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See Gullie 1972: 46-51
for it is obviously the story
but amended considerably

Chapter

1 Banaban myth of the pre-creation era
(Te Kirake of Banaba).

§1. When Heaven and Earth clove together it was a time of black darkness. Heaven was a rock lying over Earth and rooted in the deep places of the Sea. All the lands of the Ancestors were embedded in the rock of Heaven and stood forth like hills upon the overside. Banaba was the Buto (navel); all the multitude of lands and ancestors in Tebongi-ro (Black darkness) lay around it. On Banaba lived Tabakea, the First of all, and Na-Raa his brother. They were on the overside of Heaven and with them dwelt Awiraria and Tabu-ariki, Tituabine and Tabu-niiai, Hawaii, Aorao, and many others.

And on the underside of the rock, between Heaven and Earth lay the Bāba-ma-Bōno (Fools-and-Deaf-mutes), a great company of slaves (Rang). They had no senses, nor could they walk and talk; they lay imprisoned between heaven and earth.

§2. In the time of black darkness the inhabitants of heaven began to lie together and to beget children. And there was a woman of Banaba called Tānga-n-nang, who conceived and bore a child; it was the bird Te Kūnei¹ (Noddy; *anous stolidus*). So the bird grew large and flew over the sea to catch fishes for its food; and often it would bring back part of its catch for its mother Tānga-n-nang.

There came a time when the bird flew far to sea and caught a Rereba-fish², which it carried home to Banaba. But when Tānga-n-nang saw the Rereba she said, "We will not kill and eat this fish; we will keep it alive in a bowl of sea-water." So they made a wooden bowl and kept the Rereba alive therein. That was a marvellous fish, for it grew so quickly that soon the bowl was too small to contain it, and so they made a larger bowl and put it in that. So the fish

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1. Te Kūnei; one of the totems of the clans of Tabu-nimai.
 2. Rereba; another Tabu-nimai totem. Rereba is the name of this fish until it is about 18 inches long; after that it is called Arua.

throve until it became an Urua, and still it continued to grow, so that at last it was as large as a man of full stature. Then the woman Tanga-n-nang was afraid when she looked upon it; she said, "This Urua will be the death of us; we kill ourselves in getting enough food for it, and still it is not sated."

They were all afraid when they heard her words; they said, "Let us be rid of this fish." So at last they took and hurled it into the sea, and it swam away to Eastward. Then they went back to the top of Banaba, where Tabakea dwelt, and told him what they had done.

But after a while one of the inhabitants of heaven came running to Tanga-n-nang saying, "Come and behold a wonderful thing on the Eastern shore." She answered, "What is this wonder?" He said, "Thy Urua that was cast into the sea has come back and with it is a multitude of fierce fishes." So all the people went back to the Eastern shore of Banaba and looked out to sea. There, by the edge of the reef, they saw the great Urua playing in the breakers. When a wave bigger than the rest came to break

on the rocks, they saw him swimming in its heart; but he was swift and strong, for before the wave could break he turned back again and swam into the deep water. Very terrible and fierce he seemed to the inhabitants of Banaba; and with him was a mighty multitude of great and fierce fish; the sea was dark with them, and where they swam and leaped into the air they lashed the water into white foam. When the people saw that they were filled with fear; they said, "These are not fish; they are men folk swimming in the sea." So they all left the shore and ran back to Tabakea on the top of Banaba. They told him of the fierce fish-men in the East, saying, "Save us from the wrath of the Urua and his multitude."

§3. Then Tabakea sat without answering for a time. After a while he said, "I have a thought: in my thought shall be your safety." No more said Tabakea to the people but sat without a word on the top of Banaba. Three days (Bong) he sat without a word. On the first day there came a small mark in the middle of his forehead; on the second day

the mark swelled into a great lump on his forehead; on the third day something began to move within the swelling; and on the fourth day his forehead burst asunder: forth from the midst crept a little Benu (Lizard).

Tabakea took the Lizard between his finger and thumb; he saw that it was very ugly and small. So he caused a great fire to be made on the top of Banaba, and when it was burning hot he cast the Lizard into the flames. Then, when the fire was burnt out, he put his fingers among the cinders and took up the ashes of the Lizard, a small pinch of ashes. ~~Thunamuturubimandusprunikobede~~

And he called to his people; "Bring me a clam-shell full of water." When they had set it down before him, he sprinkled the ashes of the Lizard on the face of the water, and covered them over with the other half of the shell.

So the ashes remained covered up in the shell for three moons. And behold, on the first day of the fourth moon, a wonder happened; for as the people watched, the shell was thrust open from within, and

out there crawled a little man. He was very small; his body was foul and black; he was very ugly; his name was Na-arean.

When Tabakea saw that ugly dwarf he said, "Stay! He is not yet human." So he took him between his finger and thumb; he called to his people, "Make a second fire, even fiercer than the first." And when that was done he cast Na-arean into the midst of the flames; so he burned him a second time on the top of Banaba. And again he sprinkled his ashes upon the water in the clam-shell. There they stayed covered up for three more moons, and on the first day of the fourth moon the people were gathered together by the shell. As they looked, behold, it was thrust open from within, and out there crawled a little man. He was very small, but not so small as before, for he had grown to about the size of a coconut.

Tabakea looked upon him and said, "Stay! He is not yet human." And he turned to the people and said, "Make a mighty fire. Take all the trees that burn fiercely

and pile them up together so that the whole summit of Banaba is covered with the pile". And so they did; they made a mighty fire, so that it seemed the whole of Banaba burned at the top. Into the midst of the fierce flames Tabakea cast Na-areau. And behold, a great marvel: the flames did not consume his body; he stood and walked among the hottest embers; and as he played there his body grew before the eyes of the people, so that at last he was of a small man's size. Then he mounted high upon a pinnacle of flame that leaped from the heart of the fire and danced in sight of Tabakea. So he did for the whole of that day. And on the morrow he came out of the fire.

Then Tabakea took Na-areau and said, "This is my child. Take him to be your leader. He shall save you from the wrath of the Urua, with his multitude of fierce fishes." So the people were glad; they said, "Let him be our leader", and all together went down to the eastern shore of Banaba, where the Urua and his multitude of fishes were playing in the sea.

§4. Na-areau stood on the Eastern shore of Banaba and the people said to him, "Canst thou overcome the Urna and his fierce folk?" Na-areau answered no word but walked through the shallow water by the beach until he came to the edge of the reef, where the waves were breaking. And there were many great rocks standing on the edge, with fissures between them where the deep water ran up into the reef. By a great rock Na-areau waited and watched; he hid his body behind the rock so that the Urna could not see him. And so after a time a big wave came in, and on the crest of the wave swam the Urna until he was carried almost upon the very rock where Na-areau was hidden.

Swiftly the son of Tabakea stretched forth his hand; the Urna saw his hand, but not quickly enough, for Na-areau seized him before he could turn and flee. He grasped his right fin, so that he could not swim away; he hauled upon the fin, he twisted it this way and that until it was broken. So the Urna

was helpless and without strength in the hands of Na-areau; he lay still in the shallow water on the reef; he was hauled ashore. And the people raised a great cry, "The Urna is dead", and they took its body to the woman Tānga-n-nang.

But when Tabakea knew that they had given the Urna to Tānga-n-nang, he said to Na-areau, "Go thou first and get the body of the fish, for we will eat the flesh." So Na-areau went and took it from Tānga-n-nang and brought it back to Tabakea. Together they cut up the flesh, and eat it all; when they had done that, they gave back the bones to Tānga-n-nang.

§5. So she took the bones of the Urna, and put them in a clam-shell with a little water, and covered them over with the other half of the shell. For three moons she left them there, and on the first day of the fourth moon she ~~lifted~~^{raised} the cover: behold there leaped forth from the shell a mighty peal of thunder together with a terrible flash of lightning.

And it so chanced that Na-areau and

his people were standing by when that wonder happened; and when he heard the noise of the thunder he said to one of his friends, "Go thou and inquire into that matter." So the man went to Nei Tānga-n-nang and asked her what was the cause of the noise and the lightning; she answered not a word, but she took a piece of dry coconut husk and, lifting the cover of the shell but a little way, thrust it inside. When she drew it forth again, behold, it smoked and burned.

So the man went back to Na-arean and told him what she had seen. Na-arean said, "Take thou a piece of dry husk to Tānga-n-nang and beg her to give thee fire from her shell." The man did as Na-arean told him, and Tānga-n-nang answered, saying, "Raise not thy voice above a whisper, lest he who lies within the shell be angry and smite us with his thunder and lightning." Then she gently raised the cover of the shell and, lighting the coconut husk therein, gave it back to the man. So he took it back to Na-arean.

When Na-arean heard his tale, he was very curious; he desired greatly to see the thing

for himself. So he carried a fresh piece of husk to Tānga-n-nang saying, "The first piece went out; give me new fire." She answered, "Hush! Hush! I beg thee, raise not thy voice, lest he that is within the shell smite us all with his thunder and lightning." Then she took his husk and gave him new fire. And he carried it away, but after a little while he let it fall on the floor and stamped it out under his foot. Again he went back and got fresh fire; and again he put it out. This he did many times, and each time he went back the woman begged him earnestly to speak in a low voice, lest he that was within the shell should smite them all with his thunder and lightning.

And at last Na-arean desired greatly to know what would happen if he raised his voice in the presence of the shell. So he took a new piece of husk and carried it to Tānga-n-nang. When he was standing by her he bawled aloud in a great voice, "Give me fire, give me fire — o — o — o — ah!" She was afraid; she implored him in whispers to lower his voice but still he yelled as loud as he could,

"Give me fire, woman, give me fire" and he raised his foot and kicked the cover from the shell. Immediately a great clap of thunder burst forth from it and a terrible flash of lightning darted at Na-arean. But he avoided nimbly and it flew past him; he hurled himself upon the shell, and all that he saw within was the bones of the Urua lying in the water. He put his hand in the water; he took out the bones; he hurled them on the floor and trampled upon them. So he broke them into little pieces and scattered them in the sea from the top of Banaba.

§6. So the people dwelt ~~together~~ together on Banaba with Tabakea and Na-Raa his brother. Chief of them all was Anriaria the Giant; he was lord of Te-bongi-ro, the black darkness. And Heaven lay on the face of Earth; it was as a layer of hard rock overlying Earth; and all the lands of Te-bongi-ro had their roots in the rock of Heaven and stood forth on its overside like hills. [Here follows the myth of Nukaa and the Forbidden Tree of which the best version is that given by Kei Karua of Banaba in Chapter.....].

§7. And there was still a black darkness between Heaven and Earth, for they had not yet been separated. And there came a time when Anriaria the Giant desired to enter beneath the rock of Heaven and see what lay between the Sticking together. So he told his wish to Tabakea. Then Tabakea gave him a staff of wood and said to him, "Anriaria, thou art the Lord of the Darkness and the Cleaving together. Take this staff and tap upon the overside of the rock of Heaven until thou comest to a hollow place. There thou shalt pierce the rock with the staff and enter beneath it. After that, do that thou wilt do, for thou art the Lord."

So Anriaria set forth and tapped upon the rock until he found a place where it might be pierced. Deep he thrust his staff; the rock was rent asunder; he made a doorway into the depths; he entered beneath and stood in the hollow space between Heaven & Earth. And as he stood there, he heard the breathing of the Bāba-ma-Bōno (Fools-and-Drif-mutes) who lay imprisoned there. They were a breed of slaves (Rang); they had no senses, but lay moveless in the darkness under the rock.

And in the midst of the Darkness he found Riiki, the mighty Eel, coiled asleep. So he said to Riiki, "Arise". He arose at Amriana's word, and all the Bāba-ma-Bōno arose with him, for life came to them at the word of their Lord. Then all together they heaved upon the rock of Heaven and it was lifted a little. And when it stood forth a space, Riiki carried it higher and higher still upon his snout; and as he passed Heaven up with his snout he pushed Earth down with his tail, so that it was buried in the sea.

So the rock of Heaven stood high in the air, and the Waters were beneath Heaven, and Earth was under the Waters.

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Then Amriana smote the rock of Heaven with his staff; Heaven roared and rumbled; it was rent in pieces. The islands of Te-Bongi-ro that had their roots in the rock of Heaven came tumbling down into the Waters. There they lay, and they were the islands of the Sea, a great multitude of lands.

Banaba was the Navel, and all around it lay the islands of the Sea. And when Banaba fell into the Waters from the height of

Heaven it was overturned, so that its summit was in the depths of the sea and its roots were in the air. Then was Tabakea the First of All buried in the sea under the rock of Banaba, for he dwelt upon the summit. And to this day he lies buried in the depths, and Banaba stands high on his back.

*end of
reproduction*

But before Tabakea fell into the sea he collected together all the things that were in Heaven, both good and bad; he put them in a basket and gave them to the woman Kariki-bai to distribute among the people of the world. She carried that basket to all the people of the world, and what they chose she gave them. Some chose wisely, and therefore they have in their lands today all manner of fair and large trees bearing store of fruit in their season; others chose unwisely, and so their children's children to this day suffer all manner of want and hardship. For that was the first and the last choice; that which the Ancestors chose, the children kept.

§ 8. And when Heaven was lifted from Earth it was still dark over the islands of the Sea. So Anuriana voyaged southwards from

Banaba over the seas. Long he voyaged until
his foot struck a reef-rock in the South. There
he stayed and made a great land; he
named it with a name; it was Samoa.
And on Samoa he met with the shell-fish
called Katati (Razor Clam); he flung it to East
and that was the Sun. And again he took
a shell fish called Nimatani (*nerita plicata*)
and that was the Moon. Then he took
the body of Riiki, the Eel, and laid it across
Heaven; behold the ~~to~~ white belly of Riiki is
seen across Heaven today; it is the Milky
Way.

Thus did Anuriana the Giant, and after
that he planted a Tree on Samoa, from which
sprang a host of Ancestors. And after he had
planted the Tree of Samoa, he returned to
Banaba, and his children are there to this
day.
