

Magic. Wawī: sorcery or killing-magic.

Given by Tākenta aged 68-75, Marakei.

1. Tākenta tells me that he killed a man (whose name he refuses to give) by the sorcery known as te Keketi, the dragonfly. Just before sunset he went with a small-meshed riena (scoop net) to a babai-pit which he knew to be the haunt of the terra-cotta coloured dragonfly called Keketi. He waited about the banks of the pit until he recognised one of these insects distinguished by spots on the wings (baiburebure = wing-spotted). He caught this in the net. Without hesitation he clapped the mouth of the net to the ground, and muttered the following words three times over:—

Ba N nang tibiaa — I ti tier-ia Keketi  
For I am just about to — I only catch it in a net dragon-fly.  
n te ara ni maane, temanna, tuana man  
in the name of a man, one person, one person among  
tanga-ia — Ten Naewa. E rangi raa-na?  
their-host — So-and-so. It is made his-what?

E rangi bii-na. E rangi raa-na? E rang  
It is made his-hand. It is made his-what? It is made

wae-na. E rangi raa-na? E rangi nano-na.  
his-foot. It is made his-what? It is made his-heart.

E rangi raa-na? E rangi mataana. E rangi  
It is made his-what? It is made his-eye. It is made

raa-na? E rangi atu-na. E rangi raa-na?  
his-what? It is made his-head. It is made his-what?

E rangi, ngaia, te aomata Ten Naewa. E rangi  
He is made, the, the person So-and-so. He is made

E rangi. E baba, E baba. E mate, E a  
he is made. He is foolish, he is foolish. He is dead, He is  
mate.  
dead.

When this was said three times, Tākenta put his left hand under the net and closed it

upon the dragonfly. Thus he carried it home. By his living house was a small hut used for storing odds and ends of fishing-gear and lumber. This hut he had carefully prepared in advance for the reception of the insect, closing up all visible chinks in roof, and hanging mats around the sides, so as to render egress impossible. He had also deposited rotten fish, excrement, and all sort of other filth upon the floor. Carrying the dragonfly into this hovel, he carefully bit off its two "beards" (bua), and spat them out on the floor. Then he let the insect go free in the darkness, and standing there clapped his hands slowly together while muttering the following words:—

Ba N nangi tabaa ... I ti ubo-ia keketi n  
For I am just about to ... I only clap-it dragonfly in  
te ara ni maane .... etc., etc., as before.  
the name of a man .....

After three repetitions of this formula, he left the hut, carefully closing it behind him. He told me that as soon as he left, the dragonfly began to search for a way of escape from the hut; if it had found egress, Takenta's enemy would have lived. But as it found none, it gradually weakened and died. As it gradually approached its end, so did Takenta's victim sicken and lose his reason, his death eventually coinciding with that of the insect, which is thus obviously a "life-index."

In Takenta's possession was also the counter magic to the above death-spells. He told me

that he could at any stage of his victim's sickness undo the effects of the wauwau by muttering three times the following formula:-

O, Nii Terang - o ma Nii Temnāo ! Kam a tia  
O, Woman Terang - o with Woman Temnāo ! You have  
a tana man tokonōnō ma n ibetutu  
held him and made disorder and made confusion  
ma n ibetangatanga vioun te aomata ahi.  
and made tumult with the person this.  
An, teirake ; an, nāko ! An, teirake ; an,  
Come, arise ; come, begone ! Come, arise ; come,  
nako !  
begone !

This might be said anywhere, but preferably by the side of the sick man, whose symptoms thereafter would gradually leave him. Generally, a man would demand a heavy payment of land before he would consent to undo the effects of his sorcery.

The names of the women addressed in this formula mean respectively Mad One (Terang) and Crayfish (Temnāo). It seems safe to assume that though their names are not mentioned in the two original formulae, they are the spiritual powers who carry them into effect. The terms of the curative formula clearly show that the attitude of the sorcerer towards the spirits is as that of a master to a servant, commanding, and not suppliant.

Magia. Wauwi.

If you have an enemy, you watch him until he makes a fire of embers for cooking his fish. When he has taken his food from the fire and left it smouldering, you secretly approach with a fragment of wood broken from the midrib of a shrivelled coconut leaf. Stirring the embers with this in a counter-clockwise direction you recite as follows:—

Ewara-n ai ni Kamana! boario boarake,  
Stabbing-of the fire of his food! Strike west, strike east

boamate, boatabwe! A bung Kanoan nanaia!  
strike death, strike rending apart! They begin to be in pain, his bowels!

A bung, as a rai, as a mate, as a tabwenana.  
They begin to be in pain, they are overturned, they die, they are rent apart.

Mamaia bekebekeia ravia ato-na; e a tia  
Shame him, ~~confuse~~ confuse him, overturn his liver; it is finished

be a mate-o! Kokonna Konie! Kokonna  
for he is dead! Strangle him (prob. euphonic)! Strangle him

Konae! A bung Kanoan nanaia, a bung as  
(? probably euphonic)! They begin to be in pain his bowels, they begin to be in pain, and

a rai, as a mate, as tabwenana. Kokonna  
they are overturned, and they die, and they are rent apart. Strangle him

Konie, Kokonna Konae! A bung etc. Maamaia  
—, strangle him —! (As before) Shame him,

bekebekeia! Ravia ato-na! E a tia, be mate-o!  
~~confuse~~ confuse him! Overturn his liver! It is finished for he is dead.

Repeated 3 times. It was claimed that the enemy on eating the fish cooked in the fire would begin to vomit and be seized with sudden contractions of the muscles, and eventually die.

Magic. Wawi.

If your son comes to you and complains that he has an enemy who always gets the better of him, you make him sit at your feet as you stand behind him facing east. You fill a coconut shell with a mixture of sea water and fresh water. You sprinkle contents of this shell over the head of your son as he sits, reciting meanwhile the following incantation:-

Bokie ma bokio, bwerebwere imwim ma bwerebwere  
imoam, I aki tabwena bwena ba te ba Ngai! I aki  
<sup>spiritus</sup>  
raingruzi ba biaki! te nari Ngai! I aki risaku  
ma risalan e ria te aba e toro te aba e baba  
te aa-ee. Kaira Kaira Kaain waara Jimine tewiko  
te rara te mama te aomata. Ninia sewati ke  
e ing, ke e wa, ke e mate, ke e tabwe. Antai te  
aomata ae ti a naananga ai man tataekun-ai?  
Ninia sewatia, ke e ing, ke e wa, ke e mate, ke e tabwe  
Ai Kopra ia, Keena ma-na, tringa, tauna,  
kamatea, be a tra, e a mate-o-o!

This is repeated 3 times: your water must last for all repetitions. When the third is done, you kick your son in the back with your right foot, and he immediately rises and runs to find his enemy and give him battle. You at once fling the coconut shell on the ground where he has been sitting, so that it is smashed into fragments. You pick up the fragments and burn them; take the ashes to the <sup>main</sup> beach and there carry them on a canoe out to sea, where you cast them into the waves as the food of the fishes. Just as the ashes are consumed and eaten; so will your son's enemy fall.

Magic.

Wawi: sorcery or killing magic.

(Tākenta of Marakei aged 68-75).

Tākenta tells me of a method by which the death of an enemy may be caused by cursing his food. You take a piece of the food he is to eat in your right hand; then fold your arms to your breast as if you were rocking a child to sleep. Swaying gently backwards and forwards, mutter the following three times, with eyes fixed on right hand:-

Tabeka ni Kana n Ten Naeua ae-i-ee!  
Lifting of food of So-and-so This !

Kana-na n ra? Kana-na ni bo.  
His-food to do-what? His-food to be smitten.

Kana-na n ra? Kana-na ni mate.  
His-food to do-what? His-food to die.

Kana-na n ra? Kana-na ni betinako.  
His-food to do-what? His-food to drift-away.

Ba aba-na Bainnang<sup>1</sup>, so Rōro<sup>2</sup>, so rabaraba-  
For his-land is Bainnang, and Rōro, and side-  
-ni-Karawa<sup>3</sup>  
-of-heaven (i.e. the horizon).

After eating the food from which the cursed piece was taken, the victim sickened and died.

1, 2, 3. Bainnang, Rōro, Rabaraba-ni-Karawa, were places to which the soul ghost of one just dead was driven in the ceremony following death called bomaki (p.v.) throughout the Gilberts.

Magia. (Kātutu of Tuaraba, Tarawa; aged about 60).

To render harmless food which has been cursed by an enemy.

Lay food on a leaf upon ground, or floor of dwelling, and cover it with a mat of any description. Sit before it (no particular orientation), holding in the right hand the fanlike tip of a dry coconut leaf. Wave this, exactly in the manner of a fan, to and fro, and up and down, over the covered food. Occasionally tap the covering mat lightly with the fan's tip. While thus occupied, repeat the following three times:-

Uraunama	ni	mata-ni	anti.	Kang	anti.
Decoration	of	face-of	spirit.	Eat up	spirit!
taba anti;	Kang anti;	taba anti.	Anti ni		
choked with food spirit;	eat up spirit;	choked with food	spirit of		
mauere-mauere,	o-o-o!	O, nako!	Nako		
?	o-o-o!	O, go away!	go away		
te anti;	o-o-o!	Ko niniā	ni bong,		
the spirit;	o-o-o!	Then art shrivelled up	at night,		
ko niniā	ni	ngina!	tinti ni	meangi-ra,	
Then art shrivelled up at	daylight!		spirit of	north of us,	
maiaki-ra,	mainike-ra,	maero-ra,	maietā,		
south of us,	east of us,	west of us,	above,		
mainano,	Ko na	Kananeueneue,	Ko na		
below	Then shalt eat	?	Then shalt		
Kana te	boku,	Ko na	Kana te	buni,	te
eat the	rotten one,	Then shalt eat	the	poison-fish,	the
buni	harabara:	Anti ni	mauere-mauere		
poison-fish		Spirit of			
o-o-o!	O, nako!	Nako,	ma ko a	tai	
	O, go away!	Go away,	and then	must not	
rikaki	maikou.	Kang-o,	te anti-o,		
come back	to this side.	truly	spirit,		
nako!					
go away!					

As soon as the third repetition is done, you rise and go quickly to the sea-shore. There you throw the leaf fan handle first, like a dart, into the water. You may then return and eat the cursed food with impunity.

It is claimed that this ritual will <sup>also</sup> preserve the eater from the evil effects of poison.

Magic: protective. (Takenta of Marakei, aged 68-75)

If a man feared that the food which he was about to eat might have been cursed with the death-magic, he first took a pinch of the suspected food in his right hand and quickly whispered to himself the following:-

Tana ni kana-ia Taburimai ma Auriaria,  
 Holding of their-food Taburimai and Auriaria,  
 Nei Iwamei, Riiki, ma Nei Tituaabine, ai-e-i!  
 Nei Iwamei, Riiki, and Nei Tituaabine, this!  
 I aki bus, I aki taro; te mawri, te  
 I am not lost, I am not dismayed; health,  
 rai, te tabomoa ngai-o!  
 peace, excellence am I!

After repeating this three times he might eat the food with confidence.

The names of the beings cited in this protective spell are all those of the famous ancestral deities of the Gilbertese clans. These are all reputed to have been fair-skinned beings. Being clan deities they are closely associated with the patrilineal organisation and totem-exogamy. It is a remarkable fact that practically all the protective magic in the group cites the names of these beings, whereas the destructive magic never mentions them.



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