

C113 Differing Responses of Missionaries towards the Indigenous Culture, New Britain, 1886

The Protestant missions seem to be particularly intolerant of native institutions. All native manners and customs must be completely uprooted in order to make a true Christian, and starting with this idea, they forbid all and sundry customs, without, unfortunately, giving the native anything better, or giving him anything in its place. The result is often that laziness and indolence take the place of the festivities, and the happy gatherings which formerly interrupted the daily life of the native, and lead to lip-service and hypocrisy coupled with every possible vice practised in secret, which are further removed from true Christianity, than the original non-Christian institutions. There are missionaries, certainly, with a true understanding of the nature of Christianity, who respect the harmless customs of the natives where they are not in direct conflict with Christian tenets. This leads to the strange spectacle of missionised natives in one district still retaining their old secret societies, and their ancient customs, while in a neighbouring district these are held to be the works of the devil. On the Duke of York Group, the missionaries have in many places succeeded in absolutely suppressing the Duk Duk, while in Blanche Bay,

the teachers introduced from Samoa, Tonga and Fiji, not only tolerate the Duk Duk but take part in the festivities connected with it. I have known cases in which the teachers themselves have been initiated into the Duk Duk, and shared with the brothers of the society in its advantages. One native from Makada in the Duke of Yorks, who for many years has been an ardent, and I believe, a really sincere adherent of Christianity, but who cannot belong to a Duk Duk society there, took part in the festivities conducted not far from my home. I occasionally reproached him about this in a joking way. He declared that the customs of the society contained nothing, that would offend against the teachings of Holy Writ, and that he therefore did not regard it as a sin to belong to the society, and take part in its ceremonies.

SOURCE R. Parkinson, *Dreissig Jahre in der Südsee: Land und Leute, Sitten und Gebräuche in Bismarckarchipel und auf den deutschen Salomo-inseln*, Stuttgart, 1907. Translated from the German by N. G. Barry. (Typescript in Hallstrom Pacific Library, Sydney) Part 9, p. 505

C114 Miklouho-Maclay and Divinity, Astrolabe Bay, 1877

A few days after my meeting with my so called 'assassins', I went on my usual evening stroll to the Bongu village. Arriving at the village I heard a very animated, perhaps better described as heated, discussion come from the assembly hut. As usual, I just entered and gave my greetings around. This time I noticed at once that the discussion had come to an end upon my entering the hut. Obviously, it had been me they had been discussing and I assumed that the news about my meeting with my 'assassins' had come to their ears and was now under discussion. This was acknowledged by Saul the moment he came up to me and with a very serious face, pleaded with me for the right answer to his question of 'Maclay, can you die? Can you die like others?'

This question surprised me and took my breath away. I had never thought of the natives thinking of me as a divine person and this question brought the actual state of their thinking home to me. I had to find the right answer without strengthening their belief and also without damaging my image as being an honest and sincere man. They had never before found that I was lying to them and should they even think that Maclay is not truthful, all their confidence in me would be gone.

I stood up and walked around, deep in thought, looking

out of the window up to the sky as if I expected help to come from there, which at that moment would have been very welcome, however the natives stayed very quiet, thinking perhaps that I was praying for the answer or debating with myself if to impart my knowledge to them or not. At last I thought that I had the solution. A large spear stood on one wall and I went and fetched this, I gave it to Saul and said, 'Kill me!!!' knowing very well that should he do so, my life would be over at once, as this spear was very sharp and pointed. Saul however reeled back from this request as if bitten by the most deadly snake. 'No, no,' he called out and the rest of the natives suddenly posted themselves around me, sheltering me from Saul, the eventual attacker. This more or less answered their question. They did not believe that I could die—I would surely not have been so foolish as to give Saul the weapon to kill me and to ask to be killed—but in any case they made sure that I would stay alive, just in case.

The incident was closed and never again was such a question put to me.

SOURCE D. Fischer, *Unter Südsee-Insulanern das Leben des Forschers Miklouho-Maclay*, Leipzig, 1956; entry for August 1877, pp. 357-60. Translated from the German by Valli Shipmaker

EDUCATION: DOCUMENTS C115 to C118

C115 Mission Education, New Britain, 1879

I have an earnest desire to preserve everything in connection with my early Mission life which will constitute a history of the Mission. For that purpose I now place upon record the names of my scholars and I intend to keep account of their doings and hope by the blessing of God to be able to

give a good account of each one at the last great day.

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|-----------------|-------------|
| 1. Peni Lele B. | 5. Tomakait |
| 2. Noa B. | 6. Tolokor |
| 3. Adom | 7. Gapur |
| 4. Enok B. | 8. Tokamim |

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|--------------|---------------|
| 9. Reke | 16. Kada |
| 10. Tukeram | 17. Tibunabur |
| 11. Tukorina | 18. Warup |
| 12. Tomat | 19. Tomarum |
| 13. Kele | 20. Caplin. |
| 14. Etera | |
| 15. Tuminmin | B. all boys. |

- Women:
1. Ula
 2. Tegmadau
 3. Melagier
 4. Tiglumer
 5. Piklik
 6. Nikakoi

This is a complete list of all my scholars. The course of instruction which I have set down for them at present is as follows:

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|--------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1. Monday | Writing and spelling |
| 2. Tuesday | Reading out of lesson book |
| 3. Wednesday | Figures and 1st multiplication table |
| 4. Thursday | Bible stories and history |
| 5. Friday | Writing and spelling |
| 6. Saturday | Ten Commandments |
| 7. Sunday | General religious instruction |

Peni Lele is so much in advance of all the others that I

have conferred upon him the honour of monitorship and have held out to others the same office when they have prepared themselves sufficiently for it. I find it hard work to get them to remember anything but I will plod on and with God's help will conquer all things. The above table does not show any great variety; but as I consider that a great variety of subjects tends to confuse new beginners I have purposely avoided that error and will increase my list of subjects as my scholars are ready for them, and thus time after time open up avenues of knowledge to them.

As order is necessary for the success of any undertaking I have framed two rules only:

1. Punctuality. When the drum strikes they must come at once.
2. Regularity. Any scholar staying away three consecutive mornings without a legitimate cause, such as sickness in person or family, must return both slate and book to myself and he or she is no longer a scholar.

O! that God would remind me continually that I am dealing with immortal souls and that He would help me 'to spend and be spent for those who have not yet my Saviour known.'

SOURCE *Methodist Church Papers*, Rev B. Danks, Daily Journal, New Britain, 1878-1882, Mitchell Library, MS. Meth. Ch. 616, listed at A5015; entry for 27 June, 1879, pp. 55-6

C116 Schooling for Local Chiefs, Duke of York Island, 1880

Wednesday 21st

I have had a very interesting interview with some of the chiefs of this place this evening.

Warawaram, Topupkup, Turigood, Tamtile and Kale all came according to invitation and sat down in my study as I wished to see them on important matters. When they were all seated I opened the subject which was to try and persuade them to go to school and learn to read and write. I showed them that those men who knew most were the best and strongest chiefs. After much conversation I obtained their consent and each one separately promised to come to school tomorrow. I thank God for this success and will trust in Him continually for success upon success until these people are brought to a knowledge of the truth. I had more than one reason for thus getting the chiefs to go to school.

One is, if they only go now and again they must learn something, and everything they learn will create in them a desire to learn more and show them their ignorance. Another reason is—their going to school will be an example to the young men and by this means I hope to have a better attendance at my own school of boys.

Another is—if they go to school, they cannot oppose the young men because they go. I am thankful to My Lord for the *Good work* which is evidently going on in Duke of York.

SOURCE *Methodist Church Papers*, Rev B. Danks; Daily Journal, New Britain, 1878-1882, Mitchell Library, MS. Meth. Ch. 616, listed at A5015; entry for 21 January, 1880, pp. 159-60

C117 Early Mission Education and its Effects, New Britain, 1886

You don't think much of school examinations in the great and wise Colony of New South Wales. Yet it is my intention to try and give you an account of one which we held at a place called Pila Pila on Wednesday last. It is the first of its kind we have held on this side of New Britain, therefore we may be let to think it more important than others may. With us it was a great day and I am sure it was so with the scholars

themselves. The attendance was good. Indeed it was very good. Our returns for this Section of our Circuit last year gives us a total of 227 scholars. Out of that number 166 were present. We should have had many more present but: (1) The fishing season is now on and everybody is at work from sunrise till sunset making fishtraps. They scarcely take time to eat and often they eat and work at the same time. Owing

to this Kabakada contributed only 37 towards the 166 whereas at any other time probably 100 would have been its number. (2) Many of our scholars were afraid to come so far away from home. At home they feel safe, but in a distant town they are full of suspicion and dread. The assembling of so many young people, not for fighting but for reading, has already had and will continue to have a good influence on the minds of the rising generation. A feeling of friendship and goodwill will take the place of ancient distrust and hatred. It may seem strange to you that the mission should have been at work and yet we have so very recently held our first general school examination. The answer is very simple. There was no missionary on New Britain until 1883 and therefore no books until 1884 by which the people could be taught to read. There were books on Duke of York but it is time wasted to attempt to teach these people to read in a strange dialect. In the early part of 1880 I visited the schools on New Britain—I then resided on Duke of York, Mr. Brown being in Sydney—and it was distressing to see the poor people trying to learn to read Duke of York books, and it must have been very discouraging to the teachers. Duke of York books have been on New Britain since the latter end of 1879 yet not one New Britain native—so far as I know—learned to read before books were printed in their own language or dialect, not because the teachers did not try to teach them but because they could not. This shows clearly that though grammatically the two dialects are virtually one, yet in words and often in idiom they greatly differ.

But to return to Pila Pila, where the school examination was held, is about a mile and a half from Kabakada by water and is near to the place where the notorious Talili lives. The teacher in charge is the only Tongan teacher we have in the group. We heartily wish we had more like him. He has not had charge of the place twelve months but has worked wonders. He has not only cleared away the dense bush which surrounded his house, but planted it with various kinds of food, built a fine house and a church, has a large number of young men and women living with him and nearly all have made some progress—and some much towards reading. I fully expect that in two or three months three or four of his young people will be able to read the Word of God in their own tongue. His name is Josaia Hafoka. He is a fine fellow and I hope he may be able to remain many years to labour here for the Master. He came with Mr. Brown in the 'John Wesley' and was on board when she was dismantled in the hurricane off the Solomon Islands.

I wish you and some of our Colonial friends could have seen all our scholars on that day. All dressed, their hair combed and neatly dressed; faces bright and clean, all joyous and happy as they formed in line and marched to the church singing the songs taught them for the occasion by our teachers; while the dirty crowd consisting of some

four or five hundred naked men and women stood looking on in perfect astonishment.

I think I felt more satisfaction as I beheld this procession pass up the hill to the Church and listened to their happy, merry voices than any of those Emperors could feel as they gazed on the procession formed by the miserable captives and crownless kings—the result, often, of their unjust and bloody wars, and to which was given the name of a triumph—as it dragged its heavy chains and uttered its sobs of anguish through the streets of ancient Rome. I wish I could send you a photo of the crowd. I would write under the reclaimed group 'The New' under the heathen group 'The Old.' A more perfect contrast you could not find. How the voices of the young people sounded the praises of our Saviour in the opening hymn! Just such a strain as the Master would love to look upon. There was joy in our hearts and doubtless there was joy in the presence of the Angels.

I cannot say much for the examination itself or for the results. I find we have about 30 in the Kabakada Section of our Circuit who can read, about the same number who can do a little at arithmetic, and three or four who can write. This may seem very insignificant to some and they may seem inclined to smile at the smallness of the results for so much labour. We who know and feel the great difficulties of the work, grudge not the labour and think we have done well. This to us is the beginning of good things and good times. Think of the care, the watchfulness, the kindness, the patience, the forbearance we have had to exercise in order to get this Jack-as-good-as-his-master crowd to attend school. What prejudices have been overcome, what barriers have been broken down, what mind-darkness has been dispelled and what a bond of brotherhood has been established in this land where no such thing was ever known before. We despise not this day of small and feeble things because we know that the little one shall become a thousand and they who were not a people shall become the people of our Lord and of His Christ.

To tell of the feasting, the dancing, the singing, the exchange of presents and the anxious questioning as to when we should meet again would take too long. We have had much to try us lately in our work, our hearts have been made sad by the falling away of some and the defiant wickedness of others; but on this our examination day—shall we say speech day?—we think of the days that are gone and are thankful, we think, of the future and are hopeful.

SOURCE *Methodist Church of Australasia: Department of Overseas Missions Papers*, Letter book, April, 1881 to August, 1884, Mitchell Library, MS. Meth. Ch. O. M. 53; letter Rev B. Danks to Rev W. Kelynack, dated Kabakada, 16 Feb. 1886, pp. 412-16

C118 Lutheran Mission Education, Finschhafen, 1888

Missionary Bamler writes on 6 June, 1888: 'Our school is progressing only slowly. To our regret our best pupil suddenly stayed away. We still do not know why he stayed away; probably he was forbidden to come by his parents. Instead we have got some smaller boys who also are making

some progress. At the moment I am busy drawing letters for reading exercises in print as well as in long-hand. Reading still causes some difficulty as the pupils do not yet understand how to put the letters together, though the alphabet, that is the different letters as such, is known by them. Just

as with the school the study of the language is making only slow progress. The bad thing is that the people talk as brokenly in their own language to us whites as we do. Consequently we only hear few new words and even fewer new forms. We still have not yet learnt completely the conjugation. It is necessary that we go more than hitherto among the natives, which we can do now since there are three of us.

Brother Flierl now holds a meeting every Sunday with young and old men and women. In the beginning and at the end a verse each accompanied by the harmonium is sung, then Flierl tries to tell the natives the bible stories and shows biblical pictures to them to illustrate them. Several times quite a few blacks were here, and once, when the at-

tendance was small one Sunday, a black man advised, we should announce the day before when it was Sunday so that the people would stay at home. The people listen attentively and once someone believes he has understood the matter he explains it to the other. On such occasions many a thing comes up which sounds funny to them, which then gives rise to great laughter. In order to be able to teach the black something definite we have translated the first eight commandments as well as possible. As soon as we have acquired a stronger grasp of the language we will also translate biblical stories.

SOURCE Extract from *Missionsblatt Neuendettelsau*, August, 1888. Translated from the German by John Moses.

VIOLENCE: DOCUMENTS C119 to C130

C119 *Casus Belli*, New Britain, 1878

MONDAY, 8 APRIL 1878

This morning whilst I was sitting in the study skinning a bird a native came to the window and told me that four of the Teachers had been killed by the bush natives. We have often before heard similar reports but something in this impressed me with the conviction that it was true knowing as I did know they had decided to pay a visit inland. When we held our General Meeting a few weeks ago Sailasa told me that he had been up inland and had been kindly received by the Natives and that they all wished them to go again. He said that the great bulk of the people lived a very little distance inland on a fine level plain and that they were quite accessible from both sides of the promontory. He wished to go again and begged me to give him some beads etc. as presents to the chief for feeding them etc. I gave him the beads he asked for and told him that I also intended to go inland farther up the coast and hoped to get some good opening for the lotu also.

TUESDAY, 9 APRIL 1878

Today Ratu Zivai arrived bringing the confirmation of the report we had heard.

WEDNESDAY, 10 APRIL 1878

Very heavy rain all morning. Started as soon as it was over with Mr. Turner, carpenter, and Teachers in the boat. A hot sun with little or no wind made the passage very wearisome until we reached Cape Stephens when we got a very heavy downpour of rain which lasted for two or three hours until we reached Rataul (or Ratavul) where we slept at the house of Mr. Brunaw, one of Messrs Godeffroy's traders here. At this place we heard that one of the Teachers had escaped the first attack and had fought his way down to the beach where he was received by a Chief called Talili with whom all the Teachers had been on very friendly terms and with whom he had of course felt quite safe. The Chief gave him food and whilst he was eating it some of his people came from behind him and clubbed him. A lot of Nogai people who had been at the cannibal feast had passed through Ratoul that day and had told the tale.

THURSDAY, 11 APRIL 1878

Started early this morning for Kabakada about 6 miles distant from Ratoul. We soon landed and made our way to Sailasi's house. It was very very sad indeed, to meet with the poor widows and to hear their piteous cries. 'Twas little use trying then to speak any trite words of comfort and we could only sit silent with them, as sharers of their sorrow. We soon heard the many horrible accounts of their death which made our blood boil as we heard them and I could see by the compressed lips of the Teachers and their significant sullen silence that their feelings were so deeply moved that they were no longer masters of their passions. We were told that Tarlili, the reputed murderer, had actually come from his village on the previous night and proposed to Toromu the Chief of Kabakada to murder the women and children and burn the house ... that he was there is certain and that he actually proposed the murder is very probable. I soon found out that the Teachers were planning an expedition to Talili's village that night and were determined to go without telling me of it for fear I would prevent it. The Fijians and Samoans had consulted together and were prepared to go and two of our party Mr. Turner and Mr. McGrath had agreed to accompany them. This action brought matters to a crisis and I was compelled to decide what course I would pursue and the decision I arrived at was to take the matter into my own hands and endeavour to punish the Natives of the very district where the massacre was perpetrated. I felt deeply the great responsibility I was assuming and I think it right now to state the position in which I was placed and the reasons which induced me to decide as I did.

There was first the fact that the Teachers themselves were actually preparing to go; that they said that life was no longer safe, nor was the mission work at all practicable if the murderers were allowed to go unpunished. I might of course have positively forbidden them to go and under such pressure they would probably have stayed but they would lose all hope and interest in their work and our work would only result in failure.