



Oceanic [mythology] (The Mythology of all races)

Roland Burrage Dixon

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CONCLUSION THE sketch of the mythology of Oceania given in the preceding pages has been arranged in five main sections, each confined to one of the geographic or ethnographic areas into which the whole region is usually divided. At the end of each section we have given the general conclusions reached from a survey of the material; and these may now be briefly summarized, in order that we may gain an outline of the growth of Oceanic mythology as a whole. The oldest and most primitive stratum of mythology in Oceania is either lost to us entirely, as in the case of Tasmania, or else is unknown, since no material from the Negrito peoples of the area is as yet accessible. Of its character, affiliations, and sources, therefore, nothing can be said. Following next upon this, at least in Melanesia and Australia, is what has been called the Papuan type--still very imperfectly known and apparently quite variable in its character. With the rest of the mythology of Oceania it presents comparatively little in common except in Melanesia, where the later Melanesian stratum probably contains a considerable element derived from it. Of the sources of this Papuan type little or nothing can be said. As the Negrito and Tasmanian strata are followed by the Papuan in Melanesia and Australia, in Indonesia the Negrito is succeeded by the Indonesian layer. Unlike the Papuan, this has wide affiliations which extend, on the one hand, well into south-eastern Asia (i. e. to Assam, Burma, and Indo-China), and on the other, to Micronesia, Melanesia, and Polynesia. It is at least a plausible hypothesis that the characteristic myths of this type were spread by a wave or series of waves of people who, moving from the Asiatic mainland into Indonesia, passed thence, on the one hand, to Micronesia a...

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