

There was a famine in a village and the men went into the swamp to make sago. They camped out there, working the sago stand. After a time, some of the men decided to return to their families in the village. They collected the roasted skins left after burning the sago (*vevvi*) for their wives and children. Those remaining at the camp gave them *vevvi* to give to their own families. Everyone did this except for one man who did not send anything back. That night his wife began worrying. "Oh husband," she said. "You should have sent *vevvi* for your children to eat so that they could sleep properly." Now, a ghost was standing outside and heard her saying this. So he collected dry leaves and set himself on fire. He peeled off his skin, just as one peels *vevvi* off sago after it has been burnt. He then climbed up to the woman's door. He called out, "Just before I left, your children's father gave me some *vevvi* to bring for you. Wake up and take it from me so that the children will have something to eat and then they will sleep comfortably." The woman came to the door, took the bundle and unwrapped it. She woke up her children. They ate the '*vevvi*' skin and then went back to sleep. Now, while they were sleeping that ghost continued to wander about. He returned to the woman's door shortly before day break and called up, "Are you sleeping? Wake up! I need my skin to put back on." The woman heard him. "Oh dear," she said. "What is this man talking about?" The ghost called out again, "What are you chattering about? Hurry! Bring down my skin. It is almost dawn. I must put it on and go!" The woman remained silent. The dawn was breaking, so the ghost opened the door. He murdered the children and the woman, throwing their bodies to the ground. Then the ghost went away.

Translated by Franklin Seri and John Barker, June 22, 1995.