

A TALE OF NAREAU

from

TOMA OF BERU

Kenneri  
but  
to-cheate

Difficult but promising - revision needed if to be published

See, NAREAU'S loin mat is revealed!

I stoop and snatch it up, roll it up,

And present it to those ancient gods,

NAREAU and NINGONINGO.

The spirits of my song command me take my spear

And hunt the porpoise basking in the sun.

But I am humiliated;

My first spear only wounds the fish

And AURIARIA sweeps it in.

So then NAWAI and AURAO cry out

To TEWENEI for retribution.

Lightning flashes and, partly blinded,

I dip and scoop and catch it in my net.

Look! I have caught it. Look again! It leaps

High to the clouds scudding across the sky.

I wrestle hard with it, my arms

Outstretched above my head, so all

The landlubbers may watch and see.

Look, look at me, O spirits of my song!

I will exalt it as my ancestor,

But look how it leaps and threshes!

And leaping higher, disappears.

I will exalt it in the MANEABA

That stands at TABONTEBIKE

\* If the fish in the seas remain.

I will swim the deeps of the ocean

\* And show to the KIRITAUARIKI

The red, red RENGA - O.

See how in the canoe's white wake it swims!

I, from the beach, now see the bloody stain

And pull upon my spear.

Though it cries out, I haul away

And, all alone, I pull it in.

\* The porpoise dies, ancestors of the Tree!  
And on the surging ocean slowly drifts  
\* To the shores of MATANG from TAMOA.  
Under the high noon it shall die,  
Its life-blood drain away.

\* So on the wind from southern lands,  
Sail in the Woman's warrior sons  
Bedecked with teeth of TENRUKAMEREN.  
I shall waylay and capture them  
As ordained by NEI TEWENEI.  
My porpoise, TENRUKAMEREN, draws near  
I shall harpoon, o'ercome and capture it;  
And cut it up,  
And make it fast  
To the canoe.

\* Is it not your canoe which comes?

There is a mat in the MANEABA at TARIBO,  
In the place allotted to UMANTEWENEI  
Which they keep clean;  
Where TEMOTU and RURUTEI  
Tell ancient tales:  
But everything must end.  
All men beneath the heavens  
Must die, their stars snuff out,  
Their fiery spirits crushed;  
Dead on the sands to fall,  
Below-o-o. They die.  
Pick up the tale again,  
And let the ranging chant  
Surge upward, echoing,  
Through the MANEABA  
That stands at TARIBO.  
Do you feel that fearful trembling?  
The time for voyaging has come -  
Survey the rigging.

Let the fore and aft braces scream -  
Scream as the swift canoe speeds on.

\* Through the last span of NAREAU'S life.

My spear shall seek out your children  
Though they reach for the heavens.  
My arm shall be tireless,  
Hurling my spear  
High in the sky,  
Up through the hollow pillar,  
Till it reaches the ridge-pole  
Of the MANEABA  
Of the I-MATANG  
From TAMOA.

Listen! The loud laughter rings  
From the tips of the rain clouds;  
And the red dust settles down  
Upon my sleeping mat.

\* The pandanus blossom  
Is blown abroad:  
It wins renown  
And carries its fragrance  
To distant shores.  
So ends my tale.