Auriana and Tarawa

by

Notes:

Auriana was the son of Tabakea and Nei Unikai, his mother. He was born in the bush on an island called Nantubaka. When he grew up, he used to perform the ritual magic called Nontubaka, and on one occasion, he saw a vision of a woman in a boat called Nei Rei, who was riding home from a heath. He promptly boarded the boat to Nantubaka and approached Nei Rei, who, when she saw him, invited him to join her voyage. As they drew nearer, she jumped down from her rowing boat and Auriana followed her. "I want to go with you," she said, "I want to go with you." They made love, and then Auriana returned to Tarawa. On the way, he called at Malaya, where he met Nei Tamawatavava and at Bei, where he found Nei Tawatavava. He took all three women to wife and set up home at Tabakara near Fata.

When he next performed his magic, Auriana saw Nei Tabuka on Mariana, so he went to her and stayed with her for a long time. And, Auriana had left a child behind him in Tarawa, who needed to ask questions about her father and Nei Rei, her mother, at least agreed they should go and find him. The two women set off in their canoe for Mariana, and, as they approached land, Nei Rei began to sing:

"The canoe is becalmed, the wind is idly flapping, I cannot see him near. Sing with all your voice there, our song will follow him. He is as slippery as a garfish. This son of Tabakea, Nei Unikai, and Nei Unikai. Back in Tarawa, his home, he'll stay up on the shallow beach, there small fish abound. There we'll wait— for he will come."

As the song died away, Nei Tabuka
The answer is: True.
The guardian of an old man with white hair and the grand-children did not recognize him. One of the women
2 danced the mori, he Takatuka rii, for them and when it was finished they all went in to Nakanana
m Nakanana.

Now, Aunana had changed the people in three words, "You must prepare a boat for me so that my child's canoe can be launched. If it is not ready, I shall punish you all." Tanaara and Nakanana had called their people together to fell a tree that armed them but they could not do so.

In desperation, they sang the help of Nakanana, a
man who lived in the farthest tip of the land. He
was small with frizzy hair but he had a
powerful voice and he stood beside the tree and
shouted as loud as he could. But the tree did not move. When they saw Aunana approaching,
they put a magic spell on Mei Ribanikai,
daughter of Tanaara. They cut all fringes in her
hair with a nikororo shell and charmed:

'I have washed the fringes in her hair
by Mei Ribanikai.
And made her ready.
There is one now? She is here.
Where is she now? She is here.
That is in his heart,
Aunana thought many
You are charming, you are lovely.
The song started again and the chant continued:

'I have washed the fringes in her hair
by Mei Ribanikai.
Her hair was now high.
From Aunana's lips:
You are so charming and so lovely.
Then, they put a garland of flowers around
her and near her to wear Aunana.

He came towards her and she sang:

"Go back, Aunana, back to the east!
In Tiri you are glorified,
In Tonga you are praised;
you stand the highest heaven.
And haunt the hills of Tafaei;
The slumber sky is gloomy
The places where you streamed
You came upon us from the east
With storming winds and rain:
Anger resided within me;
Calm yourself, you face in lot to fall!
No matter how we tried
he could not bow it down;
No matter how we tried
he could not topple it.
Go back, O Aunia, go!
Go back, I beg of you,
I, Kei Ribanikai.

When Aunia heard her song, he stood in silent thought and his eyes spoke up, "You must take pity on this woman, she's no sad and miserable,
She listened politely to the notice of her plea:
"Who is this woman calling out my name,
Who comes to meet me,
Whom I cannot see,
Among the twisting mists and shadows?
I shall rampage through the land
With terror, and song it wails.
Kei Ribanikai heard him and was even more distressed. She broke the yoke and hanging round her neck and sang another song. This time she pleaded that her home (and always she opened and Aunia, taking pity on her or
last, took her to wife.

At Naboneta (Nibanatu), Aunia picked up the edge, Taburtoka, and started to cut down the tree. He chanted while he worked:

I am cutting down the tree,
Heaving down the tree
Of the kings of Rona,
Where shall I let it drop?
I'll let it just right here.
Now its roots are surely severed,
And its base is oozing out,
Hearing for its strength departing,
Now it's hearing, now it's falling.
Mei Ribanika, it's shattered
broken into many pieces
into pieces all around.
There is weeping through your homeland
It is detached, scattered far
like the neck of Taranawa.

The next day, in the dunet and Arunana and
his wives waited away on it. They came to
Bunaba which Arunana turned upside down in
the tip of his spear and then continued on their
way. Suddenly, Arunana was attracted by a
brilliant light which flashed beneath him and,
standing up, told his women, 'be here for me. I am going to find out where this
light down below comes from.' He dived into
the sea and, not very far down, landed in
the house of Mei Ribanaba which stood on
the island of Tarang. Mei Ribanaba was the
wife of Tangarao, lord of Mea, whose father
was Toemaneeroa and, when he saw her,
Arunana sang this song:

'The light is shining out from here,
Flashing brightly, flashing ten.
The mighty young of Ribanaba
Rule o'er Tarang in the South.
But the end is drawing near:
I have come, fly off with me.'

Mei Ribanaba replied:
'I am charmed, intrigued, excited,
And my heart is beating fast;
How my legs grow weak beneath me
As I feel his manly touch.
I, how fast our two hearts beating,
Keep within our beating breasts.'

As her song died away, she got up and
went off with Arunana to his home.

When Tangarao learned about this, he
was very angry indeed. He assembled a
fleet of canoes and, accompanied by
Toemaneeroa, sailed into the open passage
off Bario. There, they split into three
Tangara took his northern flank and Tambareva his southern. One of Auriana's sisters, who lived in Berio, saw them and asked what they intended to do. They replied that they had come to engage Auriana in battle so she returned to warn him. Auriana took up arms and went north to Buaviki from where he launched his canoes and defeated Tangara.

As daylight dawned none of the enemy canoes were left apart except that of Tambareva, who called out to Auriana, 'he has been defeated, all my men are dead. Now, send my children back to me.' Auriana agreed and sent Nei Lei back to Howate, Nei Lepuniki to Neubaera, Nei Teveneri to Hainana, Nei Rararan to Haeras and Nei Tasani to Howa for a rest.

NOTES by Reid Cowell.

1. Kauhi, probably a kauhi n ame, a magic ritual to drive a woman away. Performed in the ocean beach early in the morning.

2. Tei Apesariv to his army allies.

3. Nikorokoro, an unidentified, semi-aquatic seal fish.

4. The past means, Ko melonako itini, ko melonako i Tonga...
The syntax indicates that Timi is a place-name.

5. The text reads, Eakai n nem ni wara a Timiro Varana Hatao. I have read as E a kaui i Timiro, where Timiro is a compound of Timi and -oro, a word not in the dictionaries.

6. The text reads, Eakai n nem ni wara a Timiro mo ni bakareo ba nukan Varana. See note 5. I have treated bakareo as a one-word, Nukan Varana, lit. middle of Varana where the land is considerably broken by passages.
APPENDIX

Notes: Additions to above story from notes taken while listening to Maiana Wenaia as told by Tan Toaaki. In Guamila's handwriting, English except for 2.

1. When Aniama was poisoned at Banaba, he visited his kia, an old woman of the area between Banaba and Tarawa, whose name was Tinapatao. She cured him of his sickness.

2. On the second leg of his journey, Aniama collected his wives and they all went up to Nakurua where they met two grand-daughters. They were Paman girls called Rei Avusangari and Rei Nonumangari, and they did not recognize him from a distance. One of them cried out, 'He's a big fellow; his got red skin.' But he looks friendly enough.' The other two agreed and Aniama, who overheard their chatter, turned himself into an ugly old man with white hair and went on ahead of his wives. The two granddaughters came the women who were with them, one of them ran to the top of the beach and the other ran along it. Rei Tumana gave Aniama the women's ex rongo and he humbled himself in two directions, just like an old man:

To taka te takumui; te taka te takurara
Tamoa, Tamoa i ahana Matang; i ahana
Matang nei Nanomea, i Nanomea,
Ai ngavia ae ai ngaia ao ke,
O e keniken e keniken ten Nakauki mai
antana.

Ani Kenna ao ani Kenna;
Te ai ngaia ae ai ngaia ao ke,
O e takurara matani karera au man te
karari i ahana i Nanomea i Nanomea,
Ai ai ngaia ae ai ngaia ao ke.
Ai ko bimana ko nakemia? Ko ti
kehairi i Katumuroka?
Mani Niueae mani Niuea - o - o.
Katanga te mani, Katanga te mani;
Ta Nang a biba Koroia, Koroia,
Koroia miki e n e.

The grandchildren were enchanted by the magic and when Atumana charged back into a large young man with a smooth red skin and a fine head of curly hair, they recognized him. Then Atumana and his unique continued to dance.

3. Inhabitants of Naboraba:
Fa Kae ni manu and Fa Kae ni aina; Tawara and Kei Raki, his wife; Kei Raki, his daughter; and Nabana, his brother; Nabana, a small dark man with curly hair standing straight from his head, a flat nose, and an uneven voice; and, when he breathed, the dust and leaves scattered beneath his nose; his body strong; he lived on the south-west point of the island watching the sea for sailors.

4. There was a village in Naboraba called Niaurama popularized by skulls, necklaces and armless, headless and toothless people.

5. Matang, the home of Tumubine, was by Samoa. Sometimes it floated, sometimes it sank, and sometimes they in the air. Its inhabitants were Tanganara, Tawara, Rabara, Bureburenenga, Tebrana (Rumana). When Tumubine appeared, it was as lightning.

6. Atumana's father Tabaka, mother Urikagi, sister Rokora, mother Rei, Temurai, Teva in Tabara, Rukakivi, Tumubine of Tawara, Rabara of Matang.

7. Father of Tabaka was Taei.
1. The poisoning is likely to refer to the present of a putten-jivun given to Aumana in Ramara in the Tarawa story, part of the interests of which is deadly. The visit to Nei Traroro explains why Aumana made two attempts to return to Tarawa.

2. (a) There is always doubt whether the word Fibu means grandfather or grandson. It seems to me, from the rest of the Tarawa story, that Nei Aromangati and Nei Nomangati (Nomanari) were grandchildren.

(b) I am not recording a translation of the mimicry; it needs the attention of someone better versed in its poetic language and allusions. I do, however, note my reservations on the transcription which, if recalled from notes taken down from an oral version as Ginnabura states, may not be quite accurate. I particularly doubt the words Nanora and Naha. The former may be rendered nanora-man, where nanora means either and mana is a sound ending without meaning. The phrases Mani Niaona and Mani Niau-a-a-o may render the something like mani ni wana-a-o (c) relating to custom (behaviour) or (cause) exact or fingers even a chance as in Fa we na Tarawa. In short, attempts that appear to represent known place names need to be very carefully authenticated.