

a Genealogical Approach to Gilbertese History

The Genealogies of the Gilbert Group.

It is very difficult indeed to get a reliable genealogy in the Gilbert Islands. Even the elders of the race, who now alone care to remember the family traditions for more than nine or ten generations back, admit that they themselves have forgotten much and that their grandfathers before them were often at fault. There are several good reasons for this process of decay. First, social development in the atolls appears to have stopped short at the primitive patriarchal stage. If the race ever did, in the course of its Samoan sojourn, produce a priestcraft (and there seems a possibility that it did) its ultimate settlement among the rustic surroundings of the scattered Micronesian islands very quickly set back the social and religious clock. The difficulty of winning a bare subsistence from the sandy soil, the absence of barbaric colons in flower and bird, the scarcity and crudity of building material, the want of decorative stuffs, the lack of river, rock, mountain and valley, had all their effect on the minds

and methods of the people, and in the course of centuries must certainly have narrowed their interests, provincialised their outlook, disembellished their ritual, and profoundly simplified their every religious observance. Again, the distribution of the families piecemeal over a score of ~~isolated~~ <sup>incoherent</sup> atolls could not fail to disrupt any tribal cult which a priestcraft may have established, and the result was a return to the only possible system that could live for long in these rural and isolated communities — the patriarchal régime and the cult of the ancestral god. Thus tribal gods disappeared and with them went the priests. It was the decay of the sacred caste that, in all probability, first endangered the purity of the island genealogies; for throughout Polynessia the priestly college has always been the repository of family and tribal tradition. It is true that the elders of every household had the family generations also by heart, so as to keep a check upon the accuracy of the priests; but the test was mutual and the record a double one. When the sacred caste disappeared the individual families had

no referre in cases of doubt and the genealogies soon suffered.

(2) But the event that most profoundly affected the purity of the family records was a local war of nine generations ago, in which a host of warriors from the island of Bern, aided by numerous allies from Nikunan, swept forth to conquer the whole Group from South to North. Beginning with the utter conquest of Onotoa, Tabitenea and Nonouti, this swarm, under the victorious leadership of two heroes named Kaitu and Hakeia, proceeded to win a footing and leave powerful chiefs in residence upon every unit of the archipelago Northward as far as Marakei. It is not to be supposed that a host emanating from two islands of such dimensions as Bern and Nikunan could entirely have subjugated the rest in its own generation. But the chiefs it left established in the various districts of each unit were powerful and skilful enough to consolidate their positions; and within a few generations their descendants were the principal landowners on every island of the group. On Abaiang and Abemama

they succeeded in wrecking the ancient democratic scheme of the islanders and erecting on its ruins a dynastic system of Kings or High Chiefs who have held power until today. And so sweeping was the final effect of the war of Kaitu and Uakeia on land ownership throughout the Group that the native of today needs only to prove his descent from one of these victorious chiefs of Bern in order to establish his title to any given plot of land.

(3) The traditions of every island, after the conquest from Bern, naturally underwent a gradual levelling process. On units like Onotoa and Tabituea, where defeat had been sudden and overwhelming, local myths and genealogies must have been almost at once obscured, for defeat means slavery and slaves have no family honour left them to preserve. On other islands, like Abemama, where the dominance of the invaders took several generations to spread from a single occupied district, the decay was slower but not the less sure. In the course of time the traditions of all the invaded atolls took their colour from Bern alone, and thus we are left today with what amount generally to the transplanted traditions of a single unit.

This generalisation is not absolute, of course; there were certain groups of villages up and down the ~~the~~ islands which never actually admitted defeat by the warriors of Kaitu and Hakeia, and although intermarriage with victorious families has gradually dimmed their original records, some few fragments of these are still to be had. Nevertheless, such traditions are neither typical nor authoritative in the native mind and the genealogies of which they once formed the prelude are gone forever.

~~It~~ It was the overthrow of all preceding land-tenures throughout the Group by the war of Kaitu and Hakeia that ~~gave impetus to~~ <sup>gave impetus to</sup> the decay of Gilbertese genealogy. For the very foundation of the social scheme was land ownership, and the very *raison d'être* of the genealogy in these small and crowded islands was its proof of a clear title to possession. The last judgment on land-ownership was delivered (in the mind of the modern native) by the war of Kaitu and Hakeia, nine generations ago. Nine generations are therefore all that a man need essentially remember today of his ancestry.

With the greybeards indeed it is rather different. They still retain some sentimental regard for

the love of their grandsons, but even to them the war from Bern is so epochal an event that they use it as a dividing line between historic and legendary times. All that has happened since they call "Aomata" - Human; all that went before was "Ante" - Ghostly. Of the Ghostly period there is only one series of events in which they take any vivid interest at all, and that is the coming of their ancestors from Samoa <sup>together</sup> with the doings of their more immediate descendants in the Group. As a matter of fact, these events, as we shall see later, occupied at least ten generations and in their history we may trace the bitter turmoil that rigned in the islands while the Samoan invaders and their children were settling down. During such a period of unrest, when every chieftain strove to keep or to expand the possessions won by his Samoan ancestor, and when the ambitious Kings of Tarawa were stalking through the Group with intent to subjugate every unit to their sway, great deeds ~~must~~ <sup>of war</sup> ~~were naturally performed and naturally have been done~~ great heroes arose <sup>of</sup> whose names and exploits a later age has found it easy to remember some scraps. The old men are still able, therefore, to record a little true history of the first ten generations that succeeded the Samoan invasion, though (it must be added at once) their accounts are garbled and obscured by the wonderful,

while no one chronicler has in his single possession the complete tale of generations, Nevertheless, the latter can be recovered by cross-checking accounts from island to island, for they fell within a period of which everyone remembers something.

(5) But it was historically natural that a time of comparative quietude should supervene upon that era of initial unrest. The ambitious families were either satisfied or defeated; wars on a large scale ceased; the population had been shuffled and sorted; it settled down to consolidate its possessions; an age of agriculture followed. No great heroes arose because nothing happened to evoke a hero; nothing in fact happened to recommend this period with its generations to the memory or imagination of the modern race. It seems almost by accident that any records of it are preserved at all. Militating against the accuracy of those that have indeed survived is the native habit of handing traditions, not from father to son, but from grandfather to grandson. Among races which have priestly colleges, or possess a system of land-tenure which obliges them to keep their genealogies pure for many dozens of generations, this habit would not necessarily cause confusion, But the Gilbert Islands have neither the one nor the other. In order to

prove titles to land they need go back only nine generations with exactitude. Beyond that point it seems that their genealogies have a tendency to skip backwards from grandson to grandfather, omitting alternate generations.

(b) Thus, in surveying our family-trees back from the war of Kaitu and Uakeia through the quiet agricultural period, and indeed also through the era of unrest to the coming from Samoa, we must be prepared for a loss of anything up to 50% of the names as recorded by any one authority. Very of ten the loss is far greater than this, as a single example will show. In the final paragraph of the tale of <sup>Na</sup> ~~Nor~~webwe [on page ....] are given one or two generations of the descendants of Beia and Tekai. Their son was Teboi, whose wife Komao "bore him the girl Tabiria, the greatest of all the chieftanesses of Nonouti." Turning to a better preserved genealogy of the same line from Nui [at page ....] we find that Tabiria was not the daughter but the great-great-granddaughter of Teboi and Komao. Thus three generations are found to have been cleared in one leap by the Tarawa chronicle.

(c) But the Nui authority would not necessarily condemn the Tarawa historian for such a lapse;



he would argue that the chieftainess Tabiria was correctly called "nati-n Teboi", the child of Teboi, because she was descended from him in the direct line. If pressed for his definition of a "direct line" he would then uphold (and have the backing of every competent native authority in his contention) that this not only includes steps from father to son and mother to daughter, but also from uncle to nephew, aunt to niece. In examining our genealogies we must therefore accept these titular sons and daughters, fathers and mothers with a great deal of reserve. The same applies to our interpretation of the word "tibu" which may mean equally well ancestor or ancestress, grandparent or grandchild, adoptive child or grandchild, or merely descendant to the n<sup>th</sup> degree. It has a more puzzling sense still when used to indicate the relative seniority of two collateral lines descended from a common ancestor. Supposing one of these lines to have sprung from the eldest son of such an ancestor and the other to have branched off through a younger great-grandson or great grand-nephew, any member of the former may call himself "tibu" to any member of the latter. "Tibu" may thus be translated "belonging to the parent stock" when the relation is clear; but when the word

comes up without explanation as a commentary on a fragmentary list of names purporting to be some family's genealogy for six or seven centuries, its many possible meanings are confusing, not only to the foreigner, but to the native, who learned to use it parrot-wise in a certain place from his long-dead grandfathers.

(8) It may be laid down as an absolute rule that no one man or family of modern days is in possession of a genealogy that will lead us back without a break to the days of the Samoan invaders. One or two have been given me, that bridge the gap between now and then in twelve generations — nine to the war of Kaitu and Hakeia, and three beyond! The lists of names as a rule number from 18-21; I have one that gives 23 generations. But fortunately, by comparing local records of the same ancestral lines from island to island we are able to build up a fuller tale, which, if not all that might be desired, is still a better account than any individual native could give, and capable of proof so far as it goes.

(9) The history of the race as we know it at present has been seen to fall naturally into three chief periods, which were \_\_\_\_\_

- indent / (i) The Age of Kurst, an era of legends immediately following upon the arrival from Samoa and continuing until the invaders and their descendants had finished fighting among themselves for their footholds in the Group; this was succeeded by
- (ii) The Rustic Age, of which we have hardly any records, and during which the people settled down to the humdrum of petty island life, until their peace was again destroyed by the war of Kaitu and Wakeia;
- (iii) The Modern Age, called Human by the natives, which followed the conquest of the Group by the swarm from Bern, and lasted until the coming of the British Flag in 1892. Of this era the native records are clear.

Genealogically speaking, the first of these ages began with the names of the ancestors who arrived from Samoa and ended with the accession to power of a certain famous Bern chieftain named Tane-n-toa. The last, or modern, age began with the names of the conquering chieftains of Bern, who established their families on the various islands; ~~and~~ <sup>it ends</sup> with the present day inhabitants of the Group.

The middle or Rustic age must therefore be filled in with the generations still preserved

for us between Tane-n-toa of Bem and the chieftains of Kaitu and Wakeia.

For purposes of analysis, the genealogies of the islands may thus be examined in three groups of generations, classified in accordance with the historical periods above indicated. Our enquiry will begin with the modern group and work backwards to the comers from Samoa.

### ← THE MODERN GENERATIONS. (c.c.)

~~NOT~~ As a basis for the discussion of the modern generations we may take the names [numbered from 1 to 9 in columns <sup>columns 1 and 2 of Genealogy</sup> --- and --- <sup>Below</sup> of the table facing page ----.] The <sup>first</sup> ~~one~~ list is from an account given me on Tabiteneva by a certain Kabua; ~~whose name appears in the last generation but one,~~ <sup>second</sup> the other came from Tem Teeko of Abemama, a cousin to the present high chief Bauro, and it was corroborated on the island by a specially convened council of family elders. It will be seen that both records give an identical account, name for name, back to Tem Mwea, who established the line on Abemama. This personage was one of the warriors in Kaitu and Wakeia's host from Bem.

The similarity of the records from two separate islands and the unanimity of evidence among the local authorities of Abemama itself invite our special confidence in this account of Tem Mwea's generations.

So compact and clear also is the detail still remembered of his descendants in the chiefly line, including their deeds, personalities, marriages, deaths, and the circumstances under which each one succeeded to power, that no reasonable doubt can arise as to the completeness of the line as given by Abemama and Tabitenean alike. I have three records of collaterals to the main stock exhibited. One of these shows nine <sup>adult</sup> male generations back to the common ancestor Tem Mwea; the other two show ten generations each, consisting of eight males and two females. As women married considerably younger than men the discrepancy is not only understandable but a guarantee of accuracy.

Kabua, the Tabitenean chronicler who furnished me with the list of Abemaman chiefs [at column ... of the table,] also gave me his own line of descent, which appears in column 3<sup>rd</sup>. This shows the name of Kanatoro I at the ninth generation back, and Kanatoro I was one of the warriors of the Beman host, who succeeded in establishing himself on the Northern end of Tabitenean. Men only appear in this list, and another <sup>male</sup> Tabitenean line [at column ....] shows at the ninth ~~male~~ generation back the name of Taoroba-of-Beru, another warrior of the conquering swarm, as his name and title indicate. This last genealogy actually shows only seven names from

Taroba-of-Bern to Te Kawakawa, my authority, but Te Kawakawa is a very old man with a great-grandson who has reached puberty, so that two generous generations may be added to the list. Last of all, a Bernan line [exhibited at column...] again shows nine generations back to Tnangi-biri, who was a contemporary and kinswoman of the hero Kaitu himself. She certainly makes a female myth, but it is quite possible that she bore her first child later in life than the average native woman. ~~The evidence given by the genealogies exhibited puts it beyond reasonable doubt that the war of Kaitu and Hakeia took place nine generations ago.~~ It would be tedious to pile up instances. I have seen genealogies leading back to that period from Tarawa, Nononti, Maiana, Nikunan and Abaiang, and all of them give a like testimony. Where the lists were of males ~~names~~ only, there were nine names; where either one or two women were named there were sometimes nine, sometimes ten generations.

I have had in my possession a list from Nui, an Ellice Island, which tells the same tale. This island was populated by fugitives from Tarawa, Nononti and Tabitenea when they were overwhelmed by the Bernan warriors, and the speech used there to this day is Gilbertese. The generations kept of those fugitives (given to me by the old man Anetipa whose ancestor came from Nononti) until \_\_\_\_\_

today number nine. Unfortunately I have lost this record, but though it would have furnished interesting confirmatory evidence the case seems clear enough without it. The unanimity of the genealogies produced is but a sample of that which prevails over the whole Group concerning the period in question, and there can be no reason for doubting that the war of Kaitu and Wakeia took place in the ninth adult generation back from today. Only adult generations have been recorded in the table. It remains to add that in nearly every line exhibited the last name shown is that of a man or woman of over 35, who has a child already arrived at the age of puberty, and so for the purpose of reckoning time another half-generation must be added to the nine which have been established. In multiplying  $9\frac{1}{2}$  by the number of years in a Gilbertese generation we shall therefore be able to find approximately what was the date of the war of Kaitu and Wakeia.

(44) The age at which a male Gilbertese married and procreated lay somewhere between 25 and 30 years. The actual date of a young man's marriage depended upon the length of time it took him to pass through his initiation into full manhood, while the inception of that initiation depended again on the lad's physical development. A healthy, lusty

boy might begin younger than a weakling, but as a rule it was not muscular development that was watched so much as the growth of axillary and pectoral hairs. When these were well in evidence and not before, the boy was considered ripe enough to be "made into a man," and this, among a people not given to great hairiness, would not normally be until he was 23 or 24 years old. Taking his age to be 23 at the beginning of the initiation period, we must allow a minimum of 3 years for the completion of the various rites he must undergo. At one stage, for example, the youth was set to live on the Eastern side of the island in a new hut, of which the pandanus thatch must begin to rot and leak ere he could leave it. This might, in a succession of dry seasons, take 4 or 5 years; in rainy periods it might not take half that time; normally it would occupy about  $2\frac{1}{2}$  years. Reckoning 3 years to cover this isolation stage together with its preliminary and subsequent rites, our youth of 23 emerges as a Roro-buaka or fully grown warrior at the age of 26, and, supposing him to marry and procreate within a year of his "coming of age", he is already 27 years old by the time his first child is born.

Twenty seven years may thus be taken as the average length of a male Gilbertese generation, and if



we were dealing with exclusively male genealogies we might safely multiply the number of our generations by 27 in reckoning back to any given period. But many Gilbertese names may be given equally well to men or women, and where sex is not definitely specified in the lines recorded, we cannot be sure whether we are dealing with male or female ancestors. Pains have been taken to exhibit genealogies in which men preponderate and females have been indicated where possible, but chances of error have not been eliminated altogether. There may be other names of women among them — and women married and bore children a great deal earlier than men. We must make a general provision for this in our reckoning by somewhat reducing the length of a generation and we shall not be very far out in taking the convenient figure of 25 years as a standard for future calculations. In fact, even when we are dealing with lines in which the names of women admittedly do not appear, we shall find the 25-year standard a very good one to handle, and, as we shall not be called upon to apply it to more than thirty generations in all, our result will in the end be only 60 years out with that which we should have obtained in multiplying by 27.

At the present day, two years after writing the

above, I have read Mr. Percy Smith's "Hawaiki, in which the author for somewhat similar reasons assumes a 25-year generation for his analysis of Polynesian genealogies. I agree with Mr. Smith that Fornander's 30-year basis is ill adapted to conditions of marriage among Pacific peoples and am glad in this matter to quote his great authority on my side.

~~Two~~ Nine and a half generations of 25 years take us back about 240 years; for purposes of chronology the war of Kaitu and Hakeia may therefore be dated A.D. 1680. Already in two and a half centuries tales of the marvellous begin to gather about that conflict. The form of the warrior Kaitu looms enormous in the mists of legend; he was as tall as a coconut-tree; he could trample a host underfoot; his eyelids were so huge and heavy that two warriors must sit on his shoulders to prop them open as he went forth to battle. Even his dog is glorified! Kaitu's dog was fond of fish, and for that reason alone the hero is said to have seized as his peculiar property all islets at lagoon entrances where fish abounded, and all those parts of the mainland in many islands where fishermen might easily pursue their calling. It may be true; nothing is unreasonable in the wars of the islanders. But such is the strange tendency of island thought that through his dog the heroic

Kaitu now comes nearest to godhead. For his dog loved fish; therefore he loved fishermen; therefore the fishermen of Tarawa and the Northern Gilberts to this day propitiate his spirit with offerings ere they go forth to their labour. With Kaitu is deified his kinsman and colleague Makeia. No such wizard was ever known in the islands; unfailingly could he predict the lucky day for a venture; he spoke with the united wisdom of all ancestral spirits; he never gave an erring counsel. So today he is the patron spirit of divination and diviners, second only to Na Aerea in prestige.

← THE RUSTIC AGE. (e.c)

(13) Thus already with the personages who ushered in the modern age we begin to walk among the mists. Yet the genealogies leading back to their time are clear enough and would remain so until the land-titles established on all islands by the warriors from Bem were swept away by another war of equal scope. Then a new era would begin. The records of Kaitu and Makeia's generations would decay, while the lines springing from the latest conquerors would be carefully preserved.

Stepping back beyond the war of Kaitu and Makeia we are at once in obscurity. One general direction we have however for our guidance onward into the

~~Desires, we are at once in obscurity. One general direction we have, however, for our guidance upward into the remoter past, and that is, that all the lines take us now to the single island of Beru. This is naturally so: every genealogy of every unit leads us back to one of the conquering Beru families. Certainly, there were allies from Nikunau in the victorious host, but many of them returned to their home after the war, and all of them were kinsmen to their Beruan colleagues. They were, as it would seem, junior branches of Beru families, who had not been long settled on Nikunau when the war began, and still called themselves Beruans. Those of them who settled on the vanquished islands carried on the Beruan tradition; those who returned to Nikunau after the war at once set about subjugating the stay-at-homes on that island, and thus the traditions to be had there also lead us back to Beru.~~

~~///~~ The Rustic Age lay between the times of Kaitu and Uaakeia and of a certain famous chieftain on Beru, named Tane<sup>n</sup>+toa, [of whom more will be said later]. Judged by the poverty of its records, it was an absolutely eventless period. The only happening of importance that may definitely be attributed to it, [from the material seen in chapters .. to ..,] is the birth of a bastard child to the daughter of Towatu-of-Matang, [as related in the Tarawan tale at page ..]. We may place this event in the period under review, because we know, by the evidence of the story, that Towatu-of-Matang was a contemporary of Tane<sup>n</sup>+toa the King, while the bastard child of his so-called daughter was Te Tonga<sup>n</sup>+nga, one of the greatest warriors of Kaitu and Uaakeia, who eventually became a chief on Tarawa. Here is the whole line as given by the Tarawa chronicle:-

Towatu of Beberiki; driven from his home by the invasion from Samoa; went to Tabiteuea and married Te<sup>b</sup>+bai<sup>b</sup>+bana<sup>n</sup>+ni<sup>n</sup>+karawa;  
Tautua of Tabiteuea; son of the above; quarrelled with his parents and went to Matang the wonderful, where he married Abunaba;  
Towatu of Matang; son of the above; invaded Beru in the time of Tane<sup>n</sup>+toa,

<u>Takeiti of Beru;</u>	settled there, and married Tauranga; daughter of the above; mother of a bastard, who became the famous chieftain whose name follows:
<u>Te Tonga+nga;</u>	one of Kaitu and Ua+keia's warriors; settled on Tarawa A.D. 1680.

~~118~~ If we are to believe the testimony of the above record, there was but one generation, and a female one at that, between Tane+n+toa's time and that of the Great War. But we must first test this against the evidence of other genealogies, in which the name of Towatu of Matang appears. From Tabiteuea we have a line [(shown at column .. of the table)] in which he figures as Towatu+te+baro<sup>n</sup> / -atu - Towatu of the forelock - a name sometimes given to him on Tarawa also. This line shows three generations ~~between Towatu~~ of the forelock and Kauatoro I, who was a collateral and contemporary of Te Tonga+nga; thus we see that the Tarawan list must have dropped at least two generations belonging to the Rustic Age.

~~119~~ Three generations to this period is the number most usually found in the records of the chroniclers. For another example of this, we turn to a Tabiteuean line, which has already been referred to - that of the Abemaman high chiefs [at column ..]. Here we are given three names between Tem Mwea, who is known to have been a contemporary of Tane+n+toa on Beru, and that second Tem Mwea, his descendant, who was a warrior of Kaitu and Ua+keia. Three once more are shown between the same personages in the Abemaman version of the same line. [at column ...]

But, by comparing the Abemaman and Tabiteuean records, we shall be able to add to our knowledge. First of all, we observe that the names of Meri+meri and Te Ara+uatao appear in both. Their chronological order is inverted, indeed, from version to version, and the names of their wives are interchanged, but they with their women-folk form so solid a block that we dare not make more than a couple of generations out of them. Besides, however, showing these two gener-

ations in common, each account has a name peculiar to itself alone: the Abemaman, that of Te Annaki before Meri+meri; the Tabiteuean, that of Na Kibae after Meri+meri. Either account has, in fact, retained a name dropped by the other. We may thus add to the Abemaman list a late generation remembered by Tabiteuea, and to the Tabiteuean an early one remembered by Abemama. The synthetic record of this line then shows four generations to cover the Rustic Age.

~~It~~ *It has already been remarked* [In paragraph 6 above, was made the remark,] that we must be prepared for a loss of anything up to 50% of the names in any genealogy emanating from a single authority. An example was given, which indicated that the loss might be even greater than one half in certain cases. Our examination of specific lines so far has shown very clearly that the genealogies have suffered attrition. If the loss ever did at any time amount to 50% or more of the names, it is much more likely to have occurred in this obscure and unheroic period than in any other age of the island history. Let us apply the theory, taking three generations as the average number accorded to the period between the Great War and Tane+n+toa. Three is 50% of six; therefore according to our reckoning, six generations, and possibly more, should be attributed to the age in question. We may check the result and the theory against the showing of the Beruan line [at column .. of the table,] which allocates the unprecedented number of eight generations to this period.

The Beruan list came into my hands during the course of a dispute (in which I was invited to be arbitrator) between two families descended from Tane+n+toa, about their respective seniority in public assemblies and feasts. Its generations are attested to, not only by the old man Rioiti, whose name is the last but one, but also by a council of seven other greybeards of his family. As will be seen, it gives a sequence of seventeen names from Tane+n+toa's time to the present day. From the other side in the dispute came a list of names

covering the same period in eleven generations, of which nine could be placed in the modern age, leaving <sup>two</sup> ~~HHHHH~~ for the rustic. Inasmuch as these two branches of Tane+n+toa's line have lived for <sup>centuries</sup> ~~HHHHHHHHH~~ in the same village on Beru, the divergence of their records, represented by the difference of six 25-year generations, is a very striking example of the incoherence of island genealogies in general.

Examining the eight generations of our list belonging to the Rustic Age, we see that they fall into two groups of four generations each, the names in the second being a repetition of those in the first, except that all the wives are different. This duplication of names might seem rather suspicious, and to the argument that the different wives sufficiently dissociate the groups it might be answered, that most Gilbertese men had several wives in the old days.

Are we, then, to suspect that this is a corrupt record of only four men with two wives each? I think not. First, it was, and is, by no means uncommon for successive Gilbertese generations to bear certain ancestral names in due rotation. Secondly, the two groups of persons were carefully differentiated by my council of greybeards, by attaching the title "Te Ataei" - The Younger - to each name in the second set. Thirdly, we are face to face with genealogies whose tendency is to waste away, certainly not to increase by gathering to themselves illegitimate material. Fourthly, our reckoning on the basis of a 50% loss in the average Group genealogy prepared us to allocate six or more generations to this period. We may, in fact, accept these eight generations as authentic. In the symmetrical repetition of the names lies the secret of their preservation; had they been all different, a good half of them would ~~probably~~ probably have been forgotten.

~~(18) There is no evidence known to me indicating that the Rustic Age lasted for more than eight generations. It may have been longer, but I am inclined to~~

~~(15)~~ There is no evidence known to me indicating that the Rustic Age lasted for more than eight generations. It may have been longer but I am inclined to believe that in the Bem line just examined the full tale has been told. It will therefore be used for purposes of reckoning time. Eight generations are 200 years; back to Janēnītoa of Bem carries us into a myth — 225 years before the war of Kaitū and Hakeia. Thus we may date him approximately A.D. 1450.

### THE AGE of UNREST.



~~111~~ The generation of Tane+n+toa will keep us still on Beru. But when we begin to climb past him up the genealogies, we shall be carried out again into the islands, for he was descended from a line of Tarawan kings, whose wars of conquest established branches of the family on many units of the Group. Some representatives of those branches, notably the chieftainess Tabiria of Nonouti, achieved a fame no doubt as great in its day as that of Tane+n+toa, but the war of Kaitu and Uaakeia threw a shadow over all save Beruan reputations, and their glory is now obliterated. Tane+n+toa the Beruan stands forth pre-eminent among his contemporaries, and through him mainly speaks the past.

It must, however, be carefully observed that there were two distinct Tane+n+toas of Beru, the first of whom <sup>the son of Mata warebwe,</sup> was an ancestor on the distaff side of the second, <sup>as shown on Genealogy 2.</sup> [reference to the table will make this clear. In column ..... appears the name of Tane+n+toa the son of Mata-warebwe.] He married a lady called Te+arei+n+tarawa, and by her had a daughter named Teweia. She married the famous Tarawan, Beia-ma-tekai, and by him became the ~~ancestress~~ <sup>ancestress</sup> of the second Tane+n+toa. [The story of the union of Teweia and Beia-ma-tekai may be seen in the tale of Noubwebwe at page ....].

~~112~~ The names and deeds of the two Tane+n+toas have been so sadly confused throughout the Group that it is hardly possible to disengage their personalities. But I think there can be no doubt that the second of the name, whom we are using for our chronology, was the more illustrious of the two, because he was a son not only of the ruling house of Beru, but also of the <sup>R</sup>kingly family of Tarawa.

~~(21)~~ In the time of this chieftain, i.e., about 1450 A.D., came that remarkable invasion of Beru by a cannibal folk, of which we have an account in the tale of Towatu of Matang, [at page ...] That tale contains a good deal of detail about the invasion and its antecedent history. Stripped of the marvelous, it may be summarised as follows:†

*indent*  
When the people of the Tree were scattered from Samoa, the clans whose totem was the Tropic Bird fled to the Gilbert Islands, as far North as Beberiki, or, as it is now called, Butaritari. There they settled down to a career of cannibalism, having driven a great many of the indigenous people out of the island. But a few of the latter survived; led by the man Towatu, they succeeded at last in gaining a victory over the invaders, by burning their village, as it would seem. Nevertheless, the Tropic Bird clans recovered from that defeat, and established a line of warriors (Koura being the first named), who at last beat Towatu and his folk out of Butaritari. These fled Southward to Tabiteuea, where they settled for awhile. But in the next generation, they were split up by a family

quarrel, and some of the left the island with Tautua, son of Towatu, in search of a new home. They came at last to Matang, of which land a description is given in the text. There, Tautua married and had a son, Towatu of Matang; it was this personage who invaded Beru and, according to the story, practised cannibalism during Tane-n-toa's epoch. [The text of the tale is perfectly lucid after this point and need not be summarised.]

The most striking part of the story is its indication of the first Towatu's connection with the land of Matang. [We have seen, in the traditions already exhibited, that] this place was one of the bourhes of departed souls [cf. page .. ], and <sup>also</sup> that it was the home of Titua-bine, the great ancestral goddess of the Gilbertese. Either one of these traditions is enough to label Matang as one of the ancient fatherlands of the race. Furthermore, it is essentially a race memory belonging to the people who came from Samoa, because there was supposed to be a second or subsidiary Matang in the sea by that land, to which the departed spirit must first turn before proceeding to the first or original Matang. [cf. page .. ] Now Towatu did not come from Samoa; he was an autochthon of Butaritari, who resisted the Samoan Tropic Bird clans when they arrived. Had his ancestors ever come from Samoa, they would certainly have been remembered, for, however poor the family records may be in the islands, the glory of being descended from Samoan stock is never forgotten.

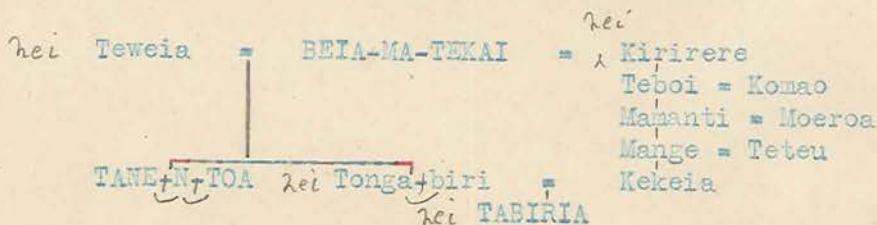
If then Towatu's son was able to use Matang as a sanctuary in time of stress, there is only one inference to be made, which is, that Matang was an ancestral land, not only of the Samoan invaders, but of the people whom they found in the Group when they came. This <sup>suggests strongly</sup> [will be used later as one of the many arguments indicating] that invaders and invaded were of the same race, and that the invasion was merely a return of part of the Samoan offshoot to its older home in Micronesia.

(16)(22) Returning now to our genealogical table, we find a gap of three generations left blank between the name of Tane+n+toa and that of his reputed father Beia-ma-tekai. This void needs justification. Certainly, the Tarawan tale of Noubwebwe [at page .], which represents the vast majority of Group opinion concerning Beia-ma-tekai, makes him the actual begetter of Tane+n+toa. Further, I know of no coherent set of traditions that show any intermediate generations in the direct line between the two persons. Nevertheless, there is a very persistent rumour among certain families of the Northern Gilberts, that there were three successive Beia-ma-tekais, just as there were three Kiratas before them. [ (see generations 23, 24, and 25 of this line) ]. Again, from Na Kee, a much considered authority <sup>on</sup> Butaritari, I had it that there were three Beias, named respectively Beia-ma-tekai, Beia-raba-raba, and Beia.

No notable deeds are attributed to the second or third of the name; if they ever did exist, they were unremarkable personalities; sandwiched between the glorious Tane<sup>n</sup>+toa on one side and the no less mighty Beia-ma-tekai on the other, it is easy to see how they might have lost whatever lustre was theirs, and how their names might have been absorbed into that of their more illustrious predecessor. On the strength of mere inchoate rumour, I have not presumed to use the names of these persons to reconstruct two of those three generations left blank on the table, but I cite their reported existence to show that we cannot be too sure that Tane<sup>n</sup>+toa immediately followed Beia-ma-tekai. This prepares our mind the more readily to accept further evidence that will now be advanced; it emanates from an examination of the line of Tabiria [column ... of the table] a celebrated chieftainess of Nonouti (see Genealogy 3).

(23) Half Tabiria's glory throughout the Group is established on the fact that she was the daughter of Tane<sup>n</sup>+toa's sister, Tonga<sup>b</sup>biri. This is recorded in the Tarawan tale of Obala the Bird-man [page .. , line .. ], and is supported by the unanimous consent of all competent authorities in the islands. The Nui record, which I am using to show Tabiria's parentage, really represents the tradition of the whole Group in respect of this line. Its showing is, that on the distaff side our chieftainess was a direct descendant of Beia-ma-tekai. This is an essential fact to have established.

(24) Here follows, for more convenient reference, an extract from the Nui record of Tabiria's descent on both male and female sides:-



From this extract we see, that Tabiria was descended, not only through

her mother, but also through her father Kekeia, from Beia-ma-tekai. The latter had, in fact, two wives, the one Teweia, the other Kirirere: from the first sprang the line of Tane-n-toa and his sister Tonga-biri, from the second that of Kekeia. The story of Beia-ma-tekai's union with both women is circumstantially given in the Tarawan tale already ~~referred to~~ referred to [at page . . .], of which the details may be corroborated on practically any island of the Group; the story must be regarded as an authentic account of actual facts.

We observe from the line of Tahiria's father Kekeia, that he was the great-great-grandson of Beia-ma-tekai. Is it possible for us to believe that his wife Tonga-biri was the daughter of that common ancestor? On the mere grounds of disparity in age, we must rule the idea out. Also, in the Gilbert Islands, no descendants of a common ancestor might marry out of their generation. Given the fact that Kekeia and Tonga-biri did marry, we must therefore assume the same number of generations to have removed each of them from Beia-ma-tekai. Further, the number of intermediate generations could not have been fewer than three, for not until the fourth had been born could the ban of consanguinity have been lifted, according to native custom. The line of Kekeia shows the minimum number required, namely, three; it follows that no fewer than three must have been forgotten between Tonga-biri, his wife, and the common ancestor.

What applies to Tonga-biri, applies equally to her brother Tane-n-toa. Thus, the rumours on Tarawa and other islands, that at least two more Beias should be shown between him and Beia-ma-tekai, are probably well founded and, whatever the missing names may have been, we are safe in reckoning the number of intermediate generations by the standard set in the line of Tonga-biri's husband. We

BB  
The question of consanguinity also arises in respect of Tane-n-toa's marriage. As related in the Tarawan tale [at line...of page...] his wife Beia-rung was a daughter of Kirirere by Beia-ma-tekai. If Tane-n-toa was a "son" of the same father by another wife, he married his half-sister - which is unthinkable. The only possible inference is that several generations between the pair and their common ancestor have been forgotten. The Nui record quoted in the text is thus supported by the nature of the case, as well as by many reliable island chroniclers.

therefore put Beia-ma-tekai in the fourth generation back from Tanentoa, and date him A.D. 1350.

With that date, our study of the Group genealogies, as such, must come to an end. They have now brought us to the threshold of the era that saw the invasions from Samoa. We shall be able to trace them back through a few more generations of Tarawan chiefs, and shall continue to use them for chronological purposes, but our attention will henceforward be principally directed towards the Samoans, to whose respective arrivals they enable us to affix dates.



It is probable that "Beia-ma-tekai", which means "Beia with Tekai", is a collective name for two individuals. Thus much is indicated in Part IV of the Beruan tale at page ... , where Kirata III's wife Beia is said to have been the mother of the son Beia, while a second wife, named Kobwebwe, bore Tekai. If this was so, the common ancestor of Tonga-biri and Kekeia was not Beia-ma-tekai, but Kirata III. This does not affect the correctness of our argument or our dating above, which has a firm foundation on the generations of Kekeia, as given by my Nui authority and corroborated by all considerable chroniclers of the Group. As Beia-ma-tekai appear to have had their wives in common, and are nearly always referred to in Gilbertese story as a single person, it has been more convenient to discuss their composite character in the singular.

N.P. /  
Again two blank generations have been left ~~blank~~  
between Beia-ma-tekai and his ancestor Kirata  
III, and as (I am sorry to say) every chronicler of  
repute in the Group would have a bone to pick  
with me on this point, justification of no uncertain  
kind must be sought.

First, we must turn to the line of Jeweia, the first  
of Beia-ma-tekai's wives. Her <sup>so-called grandfather</sup> ~~ancestral~~ was Mata-  
warabwe who, as will be shown more clearly later, was  
a contemporary of Kirata III. If she herself is to be  
placed by Beia-ma-tekai, <sup>as she must</sup> we have to leave an  
intermediate space <sup>between the two chieftains to correspond with</sup> for the generations of Janentoa I,  
her father. Thus, one of the blanks is accounted  
for.

Now we know that Janentoa I was a contemporary  
of Towatu of Matang [whose line appears at column ---  
of the table. \*] Further, as will be proved in a short time,  
Towatu's grandfather Towatu was a contemporary of  
Kirata III. Therefore between the generations of Janentoa I  
and that of Kirata III, we must leave another blank

\* cf. Beriman tale part IV, page ...; Sarawan tale of Terere, page ...  
which reproduce the universal opinion.

x cf. Sarawan tale of Nemianoa Norbwebe, page ...

x cf. Sarawan tale of Towatu of Matang, page ...



to correspond with that of Towatu of Matang's father  
 Jantua. Collating these three lines in tabular form  
 we have the following result: -

Towatu:	contemp <sup>orary</sup>	of Mata <sup>wehweh</sup>	and	Kiata III
Jantua				-----
Towatu of Matang:	contemporary of	Janentoa I		-----
		Triveria	=	B <sup>eria</sup> ma Tekai.

Thus both the spaces left blank between B<sup>eria</sup>-  
 ma Tekai and Kiata III have been justified.  
 But, <sup>we therefore date, Kiata III, A.D. 1275.</sup> while we have reasonable grounds for believing  
 that the latter <sup>the</sup> chieftain lived not less <sup>later</sup> than  
~~three generations before the former, we cannot with~~  
 certainty claim that his period was not somewhat  
 earlier; still, and so, ~~in dating him 1275 A.D.,~~  
 another intervening generation may easily have  
~~slipped out of our reckoning.~~ <sup>waded in</sup> This will be  
 returned to in its proper place.

(23) Placing Janentoa I in the generation  
 before B<sup>eria</sup>ma Tekai, we assume his date to have  
 been A.D. 1325. It was <sup>a</sup> very important epoch in the  
 history of Bera, for follow on to next page

~~(1)~~ If - as, it seems, we have a right to believe - the chief Kirata-n-  
A.D. 1250-  
Tarawa, whom we are calling more shortly Kirata III, flourished about ~~1275~~  
1275, he lived at a period of intense activity in the Pacific. The forefathers  
of the Maori-Rarotongan branch of the Polynesian race, the so-called Tonga-fiti,  
who had already for centuries been troubling the peace of the islands, had been  
driven by the first Malietoa from Samoa in about 1250, and were now thrusting  
forth branches into numerous other groups. They colonised Tahiti and Marquesas  
before 1300; they settled on Rarotonga a little later; and by 1350 they had  
sent forth a swarm to New Zealand.

[ The possible connection between the Tonga-fiti and the people who  
invaded the Gilbert islands will be discussed later. At present, it is enough  
to bear in mind this <sup>is</sup> significant coincidence - that the flooding of the Gilbert  
Group by swarms of warriors from Samoa took place, according to our genealogies,  
within a very short time of the expulsion of the Tonga-fiti from the coasts of  
Savai'i and Upolu.

~~(2)~~ In the tales of Nimanoo, to which references are given below, we  
have a very fair account of the arrival of one of the Samoan family-groups.  
These Nimanoo-traditions are of very great importance, for the genealogies con-  
nected with them on Beru and Nui contain the names of two ancestors, Karii  
and Taito-kara-nanaro, both of Samoa, and these can hardly be other than the  
Karii and Taito-rangi-ngunguru who appear, 48 and 50 generations back respect-  
ively, on Percy Smith's Rarotongan genealogies. But, for the moment, only the  
coming of Nimanoo to the Gilbert Islands will be dealt with.

The Tarawan version referred to places the arrival, indeed, in the time

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Of. Tarawa "Tale of Noubwebwe", page . . . .; Beru "Breed of the Southern Ghost",  
page . . . .; Nui "Children of Night and Day", page . . . .

of Beia-ma-tekai, but it stands alone in doing so; all other versions known to me, of which the Beru and Nui tales quoted are examples, are united in dating Nimanca's coming in the time of Kirata III, and as that chief can be shown to ~~HH~~ have married into one of the families that accompanied her, <sup>she</sup> ~~HH~~ cannot have well arrived later than his period.

A true <sup>R</sup> Karaki, or story, has been made of the matter by the Tarawan chroniclers, whose version affords by far the most lively reading, and is, by the way, the only one to give the name of Nimanca's canoe, "Te Aka-bu-toa-toa". Nevertheless, the other two versions give, in their more matter-of-fact manner, a clearer idea of the effect of the invasion of the Group.

The Nui tale shows how part of Nimanca's company, while still en route from Samoa to Tarawa, separated itself at Tabiteuea and there, under the leadership of Eini-ba-tangitang and Atua-rarango, founded a family that afterwards spread to Nonouti. Nimanca sailed on with the rest of her people to Tarawa, broke away there from the fleet, settled, and married Kirata's slave <sup>Na U</sup> ~~Non~~webwe, by whom she had children - a breed of giants, who grew too powerful for the chief's liking, and were driven out by him. This story deals, in the true Gilbertese <sup>manner</sup>, with whole branches of a family under the name of a single person. It is possible, of course, that a woman named Nimanca married a man named <sup>Na</sup> ~~Non~~webwe on Tarawa, but it is infinitely more probable that Nimanca was the name of a certain family-branch, one or several of whose members allied themselves with a family called <sup>Na U</sup> ~~Non~~webwe, and thereby founded a faction that grew over-strong for Kirata's peace of mind.

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Aka, a word not seldom appearing in the names of Gilbertese craft, is doubtless a form of Polynesian yaka, wangga, wa'a - a canoe. Wag is the modern Gilbertese equivalent. Bu = Breed; Toa = Giant. The name thus means "Canoe of the giant breed", in allusion to the boasted stature and strength of the family.

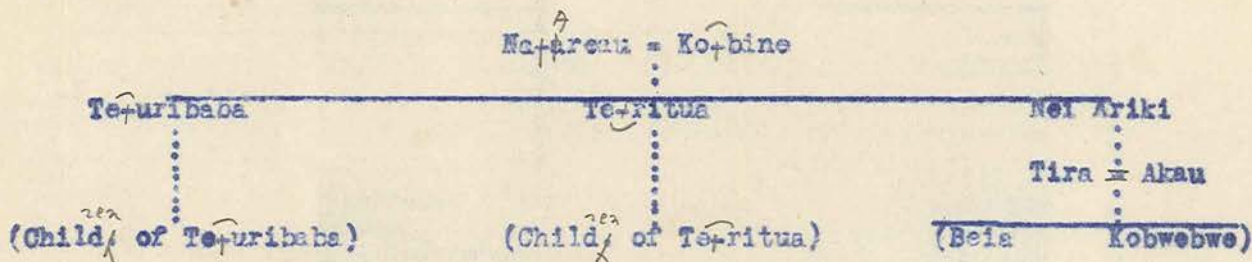
The Nui tale does not mention the fate of the people who accompanied Nimanoa as far as Tarawa, and left her there, for the chronicler admits explicitly, "We know not what became of them". But the historians of the Southern Gilberts know; EHH the strangers sailed, as the Beruan account tells, to the islands of Beru, Nikunau and Nonouti, "begetting children in all those places". The story goes on to say that "the children are there still; their place in the meeting-house is called Karongoa, the place of kings", and this I have found to be correct by reference to separate authorities on all the three islands mentioned.

Thus, by synthesising<sup>s</sup> the details of the three accounts, we see that five islands - Tabiteuea, Tarawa, Beru, Nonouti, and Nikunau - felt the effects of the Nimanoa-influx from Samoa, which must therefore have been of considerable dimensions. To have planted on so many units communities which, to this day, have been able to hold the lands they settled, was not the feat of a migratory band weak in numbers. The numerical strength of the invaders is indicated, indeed, in the events that took place on Tarawa alone; for there, the slave-people <sup>Nau</sup> Koubwebwe, hitherto crushed under the heel of Kirata, found in the Nimanoa alliance so great an addition to their power that they were able to make things unpleasant for the chief himself.

(3) Fortunately we have, in [Part VI of] the Beruan story [at page ...], a good deal of additional light thrown on the arrivals from Samoa at this period. There we read how the descendants of Na<sup>A</sup>areau and the woman Ko<sup>A</sup>bine came, in three distinct but contemporary family-groups, to various Gilbert Islands. We are told in the story how the women Beia and Kobwebwe came from Samoa to Tarawa, in the canoe called "Ata-ata-moa", and married the third Kirata; this conveniently dates the arrival for us. We may safely assume that their company was of considerable size, because, before arriving at Tarawa, they ".... planted

their tree, the kanawa, on the island of Arorae", which is to say, they founded a settlement there, whose totem was the kanawa-tree. No small errant band this, that could afford to detach from itself a company large enough to settle on a strange island, whether inhabited or barren.

With the Beia-Kobwebwe group, as the text relates, sailed its kinsmen, the "Children of Te-uribaba" and the "Children of Te-ritua". The former were on the canoe "Iti-ma-rube", and landed contingents at Tarawa, Tabiteuea and Beru; the latter were aboard the "Ata-ata"; their destinations are not specified, and I ~~have not~~ <sup>did not have</sup> had the time to locate them by independent enquiry, but undoubtedly they came to one or more of the Gilbert Islands. Follows in tabular form the genealogical detail given by the story, from which we get an idea of the relationship of the three groups to each other:-



Not for a moment is the above to be read as a "human" genealogy; in the Gilbertese sense, it only approaches humanity in the generation of Beia and Kobwebwe; these are probably the names of two women who actually did become the wives of Kirata III, and hence they have been remembered, but they also stand for a whole family-group, which came to Tarawa at that time. The earlier names are those of ancestors deified before the people left Samoa, who lived we cannot tell when. Thus, we cannot regard the three groups as literally related to each other in the second degree of cousinship, but we certainly may

Kanawa-tree, possibly Cordia subcordata, but I am not sure of this.

Incidentally, this colonisation of Arorae on the way North indicates the real motive of the migration from Samoa, which was not the mere marriage of Beia and Kobwebwe with Kirata III, but the need of finding a new home for the clans.

use the record as proof that there was an ancestral link between them, and this is again definitely indicated by the fact that each of them carried on its canoes a variant of the family crest which is generically known as Te Bou ni Karongoa (The Tuft of Karongoa).

The "Children of Te-uribaba" are not mentioned by name in the text under reference, because the main theme is not concerned with them, but there seems to remain little room for doubt that they and the Nimancoa-folk mentioned [in paragraph 2] above were one and the same party: first, because Nimancoa is definitely called, in the Tarawan chronicle, "a daughter of Te-uribaba", and her descendants to this day have the same canoe-crest as the "Children of Te-uribaba"; and secondly, because, according to our accounts, this "Daughter" and these "Children" of the same ancestor came to the Group in the reign of the same chieftain, Kirata III, and are recorded to have left settlements on the same islands, Tarawa, Beru and Tabiteuea. It is true, the names of their canoes are different - one the "Aka-bu-toa-toa", the other the "Iti-ma-rube" - but this only indicates that the invasion was large enough to require more than one, possibly many, craft for the transport of the folk.

If Nimancoa was identical with the "Children of Te-uribaba", she must, of course, have been related to the Beia-Kobwebwe group, and searching for some external proof of this we find that her descendants in the Gilbert Islands have as their totem the kanawa-tree, which, as we have just seen, was also the totem of the folk who broke away from the Beia-Kobwebwe group at Arorae, and which is still <sup>cherished by</sup> ~~the~~ the descendants of Kirata III and his two wives throughout the Group.

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See the text at page ... for a description of these crests - Single-tuft, Double-tuft, and Single-tuft in combination with another, called Dripping of Blood. A short paper on Gilbertese canoe-crests appeared in "MAN", vol. ...., page..... It is notable that the totem of Beia and Kobwebwe has been preserved rather than Kirata's, for that of the male generally goes down to posterity. The inference is, either that Kirata's totem was the same as that of his wives, or else that he was

~~(4)~~ The kanawa totem appears again in the invasion traditions connected with the ancestor Te-I-Mone, which now come under discussion. The Tarawan tale [at page ...] tells us that this personage, or rather, family group, came to Beru, but so sadly confuses the persons of the invaders with the ancestral being of whom they were the eponyms, that none of its other details are to the point. But from a Beruan record here set forth, we can fix the date of Te-I-Mone's arrival in the Gilbert Islands.

"Te-I-Mone was the child of the Samoan Kiro-kiro. When the Tree was broken, he came with his sister Matepnang to Beru, and there he stayed. But Matepnang went on to Tarawa, where she lay with Kirata, the son of Kirata<sup>n</sup>-terere; she bore a child named Bakoa, and sent him back to Te-I-Mone at Beru. There he lived, and was the ancestor of Tem Mwea<sup>ea</sup> and the chiefs of Abemama.

With Te-I-Mone came from Samoa Te-matawarebwe, and Kourahi, and Bua-tara. They landed at the Southern end of Beru, and stayed there awhile to rest, for they were weary with their voyage. But after a little, Te-matawarebwe went to the Northern end of the island, where he planted his ancestors, the two kanawa-trees, and lived by them."

The union of Te-I-Mone's "sister" Matepnang with Kirata, the "son of Kirata<sup>n</sup>-terere", whom we know to have been Kirata III, clearly dates this invasion.

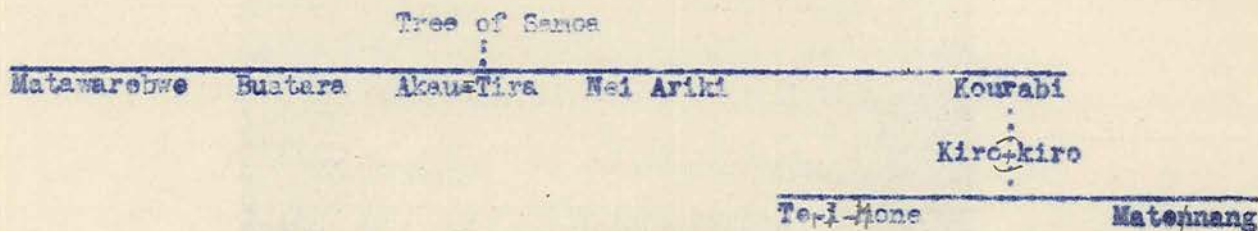
This tale was given me by Te-i-aoniman of Beru, being the foreword of the generations of Te-matawarebwe shown at column 4 of the table.

The Tabiteuean genealogy at column 4, generation 25, corroborates the record of this marriage between Kirata III and Matepnang.

This account at once explains why the Abemaman record of the local high chiefs' ancestors [at column 5 of the table] is at variance with the Tabiteuean [at column 6]. Bakoa was Kirata's son, but lived with Te-I-Mone; hence the confusion.

I was tempted to believe, at one time, that this name Matehnang was merely a family-name of the other two wives of Kirata III, Beia and Kobwebwe, but I have since found out that it could not have been so, because Matehnang's totem was an uri-tree, not a kanawa, while the canoe on which she reached Tarawa was the "Ata-ni-mone", and not the "Ata-ata-moa".

But, as we have seen in the short tradition just exhibited, the kanawa certainly was the totem of Te-matawarebwe and his people, who came to the Gilbert Islands at the same time as Te-I-Mone, and this fact alone is enough to establish a family connection between the Matawarebwe-group and the Nimanoa-Beia-Kobwebwe folk. The Beruan tale noted below throws a good deal of light upon the subject, by giving a sketch-genealogy, which may be tabulated thus:-



It certainly is but a sketch, but it is enough for our purpose, for first, it establishes an ancestral tie between all the persons concerned, and secondly, it gives the names of Nei Ariki, Akau and Tira, who have already been before us as the ancestors of Beia and Kobwebwe; thus, it forms a connecting link between all the invasions which we have hitherto discussed, showing them to have been but component parts of a great, composite and concerted movement,

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I do not think it is even necessary for us to believe that a woman named Matehnang married a chief named Kirata III. All that I would read into the tradition is, that a member of the family group Matehnang married a member of the Kirata family in the time of Kirata III.

Tale of "The breed of the Southern Ghost", section 2, page ....



made by an aggregate of family groups all more or less closely related to one another.

~~It~~ Again, this Beruan text enlarges our view of the invasion by showing how, when the Te-matawarebwe and Te-I-Mone folk sailed for Beru, the birds <sup>C T</sup>Te-take and <sup>C N</sup>Te-ngutu left Samoa with them and fell upon the island of Makin (another name for Butaritari). As we have already seen, in discussing the tale of Towatu-of-Matang, these two creatures, The Red Tailed Tropic Bird and the Yellow Billed Tropic Bird, were the totems of those invading folk who committed acts of cannibalism on Butaritari, and succeeded after much strife in beating the autochthone Towatu off the island. Their object in singling out Butaritari as their destination is, I think, clearly to be inferred from the fact that Towatu's folk were also cannibals, the suggestion being that both invaders and invaded, having the man-eating habit in common, were connected by family ties, and that the Tropic Bird folk expected to find harbourage with its ancestral kin when it fled from Samoa to the Northern Gilberts. Underlying this is the further suggestion, often to be met under different guises in the course of our subject, that this invasion of the Gilberts was but a return of certain families from a long sojourn in Samoa to an older home of their race in the Line Islands.

~~It~~ What was the link between these Tropic Bird people and the other family groups of which there has been talk? Genealogically, no relationship can be traced, save that we know that all of them are said to have sprung from the Tree of Samoa. But the cannibalism of <sup>C T</sup>Te-take and <sup>C N</sup>Te-ngutu, on which the traditions lay such emphasis, definitely connects them with their fellow invaders, as will now appear.

It will be remembered that each of the Reia-Kobwebwe and allied groups carried on its canoe a crest [or pavilion] bearing a specific name, and that these crests are generically called the "Tufts of Karongoa". Here follows a

translation of the tradition connected with the Tufts, which will show how they enter into the discussion:

The Tufts of Karongoa are memorials of Te<sup>u</sup>uribaba, the king of the Tree of Samoa. Human heads were his favourite food, and he was forever eating the heads of the people of Samoa. Therefore, when he left Samoa on his canoe "Ata-atai-moa", he wore on the peak of his sail a crest that was the likeness of a man's head, in memory of his favourite food. It was called Te Bou-teuana (The Single Tuft), but there is another called Te Bou-uoua (The Double Tuft), and another still called Tim-tim-te-rara (lit. Drip-drip-the-blood). All these are used by the families of Karongoa, because they are the children of Te<sup>u</sup>uribaba.

In this deliberate insistence of the people of Karongoa upon the man-eating habit of their ancestor lies the link which connects them with the Tropic Bird families.

But a very important distinction must be drawn between the cannibal habits of the two sets of family-groups. Whereas the Tropic Bird folk, either in the fury of conquest or in the desire for this special kind of food, appears to have devoured the flesh of its victims on Butaritari, there is absolutely no evidence to show that the people of Karongoa, who were much more numerous, indulged such an appetite on any one of the islands which they invaded. All we learn from the crest-tradition is, that the god ~~of the Karongoa people~~ of Karongoa was anthropophagous, and while this connotes the idea of cannibalism among his people, it indicates that the habit was not promiscuous but sacrificial in character.

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Given to me by Tiare, a member of the Karongoa families on Beru. In this tradition, Te<sup>u</sup>uribaba appears as the ancestral god of all Karongoa folk, which is in accordance with the evidence of general opinion in the Group, as typified in the Tarawan story [page . . .] of his growth from the surface root of the Samoan Tree. His canoe "Ata-atai-moa" is that which was allocated to Beia and Kobwebwe in the Beruan account of this invasion [at page . . .] but as an ancestral god he was present on all the craft of the Karongoa families. Note the slight difference between "Ata-atai-moa" in the one version and "Ata-atai-moa" in the other.

~~41~~ The impression of human sacrifice is emphasized for us in the Beruan tale [at page ... ] wherein we read that the food of the king of the Samoan Tree, whom we know to have been Teʻuribaba, was the first-born infants of Niku-maroro. This choice of victims, from a class so confined and so set apart by peculiar tradition as the first-born, gives excellent grounds alone for assuming its religious intent, and, in conjunction with the evidence of the crest-tradition, leaves us with very little doubt that Teʻuribaba was a god, or the priest of a god, to whom human sacrifices were habitually made.

The human heads that are said to have been the favourite food of the deity were probably the heads of victims, hoisted upon stakes that stood around his marae. Certainly, the Bou-teuana canoe crest, with its pole surmounted by a single tuft of leaf, is an excellent replica of such trophies, while the name of that other crest, Tin-tin-te-rara - Drip-drip-the-blood - suggests too well the grisly sight of the freshly elevated spoils.

The picture thus evoked reminds us at once, and forcibly, of the cult of the god Rongo, to whom human sacrifice was made in nearly every group of Polynesia, and I think we can hardly avoid the inference, when all facts are taken into account, that the being called Teʻuribaba was indeed Rongo, or else

a priest of that deity. The appellation "Te-uribaba" is but a title, and suggests nothing to the purpose, but in the family name Ka-rongo-a we seem to have Rongo clearly written. For further class we must consider the duties and prerogatives of Karongoa in the Gilbertese maneaba, or house of assembly.

The maneaba, though locally regarded for the last two or three centuries much more as a council hall and public meeting house than as a place of worship, was primarily a temple, and until quite recent times was <sup>held in</sup> ~~held in~~ particular veneration by the <sup>Gilbertese.</sup> ~~native~~. It might be erected only by those who had the hereditary right of attending to one or other of its component parts, and the work of construction was initiated with the most careful ritual. A man might enter it only at a certain point, and with bent back. When the clans were convened therein, they were called together by the winding of the sacred conch of Te-i-Mone and, on arrival, might pass into the building only in a particular order of precedence. They sat in allotted places; in the rafter over each family sitting-room (boti or potu) hovered the ancestral god, ready to visit with death or disease the intruder who trespassed where he had no right, or usurped a prerogative that did not belong to his family, or otherwise behaved with wilful indecorum. And at every time of public assembly in the maneaba, each stage in the proceedings - whether of dance, feast or council - was marked by a prescribed and unalterable ceremonial.

Master-builders of this <sup>edifice</sup> ~~temple~~ (for originally it could have been nothing else), arbiters of the ceremonial, ultimate referees in all cases of dispute, sat the elders of Karongoa, under the Northern gable. There was the sitting-room of life and death (boti-n te maiu ma te mate), for, in the belief of the Samoa-Gilbertese forefathers, the North was the bourn whence the souls of the

The Tarawan tale at page ... tells us of Te-i-mone's conch. This instrument was much used in the tribal cults of Polynesia, and was always sacred. It was particularly associated with the worship of Rongo.

new-born came and whither the dead departed. Karongoa was king of the  
manaaba. The temporal king, whose status was a mere accident of successful  
 war, must bow to the decisions of its elders. Its chief claimed for his folk  
 the first portion of the feast: its spokesman uttered the first and the final  
 word in debate. Above all, upon the Yes or Nay of Karongoa depended the  
 declaration of war, and upon an orator of the clan invariably fell the duty of  
 pronouncing laudatory addresses on warriors and their deeds.

Here then we have a building, piously erected, wherein a man might  
 not carelessly enter at any time; whither, for matters of weight, the people  
 were summoned by the blast of a sacred instrument; where every assembly was  
 governed by the most meticulous ceremonial rules; where the people did not  
 indeed worship any longer, but wherein the ancestral gods certainly lived -  
 in fact, a building which <sup>was</sup> undoubtedly by origin a temple. In this "converted"  
 temple, a clearly defined clan, or caste, presides, master of the ceremonies,  
 with prerogatives overbearing the rights of temporal kings: who can these folk  
 be but the descendants of a priestly craft, whose privileges were inviolable  
 within the sacred precincts?

Assuming, therefore, that we have identified a temple and a priestcraft,  
 what was the cult? The supreme authority of the people in the matter of declar-  
 ing war, and their privileged duty of extolling heroic deeds, seem in themselves  
 eloquently to answer the question, for War and Fame were the peculiar associat-  
 ions of Polynesian Rongu. Add to this the facts already brought to light:  
 that the people were addicted to human sacrifice, and bore the significant clan  
 name of Karongoa, and, as I believe, very little doubt will remain that the

god of Karongoa, Te<sup>r</sup>uribaba, was that Rongo whose cult scattered blood on the marae of so many Pacific islands.

The cult of Rongo was a tribal cult, and I apprehend that the families who accompanied the Karongoa clans to the Group were component members of a single Rongo-worshipping tribe. Each of them remembered its own domestic gods, to be sure, and hence every rafter of the maneaba to this day contains an ancestral shade, installed by the newcomers; but that all the diverse units accorded a very particular reverence to the god of Karongoa is an inference that cannot possibly be avoided, and it is precisely the elevation of a single common deity over the heads of a multiplicity of private or domestic gods that welds an inchoate system of patriarchal communities into a systematic tribal group.

But residence in the Group soon modified the religious organisation. Scattered over a dozen incohesive atolls, intermarried with older residents whose <sup>economy</sup> ~~structure~~ was patriarchal, and thoroughly disintegrated by the new circumstances under which they were obliged to live, there was little chance for them to keep alive anything like a tribal cult. The result was a return by each family to the worship of the ancestral being from whom it was descended. Karongoa still kept its privileges in the maneaba, because they had been established when Rongo was paramount with the invaders, because in that edifice the convened clans still had a chance to remember their ancient coordination, and because the people of Karongoa still lived on to demand, at least in form, its old prerogatives. But as the descendants of the Samoans lost the meaning of the tribal cult, so the god of Karongoa dwindled in importance, until at last he faded from the scheme, to become the mere ancestral deity of his own clan; all that we are now left with, therefore, is a framework of ceremonial in feast and council, which, while still presided over by a particular group of people and still eloquent to us of its religious origins, is far removed from the

Rongo-worship upon which it was founded.

~~(15)~~ To show at a glance the scope of the invasion of the Group by this Rongo tribe, the particulars and names given in the stories hitherto analysed may be tabulated as follows:-

Name of family group	Island invaded	Textual authority
Nimanoa	Tarawa	Beru series, Part II, 1; p .... Tarawa tale, p .... Nui tale, p ....
Nimanoa relatives	Beru, Nikunau, Nonouti	Beru series, loc. cit.
Eini-ba-tangitang and Atua-rarango	Tabiteuea	Nui tale, loc. cit.
Beia and Kobwebwe	Arorae, Tarawa	Beru series, Part VI, p ....
Children of Te-uribaba (same as Nimanoa)	Tarawa, Tabiteuea, Beru	Id. loc.
Children of Te-ritua	Not located	Id. loc.
Te-i-mone, Akau, Tira	Tabiteuea	Beru series, Part II, 2; p ....
Te-i-mone	Beru	Id. loc. and Beru tale, p ....
Matennang	Tarawa	Beru tale, p ....
Te-mata-warebwe, Kourabi, Buatara	Beru	Id. loc. and Beru series, Part II, 2, p ....
Mo-a-aine	Beru	Id. loc.
Tropic Bird clan	Butaritari	Tarawa tale, p ... & id. loc.

bbb

In alluding to Karongoa as the priestly clan, I wish to imply, not that its males were once upon a time all priests, but that it was the group of families which supplied the priests of Rongo when needed. The clan is made up at present of a dozen component families, each with its particular name. Of these, the family of Karongoa-n-uea (Karongoa of the king) is paramount. It sits in the middle of the northern end of the maneaba, and directs the ceremonies of the place through the medium of a spokesman, who is chosen from one or another of the Karongoa family branches. These sit to right and left of the senior branch, and are collectively known as Karongoa-n-raereke. It is the people of Karongoa, <sup>n uea</sup> who, as I believe, represent the priests of Rongo.

One need have little hesitation in accepting this evidence, as the authorities quoted show a unanimity which, considering the time elapsed since the invasion, is remarkable. According to the details before us, seven islands were certainly affected by the coming of the Samoans - Beru, Tarawa, Tabiteuea, Butaritari, Nonouti, Nikunau, and Arorae. It must have been a considerable swarm that arrived. The first four of the islands named seem to have been more or less flooded; of the last three, less is said. A family to family quest would probably elicit further information, and by exhaustive enquiry it could, no doubt, be proved that the whole Group felt the influx from Samoa. Indeed, I have in my possession the accounts of one or two other arrivals at this period, which show that Abemama and Marakei were affected, but beyond this they do not materially add to our knowledge, and no object would be served by the exhibition of long and unessential stories. All that we need to know seems to emanate clearly from the texts examined: the invaders came about 1250-1275 A.D. ; they were of Samoa; they were numerous; they were a tribe; their cult was Rongo. That several of the islands to which they came were inhabited before them, we have seen: Beia and Kobwebwe married the third of a line of kings established on Tarawa; the Tropic Bird clan had to fight for a footing on Butaritari. ~~Presently, more light will be thrown upon this point, but here,~~ to conclude the chapter is a song of Nonouti, which, in showing how the newcomers were received on that island, clearly gives us to understand that it was a populous place.



- E maotoua te Bakatibu, te Kai!                   The Ancestor, the Tree is broken!
- E raranakoa aba+ia I-Matang mai Samoa;       It is fallen across the land of the people  
of Matang by Samoa;
- N na kateke una+na i+aan te tawanou: e       I shall wear its flowers as ornaments in  
bone tai+na.   the noonday: its hour is struck.
- .....
- Te Kabaraaki, te aine, e nako mai+on       The ( people of) Kabaraaki, the ancestress,  
Angitano i+nano                                   comes from Angitano in the depths.
- E maena wi+n te kua, Te-uru-kaamere;       She wears a necklet of porpoise teeth,  
Te-uru-kaamere;
- N na bakaria taua i+nanon namaoti+n       I shall fall upon her, seize it in the  
Nei Tewenei!                                   secret sea-places of Nei Tewenei!
- N na korokoria, N na taenakoia, N na       I shall cut ( her people ) in pieces, I shall  
bakarereia ni kai+u te tara ni           put them to rout, I shall pierce them  
Matang; e butaki mai+on te wa!       with my barbed spear of Matang; it is  
lifted from its place on my canoe!
- .....
- Te wa mai+ia wa+n?                           Whence cometh thy canoe?
- E tikuroba i+an te maneaba i Taribo;       Its sail is furled in the lee of the maneak  
a taua tabona I-Umantewenei; a       at Taribo; the people of Uma-n-tewenei  
kaeakia I-Temotu ma I-Rurutei;       hold its stem; the people of Te-motu  
and Rurutei give it welcome;
- A katangi-rongorongo: Akea! Be a bun       They cry aloud the news: Alas! A great  
te bai; e a mate te aomata i+ani       defeat; far away the warriors lie  
karawa!   slain!
- Be tiringaki wenei+na, be boaki taka-       The pursuit is hot on the wake of the flyer  
noi+na.   it is hard on their track.
- Ma a baka ni mate i+aontano - o - o - o;   They fall dead on the ground  
I+nano - o - o - a - a - e - e - sa - tie   How lie they!
- .....

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Villages of Nonouti.

Te Kabaraaki: a title of Titua+bine the fair-haired goddess of the Gilbertese.

Nei Tewenei: a cognate of Titua+bine; the goddess of the meteorite, also blonde.