

## Serphina Ililau Bi-Lingual Questionnaires

**Interview Location:** Falalop Island, Ulithi Atoll

**Age of Interviewee:** 75 years

**Island of Birth:** Falalop Island, Ulithi Atoll

**Audio Language:** Ulithian

**Recording** afc2022011\_005\_sr001

00:09 **Question 1**

1. Thinking back, what are your very earliest memories of, or about, weaving?

A. Ulithian: Hobe luluwal tefal ngo mada mele hochil mem'mangi hare gulayem mo irel yam la Kai mo gula doh deur?

Interviewee Ulithian: 00:26 Way back in 1959, mala ngo ngang ichil tarfefel. Ited yaya gow. Iwe ngo isa kai doh yengang le ibele bidi luwulur fafel epol isa komahoi yar feffeur yengang, yuch hare gulfei ka. eloh ngo ila maro ngal yal semal deur, isa budoh fathmasowa emulwe. 00:58 Yesa mel depei mathalbo ibe kai imulwe. Ngo ila koloh irel yarmat ngo tor mele mol le reyaya bo, be tepath guluch ngo ilutul gulfei meka yach fafel. 01:10 Tor le mayaya mol. Isa interest le ibe. 01:14 Sabuthoh katabdoh, isa budoh irel elulap kala wulyetigiy. Rebefarudah yi-cho kala yar ngo ngang ibudoh ngo ila morodi, "hakangal yei". Hasigsig ye la 1960, wolmol malmulwe, wolmol Ovilia. Iwe ngo sa-mwol le ngang ibe, isa feur yai yuch, isa faru sew peg, ye wachich, te holngol, towemwol le yarmat rebe yaya iyang bo-yai kai. 01:47 Isa faru mala bo-yai sa-mwol le ngang ibe chogu, sa mol le, isa gula mele tapang, ngo igula mele ngung le bemos. Ngo ila mala rema kangalgich bo, ila lobsla sima kai, ah... yarmat remasor bo (yeelmos) mil tapang mo ngung. Sima sor bo dol, igla iye sapal chog mele tapang tai ma mos bo sa mol. 02:13 Iwe ngo ila hobelesor bo dol mo ngung... Dol mo ngung. Ila, ila lobsla sima gula mil yengang mo iyang. Iwe isa kai deur ye... ila gula.

02:27 La 19 somewhere, sa katabdoh, itugla hare 1961 ngo isa yaya gow. Isa yaya gow le yengangel chog fulyach. 02:46 Tor yai mol. Tor mol le yelah yath la. Pangmem lefechig kala ha yaya gow irel yathla iwe ngo yengangel fulyach. 02:55 Tor wol lomlulthiy le hobe wiri sew mol lerebe yali. Iwe chilmel malpawe Walter, Padre Walter. 03:06 Ila lobsla yarmat rebele, yebele komahoi meka yesa chumong mol. Yor rochokola resa feur fathal iwe ngo hamem tor lomem salpi mo wulyetigiy, iwe tor yamem mol. 03:17 Ye samoch budoh mol ka yarmat resa k'kai doh yengang iyang. 03:20 Mla ngo ngang isa fasol gula meka yar fafel mo mwaal. Mela difference iyang. La katabdoh, ngo isa waloth ngo isa moch kai machi. Ila mla sibe sor bo deur kala yal yarmat. 03:39 Isa gula ifasangal dedeur, iwe ngo mala isa gula sangal sew deur le madal bo taylor le yegula igla. Itugla hare chil yor mo wol fului kalai ngo wol falyei taror le ye gula bo sangang chog mele igula ngo iye itai ma dedeur. Rema sor bo deurel wolfal. Tor le yegula mala. 03:59 Ngang chog mo mla seley mom la bsil le sames. Le itugla hami mo

wol fulukai, ngo deurel wolfal, ma ruyai ngungul, ruyai dibal, ngo smat chol, yengangal fulyach. <sup>04:21</sup> Isa hagela ngal mol iwe ngo ye work. Iwe ila mele ngang isa gula deur mo iyang. Sa kai fethal yarmat mo iyang. Semal ngo la tongtong fathal yal mal. Hamem ralakawe le ha dedeur fathal chog le yengang fulyach. <sup>04:39</sup> Yi moch dedeur mol irel mele isa yengang ye isa lolei. Sa 1971, '72, '73 yai yengang mol bo sa mol mele yarmat resa yaya. Isa keyayalir meka layi.

Interviewee English:

Way back in 1959, I was still a young girl, I had not yet worn lavalava. I learned to do the weaving by going down to the women's house where the ladies gathered to weave, and I watched them weave. Usually, they wove using banana or hibiscus fibers. I would go and sit by one of the ladies and stare at what they were doing, and then feel like wanting to learn. When I looked around, nobody wore the thread lavalava, but local lavalavas which are called either "pathguluch" or "iltulgulfei", the ones for women. Nobody wore woven thread.

I was interested in learning. Then later, when my parents did their warping (Cho), I would come sit down with them and tell them to teach me. So, in 1960, before typhoon Ophelia, I made banana fibers, and wove a small lavalava, not to be worn, but just to learn by doing it. So, I learned the parts of the loom, like the heddles (ngung), shed rod (tapang) that identifies the place if a string is broken which they call "yelelmos". But now the string does not break because it's thread. So, somewhere around 1961 was when I started wearing lavalava, but the local ones. I didn't have thread at that time. Most of the girls that wore lavalava in those days wore the local ones. You wouldn't see anybody in Ulithi wearing lavalava made from thread in those times. Fr. Walter was the one that started observing the local fibers, and then he ordered thread.

So, some people got thread and wove, but my parents and I did not have money, so we did not get any. By that time, I knew the difference between women's and men's lavalava. Later on, I started learning how to make "Machi" (a sacred type of weaving done for the chiefs). By then, I also learned how to do another type of weaving that maybe the other islands still know how to do it but not the people from my island which they call "deurel wolfal". Nobody knows how to do this type of weaving anymore except myself and my mom. This type of weaving has two (2) heddle rods, and 2 pattern stick and a different warping. This type was done with the local fibers, but I tried the thread and it also works. So, people learned how to do it, and some just made up their ways. I started using thread when I started working and having kids. So, from 1971, '72, '73 until now, I weave with thread because that is what people are wearing.

## 05:00 Question 2

2. In your mind, who is the one person you most associate with weaving in your life and why?

A. Ulithian: Lol yam luluwal, itei semal le ye kael yam fel ngali irel yam fefaru doh deur hare yam deduer doh? Bo mada fal?

Interviewee Ulithian: 05:10 Tor... pangal yarmat ngo ifel ngalir. Mada fal? Fal mala hare ngang itugla sew formel ngo itema le ibe kasi. Hare mo mokawe yarmat roma ma iyang, bo "ay yeremtala togla deur ngo... iwe ngo imaloh. Hafedeg ngal chog hagech. Semal le igula le ye mommai yal fasfosol hagech ngo ibe mari. Haremo semal reyasor ngo ibeloh ye isla kasiya, yarmat rema'ma iyang ngo ngang ite ma iyang bo itugla. 05:38 Ngo ila pelal le pangal formel ngo igula bo tetugil le ye budoh ngo ibe dipli mulwe ngo itugla ngo ima darlog isla, "ay ifasangal tabol peg la ho bo iye sangal? Ifa sangal mulwe iye sangal? Bo ite ma bo ibe sor bo itugla. Ila pelal le te semal chog yarmat mele ifaru ngalir bo pangal loh yarmat ngo ifel ngalir. Re ma maligili yei ngo tor pelal. Mele chog ibe gula.

Interviewee English: No one in particular. I associate it with everyone, why? Because when I didn't know something, I am not ashamed to ask. I don't mind what people think of me, so if I don't know something, I ask so I can learn. It's the same with weaving baskets. When I see someone weaving a perfect basket, I look for her. If she is from Asor, I will go ask her to teach me. People are ashamed to ask because they don't want people to think that they don't know, but I don't think that way. I ask so I can learn something I don't know, and that's why I know most of those things. If I see a design on the ends of a lavalava that I like and I don't know how to make it, I will ask. People laugh at me, but I don't mind because I just want to know.

### 06:02 Question 3

3. Why is weaving so important to you?

A. Ulithi: Mada mele dedeur ye kael yal palengpelal ngalug iyang?

Interviewee Ulithian: 06:16 Ngali yei chog hare ngal pangal yarmat? Hal ila sew formel le pitgich. Very valuable irech wol outer island. Si taptap irel dugdugl mass, especially haplech mo mengaguch bo ila mele mengaguch. Tor yach mengag. Situgla sangal fereul mengagul yepsach iwe ngo temadoh long. Iwe ngo gich sigula sangal le ila mala sichapidah irel fibers, yuch and gulfei bo ila mala yor yach. Sitaptap yach dugdugul mass, sitap haposol meka yewahaha le yebudoh wolfului, wenig. Pangal metmatal. Sibe sor bo ila mele salpi irech. Tapel palang irer riyap. 07:03 Tor mele green paper le gich bo ila chog mele loch salpiy. Paleng pelal ngal gich Outer Islands. Site chuwayii bo si-far hasi mirel ahh si-feuru ngal peoch mo irel meka local. Ngo gich siwol feur. Igla iye safar pangal formel ngo siya taptap salpiy iyang. Sew farmel le ye palingpaling pelal. Ngo ila mala gula yei mo iyang.

Interviewee English: Just me or to everybody? It is one thing that is very valuable in our culture. We use it when somebody dies (funerals). It's our clothing, because before we didn't have thu (a loincloth made from a length of fabric). We don't know how to make the modern cloth and there was no means of getting it. But for us, we know how to make our clothing by weaving the fibers from hibiscus and bananas.

We use lavalava to make peace when there are tributes due between island, clans, or families. There are so many things that we use lavalava for. We use them like our money also. Lavalava, or weaving, is something very important to us in the Outer Islands. It's something that we don't buy because we make it ourselves with our hands and from the local materials we have. It's something that very important to us. Nowadays, we are using money, as well.

07:38 **Question 4**

4. How has weaving or woven skirts changed over your lifetime, or since the lifetime of those who taught you?

A. Ulithi: Ifa sangal yal deur mo dedeur susuwel doh irel yam bubudoh yesa holadoh igla? Hare sa change tangi yathkawe ho k'kai mor irel sensei kala yam?

Interviewee Ulithian: 07:58 Yak... dedeur mo mael... te change dedeur samat loh chog dedeur, wulullul yach durngu, chogu siya durngu. Yach color mele sa yisuwel fadal. So cholop metmetal color igla mimol ralakawe. Ralakawe le tor yach rochupung bo bech ila sitaptap yuch. Ngo meka yesar mwau le yesar brown le sitaptap gulfei kae ye mwau. Iwe ngo Peuch mele yach color. Hal sew loh chog. 08:31 Peuch iye sima fag meka, parang kea sayew siya ige. Ige, ige ye la mormor fadal siya kak, Tirigi sehai lol kawe siya mari mulwe maelyelpal, mokaw wahral we yemel falbol siya yosadi iyang siya mela ngal chael. Siya hamela irel sobonb hare ruwbong lebe kapes ngali mulwe ye la turn out le sa ruchupung kowe, ye samat te halngol black bo rochupung irel mala milal. Ikala makla yach color. 09:06 Samat loh chog, hasigsig ye la budoh mele, fal yothle sa cholop color, sa yor blue, green, yellow, iwe ngo yach ahh, mele parangrang le rangal Yap mele sima, mele sitaptap. Rangal Yap mele sitaptap. Ngo hal ila yema faith. Tica mo rangal Yap le hobe hamela hosa, tapel mulwe sima hamela ngal ubuth. Iwe ila mele ngang gulayei.

Interviewee in English: How we weave is still the same. It's the color that has changed. We have so many more colors these days than in the old days. We didn't have true black in those days. We had white because of the white banana fibers. We had light brown because the first layer of hibiscus fiber is kind of light brown. And, we had this color that is dark – more like black – which we called “Peuch”. This color is made of dirt (like clay that is found only in the main island of Yap) mixed with the scraped yellow inner skin of the Noni tree root and some water. Or it could be made from the scraped inner skin of Noni root with

some scraped rust from rusted metal and left to rest for one or two nights. We also had the color yellow from dried ginger root, but we could only get this color from the main island of Yap. This color also does not last; it fades away. Nowadays, there are so many colors, like blue, green, and others.

Interviewer in Ulithian: 09:40 Ila chog?

Interviewer in English: That's it?

Interviewee in Ulithian: 09:41 Ngo ila chog , igula chog le halsamat loh chog yach ngel. Sa change fathal ngel igla irel mele sa repsach le siya. 09:49 Ila hafedeg chog bele hobela yitedoh babior ka mel yach color mel, ngo tor harawraw bo smat log chog, harawraw, dulal tad, dulal falmad, iye ika meka sa samat mo samat fathal ngo tor idal irech. 10:09 Delul flak meka gich siya tongtong dah chog idal. Iwe ngo halsew loh chog yach color, peuch.

Interviewee in English: Yes that's it, I know that before modernization we only had one dye (Puech). Now we have different kinds of dyes due to modernization. Before we used carbon papers to make a dye, which is dark blue. Now we have dyes the color of the dark blue ocean, the color of the blue ocean, and the color of the light blue ocean. We don't have names for these colors. We just make up names of our colors, like US flag blue. But the only color we used to have was "Puech".

## 10:20 Question 5

5. If you could talk to your great-granddaughter about weaving, what would you want to tell her?

A. Ulithian: Hare wochog bo hobe malili ngal lol lom tarfefel irel deur, mada mele hobe kangalur hare hodipli hobe kangalur?

Interviewee Ulithian: 10:35 Idi pli le ibe kangalur pangal meka ngang igula mo irel deur. Igula bo te pangal yarmat ngo regula. Iwe ngo te meka chog layi mele ibe kangalur, bo dela tomol le yor le te interest hames le ibe kangalu ngo be maliglaloh hare yetahcheloh bo tor fal ngali ngo ye paling pelal le rebe gula meka ngang igula. 10:55 Iwe ngo pangal yarmat ngo ngang idi pli le rebe gula meka ngang igula hare ibla mes ngo be yog le rebe hadayu, rebe kangalur ikla retogla. Meka ngang igula le yir rebegula. Ye cholop cholop gich ralakawe le sima lebagli yach tafei, iwe ngo siblibagili salapach. 11:17 Site di pli sibe fang repiyach, sitedi pli sibe fang ngal yarmat bo hamela mulwe robe gula bo be tobtob loh chog. Iwe sala gel chog mele ho gula mulwe. Hosa mes hosa hasi loh falbol le tor le yegula. Tapel deur igla. Cholop le yegula tot deur le resames sa hasiloh falbol te kangalur mokawe layur. 11:40 Iwe ngo fal mele igula pangal meka iyang le mil mala itema ma ngo ite ma le hare hobe sor bo itugla deur, isa hamda loh irel rochokala regula le robudoh mo israe failing isla kasi. Resa kangal yei ngo hare redi pli rebe kangal yei mala holngol katosol, iwe ngo ngang isa wol

komahoi mirel makla yar. <sup>11:59</sup> Ilang ngo, hare ho kachapra yei, ila ngo yehatfa le iye sangal mirel deur le yam, ngo te ila sangal le ngang ila faru. Iwe rebele habungu ngaliyei. "ilang iye sangal mala macheyal." Ila fal le igula iyang bo itema le ibe kasi. Ngo halila, pangal meka igula ngo idipli ibe kangal meka layi mo yarmat, pangal yarmat. Idela mes isa hasiloh falbol tor le be gula. Sala tapel igla le siya lut-lut fadal le tor mele sigula.

Interviewee English:

I would like to teach them all that I know about weaving. I believe that not everybody knows what I know, and I would not only teach my great-great granddaughters, but all the people that would like to learn in case my kids are not interested. I want to share my knowledge of weaving because it's something very important for people to know so they can pass it on. I don't want to die and take my knowledge to my grave. Some people don't want to share their knowledge, like medicine and many other things, so when they die they take this knowledge to the grave, and that is the end of their knowledge. They don't want to tell people so that the knowledge will continue. It's the same with weaving. Some people have died, and they took their specialties to their grave.

For myself, I am not ashamed to go and ask people that come from other places and know things that I don't know. And all these things that I know, I would love to teach my kids and other people, so that I don't keep it to myself and take it to my grave.