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as an Oral  
Tradition

(90) - (96)

Series I (pp 61-66)

Stories 9-14

The origins of canoe crests & pennants

unattributed

The following accounts of canoe crests should be read in conjunction with the accounts given in Ch. 7 of *Migrations, Myth and Magic from the Cook Islands* by Rosemary Grimbble (MMM). I have translated when there are significant differences in the texts.

9. Benuakura. This is the name of a clan. The crest is Te Nimitawawa representing a marine worm (Grimble), a species of jelly-fish (Sabatier). Basic text for account at pp 181-2 of MMM. Not re-translated.

10. Temataua. The canoe-crest Temataua came from Nei Taberiki who said: 'Take two pieces of the mid-rib of a coconut frond and put it on my neck and place another one on my shoulders. This is Temataua and it represents the sting-ray.

Differs from Grimbble in attributing origin to Nei Taberiki not Nei Titualine. It is the crest of the Buatara clan.

11. Tekikomang. Identical with account at p. 184 of MMM except that (a) Nei Moaine is said to have been a Tamoa and (b) she had two sons (not three) — Baba and Bono. The crest represents a star-fish and is owned by the clan Bakarawa.

12. Te Bou-uoua. The crest of the Karongoa clan came from Teuribaba who used to devour human heads in Tamoa. When he left Tamoa, he travelled in his canoe, Te-atataimoa, and his crest was a human head in memory of his food.

13. Namakarua. The crest called Namakarua came from Taburimai of Tamoa who was chased through the ocean by Te Bakoa and Te Rokea, the sharks. They hated the sight of him but they liked his brother, Te Anoi, for the colour of his skin. When

he left, Taburimai took the crest Namakaina with him in memory of his meeting with Namakaina, the King. Tekabaraki, Taburitokia, Riki and Taburimai were the crew and Namakaina was their crest.

This story is not mentioned in M1717. There is no indication that the crest, Namakaina (the Moon), now exists nor to which clan it belonged. The Anoi is the hammerhead shark.

14. Kai ni kamara. This crest came from the Sun, their father, whom they went to visit. These are the things they took with them: stones, a non fruit and a rotting coconut. When they approached their father, he was very hot so they threw the stones at him, then the non fruit and finally the rotting coconut which damped down his heat. They went up to him and he gave them their canoe-crest, the Kai-ni-kamara, as a memento of their visit. As they left, the Sun said to them: 'This is the crest for your canoe and when you meet a whale or porpoise you may overcome them with these spells:

(1) Subdue the whales and porpoises  
In the rolling sea.

Let them fear the passage

Of this canoe of yours

Taburimai, Aniania,

Mei Teuenei, Riki, Kasubunang

And all the Spirits!

Let the shoaling young subside,

Let the shoaling adults fall,

Let the whales and porpoises

Sie in the quiet sea!

(2) They are churning up the waves

For they are mighty fish;

Rapidly, they move away

And dive beneath the bow.

No longer are they rising now

Go, chase them far away,

Sail through them as they, dying, slip

Into the northern seas.

Thus, are you born to live and die  
 O cruel fish,  
 Threshing hopelessly about  
 As you near your death.

(3) Blow away, Mister Whale,  
 From your home deep in the sea.  
 For I am offering praise  
 To Sun and Moon,  
 The glories of the sky.  
 Blow away, come blow away!

(4) Ōnei Nakinīwae

Threatening whale, rising upright from the sea!  
 Go, fall and smash yourself  
 Far south of my canoe.  
 Fearful whale, rising upright from the sea!  
 Go, fall and smash yourself  
 Far north of my canoe.  
 You are an omen of a coming storm!

Notes on 14

1. The crest, kai-ni-kamata, is the property of the Alabou clan and derives from the visit of Bue to his father, the Sun. MIMM pp 182-3.
2. It is probable that the first two chants are, in part, addressed to the kai-ni-kamata; the other two, directly to the whales and porpoises. I am not sure that the fourth chant belongs to this story though it is one which is connected with the Bue legend. I do not vouch for the accuracy of the translations of any of them since the texts are difficult and obscure.
3. Ōnei Nakinīwae. A waterspout, tornado or magic spell to counter them (Sataries). The chant is addressed to Rubeimbei te Nang, (1) frightening position of whale having whole forehead raised to

perpendicular position (2) position, omen of coming storm  
(3) surely to avert same (Satatier). The chant  
appears to confirm these meanings.

The four chants are not used in MMM.