

1.0 Oct 1922

Bairiki

- 7 skulls
- 3 scapulae
- 1 Atlas
- 9 Humerus
- 3 Radius
- 2 Ulna
- 1 Sacrum
- 36 Ribs.
- 12 Pelvis
- 1 Inferior Maxillary
- 2 Superior Maxillary
- 22 Vertebrae
- 1 Femur

List of human bones
still to be seen by the
stone of the atua
Tituaabine in Bairiki.
They are the bones of
ancestors.

Ancestor cult. Maakeia.

53

Pedigree of some of the descendants of Maakeia who made the tataro to Kaburorontem as described:—

Kaburorontem (first ancestor)

Maakeia (conqueror from Benu who gave name to stone).
Kaburorontem

? (prob. 3 generations missing)

Twisatu

Tikakeana

Maakeia

Wei Tikurabo

Taebona^x

Kirataaruru^x

Tikisana^x

Tebuto

^x The cross marks my three informants, of whom the youngest is not less than 65 years old.

Ancestor cult

Teitorea, an old man of over 80, of Marakei describes the cult of his ancestor Teveia, who was the builder of the maneaba for Tanentoa of Bern. The ntu of Marakei descended from Teveia had a stone, about half a man's height, set up as a post in the ground on the east side of the island. ~~Monolith~~ This stone was called the body of Teveia: nevertheless, it was not considered to be the actual atua or spiritual power, which was the ghost of Teveia; but it was the medium through which the ghost was approached, and was so inalienably connected with the ghost, that whosoever did it an insult or injury caused pain to the spiritual power, and was liable to sudden death or illness. On the top of the monolith were perched three lumps of red coral, each about as big as two fists, and one on top of the other. These were said to be ~~above~~ the head of Teveia. A flat stone was laid on the ground at the western side of the base of the monolith. On this stone were laid all offerings of food brought to the ghost.

On occasions of stress or danger, the senior member of the ntu would signify that a general assembly (te toa) of the ntu would be made at the stone for the purpose of offering gifts of food to the ghost and tataro or prayers for his help. He would appoint a day.

The ntu would arise in the early morning at about cockerons and gather before the stone before sunrise. They would squat in a semicircle on the west side of the stone, facing east towards it. They brought food with them. First portions of this food, and later also sticks of tobacco and a filled pipe, were laid on the flat offering-stone. Then the ntu would eat the remainder in silence. When the meal was done, the senior of the ntu (but always a male) would go and squat before the stone

and address to it, in his own words, the particular request which he had come to make. After this, the people dispersed, leaving the offerings ~~to~~ on the stone of offering.

(Note. After the meal and before the prayer, the people put on their heads each a fillet made of a single pinnule from the crest of a coconut tree, knotted in front).

Ancestor cult: Marakei.

51. 24.

At Marakei there is a stone which bears the name of the ancestor Maakeia, who was the leader of the Bernian conquerors who invaded and settled this island about nine generations ago. At this stone the utu descended thro male + female line from Maakeia made their tataro in time of need. A collection of the whole utu for the sake of tataro was called te tar, a word which since Christian times has been applied to any general gathering for religious purposes.

The stone was broad and flat, being set in a recumbent position, not standing. Beneath the stone were buried the skulls of ancestors subsequent to Maakeia, and also the skull of Maakeia himself. These were called bona-n te atibu, the posts of the stone, the word bona being the name ordinarily applied to the studs of a house or maneba.

Although this stone bore the name of Haakeia, and although all the ancestors were expressly believed to listen to the tataro offered here, the prayers and offerings were made to the single ancestor Kaburo-ronteun, who was (and still is) described as the ancestor of Haakeia. The explanation of this is most probably that Haakeia himself, whose name the stone bears, was its originator, and it was he who first instituted the cult of his ancestor on Maakei.

Before the tataro was made, the stone was encircled by three fillets of coconut leaflet, one in middle and one at each end. The prayer offered was of the following character: -

Ao-ra te amarake, nkoē Kaburoronteun. Tautau
 Our offering the food ; than Kaburoronteun. ~~Keep~~ ^{Keephold on}
 mawiri-ra ; tontons nako te aoraki, Kakamawiri-in
 our safety ; tread away the sickness, continue to save them
 ataei aikai, Karerekes Kara-ra.
 children these, continue to get our food.

Ancestor-cult: Marakei

52. 26.

Tataro.

Made to the stone of the ancestress
Nri Kanna, from whom the Bernan conqueror
Itonganga on Marakei was descended:—

Aora te amarake iko Nri Kanna. Joutoua
Our offering the food than Nri Kanna. Tread

nako te mibwaka ma te aoraki; tautana mawri-u
away the wild-drawing with the sickness; keep hold upon my safety

ma au botansomata.
with my collection of people.

The whole utu was gathered for such a tataro at
dawn. Food was brought by each member. A share was
set on the flatstone lying by the base of the monolith. The senior
male officiated. The people sat in a complete circle around
stone, wearing fillets of coconut pinnule. The offering and
prayer were made. After this the people ate, and
then departed. Food was left by stone.

The skull of the ancestor Itonganga was buried
by the monolith.

by the household, he would consent to call up the ancestral ghost and ask it the desired questions. The skull was the intermediary through which the ghost was called. Offerings were made to it by the ibonga, a medium, and it was anointed by him with oil in the usual manner. Then he lifted it from its place and whispered the charm into its ear. Here is an example of such a call:—

O-o! N na wuwete-ia Toaakai
 O-o! I shall call-him Toaakai

mai aba-na, mai aba-na; e a roko, ba
 from his land; from his land; he arrives, for
 e a roko ni mancaba-ra aia, be a roko!
 he arrives in our mancaba here; for he arrives!

As soon as the charm is done, the ghost makes his presence known by a gentle whistling under the ridge pole of the mancaba. It is the function of the ibonga to interpret the sounds made to the onlookers. The ghost will answer in his musical language all the questions put to him — the belief being that if an answer proves afterwards to be wrong, it is certainly the fault

of the ibonga and not the ghost.

Sometimes the species of oracle, thus instituted through the medium of the skull became so famous for its infallibility, that people of other households and ntu came to consult it. They would bring propitiatory offerings of food and tobacco to the ibonga, who after giving te moan tiba (the first share) to the skull would keep the rest as payment.

In this way an ancestral ghost would obtain prestige and reverence outside the circle of his own ntu.

(Add skull cult details given in J.R.A.I. to banota).

Ancestor cult and Sun.

In erecting a monolith at which the ghosts of the ancestress Nii Kanna and the ancestor Itonganga received offerings and tataro, the old man Naatan used the same formula of words as that exhibited elsewhere in connection with the planting of the stone called Taji (Sun) in the manaba. Naatan informed me that this formula was used always by his ancestors for the double purpose.

Ancestor cult.

55 31.

Prayer to ancestor at Bona. (Given by Team of
Mankai: aged about
52).

Aora te amarake, Kaieti-o! Baki-ra;
Our offering of food, Kaieti-o! Help us;

Tautau mawira; tautona nako te buaka;
Keep hold on our safety; tread away the war;

oro-ia, bakarere-ia, itui mataia;
Strike them, pierce them, sew their eyes together (as fish);

ti aki baa ti aki taro; ti mawira
we are not lost we are not deserted; safety

ao te raori; te mawira.
and peace; safety.

In Bairiki there is a stone of the usual type which is considered to be the "ratua" of the goddess Tituaarua. This deity is the "atua" of the Bairiki family group, which treats her as a guardian spirit, abstains from eating the flesh of her creature the Stingray, and makes offerings of coconuts and food at full-moon every month to her stone.

The stone is set in a small square of broken coral slabs. Beside it are strown the bones and skulls of various men who are definitely stated to have been ancestors in the Bairiki family group. Their exact genealogical connection is now unknown, but no doubt whatever exists about the fact that they were members of the family. According to old men, it would be unthinkable to preserve thus the bones of anyone unconnected with the family.

These bones are anointed with oil when offerings are made to the stone around which they lie. They are indissolubly bound up with the ceremonies connected with the stone itself. The necessity to pay them reverence and to make offerings of food to them is recognised to be

as pressing as the need to offer at Tituaabine's "rabata".

Thus we see how the relics of ancestors become actually, not only objects of worship, but bound up with the idea of god-worship. The road is not a long one from that idea to the deification of an ancestor.

Naakeia's stone: the history of Naakeia: his deification.

Kouaabi's bones.

Ancestor cult. Stone columns (bona)

- ①. All through the Gilberts, stone monoliths ranging from eighteen inches to seven or eight feet in height were erected to the various spiritual "powers". Generally these powers may be considered to be gods, and they are the gods of the fair-skinned race for their names are Taburimai, Aniriana, Tituaabine, etc. But occasionally they are called not anti but bakati, i.e. ancestors. When genealogical evidence is sought, however, it generally fails to lead one back to any ancestor of the name given to the stone. But a concrete case comes from Marakei, in which an ancestor who lived only five generations ago is definitely the atua of a stone bearing his name near the village of Temotu. The following is a list of his lineal descendants (eldest sons of eldest sons) until today:—

Kaieti

Taoroba

Neineia

Burana (about 70)

Naabuti (about 40)

Kaieti was a great fighter and traveller in his day. At one time, he and his party were driven out of Marakei and had to take refuge in Abaiang. Collecting his forces there, however, he was soon strong enough to make war on his former conquerors and return in triumph to Marakei. Soon after this he died, and is

said to have appeared in a dream to his son
Jaoroba, and to have told him to erect a
bona or monolith to him. Whatever may be
the truth about the dream, it is certain
that Jaoroba erected the bona, which stands
to this day, and of which the origin was
witnessed by old men still living on
Marakei. The worship at this stone
appears to be exactly the same in type as
the cult of the ancestral skull. Either the
collected utu or single individuals of the
utu may visit the place, and after laying
Karea or propitiatory offerings at its base
present their petition to the ancestral
spirit. If the ceremony is collective, the
eldest male representative of the senior
branch of the utu makes his prayer
on behalf of all: if an individual
performs alone, he prays for himself
alone. Formerly the skulls of Kaieti
were allowed to lie at the base of their
stones

(Insert the note on skulls and bones
found at the bases of these stones)
(The Bainiki relics).

Kaieti is also said to have given his son
a charm by which he might be called
to answer questions in the whistling
speech. But this call was made thro' the
intermediary of the skull of Kaieti, not the
stone. While the worship at the stone
continued, the family also used the skull
at home, thus duplicating the form in
which ancestor cult was sustained.

1. The removal of the skull from the grave of a buried father, mother, grandfather or grandmother was universal in the Gilberts. The skull was kept on a little mat specially woven for the occasion and was placed on a shelf in the house of the owner. It was considered liable to affront, and was therefore never put on the floor of the house, for fear that in standing above it, a member of the household might insult it with a view of his secret parts. Nor were children allowed to approach it, lest some rough game of theirs might cause offence. The idea underlying this anxiety to pay all respect to the skull was that the ancestor to whom the skull belonged would refuse if ill-treated to help his descendants when asked, in time of trouble; he might even punish them by visiting them with terrifying dreams, from which they would awake insane; and with wasting diseases such as te Kangege (consumption).

Some households would every day lay a small portion of food on the shelf beside the skull; it was the duty of the closest or the most beloved relative of the deceased to eat this food on his behalf at the day's end. This was a universal practice, but with most households it was less regularly performed.

When ^{tobacco} ~~superciliousness~~ was introduced, it became the custom in every island of the Group to allow the skull to share the household pipe. The skull was held between the

palms before the face of the smoker, who inserted the bowl of the pipe into his own mouth and the stem into the jaws of the skull. He then blew down the bowl so that the smoke was driven back through the stem into the gaping jaws. He would address affectionate familiarities to the skull while thus occupied: "E uara? E Kangkang?" (How is that? Is it tasty?) and so on.

This sort of conversation was typical of all the relations of the household with the skull. It was a member of the family, as susceptible of offence or pleasure, and as alive to conversations and events beneath that roof, as any human being. It was their friend. While busy about the house a man might throw it an occasional remark as naturally as to his father or brother; or at any time of the day he might take a little oil on his palm and rub it on the cranium of the skull, just as he would perform such an office with smiling yet deferential kindness to one of his living senior relations.

The explicit reason in the native mind for this akoi (kindness) ^(or deference) accorded to the skull was that the ghost of the ancestor was always near it: Not precisely situated within it, but enveloping it as an atmosphere, watching it, and feeling emotions of pleasure or pain in proportion as it was honoured, fed or abused.

When a particular need made itself

felt in the household the help of the deceased ancestor was enlisted through the medium of the skull. A day was appointed on which all the members of the household should meet in the house. The senior living descendant of the ancestor would anoint the cranium with scented oil, and wreaths of flowers were hung about it. Food was laid beside it, ^{as of Karea or propitiatory offering} and probably a pipe and a stick of tobacco would accompany the food. Just after noon the senior member would lift the skull from its shelf and elevate it above his face between his palms; then drawing it close to his cheek he would whisper into its ear the special request that he wished to make on behalf of his people. The following is a typical example of such a prayer:—

Joakai - o! ~~Kerua~~ tautan mauri-ra;
 Joakai - o! Keep hold of our safety;

toutona nako te aoraki; ba ti mauri
 tread away the sickness; for we are safe

vioum ti aki bua, ti aki taro;
 through thee; we are not lost, we are not deserted;

te mauri as te rahi — te mauri!
 safety and peace — safety!

There was no special form of words used in these prayers. Certain phrases have a habit of recurring in nearly every example collected, such as the universal "te mauri as te rahi", but the form of words in which a request was made was entirely at the will of the performer, whose duty it was to state as clearly as

he knew how the particular desire which he wished to convey to the ancestor.

I have described here the procedure ^{followed} when a collective request was made to protect a household from an epidemic sickness. In like manner a whole utu might be gathered together in the maneaba to appeal for the ancestor's protection in time of war, or for his help in famine or drought, or for his good offices on any important occasion whatever in which the utu had an interest.

At other times the simple ceremonial could be still further simplified. A single individual might, if a member of the household, go himself informally without preparation to the skull, and after blowing a little tobacco smoke into its jaws as a propitiatory offering, state in its ear whatever small request he had to make. And any member of the household was at liberty, as the wish seized him, to make a little private offering of food either before or after his prayer, and breathe an appeal into the ear of the skull for the general protection of the house.

Sometimes the ancestor would appear in a dream to one of his descendants and would tell him a form of words with which his ghost might be made to converse in whistling noises. The owner of such a charm would generally keep it secret from the other members of the house, but on request, when advice was needed

Religion (Ancestor cult) Tabakea.

A form of religious observance correlating very closely in externals to the cult of the ancestor at the monolith was the cult of the spirit Tabakea, whose body is said to be the turtle. Tabakea in myth was the father of NaAraan and Auriana, both of whom have appeared as chief actors in the creation drama. On Banaba and Nui, Tabakea has the title of Moanibai - First of Things - usually accorded in other islands to NaAraan. Throughout the Gilberts this being is closely connected with the origin of fire. Evidence brought in another place seems to show that he was one of the gods of the aboriginal race of the Gilbert Islands, the dark skinned dual people who were settled here before the incursion of the fairer people from the West.

The cult of Tabakea approaches nearer to the idea of a tribal cult than any other noted heretofore. On occasions of stress, disease or necessity, when not only a single uta but a group of uta allied for political or warlike purposes, felt the approach of a common danger, a stone about 6-9 feet high would be erected in the maneaba, halfway over against its eastern side, and halfway between the north and south ends. The senior man of Karongoa-n-nea, the clan in the maneaba whose privilege it was to speak the first and the last word in assembly, would decide upon a day when all the uta should be gathered together to make offerings (Karea) and prayer (tataro)

at the stone.

The stone was wreathed with coconut leaves by the people of Karongoa-raereke, the workers or acolytes of Karongoa-n-uea. Before dawn on the given day the utu would gather, wearing fillets of coconut prinnules around their foreheads, and bringing food with them. The first portion would be taken by the spokesman of Karongoa-n-uea and laid before the stone. The people would then eat their food, putting off their fillets while eating. When this was done, the fillets would be resumed and the spokesman would offer his prayer on behalf of the whole assembly.

The strict prohibition against the reopening of the grave for any purpose by the sitting interment ^{might} ~~at first sight~~ ^{to} indicate an original intention, actuated by fear, of preventing the ~~ghost~~ dead from returning to the dwellings of his descendants. The absence of any form of the skull-cult in this utu, in an island where the skull-cult was universal, seems to suggest significantly that the folk who used this sort of burial were for some reason prejudiced against communion with their ancestral ghosts. Nevertheless, the people of the utu had a stone, of the usual kind associated with the ancestral cult in the Gilbert Islands, erected close to their settlement, which was named after the "first ancestor" Kaborat, and at which tataro and offerings, differing in no respect from the kind ~~already described~~, were made in time of stress. Again, although there is no evidence that the special prayers for abundant crops, with which this utu is particularly associated, were made to the ancestral stone, it was certainly to the ancestors who lived in the skies that the "crop-maker" addressed his entreaties, and it was the ancestral ghost Kaborat who was supposed to appear to him in a dream, to tell him whether the crop would fail or flourish.

The practices and beliefs thus connected with the dead by this utu seem to unite two conflicting sets of ideas, one in which the return of the dead is a matter to be prevented, and one in which communication with the ghost is sought and ensured.

One way of explaining the presence of such a

conflict is to suppose that there was formerly on Marakei a sitting-interment people which feared its dead, and enforced a prohibition against the reopening of graves in order to prevent their return. In this case it would follow that the ancestor-cult which their descendants have practised until modern times is the result of local contact and fusion with another and quite distinct race.

Another possibility is that this particular form of sitting interment was brought to the Gilbert Islands by the people who practised the cult of the ancestor, being the peculiarity of one branch of this people, ^{that} ~~which~~ had acquired it by contact with some other race in a former home.

Both the above explanations are based upon the supposition that the practices and beliefs described are a complex of more than one system. But a third possibility is that this particular form of sitting interment was developed by a branch of the people who practised the ancestor cult, not on account of external influences but in ^{pursuance of} ~~connection with~~ the ^{special} ~~magico-religious~~ ^{functions} ~~rites~~ performed by them in connection with the pandanus and the coconut. The attitude of the dead in his grave was an exact representation of his attitude during life while praying for good crops, and it is very easy to conceive that he should be buried in this position in order that his continual ^{gesture of} ~~supplication~~ might bring fruitfulness to the trees of his descendants. If this

fundamental idea is accepted, it is again simple and natural to suppose that the continuity of the supplicatory attitude of the dead became a matter of importance. From this idea would spring the prohibition against the reopening of the grave for any reason at all, and the consequent absence of the skull-cult from the households of this inter.

This explanation appears to fit in very well with the spirit of the words of Nunita (reported in another place) when he was dying: "Make me sit, etc. If you do this you will have always good crops of pandanus". Further, if we thus regard this form of interment to be a special modification of the customs of a patrilineal community, such as the people who had the ancestor-cult certainly were, we find little difficulty in understanding why ^{only the men} ~~men and women~~ of the inter were buried in the sitting position. Whereas, if such burial were ^{supposed to be} the relic of a sentiment once entertained against the return to the dead to the dwellings of the living, it would become extremely hard to explain why and how this sentiment, while lasting in respect of dead men, so lost its force in respect of dead women that these eventually came to be buried in the extended position.

For these reasons, I incline to the belief that this form of sitting burial cannot be connected with those forms in Melanania observed by Rivers, and in his opinion practised by a people who feared the return of the dead. The sitting position

used is not in my opinion an element introduced into the customary burial practices of the patrilineal, extended interment people by a foreign race; it is a special development of the burial customs of the ancestor-worshipping race whose usual habit was extended burial, and this special development was brought about by the idea that the dead lived after death, and that their bodies were capable of continual intercession for the living if buried in the prayerful attitude assumed by the crop-maker during life.

ANCESTOR CULT

Teitirere, an old man of over 80, of Marakei describes the cult of his ancestor Teweia, who was the builder of the maneaba for Tanentoa of Beru. The utu of Marakei descended from Teweia had a stone, about half a man's height, set up as a post in the ground on the east side of the island. This stone was called the body of Teweia: nevertheless, it was not considered to be the actual atua or spiritual power, which was the ghost of Teweia; but it was the medium through which the ghost was approached, and was so inalienably connected with the ghost, that whosoever did it an insult or injury caused pain to the spiritual power, and was liable to sudden death or illness. On the top of the monolith were perched three lumps of red coral, each about as big as two fists, and one on top of the other. These were said to be the head of Teweia. A flat stone was laid on the ground at the western side of the base of the monolith. On this stone were laid all offerings of food brought to the ghost.

On occasions of stress or danger, the senior member of the utu would signify that a general assembly (te toa) of the utu would be made at the stone for the purpose of offering gifts of food to the ghost and tataro or prayers for his help. He would appoint the day.

The utu would arise in the early morning at about cockcrow and gather before the stone before sunrise. They would squat in a semicircle on the west side of the stone, facing east towards it. They brought food with them. First portions of this food, and later also sticks of tobacco and a filled pipe, were laid on the flat offering-stone. Then the utu would eat the remainder in silence. When the meal was done, the senior of the

ANCESTOR CULT

utu (but always a male) would go and squat before the stone and address to it, in his own words, the particular request which he had come to make. After this, the people dispersed, leaving the offerings on the stone of offering.

(Note. After the meal and before the prayer, the people put on their heads each a fillet made of a single pinnule from the crest of a coconut tree, knotted in front.)

ANCESTOR CULT: Marakei.

At Marakei there is a stone which bears the name of the ancestor Uaakeia, who was the leader of the Beruan conquerors who invaded and settled this island about nine generations ago. At this stone the utu descended thro male & female line from Uaakeia made their tataro in time of need. A collection of the whole utu for the sake of tataro was called te toa, a word which since Christian times has been applied to any general gathering for religious purposes.

The stone was broad and flat, being set in a recumbent position, not standing. Beneath the stone were buried the skulls of ancestors subsequent to Uaakeia, and also the skull of Uaakeia himself. There were called boua-n te atibu, the posts of the stone, the word boua being the name ordinarily applied to the studs of a house or maneaba.

Although this stone bore the name of Uaakeia, and although all the ancestors were expressly believed to listen to the tataro offered here, the prayers and offerings were made to the single ancestor Kaburoronteun, who was (and still is) described as the ancestor of Uaakeia. The explanation of this is most probably that Uaakeia himself, whose name the stone bears, was its originator, and it was he who first instituted the cult of his ancestor on Marakei.

Before the tataro was made, the stone was encircled by three fillets of coconut leaflet, one in middle and one at each end. The prayer offered was of the following character:-

Aora te amarake, nKoe Kaburoronteun. Tautau
Our offering the food, thou Kaburoronteun. Keep hold on

mauri-ra, toutoua nako te aoraki, Kakamauri-ia
our safety, tread away the sickness, continue to save them

ANCESTOR CULT: Marakei.

ataei aikai, Karerekea kara-ra.
children these, continue to get our food.

ANCESTOR CULT: Marakei.

Tataro.

Made to the stone of the ancestress Nei Kanna, from whom the Beruan conqueror Tetonganga on Marakei was descended:-

Aora te amarake nKoe Nei Kanna. Toutoua
Our offering the food thou Nei Kanna. Tread

nako te mibuaka ma te aoraki; tautaua mauri-u
away the evildreaming with the sickness; keep hold upon my safety

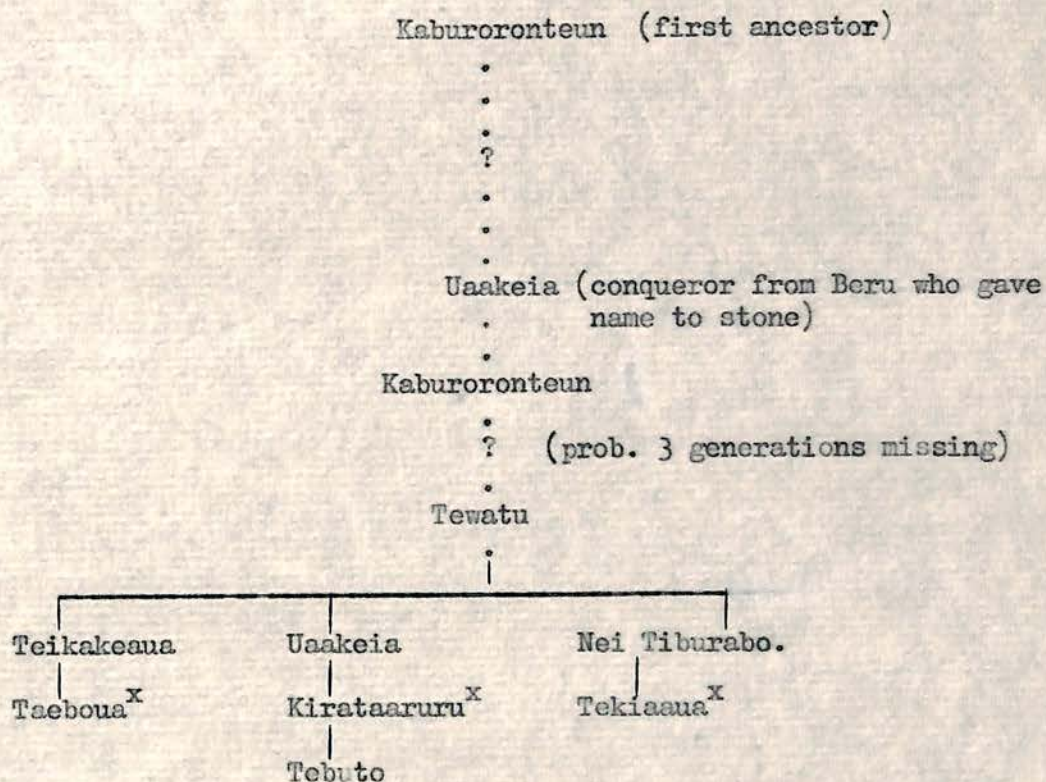
ma au botanaomata.
with my collection of people.

The whole utu was gathered for such a tataro at dawn. Food was brought by each member. A share was set on the flatstone lying by the base of the monolith. The senior male officiated. The people sat in a complete circle around stone, wearing fillets of coconut pinnule. The offering and prayer were made. After this the people ate, and then departed. Food was left by stone.

The skull of the ancestor Tetonganga was buried by the monolith.

ANCESTOR CULT: Marakei.

Pedigree of some of the descendants of Uaakeia who made the tataro to Kaburoronteun as described:-



^x
The cross marks my three informants, of whom the youngest is not less than 65 years old.

ANCESTOR CULT

In Bairiki there is a stone of the usual type which is considered to be the "rabata" of the goddess Tituaabine. This deity is the "atua" of the Bairiki family group, which treats her as a guardian spirit, abstains from eating the flesh of her creature the Stingray, and makes offerings of coconuts and food at full-moon every month to her stone.

The stone is set in a small square of broken coral slabs. Beside it are strown the bones and skulls of various men who are definitely stated to have been ancestors in the Bairiki family group. Their exact genealogical connection is now unknown, but no doubt whatever exists about the fact that they were members of the family. According to old men, it would be unthinkable to preserve thus the bones of anyone unconnected with the family.

These bones are anointed with oil when offerings are made to the stone around which they lie. They are indissolubly bound up with the ceremonies connected with the stone itself. The necessity to pay them reverence and to make offerings of food to them is recognised to be as pressing as the need to offer at Tituaabine's "rabata".

Thus we see how the relics of ancestors become actually, not only objects of worship, but bound up with the idea of god-worship. The road is not a long one from that idea to the deification of an ancestor.

Uaakeia's stone: the history of Uaakeia: his deification.

Kauraabi's bones.

ANCESTOR CULT: Bairiki.

10 Oct. 1922. Bairiki.

List of human bones still to be seen by the stone of the atua Titusabine in Bairiki. They are the bones of ancestors.

- 7 Skulls
- 3 Scapulas
- 1 Atlas
- 3 Humerus
- 3 Radius
- 2 Ulna
- 1 Sacrum
- 36 Ribs
- 12 Phlanges
- 1 Inferior Maxillary
- 2 Superior Maxillary
- 22 Vertebras
- 1 Femur

ANCESTOR CULT.

Prayer to ancestor at Boua. (Given by Taam of Marakei: aged about 52).

Aora te amarake, Kaieti-o! Buoki-ra;
Our offering of food, Kaieti-o! Help us;

Tautau mauri-ra; toutoua nake te buaka;
Keep hold on our safety; tread away the war;

oro-ia, bakarere-ia itui matia;
strike them, pierce them, sew their eyes together (as fish);

ti aki bua ti aki taro; te mauri
we are not lost we are not deserted; safety

ao te raoi; te mauri.
and peace; safety.

ANCESTOR CULT. Stone columns (boua).

I. All through the Gilberts, stone monoliths ranging from eighteen inches to seven or eight feet in height were erected to the various spiritual "powers". Generally these powers may be considered to be gods, and they are the gods of the fair-skinned race for their names are Taburimai, Auriaria, Tituaabine, etc. But occasionally they are called not anti but bakatibu, i.e. ancestors. When genealogical evidence is sought, however, it generally fails to lead one back to any ancestor of the name given to the stone. But a concrete case comes from Marakie, in which an ancestor who lived only five generations ago is definitely the stus of a stone bearing his name near the village of Temotu. The following is a list of his lineal descendants (eldest sons of eldest sons) until today:-

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Naabuti (about 40)

Kaieti was a great fighter and traveller in his day. At one time, he and his party were driven out of Marakei and had to take refuge in Abaiang. Collecting his forces there, however, he was soon strong enough to make war on his former conquerors and return in triumph to Marakei. Soon after this he died, and is said to have appeared in a dream to his son Taoroba, and to have told him to erect a boua or monolith to him. Whatever may be the truth about the dream, it is certain that Taoroba erected the boua,

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(Insert the note on skulls and bones found at the base of these stones)

(The Bairiki relics).

Kaieti is also said to have given his son a charm by which he might be called to answer questions in the whistling speech. But this call was made thro' the intermediary of the skull of Kaieti, not the stone. While the worship at the stone continued, the family also used the skull at home, thus duplicating the form in which ancestor cult was sustained.

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Some households would every day lay a small portion of food on the shelf beside the skull; it was the duty of the closest or the most beloved relative of the deceased to eat this food on his behalf at the day's end. This was a universal practice, but with most households it was less regularly performed.

When tobacco was introduced, it became the custom in every island of the Group to allow the skull to share the household pipe. The skull was held between the palms before the face of the smoker, who inserted the bowl of the pipe into his own mouth and the stem into the jaws of the skull. He then blew down the bowl so that the smoke was driven back through the stem into the gaping jaws. He would address affectionate familiarities to the skull while thus occupied: "E uara? E kangkang?" (How is that? Is it tasty?) and so on.

ANCESTOR CULT. Skulls.

This sort of conversation was typical of all the relations of the household with the skull. It was a member of the family, as susceptible of offence or pleasure, and as alive to conversations and events beneath that roof, as any human being. It was their friend. While busy about the house a man might throw it an occasional remark as naturally as to his father or brother; or at any time of the day he might take a little oil on his palm and rub it on the cranium of the skull, just as he would perform such an office with smiling yet deferential kindness to one of his living senior relations.

The explicit reason in the native mind for this akoi (kindness
(or deference)) accorded to the skull was that the ghost of the ancestor was always near it. Not precisely situated within it, but enveloping it as an atmosphere, watching it, and feeling emotions of pleasure or pain in proportion as it was honoured, fed or abused.

When a particular need made itself felt in the household the help of the deceased ancestor was enlisted through the medium of the skull. A day was appointed on which all the members of the household should meet in the house.

The senior living descendant of the ancestor would anoint the cranium with scented oil, and wreaths of flowers were hung about it. Food was laid beside it as a Karea or propitiatory offering and probably a pipe and a stick of tobacco would accompany the food. Just after noon the senior member would lift the skull from its shelf and elevate it above his face between his palms: then drawing it close to his cheek he would whisper into its ear the special request that he wished to make on behalf of his

ANCESTOR CULT. Skulls.

people. The following is a typical example of such a prayer:-

Toakai-o! tautau maui-ra;
Tooakai-o! Keep hold of our safety;

toutoua nako te aoraki; ba ti maui
tread away the sickness; for we are safe

iroum; ti aki bua, ti aki taro;
through thee; we are not lost, we are not deserted;

te maui ao te raoi — te maui!
safety and peace — safety!

There was no special form of words used in these prayers. Certain phrases have a habit of recurring in nearly every example collected, such as the universal "te maui ao te raoi", but the form of words which a request was made was entirely at the will of the performer, whose duty it was to state as clearly as he knew how the particular desire which he wished to convey to the ancestor.

I have described here the procedure followed when a collective request was made to protect a household from an epidemic sickness. In like manner a whole utu might be gathered together in the mancaba to appeal for the ancestor's protection in time of war, or for his help in famine or drought, or for his good offices on any important occasion whatever in which the utu had an interest.

At other times the simple ceremonial could be still further simplified. A single individual might, if a member of the household, go himself informally without preparation to the skull, and after blowing a little tobacco smoke into its jaws as a propitiatory offering, state in its ear

ANCESTOR CULT. Skulls.

Whatever small request he had to make. And any member of the household was at liberty, as the wish seized him, to make a little private offering of food either before or after his prayer, and breathe an appeal into the ear of the skull for the general protection of the house.

Sometimes the ancestor would appear in a dream to one of his descendants and would tell him a form of words with which his ghost might be made to converse in whistling noises. The owner of such a charm would generally keep it secret from the other members of the house, but on request, when advice was needed by the household, he would consent to call up the ancestral ghost and ask it the desired questions. The skull was the intermediary through which the ghost was called. Offerings were made to it by the ibonga, or medium, and it was anointed by him with oil in the usual manner. Then he lifted it from its place and whispered the charm into its ear. Here is an example of such a call:-

O-o! N na wewete-ia Toakakai
O-o! I shall call-him Toakakai

mai aba-na, mai aba-na; e a roko, ba
from his land, from his land; he arrives, for

e a roko ni maneaba-ra aio, be a roko!
he arrives in our maneaba here, for he arrives!

As soon as the charm is done, the ghost makes his presence known by a gentle whistling under the ridge pole of the maneaba. It is the function of the ibonga to interpret the sounds made to the onlookers. The ghost will answer in his musical language all the questions put to him — the belief being that if an answer proves afterwards to be wrong, it is certainly the fault of the ibonga and not the ghost.

ANCESTOR CULT. Skulls.

Sometimes the species of oracle thus instituted through the medium of the skull became so famous for its infallibility, that people of other households and utu came to consult it. They would bring propitiatory offerings of food and tobacco to the ibonga, who after giving te moan tiba (the first share) to the skull would keep the rest as payment.

In this way an ancestral ghost would obtain prestige and reverence outside the circle of his own utu.

(Add skull cult details given in J.R.A.I. to banota).

ANCESTOR CULT and SUN.

In erecting a monolith at which the ghosts of the ancestress Nei Kanna and the ancestor Tetonganga received offerings and tataro, the old man Naatau used the same formula of words as that exhibited elsewhere in connection with the planting of the stone called Taai (Sun) in the maneaba. Naatau informed me that this formula was used always by his ancestors for the double purpose.

RELIGION (Ancestor cult). Tabakea.

A form of religious observance co relating very closely in externals to the cult of the ancestor at the monolith was the cult of the spirit Tabakea, whose body is said to be the turtle. Tabakea in myth was the father of NaAreau and Auriaria, both of whom have appeared as chief actors in the creation drama. On Banaba and Nui, Tabakea has the title of Moan-ibai - First of Things - usually accorded in other islands to NaAreau. Throughout the Gilberts this being is closely connected with the origin of fire. Evidence brought in another place seems to show that he was one of the gods of the aboriginal race of the Gilbert Islands, the dark skinned dual people who were settled here before the invasion of the fairer people from the West.

The cult of Tabakea approaches nearer to the idea of a tribal cult than any other noted hereto ^(for?) pre. On occasions of stress, disease or necessity, when not only a single utu but a group of utu allied for political or warlike purposes, felt the approach of a common danger, a stone about 6-9 feet high would be erected in the maneaba, over against its eastern side, and halfway between the north and south ends. The senior man of Karongoa-n-uea, the clan in the maneaba whose privilege it was to speak the first and the last word in assembly, would decide upon a day when all the utu should be gathered together to make offerings (Karea) and prayer (tataro) at the stone.

The stone was wreathed with coconut leaves by the people of Karongoa-raereke, the workers or acolytes of Karongoa-n-uea. Before dawn on the given day the utu would gather, wearing fillets of coconut pinnules around their foreheads, and bringing food with them. The first portion would be

RELIGION (Ancestor cult). Tabakea.

taken by the spokesman of Karongoa-n-uea and laid before the stone. The people would then eat their food, putting off their fillets while eating. When this was done, the fillets would be resumed and the spokesman would offer his prayer on behalf of the whole assembly.

↑
ANCESTOR CULT

✓
Cult of Teweia of Beru or Marakei

Marakei

← Teitirere, an old man of over 80, ^{on} of Marakei, describes the cult of his ancestor Teweia, who was the builder of the maneaba for Tanentoa of Beru. The utu of Marakei descended from Teweia had a stone, about half a man's height, set up as a post in the ground on the east side of the island. This stone was called the body of Teweia: nevertheless, it was not considered to be the actual atua or spiritual power, which was the ghost of Teweia; but it was the medium through which the ghost was approached, and was so inalienably connected with the ghost, that whosoever did it an insult or injury caused pain to the spiritual power, and was liable to sudden death or illness. On the top of the monolith were perched three lumps of red coral, each about as big as two fists, and one on top of the other. These were said to be the head of Teweia. A flat stone was laid on the ground at the western side of the base of the monolith. On this stone were laid all offerings of food brought to the ghost.

On occasions of stress or danger, the senior member of the utu would signify that a general assembly (te toa) of the utu would be made at the stone for the purpose of offering gifts of food to the ghost and tataro or prayers for his help. He would appoint the day.

The utu would arise in the early morning at about cockcrow and gather before the stone before sunrise. They would squat in a semicircle on the west side of the stone, facing east towards it. They brought food with them. First portions of this food, and later also sticks of tobacco and a filled pipe, were laid on the flat offering-stone. Then the utu would eat the remainder in silence. When the meal was done, ⁽¹⁾ The senior of the

ANCESTOR CULT

utu (but always a male) would ^{then} go and squat before the stone and address to it, in his own words, the particular request which he had come to make. After this, the people dispersed, leaving the offerings on the stone of offering.

~~(Note) After the meal and before the prayer,~~ ^① the people put on their heads ^{each} a fillet made of a single pinnule from the crest of a coconut tree, knotted in front. ~~3~~

ANCESTOR CULT: Marakei.

Cult of Uakeia and Kaburoronteun

Marakei

← At Marakei there is a stone which bears the name of the ancestor Uaakeia, who was the leader of the Beruan conquerors who invaded and settled this island about nine generations ago. At this stone the utu descended thro^{ugh the} male & female line from Uaakeia made their tataro in time of need. A collection of the whole utu for the sake of tataro was called te toa, a word which since Christian times has been applied to any general gathering for religious purposes.

The stone was broad and flat, being set in a recumbent position, not standing. Beneath the stone were buried the skulls of ancestors subsequent to Uaakeia, and also the skull of Uaakeia himself. There were called bouan te atibu, the posts of the stone, the word boua being the name ordinarily applied to the studs of a house or maneaba.

Although this stone bore the name of Uaakeia, and although all the ancestors were expressly believed to listen to the tataro offered here, the prayers and offerings were made to the single ancestor Kaburoronteun, who was (and still is) described as the ancestor of Uaakeia. The explanation of this is most probably that Uaakeia himself, whose name the stone bears, was its originator, and it was he who first instituted the cult of his ancestor on Marakei.

Before the tataro was made, the stone was encircled by three fillets of coconut leaflet, one in middle and one at each end. The prayer offered was of the following character:†

Aora te amarake, ^hnoe Kaburoronteun. Tautau
Our offering the food, thou Kaburoronteun. Keep hold on

maurira, toutoua nako te aoraki, Kakamaurira
our safety, tread away the sickness, continue to save them

ANCESTOR CULT: Marakei.

ataei aikai, Karerekea karāra.
children these, continue to get our food.

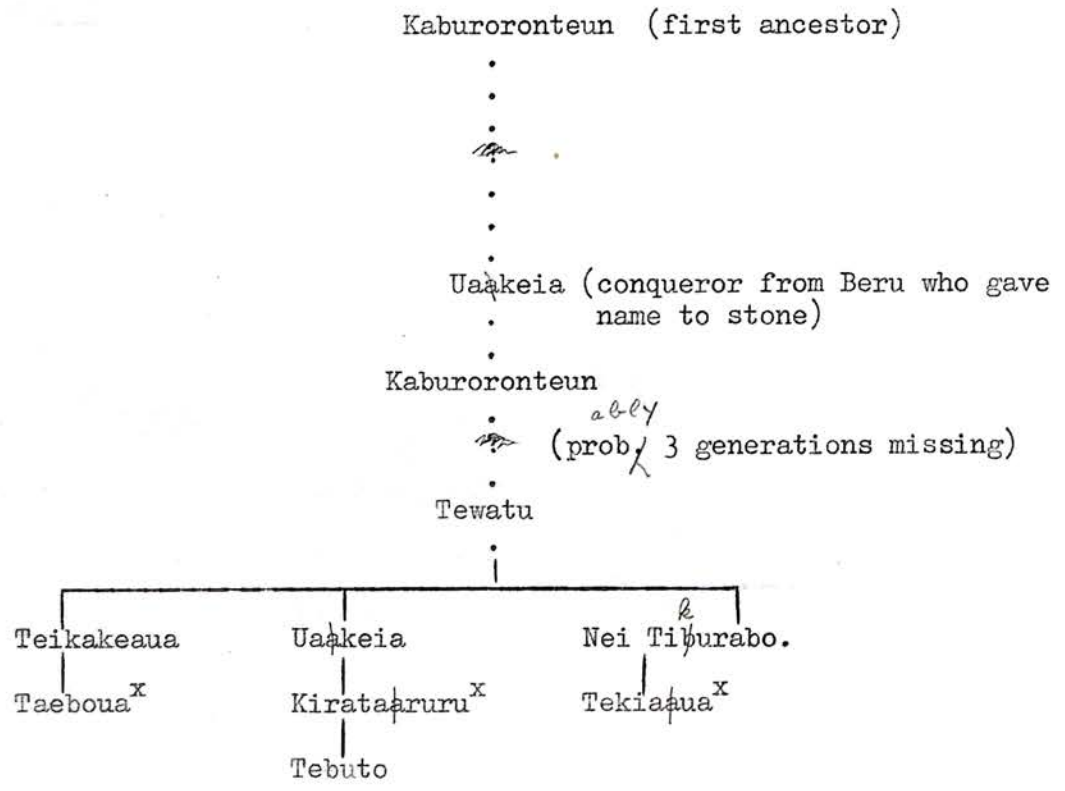
The pedigree ... (etc, as on next page ... with a cross .

To follow on from previous page

ANCESTOR CULT: Marakei.

The pedigree

Pedigree of some of the descendants of Uaakeia who made the tataro to Kaburoronteun, as described: *is as follows:*



~~The cross marks~~ *My* three informants, of whom the youngest ^{was} is not less than 65 years old, are marked with a cross.

ANCESTOR CULT: Marakei.

Prayer
Tataro to Nei Kanna

Marakei

At the tataro

Made to the stone of the ancestress Nei Kanna, from whom the Beruan conqueror Tetonganga on Marakei was descended, the old man hatau ⁽¹⁾ _{inscribed}

Aora te amarake n^koe Nei Kanna. Toutoua
Our offering the food thou Nei Kanna. Tread

nako te mibuaka ma te aoraki; tautau mauri+u
away the evil dreaming with the sickness; keep hold upon my safety

ma au botanaomata.
with my collection of people.

The whole utu was gathered for such a tataro at dawn. Food was brought by each member. A share was set on the flatstone lying by the base of the monolith. The senior male officiated. The people sat in a complete circle around stone, wearing fillets of coconut pinnule. The offering and prayer were made. After this the people ate, and then departed. Food was left by ^{the} stone.

The skull of the ancestor Tetonganga was buried by the monolith.

ANCESTOR CULT and SUN.

① ← In erecting a monolith at which the ghosts of the ancestress Nei Kanna and the ancestor Tetonganga received offerings and tataro, the old man Naatau used the same formula of words as ^{employed} ~~that exhibited~~ elsewhere in connection with the planting of the stone called Taai (Sun) in the maneaba. Naatau informed me that this formula was used always by his ancestors for the double purpose:

see legend
at letter of page

ANCESTOR CULT

Marakei

^{an utu} made his
Prayer to ancestor at Boua. Given by Tam of Marakei, aged about 52.

Aora te amarake, Kaieti-o! Buoki-ra;
Our offering of food, Kaieti-o! Help us;

Tautau mauri-ra; toutoua nake te buaka;
Keep hold on our safety; tread away the war;

oro-ia, bakarere-ia, itui matia;
strike them, pierce them, sew their eyes together (as fish);

ti aki bua, ti aki taro; te mauri
we are not lost, we are not deserted; safety

ao te raoi; te mauri.
and peace; safety.

Prayer to an utu ancestor made at his boua

Marakei

Given by Tam of Marakei, aged about 52

Aora etc.

ANCESTOR CULT. Stone columns (boua).

Significance of ceremonial boua

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~~(Insert the note on skulls and bones found at the base of these stones)~~

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ANCESTOR CULT. Skulls.

Skull cults

The removal of the skull from the grave of a buried father, mother, grandfather or grandmother was universal in the Gilberts. The skull was kept on a little mat specially woven for the occasion and was placed on a shelf in the house of the owner. It was considered liable to affront, and was therefore never put on the floor of the house, for fear that in standing above it, a member of the household might insult it with a view of his ^{sexual organs.} ~~secret parts~~. Nor were children allowed to approach it, lest some rough game of theirs might cause offence. The idea underlying this anxiety to pay all respect to the skull was that the ancestor to whom the skull belonged would refuse if ill-treated, to help his descendants when asked, in time of trouble; he might even punish them by visiting them with terrifying dreams, from which they would awake insane, and with wasting diseases such as ^k te Kangenge (consumption).

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When tobacco was introduced, it became the custom in every island of the Group to allow the skull to share the household pipe. The skull was held between the palms before the face of the smoker, who inserted the bowl of the pipe into his own mouth and the stem into the jaws of the skull. He then blew down the bowl so that the smoke was driven back through the stem into the gaping jaws. He would address affectionate familiarities to the skull while thus occupied: 'A'E uara? E kangkang?' (How is that? Is it tasty?) and so on.

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v.p.

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Topakai-o! Keep hold of our safety;

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iroom; ti aki bua, ti aki taro;
through thee; we are not lost, we are not deserted;

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There was no special form of words used in these prayers. Certain phrases have a habit of recurring in nearly every example collected, such as the universal te mauri ao te raoi¹, but the form of words ⁱⁿ which a request was made was entirely at the will of the performer, whose duty it was to state as clearly as he knew how the particular desire which he wished to convey to the ancestor.

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ANCESTOR CULT. Skills.

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In this way an ancestral ghost would obtain prestige and reverence outside the circle of his own utu.

~~(Add skull cult details given in J.R.A.I. te banota).~~

Fin / note about skulls from JRAI 1921:46-7.