

Muraian notes
+ Kulori ceremony ②

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Ompelti
March 23, 14

Professor Baldwin Spencer Esq G.M.G.
Melbourne.

Dear Professor

I am sending you along a few notes, that may be of some use to you, about the Muraian.

The man to find out about the Muraian was named KUL-ORUM, belonging to the IM-MAR-RA-ILK tribe. IM-MAR-RA-ILK country is at the head of the East Alligator River. They practice circumcision; but not subincision. Kulbrum was going through the bush, a long way from water, and found the tracks of a turtle. Following the tracks for a considerable distance, the tracks at last led Kulbrum to a small lagoon. Kulbrum went in the water and felt about until he found the turtle. Kulbrum examined the turtle and could see that it was not a true turtle, it was a Muraian. Kulbrum made a fire, by rubbing two sticks together, and put the Muraian on the fire, cooked it & then wrapped it in paper bark and put it very carefully into his NU-MAL-KER and took it back to the camp. When Kulbrum

Muraian;
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reached the camp, he told the old men that he had some thing to show them. The old men then built a bough shed, so that no others could see what the old men were doing - Kulbrum then took the turtle from his Mumaller, and placed it on the ground in front of the old men; and told them that it was the Muraian - Told how he had followed the tracks for a great distance, and while tracking something inside of him told him that it was a Muraian - He told the old men, that the Muraian had great powers, could cause the death of any one who broke the Komali laws, or who would cause fighting among the tribe without good cause, the old man ^{had} to tell all the other natives the power of the Muraian, should any of them break the Komali laws, punishment would come sooner or later, Soris would break out on the body, an arm would get broken; and any thing may happen to them, even death may result from breaking the laws - Kulbrum then told the old men that there were Muraian's of most foods, every Komali food had a Muraian, When any of the old men are walking in the bush by themselves and find a Muraian; the Muraian will make some sort of a sound or movement, so that the

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Muraian

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old men will know what it was. No person who had not been through the initiation ceremonies, must not touch or even see a Muraian - and should an native break the Komali law, The Muraian belonging to the Komali food eaten by the uninitiated native, would at once know that the law had been broken and would punish the offender sooner or later. As an instance of the above law, A native here named Kom-boyu who did some painting for you when you were here; nearly died a little while back. I doctored him & got him well again, but he has almost lost his voice, and speaks with the voice of a small child. I have just found out that he has confessed to have broken the Komali law. Years ago, before he became initiated, he eat some yams that were Komali. Hence his great sickness and loss of voice - Another case, is of a boy (Loby) Kum-me-Kumy got a bad attack of tuberculosis, I sent him to the hospital at Darwin. On enquiry how Loby got so sick, Oh says one man, Loby broke the Komali and eat some snake + Muraian made him sick. From the above I gather that the Muraian, ~~is~~ is to impress the uninitiated with the powers of the Muraian, so that the Komali laws are kept and also to keep peace among the tribes who join in the Muraian Ceremonies - Trusting you can get something from the above
yours sincerely Paddy Cahill