Chapter
Banaban Creation Myth with Appendices
(given by Nii Tiana of Banaba).

§1. In the beginning all was black darkness; no man lived; and heaven close to the face of earth. But in the darkness Heaven began to move and Earth began to move; they rubbed one upon the other as the two hands of a man are rubbed together. And from the rubbing sprang Tabakea, the first of All; he dwelt on Banaba the Navel of the World. As Heaven and Earth continued to rub together the brothers of Tabakea were born: first after Tabakea was Auiaria and after him Jahnin. Then also was born the woman Titubrine, their sister.
And Tabakea begot children on his sister Titubrine. Their names were Korekeke and Karabindo.

1. The birth of the first Rangi from the union of Heaven and Earth, as shown in the above text, is the nearest approach we have to these islands to the Maori myth of Rangi and Papa.

2-7. All these divinities are now represented by various creatures, on earth, which are the totems of the corresponding clans. In most cases the gods have both a sea and a land creature, by Tabakea: Turtle and Lady Bird; Auiaria: Giant Clam and Rat; Taburunai: Una-fish (and Kunei-bird (Anous stolidus); Taburunaki: Shark and Cockerel; Titubrine: Ray-fish and Weevil; Korekeke: Karabindo: two varieties of Sting Ray.

8.
Naka\textsuperscript{1} and the girl Te Wenei.\textsuperscript{10} And all the children of Tituabinie dwelt on the underside of heaven as it lay on the face of the Earth, together with Tabakea and his brother.

§ 2. And as yet it was dark; the darkness was called by a name; it was Te-Bongi-Ro (The Black Night). The Navel of Te-Bongi-Ro was Banaban, but it was not alone in the darkness, for a multitude of lands lay about it to North, West, and East. These had sprung from Banaban, when no man was, from the gloom of heaven and earth; therefore they are all together known to no under the single name of Te-Bongi-Ro. Yet each land had also its own name, and on each land was born an ancestor.

The land to North and East was Nangi-Ro; the ancestors who lived there were Bai-matoa\textsuperscript{11} and the woman Te-nevea.\textsuperscript{12}

The land to South and West was Roro; and the ancestors there were the woman Beia, with Matiriiki, Matiniaba\textsuperscript{13} and the girl Nangitano.

10. Te Wenei. The meteorite, who announces Naka's guest.
11, 12, 13 Bai-matoa, Matiriiki, Matiniaba. These are the names of stars and constellations, increasingly difficult to identify in these latter days, as the old navigators die one by one, and the new generations are ignorant or careless. The stars named were without doubt those by which travellers navigated to the lands named.
The land to East was Aba-riringa; the ancestors there were Tabakea and Anuniaria, Bakoa and Kaitetana.

And to Westward lay many and great lands. There were Matairango and Tanabai, Ba-n-Tongo and Waiture, Makaiao and Kabi-n-Tongo, and Te-Bik-e-n-Orioniki. And on those islands were the ancestors Tetoora and Nantonga, Nan-Taka-taka and Brunua, Nan Runu, Rangaba and Bnaba.

Also to Westward lay the land of Naba-naba, whereon lived the ancestor Tanaba, with Taniararoa and Nakekea, Nei Raniikai, and Baniano, and Buariki.

All those lands to North, West and East sprung together with Banata from the darkness; they were the first of all lands, and the ancestors who lived on them were the first of all ancestors.

Aba-riringa: a name under which the Gilbert islands were collectively known, meaning "the land of burning sunlight," referring to its blazing lagoons and beaches.

Tabakea and Anuniaria are thus shown to be the ancestors of the Gilberto ni common with Banata.

Names of stars.
§4. And Heaven lay on the face of Earth; and as yet there was no light. Banaba and all the lands of Tebongiro were on the over-side of heaven; they were part of the rock of heaven itself, for they sprang from heaven's body; and the ancestors who lived there were called the Brothers-in-Heaven.

And Anuriania, the first brother of Tabakea, walked through the Darkness of Tebongiro; he was lord of all lands, a mighty giant. And he saw that heaven cleft to earth, so he asked Tabakea what he might do to separate them. Then Tabakea gave him a staff, with which to pierce the hard rock of heaven, so that he might make a door to enter beneath it; the name of the staff was Te Rākan. And Anuriania cleft a doorway through the rock of heaven; he entered beneath, he pushed upon heaven from the underside and raised it a great height from earth. Then he called Korereke the Stingray to slide sideways between heaven and earth, so that the places where they cleft together might be separated, and he told Riiki the Sol to heave the skies yet higher on his back.

So heaven moved on high, and the lands of Te-Bongi-Ro, which had stood upon it, broke from its body and fell into the sea below. And as yet
it was dark under heaven and over earth.

§ 5. Then again Tabakea begot children, for he lay with Nei Amikai, the Thresher Shark, and with his sister Titubiline, and his children were Anuiania, Jabuniai, Jabuniviki, Nawai and Aoro, with a multitude of others. But his youngest son was no woman’s child; he was conceived in a surdling on Tabakea’s forehead. His name was Naeanu.

Tabakea stayed on Banaba with the children that he had begotten; but his son Naeanu went to the island of Beni, where he begot a daughter, whose name was Angi-ni-Macao (Ward-of-The-West).

And Anuiiania the brother of Tabakea went south over the sea, for it was his work to make ready the lands of the South. As he trod the southern waters, behold, his foot struck a rock, and there he stayed, for it was the chosen place.

He raised in that place a great and mountainious island, and he called it Tama-o-te-hunga (Samoa-the-Namesake), because it was named in memory of one of the clan-places on the eastern coast of Banaba.

When that was done he took a shell fish called Katati (Razor Clam) and plucked its body from the shell and plunged it to the East. Behold, it clove to the Eastern sky and was the Sun! Then he
took a miniatura (molusca: serita plicata) and threw it west. Behold, the Moon! After that it was light under heaven and over earth. And he planted his staff Te Rakan on Samoa; it became the Tree of Samoa.

So the Tree stood for a long time, throwing out a host of great branches. But one day Amiania came and began to lop off its branches one by one. He whittled down the lopped branches and threw them over the sea. The first branch peopled Noronui (Central Gilberts); the second Nikumanu (S. Gilberts); the third Abemama (C. Gilberts); the fourth Takitumu (C. Gilberts); and the fifth branch he threw away before he had whittled it down; it fell into the sea and, breaking in pieces, peopled all the Eight Islands. And the branch at the Tree’s summit peopled the land of Bebeaki (Buatirani, N. Gilberts).

Then only the trunk and roots were left. The trunk fell slanting over the sea to North and West, towards Te-Bongi-Ro; it peopled the line of islands that stretches to Westward of Banaba and the tip of the trunk lay by Tabucuma and Bu-Kirora.

The roots followed the trunk; they floated North from Samoa and stayed at the island of Tarawa. All useful things were hidden therein, and men and things grew from the roots.

The Tree of Tarawa grew from the roots of the Samoan Tree, for after a time they put forth a stem and a new
The Tree grew on Tarawa, that had no branches until it reached heaven. And the Tree of Tarawa was our ancestor, for its summit bore a child to Ngania-brakes (Stormy Dawn), and Obaia was the name of the child. So he lived on the tree; and he had wings like a bird.

On a day Tanakara was the Dweller in Heaven broke the Tree of Tarawa, and Obaia fled; he flew to the land of Onouma in the West, and there he married the girl Nei Antu, who bore him two daughters — Nei Kirirere and Nei Kirimoi. After a long time he desired to return to Tarawa; so he took his younger daughter on his back and flew eastward with her; but when he came to Tarawa, the wind beat him back. So he returned to Onouma to fetch a clam-shell as a weight for his head and shoulders; but again the wind beat him back to sea; and he turned southward to Jabitena, where he landed. And he set his daughter Kirimoi on Jabitena.

There came a day of public gathering on the island, and that night Nei Kirimoi lay with all the males in the public marae'a. Behold she was great with child and bore a son, who

...
was called Konabi and became a great chief on Tabitena.

When Auriania had cut off all the branches of the Samoan tree he left that place and went northward to the island of Bern. On the northern end of the island lived the girl Nei Angi-maeao; she lay with him and had two children; the first-born was called Te-anti-ma-aomata (The God-man), the second Na Boboran (Sir Traveller). Then he said to his wife Angi-maeao, "Woman, let us go to Banaba, my home." They got them a canoe and called it Tabera-ni-kai-ni-buti-ni-Bern (The summit of the tree, the Swift One of Bern); and they all set sail to Banaba. And when they arrived at Banaba, Auriania's son Te-Anti-ma-aomata had a child named Te Bu-ni-anti (The ghost-brood), who had mastery over the rain and the sunshine. And they were ever at variance among themselves; therefore it happened that the seasons of drought and the seasons of rain on Banaba were from the beginning uncertain.

The names of the ancestors who accompanied them are given as follows: - Nan Tebubu, Konteula, Namakaina, Nang Kahanua, Nei Tekorata, Na Name-mi-mate.
and so it is until today. And from the Brood of Ghosts sprang the Brood of Men and the Brood of Birds who live in the branches of the Kanawa tree (bist. cordia subcordata); and the descendants of these are the families who sit in the council-lodge under the rafters called Awarakia.

[The tale closes with a genealogy, very imperfectly preserved (as are all Banaban genealogies), leading down from the Brood of Birds to the person of Nei Karia, who is our authority for the whole suite of myths].

This account of the Creation with its appendices is of the very greatest interest and importance. Within a small space it categorically denies all the claims of priority made for the land Samoa and the being Nareau by the group of tales set forth in Chapter 4. Far from showing Nareau as the first Cause, it presents him to us in the unfamiliar rôle of a mere junior, who played no part whatever in the lifting of heaven, the ordering of the elements. And so far from the first place among lands has Samoa fallen in this version, that it is exhibited as an unknown rock in the Southern Ocean at an era when Te-Bongi Ro, the Central Pacific, swarmed with a multitude of islands, of which Banaba was the
Navel and Banaban Anariani the Lord.

Evidently, if (as we must) we take this tradition to be an authentic heritage of the Banaban race, and if any value at all may be attached to race-tradition, there lived on this island a group of families who believed their early forbears to have originated in the Central Pacific, not in Nuclear Polynesia. Let us tabulate their creed as avowed in the tales of Nia Niaiai:

1. Tabakea and Anariani were born out of chaotic darkness; Banaba was their home and the Navel of the world, which is to say, the central source of the world's life; their families were also established in Aka-Vinega, the Gilbert Group, to eastward. To North-East, West and South-West of Banaba, in the primeval gloom, lay a host of other islands, peopled with ancestors, whose common link with the Navel was that they were all Brothers-in-Heaven, i.e., contemporaries and peers.

2. Anariani the Banaban was the protagonist of the Oceani-drama. He raised heaven over To-Bongi-Ro, and all the islands of the Central archipelago fell from sky to sea.

3. Only after these things were done did Anariani tread the southern seas to make ready the land of Samoa. The very name he gave to the island was taken from a small clan-place on the eastern coast of Banaba, being conferred in

This tradition will find corroboration in a later story.
Ruminiscence of his homeland. While Amiania was
busy about his work in the South, Tabakea with all
his progeny remained in Banaba.

4. Amiania the Banaban was the planer of the
Samoaan tree; i.e., he was the ancestor of a large
number of families, Banaban by origin, who Colonised
Samoa.

5. When the tree (a group of Banaban Colonists) had
remained and thrown out a "root of great branches"
in that Southern land, Amiania again resolved it
into its component parts. These he flung Northward
oversea, up the Ellice and Gilbert Groups and
along the islands to Westward of Banaba — in fact,
back through the archipelago of Te-Bongi-Ro — as
far as Tabennu and Bokiroro.

6. The root of the Samoan tree floated to Tarawa
(N. Gilbert) and a new tree grew from it. This, in
plain language, means that the root-stock of the
Banaban colony on Samoa migrated back to Tarawa
and there bred and multiplied. But "the roots
followed the trunk" — they did not break away from
the stem which had populated the "line of islands
to Westward," but remembered the ancestral ties in
spite of their separation.

7. Amiania the Banaban migrated from Samoa to
Banner (S. Gilbert), where he stayed awhile, married
into the family of Nareau and thence returned to
Banaba, his ancestral home.
Comparison of this tabulation with the actual text will show that no point has been unduly strained, and nothing read into the story which is not palpably there. Yet in the result, it is a revelation of utmost importance, for it is distinctly evidential of a race-migration from the Central Pacific to Samoa. Taking the name of Tuvaniana as the ancestral designation of a group of clans, we must believe on the showing of our tale (a) that there was, in very early days, on Banaba a great race which had been long enough resident there to believe itself autochthonous; (b) that this race invaded and colonized Samoa for a very considerable time; and (c) that for some reason it was driven out of Samoa and retraced the island track that it had followed—i.e., the Gilbert Alice Groups—and populated Micronesia as far as "Tabenna" and "Bu-Kiuoro." Tabenna we know
not, but Bu-Ki'Oro — the Breed of Ki'Oro — gives us a clue. Is not Ki'Oro but a slight variant of Gilolo? And Gilolo is that island of Halmahera, which guards the northern gates of Indonesia, whence, in the opinion of finest scholars, the ancestors of Polynesia were driven, two thousand years ago, to seek a new Hawaiiki on the islands of the Southern Pacific. Certainly, in interpreting our text, we may take "the line of islands to Wotwald" to mean the Marshall-Caroline Groups, which, in an almost unbroken chain along the Equator, link the Northern Gilberts with the outlying archipelago of Asia. Further, the name Bu-Ki'Oro must in translation be made referable either to the Land of Gilolo or the Breed of Gilolo. If "Land" be the right interpretation, then Amiania's race was scattered back to the very sources of the Polynesian folk; if "breed" be the more correct meaning, then certainly they possibly did not travel so far, but they came to a group of islands where the Gilolo Breed lived, which is to say, the Carolines and Marshalls. Therefore these groups had been at some earlier date invaded by a race from Gilolo. Possibly, it was the invasion of the rude islands
by men of the Gidlo Breed that first gave the
Bamabans their impulse to migrate to Samoa.
Braten thence, after many generations of misrule,
they returned to their ancient homes and,
being in great force, were able to deal more
effectively than their ancestors with the Gidlo
men.