

## KUNAN NAKA

1. Te huata ni forau.

E rangataki mai aon Tamoa

Borania Nareau ma wana Te Akaruru.

Ngaia, te huata ni forau.

2. E rangataki mai aon Tamoa

Borania Naka ma Nei Nibongi bong.

A Tuku i Tarawa,

A to, a ier, a kanika kanoaia

Nei Taurikai, ma Nei Karamakuna,

Ma Nei Mataruaua.

3. "Ko a iiri ta faaba".

Ngke e ina kanga - o

Akea o'e roroa.

"Ma tiku taranga ke roko mai Manra;

Tana tebma, katehea marana,

Ba i kanna

Ba e maemaem bukini moana."

4. Karaki nako Tamoa,

Ko na iiri ongora ke forau.

A tafaa, a inako, ta a maka Ten Nareau.

Ana fai mai Teta i ta uoiaia,

Te ba ni kai ma te ba ni kaburengarenga.

5. Tibasia i Tamoa, ke ia

Te maka ni-wi,

Kwa ni fai kam babanga faetae-a-a-ee.

6. E moti Ten Nareau,

Te bibini, te Kanoua, Potorake,

Tobeka baina. Ten Nareau.

B'e kiba nakorāng  
 B'e kibara Na'ka.  
 Ma ka'ā'ā'ā'ā,  
 A'kea rōngōngōna,  
 Tī ke karaki mai maiaki,  
 M'e aki man tōtōki bukina.

7. Kam rangi nako!

Tī a ho naba ikai ... e ... e'  
 Ma uotami te leko teaina, te kekouai.  
 Kam ana tekoteko avei  
 I tabon te uma n tannakoiaki,  
 Kariki bai iai, kariki uai tibuia,  
 Ma ni karasi ta ai buton  
 Te kai ni mamano,  
 Kaurabukibuki, ngōia!

A song of Naka

The translation has been made from two Gilbertese texts, one of which is a later transcription in Grimble's hand, and from which a consolidated text has been drawn.

2. Grimble introduces his transcription as follows:

" Song of the voyage of Naka and Nibongibong from Samoa to the North, when they fled from the basket full of sickness and all evil things which were cast out of Heaven upon earth when the world was created.

The poet was Toburea of Arorae who died about a century ago ( i.e. c. 1820 AD )."

The attribution conflicts with the original Gilbertese text which says that the poet was Koriri of Tarawa. The content of the poem and language used seem to support a southern origin.

3. To expound on Grimble's brief introduction, the poem links the early tradition of the universal creation by Nareau (Bomatemakê) and the later, specific one of the Ancestral Tree of Tamoa (Kai n Tikuaba). In the former, Nakea and Nei Nibongibong fled from the basket of sorrows to their home in Bouru, the land of departed spirits, where their daughters, Nei Karamakuna in particular, fed on the tatoos of arriving spirits and the pupils of the eyes of those who had none.

4. Here, the poet pictures a Tamoa from which Nareau is preparing to sail in pursuit of Naka and Nei Nibongibong who have already left for Tarawa (Stanzas 1 and 2). Stanza 3 is an interpolation telling of their daughter's destiny on Bouru, Manra being symbolic of the world of the living.

5. The gift of Nareau to his people (Stanza 4) is elsewhere held by Grimble to be the betel nut. Since that nut is exotic to the Pacific Islands, it is more reasonable to accept Kabubu ( the word used in the Gilbertese texts) in its literal sense of dried, pulverized fruit of the pandanus, still used for sustenance by the traveller.

Then look

Then Reid's translation

A Song of Naka

1. All is ready for the voyage,  
For the flight from Tamoa's shores,  
Great Nareau will speed away  
In his canoe, ' Te Akaruru '.  
All is ready, now.
  
2. Naka and Nei Nibongibong  
Have taken to the sea  
And sailed away to Tarawa  
Where they stopped and mated.  
Their children were Nei Taunikai  
Nei Karamakuna  
And Nei Matamuarua.
  
3. " Each of you shall have a dowry,  
A plot of land to call your own.  
Go, seek it far away from here  
And wait there for the traveller  
From Manra, When he comes  
Hold on to him, peck out his eyes  
And torment him who dares  
To look so tranquilly on me".
  
4. Let us return to Tamoa  
And hear the tale unfold.  
How they were overwhelmed and fled  
Across the timeless sea.  
They feared the mighty Nareau  
And took his gift sublime  
Away with them - the precious gift  
Of red pandanus fruit.  
They mashed and dried and powdered it  
To store in woven leaves.
  
5. In Tamoa, their portion was  
Grey hairs, decaying teeth  
And many other sicknesses  
One can't remember now.
  
6. They cast their lots by plaiting strands  
Of young palm-leaves in twos and fours  
And read the omens. Nareau  
Has flown away towards the north  
To question Naka who  
Is sailing, very slowly, on  
But he has nothing to impart

Except about the southern rout  
Which hasn't run its full course yet.

7. " So, you're about to put to sea  
I'm sure we'll meet again !  
But take a shoot or two with you  
And plant them far away  
Upon a new home facing south.  
There, let them multiply.  
Let each bring offspring forth, as strong  
And sturdy as the heart  
Of the Ancestral Tree.

And may they countless be !

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## A Song of Nalca

1. All is ready for the voyage,  
For the flight from Tamoa's shores,  
Great Nareau will speed away  
In his canoe, 'Te Akaruru'.  
All is ready, now!
  
2. Naka and Mei Nibongi-bongi  
Have taken to the sea  
And sailed away to Tarawa,  
Where they stopped and married.  
Their children were Mei Tannikai  
Mei Karamakuna  
And Mei Mata-rua-rua.
  
3. "Each of you shall have a dowry,  
A plot of land to call your own.  
Go, seek it far away from here  
And wait there for the traveller  
From Manva. When he comes  
Hold on to him, peck out his eyes  
And torment him who dares  
To look so tranquilly on me."
  
4. Let us return to Tamoa  
And hear the tale unfold,  
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 To question Nalca who  
 Is sailing, very slowly, on.  
 But he has nothing to impart  
 Except about the southern route  
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 I'm sure we'll meet again!  
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