THE *SORE SINGSING*: STRINGBAND LAMENT FOR CHRISTIAN FUNERAL

The *sore singsing*, literally “sorrow song,” is a recent type of guitar band music invented in Yabob and Kranket. Although the *sore singsing* has been practiced in a relatively small number of communities, it represents the development of genre that expressiveness of guitar band music has become instrumental for mortuary ritual. The invention of *sore singsing* is a remarkable phenomenon in respect to its general association of the stringband with secular entertainment and relatively recent presence in cultural history of Madang. The *sore singsing* is an example of social formation of music that has been differentiated as a new genre. To illustrate, the *sore singsing* is a stringband music assuming no specific subcultural life style; as the music is performed in village funeral, especially old women who has little to do with the guitar band music would actively respond to the sound of music with cry. Although the *sore singsing* has been frequently arranged into the cassette to characterize uniqueness of the village powerbands as in the cases of Yabob, it has become integrated into communal ways of life to the extent that some of them accompany a story illustrating premonitory power of the song. This chapter will explore performative practice of the *sore singsing* by focusing on the aesthetic devices in the case of Yabob. The central concern for the analyses of individual texts of *sore singsing* in the following sections is to focus upon representation that make the mourner to respond to the sound of the stringband music.
The Giving of “Last Respect”

Mortuary rites are one of the many precontact practices that have been terminated with the arrival of Christianity in the Madang area. In the precontact days the corpses were carried by a broken piece of old canoe and buried under the house of the dead in a squatting position. At times, the corpses were left overnight with their family, and occasionally pieces of kundu singsing were played “in order to give last respect for the dead,” as one informant put it. Interestingly, in those days there were no dedicating singsing pieces to commemorate the death, or at least such attempts have not survived today. Although the parts from singsing tumbuna pieces were performed with the kundu, the singing was rather spontaneous, without accompanying dancing, and sometimes it was kept playing all through the night in order to “give respect to the dead”. When the missions arrived in the village, however, the old practice ceased, coffins were introduced to carry the corpses, and graveyards were prepared for the burials. The performance of kundu singsing was also discontinued, and hymns, in the case of a Protestant funeral, have been introduced.

The only surviving element of mortuary custom is women’s ritual cry, known as tok sore or krai.¹ As noted elsewhere in the ethnography of PNG (Feld 1990; Schieffelin 1976; Yamada 1997a), woman’s ritual cry in the Madang area consists of formulaic expression of sorrow and weeping. There is no age restriction to the ritual cry: even a very young child can make the cry if the language is acquired. In the postcontact era the mourners’ cry takes place spontaneously before or during the funeral service, procession to the graveyard, or the burial.
The cry is monophonic and employs rather ordinary speech registers with non-melodic vocal contour; its enunciation is in a loud wailing tone with harsh attacks at the beginnings of utterances. The language used in the cry is always either the mourner’s *tok ples* or Tok Pisin, although use of the former seems more prevalent than the latter. The cry takes the form of an address to the dead in most cases, often that of accusation, rhetorical question or remembrance. The contents of the cry in coastal communities, especially when they are addressed in *tok ples*, frequently metaphorize the death as a sailing canoe leaving off the shore.² No distinction or reputation for quality of crying is recognized.

When a Madang native dies, in hospital, at home, or away from home, the closest kin of the dead will gather in the village to arrange whatever the procedure necessary for the funeral. The death would be immediately notified, and the dead body will be placed in the morgue in order to keep the corpse from decaying until the funeral commences. Yabob has two graveyards that was opened by the missions in the prewar times, one for the Catholic on Mareg Island and the other for the Protestant on Yabob Island. According to the denomination to which the deceased belonged, the village *mangi* (boys) will go over to help the islanders of the burial site to dig the grave. The women’s cry can be heard in public as the last service is being conducted in the church nearby the community, where the people would show up to “give the last respect” to the dead. After the service is finished, the coffin is carried to the island by dinghy, along with the closest kin of the dead. As the coffin is placed on the beach, it is decorated by the *bilas* that is colorful leaves of various shades of pink,
green and yellow, and flowers of trees. A clergymen would watch the coffin, waiting for the rest of the crowd to be transported to the island. As the crowd gathers, the last sermon is given, and the procession goes to the graveyard. The coffin is placed in the grave, and buried by the hand of local mani. Contemporary funerals have no mourning period.

The sore singsing can be performed during any moments of the proceeding with consent of the church authority and by request of the mourners. The songs are never played if no request is made from the mourners, in which case hymns or gospels without accompaniment. If there is a request, or the mourners wish to play it to the dead, the sore singsing will be sung during breaks of the ritual. In most cases, the performance takes place between the addresses and sermons, before the service or by the grave during the last moment of the burial so that the performance of songs would not disrupt the ceremony. The performers of the sore singsing are usually either the members of the youth organization of the church or a voluntary stringband instantly formed by the villagers. The instrumentation for the sore singsing in the mortuary ritual is always the stringband. The effect of performance can result in an mass expression of intense emotions if the songs are performed with a good musicianship for it is free to join the singing; women’s cry is often induced by the singing, and sometimes even the singers themselves would start to cry. Em bai moa nais, (“It is better that way”) says a local speaking of the stringband lament, em i gutpela we bilong mipela long givim las rispek long man i dai pinis (“it is a good way for us to give the last respect to somebody died”).

165
As early as in 1973, Wesley Bosli of Kranket was aware of that audiences can emotionally react to some of his numbers; he composed a few songs “to make them cry” such as *O bubeg ilo so padal mon.*

**(Verse):**

Good-bye my darling ah good-bye my samoei  
gazo eme sain ta i lod alanen sain  
me woi nima parag pa nug bini biniwol  
niegn ngan iet taimon pazeg ngitiuz ngame bubeg.

**(Chorus):**

O bubeg ilo so padal mon  
samoe alap amatol  
o bubeg ilo so padal mon  
samoe alap amatol.

**(Verse):**

Good-bye my dear, good-bye my old friend,  
this is the time for us to worry.  
as you hold my hands, we separate.  
You have spoken your last letter, and we stand up, o my dear.

**(Chorus):**

O my dear, you shall not forget us,  
for we are old and going to die.  
O my dear, you shall not forget us  
for we are old and going to die.

*(Wesley Bosli, O bubeg ilo so padal mon)*

The lyrics, as translated in English, sings of old age, separation and death; the singer would sing this number in early hours in the morning, when daybreak is near and the hype of the dancing ground is settling down. The audience would cry to the song with a tune reminiscent of American sheet music. In the later stages of the flourish of stringband and bambooband, in the *six-to-six* context the people seems to have become more and more aware of the sound of the guitar band music as something that can make them cry indeed.

To this day only parts of Kranket and Yabob compose and perform the *sore* singsing for funeral and burial with a clear intent to express the loss and commemorate the
dead. Similar attempts like Yabob’s *sore singsing*, to a much lesser extent, have been reported from other villages, but there seems no inter-village influence. No doubt the general attitude among the locals who associates the guitar band music with a lower form of entertainment is apparently blocking the new practice to spread in the Madang area to a large extent. In Yabob there are thirteen known *sore singsing* composed after 1980. The *sore singsing*, like other compositions for the stringband, have no or few vocables, obsolete lexicon, arrangement from the *singsing tumbuna*; on the other hand, occasional mixture of English and Tok Pisin phrases in an otherwise *tok ples* context is reminiscent of powerband lyrics. The greatest difference of the *sore singsing* from other forms of guitar band music, however, is that the pieces are never expected as a dance: the essence of the *sore singsing* to sing along to mourn the death of one’s loved one. Although the *sore singsing* usually addresses to the dead in an intimate way, a number of songs are used over for other funerals in general if the lyrics suit the situation; such “general” *sore singsing* counts four in Yabob. As the guitar band music around Madang is devoid of parody—even powerband arrangements of *singsing tumbuna* are not taken as a parody—no parts of *sore singsing* are modified or altered, in order to be used over. (Note that *kopikiat* from western pops has had only a negative value in the powerband songs.) Whether a *sore singsing* can be used for someone else’s funeral or mourning in general is decided in terms of how widely the address would be applied.

As the true origin of the *sore singsing* is veiled—the locals find the practice a spontaneous invention with no direct influence from outside or the church, or even between
the communities—the definition of the genre varies according to the informant. In fact, even the generic term of *sore singsing* is not the formal one. Actually, the stringband lament can also be referred as *sore singsing, singsing bilong sori*, or *singsing bilong wari*. Kranket's Wesley Bosli, a church worker and one of the active composers of *sore singsing*, finds that the *sore singsing* and the "funeral songs" belong to different categories. According to Wesley, the former signifies any songs with an atmosphere of sorrow or mourning regardless of how they are performed, and the latter is those intended to sing in the mortuary rituals. As he claims, Wesley composed what he defines his first *sore singsing* in 1973, and has started to work on the funeral songs only after 1990. Yabob informants define the *sore singsing* as a body of songs either intended or suitable to be sung to the dead in the funeral. In Yabob the *sore singsing* is further divided into two subgroups: 1) those not performed for the mortuary ritual but general occasions of remembrance, and 2) those either having been performed. The latter category has two further divisions: 2a) songs played only for a particular dead, and 2b) songs played over or playable for the funeral. It seems that category 2b) stands out from the rest of repertoire since these songs in a sense became fixed numbers for the funeral. For the sake of argument, I call 2b) specifically "standard" *sore singsing*, and the rest "general" *sore singsing*. Thus, standard *sore singsing* of Yabob are *Balangui, Long solid days, Nimor wag*, and *Wag ta*, respectively. Most Yabob *sore singsing* have been arranged for the powerband and commercialized for the cassette, but I still include those performances as a lament in respect to their pretext of composition.
As in Table 15, the first known case of performance of *sore singsing* in Yabob took place in sometime between 1980 and 1981.

Table 15: The *Sore Singsing* of Yabob

(Abbreviations: Y=Yabob, TP=Tok Pisin, E=English. * = Standard song. † = Premonitional song. N.B.: The languages appear in order of size of portion in the lyrics.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Year Composed</th>
<th>Language(s)</th>
<th>Type of Address</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Balangut</em></td>
<td>198-?</td>
<td>Y, TP</td>
<td>General</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Brata bilong mi</em></td>
<td>1992</td>
<td>TP, Y</td>
<td>Personal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Damag o †</em></td>
<td>1991?</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Personal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>E Wap</em></td>
<td>198-?</td>
<td>Y, E</td>
<td>Personal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>H.S. Bubengu</em></td>
<td>?</td>
<td>Y, TP, E</td>
<td>General</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Hangu ses e</em></td>
<td>198-?</td>
<td>Y, Bilbil</td>
<td>Personal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Long solid days</em>*</td>
<td>198-?</td>
<td>TP</td>
<td>General</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Lui</em></td>
<td>198-?</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Personal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Nen a</em></td>
<td>?</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Personal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Nimor wag</em></td>
<td>1991?</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>General</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Sad memories</em></td>
<td>?</td>
<td>Y, E</td>
<td>General</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Sapar †</em></td>
<td>198-?</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Personal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Umar malain hei</em></td>
<td>?</td>
<td>Y, TP</td>
<td>Personal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Wag ta</em></td>
<td>?</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>General</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sandie Gabriel composed a song called *Wag ta*, in order to be performed in the funeral of one of his aunts, who was dying in her bed. In those days, the stringband, along with the bambooband, was the only conceivable instrumentation for the guitar band music in the *gles*, and a number of young *mangi* were participating in the activity. As the coffin was laid on the beach of Yabob Island and about to be carried to the grave by the village *mangi*, Sandie and his band, then no name was given to it, started to sing *Wag ta*, literally meaning “a canoe.” At
first, the crowd was surprised at the presence of the stringband, and that the music they started to perform was not even an arrangement of gospel or hymn. The text goes (TT 66),

\[
\begin{align*}
Unu \text{ wag } ta \\
Dirimal Ilon iyo wade \\
bi a bi a \\
mesi mesi iyo wade.
\end{align*}
\]

A canoe
sails along the reefs of Dirimal Ilon.
Aunt, here it goes
trailing the waves.

(Sandie Gabriel, \textit{Wag ta})

As the song was repeated, the gatherers started to cry, and their reaction became so intense that some women began to make krai, being stimulated by the song. This occasion marked the birth of sore singsing, and new numbers were being composed to this day. Despite its brevity, the lyrics of \textit{Wag ta} reveal many of the basic characteristics of sore singsing that are to come. First of all, there is a reference to a sailing canoe that frequently appear in women’s ritual cry, which is also a circumlocution for death; the expression “here the canoe sails” (\textit{wag iyo wade}), and so forth, is used to refer the death of someone. The word \textit{wag} is of course cannot be replaced by abstract Tok Pisin \textit{kanu}, since the word has a specific reference to the local expression of mourning, such as in \textit{tok sore} or the old \textit{kastam} of carrying the corpse to the burial site by a piece of broken canoe. The address “Aunt” (\textit{bi a})\textsuperscript{5} is one of many words that specifies relationship between the addressee and the dead. The place name, Dirimal Ilon (a reefy area of waters between Yabob Island and the mainland), is mentioned so that the
audience can picture the canoe sailing away from the shore, from the “lived” world of everyday experience. Use of local tok ples, imageries of the departing canoe, addressing and reference to the names of familiar landscape are all common techniques for the sore singsing.

The following Table 16 elaborates some of the most frequently used idioms in order to characterize basic rhetoric of the sore singsing (See also Appendix 5). The lexicon of sore singsing can be characterized as a special kind of the addressing to the dead such as accusation, and the imagery of a sailing canoe. Individual names are referred to so that the addressee of the text becomes clear. Kinship terms are incorporated in both tok ples and Tok Pisin. The words such as hangu (“mine,” “my dear”) and bubengu (“darling,” “my dearest”) appear as in ordinary guitar band song texts. Some expressions of heartbreaking is also present in tok ples rubuti (“to break apart,” “to be torn away”), Tok Pisin bagarap (“to break apart,” “to spoil”) and bruk (“to break away”). While it is understandable that the verbs to signify “to die” appear (mal/dai), the lyrics of sore singsing hardly contain the word sore or sori. As it will be clarified in the following sections, the atmosphere of being sore/sori is usually expressed through more elaborate idioms. Geographical names appear in the songs that sing about a sailing canoe (iyo wagi). These place names are mostly within village boundary so that the image of leaving canoe can be portrayed vividly. As in the cases of nostalgic songs, the canoe sails on a calm sea.
Table 16: Frequently Used Idioms in the Sore Singsing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Individual Names</th>
<th>6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Kinship Terms)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nen (mother)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mama (mother)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bi (aunt)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ses (grandfather)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>brata (brother)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Geographical Names)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arop</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dirimal</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kuru</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mareg</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morelang</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Panu Domon</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yabob</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ilon</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mesi</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wag/balangut</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Not for a long time”</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“To go away”</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Never to forget”</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“What to do”</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hangu/bubengu</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mat/dai</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rubutu/bagarap/bruk</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sori</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The theme of loss is expressed through various idioms in tok ples, Tok Pisin and English that signify “not for a long time,” “to go away,” “never to forget,” “what to do.” The phrase “not
for a long time” is especially favoured in the *sore singsing* for a young death, as in “you have not lived longtime yet” (*sain malain umas hei*) in *Lui*, or “your time was still more there” (*hinan sain malain tendeg bedeni*) in *Umar malain hei*. The phrases that connote “to go away,” such as *iyo wag ipadal ile* (“the canoe sailed away and is gone”) in *Nimor wag*, expresses the departure of the dead for the earth. The idioms that suggest “never to forget,” such as in *mi no ting hus* (“I shall not forget”) in *Long solid days*, and “what to do” in *mi no save bai mi mekim wanem* (“I do not know what to do”) address the attitude of the speaker to the dead. Therefore, the prototype of *sore singsing* consists of at least one of the followings: 1) a reference to a sea-going canoe, and 2) address to the dead. Of the *sore singsing* for funeral, or the lament in the narrower sense, three out of four songs have the canoe reference, and actually only one song about a canoe.

Unlike the gospels, the *sore singsing* makes no reference to a religious or sacred subject, despite the fact that they are performed for Christian ritual. The *sore singsing* stresses the feel of loss to its imagine subject, the dead, in a dyadic sense to which the belief in God and Jesus Christ is not the primary topic. This aspect of the *sore singsing* highlights its interaction to the dead just like in *tok sore*. Thus, the *sore singsing* is not necessarily regarded as a sacred music in a narrow sense, and this fact has enabled it to experiment with lamentation by taking common and concrete subjects. This absence of religious subject in the *sore singsing* texts at least partially plays a role in its limited extent of practice, being regarded as a form of “secular” music. The phrase “*givim respek*” to the dead entails
manifestation of anguish of the loss addressed to the ones that deceased. The sore singsing is regarded as one of the best means to “make a better funeral” (mekim fyunerel moa nais) for the lamentation is delivered in a most sincere way by those left from the earth.

The Art of Addressing

In one way or another, the sore singsing involves address to the dead. As it has been shown in Table 15, however, addressing is directed either personal (calling actual name of the person or referring to specific relationship), or general (identity of the addressee not clear from the context). Yabob musicians never replace personal reference in order to make the text suitable for another person (as in Happy Birthday to You in Western countries); this explains why so few number of songs are suitable to be used over. Of the thirteen examples collected under suggestion of a Yabob musician, seven of them are in fact not playable for someone else’s funeral because of the identity of the addressee, including Wag ta. The address of the sore singsing does not only mourn the death of someone beloved but also display a special relationship between the dead and the mourner by elaborating how much the loss is felt by the latter. Such songs signify identity of the dead by either referring to the name or relationships as in the following:

(Verse 1):  
\[O\ brata\ bilong\ mi\ longpela\ rot\ yumi\ kam\ pinis\  
nau\ tasol\ yu\ dai\ lusim\ mipela\ nau\  
dal\ malain\ toren\ mug\ tatol\ ke.\  
mereme\ biniag\ hibug\ ketei.\]
(Chorus): \textit{San bai sain i kam long mi mun bai sain i kam long mi tasol yu bai i no inap}
\textit{win bai blo i kam long mi rein bai pundau n wasim mi tasol yu bai i no inap.}

(Verse 2): \textit{San i go daun na mun i kam antap}
\textit{mi lukluk i go na tingling i bagarap}
\textit{mi save mi no inap lukim yu gen}
\textit{o hagad tingim longtaim bipo.}

(Verse 1): O my brother, a long way we have come: just now you died and left us.
A long way we have walked along; now you left me alone.

(Chorus): The sun will shine on me, the moon will shine on me, but you will never.
The wind will blow on me, the rain will fall and washes me, but you will never.

(Verse 2): The sun has gone down, and the moon has come up.
I turn my eyes, and my feeling is broken.
I know I will not be able to see you again, no matter how I remember longtime ago.

(Willie Tropu, \textit{Brata bilong mi})

The addressee in Willie Tropu's \textit{Brata bilong mi} (TT 73) is Sandie Gabriel, who died in accident. The composer's feeling of the eternal loss, which it is directly sung to the dead, is displayed in public rhetorically by the copulate phrases that juxtapose the sun for the moon, and the wind for the rain. Also, the lyrics repeatedly emphasize camaraderie between the two men by punctuating the composer's intimacy towards the addressee. As in this \textit{Brata bilong mi}, rhetorical devices in the \textit{sore singsing} construct the discursive structure of the lyrics with little ambiguity.

The lyrics of \textit{sore singsing} might take a form of accusation for having died in a
young age.

_E Wap sain malain unas hei de_
_hina damag he bedeni_
_he he diwarau deg_
_e Wap you are too young to die._

Hey Wap, you have not stayed for a long time yet.
You have broken your youthfulness.
They have all cheated you out.
Hey Wap, _you are too young to die._

(Willie Tropu, _E Wap_)

(Chorus):    _Unau unau ulong ulong deg_
             _kagin alammeg unong utore._

(Verse 1):   _Lui sain malain unas hei_
             _hina damag bedeni_
             _umat ule_
             _umat umat ule._

(Verse 2):   _Gomu ngapau deg iinatama din dipaudeg_
             _ulong deg awama_
             _awama biti e_
             _awama awama biti e._

(Chorus):    _Oooo oooo you knew, knew it,_
             _yet you have done wrong and gone around._

(Verse 1):   _Lui, you have not stayed for a long time._
             _You have broken your youthfulness._
             _You are dead and gone,_
             _you are dead, dead and gone._

(Verse 2):   _I always spoke to you; your parents, too, spoke to you._
             _You heard it and disobeyed,_
             _you disobeyed,_
             _you disobeyed, disobeyed._

(Willie Tropu, _Lui_)

176
The two young men, Wap and Lui, were Willie’s relatives and friends, both of whom died in violence for an alleged crime in an early age. *E Wap* was composed in 1983, and *Lui* (TT 21) was probably sometimes later but not after 1988, when Willie’s stringband Old Dog and The Youth recorded the number for a local radio program. Both songs were not performed in the funerals, since they have proper names of the addressees. The phrase *hina damag (he) bedeni*, translated as “you have broken your youthfulness,” is a typical *tok sore* for mourning the death of a young person. Although the two examples accuse their addressess’ untimely deaths, the addressers’ sympathy and pain are apparent in these words. In *E Wap* the young man’s death is blamed to his surroundings, and in *Lui* the repetition of the phrases as well as the *krai* “Oooo oooo” portray anguish of the addresser being powerless against the fate of Lui.

*Hangu ses e* in the following, composed by Willie Tropu while he was serving his term in Beon Corrective Institution, is one of the earliest examples of *sore singsing*, although it was not sung in the funeral of the man because he died in jail.

(Verse 1):  
*Nima pauk abenlon*  
*ngamaid sinasin oru*  
*youra uyan ta lon*  
*gomu ta ise ngalong*  
*hangu ses e hangu ses e imat e.*

(Verse 2):  
*Ad mug idu e*  
*lalamon kobolu mok*  
*maya rug rien idu*  
*ilingu rubu mok*  
*hangu ses e hangu ses e imat e.*
(Verse 1): I am staying in jail:
I have been here for two months.
In a good afternoon,
a message came and I heard it:
my grandfather, my grandfather is dead.

(Verse 2): The sun goes down,
and the evening is beautiful.
My tears are dropping very much,
and my heart is truly broken:
my grandfather, my grandfather is dead.

(Willie Tropu, *Hangu ses e*)

Since the addressed ses died while he was in jail and composer, too, was convicted this song was not performed in the funeral of the man; it was, however, played in a gathering held in memory of the man, and Willie sung the song there. The phrase *ngamaid sinsin oru*, in the second line of the first verse, is addressed in the *tok ples* of Bilbil, the native language of the old dead man, whereas it is *ngamas huleu oru* in Yabob. As this example indicates, the use of *tok ples* reflects personal quality of addressing in the *sore singsing* for such use of ‘foreign’ *tok ples* in the guitar band composition in general in order to accommodate to a ‘heterolingual’ audience is extremely rare.

*E Wap* serves a good example of inclusion of English in the lyrics. The closing line *E Wap, you are too young to die* is a condolence to the dead, in the manner of powerband lyrics in which English phrases articulate the psychological condition of the addresser. The
followings are some other instance of *sore singsing* in which English is incorporated; note they are incorporated as an important element for the expression in regard to construct particular space of discourse.

(Verse 1):  
Timu bangen lon  
ngotour hinan hei  
I wish sapos yu wantaim  
bai mi inap strong tumas.

(Verse 2):  
Bai mi kam strong tumas  
mulug ila ise  
mayarug rien idu  
mi tingting bek long yu.

(Chorus):  
H.S. bubengu  
ha ha sori o  
bubig rubuti.

(Verse 1):  
The eye of the wind:  
I am not able to stand up still.  
I wish if I were with you  
so that you give me strength.

(Verse 2):  
The wind is blowing too strongly.  
I turn my eyes:  
Tear is dropping too much.  
I am thinking back of you.

(Chorus):  
H.S. dearest,  
ah, ah, sori o.  
My heart is breaking.

(Sandie Gabriel and Willie Tropu, *H.S. bubengu*)

(Verse 1):  
Ses kagin ngawi unou keme  
ilug padal inan hei e  
sad memories *rien mok beni pana*  
sad memories *rien mok beni pana*.

(Verse 2):  
Sainmug malain gese I'm still thinking of you  
ilug padal inan hei
abitawi memories rien mok
memories rien mok benti pana.

(Verse 1): The way of ancestors that you have worked on me
that I shall never forget.
You left a lot of sad memories
You left a lot of sad memories.

(Verse 2): Now a longtime has past
that I shall never forget.
Why did you leave a lot of memories?
You left a lot of memories of you.

(Sandie Gabriel, Sad memories)

The man, referred as just in his initials in H.S. bubengu, died in a young age from a sudden illness. In this lyrics English phrase “I wish” appears briefly in order to construct a subjunctive mood, which might use too many syllables in an otherwise Tok Pisin phrase. Especially among the younger generations the expression “I wish” can take place often in the writings of greetings, such as “I wish you a merry Christmas,” “I wish a good luck,” and so forth. In this case, too, the address “I wish” is used as a mixture of contemporaneity and formality. The addressee’s age in the lyrics of Sad memories (TT 66) is not very clear, but it was probably a grown man because of the reference in the beginning line ses kagin, literary “ancestral conduct” or kastam. Here the phrase sad memories repeatedly appears, along with I'm still thinking of you in the beginning of the second verse. Use of English phrases in the sore singsing for young persons reflects linguistic environment of the younger generation in which English is given a special representation of sentiment other than literalness, urban and colonial elitism, intellectual sophistry, prestige, or the pop.
The *sore singsing*, as it might be predicted, employs the Tok Pisin word *sore*, as in the case of the above-quoted *H.S. bubengu*, even if the entire lyrics are sung in *tok ples*, the word *sore* can be used rather selectively to express the feeling of mourning. The following example is another, and even more clear, instance where the word *sore* is employed,

(Verse 1): 
\[ Umar malain hei tamasdeg binama \\
\quad pik ta tamas hei \\
\quad hina sain malain iendeg bedeni \\
\quad sori bubengu. \]

(Chorus 1): 
\[ Piap ngalon pe gomu uyan ta ngapau pe \\
\quad heiga binamag o ule e \\
\quad kankan hunamag bubama rubuti mok mok e \\
\quad sori o hangu e o ule e. \]

(Verse 1): 
It is not a long while that you lived and left us; it is as if you have never been here. You have a long time more to live, yet you are ruined. *Sori* my dearest.

(Chorus 1): 
If you were able to speak, I would say something good to you. But no, you left us and you are gone. Our feelings are struck, and our hearts are truly broken. *Sori* my dear, you are gone.

(Sandie Gabriel, *Umar malain hei*)

The powerband version of *Umar malain hei* (TT 42) has a translation in Tok Pisin for the second verse as a later addition. The addressee of *Umar malain hei* is a young man who suffered a sudden illness and died. *Umar malain hei* was not ready for the funeral, but played for commemorating gatherings held in the community. The figure of speech in *Umar malain hei* somewhat resembles that of stringband and powerband love songs in terms of frequent
accusations, expression of anguish, heartbreak, and emphatic language switching. Formulaic expressions that question the dead for having died early is prevalent throughout the text, which is each time concluded with the interjection sore. Other patterned phrases, such as the ones that refer to broken-heartedness, are present. The address in the sore singsing has a consistent subject, the dead, as the previous examples have illustrated. The word sore has never been used as a self-pity or general interjection, but to mourn the death of someone beloved. When the addressing in a particular sore singsing is regarded as applicable to other mortuary rituals, it would be performed repeatedly as a ‘standard’ number.

A Canoe Named Nimor

There are at least three pieces of sore singsing that have been performed in actual ritual. The original sore singsing is hardly composed for the funeral since death takes place rather unexpectedly without leaving much time for composition, and people are preoccupied with undertaking of the ritual with little time to rehearse. The older compositions are more likely to be performed for the funeral. Interestingly, however, all pieces for the mortuary ritual have something to do with canoes. The imagery of sea-going canoe, which is still the only means of everyday transportation to some islanders, invokes passages of life, particularly the one from life to death. Before the Japanese invasion of Madang in 1942, the sea separated the island compounds from the uninhabited mainland. The people traded their clay pots seawards, and went off shore for fishing; they also commuted to the mainland for gardening and procuring
the clay for the pots, or to make war against hostile tribes. When a villager died, the corpse was carried by a piece of an old canoe. Thus, the image of sea-going canoe has been an important nexus of poetical meaning that illustrates life and death in the community as in the words of some old *singsing tumbuna*:

(Verse 1):  
Utamone utamon e
utamon e utamon e
utamon e utamon e
waglon udusi.

(Verse 2):  
Utamone utamon e
utamon e utamon e
utamon e utamon e
hangu tang me borou panap.

(Verse 3):  
Utamone utamon e
utamon e utamon e
utamon e utamon e
you nombu me yesi panap.

(Verse 1):  
Do not cry, do not cry,
do not cry, do not cry,
do not cry, do not cry,
get on the canoe.

(Verse 2):  
Do not cry, (etc.),
fetch me my baggage.

(Verse 3):  
Do not cry, (etc.),
fill up the water container and give it to me.

*(Old Dog and The Offbeats, Uta mon e)*

*Siori o siori e
wange damon a
siori o siori e
same damon a.*

*Siori o, siori e
on the edge of canoe.
Siori o, siori e
on the edge of outrigger of the canoe.*

*(Kale Gadagads, Siori e)*
*Uta mon e* (TT 55) is a part of dance piece Maimai, and *Strori e* (TT 66) a part of former courtship song genre *Daik*. *Uta mon e* portrays a scene of long-distance voyage, to which a youngster hesitates to participate despite persuasion; the phrase *you nombu yesi pana*, literally “fill up the *nombu*—a water container made of a halved coconut shell— and give it to me,” suggests the destination is far away. *Strori e* praises the decoration made of pig’s tusks that are usually stuck on the front body and the outrigger of the canoe. These songs point out that the sailing is regarded as a kind of threshold between the everyday and different worlds; anxiety and hesitation expressed in *Uta mon e* and festivity alluded in *Strori e* represent sailing by canoe as going out into different social spaces from the everyday life.

The image of sea-going canoe is a typical device in the text of *sore singsing* such as in the following:

**(Verse):**

```
Ngalon hei e ngabol inan hei e
hangu Nimor wag donden mok rebesi ne
Dolou bangenton iyo wag iyo wag
 iyo wag ipadal ile.
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**(Chorus):**

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Hangu Nimor wag donden mas de
uuu wug wabip ngalon pe
Mareg buruwanlon Yabob buruwanlon
 iyo wag ipadal ile.
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**(Verse):**

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do not know how I should speak of it.
My canoe Nimor, where has it truly gone?
It sailed away to where the Dolou wind is blowing,
and it disappeared.
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(Chorus): My canoe Nimor where are you?
Answer to me so that I can hear from you.
Among the waters of Mareg, among the waters of Yabob,
the canoe went sailing and disappeared.

(Sandie Gabriel, Nimor wag)

Nimor wag (TT 66) is composed to mourn the death of a man from a subclan of the Kakon
clan of Yabob, Kakon Nimor Darem, which literally means “Kakon of the Nimor young
men’s house”; the composer belonged to this subclan, and the dead was one of his uncles.
Here, Sandie refers to his uncle’s canoe named Nimor after the name of their subclan. For
Nimor was the dead man’s personal canoe—there are canoes for family and for person—the
reference of it works as a symbol, a synecdoche, to signify the dead. The reference to Nimor
wag is also allusive of the old kastam of carrying a corpse on a piece of broken canoe.

All song texts with a reference to a canoe describe it in tok ples, never in Tok Pisin
kanu. As it has been elaborated in the previous chapter already, such a distinction of
preferring wag for kanu is deeply rooted in the predisposition of guitar band songs. Peri-
urban guitar band compositions have been inspired by communal ways of life and experience;
in order to express them, appropriate combination of words from the multilingual situation
has been sought with a great effort. Among the languages used in everyday life, tok ples is
regarded as the best one for describing things inside of the village or of addressing to a member
of the same community. The prevalence of tok ples in the sore singsing with references to
canoe has similar characteristics. The tok ples words create detailed images of village lives
since its historical background has made it the language inside of village against lingua franca.
Tok Pisin and official English. For instance, in Nimor wag it would be completely inappropriate to refer to the canoe as kanu. This not because of the entire text being sung in tok ples—since juxtaposition or switching of languages is common even among the sore singsing—but because the dead named his own vessel as Nimor wag. As in the case of panu against ples, wag instantly signifies a sea-going canoe whereas a kanu might signify any types of canoe wherever they are used. Therefore, when a local says to an outsider that corpses are used to be carried by a piece of old kanu and that a sailing kanu symbolizes the dead, the lexicon of kanu is a result of interpretive negotiation between the local and the outsider to signify the wag.

Although today the word wag signifies the canoe, or even means of transport in general as a metonymy, it used to mean only one type of canoes in the narrowest sense. In the prewar days before the relocation program during the colonial administration resulted in loss of the art of canoe-building there was another type of canoe specifically called balangut, as in the lyrics of sore singsing Balangut.

(Chorus): Balangut o iyowa e balangut o iyowa e
balangut o iyowa e balangut o iyowa e.
inan sain hei deg
(Verse 1): Ngalong hei e doxog ngono wi
gomu la ngabol hinan hei
hangu balangut iyo wag iyowa e. (To Coda)
(Verse 2): Hangu balangut wag iyowa e
hinan sain hei deg iyo wag ile e
bubig ainta rubuti. (To Verse 1)
(Coda): Mi no save bai ki mekim wanem
  mi no save bai mi toktok wanem
  hangu balangut iyo wag iyowa e.

(Chorus): Balangut, o it sails now,
  Balangut, o it sails now.
  It is not the time for it yet.

(Verse 1): I do not know what to do,
  I do not know what to say:
  my balangut sails now. (To Coda)

(Verse 2): My balangut sails now.
  It is not the time for it yet, but it sails now.
  My heart is broken. (To Verse 1)

(Coda): I do not know what to do,
  I do not know what to speak,
  My balangut sails now.

(Willie Tropu, Balangut)

The balangut is a two-masted large canoe that is no longer curved today. As the redundant phrase balangut wag at the beginning of second verse indicates the word balangut is becoming obsolete. But the scene of the text is never felt in practice as out of date; in fact, this number has been played for several occasions of mortuary rituals, and is the most frequently sung sore singsing. The text of Balangut is fairly repetitive, yet because of this repetitiveness it is capable of invoking a vivid image of sailing canoe that is about to leave the shore, or someone who has just departed from the earth. The repetitiveness of Balangut also might have helped the band to learn it instantly in the mortuary rituals. The word balangut brings a variety of sound-image referring to sea-going canoes. In the sore singsing, the reference to balangut or wag instead of kamu instantly creates an image of a canoe sailing out to the ocean. The canoe reference is always imagined as a leaving one because the sore

187
singsing signifies someone leaving this world.

The tok ples proper nouns in the sore sungsing illustrate the passage and destination of the depicted canoe. The itinerary of the canoe in Nimor wag is indicated by the phrases Dolou bangen lon, literally meaning “toward the side of Dolou,” and Mareg Buruwan lon Yabob Buruwan lon, “between the waters of Mareg, between the waters of Yabob.” Dolou is the name of north or northeast breeze that blows in from the ocean between the mainland and Yabob Island. When Dolou blows, the wavy murin waters become very calm, sometimes as placid as a mirror, as if it was inland ilon waters.10 Dolou is perhaps regarded as the most suitable of all kinds of wind for the representing condolence for it blows softly and makes the sea peaceful. As a canoe normally sails in a fine weather, the reference to Dolou helps to construct an image of a quiet landscape like Yabob nostalgia songs do: Hangu panu (TT 73), Hangu mui (CHM 1014) or Uta mon e (TT 73) are some of such examples. However, the representing of quiet landscape in the sore sungsing has a slightly different significance from guitar band nostalgia songs. For example, the lyrics of sore sungsing Nen a (TT 66) quotes a dying message of an old man who refers to his calm end by the phrase timtain mesi e wi timu din manin mok (“the cloud and the sea, the rain and the wind are staying very calm”). Not only the canoe should select a fine weather for a long voyage but also sailing on a rough sea is suitable for describing the last moments.

Names of places that appear in sore sungsing always mark the route of the canoe by calling names of islands or areas of waters. In Nimor wag waters between Mareg and Yabob

188
are indicated so that the audience can imagine the course of Nimor sailing between the islands and going northeast to the open waters. *Wag ta* describes the canoe pass by the Dirimal Ilon, a coral reef between mainland Malasala cliffs and Yabob Island. Other geographical points that appear in the *sore singsing* in relation to the theme of voyage are. They are Morelang Ilon, Arop Island, and the Kuru reef in *Damag a* (TT 55), and Panu Domon (of Bilbil) in *Nen a* (TT 66). The Morelang Ilon is an arm of water near the mainland compound of Yabob village where the canoes of the island use as the harbour. Arop is the local name of a doughnut-shaped island in the Bismarck Sea near the border of Morobe Province. Kuru is a reef near Yabob Island. Panu Domon is literally “Point of the Village,” which is the name of a section of Bilbil Island. With the exception of Arop Island, which is some 150 kilometres away from Madang, the points are areas of everyday activity to the locals. By naming specific places the image of sailing canoe no doubt becomes concrete, and the motion of the canoe (hence the dead) vanishing becomes vivid. Such place names are not necessarily “markers of history” (Kurita 1988) for the everyday geographical names do not take an active part in the oral tradition. But, they do invoke and strengthen reminiscence of the dead as a collective memory by connecting the images with the place names in the *sore singsing* song texts.¹¹

The *sore singsing* of Yabob portrays quiet maritime scenery as its guitar band song texts. However, the *sore singsing* focuses on the image of sea-going canoe for highlighting the imagery of a quiet departure, as the wind Dolou alludes to. The geographical feature of
ilon—“cove” or “sound” might be a close equivalent in English, although the locals say that it is olese bei, “a kind of bay”—also adds to such imagery of sore singsing. In Wag ta the addressee calls the reef of Dirimal as an ilon, and also the lyrics of Damag o mentions the natural harbour of Morelang as another ilon. To call geographical feature such as ilon is not necessarily a fiction, since an area of waters with coral reefs as well as a natural harbour, hence relatively calm, are included in the lexicon of ilon. Still, as it has been pointed out previously, the definition of ilon includes connotation of calm waters while Yabob is stereotypically referred as a murin country in contrast with the ilon villages Bel-speaking area that locate insait long Basis (“inside of Cape Barschtch”). It is therefore necessary to call the waters around Yabob as ilon in each phrase in order to emphasize serenity of the sea in the landscape portrayed in song texts, not the stereotypically rough murin around Yabob. The significance of specially calling these waters as ilon in the lyrics of sore singsing is a common technique for Yabob composers who find that the waters around their land is categorized in tok ples as murin in the Madang area.

The imagery of canoe with illustration of calm local waters on which the canoes sail consists of the main description of sore singsing. As the sore singsing is performed in the mortuary rituals and other informal occasions of mourning, the mourners would respond to the lyrics essentially by the imagery of the canoe along with the kind of landscapes that make them filim sore (“feel sorry”) or salim tingting (“remember in memory”). It is a scene of peaceful sea on which the canoe sails until it disappears in the horizon. The imagery of canoe,
quiet landscape and familiar geographical points around village all remind the audience of traditional and everyday life in community in which the sorrow of losing someone dear takes place. The hard facts of life should be mediated through lamentation while the imagining of a communal environment plays a significant role.

Textual Treatment of Sore

Some sore singing are distinctive for discursive complexity in the sense that the original context of the speech is altered. The following song is entitled Nen a (TT 66) which laments the death of a relative of the composer:

(Verse): Nen a e mala bisapa  
hotu mei nehi  
ge mereme hangu sain pisini  
timtain mesi e wi timudin marin mok  
nen a e so uruti mon ngame hinan tibun.

(Chorus): Nen ngame Panu Domon me hinan  
nen a e so uruti mon ngame hinan tibun.

(Verse): Nen, raise your head and look around,  
see the place above us.  
Although my life is about to end,  
the cloud and the sea, the rain and the wind stay calm.  
Nen, do not be frightened, for I have inherited the power over them.

(Chorus): Nen, I am man of the Panu Domon clan.  
Nen, do not be frightened, for I have inherited the power over them.  

(Sandie Gabriel, Nen a)
The text of *Nen a* contains multiple phases of discourse not only because of the complex lexicon of the word *nen* but also the multi-layered context of composition. The addressee in *Nen a* is speaking to his daughter; therefore, the closest approximation of this instance of *nen* in English might be address "Daughter."12 The lyrics of *Nen a* are actually a quotation of the last words uttered by an old dying man to his daughter crying. The man was sick in bed for a long time, and now that his condition was worsening, his daughter was called in the ward to exchange their last conversation on earth. The old man, however, was very calm despite his illness, and tried to placate his daughter by suggesting his peaceful departure. In the text, he refers to the weather, which was described as very fine, as a figurative speech for his physical condition. The line *ngame hinan tibun*, literally "I am a tibun of this thing," represent his ability of magic, however imaginary or real, to pacify the weather; here, he relates the calm weather as a result of his magic. The word *tibun*, again, is a difficult one to find an exact translation in English; it means ancestor or descendants of the same ancestor through which magical power and knowledge is passed on. The idea of the word *tibun* entails a sense of heritage that is to be carried on to the future.

The narrator of the text of *Nen a* weaves out an image of supernatural phenomenon by referring to the magical knowledge of his clan Panu Domon. The clan of Panu Domon in Bilbil, whose name comes from a piece of land on the island where they once resided, was known sailors. The magic that they passed on over the generations consisted of a prayer to pacify the weather so that the canoes could sail long distance without trouble.13 The theme of
pacified weather, therefore, has a strong relationship with safe voyage, and it was presumably chosen by the old man in order to express how peaceful his own end was going to be. Although there is no specific reference to canoe, the subject of the text is clearly signified by images of a voyage. The old man’s address was an announcement of his death, which he himself was sensing near, and was made clear by appropriating traditional image of pacified weather, ancestry, magic, and place name. Composer Sandie Gabriel adopted the old man’s words into a song by mentioning the place name of Panu Domon, along with the magical significance of the clan, which the addresser successfully created the image of departure by canoe to the audience.

Contrary to most other sore singsing texts, in Nen a the addresser and the composer are not identical. The text of Nen a was actually rendered by Sandie Gabriel during the funeral of the old man who died shortly after his last address reproduced in the song. In the funeral of the old man the text was delivered as the woman’s ritual cry. The speaker of the words as tok sore was the old man’s daughter herself, who was addressed as nen in the text of “Nen a.” She was mourning her father’s death by recollecting what was being said to her on the old man’s deathbed. Thus, there is a transposition of identity in the text of Nen a; at first the dying old man was speaking to his daughter, then the old man’s daughter commemorated her father’s death by reproducing his speech, and finally Sandie Gabriel reconstructed it as a song. It is fairly clear that the singer’s voice reproduces that of the crying daughter at the funeral. On the cassette version of the song Sandie places a strong attack on the address nen a each time and
stretches its vowels so that the phrase might be heard as an imitation of crying or weeping.\textsuperscript{14}

It must be stated, however, that reproduction of speech in the text is usually not to be regarded as a \textit{sore singsing}, even if the lyrics contain the theme of sorrow and death. The following \textit{Bi a} falls in an ambiguous area between \textit{sore singsing} and general songs about misery, although the message and context of the lyrics are rather striking.

\begin{enumerate}
\item \textit{(Verse 1)}: \textit{Bi (Nen) a rien so pia mon}  
\textit{konom hangu ngalong hei deg}  
\textit{bigabeg hangu}  
\textit{pia dep pa naup ngeni.}

\item \textit{(Verse 2)}: \textit{Hangu nenman ger dimat e}  
\textit{ulong ulong deg pia de}  
\textit{bigabeg hangu}  
\textit{pia dep pa naup ngeni.}
\end{enumerate}

\begin{enumerate}
\item \textit{(Verse 1)}: Auntie, (Mama) do not be angry with me so much,  
I am still small and do not know a thing.  
I am an orphan.  
You can scold me, but give me the meal.

\item \textit{(Verse 2)}: My parents have been dead already.  
You know, know it, yet you scold me.  
I am an orphan.  
You can scold me, but give me the meal.
\end{enumerate}

(Sandie Gabriel, \textit{Bi a})

The speaker in the text was one of the composer's cousins, then very young, whose parents passed away rather tragically. The orphan's mother died from illness, and his father, being depressed by the death of his wife, committed suicide by poison that he prepared for himself by extracting from a kind of vine. The children were left behind by their dead parents, and
were looked after by their aunt (bi). One day, one of the children was punished for some misconduct, and his meal was suspended; the text of Bi a is the words of young boy pleading to his aunt. The lyrics repeat in the second time by replacing bi (aunt) for nen (mother) probably because that was how the boy called his aunt, since she was his adoptive mother as well.

Despite the young boy’s reference to his parents’ death (dimat e, “they died”), Bi a is not considered to be a piece of sore singsing. A tragedy of the derelict in hunger is a typical image of condition qualified as tarangu (“miserable”) in guitar band song lyrics, as in the texts of Ad o ad o (TT 42), Kros bilong tupela (TT 21) or Mundunas (TT 37). However, it neither invokes the feeling of loss and mourning as in the sore singsing, nor the addressing is directed toward the dead. The orphan in Bi a protest to his aunt but his speech never really mourns the loss of his natal parents; he merely brings up the fact that his parents has been dead only for the sake of emphasize his misery.

The basic difference between tarangu songs such as Bi a and sore singsing is quality of address; it becomes even clearer in the following instance of another non-sore singsing.

Hangu bangbang (TT 42):

(Verse): Hangu bangbang nuni alan mok pitul huniąg ileg alan mok
  yati mok soloni panawi e yati mok inei panawi
  hagad gadagad egede mon ngatorwi
(Chorus): Gugul dimat dimat dllē gugul dimat dimat dilawĩ e
  dep ibed mon tamaswi.
(Verse): Something about me is very polluted; I am hungry very much.
Who will wash my cloths anyway? Who will cook my meal anyway?
Who cares? I can walk around as if I am crazy.
(Chorus): They all die, die, have gone dead; they all die, die, and go.
Just us, we stay by ourselves.

(David Ongkau, Hangu bangbang)

The speaker in the lyrics mourns the death of one’s family and close kin died in succession; the lines Gugul dimat dimat dii, etc. suggest the speaker’s pessimism that no one can escape death. Although Hangu bangbang incorporates accusation such as “Who will wash my cloths anyway?” etc., the song is not regarded as a sore singsing for the addressing to the dead is not present. As the closing line in the chorus “Just us, we stay by ourselves” shows the speaker’s concern for those still living, the main concern expressed in the text is the inevitability of death and the trauma. The essence of the sore singsing is presence of dedication to the dead. Nena has pretext of woman’s cry despite the original words were actually uttered by the dead old man himself. By contrast, the thematic focus in the Bi a and Hangu bangbang is on the living figures such as the young boy and his aunt in Bi a or the members of the family in Hangu bangbang.

There is an interesting contrast between the two Tok Pisin words sore and tarangu; while tarangu has a tok ples counterpart gadon, sore has no direct translation in the local language. Use of gadon/tarangu in guitar band song text is much less frequent than sore, counts only three in Yabob and one from Kranket among the entire samples, suggesting that the sentiment and condition expressed by sore have more relevance to musical expression in the communities. Since the core sentiment of gadon/tarangu is a sense of sympathy rooted in
self-pity, it somehow limits efficacy of representing the subject in loss of someone due to whatever reasons like broken love, departure, separation, or death.

The sentiment of sore in the sore singsing is expressed through an address to the dead. The following Long solid days (TT 21) is considered as suitable for performance in funeral despite the pretext and context of the lyrics had nothing to do with the lament.

(Verse 1): Long solid days we’ve been together mama
tasol nau i pinis
swit lav bilong yu mama
mi no ting lus.

(Chorus): Mama mama
plis kam bek gen mama
‘kos lav bilong yu mama
mi no ting lus.

(Verse 2): Nau lukluk bek
long ol pikinini bilong yu
olsem pisin flai nabad
lav bilng ol long yu
yu olsem ston.

(Verse 1): For long solid days we’ve been together, Mama
but now it is finished.
Your sweet love, Mama,
I never forget.

(Chorus): Mama, Mama,
please come back again, Mama,
‘cause your love, Mama,
I never forget.

(Verse 2): Now looking back,
all your children [are]
like pigeons flying away.
Their love [is] to you [but]
you [are] as if a stone.

(Sandie Gabriel, Long solid days)
Initially, this song was meant to describe separation of a villager's mother as a result of broken marriage; therefore, the last line of the second verse *yu olsem sion* was an expression of indifference of the separating mother. This song, which appears on cassette of local powerband Kale Gadagads, incorporates the speech of a crying child in the chorus *Mama, mama*, etc., creating an atmosphere of misery. However, the addresser's expression of anguish has a similar discursive pattern with *sore singsing* in the sense that it is addressed toward the speaker's mother; the address to *mama* makes the song applicable to lamenting loss of someone's mother. The lines such as *tasol nau i pinis, plis kam bek gen, mi no ting lus*, etc., indeed have similar structure to typical *tok sore* that emphasizes departure, asks for the dead to revive, or swear the memory to last for good.

While there are songs that are recognized as *sore singsing*, some others are never considered to be so despite tragic and mournful contents. The appropriation of *sore* from guitar band songs in general to the *sore singsing* is a sort of a discovery through introduction of the Tok Pisin word and its pervasion into *tok ples* vocabulary. In a sense, the sentiment of *sore* is found when the word itself was introduced in Madang. The addressing marks decisive characteristics for the *sore singsing*; the lamentation takes the form of communication with a dead person in the manner that the sentiment of *sore* dominated the atmosphere.
Premonitions

There are a couple of *sore singsing* that are not originally composed as such but eventually has become one due to the death of the persons referred to or involved in the composition. Such ‘premonition songs’ are considered as the *sore singsing* for they are regarded as omens of death. The following text of *sore singsing* Sapar was composed to pity a man who was suffering from mental illness:

(Verse 1):  
*Sapar gadon din itor*

*muruian yewereg itor*

*Sapar gadon gadon mok e*

*ilum pik epeni pe.*

(Verse 2):  
*Aben mok ion imas hei*

*reg mom egede ihutig*

*lou lou ihutig itor itor hieg*

*Yabob lang iseg soroweni.*

(Sandie Gabriel, *Sapar*)

The title of this song *Sapar* is taken from the name of a man, who was alone and disoriented, and in his middle age. He was said to be born in the Bogadijim area, but for some reason he found Yabob as his home. A local church worker looked after him by giving him a shelter, meals and cloths. Sapar was known for carrying large stones and sacks filled with stones on
his shoulder with no obvious purpose, which he collected in the beach, to spend his day. The composition was first dedicated to Sapar himself, who was still active in carrying his stone with no rest; therefore, the line Sapar gadon gadon mok e was probably delivered lightly. In one early mourning, however, when Sandie's Kale Gadagads were performing in a live six-to-six at village club Sapar passed away from a sudden sickness in the hospital. When Sapar's death was announced at the outdoor concert stage, the band was playing this very song. The informed audience was startled by the coincidence; they all stopped whatever they were doing, standing still.

The articulation of Sapar’s death with the performance of Sapar was an insignia for the locals to count this song as a lament. The locals were struck by the fact that the performance of Sapar created the context for the song as a sore singsing by accidentally connecting the sentiment of gadon and the death of the man. In the case of Sapar the two events, death of the dedicated of the song and performance of it, occurred almost simultaneously, and the content of gadon has become that of death instead of general state of poverty and mental illness. By contrast, Sau laliku, as discussed in the previous chapter in detail, is not regarded as a sore singsing. The singing of Sau laliku reminded the old woman of her dead husband from Bagasin, as she was listening to a powerband rendition of his composition in the concert field. Nonetheless, the Yabob performers had no relation to the woman, and the song itself had no textual or contextual significance of death for the band. Sau laliku is not considered as a sore singsing not because it is a rendition from the singsing
tumbuna from some other village but because the performers found no causality between the two events. The sore singsing is a local event articulated by means of stringband music in which sharing of grief plays the major role; however, it is also highly generic and contextual.

The other case is a clearer one that connects the text with actual death by causality.

This song, entitled Damag o portrays a sailing canoe:

(Chorus): \[Nen \ a \ nen \ e\]
\[damag \ o \ wanga \ nen \ a.\]

(Verse): \[Iyo \ wag \ mesi \ mesti \ Kuru \ wi \ e\]
\[iyo \ wag \ mesi \ mesti \ Arop \ wi \ e\]
\[Morelang \ Ilon \ iyo \ wade\]
\[iyo \ wag \ mesi \ mesti\]
\[Morelang \ Awan \ umbale.\]

(Chorus): \[Nen \ a \ nen \ e,\]
Your young canoe, nen a.

(Verse): The canoe sails along the ocean to the Kuru reefs.
The canoe sails along the ocean to Arop Island.
Along the middle of Morelang Ilon it goes.
The canoe sails along the ocean through Morelang Awan.

(Salok David, Damag o)

Damag o (TT 55), as in several other cases of sore singsing, describes a sailing canoe, in this case going to as far as Arop Island in the Pacific Ocean. The address nen leaves much ambiguity for it could be either a specific reference to the addresser's mother or an unspecified close female kin or an interjection. In fact, the lyrics of Damag o appeared in a dream of the composer, and the tune, which is arranged into reggae for the powerband, was
worked out with the members of the band. Kuru, a reef near Yabob Island, Arop and Morelang are mentioned in the lyrics, illustrating itinerary of the sailing canoe. The reference to remote Arop Island, along with the abstract *nen*, creates rather a dream-like effect. Since the folklore in the area often regards Arop and the Siassi Islands with strong spiritual significance, the image of these lines is even atavistic.\(^\text{15}\) Despite the canoe reference in the text, the overall impression of the song in the original context along with its arrangement of reggae-style powerband music, could have been anything but a *sore singsing*.

*Damag o* has become a *sore singsing* because of a band member who suddenly died shortly after the composition of the tune. The news of the young man's death shook his fellow band members; they eventually decided to dedicate their new composition to the member in the funeral. *Damag o* was regarded as a *sore singsing* specifically for the dead young man, and never to be performed in someone else's funeral. The significance of the case of *Damag o* is displacement of the causality of death and mourning, the song being attributed to the death of the young man as if the song was a premonition. *Damag o* appeared in a dream, and with its reference to the sailing canoe, the addressing of *nen*, names of significant places, and the coincidental death of the young band man, it was regarded as a *sore singsing*. *Damag o* is illustrating case in that the rhetoric of the song is associated with death of a villager; a *sore singsing* must express some imagery of departure, especially with a reference to a sailing canoe. The feeling of loss of someone in everyday life in community and mourning of it precede any other pretexts of *sore singsing* to the extent that intention and causality of
events have less importance than the emotional significance and real life event to which the music is related.

Both songs *Sapar* and *Damag o* can be seen as articulation of Yabob folk belief that gives premonition to a great cultural value. Some signs are believed to foreshadow a specific event type such as sudden departure, separation or arrival. The followings are some of the better-known Yabob premonitions:\(^{16}\)

a) When a yellow butterfly stays on a person’s shoulder or arm in the morning, an unexpected visitor may arrive. “And if he wonders why you were expecting him, with betel nuts and palm-leaf mats, you just point to your arm. He would understand the butterfly had let you know he was coming.”
b) If the yellow butterflies are seen flying across the sea in a large flock, a disaster will soon strike the village. The latest instance occurred a few days before the Japanese attacked and landed on Madang.
c) When a firefly flies circling around someone’s body a few times and go straight toward the sea, someone close to the one will have to depart the island.
d) A kind bird is known to cry all through the day and night before a villager dies from a long sickness. With the death of the person, the cry stops.
e) When a villager is killed away from home, a shout, a loud cry or a gunshot will be heard from the bush on the island simultaneously with the time of death.
f) Playing a funeral or burial by digging holes may cause someone’s death.
g) An old tall tree may die when a large snake is killed. That snake must have had home under the tree.

As the agent of premonitory phenomena is concerned, flying beings are strongly favoured, such as butterflies, fireflies and birds. Locals, however, never relate these flying beings as some kind of supernatural beings such as spirits or soul of the dead, as it appears elsewhere in PNG (Feld 1991). Old tall trees, the only ground object in these premonitory sayings, are
referred as a sign death of large snakes, in which the dead trees correspond with dead snakes. The voice of the bird is taken as an announcement. The mysterious cry of dying person in the bush and the funeral play are signs of death for the rather direct association. The reference to sea-going canoe in mourning, which is incorporated in the *sore singsing* as well, has similar structure with the premonitory saying involving insects and bird, for both patterns parallel with the representation of direction show with the agents. The coming and going of non-human agents are compared with that of a person going from the earth to the heaven.

The skeletal patterns of these *stori*, or stories, have something in common in that they have an iconic sign structure between the omen and the referred event. Unnatural movement of butterflies, fireflies and other beings are attributed to sudden events and death, in which the movement of objects represents departure and arrival. Discursive structure of the two *sore singsing*, *Sapar* and *Damag o*, that attributes the compositions as signs of death of particular individuals is a variation of these patterns of *stori*. Interestingly, Yabob people also often attribute sudden death of a person to sorcery, but that is not the discursive pattern for the *sore singsing*. In fact, there have never been a guitar band song attributed as sorcery in the Madang area by and large, not even love magic or *marila*. However, the signification of premonitory *sore singsing* differs from the *stori* in that the performance and dreaming of the songs are connected to death of individuals, and that they are essentially the words of the songs which let the villagers connect the event of music-making and death. The text of *Sapar* and *Damag o* are not only regarded as omens *post factum*, but the structure of discourse is not
similar with the preexisting premonitions introduced here. The performance of the two songs does not indicate any iconic relationship with the event of coming or going. The closest structure to the case of Sapar is perhaps seen in premonition d) (announcement of death), and that of Damag o has proximity to premonition f) (realization of song about a canoe resulted in a death). However, musical performance and composition as the agent of death has a totally new signification in that humanly organized sound structure such as music, by contrast against cry of a bird or a person, actually mediates death, and musical stimuli is now regarded as deadly sometimes. Music does not kill a person or it is not a supernatural being that compose the song, but it foretells the people the sad news. The relationship between the referent of death and the consequence is much more complex in the cases of song than simple action of the agents as in the examples from a) to f). In the case of music, the sound of guitar, the words, the pretext, and the act of composition are all integrated into the nexus, performance. These elements alone never consist of a premonition, but they have to be blended in by means of performance.

The key to the association between the song text and an actual death is homology; as the canoe sails on the sea, the person passes away. As a result, the 'discovery' of such homology in guitar band music has invented sore singsing. The sore singsing, consciously or unconsciously, make use of the symbolic association that has been so prevalent among the communities around coastal Madang. If the local attribution of sore singsing to premonitions of death is to be phrased as a reinterpretation of folk belief, the new discourse arose is not
simply a revival of older formation of knowledge but is the reality, or the practical logic. Even the local’s explanation of the essence of sore singsing as givim las rispek to the dead is but partially true. Premonitory sore singsing presents one of the most striking cases of symbolic interaction of the genre. In the sore singsing the audience connect the sound of music with death of someone in relation to the song. A performance of song is recognized as a piece of sore singsing one only through the audience’s experience of the event in which death and sound of music form a strong association.

Conclusion
The invention of sore singsing is striking in that it developed from the public entertainment of the stringband genre. The sore singsing took the style of the guitar band music, but it ended up as a genre of music that mourn the death of someone dear in public. The inclusion of the word sore in the sore singsing means a development of poetics in Madang guitar band music as a whole. Although the meaning of the word sore has already entailed the feeling for separation by death, it was not until the invention of sore singsing that the locals discovered the nature of the word sung in the guitar band music. The invention of the sore singsing is a significant event in that the attendants to the mortuary ritual now find something irresistibly sad and suitable to solemnize the death of a member of kin or community with the sound of the guitar. The immediate resources of sore singsing have been stringband songs and women’s ritual cry; the guitar band music has given the lament a clear expressive form, and
the cry has served a model for mourning. Addresses to the dead, references to leaving canoes and place name, and the polylingual idioms are characteristics of women's cry as well as the sore singsing, and discursive significance of them are basically similar. The imagery of canoes in serene landscapes has been prevalent in nostalgic guitar band songs as well. The sound of guitar has been avoided by Christian mortuary ritual in most of peri-urban Madang villages, although a number of them have composed songs for commemorating deaths of their wantoks. It is not certain, therefore, if the practice of sore singsing might pervade in the entire Madang area in the future. Still, it is significant that some villages in Madang associate the sound of guitar as something as sorrowful as inducing ritual cries of the mourners regardless of exposure to the guitar band music in everyday life, and in such a short span of time of a decade or so.

From an outsider's perspective, emotional reactions of the mourners to the sound of guitar band music appears somewhat peculiar, but for the locals it is natural to listen to the sore singsing with a deep feelings of sorrow. While it is nearly impossible to illustrate the exact cause of the invention, the articulating of sore in Madang guitar band music should have a strong relationship in the Yabob imagery of association between the mourning and the sound of guitar or a singing voice. The feeling of sore for a broken love, self-pity, separation from lovers and kin, one's pani or home, memories of past, sentimental landscapes of quite sea, moonlit beaches, a lone sailing canoe, and other sorry things have been expressed in the lyrics of guitar band music. By contrast, other realms of emotion such as happiness,
contentment, flirtation, anger, irony, ennui, or sarcasm have never been so abundant. The sore singsing is an articulation of peri-urban relationship embodied in the cry, which the locals perceive as *mekim fnunerel moa nais* (literally, "making the funeral nicer"), or a state of refinement. It is the complexity of music that makes the people feel such a deep sentiment, and the sore singsing makes the death of a wantok even more ineffable and uncanny, yet inculcating and "real."

1 There might be room for arguing whether Madang’s case is a “ritual” cry, since there is no clear sense of it being institutional as in Caraveli’s example in Greece (Caraveli 1986). By the phrase “ritual cry” I simply intend to stress formality of the expression, not “ritual” in a strict sense.

2 Yabob’s instance clearly reflects localism: in Nobonob, by contrast, the bush is the place where the dead banishes. See the text of *Amen uman*.

3 *O bubeg iio so padal mon* has the harmonic structure of I-IV-I-V-I.

4 John Sakon of Kananam left a couple of his compositions of *sore singsing* before his own death in the late 1980’s, *Kak di asop* and *G.P.*; the former commemorates the death of a father in the Alexishafen mission, and the latter was dedicated for one of his young wantok man.

5 More specifically, a *bi* is either father’s sister or mother’s brother’s wife.

6 There is another *sore singsing* by Willie Tropu in the same period, named “Bau,” although it was not collected during my field research.

7 A *wag* in general means a canoe, a vessel, an aircraft, a vehicle, and so on.

8 The verb *nyowa* suggests a long-distance sailing.

9 An unsubstantiated account counts six times for the performance of *Balangut* in actual occasions of mortuary ritual.

10 Among nearly ten different names of the wind, of which only Rai (a dry south wind that brings a fine sky but very turbulent sea in August) and Taleu (a humid cool wind that makes heavy rain around February) are frequently mentioned today. Despite the fair sky it brings Rai sank my canoe four times in 1997.
11 Apparently, there are esoteric place names that cannot be made in public; these secret place names are passed down through male members of the clan.

12 The word nen have multiple meanings in a single context. On one hand, nen is a kinship term widely used in Yabob language, and usually translated in Tok Pisin as mama; in this sense, nen means "mother" in English, as nemam is literally "mother-and-father," meaning "parents." On the other, the word nen as well as Tok Pisin mama can also be an address to a woman in general (more likely to be married) regardless of her relationship to the addressee. In the latter case, the address is uttered from a point of view of a child; if an old man is heard requesting O nen o, kisim mi marasim bilong me i kam ("Nen, fetch me my medicine here!") he is most likely speaking to his daughter. Yet another common usage of nen is an exclamation just like Italian Mama mia!

13 In 1997, Bibil Island was not inhabited except for a few young men’s houses. It was not clear, therefore, whether the magical knowledge is still in practice. In Yabob, these traditions died out completely along with the arrival of the missions.

14 I could not clarify if the words in Sandie’s text were verbatim transcription from the woman’s cry, or even they were phrased exactly as the old man did. However, since the tok ples of Yabob and Bibil are similar, it is assumed that the changes in transmission process should have been relatively minor.

15 It is said that in the traditional times Arop, Tolokia and Umboi islands were reachable with large canoes. The origin of these islands as well as the those in Madang were once attributed to the power of spiritual being, perhaps a giant, called Kilibob (Hannemann 1996:10-11).

16 Some of the premonitions may have personal relevance. A dog of a certain villager’s household is known to cover his meal, a dish of rice, with soil by his nose so that the rice is completely hidden under the ground. This is sign of the villager’s relative dying from illness. The mother of this dog was known to do the same.

17 Perhaps, this is especially true to the Melanesians. A great number of my audiences seemed to be puzzled by my presentation of Yabob sore singsing at a music conference in Port Moresby in 1997 (Suwa, f.o.). Apparently, guitar band music is associated with non-spiritual aspects of life by many, and it was hard for them to understand Sandie Gabriel’s Nen a contains serious messages. As of 1999, the Faculty of Creative Arts of the University of Papua New Guinea, to which the music department belongs, is closing down, and the
educational standard in fine arts might face some setback. However, such a construct of stereotypes might become even more active as the urban sectors dominate the rest of country in terms of sociocultural and economic advancement, as well as the religion, taking their model from the West.