This is a story about the zitung, like the zitung we have in our paddies downstream. It is a very long story!

Long ago, when we human beings had come to live on the earth, there came a deluge. Our story begins there. It happened this way.

Ninggonwa, the one who created the earth by beating it together came beating down. The nine Lewui brothers came to him, wanting to trick him, and they said, “Your wife is dead.” But Ninggonwa pretended indifference. “Really? I will have another wife then.”

“My father is dead,” they told him.
“My children are all dead.”

“No substitute for a father” and that the last two lines should come after the next two.

And Ninggonwa, beater of the earth, came back to his own home, and found that all was well.

Ninggonwa was very angry. “Lewui Brothers, you have deceived me, and I shall punish you! I will bring down the deluge, and flood you out!”

\[2\] My main informant Mopi remarked that the latter line should be: “There is no substitute for a father” and that the last two lines should come after the next two.
“Flood us, then. Go ahead! But we will build rafts, and we will make ships! We will take our hoes and dippers.” And the craft of shipbuilding had its origins then.

Now in Ninggonwa’s family there were only two orphan children. To save them from the deluge, Ninggonwa had them put into a huge chest. Nine needles, nine crows, and nine cocks were put in with them.

He told the children, “After the rain stops, you must throw down the nine needles. If you cannot hear them fall, you must stay in the chest. Then you must release the nine crows. If you cannot hear them cawing when they reach the ground, you must not yet alight from the chest. Then you can release the nine cocks. If you do not hear them crowing, you must not leave the chest.”

“Whichever of the animals you release, you may leave the chest only when you hear it calling.”

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The children sailed away; the rains came; the floodwaters covered the earth. And as the waters receded, the children threw down the nine needles; they released the nine crows; they released the nine cocks, all according to Ninggonwa’s instructions. And when they heard the nine cockerels crowing, the two children climbed out of the chest and began to wander over the earth.

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They had nowhere to go; there were no other human beings left. They felt very unhappy and ill-at-ease.

Then they came to the house of the wild zitung, our One-eyed zitung, who was an evil spirit. The zitung went to fetch water, and the brother and sister followed him secretly, and listened. He was “tumbeng tumbeng” on his way, muttering about fetching water from a muddy hole in the ground to stew the orphans…

In a flash, they were gone! They ran and ran, and finally took shelter in another house, the home of our home-zitung. But the wild zitung, the One-eyed, he was searching, following their tracks.