

SIKARI TRIBE FROM PAPUA NEW GUINEA: LANGUAGES ORIGIN STORY

“In the beginning, all people lived around a great ironwood tree in the jungle, speaking the same language. One man whose testes were enormously swollen from infection with a parasitic worm spent his time sitting on a branch of the tree, so that he could rest his heavy testes on the ground. Out of curiosity, animals of the jungle came up and sniffed at his testes. Hunters then found the animals easy to kill, and everyone had plenty of food and was happy.”

“Then, one day, a bad man killed a beautiful woman’s husband, in order to get the woman for himself. Relatives of the dead husband attacked the murderer, who was defended in turn by his own relatives, until the murderer and his relatives climbed into the ironwood tree to save themselves. The attackers tugged on lianas hanging from one side of the tree, in order to pull the tree’s crown down towards the ground and get at their enemies.”

“Finally, the lianas snapped in half, causing the tree to spring back with tremendous force. The murderer and his relatives were hurled out of the tree in many different directions. They landed so far away, in so many different places, that they never found each other again. With time, their languages became more and more divergent. That is why people today speak so many different languages and cannot understand each other, and why it is hard work for hunters to catch animals for food.”

That story was related to me by Sikari people, a tribe of six hundred New Guineans.

Diamond, Jared (2012: 209) *The World Until Yesterday: What Can We Learn From Traditional Societies?* Penguin, New York.

KNOWLEDGE QUESTIONS

- **Well, is there such a thing as religion?**
- **Is belief in God a pre-requisite for being religious?**
- **Formulate a Knowledge Question of your own on any aspect Religious Knowledge Systems. Write it down and add the names of the triad before submitting your paper to the teacher.**