

Beliefs, Customs and Rituals in the Lower Yuat River Area, North- West New Guinea

By

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Introductory Note

In 1963 I did anthropological research work in North-West New Guinea. For several weeks I also stayed on the banks of the lower Yuat River. With the kind assistance of the local Catholic missionary at Biwat I was able to collect the present material. The people proved to be very willing to help me in my task to find out the various customs and traditions they had inherited from their ancestors. I thank them all very sincerely.

Funeral Customs

Kambianggen reports: In former times the interior of a sago palm was removed and the corpse was placed in the hollow instead. People constructed a bier, like a ladder, from poles and some rattan rings. This bier was, with its upper end slanting, leaned against the wall of the house and the dead person was laid on and tied to it. Then people considered, "Did a *manzime* spirit kill him or a sorcerer?". Nowadays the corpse is placed in a canoe, which has been cut according to the length of the body.

Sorcerers

The rainbow is the road of the sorcerers. When it appeared people were afraid and said "Alas! The sorcerers are coming"—The sorcerer chews ginger and rubs his body with its juice. Then he beats his body with wild nettles. Five or more sorcerers usually go together on their way to their bad attacks. They are invisible. Sometimes they arrive in canoes. They thrust their spears in the earth and pull them out again

when they approach a hostile village. They steal any person, take him with them, cut his body in pieces and eat it, when they come home. Sometimes they attack a person in the woods, take his liver out of his body and tell him: "Go home! Now you will die!" Sometimes the sorcerers cut him up in a way that their victim dies there and then. At other times they insert wooden parts for fleshy parts and send him away, giving him the time, when he has to die. Often sit the sorcerers on a tree. They also can fly.—When people hear a certain bird, *ororo*, crying, they run home and say: "The sorcerers are coming". Only important men may at night walk about outdoors. If the sorcerers know my name, they will come and kill me.—They leave their bodies lying in the spirit house. Only their *tsinggoel*, their souls, go out. When their *tsinggoel* is killed, they cannot come back to life anymore. When we see their *tsinggoel*, we can kill them with our spears.

Manzime Spirits

The dead live with the *manzime* spirits. The latter have their homes on very high trees. They are like men. When anybody is sick, his brother goes to a very tall tree, often for many days, and speaks to the there living *manzime*: "My brother (or father, mother, sister) is sick. Can't you have a little pity on him?. Come and cure him!" Near the tree he places food, betelnuts, rings etc. and calls to the spirit: "Take this and restore my brother to health!". When his relative has regained his health again, he will take his rings back.

Name Giving

Before a child is born one of its parents or grandparents will have a dream, in which he will see the spirit of a *sanggam* tree. He will ask this spirit: "What is your name?" and he will answer: "My name is N.N.". Next morning he will tell his relatives all about his dream and when the child is born it will be given the name of the tree spirit.—Sometimes the child is named after one of its ancestors. This name will stay with the child until death. At night people are afraid of the *manzime* spirits. That is why they use a fire, when they leave their house at dark.

The Crocodile (*Asin*)

Our ancestors used to shoot the crocodile, but they never ate it. They allowed it to decay and took its head. They placed its lower jaw with its teeth in the spirit house. With these teeth they scratched

the candidates at the initiation. Our forefathers believed they would die if they ate the meat of crocodiles.—Some people were not allowed to eat eels. No snakes and dogs may be eaten. They are taboo—On our canoes are sculptures of crocodile heads, hornbill birds, *maimbringgam* (black heron), *kokom* (white heron), lizards and human skulls. The terms for water drum is *asindume* (*asin*=crocodile, *dume*=mother)

Initiation

At the start of the ceremonies many wooden drums are beaten and the war dance near the spirit house is performed until dawn. Then the candidates go into the spirit house. There the earlobes of the boys are pierced with the bones of flying foxes. The nasal septum is perforated as well. Through the holes of the earlobes and the septum, grass stalks, (*ravu*) are drawn. There are three main parts of the initiation:

1. *ASIN*=crocodile. The skin of the candidates is torn by means of crocodile teeth, and *asin* flutes are shown.

2. *MANZINE* The earlobes and nasal septa are pierced, and *manzime*—and coconut—flutes are shown to the candidates.

3. *YAKAT* Bamboo flutes are shown to the candidates. The head of a spirit is attached to the middle of the flute. The *karanyat* bird seems to be of special importance. At *manzime* the *tumbuan* masks are shown. The body of the mask carrier is covered with sago leaves. That will give the candidates special powers for hunting pigs. The *asin* makes the candidates strong in their fights. At three different times the candidates have to be in the spirit house for six months. They must neither see sexual matters nor may they talk about them. That is a very strict taboo.

Gori reports: There are wooden sculptures of the crocodile, *asin*, of *manzime*, a tree spirit, of *seki*, a water spirit. Their voices are represented by bamboo flutes. A long flute represents a man and a shorter one a woman. *Asin*, *manzime* and *seki* have a special flute each. When a crocodile is wounded it cries like a pig. At the initiation, the arms, the legs, the back and the front of the candidates are cut up in all directions. When they later on show the scars of all these cuttings to their relatives the latter will say: "The crocodile has scratched and bitten him". The mother's brothers receive a great reward from the candidates' parents for performing the ceremonies on their nephews. There is no cutting on the boys' genitals. The bullroarer, *vuvereke*, together with the water-drum, *asindume*, are the crocodile mother.

Yakat is a swamp spirit. To him belong two long flutes, a longer

and a shorter one and a wooden figure.

A Fire Myth

Once upon a time a woman had a snake in her basket. She went to catch fish. Her two daughters remained at home. The snake moved in the basket and the two girls killed it. They cut it in pieces and ate the middle part. Head and tail they laid in the sun to dry. After that they put the two pieces in a coconut shell and covered it with another shell. When their mother came back they showed her the two pieces. Having seen them she put the cover back. Next morning the woman noticed that the pieces had grown larger and placed them in a large pot. When that became too small she put them in a sleeping bag. There originated a female dog from the tail and a male dog from the snake's head. The woman dispatched the two dogs to go and get fire. She hung on each dog's neck a *vanma* (a white shell). The dogs swam until they came to a village. They took their shell from their necks and gave it to the lord of the fire. The man tied a glowing stick to the tail of the male dog. Then he wrapped hot ashes in a palm sheath and attached it to the female dog's tail. She warned them to lift on their way their tails above the water. They did so and came home to their mother. Both of them laid their fire in front of her on the ground. Now the woman went and collected firewood. The dogs she sent back into the sleeping bag. When the men came home they smelt the fire and asked what it was. The woman cheated them saying: "I did not hide anything. That is only the smell of the sun". But they replied: "No, the odour of the sun is different". Now she showed them the fire. From all sides came the people and bought fire. They asked the woman: "Where did you purchase the fire?". She answered: "You have killed and eaten my snake. From its head and tail originated these dogs. They went and got fire". While she was saying that she opened the sleeping bag and the two dogs jumped out.

Funeral Customs

Luavo reports:

In former times the corpses were placed in a hollowed out sago tree and put in the family house. At first many people came for the mourning. Later the widow and children only. About four months they would remain with the corpse. When the water had stopped to flow from the corpse the bones of the dead person were wrapped in a palm sheath, and buried under the house. The skull of the dead man, woman or

child was washed. The flesh was substituted for red earth, which was mixed with the sap of the *luang* tree. Two white shells were inserted in the eye hollows. The ears were also formed with earth. The lobes were perforated and provided with a ring consisting of bones of flying foxes. This skull was laid on the floor of the house, where the people ate with it. Tobacco was pushed in its mouth and betelnuts laid in front of it. The dead person was asked: "Help me to catch a lot of fish, etc.". Especially the forearm and fingerbones were carefully preserved in the house. Smaller bones were taken in a fight. The larger bones were left in the house, put people spoke to them: "Help me in the battle, lest the enemies kill me".

Cannibalism

Only grown up men were allowed to eat human meat. If boys ate it they would become timid, and flee in a fight.

Sorcerer

A sorcerer can transform himself into a pig. If a hunter tries to shoot a pig, which is really a sorcerer, it will break the hunter's spear in two and kill him.

Manzime Spirits

Before the *manzime* spirits lived together with the men. A married woman went in the bush to gather *kave* plants. There she smelt pig's grease. She thought: "Who causes this good odour here, while I am looking for miserable *kave* plants?". It was *manzime* man who cooked a pig. In the following night the spirit came and gave her a piece of pork. While she was eating it, her husband came unexpectedly in and saw it. He took his spear and watched. When the *manzime* spirit came back in the following night, the man threw his spear at him. The spirit was wounded and ran back home, which was on a huge *sanggam* tree. There he shouted: "Cut a bamboo tube with two keyholes and a blowhole. Take a coconut and make a hole into it. That is the image of my face (*manzime* spirits are also represented on warshields). The tune of the *manzime* flutes is the voice of the *manzime* spirit—the name of this *manzime* spirit is Vunanenggasa. There are three kinds of spirit flutes.

1. *Asin aiyang* (2 flutes)
2. *Yakat aiyang* (2 flutes)
3. *Manzime aiyang* (1 bamboo flute and the *vikuva* coconut flute).

The *manzime* spirits live in the trunks of large trees. The *maneng-*

gasa birds belong to the *manzime* spirits. When somebody approaches from afar these birds call: "Vikik, Vikik", when the stranger comes upstream, "Vikuk", when he goes downstream.

Initiation

At the time of the initiation the body of the candidates is cut with boar tusks, crocodile teeth and teeth of lizards and marsupial rats. The candidate's father prepares a big dinner and gives it to his wife's brother. He performs the rites of the initiation on his nephew. He gives the *aiyang* flutes to the candidate's father. These flutes show on their upper end a sculptured head. They are beautifully decorated with *nassa* (*singgas*) snails. The long flutes are completely surrounded with these snails. For six months the candidates remain in the spirit house. They may not tread on the earth. The ground is cold. A snake (or a worm) might bite them. On a specially from wood constructed gangway they go to the latrine. The mother cooks for her son and hands the food over through a window into the spirit house that stands on posts. The candidates sit around a clay pot, in which a fire burns.

Wome reports: The mother's brother shows the flutes to the candidate, but he gives them to the young man's father. Only after his father's death the son takes them over. The candidate's father makes new flutes and gives them later to his wife's brother, when this man's son is initiated. The sacred flutes are only handed over after a big dinner. The head on the end of the flute is called "*wusera*". The flutes are during the six months blown every day and often at night also. Only good blowers blow them in the spirit house. The candidates are not allowed to blow them there. Only when the six months are over they go deep in the bush and learn how to blow them. Before they go an expert on the flutes shows them how to do it. The bullroarer (*vuvereke*) is the mother of the *aiyang* flutes.

ome = Mother; *unguang* = Father; water drum = *vieng*.

First it is said that the *asin* spirit is in the Yuat River. When later the bullroarer sounds: "The mother of *asin* has come up". When the water drum is thrust into the water: "The mother of *asin* calls".

People say, "*asin* is a man eater. When the *asin* crocodile has bitten the candidate, then he is strong in the fight against the enemies". The old men give their power to the young men. They keep a little only for themselves. At the time they die all their power has gone over to their sons. In order to cure the wounds the young men have received at the initiation, red earth mixed with tree sap is rubbed in their lacerations.

The name of this tree is *ruang*. When the sap of the *ruang* tree gets into one's eye it burns. The term for the big wooden drum is *boeng*. This drum possesses on one of its inner walls a wooden tongue, called *boeng voadva*. Stone axes were not made here. They were traded from the Upper Yuat River.

Punishment for Evil Deeds

When anybody committed a crime or did other evil deeds, he was liable to be killed by a *manzime* tree spirit or by a *seki* water spirit. At other times these spirits caused his child to fall sick. Sometimes the dead ancestors took the bad father's child with them to the land of the dead, because they had pity on their grandchild.

Medicine

Against Fever:

1. The leaves of the *jinggrun* liana are used.
2. The good smelling leaves and the bark of the *ambrakun* tree.
3. The leaves of the *kikrik* liana.

These leaves and the bark are boiled. The sick person drinks it and his body is washed with it. Against swellings people rub the afflicted parts of the patient's body with nettles.

Human Soul

People do not speak of a living person's soul, but of the real or true man, who leaves the body at the time of death and goes away, *tsinggeen* is the term for soul of the living as well as of the dead.

The Bun people call the soul, the principle of a man's life *suvoak*, which seems to become *tsinggoen* after death—I was told that animals like pigs and dogs have no *suvoak*.

Bird and Frog Arrows

The upper end of a bird and frog arrowhead is a solid block of hardwood. Instead of a point it shows a flat quadrangle. The lower part of this arrowhead is pointed and inserted in a reed shaft. It will not draw any blood, which otherwise would soil the bird's feathers.

The Whirring Bow

This bow is made from a thin rib of a coconut leaf. Its ends are inserted in a crossfolded, about 40 cm long leaf, whose ends are sewn together. On a string this little instrument is hurled around and pro-

duces a whirring sound.

Initiation Ceremony of a Large Canoe

A wooden head, decorated with beautiful feathers is placed on the forepart of the new canoe. Then the men paddle (or push) it. From the bank of the river a coconut is thrown in the water and the men in the canoe shoot at it with their arrows. Later this coconut is planted. Sometimes a coconut's kernel is taken out and money is put into it. When it has been shot at, the mother's brother is given the money. When a large house had been built, a coconut was hung on the end of a stick over the verandah. People shot at it, especially the mother's brother.

A Sun Myth

Kwainfop reports: Once upon a time an old woman killed a small boy and cooked him together with *apika* vegetables. When the food was done she took a little stick and lifted with it the upper part. She had mixed red earth with water and cooked the vegetables in it. Now suddenly it became bright in the saucepan. The little boy stepped out of it and grew quickly up into an adult man. Formerly all was dark. Now the man went up to the sky and shone as the sun. The old woman said: "Now all men rejoice on account of light. Now all can plant their gardens, etc., etc.". The people called him *Vanma* (the common term for sun).

Origin of a Name

Once upon a time our ancestors of Kinakatem heard during the night a voice, that came from a huge tree: "You may fell this tree, but its stump you must not cut away. That is my head rest. I am Kiwakumbang". The term for this head rest was Kwainfop. *kwain* = rest or bench. *fop* = head.

After that I was given the name of Kwainfop.

The Creator

Dunduma is the name of him, who has made all things. "Dunduma *ndumbuwe Lukalukwa*", i.e., "Dunduma made everything". We do not know where he lives. "Dunduma *unguang*" = Father Dunduma. He is a good man. All men rejoice over all things he has made. Dunduma makes all things grow. He created always only one coconut, one sago palm etc. We men have then from this tree etc. planted others. In the first times there was only water.

Gurinsime

All the dead go to our female ancestor Gurinsime. Olimba, our forefather, killed Gurinsime.

A Moon Myth

The moon is the genital of a woman who was killed. A man dried it in the sun. He placed it in a sleeping bag. At night he hung it on a sago palm tree. There it shone brightly so that the man could shoot wild pigs. Afterwards he always ate together with that genital. Later he told it to ascend to the sky. There it is the moon=*mumere*.

Sorcerers

When a certain bird (*kauk*) calls, people believed it indicated the approach of a sorcerer. The bird is about the size of a dove and calls rather often. Thereby it is understandable, that the people are convinced that the mountains on the Upper Yuat River are full of sorcerers. Again and again they come down to kill people.

Details of the Initiation Ceremonies

Near the spirit house dry trenches are dug. The candidates have to lie flat in them. Their bodies are whitewashed with white mud. While the new candidates are lying in the trenches, the older men paddle upstream and come down blowing the spirit flutes. Four or five masks carrying men beat the boys in the trenches with broad, flat laths, which show a human skull at their ends. The mothers' brothers carry the boys on their backs into the spirit house. In the spirit house they lash the earth with heavy sticks in such a way that it sounds as if the candidates were thrown on the ground. After that the candidates are washed and then warmed with fire sticks. After that begins the scarification. During their stay in the spirit house they are not allowed to go home. They must neither see their mothers, nor their sisters and younger brothers. They are not allowed to drink much and may eat mainly dry food only. In the house they are shown the crocodile mother=*asindume*. Her pattern is painted (or drawn?) on sago sheaths. Furthermore they see the water drum, the bullroarer and the *asin* flute, which is the crocodile mother's child. To this flute is attached a much decorated head, which looks like a man's skull. Later this head is taken off and the flute is blown. At a later time the candidates are made acquainted with the *manzime* (spirit) mask. The mask is attached to the middle of the flute.

A relative burns the candidates with a glowing piece of wood on many parts of their bodies. His assistant pours cold water on immediately after the ordeal. After a longer period the candidates are burned again. They are shown a large fish made from heavy hard wood. It is painted in various colours. After having seen this fish, the symbol of the *saki* water spirit, the young men are burned again. There are wooden figures of the *saki* spirits which show a fishhead and others with a crocodile's head. The name of the *saki* fish is *praiwak*. They are very large and lie on the ground. The large signal drums and the tops of the spirit houses are often provided with a *praiwak* head. *Praiwak* is not a real fish, living in the water. Another wooden mask which is worn on a man's head is called *yakat*. The candidates whose bodies have received many cuttings have to crawl into a very long crocodile, made from plaited rattan. A relative of the boy disappeared in the bowels of the reptile, its tail is lifted up and one after the other come out again. After that the candidate(s') chests are beaten with the thigh bones of dead warriors who used to be very strong.

Murder of an Old Woman

Wabor reports: "When I was a boy our men caught an old woman. She was led into the village. An important man gave me a spear and told me to thrust it into the old woman's back. I wounded her a little. Seeing that, the man threw the spear himself and killed the woman". (Wabor still reproaches himself for having done that).

Warfare

Yandanggima reports: "We used to make spears and make them still, but we always bought our bows from the Upper Yuat River. We do not know who the real manufacturers were. We sent valuable things, two small rings or one large ring or one ribbon with nassa shells for one bow the *Siwisiwi*, to the *Twanggomba* or to the *Tisangguno* people. They were the middlemen. We also bought arrows, but we made them ourselves as well. Before a fight we sent word to all the neighbouring allied villages. Men and women gathered then and ate together a big meal. The men shaved one another with bamboo strips. Before we had long hair which fell down over our neck and our back. We cut our hair above our eyes lest it impaired our eyesight. With sharp shells we sharpened the points of our bamboo spearheads, which were later inserted in the palmwood shafts. In the spirit house, *Voam*, were all the spears posed with their points upwards along the sidewalls. The old, from the

ancestors inherited spears were left in the spirit house. A man who had the office to ask the spirits of each village for help in battle offered them sago and meat. He took a little piece of meat, held it up to the mouth of the large spirit figure and said: "We intend to go to this (he called the name of a certain village) village and fight against it. Turn their spears away from us lest they hit us and let them fly sideways! We want to be victorious. Weaken our enemies!" In the middle of the night the warriors went to the village of the enemies. A chosen war leader *Woken*, assigned every one to his place. In this way the village was encircled. Before they went to their various positions the *Woken* gave the warriors an admonition, "Now all of you have to be valiant! I do not want to see any coward!". When all had taken their positions, the *Woken* called at the early dawn: "Huhuhu!" and all joined him in that cry. The inhabitants of the village jumped up from their sleep. The courageous took up the challenge, while the timid ones ran in confusion here and there. All men, women and children were killed off. All the houses were set on fire. About three of the dead enemies were taken home, where they were roasted and consumed. All the other corpses were left lying about. Some warriors took also the heads of men and women with them. These heads were shown to the relatives as a proof of their gallant actions. They were cooked in hot water. All the fleshy parts of the skulls were removed and then dried in the sun. After that they were painted red. A rattan liana was tied around the forehead of the skulls and casowary feathers stuck behind it. After that they were hung along the walls of the spirit house on wooden plugs of the sago palm. They were neither venerated nor invoked".

When somebody had died, his spear, bow and arrows were put near the bier. The dead man took them with him. Later, after the burial his spear, bow and arrows, his stone axe, his earring and his netbag were burnt to ashes.

The term for a ghost is *tsinggoen*. The soul of a living person is called *aneke*, *baranjik* means man. People are afraid of the *tsinggoen*. It does not kill men, but it gives them a bad fright. The dead person was in his own house with rattan lianas in an upright position tied to a wall. A makeshift bench supported his buttocks a little in a way that he appeared to be leaning back, looking upwards. Then the people smeared their bodies with white mud and bewailed him. On the following day he was buried under his house. The grave was about 1.20m. deep. A sheath of a palm tree was put on its floor and a mat of sago leaves was spread over it. A piece of wood served as a pillow for the head. The

corpse lay with outstretched legs on its back. A mat was spread over it, then earth was heaped over it and trampled down. The bones were not taken out again.

Garden Magic

The Biwat people use spinning tops made from coconut shells. The inner parts of these shells show a carved pattern and are sometimes painted. When the yams in the gardens begin to wind their tendrils around their supporting sticks, men and women let their tops spin around. That was to help the yams to grow to a large size through magic power. Often two parties stand in opposite rows against one another. Each row sticks a certain number of thin leaf ribs of the sago palm in front of it in the earth about one yard from one another. Now the first person spins his top towards the opposite line trying to hit one of the leaf ribs. For each hit his party gets a good point. After that the second party gets a chance to win a point so on, until all the leaf ribs have been hit.—When the climbers of the yam tubers have reached their highest points and begin to fall down the tops are not used any longer. The top heads are put one above the other on a string, hung up in the houses and preserved for the next year. The sticks which go through the middle of the tops are thrown away. In order to make the top spin the lower part of the stick is turned between the palms of the player's hands.

Initiation Ceremony for a New War Canoe

The new canoe's prow shows a sculptured crocodile's head. On top of this reptile's head the wooden head of a *parak* spirit is mounted. (About *parak* see: Heinrich Meyer: *Das Parakwesen in Glauben und Kult bei den Eingeborenen an der Nordküste Neu-Guineas. Annali Lateranensi*. Vol. 7, 1943). Ten or more men are paddling the canoe. Others hold their bows and arrows to ready. They steer towards the opposite side of the river which is here of an enormous size. Having arrived at the bank of the water they all shoot at a ripe coconut which is dangling from the upper end of a long bamboo pole. The latter protrudes from the water and the nut hangs over the dry land. When the nut has been hit the men row back to their village, singing the victory song of the olden times when they returned from a successful head hunting expedition. The *parak* figure is supposed to make the canoe fortunate and victorious. Headhunting is a thing of the past, but it is still regarded as a great and heroic time. The headhunting song

starts with the words: "*ambing, ambing, bunggu maliva.*" Ambing is the man who according to a myth fell from heaven. (See further down).

Origin of Men

Once upon a time, a man, called Rangguraiwa felled a sago palm tree. When he split it open, men and women emerged from it. The name of the place where this happened is Fundokoang. It is situated on the left bank of the Yuat River, near Biwat. These people are our ancestors. From Fundokoang started the populating of the world.—Rangguraiwa was the first man to marry two women. He taught us this custom. He was also the man who demonstrated to us how to kill people and to wage war. He killed his own brother, Karanggaru, and his two wives. All inhabitants of the Karaning village lost their lives being murdered by Rangguraiwa. But besides that he showed us also how to plant yams, to hunt with a dog, and how to prepare and cook sago.

Gurinsime. Her Death and Resurrection

Once upon a time there lived at Karaning a young woman. Her name was Gurinsime. Her husband was known by the name of Simbetimo. They had two little daughters, Mavimbenme and Simbenda. When the woman went with her daughters to wash sago, her husband remained at home. Now men of another village attacked and killed her. The younger daughter hid herself while the other had climbed a *kare* tree. She saw how her mother was slain. The murderers cut her body into pieces, roasted and ate her. But the blood of the woman concentrated and she came back to life. She covered her body with white mud. Only on her back remained a free spot. Her two daughters came near and saw their mother. She said to her elder daughter: "Come and rub my back with mud. I cannot reach there". Then she added: "Be merciful to all men. I have resurrected from my blood". Now her youngest daughter rubbed her mother's back with mud. Her elder daughter ran to the village and told her father: "Murderers have killed our mother and now comes her ghost". When he had heard that he gathered all the men of the village and told them: "Our enemies have killed my wife but her spirit has returned". Having heard that they all went and chased the woman away.—All red flowers have their colour from the blood of this woman. She carried a load of sago on her back and laid a bundle of various plants under it. At the spot which was not covered with mud the plants came in contact with the woman's blood and so

they have now their red colour.—When she was chased away by the men she carried a post. Very far away where the sun rises she built a house. There she remained and is still living there. All the dead followed her but she told them: “Why do you follow me? You have chased me away. Remain in your village! You were of the opinion that you would never die, weren’t you?” But then she received the dead and they remain with her.

In Angoram the people intend to build a spirit house. We have provided them with a big post for it. The lower part of it will be placed in the earth, but the part above the earth shows from down up: 1. Gurinsime’s first daughter. 2. Gurinsime’s second daughter. 3. Gurinsime herself. 4. Standing on Gurinsime’s shoulders her husband Simetimo.

Our female ancestor’s post stands on the earth and reaches up to *pi*, the firmament. It connects heaven and earth. Now many men (the dead) move this post to and fro. That is the cause of the earthquake. When anybody has been buried, an earthquake will take place on the following day. The dead person has arrived at Gurinsime’s place and the dead move her post.

Luava reports: The term for earthquake is *mandek*.—A woman whose name is Gurinsime holds fast the tail of the earth (*mansik*) and also the tail of the sky (*fuin*) with her hands. When she pulls the tails to and fro, earth and sky move. That is the earthquake.

The term for rain bow is *alevuyang*.

The principle of life in a living man is *suvoak* (animals and plants do not have it).

tsinggoen is the ghost of a man.

The Man Who Fell from Heaven

Ambing is a man who fell from heaven. His real name is Runggunam. He possessed a very long chin and transformed himself in a wooden figure. When he had fallen on the earth he kept shouting: “*Bing bing bing*”. A man named Mandagat placed the wooden man in his house. Often when Mandagat had his meal he offered him food, but ate it later himself. The village people brought the liver of their pigs to Ambing and ate it with him. If they did not do that Ambing made all their children sick. He demanded a lot of pork.—Now the whites have taken him to Australia.

Cannibals

When I in 1963 visited Biwat, there were still a goodly number of

people who had taken part in cannibalistic meals. When any enemy had been killed, man or woman, his intestines and private parts were burned to ashes. The whole body was carved into pieces and every allied village got a part of it. Often people of hostile tribes who were found walking alone in the woods were murdered. Their heads were placed on ant-hills. After a while the ants had eaten all the flesh and the skull could be taken home. In some family houses people preserved several skulls hanging one above the other on a string. Sometimes, when the headhunters had noticed footprints of people who went to wash sago, they waited till all of them had arrived. Then they went and killed them all off.

Vaurima

Vaurima the sun, kills persons. People aver: "Vaurima has come down to earth and has killed this man". If somebody lives an immoral life and commits adultery, steals, etc., Vaurima will kill him. We cannot see Vaurima himself. We see only his light.

A Sun Myth

Before the word Vaurima was used for sun. Once upon a time the Sun Vaurima came down to earth in the shape of a young man. He went to see a young girl and wanted to become her friend. Every time he left the sky it became dark. Now the people were surprised and asked one another: "Does he perhaps want to marry the girl?" But he never married the girl nor did he do any harm to her.—Another myth relates that Vaurima did the people a good turn: A *manzime* tree spirit intended to make a child sick. He used a liana for a ladder which led to the top of a tree. When Vaurima saw what was going on he cut down the liana. That prevented the evil spirit to come down again.

Women reports: Vaurima is above. Sometimes he comes down from heaven and burns the children causing them to die. (This is probably a sunstroke the children get, when their mothers carry them without covering their heads in the blazing sun).

The Creator Spirit Vaurima

Vaurima *avang*=Father Vaurima is the great wise man who existed a long time ago. He has made us and has given us the animals to eat. He has made all the food, for instance the coconuts. We cannot see Vaurima. He lives in space above the clouds.

pi vatoek=space place. *vatoek* means place and *pi* is the space above the clouds. Vaurima is the lord of the sun (*vanma*), the great man up

there. He is good. When the sun is covered by clouds Vaurima comes down to us on the ground. He inspects the earth. Vaurima is the ruler of the sun, the moon, the stars and the men. He sees it when people steal or do any other bad things. When anybody dies, people say: "Vaurima has killed him". When the sun (*vanma*) has everything scorched, and there is a danger that men will die of starvation, Vaurima has pity on them and sends them rain. Vaurima has destined that there shall be for six months a dry and for six months a wet season.—We have never heard that Vaurima had a wife. Vaurima is all by himself. When anybody had been falsely accused of having stolen a pig, he would point up to the heaven and say: "I did not steal your pig, Vaurima has seen it". The great man up there is also referred to as Vaurima *vakoen* = Vaurima the white shining one.

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