

The Totoima Society

You are referred to McCarthy's articles in the 'Post-Courier' (April 14 and April 21, 1972) on the Society. These give most of the facts.

There is some confusion over spelling e.g. Totoina/Totoima, Eripa/Uripa, Carysoston/Chrysostom. Also it should be noted that the two Europeans met Mathias first in his village (Borugasusu, Aiga C.D.) on '5th November, 1962' and saw him again in Popondetta, at the hotel, on 'February 3, 1963' (please note what Schwimmer, 1969, p.181, has to say about 'birthday' and numbers.

Matthias was first goaled in 1969. The present collection apparently began early in 1971. He claimed that he had given 'this European' (presumably one of the above) a pass-book and \$800 in March 1972. Also \$500 to a "Mr. Tan" in May 1972. On January 18, 1972, the European man came and told Matthias they had better both go to Port Moresby as the date (February 8, when the Europeans had said that financial members of the Society would receive their money) was getting close. The European (Mr. Tom) then went overseas. He was due back on 6th February, but didn't come.

It seems most helpful to assume that Messrs. Maxwell and Chrysostom were regarded as returned ancestors. As I have proposed ('Problem' letter) returned ancestors are not important (an 'abandoned' custom; Schwimmer, 1969, p.180) while the iji eha ideology is still current. When it is in abeyance, however, they are important.

If one accepts this, then the Totoima Society reads like Schwimmer, 1969, p.68 (indeed I find the similarities striking). We have stories about the Northern Hemisphere and the Holy Land (see McCarthy, April 14; also Chrysostom was thought to live in Jerusalem and England was his District) and, most important, the episode with the young New Zealand geographer:-

"one man had pressed money upon him which he was asked to invest in New Zealand, in which case it was expected to multiply a thousandfold".

This, to me anyway, is the role which Maxwell and Chrysostom were expected to play (but didn't).

It remains to be seen if 'common sense' prevailed over 'cultism' (McCarthy, April 14) or rather, whether the victory was that of the iji eha ideology over the Totoima Society.

There is also the fact that the movement was called a 'Society' - this may, or may not, have significance but I think it does (see "On Co-operatives").

The roles played by various indigenes who acted as spokesman for and against the Society have not been commented on (because such comment could well be libellous, or, at best, unfair); the iji eha ideology seems to account for them also.

Regarding the fact that the mysterious Europeans have never been traced. I assume that the only people who do not know who they were (and it really isn't important) are the Europeans:-

"It took me some months to learn that even the simplest information I had about the Orokaiva was often unknown to Europeans, not because they were not interested but because nobody would tell them." (Schwimmer, 1969, p.121)

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