and make the shell nice and smooth inside. Then put it all in the water."

Since it was so, he took his prey, he split the shell, took the meat from it, and he did not break the bones, did not spoil them, took the meat and then put the rest back in its right place. Put the shell over it, he had smoothed it from the inside. And then he threw the whole thing into the water - it swam away at once! The shell had come alive again, and the turtle swam away.

And Polele processed the meat. Then a troll came.

"You are meat for me, my grandson!"

"No, Grandfather, don't eat me, here's some turtle meat for us!"

"Fine, fine, I won't eat you if there's meat. Then come on, let's eat."

"Grandfather, there's no cooking pot for our meat here. Why don't you go and get some big bamboos for it. Make sure they are big enough for your head, get the head-can-be-in-bamboos. If one is not wide enough for your head, keep looking for another."

So the troll went in search of bamboo. He was looking for big bamboos, head-can-be-in bamboos. Searched, chopped the bamboos, tried to stick his head into them, and when it wasn't wide enough, he kept searching. And since there were no ones big enough, he came back with the other bamboos.

"Oh, Grandfather, they are not big enough. Go again. Go get other ones and make sure your head fits inside!"

So the troll went again and looked for bamboos. All the time he was looking for big bamboos, but there were none. He searched, tried to stick his head into them and finally a bamboo split open and cut him in the ear, this bamboo.

"Ow! It cut my ear - so listen, now I'll eat you up!"

Polele meanwhile processed his turtle meat. Then a fly came:

"Buzz, buzz, buzz, the troll, he's mad! The bamboo hurt his ear! He said he'd eat you up!" But Polele didn't hear it, he didn't hear it clearly. In a moment, he punched the fly - clap! It fell down. Then a horse-fly came in its place, it had also heard the troll's speech. It said: "Buzz, buzz, buzz, the troll, he said he's going to eat you up, he's furious, the bamboo hurt his ear." And again Polele struck again, he still didn't listen. Clap! - it fell down. Then something else came in its place again, a hornet, let's say. "Buzz, buzz, buzz, the troll, he said he'd eat you up. He's furious, the bamboo hurt his ear."

"What, thus words does that animal say?"

Now he understood and tied the bamboos with the meat together. He hung it all up in a tree, and then he looked for a place for himself, a *soisoi* tree. He went and knocked on the *soisoi* trunk:

"Grandfather, you are the place for me."

"No, don't come to me, go to the other grandfather, to grandfather *kubbu-kubbu*et."

So he went to the *kubbu-kubbu*et tree: "Grandfather, you're the place for me."

"Good."

Up climbed Polele on a liana vine which grew high on the tree. And he took all the meat with him, he brought it up and hung it there. Then he climbed down again and got the rest and tied it to the other. When he was finished, he stayed upstairs. Now the troll came:

"Damn it, you're meat for me, I'm furious!"

"Grandfather, I'm up here, I'm not down there anymore. There's meat down there for you."

But that was just shit, sea turtle shit, which Polele had filled into the bamboo for the troll and there it had stayed as food for the troll. So it wasn't real meat at all.

When the troll saw this, he said: "Damn, that's spoiled!»

"What, so if that's spoiled, why don't you cut your hand?"

The troll went and cut himself. He was rather stupid, so to speak.

"Damn, that hurts!" Now the troll's anger had grown even greater. Then Polele said:

"Grandfather, if you cannot climb up to me on your own, go and call your companions. Come as a crowd. You eat me, and you eat the turtle meat. See to it that there are many of you when you come."

So the troll went and called his companions. He called all his brothers and sisters and they came.

"Grandfathers, have you come?"

"Yes, we came."

"Are there many of you?"

"Yes, there are many of us."

"Then climb up here by this liana. This is the way for you. And plant your spears down there, and put your machetes down there with their blades pointing up. Then when I fall down, there are the weapons that hurt me."

"Yes." And they planted the spears down there, everything, their spears, their machetes, their axes, and always with the edge facing up. But Polele planned he would chop the liana at the top so that the trolls would fall down again and hurt themselves on their spears. And they climbed. But Polele, he sharpened his bush knife. He sharpened and sharpened, and in the process he spilled the water with which he wet the grindstone.

"What is that, grandson?"

"Oh, just the what's-its-name, Grandfather, the meat broth. Of the meat for us, the sea turtle."

"Well, well, well, grandson, don't pour out, it's for us to drink, your grandfathers."

"Never mind, never mind, there's plenty, there is so much meat."

And they climbed.

"Are you all up here too, grandfathers?"

"Not yet, not yet."

And they climbed, and Polele sharpened the machete and spilled the water.

"What is that, grandson?"

"Nothing, Grandfather, just the turtle juice, the meat broth."

"What, pour not a drop, this is for us to drink, thy grandfathers."

And they climbed and climbed, when Polele said, "Stretch out, Mr. *Kubbu* tree."

And it stretched out, and reached high up. So their climbing distance became longer again. They came up high. When they had come very close to the top, Polele went and chopped through the liana – rip! Rip! And the trolls fell down, all of them, in a high turn, and some of them were impaled on the spears, others hit the machetes, others were smashed - all of them, and only one remained - the one that Polele had met first.

"Grandfather!"

"Yeah?"

"Are you still there?"

"No, there's no one left of your grandfathers but me."

"Go summon companions once more. And bring axes, bring axes and fell the place where I'm sitting. Make that many of you come, make that no one is left behind."

Then the troll went to call companions again, he called them all together. That's why today there are no trolls left! He called the trolls, his brothers and sisters, his mothers, his children, his brothers-in-law, he called and called, and no one stayed behind. Then they appeared again. They came again -

"Did you come, grandfathers?"

"Yes, we came,"

"Are there many of you?"

"Yes, we are many."

"Are there any of you left behind?"

"No, no one stayed behind."

"All right, now fell, grandfathers!"

Their axes, however, were made of shells. They began to chop and fell. But Polele said:

"Heal again, Mr. *Kubbu* tree!" And the tree healed up.

"Grandfathers, your axes are not sharp enough I'll throw you something to sharpen them. Gather over there where the wild bananas grow. Then down here I will throw a stone to sharpen your axes, to sharpen your machetes, so that your axes and machetes get sharp, and you can cut down the tree." And then he said to the grindstone, "I'll throw you down here, Mr. Grindstone, but you, fly over there. Stretch out, make yourself very big so that they can be slain."

And already the grindstone was thrown by him, expanded, came to the earth - and they were slain and died! No one was left.

"Grandfathers!"

Silence.

"Grandfathers!"

Silence.

But Polele in his tree, he had no way back now. His heart was yearning and he began to cry. He saw birds and he envied the birds, they had wings. Then a turtledove flew by and he sang, he sang after the turtledove, from his longing heart:

"If only, if only I were a turtledove,
I'd be off to see my fathers,
Koiokoio."

Gone was the turtledove. And he sat there, and he sat and sat. And a ring-dove came:

"If only I were, if only I were a ring-dove,
I'd be off to see my fathers,
Koiokoio."

Gone were the ring-dove. After a while other birds came. A hornbill, a minabird.

"If only I were, if only I were a mina,
I'd be off to see my fathers,
Koiokoio."

Then came the *lutsabei* bird. "*Siraratdat, siraratdat*, what are you doing, friend?

"Oh, my heart is full of longing, brother, for my fathers. But there's no way for me to get down.



"Hey, what a nice tattoo you have there, friend!"

"Yes, my tattoo is beautiful."

"How did you get it, friend?"

"Oh - that's the tattoo of us, the Mentawaians. We make it beautiful the way we want to, that's how we do it."

"Oh, do it to us too, friend, tattoo us too!" Because in the old days, all birds were white.

"Brother, I don't have the tattoo tools with me. They are over there, with my fathers. "And even if I had tattoo tools, what would you know about it?"

"No, we'll go and get them, friend. Where are they?"

"They lay - wait a moment – they lay over the entrance to my house. The soot for tattooing is there, and so are the implements."

"We go, friend, we go!"

Immediately the *lutsabei* bird took off, it flew there, to the house of the fathers of Polele. But according to the opinion of Polele's parents, their child was no longer alive. They thought he had died. They had already carved a memorial sign for him next to the house on a nearby coconut trunk. Thus there came the *lutsabei* bird.

"*Siraratdat, siraratdat!* Where are the tattoo tools and the soot from Polele? Bring everything out into the open!"

"Oh, father, what's he saying, the name of someone who died?" And then they cried, his father and mother, they cried with longing for Polele. And out of love for everything remembering them of their child, they brought out all his utensils. They brought them forth and wept. Then suddenly the *lutsabei* came and took the tattoo tools directly before their eyes. Picked them up and off he flew.

"Oh, he took the tools from the deceased - what the hell - he's carrying them away. That nostril-haired creature! Where is he taking it, where is he carrying it?"

And they wept again, out of a yearning heart, they wept and wept.

But the *lutsabei* flew and came back to Polele." There it is, friend, the tattoo tools and the soot. Come now, tattoo us please."

And other birds heard this also, and they came, the wood pigeon and the *loisiat* bird and the mina-bird and the *taporau* bird and many others, all of them came and gathered together.





"Tattoo us!" - "Tattoo me too" - "Tattoo me too!" - and he tattooed them.

"How would you like it to look?"

"So, with this drawing; so, with these stripes!" Polele drew first and then tattooed. He drew the pattern, and then he tattooed. When he was finished with one another came.

"How do you want it?"

"So and so" - and then he tattooed this one. "Do it to me black on the head, white in the middle and black on the tail." And he sketched this out, and after he had sketched it out he tattooed.

And then the crow came. It screamed: "Tattoo me, father, caw! Tattoo me, father, caw! Me of all people, a child who still has his parents, me of all people you won't tattoo first!"

"One moment, one moment," said Polele, "one moment until these are finished." And he went and tattooed some others.

"How do you want it?" he asked the *taporau* bird.

"Yes - black down here at the beak, on both sides, and then yellow here on my whole body."

And Polele tattooed.

And again the crow came in between "Tattoo me, father, caw! Tattoo me, father, caw! Me of all people, a child who still has his parents, me of all people you don't tattoo first!"

"One moment, one moment, until it's finished with the others." And he tattooed some others. Then he put down the tattoo tools and another bird came and took over from the finished tattooed one. For this one tattooing what he wanted, and for that one tattooing what he wanted. But always the crow was there and called:

"Tattoo me father, caw, tattoo me father, caw! Me of all people, a child who still has his parents, me of all people, you won't tattoo first!"

Now Polele became angry, his heart became quite nervous, and so he grabbed the tattoo soot. He fetched it, held it in his hand, pulverized it - and he had smeared it on the crow's body! He smeared it on the crow's body - and everything turned black. In the past even the body of the crow had been white, and now, now it had turned completely black.

"What, you didn't give me a nice tattoo, I of all birds, a child who still has his parents, I don't have a nice tattoo!"

"Don't talk so much or I'll shoot you with my bow and arrows. »

So the crow left. And even today, when a crow sees a bow, it gets scared. If we get a bow and pretend it's just an ordinary piece of wood, it still gets scared. - Thus the crow flew away with an angry heart.



When Polele had tattooed all the other birds as well, the *lutsabei* bird, his friend, said: "Friend, now we're going to take you back to your fathers."

"No, friend, I'm afraid I'll fall."

"What, you think we'd be fooling you? Let's go get a rock."

And all the birds flew and fetched a great stone and lifted it up and gave it to Polele.

"Look, Polele, did you see it?"

"Yes, I saw it."

And they lifted the stone once more, lifted it and let it fall down.

"Didn't you hear it, Polele?"

"No, I haven't heard anything. But I have a grindstone over at my dad's house. Go and get that one."

So they went and got the grindstone. All those birds there, they took it, carried it together and ended up at Polele.

"Did you see that, Polele?"

"Yes, I saw it."

And then they picked up the grindstone again: "Look again how we carry it!"

They lifted it up and threw it over into the sea. Splash! - it went down.

"Did you hear that, Polele?"

"Yeah, I heard it."

Now they came and carried Polele together. He was no longer afraid. But it happened that the birds' claws hurt him, that they pinched him.

"Ow, it hurts me!"

"Oh, our older brother will fall down, comrades!" So they put him back up there in the tree. "What are we going to do? Let's go to the coast and get a sack from the Malays, the ones from abroad!"

So they flew to the Malays from abroad, and there they saw a sack for coconuts lying in the sun. They went and got it and took it to Polele. Then they put Polele into the sack and carried him together. And what they pinched now, so to speak, was only the sack. They could no longer touch the human body with their claws.

They carried the sack together, carried it together to the top of the coconut tree with the memorial sign for Polele, which stood next to his father's house and set him down there.

"Hey, what are those birds doing, what are they doing?" said the father and the brothers of Polele, while Polele was in the treetop of the coconut tree. "Go and see what's going on there."

There the youngest brother of Polele went and climbed up the palm tree. But Polele, he spat towards his brother. Spat, the other climbed, spat, climbed, spat and climbed again and again.

"Oh, Father, I'm spat upon, I'm spat upon!" - and he came back down.

"How did it happen that someone spat at you? Do you think that there are people up there? From where do you think people would have come up there?"

There went the older brother. Climb-climbed, and Polele spat at him also. Climbed, spat, climbed, spat.

"Father it is true, they spit on us here! It's like my younger brother said, they spat at him!" And the older brother climbed down again.

"I wonder how they could have spat at you - as if there was a man there! Are you suggesting that your brother has risen again?"

And then the father himself went and climbed. Climbed and Polele spat - but when the father arrived on top of the tree he exclaimed::

"Son is it really you, are we back together again - what happened?" - and they came down. They cried a little and their hearts were joyful a little. And then they made a feast. When the feast was over, Polele said to his fathers and brothers:

"So in about three days or a week, my friends are coming. They say we can eat them. They're the ones flying around here. They're called birds."

"And you can eat them?"

"Yes." And that's how people came to know that you can eat birds. In former times, the birds were tame and numerous.

The birds had announced that they were edible meat and also that they would come. Polele continued: "We must make baskets for them, like chicken baskets, we prepare the places for them. Come on, let's go to the forest."

So they went into the forest and got *mandorou* lianas and *pelage* lianas. And with these they made baskets, one by one they made them, maybe a hundred baskets, or two hundred, or a thousand.

But Polele had an uncle who was called Carbuncle because he had so many boils. He only made ten baskets and that was all, because his heart was scornful - he thought nothing was arriving after all, he thought all this were anyway just lies from Polele. So he only made ten and that was it while all the others made a lot more.

And then Polele said: "Tomorrow my friends will come, and in the morning we have to grate coconuts."

In the evening they went to get coconuts from the palm trees. They threw them down, soft-fleshed ones, full of coconut milk. And the next morning they rasped them. They used a dugout canoe as a basin, or even three or four canoes, and they rasped there inside the canoes and they mixed the pulp with the milk. They grated the soft-fleshed coconuts as drink for the birds. And now Polele went and called them:

"Come on over here, you friends of mine!"

This is what the ritual master of the birds heard. "Oh, our friend called us. Come on, let's go!"

Then the sky became dark, as when the rain falls, so dark became the sky because there were so many birds. But the uncle of Polele growled out of his scornful heart: "There we go, it's raining, that's just rain" and he went to sleep. The wings of the birds made a noise like when the rain was falling, like when it was raining. And so the uncle went to sleep.

Now came the birds, in huge flocks, of every kind, large and small, all came. And they drank what the people had rasped inside the dugouts, the coconut drink. Then the ritual master of the birds said to the people: "Do not take them yet, but when they are satiated, only then take them and put them in the baskets, take them and put them in the baskets.

So the birds drank and ate in abundance. And when one was satiated they took him and put him in the basket, one by one, and the baskets became full.

But there was still uncle Carbuncle, to whom the people said: "Uncle, get up, uncle, fill our food into the baskets, these birds here."

Immediately he stood up and filled the baskets - all be it not many; soon his baskets were full and in none of them was space any more. However, there was still a mina-bird left over, and because the uncle had no more room for it in his baskets, he tied it to the back of his loincloth. He tied it tightly, and the bird fluttered there on the loincloth and scratched his boils.

"What, this nostril-haired guy, this mina, is scratching at my rashes!" And he kept scolding on and on.

But now the master of the birds got a heavy heart. He said: "Let's fly away, us birds!" And the birds flew apart, those who had sat on the hills and in the treetops, and those on the banana leaves and on the coconut trees, and they never came back. But the mina-bird, when the mina-bird flew away, it cried "*Miang, miang, miang!*" that means rotten in Mentawai because the rashes from the boils the uncle had scratched smelled rotten. And still today, the mina-bird calls out: "*Miang, miang,*

miang!" And moreover it called: "*Chiekot, chiekot, chiekot!* *Kot* means an insult in Mentawai as uncle Carbuncle had insulted them so badly.

Now all the baskets were full. But the ritual master of the birds said to Polele: "We, your friends, our hearts have become troubled. We have heard quarrelling. Nevertheless we remain your friends. If you are purposeful and wise and blessed, then you can come again and get us. Birdlime fetches, us, what is called birdlime. These are the plants for it, this is the right mixture, so and so and so. If you want to have us, and you are blessed, and you keep the taboos, then we will come to you, a hundred of us, two hundred of us. But if you are not blessed and things are not going right, if we think you are not keeping the taboos, then we will not come to you, we and our children. And the ritual master of the birds told Polele the taboos people must keep when hunting birds.

After he had done that, all the birds flew away and scattered. Only those in the baskets stayed behind, and they in the baskets were eaten; they served as the meat for them, one by one. And when they were all eaten up, the story is over, there the story is over.

Narrated by Tengatiti. Translated by Dr. Reimar Schefold.

