

# PSYKOLOGISK SKRIFTSERIE



Nr. 8

Rolf Kuschel

## A LEXICON OF SIGNS FROM A POLYNESIAN OUTLINER ISLAND

A Description of 217 Signs as  
Developed and Used by Kagobai,  
the Only Deaf-Mute of Rennell Island

PSYKOLOGISK LABORATORIUM

Københavns Universitet

Studiestræde 6 • 1455 København K



### About the Psychological Series

The Series is a communication vehicle for researchers at the Psychological Laboratory, University of Copenhagen, with the object of providing an alternative method of publication to journal articles with the following advantages:

(1) Production time is reduced from months or years to weeks.

(2) Owing to the modest requirements for perfection in the Series, researchers can receive 'feedback' on ideas during their development, rather than waiting to present their refined and 'embalmed' results.

(3) The researcher, freed from the rigors of the periodical article with regard to quantity and content, may write coherently about problems in their complex connexions rather than dissecting them to fit editorial requirements of the periodicals.

The Series is particularly designed to meet the need of research fellows and others to document their investigations to the National Research Councils. However, we will endeavor to avoid making the Series a mere file for empirical research reports. First and foremost, papers should aim to deal with some important general viewpoint.

The drawbacks of the Series are closely related to the advantages of the periodical. These papers will enjoy narrower circulation and be considerably more difficult for others to obtain. We will attempt to remedy this by sending each number of the Series to all Scandinavian institutions engaged in psychological research or research with affinity to the topic of the paper. Moreover, each number will contain a complete list of all previously published papers in the Series.

Publication Committee

© Rolf Kuschel 1974

Psykologisk Skriftserie nr. 8

Psykologisk Laboratorium  
Københavns Universitet  
Studiestræde 6  
1455 København K

Produktion; Akademisk Forlag  
Tryk: J.J.Trykteknik A/S  
ISBN 87 500 1506 0

Rolf Kuschel

**A LEXICON OF SIGNS FROM A  
POLYNESIAN OUTLINER ISLAND**

A Description of 217 Signs as  
Developed and Used by Kagobai,  
the Only Deaf-Mute of Rennell Island

København  
1974



## Foreword

Through the history of the deaf, case studies have been made about the language development and - learning of the deaf child. The most remarkable studies which we can find as landmarks in the education of the deaf, are described by, for example, Beda Venerabilis, Pedro Ponce de Leon, Juan Pablo Bonet and Carl Michel de L'Épée. These single cases had great influence on the development of pedagogical means for the deaf and the description helped the public understand the nature of deafness and the possibility of the deaf to function as a full member of society.

The Psychological Laboratory at the University of Copenhagen has a strong tradition on phenomenological description and on the intensive study of single subjects as to their perceiving of the outer world and their contact with other persons, including the psycholinguistic problems in face to face communications. Rolf Kuschel has, in his excellent field-study on Kagobai and his self-constructed sign language, combined the tradition of the Psychological Laboratory where he is employed, with the old tradition of the work with the deaf.

In Denmark, as well as in the other Scandinavian countries there is a growing interest in the non-verbal communication, i.e. the gesticulation of hearing persons as well as the sign language of the deaf. In Copenhagen a group of researchers are working intensively in this field. Rolf Kuschel is participating in this work and his report on Kagobai will be an important part of a larger series of textbooks on gesti-

ulation, which now is being worked out theoretically as well as empirically at the Psychological Laboratory.

Rolf Kuschel has developed a method of investigation in a society where only one person is deaf. This method will also be valuable in studying the sign language of the deaf communities which exist as subcultures in most societies. Last but not least Kuschel's study can help us have a better understanding of the birth of a language and the strong connection between a language and the culture in which it has developed, even when the language is manual.

There is a lot of inspiration for anthropologists and other fieldworkers in this report. For the deaf and their organizations this report can be valuable in the work of developing new signs for the national sign language as well as for the international sign language which during many years has been developed by the World Federation of the Deaf.

Lars von der Lieth

## C O N T E N T S

Foreword by Lars von der Lieth	3
--------------------------------	---

### PART 1: INTRODUCTION

1.0	Introduction	9
1.1	Gestures and signs from Oceania as found in previous accounts	9
1.2	The deaf-mute Kagobai and his surroundings	12
1.3	Data collection	19
1.4	Aspects of Kagobai's signs	22
1.4.1	Indicative signs	23
1.4.2	Imitative signs	24
1.4.3	Symbolical signs	29
1.5	Signs inventory and culture	33
1.6	Final remarks	36
1.7	Description and arrangement of lexical entries	38

### PART 2: LEXICON OF SIGNS

2.0	217 Signs arranged alphabetically	42
-----	-----------------------------------	----

### PART 3: INDEXES, NOTES, AND REFERENCES

3.0	Index of Rennellese words referring to signs	169
4.0	Index of English words referring to signs	175
5.0	Notes	181
6.0	References	183



PART 1: I N T R O D U C T I O N

The point is that the messages  
which we exchange in gestures  
are really not the same as any  
translation of those gestures  
into words.

(Bateson, 1972)





Curr's assertion that "though communication by signs has been reported to prevail in a few tribes, the practice is exceptional, the Australian being noticeable for the little use he makes of signs or gesticulation" (Curr, 1886, Vol. I:26) was soon refuted. However the correction did not lead to a more systematic investigation of the gestures, signs, or sign languages of Australian tribes. A more copious primary material would have been helpful in deciding whether a system of signs made up a complete sign language (for the distinction between these terms see Stokoe, 1972:13).

It is characteristic of the few existing descriptions that they mainly record a number of more or less incidentally collected gestures - varying from 3 hunting signs in Curr (1886) to 213 'idea-grams' in Roth (1897) - employed by verbally communicating people as (a) a sort of lingua franca among different tribes, (b) as a means of communication during the hunt, (c) in ritual circumcision, (d) in lieu of words in specific situations like deaths, or (e) as a means of communications between a mourning woman and her fellow beings. Only one writer mentions that the signs he has observed were used in front of a mute person. In this instance a woman, of whom the author writes, "although she could hear and understand spoken Walbiri as well as anyone else, most people 'spoke' in sign language to her, as well as to each other in her presence. Being dumb the woman was regarded as being warunga, mad or abnormal; and mad people, by definition, do

## 1.0 Introduction

This publication is a presentation and discussion of 217 signs from a unique sign language created on Rennell, a Polynesian outlier island in the Solomon Islands. It is unique in that it was developed by the only deaf-mute on the island interacting effectively with his fellow islanders. According to oral traditions extending 24 generations back, the island has never before known deaf-borns or deaf-mutes, and until World War II the community had had but slight contact with the world outside, so the sign language must have arisen spontaneously, as the result of a suddenly emerged need for communication.<sup>1</sup>

## 1.1 Gestures and signs from Oceania as found in previous accounts

Despite the recently increased interest in sign language and the considerable growth in the numbers of anthropologists and linguists, only sparse data are to be found on existing sign languages in non-industrialized communities. This gap is especially noticeable in Oceania. The few available data are highly sporadic and are mainly concerned with gestures in Australian tribes as different as Arunta (Stirling, 1896; Basedow, 1925), Dieri (Howitt, 1890, 1904), Jaralde (Berndt, 1940), Murngin (Warner, 1937), Ngade (Mountford, 1938), Natives from North-West Central Queensland (Roth, 1897), Walbiri (Meggitt, 1954), Walpari (Mountford, 1950), Worora (Love, 1941), and Urunjeri (Howitt, 1890).

not always understand spoken Walbiri. Since she demonstrated her ability to use and to understand sign language, it was considered safer to keep to that medium when dealing with her" (Meggitt, 1954:4). It is interesting to note in this account, first that the natives who were able to speak communicated mutually in sign language in the presence of the mute woman, and second that mutes were regarded as abnormal and a potential danger to the community in question. The former circumstance indicates that a mode of communication existed between hearer-speakers and mute individuals, and that it was sufficiently elaborate to be practiced among the hearing-speaking people themselves. The information that the mute was considered an outsider indicates perhaps why none of the other writers mentions mute, or deaf-mute persons. These were stigmatized within their own community, and stigmatized people are unlikely to be the first to meet the stranger on a brief stay in a foreign community.

During the Cambridge Anthropological Expedition to the Torres Straits, A.C. Haddon collected 31 "signs for communication at a distance" and 3 "conversational gestures" (Haddon, 1907). A few of these, commanded by a majority of natives on the eastern islands of Torres Straits, are the same as those used by the deaf-mute Rennellese, e.g. the signs for bird, coconut, come here!, no!, and fishing.

No similar descriptions seem to appear from Melanesia or Polynesia. Guppy, who towards the end of the last century



worked diligently among the natives of the western Solomon Islands opines that "little gesticulation is used in ordinary conversation" (Guppy, 1887:126). This supposition is not immediately convincing, seeing how the various Solomon Islanders communicate in Honiara on Guadalcanal. Those Bellonese who have stayed in the capital for some length of time relate that the capital is the home of several natives from the neighboring islands who cannot hear, hence 'they talk with their hands'.

### 1.2 The deaf-mute Kagobai<sup>2</sup> and his surroundings

Many of Kagobai's signs originate in the actual behavior of the Rennellese, e.g. the way they cultivate their gardens, plant and harvest their crops, and their various ways of fishing. Other signs are imitational of characteristic animal movements. A total understanding of Kagobai's signs demands a thorough knowledge of the geographical, botanical and social conditions as well as the social values peculiar to the Rennellese community. Such descriptions already exist, and will not be repeated here (see e.g. Wolff, 1958-70; Monberg, 1960, 1962; Elbert and Monberg, 1965; Monberg, 1966; Wolff, 1969; and Christiansen, forthcoming). Whenever the understanding of a sign and its denotation demands concrete knowledge and this can be given briefly, the necessary information is entered under 'comment' right after the description of the actual sign.

Due to its isolated geographical position, its small size (Rennell is a mere 320 mi<sup>2</sup> or 825 km<sup>2</sup>), and its shortage

of easily accessible natural resources Rennell remained without appreciable contact with the outside world until the middle nineteen thirties. The South Seas Evangelical Mission's attempt, in 1910, to convert the natives totally miscarried, when the three missionaries set ashore were instantly killed by the Rennellese. For some time this event cooled ardor to christianize the natives, and religious activity was not resumed til 1934, resulting at length, four years later, in the acceptance of Seventh-day Adventism and The South Seas Evangelical Mission. A more tangible opening and establishment of contact with the world outside did not take place till some years after World War II.

In this Rennellese environment, sequestered from the surrounding world, Kagobai was born and raised. As in pre-Christian times the Rennellese are not concerned with biological age, Kagobai's year of birth cannot be exactly stated. From calculation of the age of tattoos and other memorable events, Kagobai appears to have been born about 1915( $\pm$  5 years). There is every indication that Kagobai was never able to hear or speak. According to the explanations of the Rennellese themselves the reason for this defect should be sought in his parents' violation of social and religious norms (see Kuschel, 1973). Despite his handicap Kagobai is surprisingly well integrated in the community. He is respected as an able gardener and an eminent fisherman. In accordance with Rennellese tradition he is very generous with his crops and catches. He lives alone in his hut on an islet a stone's

throw from the shore of the lake by which the village is situated. This is not necessarily a sign of isolation, but well in harmony with the traditional way of Rennellese habitation, with each family nucleus in its own dwelling place.

Kagobai's interaction with the other villagers, adults as well as children, is relatively frictionless, and the children appear not to be afraid of him. However, in one field, that of marriage, the integration is incomplete. In spite of his mature age he is still a bachelor, rare for a man of his years in the Rennellese as well as in other Polynesian communities.<sup>3</sup>

In his interaction with the other Rennellese, Kagobai employs a sign language which has been developed over the years between himself and his immediate surroundings. This creative process is the result of positive interaction between hearing-speaking companions and the non-speaking person. This intellectual feat might never have been achieved, had it not been for a sincere desire to communicate with him on the part of the vocally communicating people and a strong need on the part of the mute person to penetrate the barrier of silence and participate in what is happening around him. No sign language existed to which he might have had recourse. According to Rennellese oral traditions - a written language was introduced only after the recent establishment of contact with the outside world - for the many generations in which the Rennellese claim to have inhabited the island they have

never had among them a person who was completely unable to speak and hear. Hardness of hearing is known on the island but chiefly as 'old man's hardness of hearing', i.e. the reduced hearing that occurs with relative old age. No accounts exist of individuals born deaf or dumb, let alone both at the same time, that is until the advent of Kagobai. A survey of Kagobai's patriline (see Fig. 1) discloses that only one of its members, viz. Giusanga, his younger brother's son, suffers from reduced hearing. Turning to Kagobai's matriline, which in harmony with island tradition is recollected only a few generations back, no-one is reported to have suffered from reduced hearing or speech defects.

The credibility of oral tradition as historical authority is often questioned, with or without reason. For obvious reasons nothing conclusive can be said about the historical correctness of Rennellese and Bellonese oral traditions. It is remarkable, however, that in the few instances when Torben Monberg, my colleague, and I have been able to compare collected traditional data with material derived from Western sources, the similarities were striking. The same is true of the data we collected several years apart, from different informants with no knowledge that the other had already collected these data. One should also mention the wealth of data still preserved within living Rennellese memory, oral traditions on extremely variegated circumstances, some extending right back to the time of immigration. Among the re-

## Generation

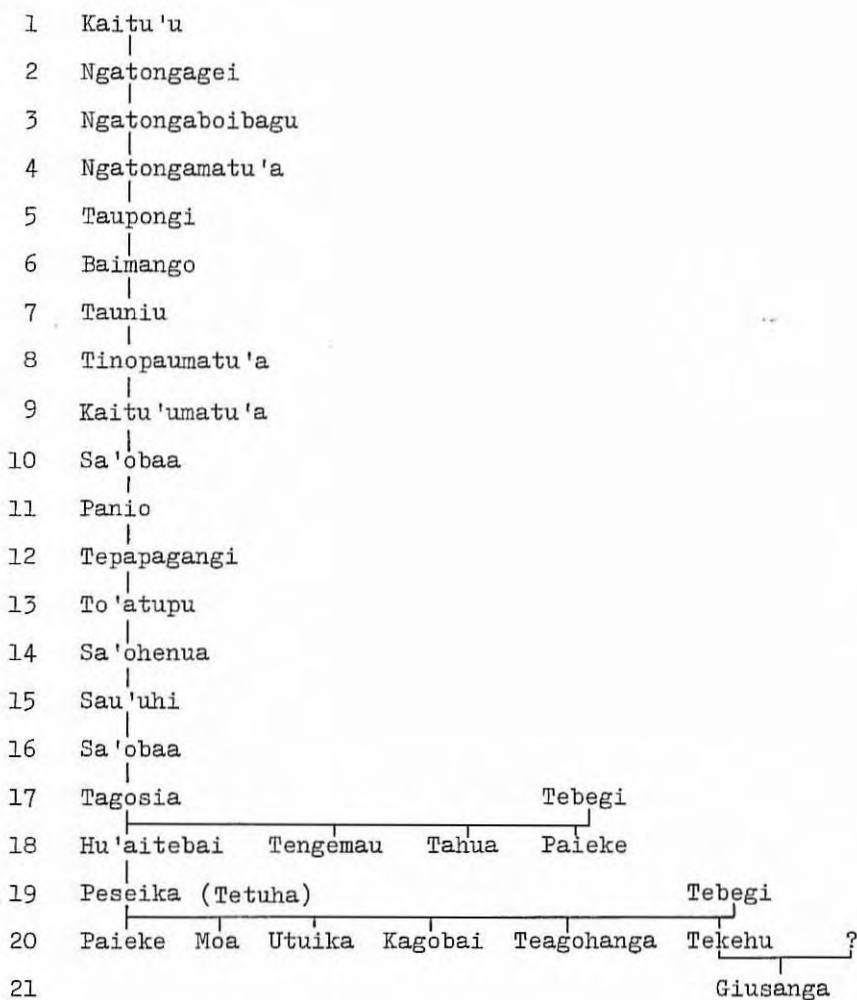


Fig. 1 Patrilineal descent of Kagobai

collected data some indeed concern men who in old age suffered from reduced hearing, but none of the many men who were interrogated remembered having heard of any other who, like Kagobai, 'spoke with his hands'. It is most likely, therefore, that the present Rennellese sign language is the first of its kind on the island.

As until 1957 Kagobai had not set foot outside of his native island and no other individual using sign language had visited the island, the Rennellese sign language has emerged and developed under no outside influence. The eight months that Kagobai spent away from the island were devoted to work on a sugar plantation on Russell Island. During this stay he acquired a few new gestures, e.g. those for money and tax. These he incorporated into his own sign language. According to the Bellonese who worked at the time on the same plantation, Kagobai was the only person there who employed sign language. Whether during his brief sojourn in Honiara on his way back to Rennell, Kagobai came into contact with other users of sign language has not been cleared up. However, on his return no-one noticed any changes in his sign language worth mentioning. Thus we seem to be faced with a genuine Polynesian language of signs, developed under no Melanesian, Western, or other influence. It apparently emerged spontaneously, as a natural consequence of a deep need to bridge a communication gap between a community of vocally communicating people and a single deaf-mute.



The singularity of the phenomenon is corroborated when one considers the linguistic terms offered by the Rennellese language to describe it. The highest degree of adequacy is found in the auditive field where the following three conceptions occur: (1) he'e hakagongo, lit., 'not hearing anything', used generally to denote a person who either does not hear what is said or who is out of ear-shot; (2) tugi, lit., 'to be hard of hearing'; (3) tugimokemoke, lit., 'to be very hard of hearing, to be deaf'. Terms relating to vocal conditions, muteness especially, are less adequate than the above mentioned. The following terms are available to denote silent people or people sparing of words: (1) he'e gea, lit., 'not speaking'; a general term used of a person who for some reason remains silent; (2) he'e muna is used to denote a taciturn, glum person; (3) tumegi refers to a person who is silent because he is ashamed. In other words, Rennellese has no specific conception equal to muteness. Nor does it have a conception for deaf-muteness, and the informants were eager to learn whether a term for Kagobai's condition was found in my mother tongue, Danish, or in English. Nor do the Rennellese have a language term for sign language. In order to describe Kagobai's method of communication they would either use the old Rennellese conception 'aaunga, originally used about arm movements in dance, or the recently fashioned conception gea i te gima, lit., 'to talk with hands'.

### 1.3 Data collection

The data were collected during two periods, from 14th to 16th March 1972 and, again, from 3rd to 4th July 1972. The first portion was collected in Kagobai's village Hutuna, at the Lake on East Rennell, while the second collection was conducted in the village of Tegano, where a large number of Rennellese, among them Kagobai, were congregated for a religious meeting. My intention was to collect a sufficient corpus of signs to be able, afterwards, to record more continuous narratives, partly the actual conversation of the deaf-mute with other people, partly a number of invented sentences. Thus I hoped to compile a usable sign lexicon and, in the process, obtain enough data for a description and analysis of the syntax and grammar of the sign language. Incidental conditions, like bad weather and limited transportation to and from the island kept me from getting beyond the collection of isolated signs torn from their original syntactical context. Only two short coherent sequences were recorded. These sign sequences along with observed but unrecorded snippets of communication between the deaf-mute and verbal communicators are evidence that the signs are used according to specific syntactic rules. To publish a more thorough description and analysis of the basic syntactic and grammatical rules has to await another stay in the field.

The following procedure was adopted in collecting the lexical data. In the vernacular I would ask Kasipa, a man of Kagobai's age from the same village, what was Kagobai's sign

for topic X. Kasipa then communicated in sign language his question to Kagobai, who, in turn, proceeded to make the sign. This was recorded in a note book and photographed (24x 36 mm black/whites except for a few in color). The following day we would repeat the entire procedure - only this time filming with super 8 mm. Thus all the signs were checked for consistency.

A total of 217 were recorded. However, I would estimate them to constitute only a modest portion of the deaf-mute's actual signs in stock. Despite the fragmentary character of the material it does with sufficient distinctness reflect the structural principles on which they were formed.

The signs were collected according to no preconceived system or list. The working principle was more or less that of free association. In most cases no sooner had I requested, and Kagobai executed, a certain sign than Kasipa himself or one of the attending villagers would encourage him to produce one of his other signs. Most of the propositions thus were within the boundaries of the subject of my original question. If, for instance, I had requested the sign for 'to fish', the others would encourage Kagobai to show me the signs for 'fish spearing', 'fishing with goggles at daytime', 'fishing with goggles at night', and 'fishing with line and hook'.

The advantage of this unstructured approach is that one becomes acquainted with culture-specific signs which one might otherwise never or not until much later encounter. Also the informant, the interpreter, and the listeners were not pestered

with too many culturally irrelevant and ethnocentric questions. On the other hand this approach is time-consuming in so far as signs strongly encoding cultural features require many explanations to be fully understood. The drawbacks of this method as opposed to the structured method of collection are that the collected data do not cover as many fields as one might have wished, a reservation that might not apply to a longer visit than mine. Another limitation in the collected material is that it consists of isolated signs rather than signs as they appear in the cultural process of communication. This involves the danger that the signs recorded are more detailed, more meticulously executed and more frequently repeated than would have been the case in the actual process of communication.

In preparing a sign lexicon it is not expedient to compile signs in accordance with linguistic concepts; you would, as it were, be putting the cart before the horse, and come up with a narrow word-to-sign translation. This would result in a distorted, often fragmentary picture of the span of connotation of the signs, for as already pointed out by Stokoe (1972) gestural signs often contain many more senses than isolated linguistic expressions. In adopting the above described approach I abandoned any pretence to confining the total range of significance of each sign.

A special difficulty in the collection of signs in foreign cultures arise from the use of interpreters. Here as in

any cross-cultural collecting of data, the investigator suffers a grave loss of information if he cannot communicate directly with the informant. The researcher of sign languages is confronted with additional difficulties since he must attempt to become acquainted with the sign as well as the verbal language of his chosen location. The latter is necessary to be able to compare the expressiveness of the sign language with that of its verbal counterpart. Only by conquering these difficulties will he learn to appreciate fully the merits of a sign language: its intrinsic dynamics, its riches of communication, its limitations, and the denotation of the unsigned, i.e. the para-signs of the sign language.

#### 1.4 Aspects of Kagobai's signs

Any degree of intimacy with Kagobai's communication with his fellow Rennellese will inevitably lead to a fascination for the expressiveness of his communication. His hands are not left alone to speak; at times his whole body is in action. One's attention is especially roused by his facial expression, as when he related how once, at night, when he was out fishing in his canoe, he suddenly saw one of the pre-Christian supernaturalists follow him. With an economy of facial expression to denote his state of mind, and a few brisk movements of his arms to denote the movements of the paddle in the water, he transmits the fear that invaded him at his nocturnal sight, and his attempt to escape his supernatural pursuer.

The spectator or the co-communicator will soon cease to watch only his hands and start contemplating his entire body in the process of decoding. Sometimes it is almost easier to decode Kagobai's signs at a little distance than when one is quite close to him. His large movements, his re-enactments and super-expressive face are reminiscent of the conception launched a couple of years ago, as "total communication".

A classification of Kagobai's signs could be made in a multitude of different ways depending upon one's intentions, e.g. whether the interest is focused on the signs themselves or upon the communicability of what they represent. In a previous article (Kuschel, 1973) I pointed out a way of classification based on immediate decipherability. In the present paper I have found it more expedient to group Kagobai's signs with due consideration for the principles of encoding, i.e. the relationship between the sign vehicle and its referent. In broad outline Kagobai employs three semiotic devices:

- (1) Indicative signs
- (2) Imitative signs
- (3) Symbolical signs

#### 1.4.1 Indicative signs

Indicative signs are signs made when Kagobai points to or simply clasps the object to which he is referring. The object referred to by pointing vary with their degree of proximity to his own body. A simple sub-classification would dis-



tinguish between the following three groups:

- (a) Kagobai touches or clasps parts of his own body. This is done in reference to Rennellese and Polynesian in general (sign 146) and especially in reference to various parts of the body such as hair of head (sign 82), mouth (sign 129) and back (sign 9).
- (b) Kagobai points to phenomena within sight, often in reference to people nearby, huts within sight, or geographical areas that clearly stand out from their surroundings such as settlements or graves.
- (c) Kagobai points with sweeping gestures to faraway phenomena, mainly geographical or astronomical. Kagobai refers to the former by pointing in their general direction as with separate settlements in a small clearing in the jungle. Astronomical phenomena like the sun are referred to by pointing to their actual or expected altitude.

Its independent function apart, pointing can enter into a combination with other signs, as e.g. in the sign for 'past' (sign 140) where Kagobai points to the horizon to denote a distant time, specifying in the second part of the sign that he is thinking of the time when people still killed one another (see symbolical signs 1.4.3. below).

#### 1.4.2 Imitative signs

An important part of Kagobai's signs have sprung from actual patterns of behavior and movement or from his observations of emotional responses in his immediate, everyday Ren-

nellese environment. The wealth of detail denoted in the imitative signs varies a great deal. Depending on the wealth of detail and the denoted characteristics encoded in the sign, the following subclassification may be made:

- (a) very detailed reproduction of an observation
- (b) reproduction of the characteristics of a phenomena or a chain of events
- (c) description of the circumference or outline of a phenomena
- (d) reproduction of facial expression.

(a) The very detailed signs are used by Kagobai to reproduce lengthy sequences of complex phenomena in such a way as to conjure up before the eyes of the spectator the actual situation in its entirety. However, I suspect Kagobai of occasionally adding extra detail to render the signs as comprehensible as possible to me, a stranger to their culture; for instance the account of the spearing of a fish contains an amusing detail illustrating how the fish is just above to escape until finally the fisherman succeeds in spearing his prey. These signs, describing a situation, are an abbreviated and digested, yet at the same time dramatic reproduction of real action. They are often concerned with animals and the way they move or are caught (see e.g. coconut crab [sign 32], sea snake [sign 161], fishing with goggles at night [sign 61], flying fox [sign 66]). In these signs the language of action finds a full outlet. The semantic gloss used to describe these signs can, but

weakly recreate what is actually contained in the sign. Should this dramatic language be rendered into words, several sentences would be needed; and the narrator would probably have to resort to the para-language of gestures to make sure of congruity between manual and oral communication.

A specific feature of several of the imitative signs is Kagobai's frequent use of concrete objects like grass, leaves, pieces of wood, coconut shells and sticks. In estimating this circumstance one should remember that these things are always found in his immediate environment. Almost always can he pick up an object from the ground or cut a twig or leaf from a plant or tree. But as shown by examples each sign can also be executed without resort to any concrete object (see e.g. 'priest-chief' [sign 148]).

Re-enactments of this kind often border on the pantomimical only they are less stylized.

(b) In the cases when Kagobai models his sign upon one or a few characteristics of the denotatum, it will frequently focus on significant trait of the phenomenon. Several of these signs refer to plants, characterised by the way in which they are harvested (see e.g. pawpaw [sign 141], and coconut [sign 31]).

The characteristics of a given phenomenon are, as we all know, subject to discussion and dependent on the cultural and social background of the spectator, his power of observation and his sensibility towards his observations. It is often obvious why Kagobai emphasized and encoded in his sign exactly

this and no other potential characteristic. Take for instance the sign for airplane (sign 4), denoted by the rotation of its propellers. Or, similarly, his sign for coconut denoted by the twisting movement executed by the person who having climbed the palm tree plucks a coconut from it. This is a most characteristic movement which cannot be misinterpreted. The reason why Kagobai chose this aspect of the coconut rather than any other is more immediately intelligible and obvious to people raised in the culture, where coconuts are plucked this way, than to the person who has never observed the phenomenon before.

The choice of focal aspect is a complicated matter. If we contemplate Kagobai's sign for woman (sign 210), a close analysis will reveal that Kagobai had other intentions with it than we might immediately expect. As in the sign languages of many communities the sign for woman is made by reference to a female attribute, the breast. Here Kagobai attaches special significance to its nursing function, thus focusing on a characteristic of the Rennellese woman who for the greater part of her fertile age will be suckling a baby. Contrarily, Kagobai's sign with its rolling movement has no implication of Westener's gestures indicative of swelling breasts as something desirable. In this connexion one should note that in the pre-Christian period a woman's bosom played no sexual part in the male-female relationship. This is a new conception inadvertantly introduced by missionaries, who by demanding that the bosom be covered aroused a certain amount of curi-

osity about it.

(c) Contour signs are such as incorporate in the sign the total outline of a phenomenon or parts thereof. A striking example of this is Kagobai's sign for hut, in which the sign construction is based on the shape of the roof. This way he differentiates between dissimilar methods of construction; e.g. the one employed in building temporary huts where two rows of sticks are stuck in the ground and tied together in pairs at the top (sign 93); again, the roof construction that is made with curved rafters (sign 94). Other examples of contour signs are the sign for drinking-water in the wood (sign 45), denoted by the circumference of the water-hole, and the sign for Bellona and other islands denoted by their more or less circular outline (sign 13).

(d) Kagobai's facial expressions alone transmit so much significance that they sometimes assume the function of signs. Phenomena primarily communicated in this way are such as refer to strong emotional states like amazement, anger, grief, and disgust. Kagobai's facial expressions are true imitations of those of his fellow Rennellese in similar situations. Their independent function apart, facial expressions are used as part of compound signs like backache (sign 10).

As a colorful master-of-signs, Kagobai also uses facial expression as a para-sign language to support the communicative function of other signs. Facial expressions as signs and facial expression as a para-sign-language can be differentiated by contemplating whether the meaning of the sign would

be communicated equally well without the use of facial expression, and whether facial expression is an incidental factor in the execution of a given sign. If both these conditions are met the facial expression is not part of the sign itself, but a redundant addition belonging to the para-sign-language.

#### 1.4.3 Symbolical signs

The collected data, in contrast with the wealth of imitative signs found among them, contain only few symbolical signs, i.e. signs which offer no external similarity between the referent, or the parts thereof to which the sign refers, and the shape or movement of the sign. I want to emphasize that we are speaking of an external similarity not experienced by the observer, for the signer himself may well experience a similarity uncommunicated to and unrealized by the spectator. Examples of symbolical signs are 'brother-sister relationship' (sign 21), marriage (sign 113), and good (sign 76).

In these signs, although Kagobai refrains from reproduction of visible facts he does not give his imagination a free rein. Most of his signs are related to basic cultural values. The sign for 'brother-sister relationship' in which the dorsal side of two index fingers face each other, is based on the socially determined avoidance behavior expected from brothers and sisters. The sign for 'marriage' -thumb and little finger protruding from fist - reflects a similar set



of social values. The thumb, the most important member of the hand, represents the more important party of a marriage, viz. the man, and vice versa. Though in the old Rennellese community the woman was certainly considered an essential factor of social and economic life, the man's supremacy was never challenged. Land was inherited only by men, and the man's religious relations determined the continuation of a family, for it was he who turned in prayer for offspring to the ancestors and the gods. Because of her social status the woman could not actively participate in the interaction within the religious realm. Nor was her biological part crucial; for the Rennellese knew nothing of the connexion between coitus and conception (see Monberg, in press).

It is only in comparison with the man that the importance of the woman is 'reduced' to that of the little finger. In her capacity as a 'mother' she is invested with the importance represented by the thumb.

To the outsider, someone who was not raised within this culture, several of the symbolical signs are not immediately decipherable. Often the decoding and real appreciation is possible only after a lengthy explanation from one or several of the natives.

To be able to create strikingly precise symbolical signs like these their creator must have been equipped with not only sharp power of observation and vivid imagination, but an intimate knowledge of his environment: his creativeness must have been matched by exquisite sensitivity.

Several signs consist of two or more constituents as e.g. the sign for 'past' (sign 140), made up partly of a vague denomination of time (pointing towards the horizon), partly of a specification of time, viz. the time when people still killed people.

Other signs, like the name sign for the American anthropologist Gordon Macgregor, are combinations of three signs (see below). Only when more substantial evidence has been collected can it be revealed whether communicationally rather rare phenomena are denoted by a combination of several signs. However, an interesting detail may be noted in contemplating Kagobai's name signs for Rennellese and non-Rennellese. As will appear from the table below his name signs for the Rennellese are shorter than those for the non-Rennellese. Five of the six Rennellese are denoted with a single movement, a single sign. Only one person, Tebegi, is denoted by two signs. None of the listed non-Rennellese are described with less than two signs, two of them even with three signs.

<u>Sign refers to:</u>	<u>Personal name:</u>	<u>Sign number:</u>
1) Tattoo on upper arm	Aaron Taupongi	1
2) Tattoo on buttock	Peseika	55
3) Tattoo on back of knee and thigh	Tebegi	188
4) Hard of hearing	Giusanga	72

5) Mark on right ankle	? (Kasipa's son)	174
6) Extraction of tooth	Moa	20
7) Baldness, thick stomach	S.M.Lambert	102
8) Tattoo on upper arm (=Aaron Taupongi), loincloth	Ian Hogbin	87
9) Sounding board, dancing, camera	Gordon Macgregor	109
10) Faraway, long nose (=white man), cigarette smoking	Rolf Kuschel	101

The amount of reduplication in a movement seems incidental to Kagobai's sign language in contrast to what is often the case in more formalized sign language in which reduplication signifies a change in meaning. Reduplication occurs frequently, but has not been observed to change the meaning of the sign. On the other hand, the intensity in the execution of a sign is relevant to communication in expressing emphasis.

Theoretically, every one of Kagobai's signs can be executed with the right or the left hand alike - unless both hands are necessary in executing it. A comparison of identical signs executed on two successive days was carried out. On the first day the informant was sitting down, on the other

standing up, and it appeared that the position of the body in the moment of signing was an essential determinant in the choice of hand for the sign execution. Not only, however, was it a question of sitting or standing, but equally of the position of the signer in relation to his partners in communication.

As mentioned earlier the above classification of Kago-bai's signs, based on the relationship between the manual sign and its referent, is only one of a host of possible methods of classification. A classification might have been made according to subject, such as fauna, flora, emotion, time, kinship, etc. with special regard to the structural characteristics of each group. Thus, one might have empirically tested the validity of Schlesinger's observation, "that the same elements appear in groups of signs whose meanings have something in common" (Schlesinger, no date). A classification according to subject contains, however, a number of unresolved problems, for on what taxonomical points of view should the grouping be based, that of the user or that of the collector of signs ?

### 1.5 Sign Inventory and culture

The close relationship between the sign inventory and the Rennellese culture is a characteristic of the Rennellese sign language. A distinction made in everyday Rennellese life will often be reflected in the signs. Similarly, phenomena which play no prominent part in the Rennellese culture, are

correspondingly insignificant in the signs. Cases in point are:

(a) Habitation plays a prominent part on Rennell Island. It does matter whether one lives in a hut made of palm leaves, a hut with or without curved, vertical rafters. It is a laborious task to build a hut with curved, vertical rafters. Such a hut is rarer and considered more prestigious than an ordinary hut with lashed rafters. Kagobai uses three distinctive signs for the three kinds of hut (see sign 93, 94, and 95).

(b) The Rennellese are intimately acquainted with animal life on their island, and most of the animals are known by specific vernacular names. Looking at Kagobai's signs, he, too, differentiates between many different animals, especially fish.

(c) A remarkable congruity is found between existing verbal time denominations and Kagobai's corresponding signs. Unlike the custom in many Euro-American sign languages, Kagobai denotes the past as a phenomenon in front of the body. Semantically the Rennellese clearly distinguish between what lies in front (mu'a) and behind (mugi) a person. They will say that one person walks in front of the other, that one event took place before the other. But genealogically speaking they will refer to their ancestors as 'atu mu'a (lit., generations before), and to descendants as 'atu ki mugi (lit., generations later). In other words, linguistically they refer to the gene-

alogical past, the ancestors, as something before or in front, whereas the genealogical future, descendants, linguistically are referred to as something later or behind.

(d) In the old Rennellese culture a distinct ban on brother-sister relationship was enforced. This held good whether they were biologically, or merely classified as, brother and sister. The avoidance behavior was enforced as soon as one of the parties had reached sexual maturity, and started wearing a loin-cloth. Grown up brothers and sisters must no longer address each other by their ordinary names, but use some other names, frequently honorific, in addressing each other. They must never be alone together inside or outside the settlement. They must not be over-colloquial in conversation. Whenever they met on the path the woman would scurry into the dense jungle vegetation in order that her brother might pass. Kagobai has incorporated this complex avoidance behavior in his sign for brother-sister relationship: extended index finger of both fists are held in such a position that they turn their 'back' towards each other (see sign 21).

(e) Other similar signs as mentioned under (d) are the aforementioned signs for marriage (see sign 113 and page 27 to 28), woman (sign 210), priest-chief (sign 148), and assistant to priest-chief (sign 8).



(f) Color never played a prominent part in the Rennellese culture, be it in connexion with everyday phenomena like clothing, ornaments, mats, bags, or (apart from turmeric) in connexion with religious ceremonies (Kuschel and Monberg, 1974). Nor does it influence the description of flamboyant tropical fish or the development stages of plants. Color concepts occur with striking rarity in the more than 500 to 600 myths and stories collected by Elbert and Monberg (1965) and Kuschel (forthcoming). What then about Kagobai? Does he have signs for color? The answer is negative in that he can denote color neither directly nor indirectly. Nor does he need to.

The connexion between culturally significant/insignificant phenomena and the sign language is impressively close as shown by the few examples above. It is, however, not total, for areas of essential cultural significance with sharp linguistic distinctions exist between which Kagobai's sign language does not really differentiate, viz. the fields of kinship and flora. The reasons for this cannot yet be expounded.

### 1.6 Final remarks

Kagobai must have felt an irresistible need to acquire knowledge and comprehension of the world to which he was born, and an immanent wish to communicate with his fellow beings must have played a crucial part in his attempts to conceptualize and 'translate' his experiences to a manual code. The

same goes for the people surrounding him, with whom he tried to communicate.

Through pointing, imitation and abstraction, through reconstruction and re-creation Kagobai has translated natural as well as social phenomena into an often extremely precise code, which for the main part can be immediately decoded by a plurality of individuals across geographical and cultural borders (see Kuschel, 1973).

We know nothing about the development of the general class of systems called sign language. In Kagobai's language the number of signs referring more or less directly to the referent either by pointing or by imitation, is large compared with the number of signs referring to the denotatum through a symbolical sign. This may indicate that a plurality of sign users in frequent interaction is needed to bring about a simplification of the signs, to relieve them of the redundancy typical of several of the imitative signs, and to create a larger number of symbolical signs. Possibly this process cannot really take place till after several generations of sign language users.

This is not to say that symbolical signs must be developed from imitative signs. Some, of course, may derive this way, while others may originally be coded in an abstract form. Despite the fact that we know nothing about the development of sign language there would seem to be natural limits to its creation by a single sign language user among 1200 vocal communicators.

### 1.7 Description and arrangement of the lexical entries

I have placed emphasis, in my treatment, upon a verbal cum photographic description. The shortcomings of photographs in reproduction of three-dimensional movements have often enough been emphasized by sign language researchers (Schlesinger, 1970, Saitz & Cervenka, 1972). Why then the use of photographs in the present publication? For the simple reason that they are intended as a supplement to the verbal description. Photographs can visualize a given movement or a facial expression at a given moment of its execution. Photographs can carry information and cues which a verbal description can transmit only with difficulty and a profusion of words.

In the following pages the collected data are described according to some or all of these six categories:

- (1) English gloss(es)
- (2) Rennellese gloss(es)
- (3) Denotation of sign
- (4) Description of sign
- (5) Variant of sign
- (6) Comment, inclusive cross-references.

(1) For each sign I have attempted to give an English gloss as close to the central idea of the sign as possible. The result is tentative in that it was often difficult to find semantic labels that comprised all the aspects included in the sign. Several Rennellese signs refer to Rennellese

cultural phenomena with no English counterpart, resulting in linguistic inequivalence between Rennellese and English (see sign for person of importance, hakahua, or the sign for second priest-chief, haihenua).

(2) Right after the English gloss(es) the Rennellese gloss has been given in parenthesis to facilitate comparison of the significance attached to the Rennellese linguistic term with the contents of the sign. A further aid in this will be Elbert's Dictionary of the Language of Rennell and Bellona (Elbert, forthcoming[a]).

(3) The meaning behind a sign will be given to facilitate full understanding. Intimacy with what a sign is intended to express or imitate, will frequently facilitate the understanding, reproduction and retention of the sign. I do not know the denotation of every sign, because (a) I occasionally forgot to enquire and (b) the Rennellese informants were sometimes rather vague on this point.

(4) Each sign was, as far as possible, described according to the four classical principles, (a) the sign's spatial position, i.e. in front of body, behind of body, (b) the specific configuration of the executing extremity (arm, hand, fingers), (c) the movements of the body or its parts, and (d) facial and bodily expressions. A few signs are composed of clearly demarcated movements, often because it was composed of several different signs. In these cases I have adopted the terminology 'first position', 'second position', or even 'third position'.

(5) In the cases in which a sign differs in execution in the first and second recording, the variation is described under this point.

(6) A number of signs are based on imitation of specific cultural patterns of behavior or focus on conditions which are not immediately understandable to a person who was not raised in the same culture (cf. Kagobai's focusing on the avoidance relationship between brother and sister). Whenever I have deemed it necessary to facilitate the appreciation of the character of a sign, the supplementary information is given under this item.

Cross-references to other signs are given whenever it may be relevant to refer to signs which either in contents or structure bear relation to the described sign.



Any attempt to redo Kagobai's signs, to translate the verbal description into movement, should aim at reproducing them as naturally as possible with regard to position of the body in the moment of sign execution.

PART 2: L E X I C O N   O F   S I G N S

217 Signs Arranged Alphabetically

## 1. AARON TAUPONGI, FORMER 'CHIEF' ON RENNELL

Denotation: Tattooing on left forearm.

Sign: Right index finger, extended from fist, touches dorsal side of left forearm just underneath the elbow.

Comment: Aaron Taupongi had some tattooing stripes on his arms.

2. AFTERNOON, EARLY (ga'aa page)

Denotation: Points towards altitude of sun.

Sign: Right extended index finger points south-south-west.

Comment: See also morning, early (sign 123); morning (sign 122); midday (sign 113); afternoon, late (sign 3); and evening, early (sign 52).

3. AFTERNOON, LATE (ahiahi)

Denotation: Points towards altitude and azimuth of sun.

Sign: Right extended index finger points towards west.

Comment: See also afternoon, early (sign 2).





4. AIRPLANE (bakagege, lit., flying vehicle)

Denotation: Airplane's rotating propellers.

Sign: Arms held on each side of body; forearms lifted up in nearly vertical position above head; palms facing away from signer. Hands lightly cupped and



fingers spread. Wrist performs rapid, oscillating movements. Face in normal position, eyes widened; mouth moves as imitating noise of the airplane's engine.

Variation: Hands perform same movement but are held on each side of body at chest level.

Comment: See also engine (sign 50)

5. ANGRY; COMPLAIN ('ika'ika; hakatangi)

Denotation: To look angry or upset.

Sign: Glowers at an imaginary person while vigorously moving protruded lips.

6. ANT (goo)

Denotation: Ant crawling down a person's arm.

Sign: Left arm lightly bend in front of body.

Right hand's crooked fingers are, in an itching movement, pulled up and

down left forearm. Teeth slightly bared; eyebrows lowered (=face showing irritation).

Variation: Right and left hands change roles.

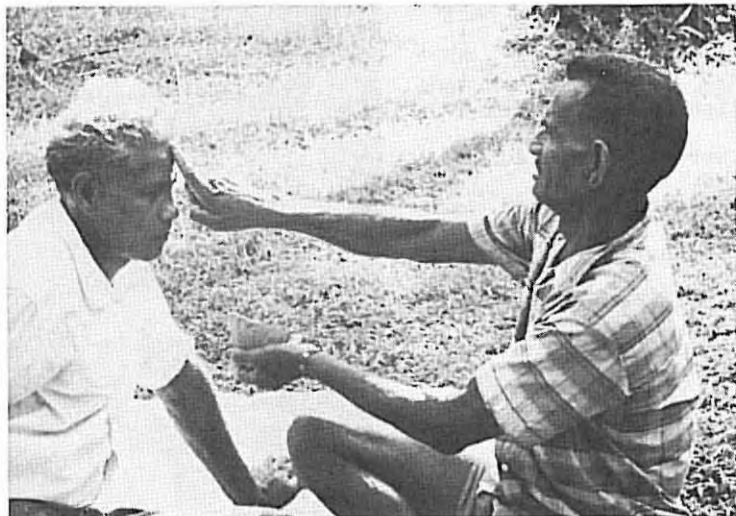
7. ARM (gima)

Sign: Moves right hand up and down left arm, especially left forearm.

8. ASSISTANT TO PRIEST-CHIEF (baka'atua)

Denotation: Anointing turmeric on forehead of the assistant to priest-chief; the sign for a person occupying this office.

Sign: Right hand stretched out in front of body at shoulder level; extended index finger touches a nearby sitting person's forehead and moves down to the root of the nose.



Variation: If half a coconut shell or a piece of coconut shell is available (which nearly always is the case) Kagobai picks up the coconut shell piece with left hand and dips his right index finger into its concave part before touching the other person's forehead.

Comment: Turmeric was prepared and kept in coconut shell containers.

9. BACK (tu'a)

Sign: Pats his back with right hand's palm.

10. BACKACHE (masaki tu'a)

Sign: Supports back with right hand and leans a little backwards. Lips widened, showing clenched teeth. Eyebrows lowered (=expression of pain).

11. BANANA (huti)

Denotation: Pressing banana skin apart.

Sign: Both fists with ulnar side downwards are held close together in front of body at chest level. Both fists turn away from each other using fingers second joints as turning points. The joints of both hands constantly touch each other during the movement which stops when knuckles touch each other.

Comment: Rennellese usually do not peel bananas the way most Europeans do. The Rennellese hold with both hands the banana between the thumbs and the index fingers. Both thumbs are on top of banana while index fingers are

held underneath banana. While pressing thumbs in opposite directions the banana skin splits and the banana can be taken out.

12. BEGGAR, MOOCHER (pegea  
hakaene)

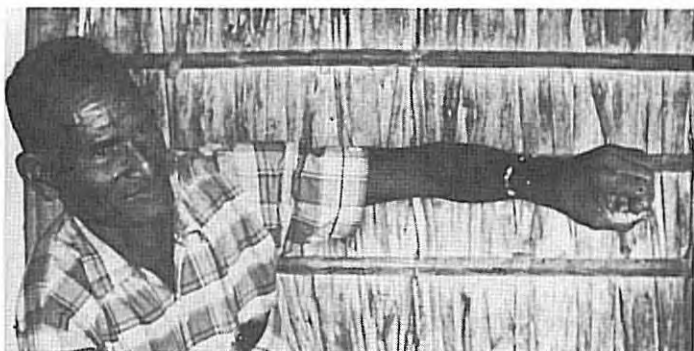
Denotation: The common gesture for asking or begging.

Sign: Right upper arm is kept close to right side of body; forearm at a right angle to upper arm is extended in front of body. Hand slants downwards. Palm faces upwards; fingers lightly spread. Head leans lightly towards left shrugged shoulder.

Comment: To ask for something directly is considered very rude on Rennell and Bellona. If somebody wants to get something from another person, it is always communicated through a third person. The only time I ever saw the begging gesture (like the sign described above) was during a famine on Bellona Island in 1972.



13. BELLONA ISLAND; SMALL ISLETS IN GENERAL (Mugiki; motu)  
Denotation: Something small with an oblong or circular shape.



Sign: Left arm held in front of body, lightly bent. Radial side of hand faces away from signer; palm face downwards. Fingers in adjacent, curved position; thumb and index finger touch each other at fingertips forming an oblong opening.

Comment: Bellona, neighbouring island to Rennell, has an oblong shape and is approximately 7 miles long and 11/2 miles wide at the widest part.

14. BIBLE; BOOKS IN GENERAL (Baibolo; buka, Engl. loanwords)  
Denotation: Turning over the leaves of a book.  
Sign: Left hand held in front of body at waist level; ulnar side facing downwards. Fingers adjacent and extended. Right hand's fist placed into left hand's palm

in such a way that both hands thumbs are hold fairly close and nearly parallel to each other. Right hand is twisted at wrist in such a way that right hand's knuckles touch at left hand's first finger joints at the volar side. This twisting movement is repeated several times.

Comment: The Bible was for a long time the first and only book most Rennellese ever had in their hands. The sign for Bible has become a more generalized term, now denoting every book.



15. BIG, LARGE (hua 'eha)





Sign: Both hands, with ulnar side facing downwards, are held in front of body. Palms are facing each other and held at a distance of about half a meter.

16. BIRD (manu gege, lit. flying animal)

Denotation: Flapping of birds' wings.



Sign: Both arms raised to shoulder level on each side of body; angularly flexed at elbow. Palm faces ground; Both hands' fingers lightly bent and held close to each other. Arms and hands are repeatedly moved up and down on each side of body.

17. BLIND PERSON (pegea kibi)

Sign: Closes eyes; blink before opening them again.

18. BODY (tino)

Sign: Both palms are in a smooth way moved up and down on both sides of body; from the lowest ribbons to the chest and back again.

19. BREAST, FEMALE (bai uu)

Sign: Right hand grasps right breast and makes an everting movement downwards. Upper part of body bends at the same time lightly forwards.

Comment: For a discussion of this sign see page 27; see also woman (sign 210).



20. BROTHER, CLASSIFICATORY, ELDER THAN SIGNER/SPEAKER  
(ta'okete)

Denotation: Tooth-drawing.

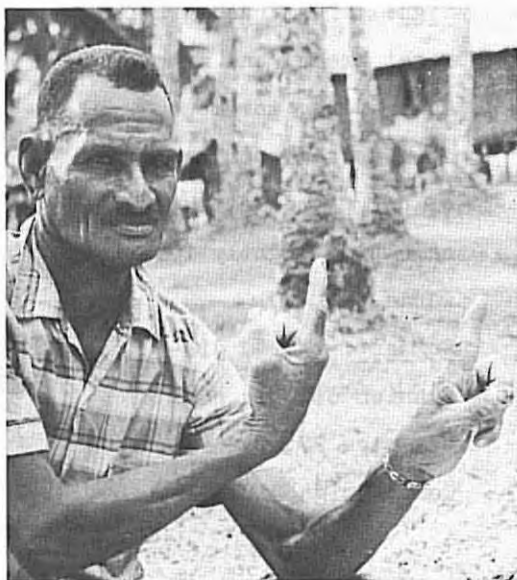
Sign: Head lightly bent backwards; mouth opened. Index finger and thumb of right hand grasp one of the teeth and pulles it in a jerking manner away from mouth.

Comment: Kagobai's elder brother, Moa, had one of his teeth extracted by a white man about 1945.

21. BROTHER-SISTER RELATIONSHIP (tau tuhahine)

Denotation: Ren-  
nellese brother-  
sister avoidance.

Sign: Index  
fingers of both  
hands are verti-  
cally extended  
in front of body.  
Wrist crossed so  
that index fingers  
are held back to  
back (nail to  
nail) at a dis-



tance of three to four inches. Other fingers are tightly kept in fist position.

Variation: The crossing of the arms sometimes takes place at middle of forearms.

Comment: The sign clearly encodes the pre-Christian avoidance behavior between sister and brother. For a more detailed discussion of the sign see page 35. See also in-laws (sign 96).

22. BUTTOCK (hakasapa)

Sign: Right hand  
slaps right but-  
tock.



23. CALM SEA (moana magino)

Denotation: a smooth sea.



Sign: Left forearm lightly bent in front of body; palm faces upward; fingers juxtaposed. Right hand's palm, facing palm of left hand, is at a distance of a few inches moved parallel above left hand. The smooth movement is repeatedly done between fingertips and wrist.

24. CANOE WITH OUTRIGGER; LARGE CANOE, AS USED FOR FISHING FLYING FISH (baka hakaama; baka 'eha)

Denotation: A person paddling a canoe on right and left.

Sign: Imitates paddle strokes over starboard; then imitates movement of paddle strokes over port. Number of strokes on each side may vary.

Comment: According to Hoffmann (1895:948) an Indian tribe at the Mississippi River uses the same sign to indicate any kind of boat.

25. CARDINAL HONEY EATER (baghigho)

Denotation: Catching a cardinal honey eater with a large net, attracting the bird by sound imitation.

Sign: Right arm, bent at elbow and in front of body holds a stick into the air in an almost vertical position. Left hand's palm moves to and fro in front of mouth (=imitating hunters enticing of birds).

Comment: See photo on next page.

Cardinal honey eater, see  
text on previous page.



26. CAT (pusikati, Eng.)

Denotation: Cat catching  
a rat.

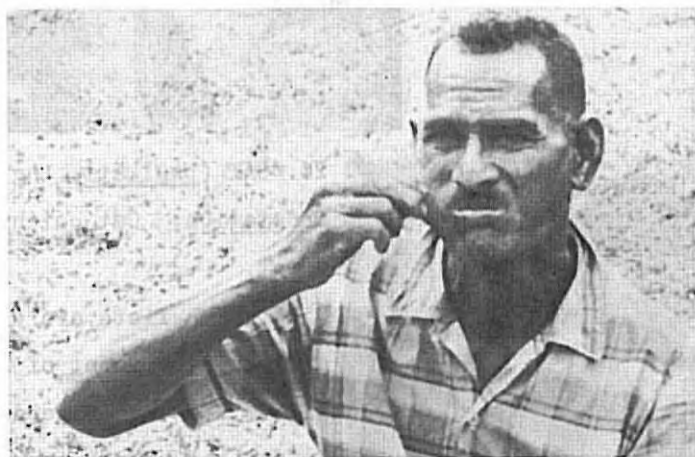
Sign: Both fists are placed  
on ground in front of body.  
With a fast and vigorous  
jump right hand (=the cat)  
grasps left hand (=the rat).

27. CATCHING LOBSTER IN A KUPENGA NET (hai 'uga i te kupenga)

Sign: Right hand holds a stick in front of body; far end of stick points towards ground. Left hand placed on ground on left side of body. Fingers spread and curved so only fingertips touch ground. The far end of stick is in a slow and smooth movement led in between left hand's index and second finger, and thus left hand is lifted up from ground.

28. CHEEK (siku ngutu)

Sign: Right hand's thumb, first- and second finger grasp right air-filled cheek.





29. CHICKEN, HEN (paolo)

Sign: (in sitting position) Fingers of right hand are split in two parts, one consisting of thumb and index finger and the other three fingers making up the other part. These two groups of fingers (=chicken's legs) are moved back and forth on ground.



Variation: (in standing position) Upper part of body lightly sloped; arms and hands hang flabbily down on each side of body. Feet shuffle around at random.

30. CHILDREN (tamagiki)

Denotation: Something small.

Sign: Left arm flexed at elbow; forearm turning upwards. Little finger protrudes from fist at eye level.

Variation: Right hand's little finger extended instead of left hand's.



31. COCONUT (polo)

Denotation: Twisting off a coconut from its stalk.

Sign: Right arm diagonally stretched out above right side of head. Hand cup-formed; palm facing upwards. Fingers spread. Hand makes rapid, oscillating movements round wrist.

Comment: Rennellese take coconuts down from the palm in the following way: when reaching the crown of the palm the climber stretches out his arm, grasps a coconut and twists it around until it gets loose and falls to the ground. When this sign is shown to Europeans they often think it means 'to screw in a bulb'. The twisting off a nut from its stalk as a sign for coconut has been reported to exist among the Eastern Islanders of the Torres Strait, too (Haddon, 1907).

32. COCONUT CRAB (akui)

Denotation: The catching of a coconut crab.

Sign: (1. position) Left hand cupped (=coconut crab); fingers spread, fingertips touching ground. Right arm, lightly bent and fingers juxtaposed, with a sudden, rapid movement catches hold of left hand's back. (2. position) Right hand loosens the grip, assumes a cupped shape and moves slowly to top of left hand's wrist. Left hand at the same time turns around (palm upwards), fingers are spread and wriggle (=claws of coconut crab).

(3. position) Right hand's thumb and index finger hold left hand's thumb and little finger together and with a sudden movement the right hand makes a rotation around left hand's thumb and little finger (=tying a piece of rope around dangerous claws). During this last movement left hand's first-, second-, and third fingertips are pointing upwards.

Comment: The hunter grasps the coconut crab by its back, lifts it up from the ground and at the same time turns the crab upside down. With the other hand the hunter ties a piece of rope or bark around the dangerous claws.<sup>5</sup>

33. COME! (a'u!)

Sign: At shoulder level right arm extends in front of body in a slightly curved way. Hand is bent at wrist, fingertips pointing downwards. From this position the arm is pulled towards body several times.

Variation: Same hand position and movement except for the hand which is flexed in the opposite direction, palm facing upwards. This is rare, probably an imitation of white man's gesture.

Comment: This sign is identical with the gesture used by speaking and hearing Rennellese and Bellonese when asking someone faraway, especially children, to come. The pronating position of the hand for 'come' seems to

be fairly common among Mediterranean and Near East peoples (see Quedenfeldt, 1890; and Müller, 1939), as well as among Melanesians (Guppy, 1887), and the Eastern Islanders of the Torres Strait (Haddon, 1907).

34. COOKHOUSE (paito)

Denotation: Outline of cookhouse's roof; blowing at ember in order to light a fire.



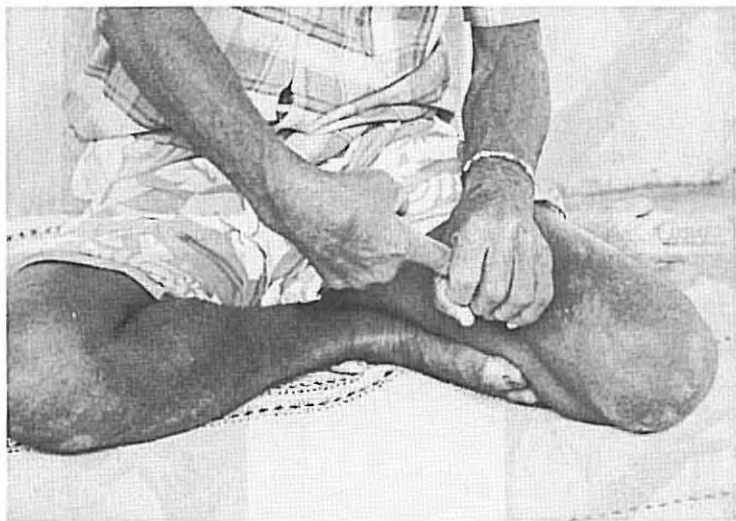
Sign: Each hand's thumb and little finger are held inside palm, touching each other. Fingertips of right hand's first-, second-, and third finger touch fingertips of left hand's first-, second-, and third finger in such a way that both hands, which are held in front of face, form the two side of a triangle (=cooking house). The signer blows air through the 'triangle' at wrist level.

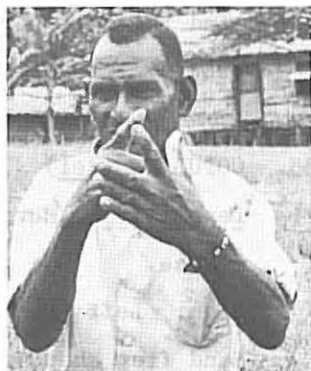
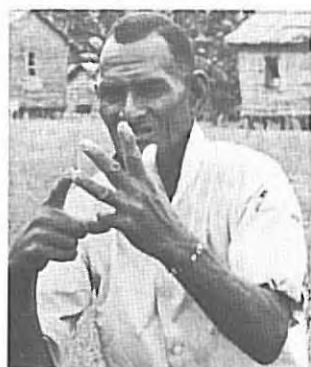
Comment: The cookhouse is an isolated hut placed behind the hut used for living. In old days fire was never brought into a hut used for living.

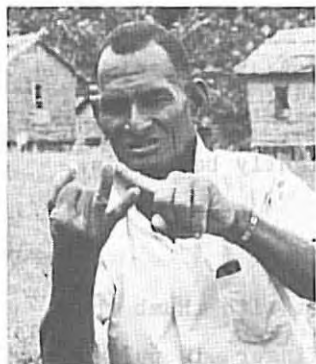
35. COPULATE ('ei)

Denotation: Movement of genitals during sexual intercourse.

Sign: Left arm held in front of body; lightly flexed. Hand fist shaped in such a way that an opening appears in ulnar-radial direction. Protruded indexfinger from fight hand's fist is inserted into left hand's opening and moved to and fro.



36. COUNT (tau)One (tasi)Two (gua)Three(togu)Four (haa)Five (gima)Six (ono)



Seven (hitu)



Eight (bagu)



Nine (iba)



Ten (katoa)



Eleven (katoa ma tasi)



Thirteen (katoa ma togu)



ONE (tasi)

Sign: Both arms in front of body, lightly flexed at elbows. Left hand's fingers extended; palm facing and opposite chest. Right hand's index finger touches left hand's thumb; pressing it slightly backwards.

TWO (gua)

Sign: Left hand clenched into fist with thumb the only extended finger. Left index finger is pulled out into extended position by right hand's thumb and index finger.

THREE (togu)

Sign: Start position same as final position in two. This time second finger is extended by right thumb and index finger.

FOUR (haa)

Sign: Start position same as final position in three. Third finger extends when touched by right hand's index finger.

FIVE (gima)

Sign: Start position same as final position in four. Left hand's little finger extends when touched by right hand's index finger.

SIX (ono)

Sign: Right hand clenched into fist. Left hand's index finger touches right hand's little finger which extends.

SEVEN (hitu)

Sign: Start position same as final position in six. Right hand's third finger extends when touched by left hand's index finger.

EIGHT (bagu)

Sign: Start position same as final position in seven. Right hand's second finger is pulled out by left hand's index finger and thumb.

NINE (iba)

Sign: Start position same as final position in eight. Right hand's index finger is pulled out by left hand's thumb and index finger.

TEN (katoa)

Sign: Start position same as final position in nine. Right hand's thumb is pulled out by left hand's thumb and index finger.

ELEVEN (katoa ma tasi)

Sign: Both hands fist held in front of body at chest level. Forearms in supinated position. Thumb and right hand protruded.

THIRTEEN (katoa ma togu)

Sign: Start position same as final position in eleven. Right hand's thumb, first- and second finger extended.

Variation: Ten can also be shown as two clenched fists, palm upwards, the two hands ulnar sides laying close to each other. A multiplum of ten is shown by pulling the two fists apart and bumping the two ulnar sides into each other. Every time this is done it equals ten.

Comment: The only time Kagobai showed any kind of uneasiness was during the counting session. It was obvious he felt uncertain for one reason or another.

Kasipa, the sign interpreter, had to help Kagobai several times during this performance. It seemed as if counting did not interest the signer too much; this is in accordance with the old culture where one hardly ever counted in such an abstract way as one does in western societies. Rennellese and Bellonese had a very elaborate and complex counting system existing of ten subsystems (see Elbert, forthcoming [b]). More research is needed to fully understand Kagobai's counting device.

37. CRUSH STONES (tigi na hatu)

Denotation: Crushing a stone with back of an axe or with another stone.

Sign: Left hand is hold in front of body at waist level. Arm flexed at elbow. Hand cupformed; fingertips point upwards. Right hand's index finger protrudes from fist

and in a short, rapid movement, starting about elbow, is led to left hand's fingertips. If fingertips spread apart it is an indication that the stone has been smashed if not the stone has resisted the blow, and the movement is repeated.



38. CRAZY (uguhia)



Sign: Head lightly stooped. Radial side of hands face forehead. Both hands perform rapid circular-like movements in front of face, especially forehead; left hand moves clockwise; right hand moves counterclockwise.

39. CROWD; MANY PEOPLE ('api pegea)

Sign: Right hand moves clockwise in the horizontal plane in front of body, describing a circular movement.

40. DEAD PERSON (pegea mate)

Denotation: A stiff corpse.

Sign: Body leaned backwards, hands falling at each side of body. Eyes stare immovable into the air.



41. DEFECATE, AS ONE HAVING DIARRHEA (kolikoli)

Sign: Right hand placed on buttock. Teeth clenched and forehead wringled.

42. DISLIKE, DISGUST, AVERSION (baaisaisa)

Denotation: "Keep the disgusting object away from me!"

Sign: In a sharp vigorous motion left arm is pushed away from body in a slanting downwards position to the left side. Hand is raised in an upright position; fingers juxtaposed; fingertips pointing upwards; palm turned away from signer. At the same time head turns to the right, lips purse up and nose gets wrinkled.

Variation: Right arm extends from body; head turns to the left. Otherwise same facial expression.

Comment: Apart from the hand movement, similar facial expressions are used by other Rennellese and Bellonese as an expression of something bad or revolting. Once, while I worked on food taboos on Bellona, I asked some informants if they had ever thought of eating a snake. In their immediate reaction to my question the Bellonese who regard snakes with utter disgust, made a grimace reflecting loathsomeness which was similar to that used by Kagobai. See also nauseated (sign 130).

43. DOG (tokitoki)

Denotation: Barking dog.

Sign: (Sitting position) Upper part of body leaned forwards, hands rest in lap. Mouth makes rapid movements.

(Standing position)

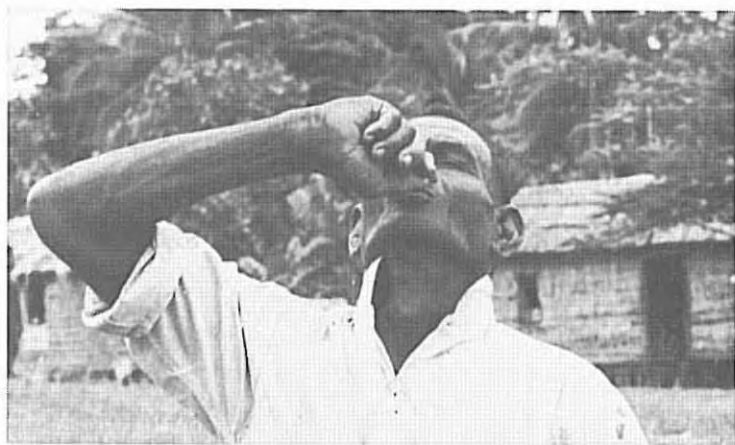
Upper part of body

bent heavily forwards; arm dangle on each side of body.

Legs make short jumping movements. Mouth makes rapid movements.

44. DRINK (binu)

Denotation: Drinking liquid out of a container.





Sign: Right hand, shaped as a funnel, is set to lips; head bend backwards.

45. DRINKING-WATER, AS IN POOLS IN THE BUSH (bai mouku, lit., water from bush)

Denotation: Sign describes circumference of a cavity in the ground where drinking-water is found.

Sign: Right hand's index finger points to the ground and makes a circular movement in front of body. Swallowing movement made with throat.



46. EAR (taginga)

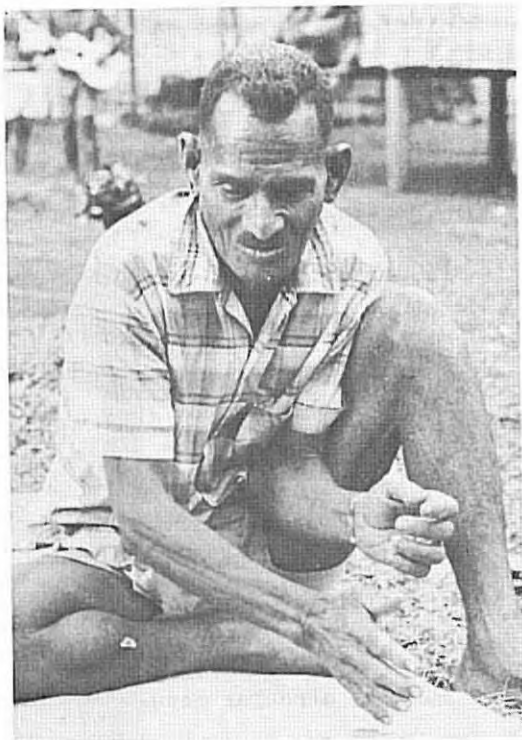
Sign: Thumb and index-finger of right ear grasps upper part of right ear.



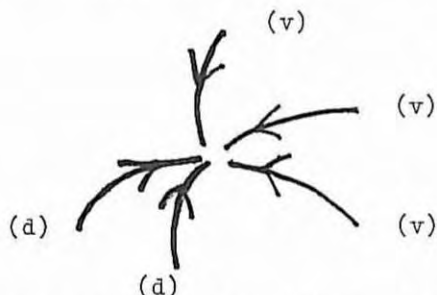
## 47. EARTH OVEN ('umu)

Denotation: Showing earth to the edge of a prepared, circular earth oven.

Sign: Right arm extended in front of body; lightly sloping downwards. Fingers extended, ulnar side facing ground. Hand shoved towards an imaginary



center (=earth oven). As indicated by the rough sketch below sometimes back of hand is facing the imaginary center, sometimes front of hand.



Sketch of hand movements; (d)=dorsal side facing centre; (v)=volar side facing centre during movement.

48. EEL (upo)

Denotation: Eel emerging from jutting corals underneath the water.

Sign: Left arm bent in front of body so forearm parallel to chest in horizontal plane; palm facing ground. Extended fingers of right hand move slowly up radial side of left forearm, across dorsal side and a very short way down

left forearm's ulnar side. From here it returns the same way it had come. During the whole movement fingers of right hand move from side to side (=as to search or watch out for something).

Variation: Left arm held as above apart from palm now facing signer instead of ground. Right forearm, fingers of hand extended and juxtaposed, slowly glides through left hand's index finger and thumb. Hand moves in a slanting upward way. Suddenly right arm with a jerk is withdrawn to starting position.



Comment: This is a very close imitation of an eel's actual movement: cautiously it leaves the safe coral slabs but retracts immediately at any noise or sudden movement in the water.

49. ENEMY (makau)

Denotation: Scolding people.

Sign: Upper part of body leans back; head moves to and fro while mouth moves quickly (=scolding an imaginary counterpart).



50. ENGINE; OUTBOARD MOTOR (engini, Engl. loanword)

Denotation: Rotation of screw or propeller.

Sign: Upper part of right arm raised at shoulder level on right side of body. Forearm, angular bent at elbow, extended in front of body. Hand lightly cupped, fingers spread. Wrist makes rapid oscillating movements.

Comment: An engine is sometimes called sikola, derived from Sea Gull, a brand name. See also airplane (sign 4).

51. ENVY ('ita)

Sign: Turns face away from person or object with a contemptuous smile.



52. EVENING, EARLY (poo)

Denotation: Sleeping time.

Sign: Upper part of body leans backwards to the right. Right hand supports right side of head.

Comment: See sign for sleep (sign 170).



53. EYE (mata)

Sign: Head a little bit stooping; eyes closed. Thumb and index finger of left hand touch each one of the eyelids.

54. FAST (ghali)

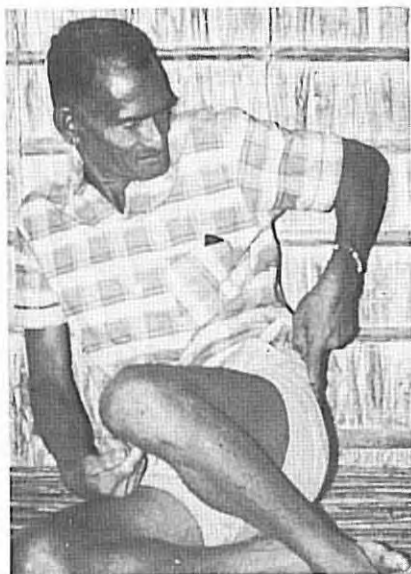
Sign: Same as sign for engine (sign 50).

55. FATHER (tamana)

Denotation: Draws attention to a fairly large crescent-shaped tattoo (tatau hakasapa) on male buttock.

Sign: Left hand's thumb and index finger draw the outline of a crescent-shaped tattooing on left buttock.

Variation: Right hand performs the same move-

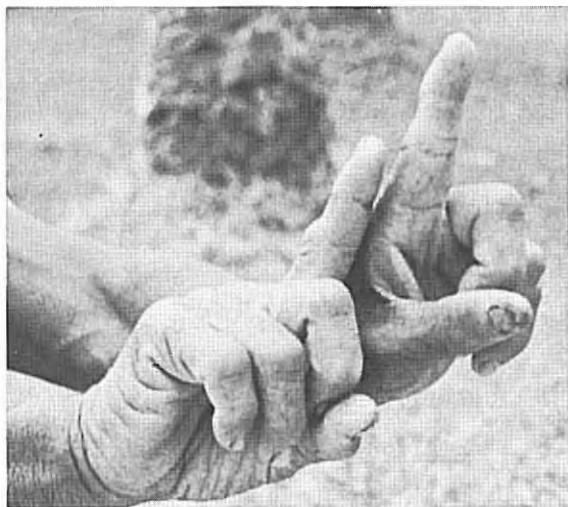


ment on right buttock.

Comment: Kagobai does not distinguish between classificatory father (tamana hakpigi) and procreative father. Originally this sign referred to his own father exclusively, but has since gradually been used to signify others' fathers too.

56. FATHER AND SON/DAUGHTER (tau tamana)

Sign: Both arms extended in front of body; hands slightly raised; palm facing away from signer. Index fingers protrude from fist with fingertips

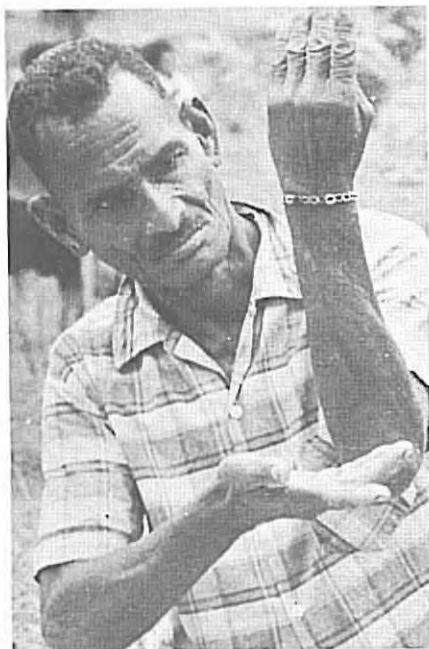


pointing upwards. Left index finger's radial side touches right index finger's radial side. Left index finger (=father) above the other.

57. FELL A TREE (tua te ga'akau)

Denotation: Cutting and felling a tree.

Sign: Left forearm kept in upright position in front of body. Hand and fingers stretched out; palm facing signer. Right hand, palm upwards and fingers adjacent, hits ulnar side of left forearm just above elbow joint several times. Left forearm falls forwards to a horizontal position.



58. FIREFLY ('agito)

Denotation: Flashing of firefly.

Sign: Right hand held in front of body at head level. Palm facing away from signer; hand lightly cupped. Fingers spread, making flashing movement.

Variation: Both hands perform the same movement simultaneously.

59. FISH (kaui)

Denotation: Fish swimming in water.

Sign: Left arm, angular bent at elbow, raised at chest



level at left side of body. Hand and fingers stretched; ulnar side facing ground. Arm and hand make two different movements simultaneously. One is an undulating movement performed by left forearm in vertical plane away from body. The other movement is a wiggling of hand and fingers backwards and forwards in the horizontal plane.

60. FISHING WITH GOGGLES DURING DAYTIME (ghaasi i te 'ao, lit., goggles at daytime)

Denotation:

Fisherman with goggles.

Sign: Thumb and index finger of each hand are held together, forming a circle each; other fingers lightly raised.



Hands are placed in front of eyes, so the signer looks through the two circular openings (=goggles).

Comment: Rennellese men are very keen on using goggles to protect the eyes from the salty water when diving for fish. The use of goggles is a result of the contact with the industrialized world.

61. FISHING WITH GOGGLES AT NIGHT (ghaasi i te poo, lit., goggles at nighttime)

Denotation: Right hand holds a rod-shaped torch.

Sign: Left elbow at shoulder level; forearm in a slanting downwards position towards left side. Palm facing signer.

Thumb and index

finger C-formed (=hand holding an imaginary rod-shaped torch).

Comment: When diving at night in order to spear fish Rennellese men use a torch light to locate and paralyze fish.



62. FISHING WITH LINE AND HOOK (hai kaui i te uka)

Denotation: Holding an then drawing in a fishing line.

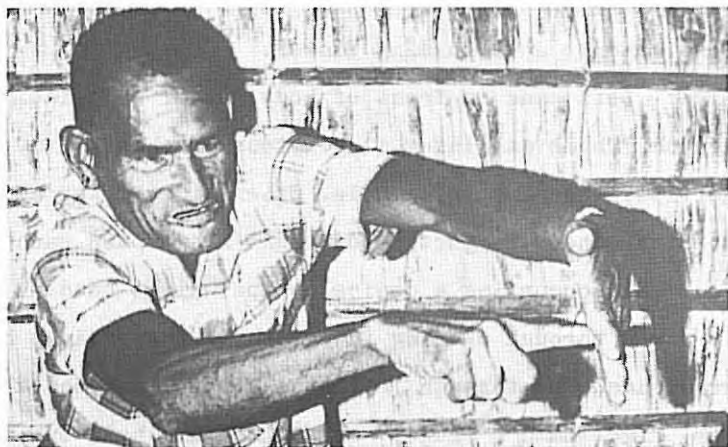
Sign: (1. position) Right hand fist in front of forehead; palm facing signer. Fist moves slowly down to waist level then returns to forehead position. (2. position) In a jerking movement right fist pulls up over head level; left hand, passive until now, at the same time clenches into fist in front of body at stomach

level (=grasps the fishing line). Left fist pulls aslope up to left side of head.

Comment: According to Haddon (1907) the sign of 'drawing in a fish-line' is used among the Eastern Islanders in the Torres Strait as a general sign for fishing.

63. FISH SPEARING (bego na kaui)

Denotation: Spear hitting a fish.



Sign: Left hand (=fish) in same position and executing same movement as in sign 59, fish. Right hand's index finger, protruding from fist, is held in front of body at same level as left hand. After left hand has started moving, right hand suddenly rushes to center of left hand's palm. Momentarily left hand intensifies its movement with fingers wriggling violently (=fish's death struggle).

Variation: Stick in right hand; upper part of body moves to and fro (=catching sight of a fish and following its movement). With a sudden stick is pushed into ground in front of body (=spearing the fish).

Comment: The description given under variation is an imitation of the fisherman's movement and behavior when spearing fish from the reef.

64. FLOWER (laka)

Denotation: An unfolding flower.

Sign: Left hand in front of body, ulnar side facing ground. Thumb and index finger touch each other at fingertips, thus forming a hole. Other fingers lay adjacent to each other. Fingertips of right hand touch each other; hand thus occupying a conical shape. Right hand is slowly moved through opening in left hand. When right hand's wrist has come through left hand's thumb and index finger, right hand's fingers spread and are held cup-formed (=unfolding of the flower).

65. FLY (gango)

Denotation: Catching and killing a fly.

Sign: Palms of both hands are clapped against each other. The clapping takes place here and there in front of body and finally palms are rubbed against each other.

66. FLYING FOX (peka)

Denotation: Catching of a flying fox while clawing on a pawpaw.

Sign: Right arm held in front of body at shoulder level; forearm sloping upwards to the left. Palm face upwards; fingertips spread and fingers slightly



bent. Left hand held above right hand at a distance of 15 to 20 cm; fingers spread and curved, moving back and forth arrhythmically. Head bent towards right shoulder; eyes look fixedly at hands. Right hand moves towards left hand. When hands touch each other fingers of both hands clench into fists; both hands, still touching each other, are moved downwards; towards ground if signing in sitting position or towards knee-level if in standing position.

67. FOREHEAD (maganga'e)

Sign: Extended index finger of right hand touches wringled forehead.

68. FRIGATE BIRD (kataha)

Denotation: Frigate bird, characterized by its distinctive wings, swooping down for fish.

Sign: Both arms raised at shoulder level at each side of body; elbow flexed; both hands bent downwards at wrist. Arms are moved up and down (=flying of the frigate bird). Upper part of body bends forward. At times body moves almost to ground; arms then getting pressed close to the body (=frigate bird's vertical diving for fish).

Variation: (In standing position) Signer moves about in small circles while flapping both arms as described above. Suddenly upper part of body bends way down, then raises, and flaps again with arms.

69. FULL UP AFTER EATING (maakona)

Denotation: Showing the distended condition of stomach after heavy eating.

Sign: Both hands lightly folded in front of body. A halfcircular movement is performed by hands, starting at solar plexus and ending at navel region. The movement is repeated two or three times.



70. GARDEN ('umanga)

Sign: (1. position)

Right hand's crooked fingers perform a scraping movement just above ground (=loosening soil in coral crevices). (2. position) Right hand's extended fingers are pressed together at fingertips thus giving the hand a conical shape (see photo).



Fingertips repeatedly press and twist an imaginary object into the ground (=planting, e.g. pressing a piece of a swollen root into the loosened soil).

71. GECKO (moko)

Denotation: Left arm, bent at elbow, held in front of body at waist level. Right hand with a sudden movement grasps hold of left forearm; loosely held left fingers start moving rapidly back and forth.



72. GIUSANGA, SON OF MOA (Giusanga, hosa o Moa)

Sign: Places volar side of right fist in front of right ear.

Comment: Moa's son was hard of hearing. See Fig. 1:Generation 21; see also hard of hearing (sign 83).

73. GOBY FISH (paghabu)

Denotation: Probably trapping of goby fish.



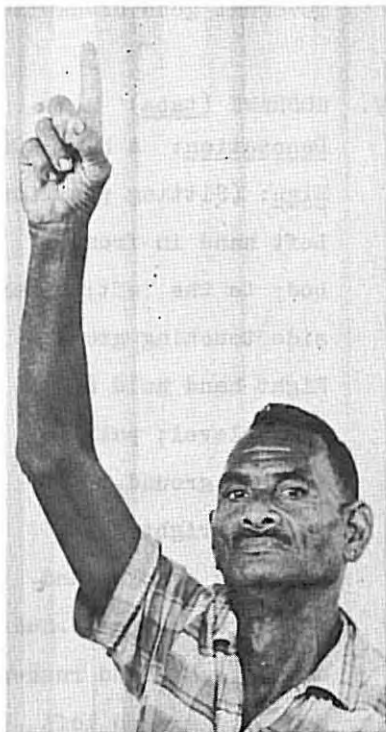
Sign: Both hands held in front of body at chest level; bent at elbow. Left hand's fingers spread and extended. Right hand's thumb and index finger seize nail of left hand's second finger and bends it downwards. The bending of second finger's first joint is repeated several times.



Variation: Instead of repeatedly bending second finger's first joint, all left hand's fingers are bent successively.

74. GOD IN HEAVEN ('aitu)

Sign: Index finger of right hand points straight to the sky.



75. GOING TO ONE'S OWN SETTLEMENT (hano ki te manaha)

Sign: Right hand's index finger points from extended arm in the direction of one's homestead.

76. GOOD, OK, FINE (gaoi)

Denotation: unknown

Sign: Right hand performs at chest level, in front of body, an elliptic movement in the horizontal plane. The movement goes clockwise.

77. GOSHAWK (taba)

Denotation: A hawk swooping down, clawing a chicken.

Sign: (Sitting position)

Left hand in front of body to the left; ulnar side touching ground.

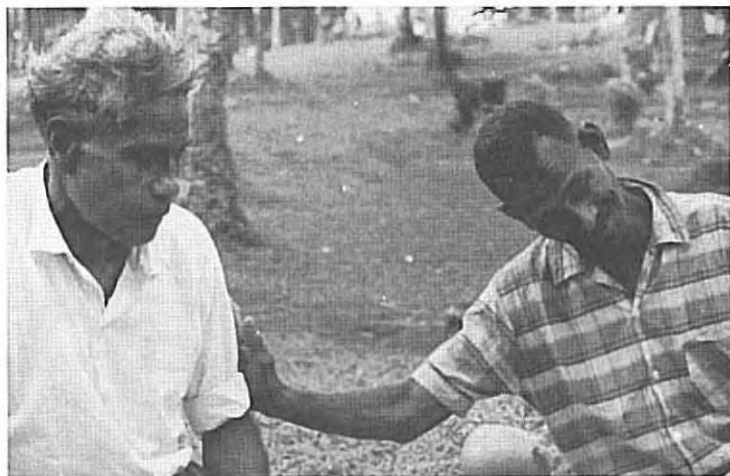
Right hand held at chest level; palm towards ground. Fingers of right hand are very crooked and spread wide apart. Suddenly right hand rushes down and grasps left hand's thumb.

Variation: (Standing position) Same movement as above, but enlarged. Left hand flaps a little when grasped.

78. GRASS (mutie)

Sign: Touches grass on ground with hand.

79. GRATEFUL, PLEASED, SATISFIED (maagaohie)



Sign: Turns head lightly towards right shoulder; lifts eyebrows; smiles and touches another person gently on left arm.

Variation: Same facial expression and hand movement as above but no touching of another person.

80. GRAVE (takotonga)

Denotation: Scrapes earth over a corpse.

Sign: Left hand, in supinated position, held in front of body. First-, second-, and third finger extended; thumb and little finger held inside palm (=corpse).

Right hand with ulnar side facing ground, moves towards left hand's extended fingers ulnar side several times (=to scrape earth over the corpse).

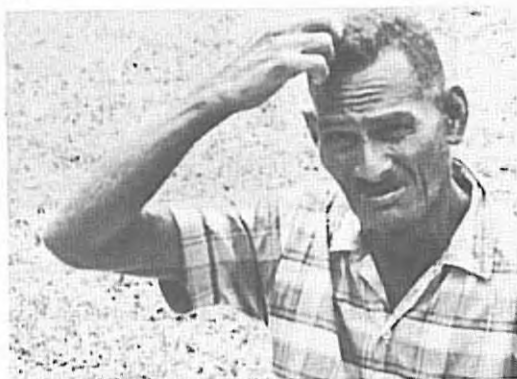
Comment: In pre-Christian times the corpse was wrapped up in a plaited mat and buried in a sitting position.

81. GROUND (kege)

Sign: Left hand with palm facing upwards makes a circular clockwise movement in front of body.

82. HAIR OF HEAD (gau'ugu)

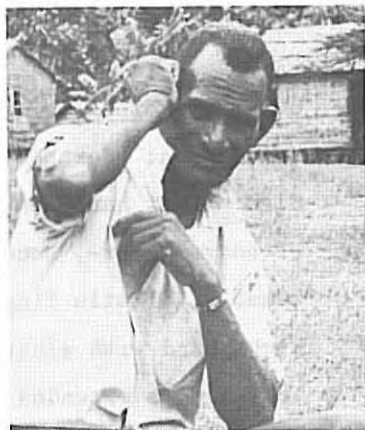
Sign: Right hand's fingers touch hair of right side of head and pulls a few hairs up a bit.



83. HARD OF HEARING (tugi)

Sign: Volar side of right fist placed in front of right ear.

Comment: See also Giusanga (sign 72).



84. HEAD ('ugu)

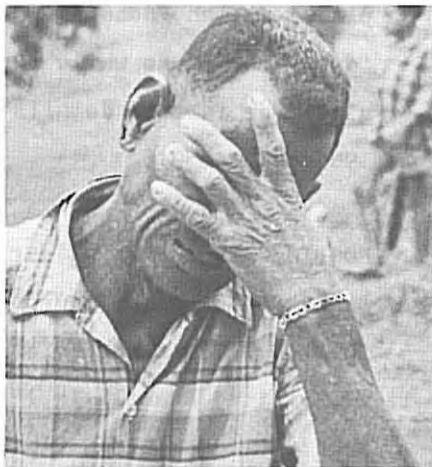
Sign: Left hand placed in front of forehead; palm facing away from signer. Fingers open and close several times.

Comment: The fingers flashing motion illustrate the thoughts inside the head.



85. HEADACHE (masaki 'ugu)

Sign: Head leans to the left. Left hand covers face with spread fingers; palm facing signer.



86. HITI-POPULATION (hiti)

Denotation: 1) To place a fish or twig on top of a huge coral stone, 2) walking.

Sign: (1. position) Left arm held in front of body in supinated position; arm lightly bent. Hand cupped and fingers spread (=astone). Right hand picks up a small stone, a blade of grass, an imaginary object and places it on fingertips of left hand. (2. position) sign for walk (sign 205).

Comment: In pre-Christian time fishermen usually made a short prayer to the hiti, a mythical population said to have been on the island before the first Rennellese immigrants arrived. The hiti were believed to transform into stones whenever human beings approached. After a fishing expedition the fishermen on their way home placed a fish, some twigs, or just a bundle of leaves on top of the stone while reciting a short prayer to the hiti. For further details about the hiti see Monberg, 1966:chapter 9.

87. HOGBIN, IAN (Hokobini)

Denotation: Aaron Taupongi tying a loincloth around the body of Ian Hogbin, an Australian anthropologist who visited Rennell in 1927.

Sign: (1. position) Sign for Aaron Taupongi (see sign 1). (2. position) Right hand moves at waist level from right to left side of body. Palm towards signer, fingertips pointing to the left. Right hand returns to right side; fingertips now point to ground. Left hand lightly curved; palm faces signer, fingertips towards right side. Hand

moves from left to right waist and stops at right hand. Both hands clench slightly and move from right to left side of body a little above waist. Upper part of body follows the turn towards left side, so do head and eyes. This sequence is repeated twice; hands moving higher each time until chest level (=winding on the loincloth). (3. position) Beginning from waist level palms of hands slide upwards along sides of body stopping near armpits; fingertips turned downwards. Hands move out in front of body, palms facing each other; movement continuous downwards between legs, then back to chest level. From here left hand moves to left hip, right hand to right hip where each hand grasp a little of the signers trousers and lift them lightly (=putting loincloth between legs and afterwards adjusting and tighten it). Lastly both hands C-shaped and moved to chest level on right side of body, there making a turning with hands towards body (=fastening the loincloth).

Comments: When Ian Hogbin visited Rennell Aaron Taupongi, a person of very great importance residing at the Lake, gave a feast in honour of the anthropologist. During the feast he wound a loincloth round Hogbin.

88. HOLY COMMUNION (kai tapu)

Denotation: Signer sits on ground; right leg in front of body; bent at knee. Leg rests on heel. Both hands rub the sole of the foot (=washing feet).

Comment: One of the most striking things going on in the service the evening before the Holy Communion is the foot-washing ceremony.

See e.g. Luke 22:14-15;

John 13:1-20.

89. HONIARA, CAPITAL IN THE BRITISH SOLOMON ISLANDS (Honi-la)

Denotation: To hammer a nail into a board.

Sign: Left arm, slightly bent, sloping down in front of body at left side; hand clenched into fist, palm facing ground (=hand holding a nail towards board).

Right hand in supinated position also held in front of



body; hand  
clenched as  
fist. Ulnar  
side of right  
hand repeated-  
ly hammers  
against left  
hand's radial  
side.

Comment: Some  
of the first

Rennellese who went to Honiara worked in the building  
trade.



90. HUMAN CHEST (hatahata)

Sign: Slaps chest with right palm.

91. HUNGRY (ongea)

Denotation: Shrunken,  
hollow belly.

Sign: Both hands  
are pressed into  
belly, which at  
the same time is  
sucked in.

Variation: Right  
hand instead of both hands.



92. HUNTING EELS (sasaga na upo)

Sign: A stick, held in right hand, points towards ground; suddenly it is thrust into ground; afterwards shaken lightly. Left hand grasps end of stick near ground; right hand still holds other end. Both hands cautiously raise stick.

93. HUT MADE OUT OF COCONUT LEAVES (hage gau niu)

Denotation: Both hands fists with extended and wide spread index and second fingers held in front of head. Right hand's palm facing away from signer, left hand's facing towards signer. Fingertips of extended index fingers touch each other; the same do second fingers.

Comment: Hage gau niu is a hut of more or less temporary character.



In order to build such a hut thick branches are stuck into the ground in two parallel rows and lashed together in pairs at the top with a piece of bark or rope. This is what the sign

refers to. Across each side another two or three rows of horizontal sticks are tied. On this construction cocopalm leaves are fastened, covering the sides from the ridgepole to the ground.

94. HUT WITH CURVED, VERTICAL RAFTERS; CHURCH (hage haka-huahua; hage sogi)

Denotation: Indicates the vertical construction of the rafters.

Sign: Both hands held in front of face. Fingertips of the two hands touch each other. Fingers and palm of each hand form an almost right angle.

Comment: Building huts with this construction is a very elaborate task which requires not only a skilful craftsman but also a great amount of wood. Huts of this construction are very highly esteemed on the island.



95. HUT WITH LASHED AND NON-CURVED RAFTERS (hage hatukaso)

Denotation: Indicates the pointed construction of the roof.



Sign: Both hands fingertips touch each other at head level in front of body. Each thumb kept inside hand. Elbows and meeting point of fingertips are hold in such a position as to form a triangular shape.

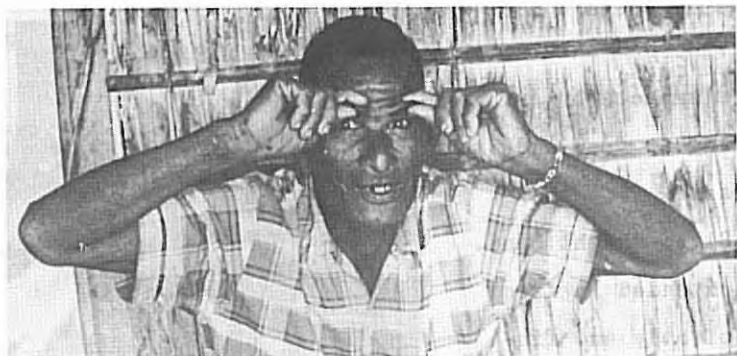
96. IN-LAWS (tau ma'aa)

Sign: Same as brother-sister relationship (sign 21).

Comment: About the formal courteousness maintained between in-laws see Monberg (1966:29) and Elbert and Monberg (1965:13-14).

97. JAPANESE (Sapani)

Denotation: Japanese' slanting eyes and their incomprehensible language.



Sign: Right index finger and thumb gets hold of right eyebrow; left hand's index finger and thumb grasps left eyebrow. All other fingers clenched into fists. Both eyebrows are raised a little. Mouth moves fast.

Variation: Sometimes head is turned towards sky while mouth exaggerates its movements.

98. KINSMEN OF SAME LINEAGE AND GENERATION OF CLASSIFICATORY SIBLINGS ('api)

Denotation: unrecorded.

Sign: Left hand in front of body; forearm lightly raised. Hand raised at wrist in almost vertical position; palm facing away from signer.



Index and second finger extended and spread. Thumb touching bent third finger.

99. KNIFE; CLEARING UNDERGROWTH (kiba; boga)

Denotation: Cutting vine and shrub with a machete by swinging it from side to side.

Sign: Right hand, extended in front of body and fingers spread, makes large forceful



swinging movements from side to side. When swinging from right to left palm faces upward; when swinging from left to right palm faces downwards.

Comment: The turning of palm at the extreme positions of movement correspond with movement when cutting with a machete.

100. KNOW, UNDERSTAND, INTELLIGENT ('igo'igo)

Sign: Palm of either left or right hand is placed on forehead.

101. KUSCHEL, ROLF

Denotation: A white person coming from faraway smoking [a lot].

Sign: (1. position) Faraway (see sign 151).

(2. position) White person (see sign 209).

(3. position) Smoking (see sign 171).

102. LAMBERT, S.M. (Lamputi)

Denotation: Baldness and big stomach.

Sign: (1. position) Right index finger extended from fist performs a circle above head (=baldness). (2. position) sign for 'full up after eating' (see sign 69).

Comment: Lambert, an American medical doctor, visited Rennell and Bellona in 1930 and 1933.

103. BE LATE FOR WORK (leti, Eng. loanword)

Denotation: Looking upon a wristwatch.

Sign: Left arm, angular bent at elbow, held in front of body at chest

level. Forearm

twisted, dorsal

side of hand facing

signer. Signer

looks upon wrist

(=looking at imaginary wristwatch).



104. LEG (ba'e)

Sign: Pats right thigh with right hand.

105. LET WIND (kii)

Sign: Presses abdomen by contraction of a dominal muscles; shrugs shoulders; bared and clenched teeth; eyes half-closed. Head leaned forwards and to the right.

106. LIP (gaungutu)

Sign: Left hand's thumb and index finger grasps protruded underlip.

107. TO BE LOST, NOT SEEN, MISSING (he'e kitea)

Denotation: A person looking for lost property.

Sign: (Sitting position) Right hand extended in front of body. Palm downwards; fingers spread. Hand touches different areas in front of signer; eyes follow movement of hand.



108. LOUSE (kutu)

Denotation: Catching and biting a louse to death.



Sign: Right hand scratches hair. Thumb and index fingers are pressed together (=holding the louse) and taken to the mouth which makes a biting movement.

109. MACGREGOR, GORDON (Makaleke)

Denotation: Beating the sounding board, dancing, and looking through a filmcamera.

Sign: (1. position) Both hands index fingers extend from fists and are, in the vertical plane in front of body, moved asynchronous but rhythmical up and down. Movement goes from head level to leg which is beaten on (=beating the sounding board). (2. position) Right index finger makes a circular, clockwise movement in front of body (=dancing). (3. position) Left hand's

fist, radial side facing signer, is kept in front of right eye. Body turns slowly from right to left and back again; shoulders shrugged (=moving of filmcamera).

Comment: During Macgregor's visit to the island the men's circle dance (makosau'u) was performed in which the sounding board (papa) plays an important part. Macgregor recorded this dance with a movie camera (tigi henua). This, apparently, was the first time Rennellese saw a movie camera. Macgregor was an American anthropologist who visited Rennell in 1933.

110. MAKING FRIENDS (hakamasi'inga)

Denotation: To press noses.



Sign: Tip of nose and forehead is pressed against nose and forehead of another person.

Variation: Some movement and position of body but

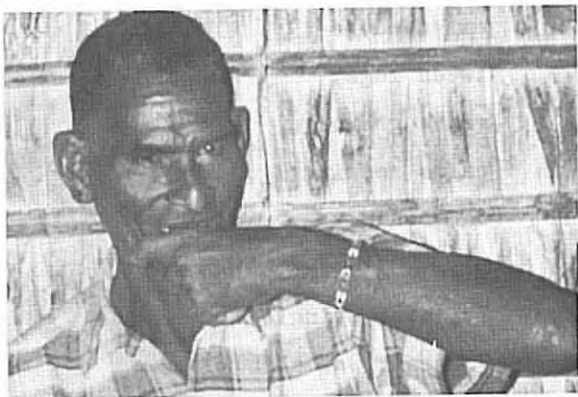
without another person.

Comment: This signs is an imitation of the very old greeting ceremonies performed when friends who had 'nt met for long time saw each other again.

111. MAN (tangata)

Denotation: Beard.

Sign: Left  
hand's thumb  
and index  
finger touch  
face right  
above cheek-  
bones; thumb  
on left side  
of head and



index finger on right side. They are moved smoothly downwards below chin (=indicating a long beard).

Comment: Before the introduction of Christianity Rennellese men usually had long beards. Mountford (1939) reports the same sign as used for man among the Ngada tribe in Australia.

112. MAN DEFECATING (tangata titiko)

Sign: Squats  
on heels; upper  
part of  
body lightly  
leaning for-  
ward. Arms,  
extended be-  
tween legs,  
reach ground;  
palms resting  
on ground.  
Lips held tight-  
ly; nose wringled.  
Comment: See also  
woman defecating  
(sign 211).

113. MARRIAGE (takanga)

Sign:  
Left arm  
extended  
in front  
of body;  
forearm  
slightly  
bent up-



wards. Hand raised in nearly vertical position; palm facing away from body. Thumb and little finger extended from fist.

Comment: The thumb, the most important finger, represent the man, the most important part in a marriage. The little finger represents the woman, the least important part in a marriage. See also page 29 to 30.

114. MASTURBATE, MALE (totou)

Denotation: Imitating the act of masturbation.



Sign: Left index finger points from fist. Thumb and index finger of right hand rub up and down left index finger.

115. MASTURBATE, FEMALE (hou)

Sign: Left hand makes sign for vagina (see sign 200). Right hand's index finger and thumb grasps left hand's thumb (=clitoris) and rock it back and forth.

116. MELANESIAN, STRANGER, FOREIGNER (tongahiti)

Denotation: Writing on a blackboard.



Sign: Left arm held in front of body, almost angular bent at elbow. Hand and fingers extended; palm facing signer (=blackboard). Right hand's thumb touch index finger's fingertip (=holding a piece of imaginary chalk). These two fingers perform wavy movements on left hand's palm.

Variation: The movement of right arm sometimes is carried out on left forearm.

Comment: The first Melanesians who stayed on the island for a longer time were all teachers.

117. MENSTRUATION (masaki haahine, lit., women's sickness)

Denotation: Abhorrence of menstruation.

Sign: Both hands held close in front of abdomen; fin-

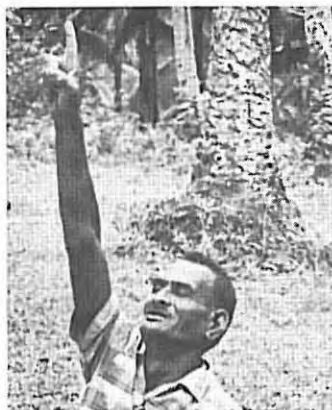
gers spread and pointing away from body. Head turned to the right, lips strongly protruded, brows wringled, eyes closed.

Comment: Though menstruation was regarded with disgust no special taboos existed in connection with it; women were not isolated during this period either.



118. MIDDAY ('ao 'atea)  
Denotation: Points towards altitude of sun.

Sign: Right extended index finger points straight upwards in the sky (=position of sun at noon).



Comment: See also sign for God in Heaven (sign 74).

119. MIDNIGHT (tu'uguaa poo)

Sign: (1.position) Same sign as midday (see sign 118).  
(2. position) Same sign as sleep (see sign 170).

120. MIST, FOG (po'ao)



Sign: Both hands held in front of body at chest level. Palms facing upwards, fingers adjacent. Ulnar sides of hands fairly close to each other without touching. From this position hands move simultaneously upwards over level of head; fingers spread at the same time.



121. MOON (maahina)

(A) NEW MOON (maahina tu'u)

Sign: Left arm extended in front of body slightly about head level. Thumb and index finger form a large C.



(B) CRESCENT MOON (tuma'atasi)

Sign: Both hands held in front of body, lightly bent at elbow. Right hand's thumb and index finger touch left hand's thumb and index finger thus forming an oval shaped opening. Other fingers clenched into fist. In a smooth motion hands move apart from each other; each keeping its original shape. Movement stops when fingers approximately 15 centimetres away from each other. The final stage is full moon (see photographs on next page).

(C) FULL MOON (maahina kaatoa)

Sign: Last stage of crescent moon, (see 121 [B]).



Crescent moon (tuma'atasi)



Full moon (maahina katoa)

122. MORNING (mahoata)

Denotation: Points to altitude of sun.

Sign: Right extended index finger points towards southeast.

Comment: See also morning, early (sign 123); midday (sign 118); and afternoon, early (sign 2).



123. MORNING, EARLY (taha'ata)

Denotation: Points towards altitude of sun.

Sign: Right hand's extended index finger points towards east.

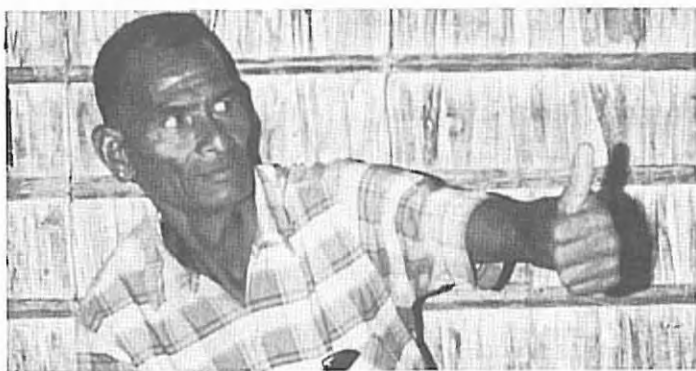
Comment: See also signs mentioned under morning (sign 122).

124. MOSQUITO (namu)

Denotation: Killing a mosquito sitting on one's leg.

Sign: Left hand slaps left thigh and then scratches the spot.

Variation: Right hand instead of left hand.

125. MOTHER (tinana)

Sign: Left arm extended in front of body at shoulder level. Thumb extends from fist , pointing upwards.

Comment: The sign for mother does not distinguish between classificatory mother (tinana hakapigi) and procreative mother (tinana hakahua). See also marriage (sign 113).

126. MOTHER, CLASSIFICATORY, AND DAUGHTER, SON, OR SON-IN-LAW (tau tinana)

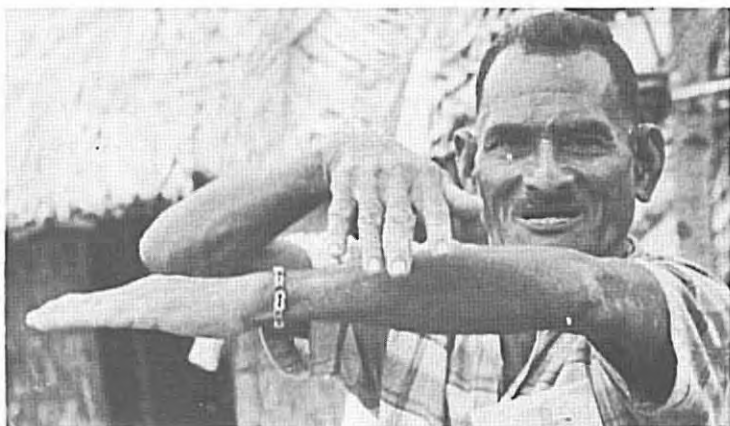
Denotation: Carrying a baby in front of body.

Sign: Upper arms close to sides of body. Elbow flexed; forearms extended in front of body. Palms facing upwards, fingers adjacent and stretched.



127. MOUNTAIN, HILL (ogo)

Denotation: A person easily climbing a mountain.

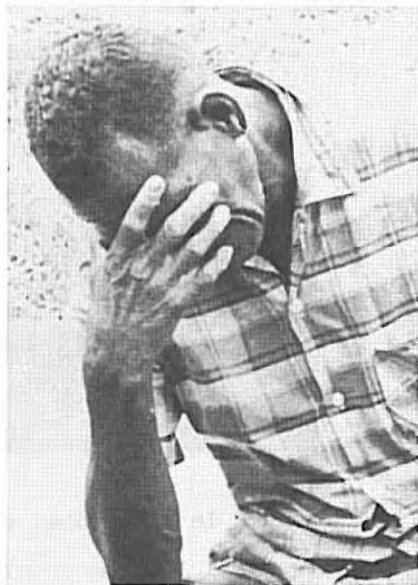


Sign: Left forearm, angular bent at elbow, held in front of body at chest level. Fingers adjacent and extended. Right hand's fingers, extended and lightly spread, perform a sliding semi-circular motion across left forearm from radial to ulnar side.

Comment: This sign focuses upon the possibility of mounting and descending whereas the sign for the edge of a coral cliff and hillock stresses the impossibility of mounting and descending (see sign 127).

128. MOURNING WOMAN, WIDOW (hahine magepe)

Denotation: A woman lamenting.



Sign: (1. position) Sign for woman (see sign 210).  
 (2. position) Upper part of body slightly leaned towards left and lightly leaned forwards. Right hand's fingers, slightly spread, cover face; thumb on right side of face, other fingers on left side. Short, rapid breathing, blubbing.

129. MOUTH (ngutu)

Sign: Right hand grasps area round mouth.

130. NAUSEATED, FEEL BAD (baaisaisa)

Sign: Right hand held close to right chest; palm facing away from signer, fingertips pointing upwards. In a jerking movement arm extends in a sloping downwards way to right side of body. Hand raised at wrist, fingertips pointing upwards. Head turned to left side, nose wringled; lips widen, teeth clenched.

Variation: Left hand instead of right one. See also dislike (sign 42).

131. NETTING FLYING FISH BY TORCHLIGHT (gagama)

Denotation: Beating the stick of a fishing net against the stern sides of canoe.

Sign: (Sitting position) Picks up a stick from ground; holds it with both hands in front of body. Right hand held near body, left hand further away. End of stick alternately pushed into ground and heaved up into the air several times.

Comment: This is an imitation of how fishermen sit in their canoes and handle the fishing net during the fishing for flying fish. The fishermen, floating around the large torchlight carrying canoe, will sit in the stern of the canoe with a long handled net. As soon as the torches are lit the fishermen shout or sing while beating the handle of the fishing net against the hull of the canoe, in order to attract the flying fish.

132. NO! (si'ai!)

Sign: Right hand extended in front of body at shoulder level. Hand raised in vertical position at wrist. Fingers kept close to each other. Palm facing away from signer.

133. NOSE (isu)

Sign: Thumb and index finger of left hand grasp nose.





134. OLD PERSON (tauiku)

Denotation: Slow and distressful movement of old person.

Sign: (Sitting position) Upper part of body, leaning forward and to the left, is supported by both hands resting on ground. Both hands are dragged along ground with great difficulties. Forehead and nose wrinkled, lips corners tighten.

135. PACIFIC PIGEON (gupe)

Denotation: Catching Pacific pigeons with a large net.

Sign: Left arm, bent at elbow, held in front of body (=platform in tree on which hunter is sitting). Right fist, in a perpendicular motion, moves up and down radial side of left forearm (=movement of net with which pigeons are caught).

136. PACIFIC RAT (kimoa)

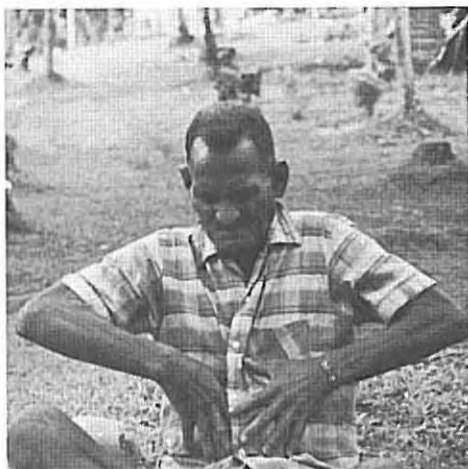
Denotation: Rat running back and forth or up and down a housewall.

Sign: Left hand's spread and cupped fingers move in a jumping way back and forth on ground.

Variation: If sitting near a hut, fingers are moved up and down the housewall itself.

137. PAIN, HURT (mamae)

Sign: Palm of both hands lightly pressed against stomach. Eyes closed; lips held tightly.

138. PANNA [ NAME FOR A KIND OF YAM IN THE SOLOMON ISLANDS ] ('uhigaba)

Denotation: Planting of panna.

Sign: Right hand's fingers crooked and moved forth and back on ground (=loosening soil). Left hand turns upside down, hand lightly cupped, fingers spread. Index

finger and thumb of right hand take an imaginary object out of left hand's palm and puts it on the ground. This movement is repeated several times.

139. TO PARALYZE FISH WITH DERRIS VINE (punu)

Denotation: To beat Derris vine with a stone.

Sign: Left hand holds a piece of wood on the ground in front of body. Right hand picks up a stone and beats wood kept in left hand. Left hand moves in a smooth motion from left to right.

Comment: Paralyzing fish with Derris vine on the reef is usually done by women. They do exactly what is reproduced in the sign: beat the Derris vine with a piece of coral and afterwards insert it into coral crevices where the vine is moved back and forth in order to speed up the oozing out of the poison.

140. PAST, OLD TIME (i gaa 'aso)

Denotation: That time, when people were killed.

Sign: (1. position) Left arm extends from body in a curved way about head level. Hand lightly bent downwards, index finger extended from fist. Head leaned forwards (=the time faraway). (2. position) Ulnar side of right hand makes a blow at right side of neck. Head falls towards left shoulder (=kill people).

Comment: For a discussion of this sign see page 34. See also photographs on next page.



That time.....



when people were killed.

141. PAWPAW (mamiapu)

Denotation: Pushing a stick vertically upwards, in order to loosen a pawpaw (papaya) from its stem.

Sign: Both fists, radial sides facing upwards, held in front of body; right one at stomach level, left

one at chest level (=holding an imaginary long stick into the air). Both fists are several times pushed upwards in short rapid movements (=loosening the fruit from its stem).

142. PERSON OF PROMINENCE (hakahua)

Denotation: Leaning the sacred ga'akau tu'uti staff against shoulder thus imitating the sitting position occupied by the hakahua when acting as priest-chief.

Sign: A stick or stick-like object is picked up from the ground and leaned against right shoulder. The stick is sloping down from shoulder to ground in front of body. Right hand holds at lower end of stick.

Variation: Same position with right hand but without a stick; just holding around an imaginary one.

Comment: A hakahua is a person enjoying highest esteem among landholders within a lineage. His behavior and ideas approximate as



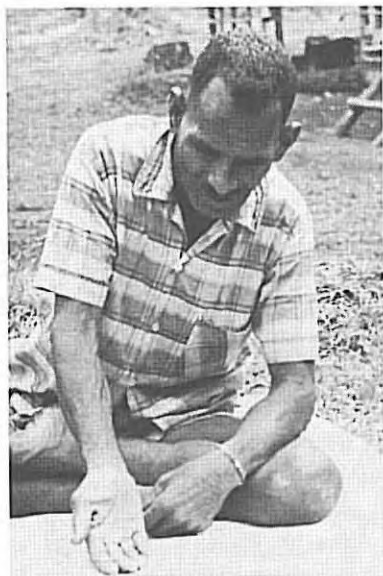
closely as possible the ideals of the society (see Monberg, 1966:29). A hakahua resembles what could be translated by English as chief but unlike a chief a hakahua has no formal power or authority over other people. The ga'akau tu'uti is a long wooden staff sacred for the god Tehainga'atua (see Monberg, 1966: 52). This wooden staff was carried by the priest-chief during the performance of rituals. A priest-chief would most often be chosen amongst the hakahua. During the time of his priest-chieftood the hakahua carried with him the wooden staff; the only time he was separated from it was when he had to obey the call of nature.

143. PLANTING A BANANA PALM (tanu te hutu)

Denotation: The process of planting as done in the following four steps (a) clearing the undergrowth, (b) loosening the soil, (c) planting banana shoot, and (d) stamping soil around the planted shoot.

Sign: (1. position) Same as clearing undergrowth (see sign 99). (2. position) Crooked fingers of right and left hand scratch ground. (3. position) Right hand, in supinated position, held at ground in front of body. Knuckles of left fist pressed against right hand's palm. (4. position) Knuckles of left hand pressed against ground several times.

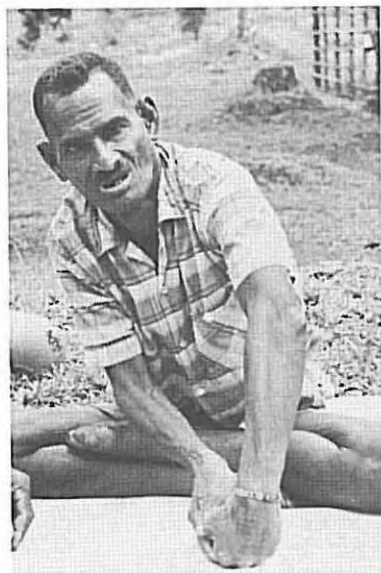
Comment: See photographs on next page.



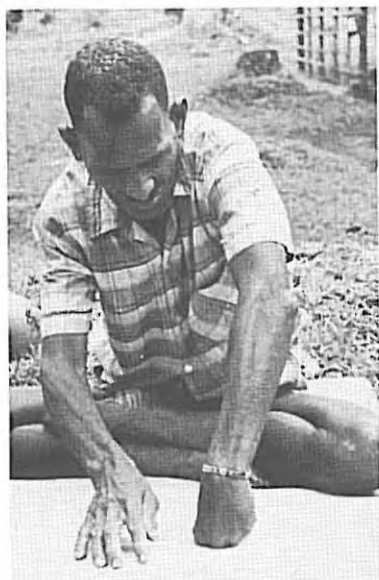
(a) clearing undergrowth



(b) loosening soil



(c) planting banana shoot



(d) stamping soil around  
planted banana shoot

144. PLANTING A COCONUT PALM (tanu te niu)

Denotation: Pressing a coconut into the ground.

Sign: Takes a coconut, or anything associated with coconut, and presses it into the ground.

145. POLIO (polio)

Sign: Walks with stiff legs and arms.





146. POLYNESIAN, RENNELLESE, REDSKINNED PERSON (pegea uga)  
Sign: Right hand's index finger touches left arm just below elbow.
147. POOR (lae)  
Denotation: To have nothing (he'e tau me'a)

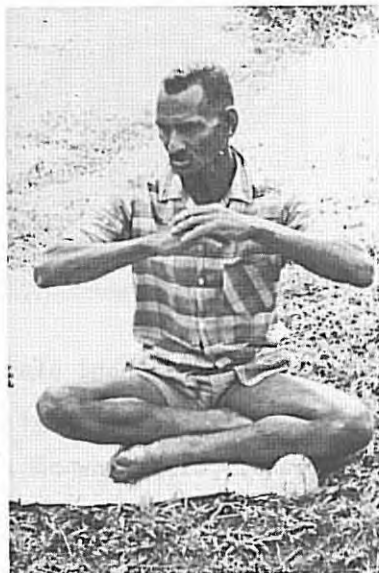


- Sign: Left hand placed in front of body at waist level; palm facing upwards; fingers adjacent and extended. Right hand, palm downwards, fingers juxtaposed and extended, moves several times fast across left hand's palm, sometimes touching fingertips.
148. PRIEST-CHIEF (tunihenua)

Denotation: Imitation of priest-chiefs characteristic sitting posture during the performance of pre-Christian rituals.

Sign: If a stick or cane is immediately available it is picked up and stuck into the ground in front of body. Both hands placed on top of stick, left hand resting on the right. Both arms held at shoulder level, forming a triangle with body. Chin rests on back of left hand. Mouth makes talking movements (=reciting the lengthy ritual formulae).

Variation: If no stick or cane is available the hands occupy the same position as with a stick.



Comment: The stick symbolizes the priest-chief's holy staff (ga'akau tu'uti) which only he was permitted to bear and furthermore only in the period when his office demanded a performance of the mandatory rituals. While

performing the rituals the tunihenua would often sit with his ritual staff placed in front of him. The mouth movements in the sign is an imitation of the priest-chiefs behavior, when reciting the long ritual formulae. See also person of prominence (sign 142).

149. RADIO, TRANSMITTER, BROADCASTING (ualasi)

Denotation: Speaking into a microphone.

Sign: Right fist held in front of mouth; vocal side facing signer.

Lips moving rapidly.

Comment: The first time Kagobai became acquainted with radio communication was during the end of World War II, when Rennell was visited by a few naval ships. On-board one of the ships he saw how one of the crew talked into a microphone.



150. RAIN ('ua)

Denotation: (a) rain pouring down, and (b) seeking shelter for the rain.

Sign: (1.position) Both hands held at chest level in front of body. Palm facing ground, fingers crooked and

spread (=rain). Eyes looking towards ground. (2. position) Suddenly hands turn  $180^{\circ}$  at wrist; palms now facing sky; fingers juxtaposed. Hands are simultaneously moved up over head (=shelter). Head slightly bent backwards, eyes looking at palms.

Variation: Same position as in position 1. Instead of position 2 hands are repeatedly pushed from chest level to waist level (=heavy pouring).

151. REMOTE COUNTRY, FARAWAY PLACE ('aamonga 'ate)

Denotation: Something faraway, behind the horizon.

Sign: Right arm extended in front of body in an upwards sloping way. Fingers extended and in adjacent position. Head slightly sloping forward.

Variation: Same arm movement and body position but fingers spread apart.

Comeent: See also past (sign 140).



152. RENNELL ISLAND (Mugaba)

Denotation: A ship arriving at Lughughi Bay, south coast of Rennell Island.

Sign: Left arm extended at left side of body. Forearm

lightly raised; dorsal side facing left. Thumb and index finger C-shaped opening towards right. Right hand placed in front of body opposite left hand approximately 30 to 40 centimeters away from it. First and second finger vertical extended from right fist. In a slow, smooth motion these two fingers (=ship) are moved into left hand's opening between thumb and index finger (Lughughi Bay).



Comment: Lughughi Bay is one of the best sheltered Bays on Rennell and thus the place most ships stop or anchor when visiting the island.

153. RITUAL GROUND IN FRONT OF HOUSE (gotomaga'e)

Denotation: Place where people danced.

Sign: Right index finger describes a circle, clockwise in front of body in the horizontal plane.

154. ROOT OF FIGUS TREE (aka o te tapaago)

Denotation: Large visible roots of the Ficus tree.

Sign: Fingers of right hand cupped, spread, and placed

with fingertips on ground.

155. ROCKY PLACE (kunga ghaighai)

Denotation: Twisting one's ankle when walking on rocky places.

Sign: Left hand held in front of body near waist level. Palm facing upwards, fingers slightly spread and curved (=rocky area). Right hand's fingertips, facing downwards and lightly spread, are placed on left hand's fingertips where they slide off (=twisting of legs).

156. ROUGH SEA (moana 'atua)

Denotation: Huge waves.

Sign: (1. position) Both hands in front of body at waist level; lightly bent at elbow. Ulnar side of hands facing ground, fingers spread and pointing away from body.

(2. position) In a vigorously motion hands are twisted at wrist so both palms face upwards, then, still at waist level, hands are moved towards each other, touching at ulnar sides.



1. position



(2. position)



(3. position)

(3. position) Simultaneously both hands, in a vertical movement, ascend straight over the head; palms facing upwards, fingers spread. Head bent backwards facing heads final position.

157. RUN (tege)

Sign: Same as walk (sign 205), but movement more rapid.

158. SALVIA, SPIT (nga'esu)

Sign: Turns head to the left and spits to the ground.

159. SEARCH (sasaga)

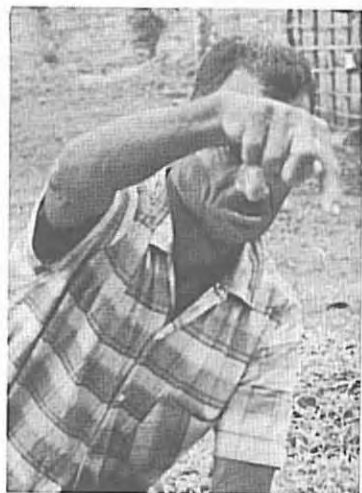
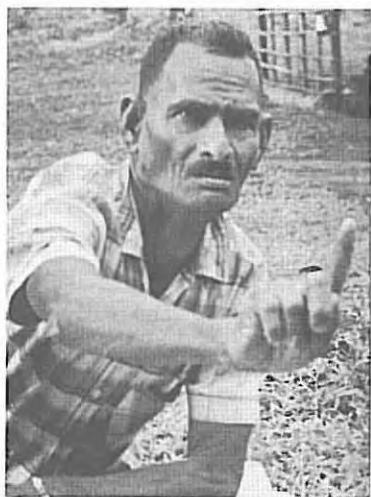
Sign: Moves upper part of body to and fro; eyes looking seekingly around on ground.

## 160. SEA SNAKE IN THE LAKE

(tugihono)

Denotation: Movement of sea snake.

Sign: Index finger, protruding from right fist, moves from side to side across ground in front of body. After a while hand raises from ground to head level, still moving from side to side. From head level fingertip point downwards and hand moves back to ground in the same movement.





161. SEA SNAKE, PARTI-COLORED (taaapea)

Denotation: Catching a sea snake on a hook.

Sign: (Sitting position) Left hand held near ground in front of body. Palm facing upwards; index finger protruding from lightly clenched fist. Index finger makes vibrating movements from side to side (=sea snake). Right fist, raised close to right ear; radial side towards



ear. Right hand follows movement of left hand's index finger (=holding a rope with bait on hook, trying to draw the sea snake's attention to it).

Variation: (Standing position) Both hands pull up an imaginary fishing line. In between the pulling movements signer bends knees and touch ground with right hand.

162. SECOND PRIEST-CHIEF (haihenua)

Denotation: The ritual tao hakasanisani spear; related to the office of the second priest-chief.

Sign: Places any large stick or stick-like thing into the ground in front of body.

Comment: The second priest-chief represented the god Tehu'aiga-benga to whom the tao hakasanisani spear was taboo. On the picture Kagobai has placed a paddle in front of him.

163. SERVANT, PERSON OF LOW SOCIAL STATUS (guani)

Denotation: A person always being pushed away.

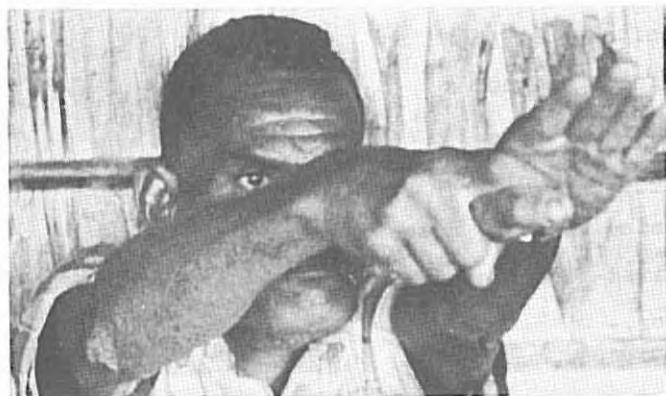
Sign: Both hands held in front of body at waist level; palms facing upwards; ulnar sides touch each other. Fingers extended. Hands are shoved away from body (=pushing a person sitting on the plaited mat away from it).

Comment: Servants usually were not aloud to sit on the same mat as the ordinary landholders or hakahua; neither could they walk or sit in front of a man occupying a higher social status than themselves.



164. SHARK (mangoo)

Denotation: Shark fishing with a large wooden hook.



Sign: Left arm performs undulating movements in pronating position starting from shoulder going away from body. Right hand's fist and thumb are C-shaped, other fingers clenched into fist (=wooden shark hook). Right hand moves slowly towards left hand and strikes between thumb and index finger. Left hand moves violently in different directions but right hand does not slip its grip (=shark fighting to escape the hook).

Variations: The roles of hands can be reversed and right hand can grasp left hand's thumb instead of area between thumb and index finger.

165. SHIP, OTHER THAN CANOE (hakataupapa)

Sign: Right hand's first-, second-, and third finger extended, fingertips pointing upwards, palm facing right side of head. Hand is in a smooth curve moved opposite nose; palm now facing signer's face.

Variation: Only two extended fingers, namely first- and second finger.



166. SICK (masaki)

Sign: Falls to the ground and writhes with pain, both hands placed on stomach.



167. SIDE OF HUMAN BODY (kaokao)

Sign: Right hand, palm facing body and fingers spread, moves along right side of upper part of body.

168. SISTER'S SON OR DAUGHTER, CLASSIFICATORY ('igaamutu)

Denotation: Kagobai's three 'igaamutu, one of them having a scar at the neck.

Sign: Right arm, angular bent at elbow, raised in front of body. First-, second-, and third finger extended from hand. Palm facing away from signer. Left fist placed at neck.



Comment: Whether this sign only refers to Kagobai's own 'igaamutu' or has a more general application is unrecorded.

169. SKY (gangi)

Sign: Points with left hand's index finger towards sky.



170. SLEEP (moe)

Sign: Upper part of body leans towards left. Right hand supporting right side of head.

171. SMOKE (kaiahi, lit., to eat fire)

Denotation: Smoking a cigarette.

Sign: First- and second finger of right hand extended from fist; kept apart (=holding a cigarette). The fingers are moved to lips; palm facing lips, and inhaling movement is done. Fingers move back and air is blown out of mouth.

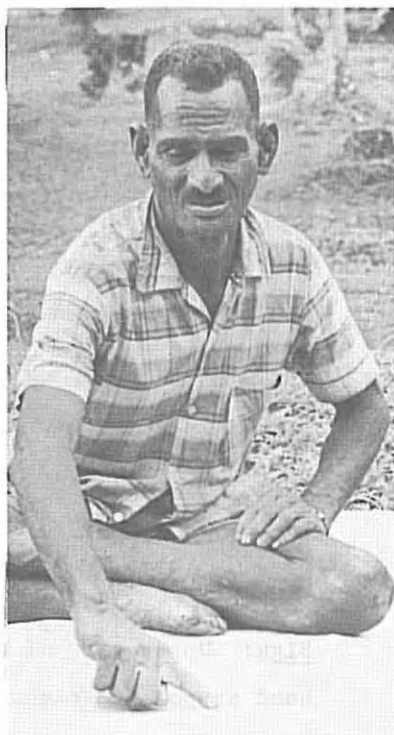
172. SNAKE (ngata)

Denotation: Snake winding along ground.

Sign: Index finger pointing from right fist slides along ground from side to side.

Variation: Another person moves a stick towards signer who, looking at the stick, withdraws body. Suddenly signer grasps any object and beats the approaching stick (=snake). Facial expression

is that of disgust. See also sign for disgust (sign 42).





173. SOLE OF THE FOOT (tapungao)

Sign: Touches sole of right foot with right hand.

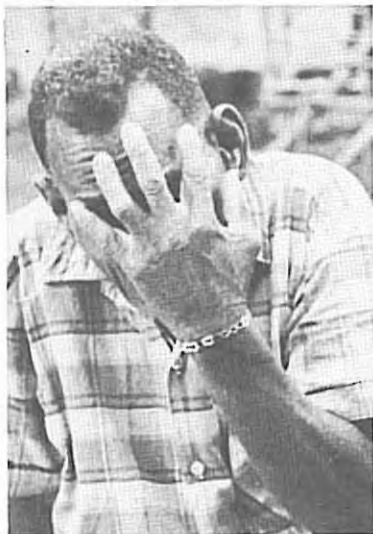
174. SON OF KASPAR (hosa o Kasipa)

Sign: Points with right hand's index finger at a point on his right ankle.

Comment: Kaspar's son has a mark on his leg above his ankle.

175. SPY; TO WATCH (gepo)

Sign: Head put between shrugged shoulders. Left hand placed in front of face; fingers spread and eyes looking between fingers.



176. STAR (hetu'u)

Sign: Left arm extended to left side of body about head level. Hand bent downwards at wrist; fingers cupped and spread. No flashing movement.

Comment: See also sun (sign 181). Photo of sign for star on next page.

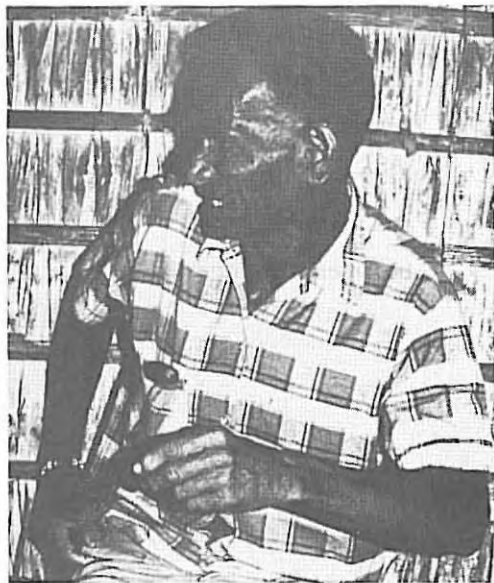


177. STEAL, ROB (kaia'a)

Sign: Somebody stealing something out of pocket or loin-cloth.

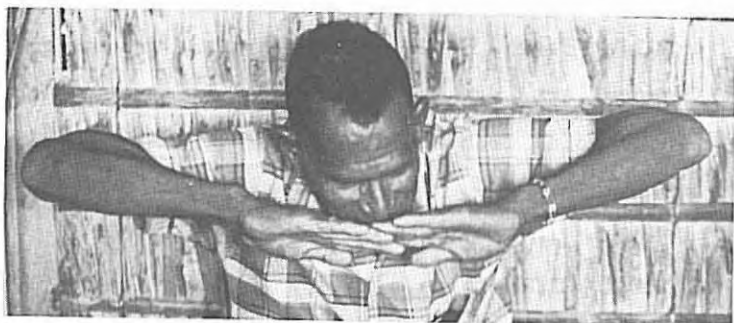
Sign: Left hand placed on left hip holding at trousers. Right hand approaches slowly left hand, snatches some imaginary thing

and returns to starting position in a rapid movement. Lips widened, teeth clenched.



178. STING-RAY (hai)

Denotation: Movement of the large triangular fins.



Sign: Both hands held in front of body at throat level; left hand's fingertips lying on top of right hand's first fingerjoints. Both elbows raised a little above shoulder level. Head leaning forwards touching hands fingers. Arms are in a large motion moved up and down, elbows going from shoulder level to waist level and back again.

179. STOMACH, BELLY (tina'e)

Sign: Slaps belly with right hand.

180. STONE (hatu)

Denotation: Stone or coral protruding from ground.

Sign: Both hands, in supinated position, placed on ground in front of body. Hand cup-formed, fingers spread.

181. SUN (ga'aa)

Denotation: Sunbeams reaching earth.



Sign: Left arm raised at shoulder level, elbow bent, forearm extending in front of body. Hand lightly bent downwards at wrist; palm facing ground; fingers spread. Hand moves in a slow and smooth motion downwards towards waist level.

Variation: Right hand's extended index finger points to eastern horizon, then moves to the altitude of sun at the particular moment.

Comment: See also star (sign 176).

182. SWAMPHEN (kagae)

Denotation: The fluttering tail feathers of the swamphen.

Sign: Left hand held on ground in pronated position; hand lightly cupped, fingers spread. Dorsal side of right hand is placed on top of left hand. Right hand's index finger makes small jerk-like movements (=fluttering of tail feathers).



183. SWEAR (huhu)

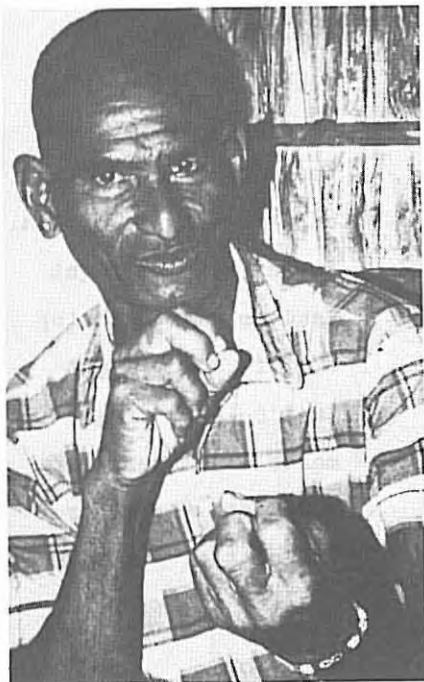
Denotation: un-recorded.

Sign: Right fist held in front of throat; volar side towards signer.

184. TALK, SPEAK, COMMUNICATE (hegeu)

Denotation: Two persons talking while facing each other.

Sign: Right fist in front of throat, dorsal side towards signer. Volar side of left fist facing right fist's volar side at a distance of approximately 20 to 30 centimetres. Left fist a little bit lower than right fist. In rapid



succession both hands simultaneously spread fingers and close them into fists again. This flashing movement is repeated several times.

185. TARO (tago)

Denotation: Both hands grasp imaginary leaves of a taro plant and make a vertical jerk in upwards direction (=pulling the taro plant out of the soil).

186. TARO PLANTING (tanu tago)

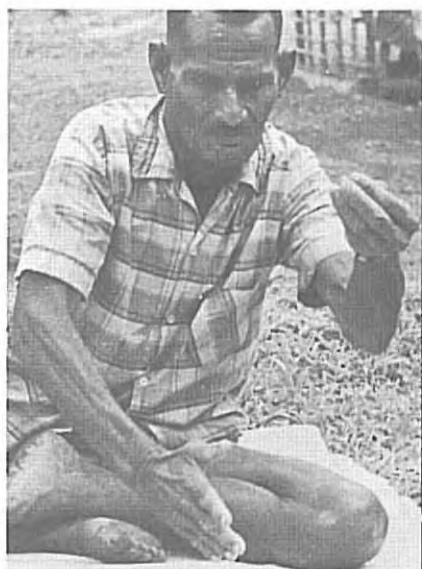
Sign: (1. position) Same sign as clearing undergrowth (see sign 99). (2. position) Same sign as taro (see



1. position: clearing undergrowth

2. position: heaving up taro

sign 185). (3. position) Left hand conical shaped; fingertips pointing upwards to the right; hand held at chest level. Right hand, ulnar side downwards, fingers in juxtaposition, makes a fast vertical movement from head level to waist level (=cutting off a piece of the taro root, the part used as shoot). (4. position) Fingertips beat on ground several times and make a slightly twisting movement (=planting the taro shoot).



3. position: cutting  
off a taro shoot



4. position: planting  
the taro shoot.



187. TAX, TO PAY MONEY (takisi, Engl. loanword)

Sign: Thumb of right hand scratches palm of left hand several times. Left hand held in front of body at stomach level; palm facing upwards; fingers adjacent to each other.

Comment: This sign Kagobai learned during his stay in the Russell Islands.

188. TEBEGI, KAGOBAI'S MOTHER (Tebegi)

Denotation: Refers to his mother's tattooing, especially those in the tendon of the knee ('ago ba'e) and the tattooings she had on the shin-bone.

Sign: Right hand touches back of right knee, then touches right shin-bone.

189. THIN (magheghe)

Denotation: Emaciated arm; the movement made by right hand indicates that all meat has disappeared from left arm.

Sign: Right hand grasps left forearm, which is extended in a sloping downwards position in front of body. Right hand slides tightly



down to wrist. Teeth are bared, eyebrows lowered.

Comment: Between two harvest periods and especially after a cyclone has passed the island it is quite usual to see fairly emaciated people on Rennell and Bellona.

190. TREE (ga'akau)

Denotation: Stem of tree.

Sign: Left upper arm held tight to body; left forearm in upright position in front of upper part of body; palm facing signer; fingertips extended and spread, pointing towards sky.

191. THROAT (u'a)

Sign: Right hand's thumb and index finger hold round throat.

192. THUNDERSTORM (hatutigi, 'uiga)

Denotation: Vigorous lightning and human dread.

Sign: Left arm raised at shoulder level, angular bent at elbow, forearm extending in front of body. Hand bent downwards at wrist,



cupformed, fingers spread. Fingers make rapid flashing movements (=vigorous lightning). Head leaned slightly forward, brows wrinkled, eyes closed, mouth wide opened with corners maximally drawn to the sides (=dread). Variation: Right hand instead of left hand. If standing same sign as above, but feet shuffle around.

193. TIRED (logho)

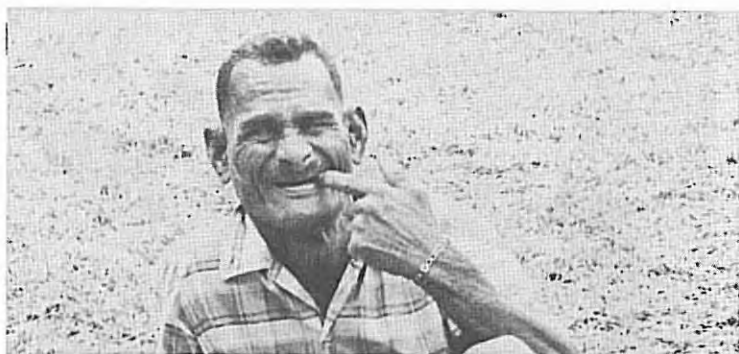
Sign: Sits relaxed with crossed legs; arms resting in lap, breathes heavily in and out.

194. TODAY, NOW (te 'aso nei)

Sign: Left hand, pronated position, touches ground in small rapid beats.

195. TOOTH (niho)

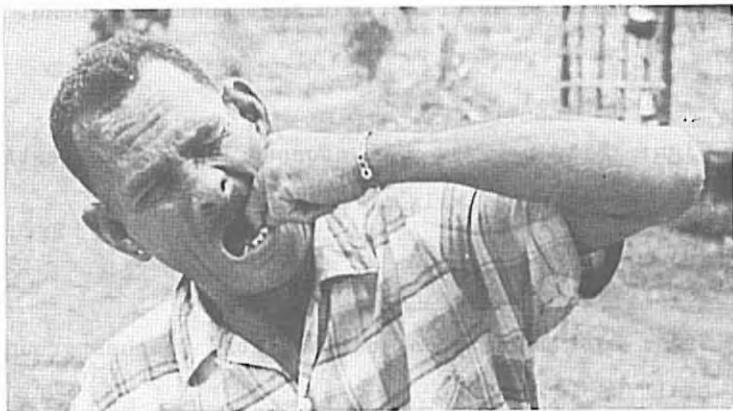
Sign: Left hand's index finger moves across the row of teeth.



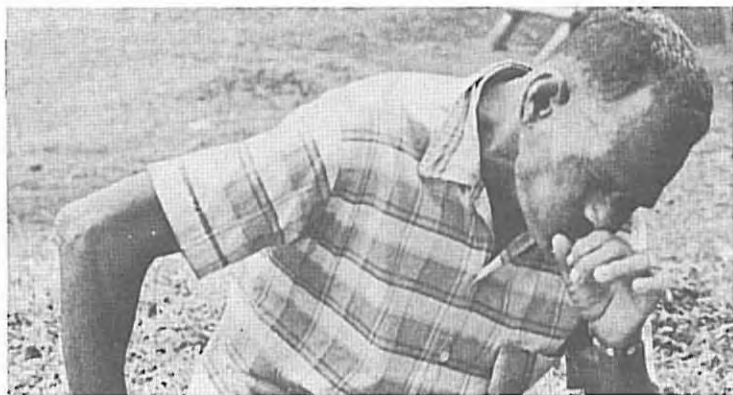
196. TOOTHACHE (masaki niho)

Sign: Mouth wide opened. Left hand's thumb and index finger grasps one of the teeth. Head leaned towards right shoulder; forehead wrinkled; eyes closed.

Comment: See also tooth (sign 195).

197. TUBERCULOSIS (tibi)

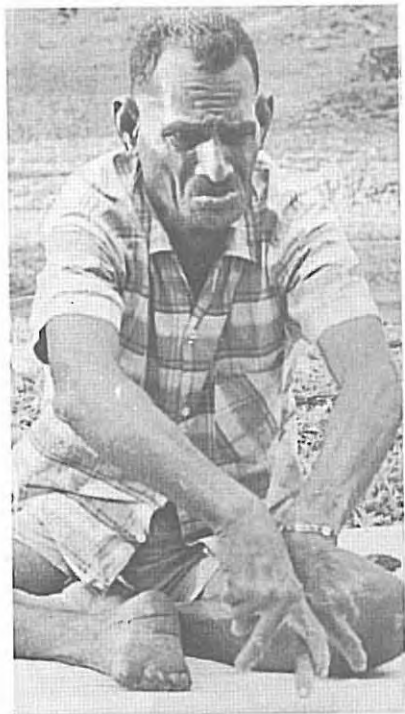
Sign: Exaggerated fit of coughing. Radial side of



hand held in front of mouth. Head bent forward. Body moves to and fro following the beat of the fits of coughing.

198. TURTLE (honu)

Denotation: Turtle's undulating swimming movement.



Sign: Both hands held in front of body in pronated position. Hands touch each other at radial sides. Index and second fingers extended from fists; right index

finger on top  
of left index  
finger. Hands  
perform undu-  
lating motions  
away from body.



199. URINATE, FEMALE (mimi te hahine)



101

Denotation: (1. position) Female hitching up their lavalava. (2. position) sitting position of females.  
Sign: (1. position) Both hands slide up on outside of thigh, at the same time hitching up the lavalava. (2. position) Squats with feet a few inches apart. Both hands hold lavalava in between legs. Purses up his lips.

Comment: Rennellese do not use lavatories a la western style. Special areas behind each settlement are laid out as a defecation place, one for men and one for women.

200. VAGINA (tobigha hahine)

Sign: Left hand held in supinated position in front of body; ulnar side towards signer. Third or fourth finger is stuck between thumb and index finger (=clitoris).

201. VENERAL DISEASE (masaki sege)

Denotation: Penis is painful after sexual intercourse with a woman having a venereal disease.

Sign: Same sign as copulate (see sign 35). Index finger of right hand is drawn out of opening in left hand. Forehead wrinkled, teeth bared and clenched (=pain).

202. VERTICAL CLIFF (tiha)

Denotation: A person climbing a cliff from landside trying to find a way down the steep cliff to the water side. He cannot find it and goes back the way he came.



Sign: Left forearm held in a vertical position upright in front of body at chest level. Fingers stretched, palm facing signer. Right hand's index finger slides along volar side of left forearm and along palm. Reaching the fingertips right index finger moves from one fingertip to the other (=searching a trail down the steep cliff). Index finger moves down dorsal side of left hand's first fingerjoints, then moves same way back to volar side of elbow.



203. VOMIT (gua)

Sign: Both hands' palm pressed against stomach. Shoulders upheaved and upper part of body bent forward in jerk-like movements. Mouth opened.

204. WAKE UP ('aga)

Denotation: A person rousing from a sound sleep lightly bewildered.

Sign: (1. position) Body in relaxed position. Head bent forward, eyes closed. (2. position) With a sudden head raises into normal position, eyes open wide, brows raise.

205. WALK (sehu)

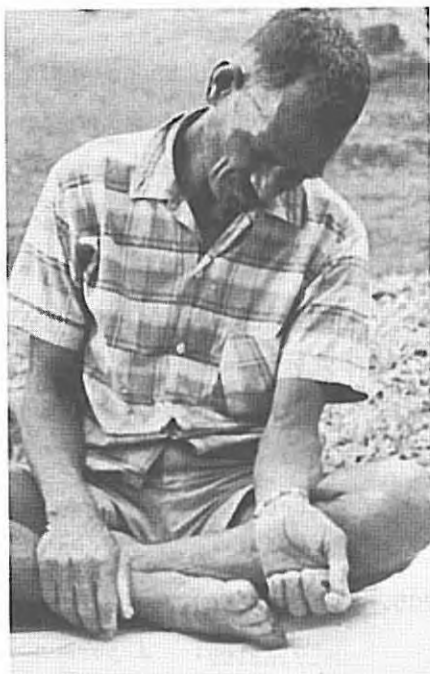
Denotation: A person walking on two legs.



Sign: Both index fingers protrude from fists and touch ground in front of body alternately in a slow movement away from body.

206. WEAK, LAZY (lologi)

Sign: Body in relaxed position; upper part leaning to the left; head bent lightly downwards. Hands resting inactively in lap.

207. WHALE, PORPOISE (tahoga'a)

Denotation: The leaping of a whale or porpoise.

Sign: Right forearm extended in front of right side of body at chest level; ulnar side facing ground. Extended hand and arm perform large undulating movements away from body (=leaping of whale).

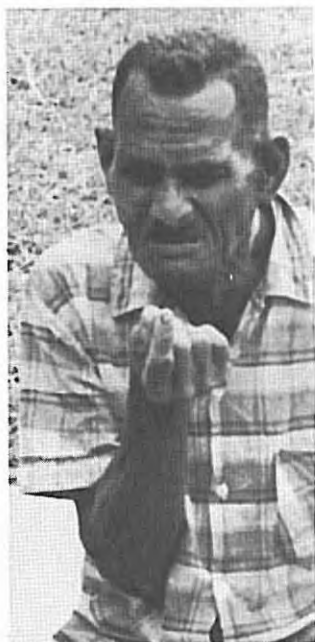
208. WHITE IBIS (taghoa)

Denotation: Ibis searching for food with its long bill.

Sign: Left extended index finger is pressed into ground in front of body several times.

209. WHITE PERSON (pegea susugu)

Denotation: Indicating long nose, gesticulation with index finger while talking, parting of hair.



Sign: (1. position) Right hand's thumb and index finger grasps wing of nose and slides down to tip of nose and continuous movement approximately 10 centimetres below nose. (2. position) Raises index finger of right fist and moves it back and forth in front of right side of head. Mouth moves simultaneously (=scolding and reprimanding behavior). (3. position) Both palms are placed on head, ulnar sides of hands approximately there where parting of the hair use to be. Both hands

are pressed away from each other (=parting of hair).

Variation: Sign for long nose is sometimes made by moving dorsal side of right index finger back and forth underneath of nose. The sign for white man sometimes exist of only 1. position and 2. position, or 1. position and 3. position.



210. WOMAN (hahine)

Denotation: Bosom of woman.



Sign: Both hands grasp area around nipples and make a rolling movement downwards. Upper part of body bends

lightly forwards at the same time.

Variation: Only one hand performs the movement.

Comment: See comments on page 27; see also mourning woman (sign 128).

211. WOMAN DEFECATING (hahine titiko)



Sign: Assumes a squatting position, legs widely apart; knees fairly close to each other. Both hands grasps lavalava between legs. Lips widened, nose and forehead wrinkled.

212. WOMAN OF A PLEASANT DISPOSITION (hahine ina gaoi)

Denotation: A woman who (1) works hard, (2) keeps herself clean, and (3) sleeps at night instead of going for adventures.

Sign: (1. position) Same sign as clearing undergrowth (sign 99). (2. position) Palms of both hands move around upper part of body, arms, and face in an accidental manner. (3. position) Sign for sleep (see sign 170).

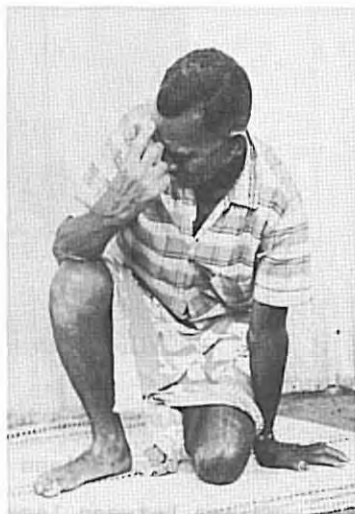
Variation: Instead of the usual sign for sleep, the signer place his whole body on ground in sleeping position,

Comment: This sign contains all the virtues attached to a woman in the old days.

213. WORSHIP (songi 'anga)

Denotation: Kneeling as during worship.

Sign: Kneels down on left knee. Right elbow on top of right knee; hand supports forward bent head by touching forehead. Head lightly turned to the right.



## 214. YANDINA, PLACE NAME IN THE BRITISH SOLOMON ISLANDS

Denotation: Making copra.

Sign: Left hand in supinated position in front of body at waist level; hand lightly cupped (=half a coconut). Right fist, volar side facing signer, scrape with knuckles left



hand's palm (=scraping off the meat of the coconut).

Comment: Rennellese men going to Yandina went there to work in copra plantations. Kagobai himself went to work there once.

## 215. YES, AGREE ('oo)

Sign: Nodds with head downwards.

Comment: Probably an imitation of Euroamerican behavior since nodding with head as expression of the affirmative was unknown in the old culture.

216. YESTERDAY (anaahi)

Sign: Left hand's index finger and thumb raised into the air from fist. Hand held in front of right side of body at chest level; palm facing signer. Right hand's

index finger, protruding from fist, touches left index finger which bends into palm of left hand. Right index finger then touches left hand's thumb which clenches into fist. Left hand is now a clenched fist.

217. YOUNG PERSON (tamatama)

Denotation: A strong superior person.



1. position: strong person



2. position: superior person

Sign: (1. position) Right fist, volar side towards body, placed at left collar-bone. Left forearm maximally bent at elbow in such a way that fist almost 10 centimetres above left shoulder (=carrying something heavy



on shoulder). (2. position, sitting) Both fists placed in front of knees; arms extended. Lips slightly protruded, eyes half-closed (=strong man satisfied with himself).



## 3.0 INDEX OF RENNELLESE WORDS REFERRING TO SIGNS

Numbers refer to the sign number under which  
the word occurs

## A

	binu	44
'aamonga 'aatea	boga	99
151	buka	14
Aaron Taupongi		
1		

'aga 204

'agito 58

ahiahi 3

'aitu 74

aka o te tapaago 154

akui 32

anaahi 216

'ao 'atea 118

'api 98

'api pegea 39

'aso nei 194

a'u 33

## B

baaisaisa 42, 130

ba'e 104

baghigho 25

Baibolo 14

bai mouku 45

bai uu 19

baka 'atua 8

baka 'eha 24

bakagege 4

baka hakaama 24

bego na kaui 63

## E

'ei 35

engini 50

## G

ga 'aa 181

ga 'aa page 2

ga 'akau 190

gagama 131

gangi 169

gango 65

gaoi 76

gau 'ugu 82

gaungutu 106

gepo 175

gima 7

Giusanga, hosa o Moa 72

goo 6

gotomaga'e 153

gua 203

guani 163

gupe 135

## G

ghaasi i te 'ao 60  
 ghaasi i te poo 61  
 ghali 54

## H

hage gau niu 93  
 hage hakahuahua 94  
 hage hatukaso 95  
 hage sogi 94  
 hahine 210  
 hahine ina gaoi 212  
 hahine magepe 128  
 hahine mimi 199  
 hahine titiko 211  
 hai 178  
 haihenua 162  
 hai kaui i te uka 62  
 hai 'uga i te kupenga 27  
 hakahua 142  
 hakamasi'inga 110  
 hakasapa 22  
 hakatangi 5  
 hakataupapa 165  
 hano ki te manaha 75  
 hatahata 90  
 hatu 180  
 hatutigi 192  
 he'e kitea 107  
 hegeu 184  
 hetu'u 176  
 hiti 86  
 Hokobini (Ian Hogbin) 87

Honiala 89  
 honu 198  
 hosa o Kasipa 174  
 hou 115  
 hua 'eha 15  
 huhu 183  
 huti 11

## I

i gaa 'aso 140  
 'igaamutu 168  
 'igo'igo 100  
 'ika'ika 5  
 isu 133  
 'ita 51

## K

kagae 182  
 kaia'a 177  
 kaiahi 171  
 kai tapu 88  
 kaokao 167  
 kataha 68  
 kaui 59  
 kege 81  
 kiba 99  
 kii 105  
 kimoa 136  
 kolikoli 41  
 kunga ghaighai 155  
 Kuselo 101  
 kutu 108

## L

lae 147  
 laka 64  
 Lamputi (S.M.Lambert) 102  
 leti 103  
 logho 193  
 lologi 206

moana 'atua 156  
 moana magino 23  
 moe 170  
 moko 71  
 motu 13  
 Mugaba 152  
 Mugiki 13  
 mutie 78

## M

maagaohie 79  
 maahina 121  
 maahina kaatoa 121[G]  
 maahina tu'u 121[A]  
 maakona 69  
 maganga'e 67  
 magheghe 189  
 mahoata 122  
 Makaleke (Gordon MacGregor) 109  
 makau 49  
 mamae 137  
 mamiapu 141  
 manu gege 16  
 mango 164  
 masaki 166  
 masaki haahine 117  
 masaki niho 196  
 masaki sege 201  
 masaki tu'a 10  
 masaki 'ugu 85  
 mata 53  
 mimi te hahine 199

## N

namu 124  
 niho 195  
 nga'esu 158  
 ngata 172  
 ngutu 129

## O

ogo 127  
 ongea 91  
 'oo 216

## P

paito 34  
 paghabu 73  
 paolo 29  
 pegea hakaene 12  
 pegea kibi 17

pegea mate 40  
 pegea susugu 209  
 pegea uga 146  
 peka 66  
 po 'ao 120  
 polio 145  
 polo 31  
 poo 52  
 punu 139  
 pusikati 26

## S

Sapani 97  
 sasabe see gagama  
 sasaga 159  
 sasaga na upo 92  
 sehu 205  
 si 'ai 132  
 siku ngutu 28  
 sogi 'anga 214

## T

taapea 161  
 taba 77  
 taginga 46  
 tago 185  
 taghoa 208  
 taha 'ata 123  
 tahoga 'a 207  
 takanga 113  
 takisi 187

takotonga 80  
 tamagiki 30  
 tamana 55  
 tamatama 217  
 tanu te niu 144  
 tanu te huti 143  
 tanu tago 186  
 tangata 111  
 tangata titiko 112  
 ta 'okete 20  
 tapungao 173  
 tau 36  
 tauiku 134  
 tau ma 'aa 96  
 Taupongi, Aaron 1  
 tau tamana 56  
 tau tinana 126  
 tau tuhahine 21  
 Tebegi 188  
 tege 157  
 tibi (TB) 197  
 tigi na hatu 37  
 tiha 202  
 tina 'e 179  
 tinana 125  
 tino 18  
 titiko, hahine 211  
 titiko, tangata 112  
 tobigha hahine 200  
 tokitoki 43  
 tongahiti 116  
 totou 114  
 tu 'a 9  
 tua te ga 'akau 57

tugi 83  
 tugihono 160  
 tuma'atasi 121[B]  
 tunihenua 148  
 tu'uguaa poo 119

## U

u'a 191  
 'ua 150  
 ualasi 149  
 'ugu 84

uguhia 38  
 'uhigaba 138  
 'uiga see hatutigi  
 'umu 47  
 'umanga 70  
 upo 48

## Y

Yandina 214





## 4.0 INDEX OF ENGLISH WORDS REFERRING TO SIGNS

Numbers refer to the sign number under which  
the word occurs

A		
Aaron Taupongi	1	broadcasting 149
afternoon, early	2	brother, classificatory, elder than signer or speaker 20
afternoon, late	3	brother-sister relationship 21
agree	216	buttock 22
airplane	4	
angry	5	
ant	6	C
arm	7	
assistant to priest-chief	8	calm sea 23
aversion	42	canoe with outrigger 24
avoidance, brother-sister	21	canoe, large 25
		cardinal honey eater 25
		cat 26
		catching lobster 27
		cheek 28
		chest, human 90
		chicken 29
		children 30
		church 94
		clearing undergrowth 99
		cliff, vertical 202
		coconut 31
		coconut palm, planting of 144
		coconut crab 32
		come 33
		communicate 184
		complain 5
		cookhouse 34
		copulate 35
		count 36
B		
back	9	
backache	10	
banana	11	
banana, planting of	143	
beggar	12	
Bellona Island	13	
belly	179	
Bible	14	
big	15	
bird	16	
blind person	17	
body	18	
body, side of human	167	
book	14	
breast, female	19	

country, remote 151  
 crush stones 37  
 crazy 38  
 crescent moon 121[B]  
 crowd 39

## D

dead person 40  
 defecate, as one having diarrhea 41  
 defecate, man 112  
 defecate, woman 211  
 diarrhea, defecate as one having 41  
 disgust 42  
 dislike 42  
 dog 43  
 drink 44  
 drinking-water, as in  
   pools in the bush 45

## E

ear 46  
 earth oven 47  
 eel 48  
 eel, hunting 92  
 enemy 49  
 engine 50  
 envy 51  
 evening, early 52  
 eye 53

## F

faraway place 151

fast 54  
 father 55  
 father and son/daughter 56  
 feel bad 130  
 fell a tree 57  
 Ficus tree, root of 154  
 fine 76  
 firefly 58  
 fish 59  
 fish spearing 63  
 fishing with goggles  
   at daytime 60  
 fishing with goggles  
   at night 61  
 fishing with line  
   and hook 62  
 flower 64  
 fly 65  
 flying fish, netting 131  
 flying fox 66  
 fog 120  
 forehead 67  
 foreigner 116  
 friends, making 110  
 frigate bird 68  
 full moon 121[C]  
 full up 69

## G

garden 70  
 gecko 71  
 Giusanga, son of Moa 72  
 goby fish 73  
 God in Heaven 74  
 going to one's own  
   settlement 75

good 76  
 goshawk 77  
 grass 78  
 grateful 79  
 grave 80  
 ground 81  
  
 H  
  
 hair of head 82  
 hard of hearing 83  
 head 84  
 headache 85  
 hen 29  
 hill 127  
hiti-population 86  
 Hogbin, Ian 87  
 holy communion 88  
 Honiara 89  
 human chest 90  
 hungry 91  
 hunting eels 92  
 hurt 137  
 hut made out of  
     coconut leaves 93  
 hut with curved,  
     vertical rafters 94  
 hut with lashed,  
     non-curved rafters 95

# I

in-laws 96  
 intelligent 100  
 islets, small 13

# J

Japanese 97

# K

kinsmen of same lineage  
     and generation of  
     classificatory siblings 98  
 knife 99  
 know 100  
 Kuschel, Rolf 101

# L

Lambert, S.M. 102  
 large 15  
 late for work, be 103  
 lazy 206  
 leg 104  
 let wind 105  
 lightning see thunderstorm  
 lip 106  
 lobster, catching 27  
 lost 107  
 louse 108

# M

MacGregor, Gordon 109  
 making friends 110  
 man 111  
 man defecating 112  
 marriage 113  
 masturbate, male 114  
 masturbate, female 115

Melanesian 116  
 menstruation 117  
 midday 118  
 midnight 119  
 missing 107  
 mist 120  
 money 187  
 moocher 12  
 moon 121  
 moon, crescent 121[B]  
 moon, full 121[C]  
 moon, new 121[A]  
 morning 122  
 morning, early 123  
 mosquito 124  
 mother 125  
 mother classificatory,  
     and daughter, son  
     or son in-law 126  
 mountain 127  
 mourning woman 128  
 mouth 129

## N

nauseated 130  
 netting flying fish by  
     torchlight 131  
 new moon 121[A]  
 no 132  
 nose 133  
 not seen 107  
 now 194

## O

OK 76  
 old person 134  
 old time 140  
 outboard motor 50

## P

Pacific pigeon 135  
 Pacific rat 136  
 pain 137  
 panna 138  
 paralyze fish with Derris vine 139  
 past 140  
 pawpaw 141  
 pay money 187  
 people, many 39  
 person, blind 17  
 person, dead 40  
 person of low social status 163  
 person of prominence 142  
 person, old 134  
 person, redskinned 146  
 person, white 209  
 person, young 217  
 pigeon, Pacific 135  
 place, rocky 155  
 planting a banana palm 143  
 planting a coconut palm 144  
 pleased 79  
 polio 145  
 Polynesian 146  
 poor 147

porpoise 207  
 priest-chief 148  
 priest-chief, assistant to 8  
 sick 166  
 side of human body 167  
 sister's son or daughter, classificatory 168

## R

radio 149  
 rain 150  
 rat, Pacific 136  
 remote country 151  
 Rennell 152  
 Rennellese 146  
 ritual ground in  
     front of house 153  
 rob 177  
 root of Ficus tree 154  
 rocky place 155  
 rough sea 156  
 run 157

## S

saliva 158  
 satisfied 79  
 sea, calm 23  
 search 159  
 sea, rough 156  
 sea snake in the Lake 160  
 sea snake, particolored 161  
 second priest-chief 162  
 servant 163  
 shark 164  
 ship 165

sky 169  
 sleep 170  
 smoke 171  
 snake 172  
 sole of the foot 173  
 son of Kaspar 174  
 speak 184  
 spit 158  
 spy 175  
 star 176  
 steal 177  
 sting-ray 178  
 stomach 179  
 stone 180  
 stones, crashing of 37  
 stranger 116  
 sun 181  
 swamphen 182  
 swear 183

## T

talk 184  
 taro 185  
 taro planting 186  
 tax 187  
 Tebegi 188  
 thin 189  
 transmitter 149  
 tree 190

tree, fell a 57  
 throat 191  
 thunder see thunderstorm  
 thunderstorm 192  
 tired 193  
 today 194  
 tooth 195  
 toothache 196  
 tuberculosis 197  
 turtle 198

## U

understand 100  
 urinate, female 199

## V

vagina 200  
 venereal disease 201  
 vertical cliff 202  
 vomit 203

## W

wake up 204  
 walk 205  
 watch 175  
 weak 206  
 widow 128  
 whale 207  
 white ibis 208  
 white person 209  
 woman 210  
 woman, defecating 211  
 woman, mourning 128  
 woman of a pleasant  
     disposition 212  
 worship 213

## Y

Yandina 214  
 yes 215  
 yesterday 216  
 young person 217

## 5.0 NOTES

1. The research was conducted with financial support from the Danish Research Council and the Psychological Laboratory, University of Copenhagen, to whom I convey my sincere thanks.

Thanks are also due to Grethe Hein and Jack Byman. Grethe Hein undertook the demanding task of translate into words what Kagobai formulated with his hands. With patience and zeal Jack Byman attempted to redo Kagobai's signs from the verbal description and often contributed valuable corrections.

I am very grateful to Dr. William C. Stokoe, Jr, Gallaudet College, Washington DC., Dr. Torben Monberg and Lars von der Lieth, University of Copenhagen, who have read the manuscript and offered valuable criticism.

The introduction was translated by Ebbe Kjerstrup whom I want to thank for his dependable accuracy in the translation.

2. In an earlier publication (Kuschel, 1973) the deaf man's name was spelled in the Bellonese language as Kangobai. In accordance with Rennellese pronunciation it should be written as Kagobai.

3. For more details about Kagobai's social integration see Kuschel, 1973.

4. For a specification of the fauna mentioned in this book see Christiansen (forthcoming); Elbert (forthcoming), and Kuschel (forthcoming).

5. For further details about the catching of coconut crabs see Kuschel (forthcoming, NA9[B]).





## 6.0 REFERENCES

- Bateson, Gregory. Steps to an Ecology of Mind. Balantine Books, New York, 1972.
- Basedow, Herbert. The Australian Aboriginal. Adelaide, F.W.Preece and Sons, 1925:chapter XXXI.
- Berndt, R.M. "Notes on the Sign-Language of the Jaralde Tribe of the Lower River Murray, South Australia." Transactions of the Royal Society of South Australia, 1940, Vol. 64, part 2, 267-272.
- Christiansen, Sofus. Subsistence on Bellona Island (Mungiki), forthcoming.
- Curr, Edward M. "The Australian Race: Its Origin, Languages, Customs, Place of Landing in Australia, and the Routes by which it Spread Itself over that Continent." John Ferres, Government Printer, Melbourne and Trubner and Co., Ludgate Hill, London 1886-87, Volume I-III.
- Elbert, Samuel H. Dictionary of the Language of Rennell and Bellona. The Danish National Museum Copenhagen, forthcoming(a).
- Elbert, Samuel H. Grammar of the Language of Rennell and Bellona, forthcoming (b)

Elbert, Samuel H., and Monberg, Torben. From the Two Canoes. Oral Traditions of Rennell and Bellona Islands. Language and Culture of Rennell and Bellona Islands: Volume I. Honolulu and Copenhagen: Danish National Museum in Cooperation with the University of Hawaii Press, 1965.

Guppy, H.B. The Solomon Islanders and Their Natives. London, 1887.

Haddon, A.C. "The Gesture Language of the Eastern Islanders." In Haddon (ed.) Reports of the Cambridge Anthropological Expedition to Torres Straits. Cambridge, University Press, 1907, Vol. 3:261-262.

Hoffman, Walter J. "Graphic Art of the Eskimo." In U.S. National Museum Annual Report, Washington, 1895: 739-968.

Howitt, A.W. "Note on the Use of Gesture Language in Australian Tribes." In Proceedings: Australian Association for the Advancement of Science, 1890, 2:637-646.

Howitt, A.W. The Native Tribes of South-East Australia. London, MacMillan and Co, Ltd., 1904.

Kuschel, Rolf. "The Silent Inventor: The Creation of a Sign Language by the Only Deaf-Mute on a Polynesian Island." Sign Language Studies, 1973, 3:1-27.

Kuschel, Rolf. Animal Stories from Bellona Island. Danish National Museum, Copenhagen, forthcoming.

- Kuschel, Rolf and Monberg, Torben. " 'We Don't Talk Much About Colour Here'. A Study of Colour Semantics on Bellona Island." Man, 1974, 9:213-242.
- Love, J.R. "Worora Kinship Gestures." Transactions of the Royal Society of South Australia, Proceedings, 1941, 165:108-109.
- Meggitt, Mervyn. "Sign Language among the Walbiri of Central Australia." Oceania, 1954, XXV:2-16.
- Monberg, Torben. "Research on Rennell and Bellona." Folk, 1960, 2:71-82.
- Monberg, Torben. "Crisis and Mass Conversion on Rennell Island in 1938." The Journal of the Polynesian Society, 1962, 71:145-150.
- Monberg, Torben. The Religion of Bellona Island. A Study of the Place of Beliefs and Rites in the Social Life of Pre-Christian Bellona. Part 1: The Concepts of Supernaturals. Language and Culture of Rennell and Bellona Islands: Vol. II, Part 1. Copenhagen: The National Museum of Denmark, 1966.
- Monberg, Torben. "Fathers were not Genitors." (In press).
- Mountford, G.P. "Gesture Language of the Ngada Tribe of the Warburton Ranges, Western Australia." Oceania, 1938-1939, IX:152-155.

Mountford, Charles P. "Gesture Language of the Walpatri Tribe, Central Australia. " Transactions of the Royal Society of South Australia, 1950, 73:100-101.

Müller, Günter. "Über die geographische Verbreitung einiger Gebärden im östlichen Mittelmeergebiet und dem nahen Orient." Zeitschrift für Ethnologie, 1939, 71:99-102.

Quedenfeldt, M. "Verständigung durch Zeichen und das Gebärdenspiel bei den Marokkanern." Zeitschrift für Ethnologie, 1890, 22:329-331.

Roth, Walter, E. "Ethnological Studies among the North-West Central Queensland Aborigines." Brisbane and London, 1897.

Saitz, Robert, L. and Cervenka, Edward, J. Handbook of Gestures. Mouton, The Hague and Paris, 1972.

Schlesinger, I.M. "Research Proposal on the Development of Signs." Mimeographed, no date.

Schlesinger, I.M. "A Proposal for a New Dictionary of Sign Language." Mimeographed, January, 1970.

Stirling, E.C. "Anthropology." In Spencer, Baldwin (ed.) Report on the Work of the Horn Scientific Expedition to Central Australia. London and Melbourne, 1896, Part IV, 1-160.

Stokoe, William C. Semiotics and Human Sign Language. Mouton, The Hague and Paris, 1972.

Warner, Lloyd, W. A Black Civilization. A Social Study of an Australian Tribe. Harper and Brothers, 1937.

Wolff, Torben (ed.) The Natural History of Rennell Island, British Solomon Islands. Scientific Results of the Danish Rennell Expedition, 1951 and the British Museum (Natural History) Expedition, 1953. Danish Science Press, Ltd., 1958-1970, Vol. 1-6.

Wolff, Torben. "The Fauna of Rennell and Bellona, Solomon Islands." Phil. Trans. Roy. Soc. 1969, B255, 321-343.

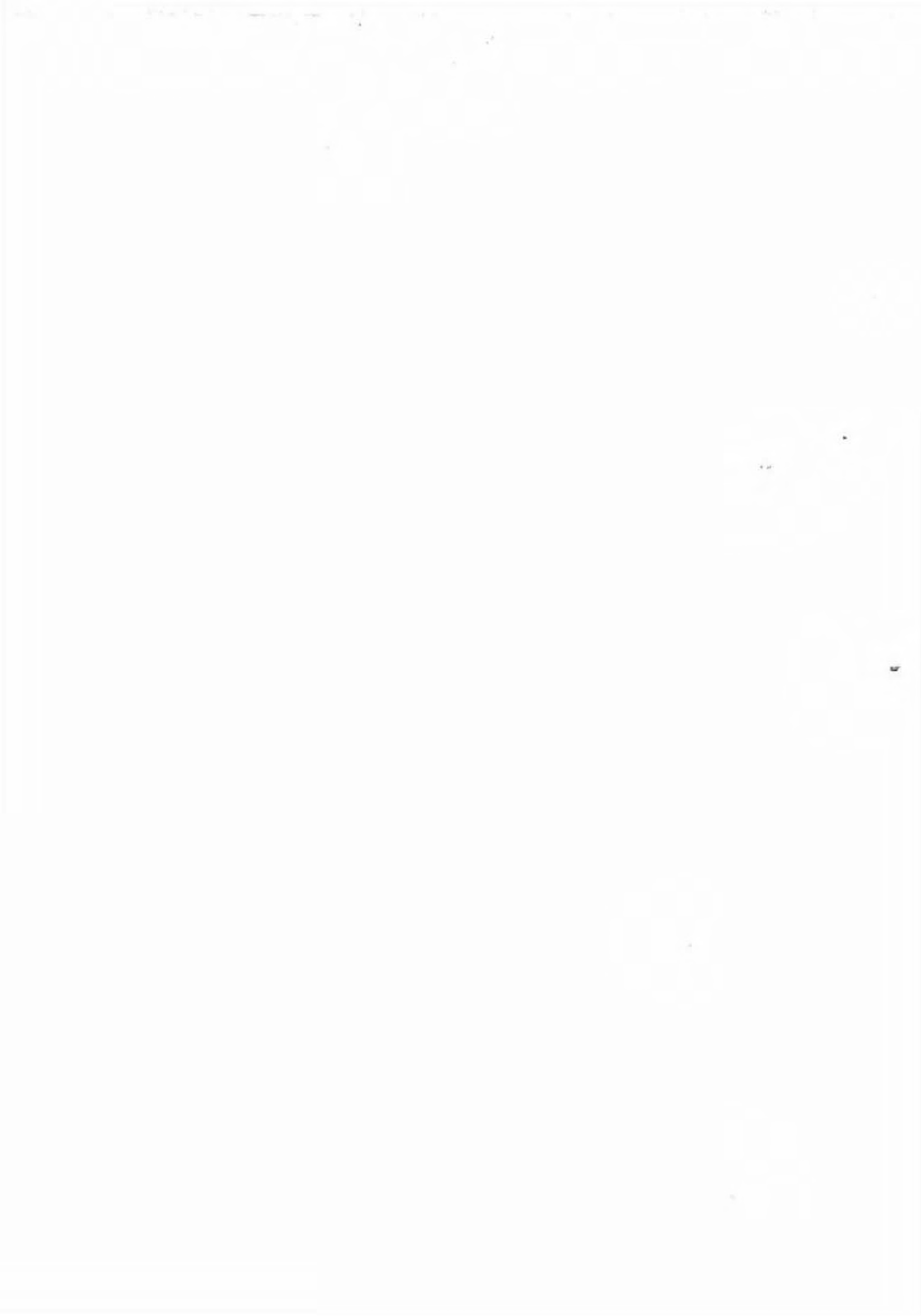












Liste over tidligere udsendte skrifter i  
Psykologisk Skriftserie.

- nr. 1 Skalainvariante sandsynlighedsmodeller  
Benny Karpatschof, marts 1971
- nr. 2 Personlighed og tænkning  
Arne Friemuth Petersen, juni 1971
- nr. 3 Funktionel interaktion i det visuelle system  
B. Karpatschof, O.E. Rasmussen,  
J. Rattleff, august 1972
- nr. 4 Non verbal kommunikation,  
en seminar rapport, marts 1973
- nr. 5 Om sansning og perception,  
Claus Bundesen, februar 1974
- nr. 6 Æstetikens psykologi, dens maya og  
prolegomena,  
Bjarne Sode Funch, marts 1974
- nr. 7 Tvillingers sprogforsinkelse,  
en teori og en udviklingsundersøgelse,  
Preben Kihl, marts 1974



