10 Oct 1922

Bairiki

List of human bones still to be seen by the stone of the altar at Bairiki. They are the bones of ancestors.

1. Skull
2. Scapulae
3. Femur
4. Humerus
5. Radius
6. Ulna
7. Sacrum
8. Ribs
9. Pelvis
10. Inferior Maxilla
11. Superior Maxilla
12. Vertebrae
13. Femur
Ancestor cult. Haakeia.

Pedigree of some of the descendants of Haakeia who made the tatau to Kaburoonteanu as described:

Kaburoonteanu (first ancestor)

| Haakeia (conqueror from Bera who gave name to stone) |
| Kaburoonteanu |
| (prob. 3 generations missing) |
| Teuatau |

* Xikakeawe |
* Haakeia |
* Nei Xikakeawe |
* Taamoria |
* Kiraatau |
* Tikisana |
* Tribato |
* The cross marks my three informants, of whom the youngest is not less than 65 years old.
Ancestor cult

Takuri, an old man of over 80, of Marakei
describes the cult of his ancestor Tarwia, who was the
builder of the mafeaka for Tamewa of Rennell. The utn of
Marakei descended from Tarwia had a stone, about half
a man's height, set up as a post in the ground on the
east side of the island. This stone was called the
body of Tarwia; nevertheless, it was not considered to
be the actual utna or spiritual power, which was the
ghost of Tarwia; but it was the medium through which
the ghost was approached, and was so magically con-
ected with the ghost, that whoever did it an insult
or injury caused pain to the spiritual power, and
was liable to sudden death or illness. On the top
of the monolith were placed three lumpas of red coral,
each about as big as two fists, and one on top of the
other. These were said to be where the hands of Tarwia
A flat stone was laid on the ground at the west-
side of the base of the monolith. On this stone were
laid all offerings of food brought to the ghost.

On occasions of stress or danger, the senior member
of the utn would signify that a general assembly
(teto) of the utn would be made at the stone to
the purpose of offering gifts of food to the ghost and
tararo or prayers for his help. He would appoint
a day.

The utn would arrive in the early morning at
about cockcrow and gather before the stone before
sunrise. They would squat in a semicircle on the
west side of the stone, facing east towards it. They
brought food with them. First portions of this food,
and later also sticks of tobacco and a filled pipe,
were laid on the flat offering stone. Then the utn
would eat the remainder in silence. When the
meal was done, the senior of the utn (but always
a male) would go and squat before the stone.
and address to it, in his own words, the particular request which he had come to make. After this, the people dispersed, leaving the offerings on the stone of offerings.

(Note. After the meal and before the prayer, the people put on their heads each a fillet made of a single pinnule from the crest of a coconut tree, knotted in front.)
Ancestor cult: Marakei.

At Marakei there is a stone which bears the name of the ancestor Haakeia, who was the leader of the Persian conquerors who invaded and settled this island about nine generations ago. At this stone the rats descended two male and female line from Haakeia, made their tatau in time of need. A collection of the whole rats for the sake of tatau was called to ta, a word which since Christian times has been applied to any general gathering for religious purposes.

The stone was broad and flat, being set in a recumbent position, not standing. Beneath the stone were buried the skulls of ancestors subsequent to Haakeia, and also the skull of Haakeia himself. These were called tana in te atiha, the posts of the stone, the word tana being the name ordinarily applied to the studs of a house or manaka.
Although this stone bore the name of Haakeia, and although all the ancestors were expressly believed to listen to the tātara offered here, the prayers and offerings were made to the single ancestor Kāhūro-ronteun, who was (and still is) described as the ancestor of Haakeia. The explanation of this is most probably that Haakeia himself, whose name the stone bears, was its originator, and it was he who first instituted the cult of his ancestor in Haakeia.

Before the tātara was made, the stone was encircled by three fillets of coconut leaflet, one in middle and one at each end. The prayers offered was of the following character:

Ao-ra te amarake, rōte Kāhūro-ronteun. Tautau, our offering the food; tautau Kāhūro-ronteun. Reheparo on maruira; tautau make te aoraki. Kakamaruira-i, one safety; tread away the sickness. Continue to save the atae arikai, kareakea, kareara, children these; continue to get our food.
Ancestor-cult: Marakei

Tataaro. Made to the stone of the ancestress Nee Kanna, from whom the Bernan conqueror Jetonganga on Marakei was descended:

Aora ki amarake rake Nee Kanna. Fontona our offering the food. Then Nee Kanna. Tread nako te mihwaka ma te asakaki; Fantona mau-riv away the evil dreaming with the sickness: Keep hold upon my safety ma an Botangaomata with my collection of people.

The whole utara was gathered for such a tataaro at dawn. Food was brought by each member. A share was set on the flatstone lying by the base of the monolith. The senior male officiated. The people sat in a complete circle around the stone, wearing fillets of coconut pinnula. The offering and prayer were made. After this the people ate, and then departed. Food was left by stone.

The skull of the ancestress Jetonganga was buried by the monolith.
by the household, he would consent to call up the ancestral ghost and ask it the desired questions. The skull was the intermediary through which the ghost was called. Offerings were made to it by the ibonga, a medium, and it was anointed by him with oil in the usual manner. Then he lifted it from its place and whispered the charm into its ear. Here is an example of such a call:

O-o! N' na wurete-ia Toaakai

As soon as the charm is done, the ghost makes his presence known by a gentle whistling under the ridge pole of the manceba. It is the function of the ibonga to interpret the sounds made to the onlookers. The ghost will answer in its musical language all the questions put to him—the belief being that if an answer proves afterward to be wrong, it is certainly the fault
of the ibonga and not the ghost. Sometimes the species of oracle thus instituted through the medium of the skull became so famous for its infallibility that people of other households and clans came to consult it. They would bring propitiatory offerings of food and tobacco to the ibonga, who, after giving the skull tobacco (the first share) to the skull would keep the rest as payment. In this way an ancestral ghost would obtain prestige and reverence outside the circle of his own clan.

(All skull cult details given in R.A.F. to bandida).
Ancestor cult and Sun.

In erecting a monolith at which the ghosts of the ancestress Nei Kanna and the ancestor Welonganga received offerings and tabara, the old man Naatan used the same formula of words as that exhibited elsewhere in connection with the planting of the stone called Iaai (Sun) in the manceaba. Naatan informed me that this formula was used always by his ancestors for the double purpose.
Ancestor cult.
Prayer to ancestor at Bona. (Given by Tam of Marakeri; age about 52).

Aora te aamarake, Kaiti-o! Backiraa; Our offering of food, Kaiti-o! Help us!
Tautau maniia; tautona nako te bureka; Keep hold on our safety; tread away the war!
Oro ia, bakarereia; itai mataia Strike them, pierce them; join their eyes together (as fish);
Te aki boa te aki tano; te manu we are not lost we are not deserted; safety
Tua te rairo; te manu
and peace; safety.
In Baniiki there is a stone of the usual type which is considered to be the "napa" of the godess Tiituauma. This deity is the "ata" of the Baniiki family group, which treats her as a guardian spirit, abstains from eating the flesh of her quarry, and makes offerings of coconuts and food at full-moon every month to her stone. The stone is set in a small square of broken coral slabs. Beside it are thrown the bones and skulls of various men who are definitely stated to have been ancestors in the Baniiki family group. Their exact genealogical connection is now unknown but no doubt whatever exists about the fact that they were member of the family. According to old men, it would be unthinkable to preserve the bones of anyone unconnected with the family.

These bones are anointed with oil when offerings are made to the stone around which they lie. They are indissolubly bound up with the ceremonies connected with the stone itself. The necessity to pay them reverence and, to make offerings of food to them, is recognized to be...
as pressing as the need to offer at Temaabing's "zabota".
Thus we see how the relics of ancestors became actually, not only objects of worship, but stoned up with the idea of god-worship. The road is not a long one from that idea to the deification of an ancestor.

Haakeia's stone. The history of Haakeia. His deification.

Konnaabi's Inka.
All through the Gilberts, stone monoliths, ranging from eighteen inches to seven or eight feet in height were erected to the various spiritual "powers." Generally these powers may be considered to be gods, and they are the gods of the fair-skinned race for their names are Taburunai, Aririuia, Tituaabumia, etc. But occasionally they are called not anti but bakatakia, i.e., ancestors. When genealogical evidence is sought, however, it generally fails to lead one back to any ancestor of the name given to the stone. But a concrete case comes from Masakei, in which an ancestor who lived only five generations ago is definitely the ancestor of a stone bearing his name near the village of Timuta. The following is a list of his lineal descendants (eldest sons of eldest sons) until today:

Kaieti
Tevroba
Nimia
Birana (about 70)
Nabato (about 40)

Kaieti was a great fighter and traveller in his day. At one time, he and his party were driven out of Masakei and had to take refuge in Aitaiang. Collecting his forces there, however, he was soon strong enough to make war on his former conquerors and return in triumph to Masakei. Soon after this he died, and is
Said to have appeared in a dream to his son Tarooba, and to have told him to erect a bora, or moulitha, to them. Whatever may be the truth about the dream, it is certain that Tarooba erected the bora, which stands to this day, and of which the origin was witnessed by old men still living on Narakei. The worship at this stone appears to be exactly the same in type as the cult of the ancestral skull. Either the collected into or single individuals of the ntu may visit the place, and after laying kesa or propitiatory offerings at its base present their petition to the ancestral spirit. If the ceremony is collective, the eldest male representative of the senior branch of the ntu makes his prayer on behalf of all; if an individual performs alone, he prays for himself alone. Formerly the skulls of Kairiti were allowed to lie on the bases of their stones.

(Inset the note on skulls and bones found at the bases of these stones)

The Baimiki relics:

Kairiti is also said to have given his son a charm by which he might be called to answer questions in the whispering speech. But this call was made through the intermediary of the skull of Kairiti, not the stone. While the worship at the stone continued, the family also used the skull at home, thus duplicating the form in which ancestor cult was sustained.
The removal of the skull from the grave of a buried father, mother, grandfather or grandmother was universal in the Gilberts. The skull was kept on a little mat specially woven for the occasion and was placed on a shelf in the house of the owner. It was considered liable to affront, and was therefore never put on the floor of the house, for fear that in standing above it, a member of the household might insult it with a view of his secret parts. Nor were children allowed to approach it, lest some rough game of theirs might cause offence. The idea underlying this anxiety to pay all respect to the skull was that the ancestor to whom the skull belonged would refuse if ill-treated to help his descendant when asked in time of trouble; he might even punish them by visiting them with terrifying dreams, from which they would awake insane; and with wasting diseases such as to Kangenge (consumption).

Some households would every day lay a small portion of food on the shelf beside the skull; it was the duty of the closest or the most beloved relative of the deceased to eat this food on his behalf at the day's end. This was a universal practice, but with most households it was less regularly performed.

When tobacco was introduced, it became the custom in every island of the Group to allow the skull to share the household pipe. The skull was held between the
palms before the face of the smoker, who inserted the bowl of the pipe into his own mouth and the stem into the jaws of the skull. He then blew down the bowl so that the smoke was driven back through the stem into the gaping jaws. He would address affectionate familiarity to the skull while thus occupied: "E wur? E KangKang?" (How is that? Is it tasty?) and so on.

This sort of conversation was typical of all the relations of the household with the skull. It was a member of the family, as susceptible of offence or pleasure, and as alive to conversations and events beneath that roof, as any human being. It was their friend. While busy about the house a man might throw it an occasional remark as naturally as to his father or brother; or at any time of the day he might take a little oil on his palm and rub it on the cranium of the skull, just as he would perform such an office with smiling yet deferential kindness to one of his living senior relations.

The explicit reason in the native mind for this akoi (kindness) accorded to the skull was that the ghost of the ancestor was always near it. Not precisely situated within it, but enveloping it as an atmosphere, watching it, and feeling emotions of pleasure or pain in proportion as it was honored, fed or abused.

When a particular need made itself
felt in the household the help of the deceased ancestor was enlisted through the medium of the skull. A day was appointed on which all the members of the household should meet in the house. The senior living descendant of the ancestor would anoint the cranium with scented oil, and wreaths of flowers were hung about it. Food was laid beside it, and probably a pipe and a stick of tobacco would accompany the food. Just after noon the senior member would lift the skull from its shelf and elevate it above his face between his palms; then drawing it close to his cheek he would whisper into its ear the special request that he wished to make on behalf of his people. The following is a typical example of such a prayer:

\[
\text{Ioakai - o! tautaro mauri - pa; Ioakai - o! keep hold of our safety!}
\]

\[
\text{tautaro maka te aoraki; be to mauri to ward away the sickness; for we are safe}
\]

\[
\text{viona; ti aiki tua; ti aiki taro; through the; we are not lost; we are not deserted;}
\]

\[
\text{te mauri, as te rahi — te mauri! safety and peace — safety!}
\]

There was no special form of words used in these prayers. Certain phrases have a habit of recurring in nearly every example collected, such as the universal "te mauri as te rahi", but the form of words in which a request was made was entirely at the will of the performer, whose duty it was to state as clearly as
he knew how the particular desire which he wished to convey to the ancestor. I have described here the procedure followed when a collective request was made to protect a household from an epidemic sickness. In like manner a whole utu might be gathered together in the maraeba to appeal for the ancestor's protection in time of war, or for his help in famine or drought, or for his good offices on any important occasion whatever in which the utu had an interest.

At other times the simple ceremonial could be still further simplified. A single individual might, if a member of the household, go himself ritually without preparation to the skull, and after blowing a little tobacco smoke into its jaws as a propitiatory offering, state in its ear whatever small request he had to make. And any member of the household was at liberty, as the wish seized him, to make a little private offering of food either before or after his prayer, and breathe an appeal into the ear of the skull for the general protection of the house.

Sometimes the ancestor would appear in a dream to one of his descendants and would tell him a form of words with which his ghost might be made to converse in whispering noises. The owner of such a charm would generally keep it secret from the other members of the house, but on request, when advice was needed
Religion (Ancestor cult) Tabakea.

A form of religious observance, closely in externals to the cult of the ancestor at the mordita was the cult of the spirit Tabakea, whose body is said to be the turtle. Tabakea in myth was the father of Nalilua and Ananina, both of whom have appeared as chief actors in the creation drama. On Banaba and Niu, Tabakea has the title of Moanibai—Fruit of Things—usually accorded in other islands to Nalilua. Throughout the Gilberts this being is closely connected with the origin of fire. Evidence brought in another place seems to show that he was one of the gods of the aboriginal race of the Gilbert Islands, the dark-skinned dual people who were settled here before the missionisation of the fairer people from the West.

The cult of Tabakea approaches nearer to the idea of a tribal cult than any other noted hortofere. On occasions of stress, disease or necessity, when not only a single ute, but a group of ute allied for political or warlike purposes, felt the approach of a common danger, a stone about 6-9 feet high would be erected in the maneaba, half-way over against its eastern side, and halfway between the north and south ends. The senior man of Karongona-nu, near, the clan in the maneaba whose privilege it was to speak the first and the last word in assembly, would decide upon a day when all the ute should be gathered together to make offerings (Karea) and prayers (tabaro)
at the stone.
The stone was wreathed with coconut leaves by the people of Karongoa-rapaake, the workers or acolytes of Karongoa-n-nea. Before dawn on the given day the ritu would gather, wearing fillets of coconut prinules around their foreheads, and bringing food with them. The first portion would be taken by the spokesman of Karongoa-n-nea and laid before the stone. The people would then eat their food, putting off their fillets while eating. When this was done, the fillets would be resumed and the present spokesman would offer his prayers on behalf of the whole assembly.
The strict prohibition against the reopening of the grave for any purpose by the sitting interment of a body to indicate an original intention, activated by fear of preventing the spirit of the dead from returning to the dwellings of his descendants. The absence of any form of the skull-cult in this ati, in an island where the skull-cult was universal, seems to suggest significantly that the folk who used this sort of burial were for some reason prejudiced against communion with their ancestral ghosts.

Nevertheless, the people of the ati had a stone, of the usual kind associated with the ancestral cult in the Gilbert Islands, erected close to their settlement, which was named after the "first ancestor" Kabaroak, and at which sacrifices and offerings, differing in no respect from the kind vividly described, were made in time of stress. Again, although there is no evidence that the special prayers for abundant crops, with which this ati is particularly associated, were made to the ancestral stone, it was certainly to the ancestors who lived in the skies that the "crop-maker" addressed his entreaties, and it was the ancestral ghost Kabaroak who was supposed to appear to him in a dream, to tell him whether the crop would fail or flourish.

The practices and beliefs thus connected with the dead by this ati seem to unite two conflicting sets of ideas, one in which the return of the dead is a matter to be prevented, and one in which communication with the ghost is sought and "mourned." One way of explaining the presence of such a
conflict is to suppose that there was formerly on Marakei a sitting interment people which feared its dead, and enforced a prohibition against the reopening of graves in order to prevent their return. In this case it would follow that the ancestor cult which their descendants have practiced until modern times is the result of local contact and fusion with another and quite distinct race.

Another possibility is that this particular form of sitting interment was brought to the Gilbert Islands by the people who practiced the cult of the ancestor, being the peculiarity of one branch of this people, which had acquired it by contact with some other race, in a former home.

Both the above explanations are based upon the supposition that the practices and beliefs described are a complex of more than one system. But a third possibility is that this particular form of sitting interment was developed by a branch of the people who practiced the ancestor cult, not on account of external influences but in connection with the religious functions performed by them in connection with the pandanus and the coconut. The attitude of the dead in his grave was an exact representation of his attitude during life, while praying for good crops, and it is very easy to conceive that he should be buried in this position in order that his continual supplications might bring fruitfulness to the trees of his descendants. If this
fundamental idea is accepted, it is again simple and natural to suppose that the continuity of the supplicatory attitude of the dead became a matter of importance. From this idea would spring the prohibition against the reopening of the grave for any reason at all, and the consequent absence of the skull-cult from the households of this site.

This explanation appears to fit in very well with the spirit of the words of Nivita (reported in another place) when he was dying: "Make me sit, etc...... If you do this you will have always good crops of pandanus," Further, if we thus regard this form of interment to be a special modification of the customs of a patrilineal community, such as the people who had the ancestor-cult certainly were, we find little difficulty in understanding why that custom of the men who were buried in the sitting position. Whereas, if such burial were the relic of a sentiment once intrusted against the return to the dead to the dwellings of the living, it would become extremely hard to explain why and how this sentiment, while lasting in respect of dead men, so lost its force in respect of dead women that these eventually came to be buried in the extended position.

For these reasons, I incline to the belief that this form of sitting burial cannot be connected with those forms in Melanesia observed by Rivers, and in his opinion practised by a people who feared the return of the dead. The sitting position
used is not in my opinion an element introduced into the customary burial practices of the patrilineal, extended interment people by a foreign race; it is a special development of the burial customs of the ancestor-worshipping race whose usual habit was extended burial, and this special development was brought about by the idea that the dead lived after death, and that their bodies were capable of continual intercession for the living if buried in the prayerful attitude assumed by the crop-maker during life.
Teitirere, an old man of over 80, of Marakei describes the cult of his ancestor Teweia, who was the builder of the manseaba for Tanentoa of Beru. The utu of Marakei descended from Teweia had a stone, about half a man's height, set up as a post in the ground on the east side of the island. This stone was called the body of Teweia; nevertheless, it was not considered to be the actual atua or spiritual power, which was the ghost of Teweia; but it was the medium through which the ghost was approached, and was so inalienably connected with the ghost, that whosoever did it an insult or injury caused pain to the spiritual power, and was liable to sudden death or illness. On the top of the monolith were perched three lumps of red coral, each about as big as two fists, and one on top of the other. These were said to be the head of Teweia. A flat stone was laid on the ground at the western side of the base of the monolith. On this stone were laid all offerings of food brought to the ghost.

On occasions of stress or danger, the senior member of the utu would signify that a general assembly (te toa) of the utu would be made at the stone for the purpose of offering gifts of food to the ghost and tataro or prayers for his help. He would appoint the day.

The utu would arise in the early morning at about cockcrow and gather before the stone before sunrise. They would squat in a semicircle on the west side of the stone, facing east towards it. They brought food with them. First portions of this food, and later also sticks of tobacco and a filled pipe, were laid on the flat offering-stone. Then the utu would eat the remainder in silence. When the meal was done, the senior of the
ANCESTOR CULT

utu (but always a male) would go and squat before the stone and address to it, in his own words, the particular request which he had come to make. After this, the people dispersed, leaving the offerings on the stone of offering.

(Note. After the meal and before the prayer, the people put on their heads each a fillet made of a single pinnule from the crest of a coconut tree, knotted in front.)
ANCESTOR CULT: Marakei.

At Marakei there is a stone which bears the name of the ancestor Uaakeia, who was the leader of the Beruan conquerors who invaded and settled this island about nine generations ago. At this stone the utu descended thro male & female line from Uaakeia made their tataro in time of need. A collection of the whole utu for the sake of tataro was called te toa, a word which since Christian times has been applied to any general gathering for religious purposes.

The stone was broad and flat, being set in a recumbent position, not standing. Beneath the stone were buried the skulls of ancestors subsequent to Uaakeia, and also the skull of Uaakeia himself. There were called boua-n te atibu, the posts of the stone, the word boua being the name ordinarily applied to the studs of a house or manaca.

Although this stone bore the name of Uaakeia, and although all the ancestors were expressly believed to listen to the tataro offered here, the prayers and offerings were made to the single ancestor Kaburoronteun, who was (and still is) described as the ancestor of Uaakeia. The explanation of this is most probably that Uaakeia himself, whose name the stone bears, was its originator, and it was he who first instituted the cult of his ancestor on Marakei.

Before the tataro was made, the stone was encircled by three fillets of coconut leaflet, one in middle and one at each end. The prayer offered was of the following character:-

Aora te amarake, nKoe Kaburoronteun. Taatau
Our offering the food, thou Kaburoronteun. Keep hold on
mauri-ra, toutoua nako te aoraki, Kakamauri-ia
our safety, tread away the sickness, continue to save them
ANCESTOR CULT: Marakei.

atasi  aikai, Karerekea  kara-ra.
children these, continue to get our food.
Ancestor Cult: Marakei.

Tataro.

Made to the stone of the ancestress Nei Kanna, from whom the Beruan conqueror Tetonganga on Marakei was descended:-

Aora te amarake nKoe Nei Kanna. Toutoua our offering the food thou Nei Kanna. Tread

nako te mibuaka ma te aeraki; tautaua mauri-u away the evil dreaming with the sickness; keep hold upon my safety

ma au botanaomata.
with my collection of people.

The whole utu was gathered for such a tataro at dawn. Food was brought by each member. A share was set on the flatstone lying by the base of the monolith. The senior male officiated. The people sat in a complete circle around stone, wearing fillets of coconut pinnule. The offering and prayer were made. After this the people ate, and then departed. Food was left by stone.

The skull of the ancestor Tetonganga was buried by the monolith.
ANCESTOR CULT: Marekei.

Pedigree of some of the descendants of Uaakeia who made the tataro to Kaburoronteun as described:

Kaburoronteun (first ancestor)

Uaakeia (conqueror from Beru who gave name to stone)

Kaburoronteun

? (prob. 3 generations missing)

Tewatu

Teikakeana

Taeboua

Teikakeana

Uaakeia

Kirataaruru

Tekiasua

Tebuto

The cross marks my three informants, of whom the youngest is not less than 65 years old.
In Bairiki there is a stone of the usual type which is considered to be the "rabata" of the goddess Tituaabine. This deity is the "atua" of the Bairiki family group, which treats her as a guardian spirit, abstains from eating the flesh of her creature the Stingray, and makes offerings of coconuts and food at full-moon every month to her stone.

The stone is set in a small square of broken coral slabs. Beside it are strown the bones and skulls of various men who are definitely stated to have been ancestors in the Bairiki family group. Their exact genealogical connection is now unknown, but no doubt whatever exists about the fact that they were members of the family. According to old men, it would be unthinkable to preserve thus the bones of anyone unconnected with the family.

These bones are anointed with oil when offerings are made to the stone around which they lie. They are indissolubly bound up with the ceremonies connected with the stone itself. The necessity to pay them reverence and to make offerings of food to them is recognised to be as pressing as the need to offer at Tituaabine's "rabata".

Thus we see how the relics of ancestors become actually, not only objects of worship, but bound up with the idea of god-worship. The road is not a long one from that idea to the deification of an ancestor.

Uaakeia's stone: the history of Uaakeia: his deification.

Kaurabbi's bones.
List of human bones still to be seen by the stone of the *atau* Tituabine in Bairiki. They are the bones of ancestors.

- 7 Skulls
- 3 Scapulas
- 1 Atlas
- 3 Humerus
- 3 Radius
- 2 Ulna
- 1 Sacrum
- 36 Ribs
- 12 Phlanges
- 1 Inferior Maxillary
- 2 Superior Maxillary
- 22 Verteb ras
- 1 Femur
Prayer to ancestor at Boua. (Given by Team of Marakei: aged about 52).

Aora te amarake, Kaieti-o! Duoki-ra;
Our offering of food,   Kaieti-o! Help us;

Tautau mauri-ra; toutoua nake te buaka;
Keep hold on our safety; tread away the war;

oro-ia, bakarere-ia itui matia;
strike them, pierce them, sew their eyes together (as fish);

ti aki bua ti aki taro;   te mauri
we are not lost we are not deserted; safety

ao te raco; te mauri.
and peace; safety.
ANCESTOR CULT. Stone columns (boua).

All through the Gilberts, stone monoliths ranging from eighteen inches to seven or eight feet in height were erected to the various spiritual "powers". Generally these powers may be considered to be gods, and they are the gods of the fair-skinned race for their names are Taburimai, Auriaria, Tituabine, etc. But occasionally they are called not anti but bakatibu, i.e. ancestors. When genealogical evidence is sought, however, it generally fails to lead one back to any ancestor of the name given to the stone. But a concrete case comes from Marakei, in which an ancestor who lived only five generations ago is definitely the atua of a stone bearing his name near the village of Temotu. The following is a list of his lineal descendants (eldest sons of eldest sons) until today:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kaeti</th>
<th>Taoroba</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Neencia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Burana (about 70)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Naabuti (about 40)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Kaeti was a great fighter and traveller in his day. At one time, he and his party were driven out of Marakei and had to take refuge in Aetaing. Collecting his forces there, however, he was soon strong enough to make war on his former conquerors and return in triumph to Marakei. Soon after this he died, and is said to have appeared in a dream to his son Taoroba, and to have told him to erect a boua or monolith to him. Whatever may be the truth about the dream, it is certain that Taoroba erected the boua,
which stands to this day, and of which the origin was witnessed by old men still living on Marakei. The worship at this stone appears to be exactly the same in type as the cult of the ancestral skull. Either the collected utu or single individuals of the utu may visit the place, and after laying karea or protitiatory offerings at its base present their petition to the ancestral spirit. If the ceremony is collective, the eldest male representative of the senior branch of the utu makes his prayer on behalf of all; if an individual performs alone, he prays for himself alone.

(Insert the note on skulls and bones found at the base of these stones)

(The Bairiki relics).

Kaieti is also said to have given his son a charm by which he might be called to answer questions in the whistling speech. But this call was made thro' the intermediary of the skull of Kaieti, not the stone. While the worship at the stone continued, the family also used the skull at home, thus duplicating the form in which ancestor cult was sustained.
ANCESTOR CULT. Skulls.

I. The removal of the skull from the grave of a buried father, mother, grandfather or grandmother was universal in the Gilberts. The skull was kept on a little mat specially woven for the occasion and was placed on a shelf in the house of the owner. It was considered liable to affront, and was therefore never put on the floor of the house, for fear that in standing above it, a member of the household might insult it with a view of his secret parts. Nor were children allowed to approach it, lest some rough game of theirs might cause offence. The idea underlying this anxiety to pay all respect to the skull was that the ancestor to whom the skull belonged would refuse if ill-treated to help his descendants when asked, in time of trouble; he might even punish them by visiting them with terrifying dreams, from which they would awake insane; and with wasting diseases such as te Kangenge (consumption).

Some households would every day lay a small portion of food on the shelf beside the skull; it was the duty of the closest or the most beloved relative of the deceased to eat this food on his behalf at the day's end. This was a universal practice, but with most households it was less regularly performed.

When tobacco was introduced, it became the custom in every island of the Group to allow the skull to share the household pipe. The skull was held between the palms before the face of the smoker, who inserted the bowl of the pipe into his own mouth and the stem into the jaws of the skull. He then blew down the bowl so that the smoke was driven back through the stem into the gaping jaws. He would address affectionate familiarities to the skull while thus occupied: "E uara? E kangkang?" (How is that? Is it tasty?) and so on.
This sort of conversation was typical of all the relations of the household with the skull. It was a member of the family, as susceptible of offence or pleasure, and as alive to conversations and events beneath that roof, as any human being. It was their friend. While busy about the house a man might throw it an occasional remark as naturally as to his father or brother; or at any time of the day he might take a little oil on his palm and rub it on the cranium of the skull, just as he would perform such an office with smiling yet deferential kindness to one of his living senior relations.

The explicit reason in the native mind for this akoi (or deference) accorded to the skull was that the ghost of the ancestor was always near it. Not precisely situated within it, but enveloping it as an atmosphere, watching it, and feeling emotions of pleasure or pain in proportion as it was honoured, fed or abused.

When a particular need made itself felt in the household the help of the deceased ancestor was enlisted through the medium of the skull. A day was appointed on which all the members of the household should meet in the house. The senior living descendant of the ancestor would anoint the cranium with scented oil, and wreaths of flowers were hung about it. Food was laid beside it as a Karea or propitiatory offering and probably a pipe and a stick of tobacco would accompany the food. Just after noon the senior member would lift the skull from its shelf and elevate it above his face between his palms: then drawing it close to his cheek he would whisper into its ear the special request that he wished to make on behalf of his
people. The following is a typical example of such a prayer:

Toaakai-o! tautau mauri-ra;
Toaakai-o! Keep hold of our safety;

toutoa nako te aoraki; ba ti ma Uri
tread away the sickness; for we are safe

iroum; ti aki bua, ti aki taro;
through thee; we are not lost, we are not deserted;

te maui ao te raoi — te maui!
safety and peace — safety!

There was no special form of words used in these prayers. Certain phrases have a habit of recurring in nearly every example collected, such as the universal "te maui ao te raoi", but the form of words which a request was made was entirely at the will of the performer, whose duty it was to state as clearly as he knew how the particular desire which he wished to convey to the ancestor.

I have described here the procedure followed when a collective request was made to protect a household from an epidemic sickness. In like manner a whole utu might be gathered together in the mancaba to appeal for the ancestor's protection in time of war, or for his help in famine or drought, or for his good offices on any important occasion whatever in which the utu had an interest.

At other times the simple ceremonial could be still further simplified. A single individual might, if a member of the household, go himself informally without preparation to the skull, and after blowing a little tobacco smoke into its jaws as a propitiatory offering, state in its ear
ANCIENT CULT. Skulls.

Whatever small request he had to make. And any member of the household was at liberty, as the wish seized him, to make a little private offering of food either before or after his prayer, and breathe an appeal into the ear of the skull for the general protection of the house.

Sometimes the ancestor would appear in a dream to one of his descendants and would tell him a form of words with which his ghost might be made to converse in whistling noises. The owner of such a charm would generally keep it secret from the other members of the house, but on request, when advice was needed by the household, he would consent to call up the ancestral ghost and ask it the desired questions. The skull was the intermediary through which the ghost was called. Offerings were made to it by the ibonga, or medium, and it was anointed by him with oil in the usual manner. Then he lifted it from its place and whispered the charm into its ear. Here is an example of such a call:-

O-o! H na nemo-te-ia Toaakai
O-o! I shall call-him Toaakai

mai aba-na, mai aba-na; e a roko, ba
from his land, from his land; he arrives, for

e a roko ni maneaba-ra aio, be a roko!
he arrives in our maneaba here, for he arrives!

As soon as the charm is done, the ghost makes his presence known by a gentle whistling under the ridge pole of the maneaba. It is the function of the ibonga to interpret the sounds made to the onlookers. The ghost will answer in his musical language all the questions put to him — the belief being that if an answer proves afterwards to be wrong, it is certainly the fault of the ibonga and not the ghost.
Sometimes the species of oracle thus instituted through the medium of the skull became so famous for its infallibility, that people of other households and utu came to consult it. They would bring propitiatory offerings of food and tobacco to the ibonga, who after giving te moan tiba (the first share) to the skull would keep the rest as payment.

In this way an ancestral ghost would obtain prestige and reverence outside the circle of his own utu.

(Add skull cult details given in J.R.A.I. te benota).
In erecting a monolith at which the ghosts of the ancestress Nei Kanna and the ancestor Tetonganga received offerings and tataro, the old man Naatau used the same formula of words as that exhibited elsewhere in connection with the planting of the stone called Taai (Sun) in the maneaba. Naatau informed me that this formula was used always by his ancestors for the double purpose.
RELIGION (Ancestor cult). Tabakea.

A form of religious observance co-lating very closely in externals to the cult of the ancestor at the monolith was the cult of the spirit Tabakea, whose body is said to be the turtle. Tabakea in myth was the father of NaAareau and Auriaria, both of whom have appeared as chief actors in the creation drama. On Banaba and Nui, Tabakea has the title of Moanibai—First of Things—usually accorded in other islands to NaAareau. Throughout the Gilberts this being is closely connected with the origin of fire. Evidence brought in another place seems to show that he was one of the gods of the aboriginal race of the Gilbert Islands, the dark skinned dual people who were settled here before the invasion of the fairer people from the West.

The cult of Tabakea approaches nearer to the idea of a tribal cult than any other noted hereto pre. On occasions of stress, disease or necessity, when not only a single utu but a group of utu allied for political or warlike purposes, felt the approach of a common danger, a stone about 6-9 feet high would be erected in the maneaba, over against its eastern side, and halfway between the north and south ends. The senior man of Karongoa-n-uea, the clan in the maneaba whose privilege it was to speak the first and the last word in assembly, would decide upon a day when all the utu should be gathered together to make offerings (Karea) and prayer (tataro) at the stone.

The stone was wreathed with coconut leaves by the people of Karongoa-raereke, the workers or acolytes of Karongoa-n-uea. Before dawn on the given day the utu would gather, wearing fillets of coconut pinnules around their foreheads, and bringing food with them. The first portion would be
RELIGION (Ancestor cult). Tabakesa.

taken by the spokesman of Karongoa-n-nea and laid before the stone. The people would then eat their food, putting off their fillets while eating. When this was done, the fillets would be resumed and the spokesman would offer his prayer on behalf of the whole assembly.
Teitirere, an old man of over 80, of Marakei, describes the cult of his ancestor Teweia, who was the builder of the maneaba for Tanentoa of Beru. The utu of Marakei descended from Teweia had a stone, about half a man's height, set up as a post in the ground on the east side of the island. This stone was called the body of Teweia; nevertheless, it was not considered to be the actual atua or spiritual power, which was the ghost of Teweia; but it was the medium through which the ghost was approached, and was so inalienably connected with the ghost, that whosoever did it an insult or injury caused pain to the spiritual power, and was liable to sudden death or illness. On the top of the monolith were perched three lumps of red coral, each about as big as two fists, and one on top of the other. These were said to be the head of Teweia. A flat stone was laid on the ground at the western side of the base of the monolith. On this stone were laid all offerings of food brought to the ghost.

On occasions of stress or danger, the senior member of the utu would signify that a general assembly (te toa) of the utu would be made at the stone for the purpose of offering gifts of food to the ghost and tataro or prayers for his help. He would appoint the day.

The utu would arise in the early morning at about cockcrow and gather before the stone before sunrise. They would squat in a semicircle on the west side of the stone, facing east towards it. They brought food with them. First portions of this food, and later also sticks of tobacco and a filled pipe, were laid on the flat offering-stone. Then the utu would eat the remainder in silence. When the meal was done, the senior of the
ANCESTOR CULT

uatu (but always a male) would go and squat before the stone and address to it, in his own words, the particular request which he had come to make. After this, the people dispersed, leaving the offerings on the stone of offering.

(Note: After the meal and before the prayer, the people put on their heads each a fillet made of a single pinnule from the crest of a coconut tree, knotted in front.)
At Marakei there is a stone which bears the name of the ancestor Ua\'akeia, who was the leader of the Beruan conquerors who invaded and settled this island about nine generations ago. At this stone the utu descended through male and female line from Ua\'akeia made their tataro in time of need. A collection of the whole utu for the sake of tataro was called te toa, a word which since Christian times has been applied to any general gathering for religious purposes.

The stone was broad and flat, being set in a recumbent position, not standing. Beneath the stone were buried the skulls of ancestors subsequent to Ua\'akeia, and also the skull of Ua\'akeia himself. There were called boua\n te atibu, the posts of the stone, the word boua being the name ordinarily applied to the studs of a house or maneaba.

Although this stone bore the name of Ua\'akeia, and although all the ancestors were expressly believed to listen to the tataro offered here, the prayers and offerings were made to the single ancestor Kaburoronteun, who was (and still is) described as the ancestor of Ua\'akeia. The explanation of this is most probably that Ua\'akeia himself, whose name the stone bears, was its originator, and it was he who first instituted the cult of his ancestor on Marakei.

Before the tataro was made, the stone was encircled by three fillets of coconut leaflet, one in middle and one at each end. The prayer offered was of the following character:

\[\text{Aora te amarake, n\text{\oe} Kaburoronteun. Tautau maurifra, toutoua nako te aoraki, Kakamaurifra our safety, tread away the sickness, continue to save them.}\]
ANCESTOR CULT: Marakei.

ataeiaikai, Karerekea karafra.
children these, continue to get our food.

The pedigree ... (etc., as on next page ... with a curse.
ANCESTOR CULT: Marakei.

Pedigree of some of the descendants of Ua'Akeia who made the tataro to Kaburoronteun, as described, is as follows:

Kaburoronteun (first ancestor)

... 

Ua'Akeia (conqueror from Beru who gave name to stone)

Kaburoronteun

ably

(prob. 3 generations missing)

Tewatu

Teikakeua  Ua'Akeia  Nei Tihurabo.
Taeboua  Kiratapuru  Tekiaua

Tebuto

The cross marks my three informants, of whom the youngest is not less than 65 years old, are marked with a cross.
ANCESTOR CULT: Marakei.

Prayer to Nei Kanna

Made to the stone of the ancestress Nei Kanna, from whom the Beruan conqueror Tetonganga on Marakei was descended. Our offering the food thou Nei Kanna. Tread away the evildreaming with the sickness; keep hold upon my safety with my collection of people.

The whole utu was gathered for such a tataro at dawn. Food was brought by each member. A share was set on the flatstone lying by the base of the monolith. The senior male officiated. The people sat in a complete circle around stone, wearing fillets of coconut pinnule. The offering and prayer were made. After this the people ate, and then departed. Food was left by stone.

The skull of the ancestor Tetonganga was buried by the monolith.
ANCESTOR CULT and SUN.

In erecting a monolith at which the ghosts of the ancestress Nei Kanna and the ancestor Tetonganga received offerings and tataro, the old man Naatau used the same formula of words as that exhibited elsewhere in connection with the planting of the stone called Ta'ai (Sun) in the maneaba. Naatau informed me that this formula was used always by his ancestors for the double purpose.
Prayer to ancestor at Boua. Given by Ta'am of Marakei, aged about 52.

Aora te amarake, Kaieti-o! Buoki-ra;  
Our offering of food, Kaieti-o! Help us;

Tautau mauri-ra; toutoua nake te buaka;  
Keep hold on our safety; tread away the war;

orio-a, bakarere-tia, itui matia;  
strike them, pierce them, sew their eyes together (as fish);

ti aki bua, ti aki taro; te mauri  
we are not lost we are not deserted; safety

ao te raoi; te mauri.  
and peace; safety.

---

Prayer to an inu ancestor node at kio Boua  

Given by Tan of Marakei, aged about 52.
All through the Gilberts, stone monoliths ranging from eighteen inches to seven or eight feet in height were erected to the various spiritual "powers". Generally these powers may be considered to be gods, and they are the gods of the fair-skinned race for their names are Taburimai, Auriaria, Tituahine, etc. But occasionally they are called not anti but bakatibu, i.e. ancestors. When genealogical evidence is sought, however, it generally fails to lead one back to any ancestor of the name given to the stone. But a concrete case comes from Marakei, in which an ancestor who lived only five generations ago is definitely the atua of a stone bearing his name near the village of Temotu. The following is a list of his lineal descendants (eldest sons of eldest sons) until today:

Kaieti
| Taoroba
| Neeneia
| Bureua (about 70)
| Nabutii (about 40)

Kaieti was a great fighter and traveller in his day. At one time, he and his party were driven out of Marakei and had to take refuge in Afigang. Collecting his forces there, however, he was soon strong enough to make war on his former conquerors and return in triumph to Marakei. Soon after this he died, and is said to have appeared in a dream to his son Taoroba, and to have told him to erect a boua or monolith to him. Whatever may be the truth about the dream, it is certain that Taoroba erected the boua,
ANCIENT CULT. / Stone columns (boua).

which stands to this day, and of which the origin was witnessed by old men still living on Marakei. The worship at this stone appears to be exactly the same in type as the cult of the ancestral skull. Either the collected utu or single individuals of the utu may visit the place, and after laying karea or profitiatory offerings at its base present their petition to the ancestral spirit. If the ceremony is collective, the eldest male representative of the senior branch of the utu makes his prayer on behalf of all; if an individual performs alone, he prays for himself alone.

(Insert the note on skulls and bones found at the base of these stones)

(The Bairiki relics).

Kaieti is also said to have given his son a charm by which he might be called to answer questions in the whistling speech. But this call was made through the intermediary of the skull of Kaieti, not the stone. While the worship at the stone continued, the family also used the skull at home, thus duplicating the form in which ancestor cult was sustained.
The removal of the skull from the grave of a buried father, mother, grandfather or grandmother was universal in the Gilberts. The skull was kept on a little mat specially woven for the occasion and was placed on a shelf in the house of the owner. It was considered liable to affront, and was therefore never put on the floor of the house, for fear that in standing above it, a member of the household might insult it with a view of his sexual organs. Nor were children allowed to approach it, lest some rough game of theirs might cause offence. The idea underlying this anxiety to pay all respect to the skull was that the ancestor to whom the skull belonged would refuse if ill-treated to help his descendants when asked, in time of trouble; he might even punish them by visiting them with terrifying dreams, from which they would awake insane, and with wasting diseases such as te kange nge (consumption).

Some households would every day lay a small portion of food on the shelf beside the skull; it was the duty of the closest or the most beloved relative of the deceased to eat this food on his behalf at the day's end. This was a universal practice, but with most households it was less regularly performed.

When tobacco was introduced, it became the custom in every island of the Group to allow the skull to share the household pipe. The skull was held between the palms before the face of the smoker, who inserted the bowl of the pipe into his own mouth and the stem into the jaws of the skull. He then blew down the bowl so that the smoke was driven back through the stem into the gaping jaws. He would address affectionate familiarities to the skull while thus occupied: ‘E uara? E kangkang?’ (How is that? Is it tasty?) and so on.
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The explicit reason in the native mind for this akoi (kindness, deference) accorded to the skull was that the ghost of the ancestor was always near it. Not precisely situated within it, but enveloping it as an atmosphere, watching it, and feeling emotions of pleasure or pain in proportion as it was honoured, fed or abused.

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At other times the simple ceremonial could be still further simplified. A single individual might, if a member of the household, go himself informally without preparation to the skull, and after blowing a little tobacco smoke into its jaws as a propitiatory offering, state in its ear
Whatever small request he had to make. And any member of the household was at liberty, as the wish seized him, to make a little private offering of food either before or after his prayer, and breathe an appeal into the ear of the skull for the general protection of the house.

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0-o! N na wewete ia Toaŋkai
0-o! I shall call him Toaŋkai
mai aaba na, mai aaba na; e a roko, ba from his land, from his land; he arrives, for e a roko ni maneaba ra aic, be a roko! he arrives in our maneaba here, for he arrives!

As soon as the charm is done, the ghost makes his presence known by a gentle whistling under the ridge pole of the maneaba. It is the function of the ibonga to interpret the sounds made to the onlookers. The ghost will answer in his musical language all the questions put to him - the belief being that if an answer proves afterwards to be wrong, it is certainly the fault of the ibonga and not the ghost.
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In this way an ancestral ghost would obtain prestige and reverence outside the circle of his own utu.

(Add skull cult details given in J.R.A.I. te baneta).