

## **The return of the dead or the visit of the demon spirit? : The anxiety of the influences of “White Men” cultures among East Sepik, Papua New Guinea**

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**Abstract:** Among East Sepik Province, Papua New Guinea, the European colonists came to stay at the coastal area at the latest on the end of 19 century. The northern territory of East New Guinea was the German colony from 1884 until 1917, that is the German New Guinea. At the coastal area not only the German planters but also the Roman Catholic and Lutheran Church had established some stations by 1901. The S.V.D. Mission of Roman Catholic built the missionary station at Wewak, the capital town of East Sepik Province, on 1912 where the Wewak Cathedral is now.<sup>1</sup> However, it was for the first time since 1930 period that the European colonists arrived to stay at the interior area of the northern territory, especially Sepik River Basin, because it was restricted for the foreigners to enter into these interior areas until 1933. Well, from the “First Contact” of the native peoples of this area with Europeans until nowadays, it passed about 80 years. The arrival of Europeans into these areas seems to have made the native peoples experience the enormous impact very different from the simple visit of their kin and enemies. Then, if so, during these 80 years how the influences of European Cultures have been uttered in the forms of some myths and stories by the native peoples?

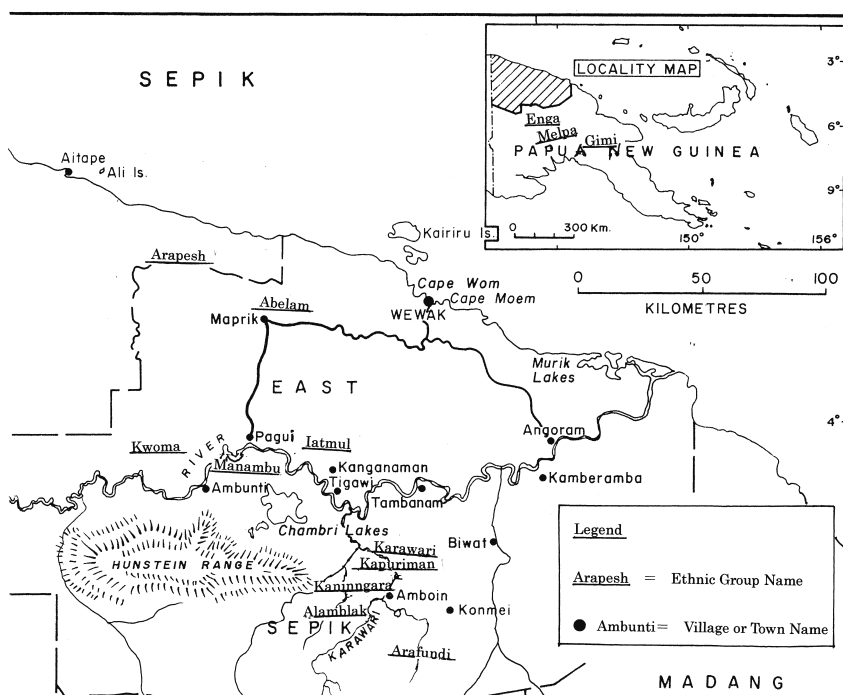
### **1. Elementary structure of “White Men” kinsmen**

When Europeans came to Papua New Guinea at the first time, the native peoples called them as “White men” according to European skin color different from their own one. But nowadays the idiom of “White Men” of the native peoples designate not only western Europeans almost of whom are Australians but also Japanese and Australian Chinese who are the big businessmen. Especially Japanese were imagined as the strong soldiers by the peoples of East Sepik Province due to the Second World War. However Philippine workers may not be included in “White Men” in spite of that many Philippine workers are staying at the towns and villages as the foreign workers. Because it is probably that almost Philippine workers are not rich. Almost Malaysians and Koreans also are not included in “White Men” and are called as Malaysians and Koreans only, since they are staying at only Port Moresby, Capital City of Papua New Guinea, and most of Papua New Guineans living in rural areas

do not know of them well.

Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that “White Men” for almost Papua New Guineans living at the rural areas are imagined as the alien beings coming from the most far away with the enormous wealth and the strongest power. Are “White Men” thought as either the same human beings with the Papua New Guinea native peoples or another alien beings different from them? As the hint of this question, we shall gain some clue to it from the records about “First Contact” for Eastern Highlanders to encounter Europeans during 1933.<sup>2</sup> According to Bob Connolly & Robin Anderson, when Eastern Highlanders encountered Australian exploration team by Leahy brothers at the first time, they imagined them by two kinds of way of thinking. One was that “White Men” would be the sky beings or the demon spirits with the very long huge penis coming from the far mountain forest handed down in their legendary traditions. Another was that “White Men” would be the dead kinsmen returning back home. Concerning the former, they thought that it was the reason why “White Men” covered all their body with the second skin, the dress, for them to hide their long huge penis. Therefore many women in the villages ran away from Europeans as soon as Europeans came near them.<sup>3</sup> The dress putting on their body for Eastern Highlanders was only used in order to hide their genitals. Then it is assumed that

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they thought of “White Men” as the pseudo-human spiritual beings having the long huge penis. On the other hand, concerning the latter, “White Men” were thought as their own dead kinsmen with the vital body. They produced the proofs that they had the same physical features or the same behaviors with their own dead kinsmen. For example, one white man had half his finger missing with the same of their dead cousin, then they thought of this white man as their dead cousin.<sup>4</sup> And more, another white man took a steel axe and went across to an old, dry tree that had been planted long ago by a man who had since died. They thought that this old white man had come back from the dead to cut down his own tree for firewood.<sup>5</sup> The people of Asaro Valley thought that when the white men lay down to sleep at night, their flesh would go from their bones and would come back into skeletons at dawn, because the dead could take human form by day and become skeletons by night.<sup>6</sup> It would be assumed that the form of the dead was the reversal of the living, then the soul of the living went from his flesh by night, that is, it was the dreaming. Conversely, the flesh of the dead went from his body and left the soul behind which attached to skeletons by night.

Among East Sepik, the arrival of “White Men”, I think, would have been thought as the return of the dead rather than the visit of the evil spirits. Because there are the native words keeping the meaning contents of “White Men” as the dead, but not as the evil spirits nor as the sky beings. For example, the Kwoma of the Nukuma language family, Nudu language stock, living at Washikuk Hill near Ambunti Station use the words such as “**gamba nogu**”, “**gamba waji**” and “**pusi asa**” in the Kwoma language. **Gamba** signify the dead or the dead spirit. **Nogu** signify the sago starch made of the sago palm which is their staple food. Then “**gamba nogu**” means the sago starch of the dead literally, but signify the rice that Europeans brought into them at first in fact. Similarly “**gamba waji**” signify the bread fruit tree which Europeans brought into them, as **waji** means the bread fruit tree. They have two kinds of the bread fruit tree, **waji** and **gamba waji**. The bread fruit is the subsidiary starch food and is the metaphor of the love game. Especially **gamba waji** is used as the metaphor of the love game between the classificatory brother and sister of the same clan that their parents prohibit by reason of the traditional incest taboo rule. Therefore both of **gamba nogu** and **gamba waji** attach the word **gamba** to themselves the meaning of which is the white men but not the dead. And both, the rice and the new bread fruit, are only the subsidiary foods, but not the staple foods. The love game not combining with the marriage is also the subsidiary union with man and woman because their parents decide their marriage at last. On the other hand, among the yams which are the most important foods for the Kwoma, there are 6 kinds of species of the alien yams bringing into them from the other world, but the name of any species has never the word **gamba** attached to it.

Then, the foods to the words of which **gamba** are attached are consumed many in quantity in everyday life but have never the important central values and meanings in ritual life for the Kwoma. These foods have only the circumferential ambiguous meanings for them. This fact might connote that the white men also would occupy the position of circumference compared with the position of centrality of the Kwoma people in the context of the Kwoma social world.

However, at once since the “First Contact” experiences with the Europeans, the native peoples got many transactions with them and felt that since the white men void the same excreta with them, may speak the human language and never transform themselves to skeletons during a night’s sleep, the “White Men” were neither some demon spirits, the sky beings nor the dead, and they were only the human beings with all the same of themselves provided that the “White Men” were neither their allies nor their enemies but rather the strange monstrous human beings with the super power and wealth. Then, it is seemed that since that time on the native peoples would have been keeping the images of the strangeness and the monstrousness for the white men within the inner side of their hearts. On 1978 I experienced that when my friend slept at night taking off his contact lenses from his eyes during staying at Siassi Islands, Morobe Province, many islanders were frightened at it and that news spread all over the islands at once as such that another islanders visited at our island to look at my friend’s action. The islanders said that my friend took off his own eyes when sleeping at night. Although the Siassi islanders could not possibly think of my friend as the dead, they were, none the less, forced to rouse interest in my friend’s action taking off his eyes from his face, because it was assumed that only the dead could do such a thing. Next, we will observe the state of affairs above mentioned from some myths collected in East Sepik peoples.

## **2. Mythology with regards to the monstrous human beings to be exiled**

The myth of the demon spirit with the long huge penis is widely diffused in the belt zone from Papua Gulf, Torres Islands, Kiwai Island, Purari Delta, Mt. Karimui, until Eastern Highlands. In these myths, it is said that the demon spirit or the mythical deity spread his long huge penis like snake towards some young woman in order to have sexual intercourse with her. But she is terrified with that long penis and ran away (Mt. Karimui version), or get angry to cut off that long penis with a stone axe (Eastern Highlands version).<sup>7</sup> In The former the demon spirit is ashamed and give the destiny of death toward all the human beings, and in the latter his cut-off penis is transformed to the staple foods like taro, banana and so on. The Arafundi of the Arufendio language family living at Upper

Karawari River, East Sepik Province, have the same kind of legend as stated above, but the demon’s long penis is transformed to a eel and a turtle.<sup>8</sup> Meanwhile, that demon is the man who has the excessive sexual desire and the woman suffers from his excess. Moreover, these mythical legends would reflect the opposition and the difference between the men and the women that is seemed to be the basic social structure among Papua New Guinea societies.

However, since the native peoples understand that the white men are not the same with such the demon spirits or the mythical deities, such imaginations must be modified. If so, how would they modify them? What kind of modifications they are executing?

At first, we find some strange mythical legends about the “Amazon” villages diffusing widely in the swamp basin of Middle Sepik River. Those tales are such that almost the women ran away from their village as their husbands never bring any delicious meats to them or as their husbands never take care of sexual intercourse with them. The women get rid of the fire and the secret items owned by their husbands and are transformed into birds, or are getting on the long rope, to go upstream of Sepik River. Thus the women make up a village to live on together for only themselves.

In these villages, only the women live on without any man. They are lodging together at one big barrack house and have one woman leader. The leader calls the roll every night before sleeping and forbid any kind of intercourse with any man very strictly. If she finds some man sleeping together with some woman, she should kill him at once. When the women want to get born of babies, they can become pregnant by blowing wind into their vagina (Chamburi and Arafundi version) or by pouring water into their vagina (Blackwater River version).<sup>9</sup> As regards to the strange way to become pregnant, I already tried to solve the problems elsewhere.<sup>10</sup> Now, we will direct our notice to the fact that the narrative forms of these mythical legends have European cultural elements like the barrack house, the roll call at night, the lodging together, the despotic power of the camp leader, and the strictly ascetic life. These elements might be those of the drafted laborers’ camps at European plantations in the coastal areas or the mining company in some mountain. That is to say, the “Amazon” villages in East Sepik should be like the same of the drafted laborers’ camp which the “White Men” own and manage, although only the male laborers but not the female ones are working at the real camp. In the Arafundi version, the old female leader uses the sorcery of “drill” to bring forth the small earthquake and the young man who wandered deep into the “Amazon” village thought this kind of sorcery as very evil one.<sup>11</sup> This sorcery of “drill” remembers us of the digging drill at some mine. Then, since the young man thinks of the sorcery as very evil, so the native peoples compare the camp of

“White Men” with the very evil site. That is to say, the “Amazon” villages are thought as the very evil places combined with the “White Men” by the native peoples.

In the “Amazon” villages all the women are forced the sexual abstinence by the female leader. This character is the reversal of that of the demon spirit with the huge penis, because he has the nature to generate his excessive sexual desire and he generates it anytime freely when he looks at a woman.

<b>Demon spirit</b>	—————>	<b>Sepik Amazon</b>
Excessive sexual desire	—————>	Insufficient sexual desire
Voluntary	—————>	Enforced
Mountain forest	—————>	River swamp
Man	—————>	Woman

Moreover, the demon spirit visits the human village coming down from mountain in order to have sexual intercourse with a woman. On the contrary, the “Amazon” women run away from their own human village going upstream toward the upper river in order to never have sexual intercourse with their husbands. That is to say, the legends of the Sepik “Amazon” are the opposite images of the myths of the demon spirit with the huge penis. The latter is seemed to inflect the former being inverted each other. Thus, the geographical position of the “Amazon” villages must be set up at the upper areas of Sepik River main stream, for example, Kamchua near Garamambu mine at the western bank of Chamburi Lake (Chamburi version), Nambunti i.e. Ambunti Station (Arafundi version), Kaburaruu near Green River Station (Blackwater River version). Thus, the plot of the demon spirit with a huge penis is transformed to the legends of the Sepik “Amazon” and the content of tale is transformed from the myth of origin of the cultivated plants or the destiny of death to the legend of the end of human community, i.e. a kind of eschatology. Therefore, the landscape of the “Amazon” village is concretely combined with the drafted laborers’ camp of the “White Men”, since such the camp is, the native peoples imagine, the landscape of the end of their own world.

Next, the native peoples would hope that the evil beings like the “White Men” must be exiled forever from their own world. The mythical legends having that kind of contents are found among The Kaningara of the Sepik Hill language family, Upper Blackwater River area, one of the tributaries of Middle Sepik River. The informant was ever the catechist of Roman Catholic Church;

**The story of the wooden hook figure with one leg named Agurimaka**<sup>12</sup>

We, Bashimujowun clan, have 3 kinds of spirits' figures. One of them is made of wooden figure. His name is Agurimaka. These spirits were the most powerful long time ago. But nowadays God is the most powerful more than our traditional spirits. Well, Agurimaka stayed at Mt. Kaburimari, where was at the source area of Karawari River, Blackwater River, and Korosameri River. Originally all our ancestors had lived at many caves on top of Mt. Kaburimari. Agurimaka lived together with our ancestors very friendly when God created our earth. In those days Agurimaka could walk about and speak. All the women could never look at Agurimaka. It was very strictly prohibited against them. But one day some woman looked at Agurimaka, then since this time Agurimaka turned out to never speak nor walk about. When God created our earth, all the human beings had only one language with them. They all were living together very friendly at Mt. Kaburimari. But one day the people with the white skins constructed the very high tower in order to go up to the place of God. Then God got very angry. God cut off their tongues and exiled from the mountain to carry off toward Australia over the sea. In this way, only the people with the black skins stayed behind at Mt. Kaburimari.

It is plain enough that this legendary story is influenced by the episode of the Tower of Babel, the Genesis of Old Testament. Above all, the originality of the myth of origin of the wooden hook figure with one leg fades out and tends toward a minimal expression, collapsing and contracting at the same time. On the other hand, the traditional place of origin, Mt. Kaburimari, is seemed to be equated with the Garden of Eden. Compared with the episode of the Tower of Babel, in this legend God cut off the white men's tongues, but never differentiate the language of all the human beings each other to bring forth many languages, and carry off them downstream over the ocean. Since the white men already were cut off their tongues by the anger of God, they are expected to lose their ability of speech, which is similar with the loss of the human intelligence among Papua New Guinea in general. That is to say, the message of this legend is that the white men should be the fools without intelligence. On the other hand, the native peoples know very well of that the white men have their own language different from theirs. Thus, the white men are assumed to be the fools but also to be the ordinary human beings only.

In East Sepik River basin, the dirty, evil things must be thrown away downstream into Sepik River. The white men would be the dirty evil beings. Thus the white men are assumed to be the dirty evil fools but also to be the ordinary human beings.

Another version about the legendary story of origin of the white men also comes from Kaningara Village, Blackwater River area. This informant has experienced to stay at Rabaul and Hong Kong for his drafted labor soon after the Second World War;

**The story of Marianmei**<sup>13</sup>

Marianmei is the founding ancestor of Garumario clan. He was born at Mt. Kumbunga near to Sebungbuk Village at present. When he stayed at Mt. Kumbunga, he had one younger brother named Siabu. One day, Marianmei went to forest for hunting and Siabu sat down inside the spirit house to draw a picture. At the same time, the wife of Marianmei climbed up to a Gnetum gnemon tree neighbor to the spirit house to collect several edible leaves and peeped into the spirit house where Siabu was sitting down to draw a picture on the tree bark of the wild sago palm. Looking at Siabu's picture, the wife of Marianmei shouted, "That picture is myself!". After that, she prepared to boil the sago starch inside the boiling water tub made of the leaf sheath of the sago palm. She said to Siabu that "Please take a bath inside this tub! I will wash your body skin cleanly." Siabu refused her proposal saying that "It is prohibited for any woman to come into the spirit house". But she brought the tub into the under floor of the spirit house forcibly. Siabu fell into temptation from her and took a bath together with her. Bathing together skin to skin each other inside the hot water tub, Siabu's skin color changed from black to white. And he had a sexual intercourse with his elder brother's wife. The smell of Siabu remained on the skin of Marianmei's wife.

When Marianmei came back home after hunting, he noticed that the smell of his younger brother remained on the skin of his wife. Marianmei asked to his wife that "Why does your skin have my brother's smell?" But his wife could not answer it.

Next morning Marianmei would take Siabu's life by trickery two times. Siabu ran away toward downstream of Sepik River, by way of Angoram and Imbuando, to go to the sea. When Siabu was tired and slept on the floor of the canoe at Imbuando, the color of his body skin changed to white more and more. As Marianmei traced him to come to Imbuando, Siabu ran away over the sea, to go to Australia. Nowadays the face of Siabu remains on the surface of 2 dollar note as the devil's face. The descendants of Siabu are Australians. Then the skin colors of Australians are white.

This legendary tale says about the origin of the skin color of the white men. The episode that Marianmei's wife peeps into the inside of the spirit house climbing up on the tree near to it, is the same with that of the myth of the wooden spirit figure with one leg. However, in the latter the spirit figure turned from the spirit walking about outside, speaking, and sometimes fighting against the enemies toward the one freezing and unspeakable inside the spirit house, as soon as the woman peeped into him. On the contrary, in the former Siabu turned from sitting down inside the spirit house toward to hurry up to run away outside of the spirit house, fighting against his brother, to go to downstream. The pattern of behavior in the former is the opposite of that in the latter in the direction. And the hook figure is made of carving the plain wood, i.e., the white colored wood and later is painted with the black pigments. That is to say, the body color of the figure changes from white to black. Conversely, the body color of Siabu changes from black to white. Moreover, with regards to relation with the other sex, the wooden spirit figure rejects the sexual desire from any woman, then in olden times the man only, they say, could offer the blood



which was taken out from his penis to this figure’s whole body. On the contrary, Siabu was seduced by the woman too much easily who was his elder brother’s wife. And the fact that the wooden figure is the spiritual being is opposed to that Siabu is the human being only, although both is the man. Furthermore, we can observe another transformation. In the Alamlak version of the myth of the wooden hook figure, which is the most integrated of the same kinds of myths of the hook figures in the Sepik Hill groups, the blood-thirsty hook figures, walking about inside the spirit house, drink all the bloods of some man to the dregs.<sup>14</sup> Moreover, the myth of the hook figure of the Alamlak version is a part or only one episode of the longer and richer complex of myth about the Mother-Moon and her Son-Sun.<sup>15</sup> The Alamlak live in south next to the Kaningara. On the other hand, in the story of Marianmei at the Kaningara stated above, Siabu takes a bath together with the woman by her seduce. Therefore, in following the phrase of Levi-Strauss we could say as follows; the semantic function of fluid changes from drink to bath, i.e., from body content to body recipient, for the drinking blood goes into the body just as the body goes into the bath water.<sup>16</sup> In the Kaningara version of the myth of the hook figure, there is not the motif that the hook figure drinks the human blood and the plot as a whole is contracting and diminishing.

Consequently, in following the same kinds of myths from the Alamlak to the Kaningara along south-north axis, we could observe the collapsing and contracting phases which results in breaking up two stories; one is the mythical legend of the hook figure, the length of which is too much short and the narrative of which is never rich, and another is the legendary story about Siabu, the reflection of which is inverted compared with the Alamlak version of the myth of the hook figure in spite of the same formula of narrative sequence as follows;

<b>Hook Figure</b>	←→	<b>Siabu</b>
spiritual being	←→	human being
from walking about to immobility	←→	from immobility to running away
reject against woman	←→	vulnerable to temptation of woman
blood pass through inside of body	←→	body pass through inside of hot water
from white skin to black skin	←→	from black skin to white skin

One of the two stories broken up in the Kaningara version is the diminishing type of the transformations of the mythical tales and, on the other hand, another of them is the reversal type of that. One story would turn into the brief legend and another would turn

into the supposed history of the specific clan group. Here we find that two types of the transformations take place at quite the same village, Kaningara Village of the Kaningara.

By the way, in the latter Siabu goes downstream toward over the sea in order to run away from his brother chasing to kill him, just as in the Alamlak version the Sun-man, who is the foster- father of the hook figure, goes upward to the sky in order to run away from all the human beings mourning to farewell him. Accordingly, both the protagonists go to the outside of the world, otherwise the other world, one toward Australia and another toward over the sky.

In the Alamlak version, the hook figure spirits, when walking about, killed to drink the blood of the man as the ogre. They were ever the evil beings like the devils but later turned into the immovable wooden figures only. On the contrary, in the Kaningara story about Siabu, he was ever the mere man, but after he went to arrive at Australia, Siabu became the ancestor of Australians, i.e. the white men with the devil's face. That is to say, Siabu became the white man as the devil. Then, different from the hook figure spirits, Siabu had to be exiled from his own village to Australia. It is certainly that Australia is, they think, the outer world at which the white men as the evil devils stayed.

Well, we could speculate that the Siabu' bathing together with the brother's wife is seemed to reflect some scenes of the pornographic movie video where some lovers, man and woman, take a bath together inside the bubble bath tub. Because the informant of this story have ever stayed at Rabaul and Hong Kong. Native people have never any custom that some man and woman take a bath together and some person take a bath with hot water.

### **3. How the idea of the return of the dead was modified?**

On the days of "First Contact" of the year 1933, most highlanders thought of the white men as the dead returning back home as well as the monstrous spirit. However, soon after a while they acknowledged that the white men were not the dead, although the white men had the white skins with them and were the very tall guys. They knew now that the dead did not come back home whose body still had the living flesh with it.

Generally speaking, not only the highlanders but also the Papua New Guineans in general did not hold some concepts of the human beings but had some traditional images of the mankind consisting of the men and women and having the black skins with them. Then when the white men with the white skins arrived at the native peoples, they were very fearsome imagining the white men as the dead returning back home. But now they acknowledged that there were two kinds of the human beings in the world, one with the black skins and another with the white skins.

However, after that, the transformations toward the narrative stories about the arrival of white men as the return of the dead would have been never developed so much, with exceptions of the motifs of the white skin, the skin color of which was that of the dead, and of the ecdysis, the ability of which was the attributes of the immortal beings. Because that the myth of the immortal beings sloughing off the skin would make them image the appearance and life-style of the white men, i.e., their white colored skins and the changing of their clothes. It is the myths of the immortal beings sloughing off their skins that made the native peoples arouse the images and the anxieties for the white men.

According to T. Obayashi, the ecdysis typed myth of the origin of death diffuse very widely in Melanesia including New Guinea.<sup>17</sup> Obayashi writes as follows,

“in olden times all the human beings did not die. Why they did not die? That reason is that when everyone became old, they sloughed off his old skin. However, one day one grandmother went to the river bank and sloughed off her old skin. Then she hung her old skin on the tree standing at the river bank and grew young again as a young woman. When she returned back home changing to a young woman, her grandson did not stop crying as soon as he met her. Because he never acknowledged her as his own grandmother. The grandmother said to her grandson many times that she was his grandmother. But the grandson never acknowledged it by any means. The grandmother was obliged to go back to the river bank and put on her old skin hanging on the tree again over her body. As the grandmother of whom the grandson knew well came back home, he stopped crying at last. However since that time every human beings resulted in the destiny that they could not slough off their skin to grow young again.”<sup>18</sup>

That is to say, in Melanesia the idea of the ecdysis is symbolically in opposition to the death of all the human beings.

However, especially in the interior areas of New Guinea we can not find the typical ecdysis typed myth of the origin of death. But we can find the myth about the hero who has two kinds of skin to be sloughed off without relation to the destiny for any human being to die. For example, the Mikaru on the southern fringes of the highlands in Simbu Province say that long time ago when the giant hero named Souw lived among the Mikaru, a party of their ancestors had caught him copulating with his daughter as that was the grave crime. Souw was ashamed and enraged at being caught, and punish them for shaming him. When both white men arrived, the Mikaru were full of fear. Their white skin (Souw had white skin), their big dogs, and their clothing (Souw ensured his immortality by changing his skin like a snake) stamped them as reincarnations of Souw.<sup>19</sup> But they do not hold any kind of ideas of incarnations traditionally with them. Did the ideas of incarnations invented? No, rather we had better think that they imagined of Souw coming back home with the living

flesh as he was the immortal being. Souw as the immortal being went to the other world, probably the land of the dead, and came back home from the other world. Here the Mikaru were under the illusions that the white men were the same persons of Souw, the giant hero, coming back from the other world, because the white men had the white skins and changed their cloths as well as that Mikaru also has a white skin and change his skins. Souw gets his power of immortality by way of sloughing off his old skin. Another version of Souw says that Souw threw down his own skin. If people had taken this skin, they would be immortal, but instead the snakes all came together and took it, and now instead of dying they simply shed their skins and are young again.<sup>20</sup> The version of the Pawaia-speaking people to the east of the Mikaru or the Daribi says that Saur's skin was getting old, and to get rid of it he sloughed it off; the gura' snakes, sago grubs, and eels took it. Man received mourning clay, body shields, arrows, etc., whereas the snakes settled down to a quiet existence.<sup>21</sup> Therefore, it is seemed Souw's old skin already sloughed off that has the immortal power, thus the gura' snakes which took Souw's old skin became the immortal beings but not the human beings. However, the fact that Souw can slough off his old skin is the metaphor of his immortality. This metaphor would be transformed to the metonymic representations in contiguity as if his old skin itself had the immortal power. Thus, the hero's ability of sloughing off his skin would be transformed from the immortality which he possesses by himself naturally inside his body to the magical items with the immortal power which attached to his body.

Across over the central range northwards we find the other kinds of the myth of the hero sloughing off his skin, i.e., the ecdysis without relation to death whether mortal or immortal. In the Kwoma on Washikuku Hill, Upper Sepik, we observe the myth about the hero who has two skins with his body;

**The myth of the origin of Masukumba<sup>22</sup>**

Makapusyapa was the man having two skins with his body. One skin was very beautiful, and another skin was very ugly.

Two women, names of whom were Januruk and Jarunjao, stayed at their village. Januruk worked to prepare the sago cooking, but Jarunjao was watching the street doing nothing. Well, Makapusyapa was walking to arrive at the village from far away. Before he came in the village, he sloughed off his one skin, ugly one, and hung it on the wild pandanus tree. Like this Makapusyapa had only the beautiful skin with his body. When two women looked at him, they acknowledged him as very beautiful. Then two women took his ugly skin from the tree and burned it in order for him not to turn back to the ugly appearance again. Now Makapusyapa had only the beautiful skin with him. He could never exchange his skin whether from beautiful to ugly, or from ugly to beautiful.

Two women gave him the delicious meals including the grilled sago worms. He ate

them all. But he worried about his own ugly skin which two women had already burned. Two women said to him that he needed not worry about it because they thought to their hearts' contents that he was very beautiful as he had only the beautiful skin with him. However, Souw could not appease his anger and tried to shoot them by arrows. Then two women tried to run away. Jarunuk put the twigs of *Gnetus gnemon* tree into both sides of her chest and chanted the spells. Jarunjao put the bark fibers of Coast Cotton Tree into both sides of her chest and chanted the spells. Thus they two women were transformed to two birds of paradise and fled away over the forest.

Makapusyapa found two women, i.e., two birds of paradise at Amoki north to Tongusyemp village after sleeping in the mountain during 10 nights. They were sitting on the branch of tree. When two women met him again, they discussed how to dispose him. Januruk said that they had not to kill him, but Jarunjao said that she wanted to kill him. Then, Jarunjao thrust her leg into his head. Makapusyapa was dead. Then two women ate his all body and fled away being full up their stomachs. The deceased was survived by his only head. Thus, the head-man named Masukumba came to existence.

That is to say, this myth tells that Makapusyapa, the man holding with two kinds of skins, got angry too much as the two women burned his ugly skin and was killed by them whom he sought revenge. Although he was killed, he was born again as the head-man. Makapusyapa's anger resulted in his death, which followed his reborn toward the different existence, the head-man. We can not understand the reason that why Makapusyapa got angry being burned his ugly skin by two women, but it is certainly that this story would be affected from the myth of the origin of death in Melanesia, although the integrity of the mythical system of the former collapse compared with the latter. We find the similar story at the Boiken Abelam of Ndu language family, across over the vast grasslands northeast to the Kwoma, but that story tends to a minimal expression like a simple legendary tale. The Boiken tell that the man holding two skins, the beautiful young skin and the ugly skin with large painless sores, killed his two wives as they burned his ugly skin.<sup>23</sup> This story is seemed of that of only the domestic violence.

On the other hand, we find another transformation in the Arafundi, Upper Karawari River which is the biggest tribute of Sepik River. Here the motif of ecdysis is inserted into the first episode of the myth of the creation of all the living beings, mankind, spirits, and animal by the creator whose name is Ape;

#### **The myth of Ape<sup>24</sup>**

One day, when Ape took a view of the lower world from the top of Mt. Nandukum, he looked at smoking in the swamp there. Ape went down there, he met two women. They were the sisters cutting and beating the sago palms. Ape, climbing up the sago palm, put on the sago leaves and covered his body with sago leaves. The younger sister looked at Ape's face in the water inside of the tub for sago starch-washing and shouted to her sister, “Come here! Look

at this!". The elder sister came there to remove the water, but could not find anybody. She found only the sago starch. Then they were cutting all the sago palms around there. On the last sago palm, they found that man who put on the sago leaves over his body. They removed his sago leaves putting on his body and then stripped off the sago bark of his body from him. Thus, from this black colored sago bark we, the people with the black skin, came into being existence and from the white colored sago pith the white men with the white skin came into being existence.

Continuing this episode, Ape set about the task of the creation of all the living beings by way of using the clay pot full of the bloods. Well, Ape made his appearance in front of the women as the sago palm-man. Then the Papuans were born from his upper black skin, i.e. the bark of sago palm, and the white men were born from his lower white skin, i.e. the pith of sago palm. Then, we could say that Ape had two kinds of skins, the black skin and the white skin. It is certainly that this episode possesses the motif of ecdysis. However, this episode is not integrated entirely in the whole body of the myth of the creation of all the living beings, the human beings, all kinds of spirits and deities, and all kinds of animals and worms. Because the black men, i.e. the Papuans were created again from the creating clay pot by Ape notwithstanding that both the white men and the black men were created from Ape's body at the first episode. That is to say, this episode would be inserted into the original myth of creation like a patchwork. Probably the reason would be that the Arafundi informants thought that since their original myth of creation told about the creation of all the living beings, it was the matter of course that the white men also entered in that myth of creation. We could regard this kind mode of transformation of the myth as "tessera" after the model of Harold Bloom in the meaning that the new version of this myth antithetically completed the precursor as though the precursor failed to go far enough.<sup>25</sup>

Moreover, diagonally opposite to the typical myth of the origin of death in Melanesia, the motif of ecdysis in the myth of Ape is strongly combined with the formation of the new typed human beings, i.e. the white men, but not the beginning of the destiny of death. That is united with the birth, but not the death.

Another version of the similar myth tells that the left side of half of Ape's body is muddy and ugly, but the right side of half of his body is beautiful and white. The left side turn to the black men, the Papuans, and the right side turn to the white men.<sup>26</sup> According to this version, we can observe that on the day of the creation of all the living beings, the human beings divide themselves into two kinds, one is the black men, another is the white men. Thus, the message of this episode seems that the black men, Papuans, are on an equality with the white men.

Well, we observed that the idea of the return of the dead was not hardly fixed in the narrative stories like myths, legendary tales and so on among Papua New Guinea, especially Highlands and East Sepik. The exceptions are only the motifs of the white skin and of the ecdysis. In the story of Ape of the Arafundi, the motif of the culture hero holding two skins is combined with the advent of the white men. This metaphoric combination is the same of that of the myth of Souw in the Mikaru, highlands fringe. Moreover, the hero, Ape, pass back and forth between the mountain of the original home land and the lower swamp land as well as that Souw pass back and forth between this world and the other world, the land of the dead. However, in the story of Ape, the white men come into existence from the hero’s white skin itself. In opposition to it, the hero, Souw, himself is identified with the white man returning back home in the Mikaru version. In the former, the white men is the metonymy of the hero, but in the latter, the white men is equal to the hero. Therefore, the white men of the former would be the weakened beings more than the white man of the latter. In the Arafundi version, we could say that the Arafundi tried to regard the image of the white men as only the human beings, the same beings of them, but with the strange appearances different from them and that the white men were never the immortal beings by way of sloughing off their skins nowadays for the Arafundi people.

At last, we observe the historical story about the advent of European Father of Roman Catholic Church at Kaningara Station next to Kaninngara village;

#### **The advent of Father Kisubon**<sup>27</sup>

Our tribal wars finished as follows. At first, Catholic Missionary arrived at kaninngara. Then the patrol officer named Master Eris came here. Later Japanese soldiers arrived here. On the year 1946, Catholic Missionary arrived at Kaninngara. They constructed the station buildings. Father Kisubon was the first Catholic Priest. Father Kisubon put the Bible at first, then the salts and the matches, in front of all the villagers. All the villagers were surprised at the matches and the salts, because the matches flared up and the salts were very delicious. Later, Father said, “I have one shot gun with me. I will shoot one bird on the top of the tree over there with this gun. That bird shall fall down from that tree. Look at it! You can not shoot it by your own arrows”. Father could shoot it to fall down fairly. All the villagers trembled to fear very much. Therefore, all the adults of Kaninngara attacked to kill Father and sliced off all the body of Father to cook. Then they ate all the cooked flesh of Father and threw all the bones of Father away in the river around the spirit house. Because they thought that the white colored skin of Father was clearly different from them, then Father must have been their enemy. When they ate them, they felt them very delicious. When they threw all the bones of Father away in the river around the spirit house, all the water of that river dried up. Because the water was the life of God. Father Kisubon was brought back to life from that river holding all his flesh. Then, Father presented the knives, the steel axes, the cotton clothes, the matches, the razors, and the mirrors to all the villagers. All the villagers were surprised looking at their

faces by the mirrors. Thus they became the friendly relationship with Father. Kaningara village became the first station for Catholic Missionary. Thus our tribal wars finished. Father Kisubon sent many villagers to go to the schools at Solomon, Lae, Madang, Kairiru Island and so on. Father took out Mr. Kungarabi, Mr. Kindi, Mr. Yagasibo, and Mr. Undundambi to the coastal plantations with him.

This story is not any mythical tradition, but rather the legend relating supposedly historical event. Even so, this story tells that Father Kisubon sloughs off his flesh to become only the bones and later is brought back to life. After he was killed to be dead, he was born again. This plot would mean a kind of the return of the dead. As far as I know, this plot is only one case that the theme of the return of the dead is told in the narrative story among Papua New Guinea. The reason is probably that the Kaningara Catholic Station is set up directly next to Kaningara village and the Kaningara people have a good friendship with the missionary. Moreover, here was the sole missionary station around the vast areas of the Karawari River, the Korosameri River, and the Blackwater River swamps until the year 1965.

#### **4. Conclusion**

We observed the several narrative stories like some myths and some legends being related with the white men among Highlands and East Sepik Province, Papua New Guinea. In such stories we could find some images of the white men that had been transmitted among the peoples living on these areas since the first advent of Europeans, i.e., the First Contact. There are two kinds of the images of the white men, one is the alien beings such as the sky beings, the demon spirits visiting at the human world, and another is the dead kinsmen returning back home. Most Papua New Guineans have already acknowledged that the white men were neither the return of the dead nor the alien demonic spirits, rather were the same human beings with them, soon for a while after the First Contact. However, it is seemed that the anxiety of the influences of the white men has continued among the peoples of Papua New Guinea until nowadays since the First Contact.

Well, we can observe that the images of the white men as some alien beings visiting at the human world, which we could call as the “marebito” after Dr. Shinobu Origuchi, have been developing to several legendary stories such as the Amazon villages stories and the story of Siabu transforming to the white man with the devil face and so on. On the contrary, the images of the white men as the dead kinsmen returning back home have not developing so much, although only two motifs, the white skin and the ecdysis, combined with the death, remained in some legendary stories. Why the theme of the return of the dead has



never been evolved in the narrative stories? This is seemed the questions to be solved from now on.

## Notes

1. Lorna Fleetwood, 1989: pp. 8-12.
2. Bob Connolly & Robin Anderson, 1987.
3. Ibid.: pp. 44-46.
4. Ibid.: pp. 37-38. , pp. 92-94.
5. Ibid.: p. 38.
6. Ibid.: p. 41.
7. Ibid.: p. 44. Roy Wagner, 1972: pp.19-32.
8. This information according to my own field research data, 1988 August.
9. Gewertz, Deborah, 1985; Frederick Errington & Deborah Gewertz, 1988; Kamimura, Toru, 1991.; Kamimura, Toru, 1992.
10. Kamimura, Toru, 1991.
11. Ibid; pp.113-114.
12. This information according to my own field research data, 1991 August. 24 at Kaninngara village, Upper Blackwater River. Informant is Mr. Gregory Manga of Bashimujowun clan.
13. This information according to my own field research data, 1993 August 6. at Kaningara Village, Upper Blackwater River. Informant is Mr. Martin Kari of Dabujowun clan.
14. Haberland, Eike, 1964 : pp. 60-61. ; Kamimura, Toru, 1990 : p. 10.
15. Kamimura, Toru, 1990 & 1991.
16. Levi-Strauss, 1975 : p. 262
17. Obayashi, Taryou 1998: pp.160-165.
18. Ibid; p. 162.
19. Bob Connolly & Robin Anderson, 1987: p. 39.
20. Roy Wagner, 1972: p. 27.
21. Ibid. : p. 30.
22. This information according to my field research data, 2006 August. Informant is Mr. Allan Sasa-ap, of Hambantum Wany clan, at Tongusyemp village.
23. K.A.McElhanon, 1982: pp. 72-73.
24. This information according to my field research data, 1990 August. Informant is Mr. Tapain of Kaemongae group, Auimu village.
25. Bloom, Harold, 1973: p. 14.
26. This information according to my field research data, 1990 August. Informant is Mr. John

Kanduwai of Monkanbae group at Auimu village.

27. This information according to my field research data, 1993 August at Kaninngara village.  
Informant is Mr. Martin Kari of Dabujoun clan.

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