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TOPIC: FISHING

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INTERVIEWED: Basilio Mau.....Naselai, Rewa.

SUBJECT: THE FISHERMAN OF BUREBASAGA

There are two fisherman for the chiefs of Burebasaga. One is the ordinary fisherman like the human being and the other is the VU or the godly spirit.

There is a godly spirit for the Roko Tui Dreketi. He usually bring fish for the Tui Dreketi every now and then. The godly spirit is believed to be living between the sea-area of Rewa and Suva. The area of his territory is called the CAKAU YAWA meaning the far-away reef.

The VU or Godly spirit would know the time that the Tui Dreketi wants to eat some IKA BULA or turtle.

In this case he would supply the Tui Dreketi with turtles. There is a shore at MATAI SUVA where the godly spirit would bring the turtle in and lay them on the beaches. The people living near the beaches would know this when they will find turtles lying on the beaches.

They are the ones who will take the turtles to the chiefly house. They would walk along the beach and when they will see the turtles are lying there without their shoulders, they would instantly know that the turtles are for the Tui

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Dreketi. It is believed that when the godly spirit will supply the turtles to the chief, it would eat the shoulders of the turtle first and supply the rest of the body at the beach. It was found that all turtles were without their shoulders when found lying. The people of MATAI SUVA would at once take the turtles to the Tui Dreketi. This shows how the godly spirit works and serve the chief.

This ready supplies of turtles is still happening today. As for us, the human fisherman, we also play our part. We also go out to the sea to get fish for the Roko Tui Dreketi. If there is a ceremony to be held in our village, the chief would send for us to go out to the sea dn to catch some fish. The chief would send his MATA NI VANUA or spokesman and thus presented some yaqona and request us to go fishing. Of course we would at once pack and leave for the sea.

When the chief's spokesman presented his yaqona, we would at first call a meeting which consist of all the GONEDAU or fisherman. We would be all present when the announcement is going to be made. We would all agree to what the spokesman had requested.

The yaqona which is brought by the spokesman would be pounded and mixed for drinking. The yavusa or big clan of NASELAI would prepare the yaqona for drinking. After the drinking we would let the spokesman know the time of our leaving. Usually we will say that early tomorrow morning we would be leaving.

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Early next morning we would pack and be ready with our nets and off we head to the sea. We would take the nets and place it at the entrance of the reef. This is where all the turtles would come and go through.

Now and then we would check at the nets. If a turtle is caught, the conch shell would be sounded. At this, the people on shore would know that a turtle had been caught.

When the fisherman will be out at sea; they would also be looking for a particular fish which is called the KABATIA.

This fish is often referred to as the BENA WAI BUTA the Tui Dreketi meaning the 'boiled water' for the Tui Dreketi.

When the fisherman will go out for fishing they would all listen to their leader. All the rest would do the paddling of the boat. The leader would always be looking for the where the wide sands is. When the fisherman reach this bright area, they would go the deeper area. This is a place where this type of fish the KABATIA is found to be abundant number. In every place you'll reach for, you will find this fish. As the fish is caught, it is put onto the boat.

It is recommended to every fisherman who goes to catch this type of fish to be aware of one thing - and that is, you should climb back into the boat in the same place you've left it when you goes into the water. When all the fish is collected, it would then be taken to the Tui Dreketi. The fish fins is not scrapped when taken to the chief.

This is the rule.

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If the Tui Dreketi wants to eat fish or turtle he would send his mata ni vanua to request the service of the GONEDAU. Sometimes when the Tui Dreketi wants to eat turtles and does not show forth his desire, this is how the godly spirit fisherman came in. People living near the beaches would know that the chief wanted to eat turtles when they will see turtles lying on the beaches with their shoulder bitten. They would at once know that these turtles are supplied by the godly spirit. They would take the turtles to the chief.

- Could you tell me how the GONEDAU or fisherman knows the territory where the catch would be abundant in number?

Every fisherman know this.

In our village, the fisherman often fish inside the harbour especially on the entrance. They would catch and they will return to the village. After some traditional ceremonies, the catch is handed over to the chiefs.

If the chief send his spokesman at night, the fisherman would also leave for the sea during that night. This all the parts which the fisherman will have to play. They have to do what their chief wanted. It's their duty like wise the godly spirit or TEVORO play his part too.

VINAKA.