

Supplement to MANUBADA, TOTOIMA, and BANU.

This very restricted circulation supplement mainly consists of quotations of Copyright material which I don't have permission to use (hence the restrictions), plus some comments and notes on them.

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"C. King at UMI. Particulars about BAIGONA. They have a process of initiation semble smear them over with leaves and other things. A BAIGONA baptises all his family and friends but is not baptised himself. The power resides in the lime pot -- in it they put the ashes of leaves they have burnt, also human bones. They cure a lot of people with herbs and massage drawing the Baigona out. They spit ginger over the patient and smear him over with chewed betel nut. They seem as a rule to be more powerful than the ordinary sorcerer.

A snake that was killed at the OPIE (?) was propitiated by sending it out to sea in a canoe full of native wealth in the hopes that it would go somewhere else and not take vengeance on local people. BAIGONA cult existed at C N in the time of Monckton (per Barigi) but semble not so called. King first heard of it semble the cult not the name just before Hogan's death. King has a story who was taken up Mt Victory or Trafalgar and had his inside taken out and a new inside inserted."

Hubert Murray, Diary 1912-17, part entry Friday October 18 1912 (Mitchell Library, A3140 - Sir Hubert Murray Papers, Volume 3).

I think he was at Ioma; the next day he wrote to King from Ioma to get more details, and I suppose King's "The Baigona Cult" in PAR 1912-13:154-5 is the result.

The Oxford English Dictionary (1933) Vol. IX, p.434, gives the meaning of "semble" when used in the legal sense as "used in judicial utterances to introduce the incidental statement of an opinion on a point of law which it is not necessary to decide authoritatively." As Murray was a barrister and Judge, this seems to be the meaning he intends here i.e. he is just noting information down, without passing his own judgement on its accuracy, or necessarily implying that it is correct.

I think Murray was on his "tour" - Buna/Kokoda/Ioma, and down the Mambare to the "Merrie England". I assume that the activities of Barigi (see APPENDIX IV. of the main paper) were discussed at Buna; otherwise the only alternative I can see is that this Barigi is the Bariji people.

(Baigona) I don't know when Hogan died - 1911 I assume, as King (PAR) says they learnt of Baigona just after his death, and Holland (1933a) says he first learnt of it in 1911 when he went to Ambasi. Nor am I certain what date limit "in the time of Monckton" puts on it; however Monckton left Papua in April 1907. My confusion is over what Murray really means - Monckton was in charge of the North-Eastern Division (headquarters at Cape Nelson) up till at least June 1906, if not till April 1907, but Murray could be referring to when he was resident there, and I understand that phase of his life ended in September 1903 when he assumed responsibility for the Northern Division as well as the North-Eastern Division. In any event it was a while before Baigona "surfaced", and there must surely be some references, somewhere, by someone (such as Strong - I've not seen any, though, which was why I was so interested in, and surprised by, this one of Murray's) to the original practice.

It may be as well to look at (again, if necessary) what 3 people had to say on this or related aspects:-

- a) "I understand it ["Baigona"] has been in existence for some time, but it has only got a hold in this portion of the Territory to any ~~exte~~ extent during the last twelve or wighteen months."
(Oelrichs, in PAR 1911-12:129)
- b) "Possibly the treatment was known then [when Barigi was stationed at Tufi], but the profession of Baigona has only recently been grafted on to it."

(King, in PAR 1912-13:155)

- c) "This new cult [The Baigona Cult], which has taken deep root, appears to be purely a native growth; there is no evidence that it has borrowed anything from the white man."

(Chinnery and Haddon, 1916/17)

It is unlikely that I will bother obtaining permission to use the Murray quotation (i.e. as in a normal typescript).

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"In one garden I noticed a small platform about six feet high with a ladder fixed on either side. This I was told was the GAGA, the platform used by their ancestors (the SUKARO) at night when they keep watch over the gardens, defending them against thieves, human and otherwise, storms and hostile spirits. Each day before the workers leave for home they place a little food and a cigarette, or a little piece of tobacco in a shell on top of the GAGA for the use of the SUKARO. "See!" said one man taking down the shell "they were here last night and used the food and tobacco we left for them yesterday"."

(Thursday, 4.9.30; at the Kanane gardens)

"Fro six hours we walked about this fertile [Gobi] land, meeting families at work or resting from their toil. I spoke to them all. In one garden we passed a 7 ft spear sunk point upwards in the ground. Said one man to me "This spear is my father's spear. It is placed here for my father's spirit to use. With it he guards my garden at night and when I am away. Should another man take it out he would not prosper; his gardens would fail or the wild pigs would destroy it". The speaker looked at me closely and continuing in a low voice said, "Humphries take hold of it, take hold of my father's spear and say these words - "SUKARO O ORODA, SUKARO, O ORODA" When I had done so, he explained that this was a greeting and that having made it I could go on my way and find no harm. There is a song attached to this weapon of the dead, but I did not know it at the time. When I said "How about Mr. Sandes; hed he not better make the greeting too?" the man explained that I had made it for them all; that only one man in a party need make it."

(Thursday, 4.9.30)

Both the above are, of course, from the same source as APPENDIX. XII. - the Patrol Reports of then Resident Magistrate, Cape Nelson, Humphries. These are from his report on his 30 Aug 1930 - 14 Sep 1930 patrol to the MUSA River Districts and AGAIAMBO swamp.

The first is quoted mainly for Sukaro, the local equivalent of the Binandere binei it seems; the gaga seems to be the Aiga harau (Williams, 1930:271). Kanane is on the map to the soil survey of the area (CSIRO, 1964), and is on Porlock Bay; it is not listed in Dutton (1973) but his map (opp. p.1) shows it as a Binanderean language, probably Yega.

In the patrol report Humphries went on to commend the people for retaining their good old customs (after the GAGA episode).

There is a Gobe on the CSIRO map, also on Porlock Bay, and only about a mile west of Kanane. There is also what seems to be the correct Gobe (I don't have a 1968 Village Directory) listed on p.29 of Dutton (1973), but there he gives its language as Notu. This doesn't look right from his map, or from its proximity to Kanane. However it certainly is Binanderean language family, probably Yega (maybe Notu).

So SUKARO O ORODA is ORODA, the word of greeting of the Taro Cult, with SUKARO, the ancestors, and O.

As with APPENDIX. XII., Humphries did not share the thinking of most whites on these matters.

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"..... we have instances of new cults and secret societies arising sporadically throughout the Territory, and it is not easy to decide whether they are good, bad, or indifferent. They may do good, for instance, in promoting agriculture and in increasing the birth rate --for we in Papua are a primitive folk and have not learned that the production either of food stuffs or of babies should be restricted-- or they may be indifferent, as involving ceremonies which seem quite harmless, or they may be definitely bad, as suggesting "black magic" and murder.

Thus there arose in this year in the Baniara district a cult known as Asisi. Asisi means, apparently, "a spirit"; and the movement had much to recommend it, for it encouraged the cultivation of taro; but, unfortunately, it was accompanied by a lot of mass hysteria. Now, although hysteria is an abominable nuisance, it is not, so far as I know, punishable by law; but, as the cult progressed, it developed into an organized practice of robbery by threats, and robbery by threats is punishable. So now the Government has taken a hand and the movement is dying out."

(Murray, in PAR 1932-33:21)

He then went on to discuss the Gi-embo of the Northern Division.

The above quotation is not Confidential - being published, it is in the public domain. It is in here mainly because of the suggestion that Asisi may not have been borrowed from the Binandere, but may originally have been a Cape Vogel word which the Binanderes borrowed!

I am very skeptical, to say the least. Certainly if it was done, it was a good while ago - Green's Mambare Vocabulary (ENG AR 1895-96) gives Shadow as Achichi, and King, in his "Theological Terms in Native Languages" (1913), gives asisi as shadow, reflection, soul in Binandere.

You are also referred to the Mission comment on it - see APPENDIX. XIV.

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