

see pp. 7 and 8
att. 3

Traditional Origins of the Maneaba.

It is convenient to open this section with the traditions relating to the Butaritari and Makin Maneaba, since they lead up to the tale concerning the establishment of the Southern styles.

Reference to the traditions of the immigration into the Gilberts from Samoa, ~~exhibited elsewhere,~~ will show that, the ancestral tree of Samoa having been broken, the Red Tailed Tropic Bird, which lived on its crest, flew northwards to Totoronga and began to eat the people of that place. Totoronga is the ancient name of the Gilbert Island now called Makin; it is still attached to a desolate stony point at the northern end of the atoll. A detailed Butaritari version of this tradition ~~in~~ ~~my possession~~ relates that the bird settled among the branches of a tree called Taras^kai^kmate, on a small islet called Te^fnaunga^matabu (the holy hill), where there was a beautiful bathing pool. Beside the bathing pool stood a maneaba, where people went to dance. When these went down to bathe in the pool, they were eaten by the Tropic Bird.

After a time came the goddess Titua^abine, also from Samoa, looking for the Tropic Bird, which belonged to her. On hearing from the people of the place how it was behaving, she told them how to kill it, and when it was dead, went to bury it herself. Then she planted over the grave a young coconut palm, and when this was done, went with all the people to dance in the maneaba.

There came a night, after many days of rejoicing, when the inmates of the maneaba were astonished and terrified to see a red light glowing in the eastern side of the building. They saw that it was a man of gigantic stature, whose body and hair gave out this meata.^x

Em Te meata is the name of the dull copper (not crimson) glow just as the last sunset goes.

(2)

They tried to catch him but he ran away, ^{and} but after this had happened several nights in succession, they chased the visitor, and found that he lived with a host of brothers in the branches of the tree where the Tropic Bird had dwelt. He told them that he and all his brood had grown from the head of the bird, when it was buried. They took him to the maneaba, where the goddess Titua^abine named him Koura, at the same time giving names to his brothers: ~~the~~ Koura-iti, Iti-ni-Koura, Rube-ni-Koura, Koura-mwe, Koura-Ta^amoa, Kouraⁿ-te-taake, Kouraⁿ-Tarawa. All these were riba^aura (red in complexion).

It was found later that a race of women had also grown from the young coconut palm planted by Titua^abine over the grave of the Tropic Bird. Their names were Nei Riki, Nei Temarewe, Nei Teba^arae, Nei Nowi, and Nei Tarabainang. With these women the red people married and procreated.

Koura was made Uea of the island, and in commemoration of this, the old maneaba standing on ~~Te~~^{Te}^Mnaunga^atabu (~~the holy hill~~) was destroyed and a new one of immense size erected in the same spot. The tale reports it to have been more than a hundred fathoms long and more than fifty fathoms wide.

The new building was called Koura's maneaba, and had the special name of Makuaⁿ-te^rrara (the high tide-of-blood), in reminiscence of the Tropic Bird's slaughter of the inhabitants. By this name the style is known at the present day.

Thus far, the tradition accounts for the establishment of the type of building now used on the two islands. According to the evidence, the inhabitants of Makin already had some sort of maneaba before the arrival of the Tropic Bird from Samoa. From the account of the doings of this ^{bird} creature, we are obviously to understand that the island was invaded by a party of immig-

Ko = Thou. Ura = red or burn.

3

-rants from Samoa, whose ^tXotem and ancestor was the Red Tailed Tropic Bird, and whose skin was of a red or copper colour.

The link between the original inhabitants and the immigrants seems to have ^{been} a common cult of the goddess Titua~~bine~~. This is at least suggested by the friendly relations of the deity with both parties.

The immigrants gained the ascendancy over the aboriginals; their chief, Koura, became Uea; and a new maneaba, in the style of the invaders, was erected on the site of the old one. Thus, it is the maneaba of the people from Samoa, which we see today on the two islands.

It was Koura, according to the account, who divided the maneaba into four boti, and allocated these quarters to the four different grades of society, ~~as delineated in the previous section.~~

In the light of this tradition, it seems possible to discern the mechanism by which these four groupings came into being. The disposition of the boti appears to have been the logical result of the conquest of Makin and Butaritari by the immigrant population. Clearly, the Botiⁿ+uea (see diagram) was taken by the chief of the immigrants, Koura, and his circle; and it is again explicitly stated that the third boti, Teanikabaⁱ, was given to those "who were conquered", a phrase which must refer to the original inhabitants of the islands. The intermediate boti of Tabo^kkororo was allocated to the toka (chiefs), who with very little doubt may be supposed to have been immigrant warriors not qualifying for a seat among the royal group. The fourth division, for strangers, would be the natural outcome of a later desire to provide a place for peaceful comers, who would be otherwise be excluded from the social scheme by a strict adherence to the original plan.

If the evidence of tradition has led us to the right conclusion, we are faced with a serious difficulty; ~~which is~~ to explain why the invasion of the Gilbert Islands by a people from Samoa resulted in so simple a scheme of social divisions

on Butaritari and Makin, while on the southerly islands it had no such effects. The multiplicity of the boti ⁱⁿ of the southern maneaba is in strong contrast with the simplicity of the Makin plan.

If the immigration into Butaritari and Makin was part of a general, contemporaneous swarming into the group from Samoa, it ^would seem that only the members of a single social group out of the whole swarm ~~the~~ Tropic Bird group ~~reached~~ reached these two most northerly islands. It is possible that this affords the explanation of the simple ²organisation of society according to grade. The basic division into an upper and a lower class would be a result of a war of conquest. And a pre-existing tendency among the upper class to sub-grouping in the maneaba would easily lead to the separation of the leading chief and his nearest kin from the group of immigrants who were not of his kin. Thus the three clans may have originated; the stranger's clan would follow.

Another solution may be that the migration from Samoa to Makin was not a part of the general invasion of the group, but a separate movement. In this case, while the possession of the maneaba and the boti-scheme stamps the culture of the Tropic Bird folk as a probable ally of that introduced by the immigrants into the southern islands, it is possible that its social ²organisation was in a different stage of development. Thus again might be explained the difference of character between the social groupings of the south and those of the two northern islands; and ~~At present, I must set aside the discussion of the two possibilities suggested for a future chapter, with the remark that~~ ^{there is} evidence of other kinds ^{which} seems to indicate that the Tropic Bird folk were members of an immigration distinct from that into the southern islands.

^{Proceeding with} The tradition of the Tropic Bird maneaba ~~proceeds~~, ^when Koura had apportioned sitting-rooms to all the four classes of people, it was decided to make a voyage to southward. Koura's son and namesake, with a host of other Kouras and their wives, launched their canoe, called "Te Bukinini Benebene" (the tip of a coconut

(5)

leaf) and set out. Butaritari was settled and the maneaba erected there. Missing Marakei, Abaiang, and Tarawa, these people then visited the six islands southward as far as Beru: everywhere, they landed, procreated and left a maneaba. On Beru they stayed: they built their maneaba on the north end of the island, and therein they exalted (neboa) their brother Koura. The process of exaltation seems to have been materially manifested, if the tradition is reliable. Koura was seated upon a square platform, slung by ropes from the ridge-pole of the maneaba, high above the heads of his people.

After a residence of unknown duration upon Beru, the peace of the Tropic Bird folk was broken by the immigration of another race of people from Samoa. The leader of this swarm is given the name of Mata⁺warebwe (Broad-face or Wide-eye) and he was accompanied by many others. Apparently, some sort of peaceful settlement¹ was arranged, for we are told that Koura and his people continued to live in their maneaba until the son ~~son~~ of Matawarebwe, Tane⁺n⁺toa the first, ruled in his father's stead. Then dissension broke out. It is related that the insolence of the Tropic Bird folk grew beyond the endurance of Tane⁺n⁺toa. The story relates that Koura the chief would sit upon his raised platform (bwia) and break wind before the people, at which they would say, 'E tingiting Koura; e rebwerebwe ^h Ki ni Koura'. This custom they forbore not to pursue, even when Tanentoa and his brothers came as guests to visit Koura's maneaba; which caused such offence that Tanentoa appointed the destruction of the visitors. This was achieved by burning them all in their maneaba. Everyone was killed except Koura-iti, who was saved alive by one of the Beruans, and adopted as his child.

There was now, tradition runs, no maneaba on Beru. Therefore Tanentoa the King ordained that a large one should be built at the place called Tabon⁺te⁺bike, in honour of his Grandfather Mata⁺warebwe (Broad-face), who had led the Samoan immigrants into that island. With the help of two spirits, Bou⁺r⁺iki and Bou⁺tabo, called especially from Samoa, the edifice was erected,

and straightway the allocation of sitting-places was begun. Matawarebwe and Tanentoa took the boti of Karongoa+n+uea. Tabuariki was placed at TeBakoa. Te^I-mone was given Te Wiwi; and so on, until all the ancestors knew their sitting-rooms. There remained Kovra-iti, the stranger from Butaritari and Makin who had been saved alive from the killing of the Tropic Bird people: he was given the boti of Keaki in the S.E. corner and there his decendants remain until the present day. Its seems therefore that the social group sitting at Keaki is a representative of the submigration of the Tropic Bird folk from the northern islands to Beru.

From the traditions reviewed we can assume with some certainty that the maneaba called Pabon^Tte^Tbike, a four square building, was brought to Beru by the folk who came from Samoa under the lead of Mata^ewar^ebwe, or Bro^ad-face. Mata^ewar^ebwe was of ^{the} ~~the~~ Karongoa clan: analysis of the tales of the coming from Samoa, made elsewhere shows that Karonga^Tpeople must, ^{at} of the period of Mata^ewar^ebwe, have poured from the south into nearly every island of the Gilberts. It is reasonable to suppose, therefore that the foursquare maneaba was introduced almost universally throughout the group at about this time.

It remains now to discuss the origins of the narrow Tabiang style and the intermediate Maunga^Ttabu type. ~~Evidently~~ The name Maunga^Ttabu (holy hill) seems to ^{Rare ex} be taken from the spot in Makin where the Tropic Bird settled, and so it ^{appears} ~~seems~~ probable that the Koura people spread it through the northerly islands of the group as they migrated from Makin to Beru. But although I believe this to be the case, we cannot, ^{as yet} ~~on the traditions thus far adduced~~ attribute it with certainty to the Tropic Bird folk, since we ^{are} ~~are~~ ^{told} that the aboriginal inhabitants of Makin already had a maneaba at Maunga^Ttabu before the arrival of the Tropic Bird. The doubtful point seems to be settled, ^{however,} by the evidence of the ~~trad~~ tradition connected with a man named Towatu^Tof^TMatang^X.

When the Tropic Bird came to Makin, many of the inhabitants fled, for fear of being eaten. According to a tradition of Tarawa and Nonouti, Towatu was one of these refugees. He fled

F¹m / * also called Towatu - see note

to Tabiteuea, and, settling in the district called Te^foti^rrababa (the Broad Stone), married a wife, Nei Te^bai^bunnaⁿi^karawa. By her he had a son named Tautua, who quarrelled with his parents, and sailed away in anger to a land in the west, called Matang. In Matang, he married Nei Abunaba, the daughter of Rake and Nei Touna. She bore him a child, whom they named Towatu^of^fMatang.

When Towatu of Matang was a man, his parents died. He buried them and took their skulls as drinking vessels. Then he set forth on his canoe 'Kaibo' to eastward. He made land at Beru, and going ashore at Teteirio in the middle of the island, started to make war on the people and to eat the flesh of his victims. This happened in the time of Tanentoa the First.

So Tanentoa the First sent a messenger to Towatu, asking him to go to his maneaba. Towatu went, but as he entered the building a dog belonging to the man Teikake flew at him and bit his leg. Picking up the dog, he tore it apart and with the bleeding remains turned to smite the owner. But Tanentoa stayed him, saying, 'Smite him not. He shall be your slave. Take the seat in the South gable: it shall be your boti, and its name Karumaetoa. Your food shall be the tail of the porpoise, for you are late for the feast, and the people of Tabiang have already eaten the head'.

Thus Towatu of Matang took the clan-place of Karumaetoa in the Tabon^te^bike maneaba. But after a while he began to desire a maneaba of his own; and he proposed to Taneⁿtoa the King that he should build one in his own fasion. The King allowed it to be done, and so was erected at Tabiang, the north end of Beru, Towatu's maneaba in the style called Tabiang to this day.

It seems therefore reasonably certain that the narrow maneaba named Tabiang was introduced into the southern Gilberts by the man Towatu and his immigrant party, who came from a land in the west traditionally called Matang. In this case, we are faced with two possibilities: either the Tabiang maneaba was a style of building known to Towatu's ancestor and namesake, who had been driven out of Makin by the Tropic Bird folk; or else it

(8)

was an entirely new type of building, acquired by Towatu in the western land called Matang, and freshly imported thence into Beru.

If the Tabiang style was that of Towatu's ancestor, it was obviously the type of building used on that island before the invasion of the Tropic Bird folkⁱ ~~in~~ the edifice which stood on the holy hill, at the north end of the land, until the period when the fierce bird began to eat the people of the place. If, on the other hand, the Tabiang maneaba was a new import from Matang there should be islands in the neighbourhood of Melanesia where this type of building is seen today.

In favour, perhaps, of the view that the building-style brought by Towatu was that of his Makin ancestors, is the circumstance that he chose as a site for his maneaba the northern end of Beru, a surprising choice in view of the fact that he owned no land there; for the property that he had acquired by his invasion was all in the centre of the island. It may be that, in this northern site of the Tabiang maneaba we have a link with the building which stood on the northern tip of Makin, and that Towatu's rather surprising choice of a site on Beru was influenced by some tradition connected with this style of building, which dictated that it should always stand in the North. What is quite certain, is that until recently no native would dream of erecting a maneaba of the Tabiang style anywhere save towards the northern extremity of the island. But the tradition of the first building on Beru might be enough to account for this.

We have now seen that traditions connected with the various styles of maneaba in the group are definite on these points:-

- (a). That the Tabontebike style was introduced by the Karongoa group of people, represented by the names of Mata⁺warebwe and Tane⁺n⁺toa, who invaded Beru from Samoa some 20-25 generations ago;
- (b). That the Tabiang style was imported by the man Towatu whose clan was Karumaetoa, and whose ancestors were pre-Samoan inhabitants of Makin.

As for the third type of maneaba, called Maunga-tabu, it has appeared probable that this may be attributed to the Tropic Bird invaders from Samoa, who carried their maneaba with them to Beru when they migrated thither from Makin. ~~The only~~

ÀICLOV PIREM