

## GEGERU

When a dog that used to kill many marsupials has died, its soul roams through the bush. The owner will get another dog. Staying in the bush with his new dog, he will call out the name of his former one. When he is sure that the latter's soul has arrived, he will warn it not to give any trouble to the new dog that is taking its place! Then the dead animal's soul will enter the new dog. – Sometimes people's ancestors do not accept a pig that has been cooked and eaten because it is either too small or too skinny. They will, however, always accept an old sow that had many litters. A smoke magician can find that out by his smoking. – When the natives have killed a big snake of the kind called *kapiyei*, they will cook and eat it. Its bones together with the last vertebra of its tail are laid on the ground near a tree, or near a cordyline or a bamboo cluster. Then this place is tabooed. Nobody may go near it because the snake's soul (*kara momona*) is there. It is endowed with a certain power or quality called *mare mare yowo*. If anyone gets affected by this power, his belly will become tense so that he cannot eat anything. Though people do not die from it. – When a pig's bristles are very long, the owner will abuse his wife. The latter will therefore wish she could burn them off, but if she did, the pig's soul would run away. A *poi kane tina ana* must come to their rescue<sup>10</sup>. She will speak a charm over some water, pour it over the pig's back, and then the woman may safely singe off its bristles. (Reported by KENI.)

About three or four days after the great pig festival every family goes to the woman's house where the pigs that are to be slaughtered have been reared. The head of the family will tap a little pig on its head with a wooden club. People think that if they hit the piglet strongly without tapping it gently first, the animal would get a shock and jump. Its soul would leave for good and there would be no new pigs. This little ceremony is performed whenever pigs are slaughtered. – After the piglet has been killed, cooked, cut and spiced with ginger and salt, the head of the family calls on the spirit who used to watch over the recently slaughtered animals. The name of this spirit is *Izo tovoya tagaiyai* "the one who cuts the roots of trees". The man then calls out the names of all the slaughtered pigs and addresses the spirit with these words: "I offer you all these pigs." Then he plants a cordyline shrub behind the house and hands out pieces of the meat just prepared, to all the members of the family. – When the men notice that a pig is very excited and that it will probably jump when they are about to slaughter it, they decide to kill it "when its soul is asleep". So, before clubbing the pig, they wait till it has calmed down. – As soon as he has killed a pig with his wooden club, a man will call out its name and say: "N. N., stay at N. N., your home place!" For instance: "Bobia! stay at Karamuke, which is your home place!" When he has eaten the pork with his relatives and friends, he will take some fresh meat and cook it at the place where he wants the pig's soul to dwell. After eating this meat, he feels sure that the soul of the pig will stay there. (Reported by GAIMA.)

<sup>10</sup> A woman who pronounces magical words in connection with pigs.