

*The Old Lady who Bundled up the Old Man in Her Firewood* #26

Willie 29/3/82

Book: 3-62

The Old Woman who Carried an Old Man in Her Firewood

Some people cleared the bush, left the brush to dry and then burned it up. They placed the boundaries and roads, leaving a plot for an old woman at the far end nearest the village. One day that old woman was working in her garden. An old man stepped up to the top of the fence and surveyed the area. He saw the old woman weeding. One part of the garden had not yet been cleared. The old man made his way there and hid. While watching the woman doing her weeding, that old man picked up a clump of earth and tossed it towards her. She stood up and looked around, saw nothing and returned to her weeding. He then tossed another one. This time she saw him waving. "Aga!" she thought to herself, "Why is he trying to get my attention?" She continued weeding, slowly working her way towards the man. As she came close, she suddenly stood up and demanded, "What are you doing here?" "I was walking by and saw you, so I came in." "All right," she replied, "I don't want you here. Go." The old man then walked to his own garden and decorated his whole body — arms, legs and hair. He walked back over the fence until he came to the grasslands. He felt the nice breeze against his body. He felt so good, he sang this song:

*Agai e e e Agai e e e Agai e e e*  
*E e emisire e misire a kotara emisire*  
*O o o emisire a agai e e e*

He sang happily all the way back home.

Thereafter that old man followed the old woman everywhere she went. He followed her to the garden and elsewhere. Another old man noticed him trying his luck on the old woman. He saw that the old man always came back from his garden fully decorated. He wondered about this, "Aga, this old man is acting like a young boy by decorating himself each day he goes to his garden." The old man took no notice. Everyday he continued to decorate himself, climb over the fence and make his way to the grasslands. When he felt the nice breeze on his body, he would sing:

*Agai e e e Agai e e e Agai e e e*  
*E e emisire e misire a kotara emisire*  
*O o o emisire a agai e e e*

And so he sang happily all the way home. Finally the old man watching him began to suspect that the old woman had herself done something to make him act this way.

One day everyone went off to the gardens leaving the village empty. The old woman got out her string and began to weave a string bag while sitting on her verandah. As usual, the old man was nearby keeping an eye on her. She worked for a while, bundled up her materials and returned them to her house. Then she got her axe and twine and headed to the edge of the village to chop some firewood. The old man followed her. He came up from behind while she was busy chopping. Surprised, she demanded, "Where did you come from? Why are you following me?" "I saw you heading this way and so I came along," he replied. "Oh, I am not a young woman! I am too old." "Don't try to fool me," he replied. "I saw that other old man

