

Tabwewa account of the coming of the Beru settlers.

Auriaria was about to rest upon his land of Banaba, so he began to set it in order. He overturned it; he capsized it; he cut off the southern end of it, and threw it away to eastward; it fell in the sea, and lo, it became the island of Tamana.

And after that, Auriaria set a fence around his land (i.e., the fringing reef); he set a guard of canoes about it. Not a strange canoe must come near the land: if one appeared, it perished; if another appeared, it perished.

But after a time, a canoe from Beru appeared, and the people on it were Na-kouteba, and Na-mani-ni-mate, and Nei Angi-ni-maeao, and Nei Te-borata.

That canoe did Auriaria allow to approach; he brought it to shore, for he wished to make his land more populous thereby.

And at the first coming of the people of that canoe, they had no wives. They were able to marry only when they met with the people of Auriaria, even the Bu-n-anti (the breed of spirits), on Banaba. And the man Na-kouteba got his wife from Tabwewa, from among the people of Auriaria, nke e a nakonako n otobong when he had gone to appoint a day i-ao-ni marae-ia. (i.e., after he had appointed a day to meet them on their marae. on the marae of Tabwewa).

And this was what the canoe from Beru did, when first it came to Banaba from over the sea: it came to shore, and its people hastened to measure out the foreshore in a circle around the island; and they divided it up, and took every man his share thereof. Each man was master of his portion. And while they were busied with measuring out the foreshore, Auriaria watched them encircle the island. Then he parted from them and went to his own place of Tabwewa and they came ashore, and they sought their wives from among the inhabitants of Banaba. And afterwards, they again met together with Auriaria at the place called Aurakeia, and they made a council with him.

And this was the judgement made in that council. Each man who came from over the sea should be master of his portion of the foreshore. But as for us of Tabwewa the first people of Banaba, the true inhabitants of the land, we abided our time, and our time arrived.

Our time arrived for the things that came out of the sea. Ours was the right of the wa-n-tieke (canoes that board strange vessels), when a voyaging canoe arrived. For if perchance a strange craft came to Uma, we alone might go to aboard it, we of Tabwewa; and none had the right to prevent us in what we did. And if presents came from the stranger, they were ours. And so it was until even latter times; for if something fell from a ship, such as a water barrel, we could take it as our own if it stranded on the foreshore, and none could prevent us.

And again, if the turtle or the urua-fish or the porpoise or the whale were stranded on the shoal, it was brought to us, for it was our food, and none might prevent us.

This was the custom before us, in an early generation, and it has been so until now.

This is the history of us, the people of Tabwewa.

(Given by Nei Te-oti-n-taake of Tabwewa; aged about 70)

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