

worship are those of their deceased ancestors. The custom on the death of a great chief is to set up a similar stone and deck it with cocoanut-leaves, after which such offerings as have been mentioned are made to it. Kirby thought, from what he had seen, that the natives of Kuria believed that their gods also had once been chiefs, who from the lapse of time had been forgotten. For the performance of these duties there are priests, but they do not enjoy any particular respect or power on that account. The priests are called *iboya* or *boya*, and are not a distinct class: any young man of high rank and possessed of shrewdness may become a priest. Every family of consequence has a priest to attend to its tutelar deity, who performs the rites and ceremonies. The perquisites of priests consists only in the food offered to the god, which the former takes away after it has remained a short time, and eats it at his own house. In the absence of the priest, the father of the family officiates by offering up family prayers, and the food is removed and eaten by some elderly person belonging to the household. Prayers are offered up either in a sitting or standing posture, and are accompanied by no particular ceremony or gesticulations. The prayers are usually petitions for health, long life, success in war, fishing, the arrival of ships, and other blessings they may desire at the moment, and which it is believed to be in the power of the gods to give them.

The priest makes known the oracles of the gods, which he receives in the following manner. On the sandy beach on the weather or eastern side of the island, there are many houses, called *ba-ni-mota*, or *bota-ni-anti*. These are of the usual size of the dwelling-houses, but the walls are of coral stone, and they have no loft. The doorway is always in the west end, because the *Kainakaki*, the country of souls, lies in that direction. In the centre of this house, a stout pillar of coral stone is built up to the height of three and a half feet, having in its middle a hollow of about a foot in diameter; to this the priest puts his ear, and pretends to receive the instructions of his god.

On Kuria there are six of these houses, and besides there are many hollow pillars standing uncovered along the beach, as it is not deemed necessary that the oracle should always have a covering.

On Makin there is no regular order of priests, and the father of the family, as in the case of the absence of the priest on the other islands, officiates. On this island they have a class of men, which are unknown to the others, conjurors, and persons who pretend to have intercourse with spirits.

The natives of the group put great faith in omens and charms. The most common mode of divination they call *kaina*, which is performed