

Stages of nut:-

- 1<sup>st</sup> stage: *nunioimoi* (when just out of blossom)
- 2<sup>nd</sup> stage: *onobua, ubu* (containing only water)
- 3<sup>rd</sup> stage: *mataru* (gelatinous flesh)
- 4<sup>th</sup> stage: *moimoto* (drinking nut)
- 5<sup>th</sup> stage: *bukimaere* (still green but hard tip)
- 6<sup>th</sup> stage: <sup>*tinginiphunioa*</sup> *ben* (eating nut)  
<sub>*amakai*</sub>
- 7<sup>th</sup> stage: *moi* (fallen ripe).
- 8<sup>th</sup> stage: *ranimauna, ubu* (dry inside).
- 9<sup>th</sup> stage: *maeke* (ready for copra making)
- 10<sup>th</sup> stage: *bobo* (flesh going brown)
- 11<sup>th</sup> stage: <sup>*stawa*</sup> *uraura* (flesh quite dark).
- 12<sup>th</sup> stage: <sup>*tena tena*</sup> *nanana nako* (skin of flesh disappearing)
- 13<sup>th</sup> stage: <sup>*kokakua*</sup> *momoka* (flesh spongy and full of oil).

Stages of tree.

- 1<sup>st</sup> stage: *buro* (kernel beginning to sprout)
- 2<sup>nd</sup> stage: *wintake* (sprout just through husk)
- 3<sup>rd</sup> stage: *baraerae* (sprout opening)
- 4<sup>th</sup> stage: *uto, ene* (fronds developed)



- 5<sup>th</sup> stage: uto ae main ~~botona~~ (young palm)  
 6<sup>th</sup> stage: uto ae toro botona (trunk appearing)  
 7<sup>th</sup> stage: ni (trunk developed)  
 8<sup>th</sup> stage: ninae ribaiaia (bloom appearing)  
 9<sup>th</sup> stage: ni ae ~~mauruetan~~ <sup>kairieta</sup> (bearing tree).

Leaf: ba, banni.

—, tip of: bukinibenebene, bukinikoriri.

—, base of: ritan

—, at summit of tree, marewe

—, young frond of, kakoko

—, fibrous base of, in.

Bloom, ari

— sheaf, ~~mauruetan~~, roro

Heart of tree, ibubu

Shell — nanai  
 Spongy interior  
 of sprouting nut — bebe

Point at which branches separate: nanoba

Nut, shrivelled: waea

—, split in two: niibona

Husk: of young nut: ninihana

— of mature nut: ewanin



Daily life. Women's work.

she should be

(i) <sup>Awake</sup> and about just before dawn, in the <sup>itingaro.</sup> itinaaro. A woman (or man) who slept into the daylight was the subject of contemptuous jokes.

(ii) <sup>left</sup> After a drink of Kamaimai (or toddy, if there was any <sup>left</sup> over from last night's cutting), the woman began her work. Generally the early hours of the morning were allocated to the heavier work. Any task (except food-gathering) that took her into the bush was done before the sun was "over the tops of the coconut-trees" — an hour that would correspond to about 8 o'clock by our time. The sort of work that took a woman abroad <sup>in the early morning,</sup> ~~were~~ <sup>was</sup> roughly divisible into two classes: (a) Those connected with agriculture, (b) Those connected with the dwelling.

In agriculture, the woman shared labour with the man, her brother, father or husband. Her early morning tasks were concerned with the upkeep of the babai pits. To her was assigned the duty of collecting the black humus from beneath the ren tree (*Journefortia argentea*) and the wiri tree (*Fragaria*, sp.) which was used for enriching the soil of the pits. This she carried to the side of the pit and sifted through a string sieve called <sup>R</sup>Kamarei, leaving it in a heap ready for the man to dig in. Her work was also to gather the old babai leaves and stalks, and twist them into thick ropes with pandanus leaves, so that they might be laid by the man in circles about the roots of the plant, forming paniers to contain the richer soil. Another agricultural pursuit especially performed by the woman was the collection of the young flowers of the Kaura (*Wedelia strigulosa*), which,



after drying in the sun for a couple of days, she mixed with the sifted humus at the side of the pit, for the man to lay around the roots.

All these duties were performed before the sun became hot.

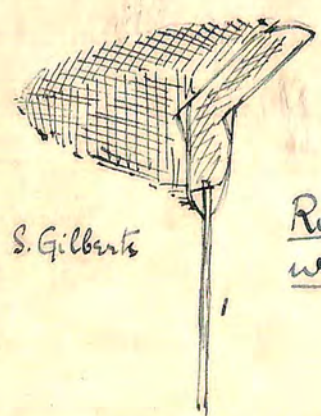
Connected with the dwelling, the first duty of one or another woman of the household was to draw water (itiran) from the nearest well (maniba), in the numerous coconut-shells (ibu) reserved for the purpose. She would usually draw enough to last her people until sunset, when she would again set out to procure the night's supply.

(iii) ③ The collection of raw material for the plaiting of mats ~~and~~ string-making <sup>and the manufacture of fishing torches</sup> was also usually made before the day's heat began. These ~~two~~ works were called respectively te bo-rau (collection-of-pandanus-leaf); ~~and~~ te bo-benu (collection-of-husk); the latter was also called te tae-benu, the pulling-of-husk; and te bo-nin (collection-of-dry-coconut-leaves-used-for-torches).

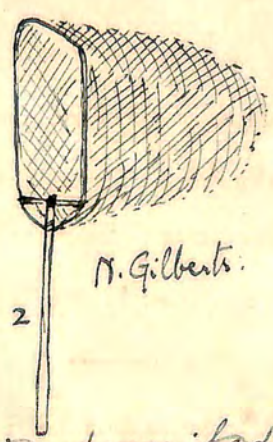
When such tasks were done, the woman would return to the first proper meal of the day, which was generally eaten at some time between 8 and 9 a.m.

(See Food)

(iv) ④ One of the duties allotted to women was fishing on the shoals at low tide. A net with a short handle of the design <sup>shown below</sup> in diagram was generally used; it was called te <sup>riena(n)</sup> urakaraka (handnet-for-urakaraka)



Riena(n)  
urakaraka



The urakaraka method of fishing is described under Food. Other methods of shoal-fishing by women were with



rod and line or with line pure and simple, from the edge of the reef. A small fish called the ninima was their usual quarry. They also hunted with the aid of pieces of stick for the smaller octopus (Kika) and squids (Kikao) in the crannies of the reef, and for all kinds of smaller shellfish.

The hour for the women's fishing was always the hour of low tide, and so might take them out at any hour of the night or day. But if they set out at night, they would always be accompanied by some elderly female relative of their husband, or else his sister.

~~Woman was allowed to use the fishing net called te kibe~~

⑤ Often women would accompany their husbands on deep-sea fishing expeditions at night. This was especially the case when the moon set before cockcrow at midnight. At this season the flying fish were plentiful and were caught by the tatae method (see Food) by torchlight. While the man held torch and net, it was the woman's duty to paddle and steer the canoe and to hand him up fresh torches at need. When husband and wife went shoal fishing at night, it was the woman's duty to follow her lord, holding aloft the flaming torch of dried leaves (rin) and bearing a charge of six or seven others on her shoulder.

⑥ It has already been said that women shared agricultural labours with their husbands, brothers, or other male relatives. When the man set out to dig his babai pit, the woman handed him baskets of soil, manure, and so on, and did in fact all the work except the digging itself. In the collection of



nuts, or pandanus fruit, ~~babai~~ for food, the man did all the climbing, while the woman gathered up the fruits which he threw down and carried them home behind him. Portage of all descriptions was essentially the woman's duty. The sole burden of a man was the tool with which he dug or cut.

Women were strictly forbidden ~~from~~ <sup>to</sup> climbing; but with the poles called butika they might knock down the pandanus drupes or the nuts from small coconut trees.

⑦ During the hotter part of the day, if agriculture or fishing did not take her abroad, the woman's chief work was plaiting mats and preparing food. It was generally an older woman of the household who did the cooking, saw to the fires, and collected firewood, but failing an elder, there was no prohibition <sup>preventing</sup> ~~upon~~ a young girl from performing such duties.

⑧ Also upon the woman fell the duty of <sup>making scented oil (awa-ba)</sup> making thatches (wai-ran); making fishing torches (o-rin); riri-making (tae-riri), both her own and the men's; sinnet-making (kakano); the plaiting of wreaths for the dance (biri-kane), and the amulets of hair (bunna) worn by men and women about the neck; and the preparation of all ornaments for the personal use of the men which did not require strength, or skill in carpentry, or a particular magic ritual known only to the man.

⑨ It was generally the men who made fire with the Kai-n-iri (rubbing-sticks), but a woman who learned to do this was considered particularly clever and helpful.



Te Raba (to be)

Agriculture, Raba

Butantari

A special method of protecting a tree from use by another was used at Butantari by chiefs. The worn out rivi of a wife would be tied round the trunk about twelve feet from the ground. The tree then became exactly the same as the wife of the chief to whom it belonged. If another passed near or under the rivi, he was therefore considered to have offended the modesty of a married woman, and had to pay the forfeit of land called bai-n-aine just as if he had committed adultery with her, or insulted her modesty. This form of raba was called te be (the heat) because a man was considered to have burned himself by approaching the forbidden object.



## The Fructification of the Pandanus

A highly interesting ritual, in which the Sun and Moon played a large part, was formerly used for the purpose of ensuring a rich pandanus harvest. The ceremony could only be performed by members of the three totem sibs named Karongoa, Ababou and Maerua. The first named, Karongoa, was called the King of the Maneaba, and its members were said to be protected, while under the roof of the maneaba, by the Sun. The chief elder of the clan in the Northern Gilberts was called 'The Sun in the maneaba'. The sitting place allotted to the Karongoa folk in council was in the middle of the eastern side of the maneaba and the coral monolith (stud) supporting the roof, by which they sat, was said to be the 'body of the Sun'.

The season at which the fructification-ritual takes place lies between July and September, when the S.E. Trades are expected to give way to the westerly rains. The seasonable arrival of these rains is anxiously awaited, because upon it depends the quantity and quality of the pandanus harvest, which is gathered towards the beginning of October.

The days on which the ceremony is undertaken are two, the first stage being completed on the 7th night of the lunar month, the second stage <sup>about</sup> on the 13th night.

The time of commencement is the hour of sunset. For the first stage, the moon must be approaching the meridian just as the sun is over the western horizon. For the second stage, the moon must be just risen as the sun is on the point of setting. The essential point is that both luminaries at once should be visible in the sky when the ritual is begun.

The place is a cleared space on the east side of the performer's dwelling-house, in a straight line with the middle rafter of the roof. <sup>22 127</sup>

Footnote 22. All Gilbertese dwellings are built with gables N. and S., and sides facing E. and W.



The material prepared for the ritual consists of the parts of a magic tree - a trunk and two branches. The branches are two round wands of pandanus wood, each a span long, and as thick as a man's thumb. The

(Footnote <sup>127</sup>23. A span (te nga) is the full stretch of a man's outspread arms, from tip to tip of the middle fingers.

trunk is a rounded and tapered shaft of coconut timber, two spans long and about two inches thick at the base. The shaft is decorated at its point with a tuft of five upstanding frigate-bird feathers, the string with which this tuft is lashed on being made of alternate strands of coconut fibre and human hair. Both the feathers and the string have the same important underlying sun-idea: the frigate-bird is believed to be the bird of the <sup>sun,</sup> ~~sun~~

(Footnote <sup>128</sup>24. See Section 5 ante, The Frigate-bird, p. 20.)

while the spiral pattern of black hair running through the string is belie<sup>ved</sup> to be pleasing to the luminary. The tuft, when lashed in place, is said to be "the Body of the Sun at the crest of the tree". At equal intervals around the base of the <sup>sun -</sup> tuft are attached four strings of hair and fibre, each a span and a half long, in the manner of maypole strings. Each string is then garnished with frigate-bird feathers in the following arrangement:

follow on



Near the top - a tuft of three;

In the middle - a tuft of two;

Near the free end - a single feather;

At the free end - a tuft of five.

*Protruding leaf branches*

These feather decorations are technically named buka; the strings which carry them are destined to be draped over the branches of the tree, when the moment comes to lash these latter into position; the technical name of the branches is therefore maanga-ni-buka (branches-of-buka).

The decorated pole and the separate branches having been prepared they are taken to the space made ready for them on the east side of the maker's dwelling. A small hole for planting the magic tree is dug, and, just as the sun's lower limb is about to touch the western horizon, the first part of the ritual begins.

Stage 1. (Moon's seventh day).

The performer plants the trunk of the tree in the hole. Holding the shaft upright with both hands before him, as pictured in Plate 14, he throws his head as far backwards as he can, and fixes his eyes upon the sun-tuft above him. Having stood silent in this posture for about half a

*Follow*

*or*



minute, he intones in a low voice the following formula:

Unikan au bitanikai aio. E bung meang, e bung maiaki,  
e bung maeao, ma mainiku-o-o-o! E bung Tai ma Nama-  
kaina! Ba I ti namanamatia i aon Tai. Tera uotan Tai?  
E uota te maiu. E uotia tera? Te taba mai buakon ron  
te iti ma te ro. Kimarimari, au buonikai-o-o-o!

Planting of this my magic tree. The north gives birth,  
the south gives birth, the west gives birth, and the  
east-o-o-o! The Sun gives birth, and the Moon! For I  
prepare it (the tree) on the overside of the Sun. What  
is the burden of the Sun? He bears life. What bears  
he? The young pandanus bloom from the blackness of the  
rain-cloud. Be abundant, my plantations-o-o-o!

The formula is recited three times, after which the performer  
his face to the ground and remains <sup>immovable</sup> ~~immovable~~, holding the shaft upright  
before him, for perhaps another half minute. He then proceeds to push <sup>loose</sup> ~~loose~~  
soil with his feet into the hole at the tree's root, and to stamp it firm.

Only when the tree can stand alone does he release his hold upon  
the stem, and seat himself at its base, still facing east. His attitude  
when seated is as pictured in Plate 15, the position of his legs being of  
great ritual importance. His right leg lies doubled before him, knee to  
ground, tailorwise; but his left thigh is thrust forward, and the lower  
leg doubled back beside his hip, so that the sole of his foot is presented  
to the sunset. He believes that, unless the left foot be thus "given to  
the sun", he will incur the luminary's displeasure by having the appearanc<sup>e</sup>  
of wholly turning his back upon him.

The performer's first business when seated is to finish with his  
hands the practical work of making the tree firm in its hole. When that  
is done, he holds the base of the stem in the manner pictured, and throwing  
back his head to regard the sun-tuft on high, intones:



Kanenean au bitanikai aei i an Tai ma Namakaina. E  
tio-otoia, mangan au bita-bongibong aei! E iti, m'e  
ruo te ba ma te karau, ba katabaeen au mataburo. O,  
temana te ataeinaine, ba kainan Abatang, ma Abatoa,  
ma Abaiti-e-e-e! O, antin taberan au bita-bongibong:  
Auriaria, ma Nei Tevenei, ma anti ni Bouru, Riki,  
Riki-e-e! I ti oboria, I ti wetei Nei Tituabine ma  
Riki, ma anti ni Bouru, ba a na kamaurai i an au kai  
aei. Te mauri ao te rai. Te mauri naba ngai i an  
au kai aei!

Setting firm of this my magic tree under Sun and Moon.  
It flutters and bends, the branch of this my magic-tree-  
in-the-twilight! The lightening flashes, and the  
thunder and rain descends, even the fructifiers of my  
opening pandanus bloom. O, thou certain maiden, even  
the pandanus tree of Abatang and Abatoa and Abaiti-e-e-e!  
O, spirits of the crest of this my magic tree in the  
twilight: Auriaria and Nei Tevenei, and the spirits of  
Bouro, Riki, Riki-e-e! I only prepare the way, I only  
call Nei Tituabine, and Riki and the spirits of Bouru,  
that they may prosper me beneath this my tree. Prosper-  
ity and peace. Prosperous am I beneath this my tree!

After reciting this formula three times, the performer turns his  
face towards the ground, remains still for a few seconds, and then arises.  
The branches of the tree are now fixed in position. They are first lashed  
middle to middle with hair and fibre string, in the form of a symmetrical  
cross. The cross is made fast by its middle to the trunk of the tree,  
shoulder high, so that its branches are parallel to earth, and point North,  
South, East, and West, the orientation being controlled by the position of  
the sun at its setting. Over the ends of the branches are draped the four  
strings of buka (feathers) attached to the sun-crest, with their terminal  
tufts dangling earthwards. Diagram C indicates the main details of the  
completed tree, which is left standing until the moon's thirteenth night  
ushers in the second stage of the ritual.

Stage 2 (Moon's thirteenth day).

Just before sunset, the performer sits on the ground at a distance  
of about two paces from the tree, back to sun and face upturned, as before,  
to gaze at the Sun-tuft. The sitting attitude already described is once  
more adopted, but, instead of holding the base of the trunk, the performer  
stretches his arms forward, and lays his loosely opened hands, palms upward  
upon the ground beside his thighs (see Plate 16). He intones:



Au bita-bongibong aei, au bita-mataro. Ron Tai rio. E bung i maeaou, e bung i mainikuu, e bung i taberan au bitanikai aio, m'e a oboria te taba ma te mataburo, ba uotan Tai ma Namakaina. Anti-ro, anti-rang, a batete-nako i taberan au bitanikai aei. I ti marimari-e-e, I ti marimari-o-o! Taberan au kai ni kataba aei!

This my magic tree in the twilight, my magic tree in the dusk. Darkness of Sun going west. He gives birth to west of me, he gives birth to east of me, he gives birth at the crest of this my magic tree, and he prepares the way for the young pandanus bloom and the opening pandanus bloom, for these are the burden of Sun and Moon. Spirits of darkness, spirits of madness, they tumble down from the crest of this my magic tree. I am fruitful-e-e, I am fruitful-o-o! Crest of this my tree of fructification!

After three recitations of this formula, the performer remains for a short space in his attitude of supplication, then drops his head forward to look upon the ground, and finally rises to his feet. The ceremony is complete.

The magic tree may be left where it stands for an indefinite time and may thereafter be used for other magico-religious purposes. Barren women are brought to the place, to be rendered fertile; and persons desiring to be blest with good-luck (especially in love), good health, and long life may there receive ritual treatment at the hands of the owner. For such ceremonials, the persons receiving attention sit facing eastwards towards the tree, while the performer sits before them in the position already described.

The tree may <sup>also</sup> be used to remove the curse of a desecrated rabu, there cannot be much doubt that the magic staff described in section 14(b), ~~which was~~ used for the same purpose, is but a simplified form of the tree. The ceremony of the staff being open for anyone to perform (if he can learn the ritual and formula), while that of the tree is strictly reserved to <sup>three</sup> privileged <sup>social</sup> groups, it is probable that the staff represents a popular attempt to achieve the benefits of the tree without too dangerously trenching upon the form and substance of the Sun-Moon ritual.



## The Fructification of the Pandanus

A highly interesting ritual, in which the Sun and Moon played a large part, was formerly used for the purpose of ensuring a rich pandanus harvest. The ceremony could only be performed by members of the three totem sibs named Karongoa, Ababou and Maerua. The first named, Karongoa, was called the King of the maneaba, and its members were said to be protected, while under the roof of the maneaba, by the Sun. The chief elder of the clan in the northern Gilberts was called 'The Sun in the maneaba'. The sitting place allotted to the Karongoa folk in council was in the middle of the eastern side of the maneaba and the coral monolith (stud) supporting the roof, by which they sat, was said to be the 'body of the Sun'.

The season at which the fructification ritual takes place lies between July and September, when the south-east trades are expected to give way to the westerly rains. The seasonable arrival of these rains is anxiously awaited, because upon it depends the quantity and quality of the pandanus harvest, which is gathered towards the beginning of October.

The days on which the ceremony is undertaken are two, the first stage being completed on the seventh night of the lunar month, the second stage on about the thirteenth night.

The time of commencement is the hour of sunset. For the first stage, the moon must be approaching the meridian just as the sun is over the western horizon. For the second stage, the moon must be just risen as the sun is on the point of setting. The essential point is that both luminaries at once should be visible in the sky when the ritual is begun.

The place is a cleared space on the east side of the performer's dwelling house, in a straight line with the middle rafter of the roof.

The material prepared for the ritual consists of the parts of a magic tree - a trunk and two branches. The branches are two round wands of pandanus wood, each a span long, and as thick as a man's thumb. The trunk is a rounded and tapered shaft of



coconut timber, two spans long and about two inches thick at the base. The shaft is decorated at its point with a tuft of five upstanding frigate-bird feathers, the string with which this tuft is lashed on being made of alternate strands of coconut fibre and human hair. Both the feathers and the string have the same important underlying sun-idea: the frigate-bird is believed to be the bird of the sun, while the spiral pattern of black hair running through the string is believed to be pleasing to the luminary. The tuft, when lashed in place, is said to be 'the body of the Sun at the crest of the tree'. At equal intervals around the base of the sun-tuft are attached four strings of hair and fibre, each a span and a half long, in the manner of maypole strings. Each string is then garnished with frigate-bird feathers in the following arrangement:

Near the top - a tuft of three.

In the middle - a tuft of two.

Near the free end - a single feather.

At the free end - a tuft of five.

These feather decorations are technically named buka; the strings which carry them are destined to be draped over the branches of the tree, when the moment comes to lash these latter into position; the technical name of the branches is therefore manga-ni-buka (branches of buka).

The decorated pole and the separate branches having been prepared they are taken to the space made ready for them on the east side of the maker's dwelling. A small hole for planting the magic tree is dug and, just as the sun's lower limb is about to touch the western horizon, the first part of the ritual begins.

#### Stage 1 - (Moon's seventh day)

The performer plants the trunk of the tree in the hole. Holding the shaft upright with both hands before him, he throws his head as far backwards as he can and fixes his eyes upon the sun-tuft above him. Having stood silent in this posture for about half a minute he intones in a low voice the following formula:



Unikan au bitanikai aio. E bung meang, e bung maiaki,  
e bung maeao, ma mainiku - o - o - o! E bung Tai ma  
Namakaina! Ba I ti namanamatia i aon Tai. Tera uotan  
Tai? E uota te maiu. E uotia tera? Te taba mai buakon  
ron te iti ma te ro. Kimarimari, au buonikai - o - o - o!

Planting of this my magic tree. The north gives birth,  
the south gives birth, the west gives birth, and the  
east - o - o - o! The Sun gives birth, and the Moon!  
For I prepare it (the tree) on the overside of the Sun.  
What is the burden of the Sun? He bears life. What  
bears he? The young pandanus bloom from the blackness  
of the rain-cloud. Be abundant, my plantation - o - o - o!

The formula is recited three times, after which the performer  
turns his face to the ground and remains immobile, holding the  
shaft upright before him, for perhaps another half-minute. He  
then proceeds to push loose soil with his feet into the hole at  
the tree's root, and to stamp it firm.

Only when the tree can stand alone does he release his hold  
upon the stem, and seat himself at its base, still facing east.  
The position of his legs are of great ritual importance. His  
right leg lies doubled before him, knee to ground, tailorwise;  
but his left thigh is thrust forward and the lower leg doubled  
beside his hip, so that the sole of his foot is presented to the  
sunset. He believes that, unless the left foot be thus 'given  
to the sun', he will incur the luminary's displeasure by having  
the appearance of wholly turning his back upon him.

The performer's first business when seated is to finish with  
his hands the practical work of making the tree firm in its hole.  
When that is done, he holds the base of the stem and, throwing  
back his head to regard the sun-tuft on high, intones:

Kanenean au bitanikai aei i an Tai ma Namakaina. E  
tio-otoia, mangan au bita-bongibong aei! E iti, m'e  
ruo te ba ma te karau, ba katabaeau au mataburo. O,  
temanna te ataeinaine, ba kainan Abatang, ma Abatoa,  
ma Abaiti-e-e-e!. O, antin taberan au bita-bongibong:  
Auriaria, ma Nei Tewenei, ma anti ni Bouru, Riki,  
Riki-e-e'. I ti oboria, I ti wetei Nei Tituabine ma  
Riki, ma anti ni Bouru, ba a na kamaurai i an au kai  
aei. Te mauri ao te raui. Te mauri naba ngai i an  
au kai aei!



Setting firm of this my magic tree under Sun and Moon.  
It flutters and bends, the branch of this my magic-tree-  
in-the-twilight! The lightning flashes, and the thunder  
and rain descends, even the fructifiers of my opening  
pandanus bloom. O, thou certain maiden, even the panda-  
nus tree of Abatang and Abatoa and Abaiti-e-e-e! O,  
spirits of the crest of this my magic tree in the twilight:  
Auriaria and Nei Tewenei, and the spirits of Bouro, Riki,  
Riki-e-e! I only prepare the way, I only call Nei Titua-  
bine, and Riki and the spirits of Bouru, that they may  
prosper me beneath this my tree. Prosperity and peace.  
Prosperous am I beneath this my tree!

After reciting this formula three times, the performer turns his  
face towards the ground, remains still for a few seconds, and  
then arises. The branches of the tree are now fixed in position.  
They are first alshed middle to middle with hair and fibre string,  
in the form of a symmetrical cross. The cross is made fast by  
its middle to the trunk of the tree, shoulder high, so that its  
branches are parallel to earth, and point north, south, east and  
west, the orientation being controlled by the position of the  
sun at its setting. Over the ends of the branches are draped  
the four strings of buka (feathers) attached to the Sun-crest,  
with their terminal tufts dangling earthwards. The tree is left  
standing until the moon's thirteenth night ushers in the second  
stage of the ritual.

#### Stage 2 (Moon's thirteenth day)

Just before sunset, the performer sits on the ground at a  
distance of about two paces from the tree, back to sun and  
face upturned, as before, to gaze at the Sun-tuft. The  
sitting attitude already described is once more adopted but,  
instead of holding the base of the trunk, the performer  
stretches his arms forward and lays his loosely opened hands,  
palms upward, upon the ground beside his thighs. He intones:

Au bita-bongibong aei, au bita-mataro. Ron Tai rio.  
E bung i maeaou, e bung i mainikuu, e bung i taberan  
au bitanikai aio, m'e a oboria te taba ma te mataburo,  
ba uotan Tai ma Namakaina, Anti-ro, anti-rang, a  
batetenako i taberan au bitanikai aei. I ti marimari-  
e-e, I ti marimari-o-o! Taberan au kai ni kataba aei!



This my magic tree in the twilight, my magic tree in the dusk. Darkness of Sun going west. He gives birth to west of me, he gives birth to east of me, he gives at the crest of this my magic tree, and he prepares the way for the young pandanus bloom and the opening pandanud bloom, for these are the burden of Sun and Moon. Spirits of darkness, spirits of madness, they tumble down from the crest of this my magic tree. I am fruitful-e-e, I am fruitful-o-o! Crest of this my tree of frustification!

After three recitations of this formula, the performer remains for a short space in his attitude of supplication, then drops his head forward to look upon the ground, and finally rises to his feet. The ceremony is complete.

The magic tree may be left where it stands for an indefinite time and may thereafter be used for other magico-religious purposes. Barren women are brought to the place, to be rendered fertile; and persons desiring to be blest with good-luck (especially in love), good health, and long life may there receive ritual treatment at the hands of the owner. For such ceremonials, the persons receiving attention sit facing eastwards towards the tree, while the performer sits before them in the position already described.

The tree may also be used to remove the curse of a desecrated rabu, and there cannot be much doubt that the magic staff used for the same purpose is but a simplified form of the tree. The ceremony of the staff being open for anyone to perform (if he can learn the ritual and formula), while that of the tree is strictly to three privileged social groups, it is probable that the staff represents a popular attempt to achieve the benefits of the tree without too dangerously trenching upon the form and substance of the Sun-Moon ritual.



Do not type  
endnotes.

## Footnotes

~~XXXXXX~~ Most Gilbertese dwellings are built with gables north and south and sides facing east and west.

A span (te nga) is the full stretch of a man's outspread arms, from tip to tip of the middle fingers.

Bitanikai, magic tree. Bitanikai in this context means to the performer 'changing-of-trees', with reference to the fructification of his pandanus trees, which would otherwise not be productive.

Bung, gives birth. This is the usual meaning of bung, but the word is also used to denote the setting of sun or moon. Those who use the ritual state that the meaning of birth is here intended, the idea being that north, south, east and west are made fruitful by the ceremony. The fact that the sun is setting at the same time gives a punning effect to the word. Puns are not infrequent in Gilbertese magic, their force to the Gilbertese mind being always strongly esoteric.

On the overside of the sun. The performer believes that as the sun sinks below the horizon the roots of his magic tree become planted upon his overside.

The rain cloud. The word means literally 'the lightning-with-the-darkness', and refers to the alternate flickering of lightning and blackness which is seen in the rain clouds of the westerly season.

Bitabongibong. Bitab is the first component of bitanikai, and stands for the whole word; bongibong signifies 'growing dark'.

Mataburo, opening pandanus bloom. A technical term of the same family as taba, young (i.e. unopened) pandanus bloom. Both these words are inapplicable to any other form of flower.

The allusion here is obviously to the First Pandanus of Abatoa and Abaiti, called the Ancestress Sun in the Tabiteuea text.

Mauri, rendered prosperous and prosperity, is difficult to interpret in a single word. It indicates a condition of being free from the influence of all evil magic and so in a state of peace, health or general prosperity.

Ka-taba, fructification. The literal meaning is 'causing-young-pandanus-bloom'.







eastward of the village of Rawanaui. As described by elders who, in pre-Christian days, actually performed the clan-rituals, it "stood as high as a man's shoulder", and was about as "broad and thick as a man"; it was, moreover, waisted like a man in the middle, though it seems to have had no definitely marked head. This monolith stood in the centre of a circle of flat stones set edgewise in the ground, so as to form a kerb about a hand's breadth high. The diameter of the circle was, according to the account, "three or four paces": its exact size was not, as it would seem, a matter of importance. The space within the circle was dressed with white shingle, and therein were buried the skulls of successive generations of clan elders, all males. The crania of the skulls remained uncovered by shingle, so that they might be anointed with oil on occasions when the cult of the ancestral deity was being observed. Care was taken to avoid burying any skulls due west of the boua, as this portion of the circle was reserved for food offerings.

For all everyday and overt purposes, including the normal cult of ancestor, the boua represented the body of an ancestral being named Teveia.

Footnote 3b. Teveia is reputed to have been the mother's father of Taane-n-toa II. that Karongoa High



Chief of Beru named in the tale of Tewatu-of-Mata (Part II, Appendix 4 and Section 12(e)). He is reputed to have been the builder of Taane-n-toa's maneaba and, as such, adopted by the Chief as a deity after his death

But for the particular and secret purpose of the first-fruits ritual, it represented no longer Teveia, but the spirit Auriaria. Upon its crest were then perched three red coral blocks, each about the size of two fists, one on top of the other. This addition was known as the bara (hat) of Auriaria.

The date of the first-fruits offering was the second day of the next new moon after the pandanus harvest had been gathered. The hour of the ritual was that of sunset, when both luminaries were seen together in the sky, the moon setting almost together with the sun. The material of the offering was a ball of the sweet food called te korokoro made of boiled

Footnote 36. See Section 7(o), Part I, for description of te korokoro.

coconut toddy and that desiccated pandanus product called kabubu. The kabubu used for the purpose was, of course, manufactured from the newly harvested crop.

The ball of korokoro was carried to the boua by the senior male of the Karongoa clan, all the other men and women of his group following him.



The leader wore upon his head a fillet of coconut leaf ~~such as that described in Section 140~~, and called the "fillet of the sun". Arrived at the place of offering, the whole company assumed the sitting posture adopted by the performer of the fructification ritual ~~(Plates 15 and 16)~~, with backs to the sunset and faces to the stone. The leader took his place a little in advance of the others, right up against the kerb of the circular enclosure. Being seated in the ritual posture, he leaned forward and set the ball of korokoro at arm's length before him on the shingle near the base of the stone. Throwing back his head to gaze into the sky immediately above the boua, and laying his open hands, palms upward, on the ground by his knees, he intoned:

Kana,

ident as  
usual

Kanami aei, Tai ma Namakaina, ba ana moan nati Nei Kainabongibong. Auriaria, ma Nei Tevenei, ma Riki ma antin rabarabani karawa, kanami aei, ba moan taban te bitabongibong. Te mauri ao te raoui. Te mauri naba ngaira-o-o-o!

This is your food, Sun and Moon, even the first child of the woman Pandanus-in-the-twilight. Auriaria, and Nei Tevenei, and Riki, and spirits of the hidden places of heaven, this is your food, even the first young bloom of the magic tree in the twilight. Prosperity and peace. Prosperous indeed are we-o-o-o!

Follow on



~~the far lands of the ancestral deities.~~

Kana-mi aei,

Ba moan tabaa-n te bita-bongibong.

Te mauri ao te raoi.      Te mauri naba  
Ngaira-o-o-o!

This is your food,

Even the first young bloom of the  
magic tree in the twilight.

Prosperity and peace. The prosper  
indeed are we-o-o-o!

The formula was recited three times. Through the entire ritual that followed, the leader never for a moment ceased to look up into the sky above the stone. Leaning forward, he first groped for the ball of korokoro and, having taken it upon the palm of his left hand, returned to an upright posture. Still sitting, he plucked out with his right finger-tips a piece of the sticky ball and moulded it into a pellet, which he then laid on the shingle before the stone as <sup>the</sup> "the portion of the Sun, and Moon, and Auriaria". This was called the taarika. The first portion having thus been given, he

<sup>1122</sup>  
Footnote 38. See the ceremony of ~~te taarika performed~~  
~~by a guest, when invited to eat with a~~  
~~Gilbertese household: Part I, Section 9.~~

proceeded to mould a series of similar pellets, passing each one as it was back over his right shoulder, where it was taken by the man behind him, and sent along the ranks of sitting people, until every member of the company had a portion. Absolute silence was observed until the distribution was

*SM*

Follow on



complete, when the man behind the leader whispered, "A toa bai-ia (Their hands are all full). Thereupon the leader made for himself a pellet of the food, and raised it in his right hand above his still upturned face. At once, the whole company threw their heads back to gaze at the sky above the boua, and lifted their right arms in a similar attitude. Having allowed time enough for everyone to adopt this posture, the performer dropped the pellet into his mouth and swallowed it whole. The company followed suit. It was essential to the ritual that the bolus should not be bitten.

After a short pause with arm still uplifted, the leader, imitated by the whole assembly, dropped hand to side and turned his face to the ground. The "looking downward" lasted for a few seconds only. Finally, the leader arose and, without special ceremony, placed whatever remained of the ball of korokoro up against the boua, beside the small taarika, for <sup>the remnant (nikira)</sup> ~~that~~ also was the "portion of the Sun, the Moon, and Auriaria". In a lesser degree also, this nikira (~~remnant~~) belonged to the other ancestral spirits, Riki, Nei Tevene, Nei Titua ~~bine~~, together with the ghosts of those clan elders whose skulls were buried by the boua.

Before leaving the spot, the leader anointed with oil the crania of the buried skulls, and, after he had performed this rite, any other member of the group might do likewise, choosing at his pleasure any or all of the skulls for anointment.



## The kabubu first-fruits ritual

## Marakei

After the pandanus harvest which, in a normal season, occurs during September-October, it was formerly forbidden to partake of any product of the new crop until the first-fruits had been offered up and a ritual meal eaten at the boua, or stone pillar representing the 'body' of the ancestral deity of the totem group.

The clans of Karongoa, Ababou and Maerua made the offering to the Sun and Moon, but included the names of Auriaria and other ancestral deities in the dedicatory formula. Other social groups offered the first-fruits direct to their ancestral deities.

The boua of the Karongoa group on Marakei - now, like most of its kind, unhappily destroyed by Christian iconoclasts - was an upstanding monolith of coral rock hewn from the reef and planted in the ground to eastward of the village of Rawanai.

As described by elders who, in pre-Christian days, actually performed the clan-rituals, it 'stood as high as a man's shoulder' and was about as 'broad and thick as a man'; it was, moreover, waisted like a man in the middle, though it seems to have had no definitely marked head.

This monolith stood in the centre of a circle of flat stones set edgewise in the ground, so as to form a kerb about a hand's breadth high. The diameter of the circle was, according to the account, 'three or four paces': its exact size was not, it would seem, a matter of importance.

The space within the circle was dressed with white shingle, and therein were buried the skulls of successive generations of clan elders, all males. The crania of the skulls remained uncovered by shingle, so that they might be anointed with oil on occasions when the cult of the ancestral deity was being observed. Care was taken to avoid burying any skulls due west of the boua, as this portion of the circle was reserved for food offerings.



For all everyday and overt purposes, including the normal cult of the ancestor, the boua represented the body of an ancestral being named Teweia. But for the particular and secret purposes of the first-fruits ritual it represented no longer Teweia but the spirit Auriaria. Upon its crest were then perched three red coral blocks, each about the size of two fists, one on top of the other. This addition was known as the bara (hat) of Auriaria.

The date of the first-fruits offering was the second day of the next new moon after the pandanus harvest had been gathered. The hour of the ritual was that of sunset, when both luminaries were seen together in the sky, the moon setting almost together with the sun. The material of the offering was a ball of the sweet food called te korokoro, made of boiled coconut toddy and that dessicated pandanus product called kabubu. The kabubu used for the purpose was, of course, manufactured from the newly harvested crop.

The ball of korokoro was carried to the boua by the senior male of the Karongoa clan, all the other men and women of his group following him. The leader wore upon his head a fillet of coconut leaf called the 'fillet of the sun'. Arrived at the place of offering the whole company assumed the sitting posture adopted by the performer of the fructification ritual, with backs to the sunset and faces to the stone.

The leader took his place a little in advance of the others, right up against the kerb of the circular enclosure. Being seated in the ritual posture, he leaned forward and set the ball of korokoro at arm's length before him on the shingle near the base of the stone. Throwing back his head to gaze into the sky immediately above the boua, and laying his open hands, palms upward, on the ground by his knees, he intoned:

Kanami aei, Tai ma Namakaina, ba ana moan nati Nei Kainabongibong. Auriaria, ma Nei Tewenei, ma Riki ma antin rabarabani karawa, kanami aei, ba moan taban te bitabongibong. Te mauri ao te raoi. Te mauri naba ngaira-o-o-o!



This is your food, Sun and Moon, even the first child of the woman Pandanus-in-the-twilight. Auriaria, and Nei Tewenei, and Riki, and the spirits of the hidden places of heaven, this is your food, even the first young bloom of the magic tree in the twilight. Prosperity and peace. Prosperous indeed are we-o-o-o!

The formula was recited three times. Through the entire ritual that followed the leader never for a moment ceased to look up into the sky above the stone. Leaning forward, he first groped for the ball of korokoro and, having taken it upon the palm of his left hand, he returned to an upright posture. Still sitting, he plucked out with his right finger-tips a piece of the sticky ball and moulded it into a pellet, which he then laid on the shingle before the stone as 'the portion of the Sun, and Moon, and Auriaria'. This was called the tarika.

The first portion having thus been given, he proceeded to mould a series of similar pellets, passing each one as it was back over his right shoulder, where it was taken by the man behind him and sent along the ranks of sitting people, until every member of the company had a portion. Absolute silence was observed until the distribution was complete, when the man behind the leader whispered 'a toa baia' (their hands are all full).

Thereupon the leader made for himself a pellet of the food, and raised it in his right hand above his still upturned face. At once the whole company threw their heads back to gaze at the sky above the boua and lifted their right arms in a similar attitude. Having allowed time enough for everyone to adopt this posture, the performer dropped the pellet into his mouth and swallowed it whole. The company followed suit. It was essential to the ritual that the bolus should not be bitten.

After a short pause with arm still uplifted the leader, imitated by the whole assembly, dropped his hand to his side and turned his face to the ground. The 'looking downwards' lasted for a few seconds only. Finally the leader arose and, without special ceremony, placed whatever remained of the ball



of korokoro up against the boua, beside the small tarikā, for the remnant (nikira) was also the 'portion of the Sun, the Moon, and Auriaria'. In a lesser degree also this nikira belonged to the other ancestral spirits, Riki, Nei Tewenei and Nei Titua-bine, together with the ghosts of those clan elders whose skulls were buried by the boua.

Before leaving the spot, the elder anointed with oil the crania of the buried skulls and, after he had performed this rite, any other member of the group might do likewise, choosing at his pleasure any or all of the skulls for anointment.



Magic.      Protective.

The magi-staff.

When you have performed the protective ceremony on the staff described in paper marked ⑧, the staff becomes your natural protector in all kinds of danger or necessity. You carry it with you wherever you go, but you must be careful never to use it as an implement. For example if you use it for te amoamo, i.e. slinging a weight over your shoulder, you will die a sudden death. The staff is pointed at both ends. When you return to your house, you may not bring the staff into the dwelling; you must plant it upright in the ground in the middle of the east side of your house, a few paces from the eaves. The staff is called Ji Kai ni bitanikai — the staff for reversing (or turning away) weapons (either material or spiritual).