

Creation story: Marakei version.

Na Aneau grew, and there was only he. He had no companions. Heaven clove to Earth and there was no light. In the Darkness and the Cleaving Together there was a thing, and its name was Tarawa. From Tarawa grew Na Aneau, for he sprang from the earth of Tarawa.

The land whence Na Aneau sprang is called Te-bua-tarawa in these days, and it is joined to the Northern end of Tarawa. The first land was Te-bua-tarawa; only afterwards grew Tarawa, for that was the first work of Na Aneau in the Darkness and Cleaving Together: he completed the island of Tarawa from its Northern end to its Southern end.

After that was done, Na Aneau made things in the midst of the Darkness and Cleaving Together. First he made Riki the Eel; and next he made Te Ikawai (The Eldest); and next he made Uka; and next he made Na Abave; and next he made Karitoro; and next he made Ngkoangtoa; and next he made Nei **Kiika** (The Women Octopus).

When he had finished making those people, he made two others, whose names were Riki-n-te-aba (Growth of the land) and Te-ro-n-te-aba (The anchor of the land).

Then spoke Na Aneau to Riki the Eel, and commanded him to tear Heaven from its roots. So Riki tore heaven from its roots, and Nei Kiika helped him. There was also a living thing which helped, even Bakauaneku the Sting-ray: he slid sideways between Heaven and Earth, and cut the roots of Heaven where they clove to the Depths.

When that was done, Riki raised Heaven aloft upon his snout, and when it reached its place Na Aneau called, "That is high enough for Heaven, Riki". Then he seized Riki and hauled him down from Heaven, and Riki fell across the island of Tarawa. There he lay writhing, a mighty eel, and his writhing cut the island of Tarawa into small pieces, so that to this day the land is cut by many passages.

When Heaven was torn asunder from the Earth, Na Aneau called Te Ikawai to him and said, "Come near, that I may take thine

eyes, for they shine brightly". He took the right eye of Te Ikawai, and of that he made the Sun; he took the left eye, and of that he made the Moon.

After that he made on Tarawa the woman Terorei, and the woman Raioi (Good), and the woman Huakala (Bad), and the woman Turētireti (Ugly), and Te Kere (the female genitals), and Te Kabanga (the male organ). These people were made to grow from the water.

When all those works were done on Tarawa Na Aroau sent out Riki-n-te-aba and Te-ro-n-te-aba to make the lands of the sea. First they went to make Beru, and after that they made Tamoā.

While they were busy, Na Aroau said to his people on Tarawa, "Men and women, I am about to go, never to return. As for you, ye shall watch for the coming of the canoes of the People of Matang, which will visit your island: when ye see them from a distance, ye shall sit down in fear, for ye cannot know the hearts of those people - their hearts are the hearts of Matang".

When Na Aroau had spoken to his people, he went Southwards to seek those men Riki-n-te-aba and Te-ro-n-te-aba: he found them busied in making Tamoā; he said to them, "Make it greater than Tarawa". They made a very great land, a giant compared to Tarawa (to toa riki nāhon Tarawa), and Na Aroau went about it making the Mountains of Tamoā. He made also a Tree in the land, which he called Te Ierotia, and he summoned men and women whom he had made, and gave them their dwelling places in the crest of that Tree. They all dwelt there.

Na Aroau spoke to the man Nakaā, who was also of the crest of the Tree, and thus said he, "Nakaā, I am about to go, never to return. Before I go, I shall collect together certain things upon this your land". Nakaā said, "Na Aroau, what things are those?" Na Aroau answered, "These things indeed:- White Hairs, Decay of the Teeth, Baldness, Old Age, the Fan and the Staff of Old Age, Wandering of the Wit, and Death". When he had disclosed all these things, Nakaā questioned him, saying, "Where are these

things that thou hast named?" He Aneau answered, "Thou canst not see them with thine eyes on this day that I speak with thee, but when I go thou shalt see them among thy people and their generations".

When he had said thus, he said again, "I go. Farewell". That was the manner of his going, never to return. But Nakaa went North, for he feared to remain in Tamo; he feared the things that He Aneau had told him. As for the people of the crest of the Tree of Tamo, it was they who beget children upon Tamo. Their children came to these islands, for the Tree of Tamo was broken by He Urilaba, who was a king beneath the Tree, and the people were scattered. And the man Koure-abi, who sprang from the first blossom of the Tree, came to Harakei.