

Barb 8/6

CULTS - CAPE NELSON/CAPE VOGEL.

Here the discussion will be on a geographical basis, and will not just be limited to the pre-war period.

Sefoa. The immediate post-war "Urvana" cult.

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The best account of this that I am aware of is in Dorothea Henslowe's "Papuan Post, being Letters from New Guinea" (Mercury Press, Hobart, n.d. (1949?)), being an account of her visit to PNG in August-November 1947 - see pages 103-5.

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It is also mentioned on p.61 of "The Tatterford Hebdom", Vol.VII, No.83 (Consecration Postscript 1950), n.d. (c.1951) - a copy is in Evan Gill's "Collection of Pamphlets" in the Mitchell Library (Sydney). The writer was Rev. W.T. Hand, who had visited PNG about mid-1950 for his son's consecration. Bp. David, then a priest, was in the thick of "Urvana", apparently.

Naniu.

This is a semi-island, about half-way between Cape Nelson and Wanigela. The people are akin to Wanigela - see Devitt in A.B.M. Review April 15, 1932. From published comments, either they have been wrongly judged, or it is the "home" of cults.

"The difficulties at Naniu have been increased by the introduction of the taro or the spear cult from the north. Hitherto these cults have been confined to the Binandere tribes. Evidently missionaries of the cults have come down the coast."

(the Bishop (Henry), in the NGM AR for 1924; A.B.M. Review, June 12, 1925, p.45)

"The emissaries of the Taro cult had more success in the Naniu district ....."

(Bp. again, 1925 AR; A.B.M. Review, May 12, 1926, p.33)

"Orodo cult has revived again, but not in the form of dancing, etc. The man who has instituted himself head of the cult here is living in a village close by. The people have to take to him gifts of sago, fish, pig-flesh, betelnut and money-- some are offered to the spirit of Orodo, and some of each is thrown into the bush to prevent Mt. Victory becoming active again and burning them all; and some is thrown into the sea to prevent a tidal wave; some is left in the village to keep away evil spirits and sickness. Many of the people are so scared that they are building their homes in the hills--even then they are in fear of Mt. Victory. It is a gospel of fear, and he has scared them well."

(part of Miss Nellie Hullett's letter of Feb.11th, 1928; she was stationed at Naniu. In A.B.M. Review, July 12, 1928, p.90)

The saga of Naniu (and Miss Hullett) is continued on p.91 of Cranswick & Shevill's 1949 book "A New Deal in Papua", though the episode described is called "an Assisi orgy".

Wanigela.

"Emissaries of the "Taro Cult" from the North found their way to Wanigela to spread the teaching, which seems to be a strange mixture of heathen ideas with a smattering of Christian teaching. It promises abundance of food, with some

suggestions that Papuan skins will become white, and the people be able to get rid of the white people, and run stores of their own; the working of new ideas of a very undigested kind in the Papuan mind. The Wanigela people refused to have anything to do with the new teaching, though it had strong points of appeal to the Papuan mind, with its promise of plenty in the way of material things, and the dancing that accompanies the teaching."

(Bishop Henry, in NGM AR 1925; A.B.M. Review, May 12, 1926, p.33)

The story of Kitore, from Uiaku, at Wanigela is a most interesting one - see A.B.M. Review, February 1, 1933 (pp.165-6), and April 1, 1933 (pp.193-4)

#### Cape Vogel.

Here we are concerned with Asisi, the spelling used by the A.B.M. Review and in the PAR, or ~~Asi~~ Assisi (Cranswick/Shevill). Asisi means spirit (see A.B.M. Review, April 1, 1933, p.194, a view which Murray apparently quotes in PAR 1932-33:21), suggesting strongly to me that the name, as well as the ritual, was "borrowed" from the Binandere area.

Asisi occurred mainly in the inland areas, not only of Cape Vogel but also behind Wedau/Boianai. I doubt that the A.B.M. Review (p.194, April 1, 1933) is correct in saying that Asisi grew from Kitore's practices at Wanigela.

Asisi "encouraged the cultivation of taro" (PAR 1932-33:21), but included "the element of hysteria" (A.B.M. Review, above), and progressed to "robbery by threats" (PAR), when the Government took an interest in proceedings.

In addition to the above two references, Assisi (blamed here on Seventh Day Adventist influence) is described behind Mukawa by Cranswick & Shevill (p.91-2), and two articles on it appeared in "The Papuan Villager", in the March 15 and May 15 issues in 1933 (the Asisi had Dancing Spears, called "Bego", and a drawing of them is on the front of the March 15 issue - "Magic Spear"/spear cult derivations?). Worsley ("The Trumpet Shall Sound") also discusses 'Assisi'.

However I think the major reference to it must be Rev. J.D. Bodger's "A Parson's Tramp in Papua", being an account of a September 1931 trip into the mountains behind Wedau, emerging at Boianai. This was first published by the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel (SPG) in 1932, and was reprinted by the New Guinea Mission (NGM) in London in 1958.

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The above are merely intended as a guide, and must not be taken as a complete listing, not even in the A.B.M. Review material.

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