

"The ^{Asisi} Cult" 1933 mss. mimeo N6 Coll. UANB
AA Box 25 AL C563 6A1 12 Nov. 1981
- See Wethwell for ref.

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Cult 1st noted from Wonigela by A.J. Thompson in June 1932 as follows:

"Frederick Bogara's father of Uialku came to Wonigela with a retinue in ceremonial dress ostensibly to interview the Priest in the first instance. The Priest being at Dogara, the visitor sought out Abraham a prominent Church Councillor and greeted him and the Church at Wonigela through him. With his retinue and in company with the Government Councillors and V.C. he then visited each village in the neighbourhood in turn seeking baravu purapurana. His method of search was as follows: - Whilst his followers were drumming he stood before each house and sniffed. Some houses he passed over without a remark but in each house where he indicated the presence of the purapura it was found by the Councillors who went up at his bidding. One man noting the method took the precaution of removing the purapura from his house and hiding it in the forest but this availed him nothing. The pose of the detective (if ~~may~~ we may call him so) led him to the spot where it was hidden and it was discovered. The substances were mostly in corked bottles and all were thrown into the sea. The reason given for this search was, in the man's own words - 'It is not good that we should be trying to injure one another or to cause death and so I am come to help you to put an end to this practice'. The local people were very much impressed.

"Note: - What the substances were, I have no idea. They were all destroyed before I came home." (1)

Sept. 20 ALISTER KEKEDO reported at SIRISIRI that 20 young men from Collingwood Bay had come to smell out sorcery

- owed allegiance to DIPARI from btw Biniguni and Sinipara, "but that their practice came from behind Uialku." - continually mentioned God and the Bishop in favourable tones

- when arrive at village, people told to "fall in" - told in a peaceful and kindly way that the Gov. and Mission had told them sorcery was evil, yet they persisted. What the Gov. had failed to do, Asisi would do
- people told to bring out sorcery stones, stones licked & gings chewed and spat out to make impotent.

Then "fall in" again - each persons palm smoothed one and smelt - could smell other stones
- miraculous things - smelt out all stones
- when one person of desecrate; held "court" with him all afternoon but he would not speak. At end of reparations, the leader jumped and came down with a thud "everyone saw sparks and flashes of light come from the ground as his feet struck it". They located the stone where it had been buried in a landslide.
- no distortion connected with this (cf Humphries).

Light (?) preached that Asisi was to be respected as they were casting out evil in God's name; but not part of Church and should not be accepted over Christianity
- but in Nov. received note from Alister who was proposing to tour with Asisi - they going as far as Davasi in Degwa District; he was "dressed down"

Wanted to show (Alister, that is) "wainine ai gavia" and that the Asisi could turn out "wainine ai diabolito"

Next, a report from FRANCIS at UGA in Nov.

"On inquiry I found that the party consisted mainly of young men from the Sirisiri and Gayoanaki districts mostly baptised. The description was very different from that Alister had given. The party had come with drums, all being decorated and painted. They queried (sic) the women, according to Francis, professing to extract the parama from the women, ~~according~~ but they did not find many stones connected with barava. This would probably be accounted for by the fact that Uga more or less marks the line separating the use of stones by barabarava on the west and the belief in parama on the east. The Asisi party also made demands on the Uga people and started cooking pots, beads and other New Guinea decorations and food. In one case they went to the extreme of snatching an ornament from a woman's ear. They were also accused of behaving loosely at night."

Caught up with the Christians, scolded them, got them to return the objects and leave the cult

- at Gayoanaki a decorated native appeared, placed a stone and began to shiver until Light jumped up & the man said off - shivering a characteristic

ARM at Boniara arrested same for disturbances at Giwa and Davokerehere

At Giwa they got I into hypnotic trances broken by
twisting their big toes.

Interprets as sorcery against sorcery

- early good stages may be due to teacher's anxieties to destroy sorcery and cure of Asisi not to push their luck
- maybe "Satan divided against himself" "a hopeful sign for the downfall of his kingdom and the extinction of what is one of the greatest evils of New Guinea." (3).

Light Boianai

"The Asisi Cult" 1933 - n.a. mimeo

June 1932 - KITORE of Uaku visits Wanigela to destroy
sorcery

- had been connected with ORODA ritual, but had given it up when Miss Carwell at Nanin told him it was bad

- but the Asisi also uses exclamation "Oroda!" in later stages in Goodenough Bay - and Kitoré also claimed to heal the sick.

Kitoré visited Ovan Kewansasaf in July, spreading Cult

- initiates made base at Gwoira, a mountain inland from Goodenough Bay on edge of Boianai District - area little touched by mission

- a no. of young men including Christians initiated

- systematic tours in Goodenough Bay area in Sept., mainly in the mountains behind

- passing east, it merged with the Vaitala Cult

- new strongholds at Pondawana and Dimadima, in the main range and difficult access

- Asisi had some associations with Christianity; with the Vaitala more added, making it more plausible to the mountain Christians

- Kitoré died late in 1932

Asisi claim 3 gifts: (a) cast out evil spirits

(b) heal the sick by own power

(c) raise the dead

- pts out that these are powers of Christ

"It may be a mere co-incidence that these three striking features of the Gospel narrative are reproduced in what is an obvious attempt to provide a practical solution to three of the greatest problems of life. It has been mentioned more than once by natives that Spiritual Healing should be used by the Church,

which suggests that they seem to think that the Mission is withholding from the Papuan Christians vital parts of the Faith. It is ~~difficult~~ difficult to say whether this idea is widespread or not. It is some comfort to know that some at least of our people read their Testaments and think about what they read, even though their thinking is confused and raises questions connected with such problems as possession by evil spirits, sickness and death which are difficult to answer." (3)

East of Pongawona, "wireless masts" erected, to speak to God
 - Vailala up north coast, through LMS stations
 - poles 20 ft; often with dish of water and at one place a knife and fork and piece of soap; nearby a 4 ft post with a top of woven cane, supposed to be a table
 - sacred area where God speaks and gives instruction
 - smoke special tobacco which may "help" God speak - commit

Women treated diff. than men: evil spirit sucked from palm of hand or out of hair of head

Healing by sucking sick person and producing stone; though Kitoro stated that he withdrew to pray for strength from God and then held hand of patient to impart the healing power

"Raising the dead" by a kind of hypnosis

- mirror repeatedly flashed - usually a woman - who falls down in faint; she is revived through twist of toe or "good morning" or cold water; some women in dazed condition for days afterwards

"A remarkable point is that a belief in God is apparently well established amongst the heathen, an advance from their primitive belief." (6)

- also few Christians affected
 * older mission areas not influenced

Follows a note from Diary of Ernest Owen KASO about visit of Kitoro to Wanigela

- at Orereson, Ezekiel was one of those who had hidden a bundle in the bush which was smelled out
 - kits thrown into the sea

"Notes on Kitoro..." - partly an interview

- had been follower of Baigona, but later convinced it was false

"One night whilst lying down he had a vision in which the wind came to him and spoke to him. The wind took him up and carried him abroad and showed him two paths - one leading to GOD and the other to satan. Adam appeared to him and spoke to him. Adam told him that he - Adam - had been brought into being by the wind. The wind left him and he went on with his work. Later another wind came but this he refused to obey because it had a different voice which he did not recognise.

"The wind told Kitoré to heal the sick and gave him power to discern the presence of evil and to root it out. For some years he thought upon the vision and recently felt himself endowed (sic) with the power to fulfil the message of the wind. He gave instances of persons being at death's door restored by the clasp of his hand. The result was not immediately apparent but during the night the patient began to mend.

- see note above about healing

"he said 'I joined my treatment with the ritual of Orda because I thought it might increase my power but as soon as Miss Caswell at Nonia told me that Orda was a bad thing I gave up the Orda ritual - it really has nothing to do with the gift - I just adopted it as a part of ritual. I believe it to be a gift from ~~God~~ GOD and I am careful to let people know this."

- in detecting objects, claimed that head would incline towards the place and 'my whole body shakes'. But no physical after-effects - not tired

Refused to take payment "He says he would lose the gift were he (sic) to take payment for it..."

Wanigela 29:12 '32.