

Extra translated

TOPIC: FISHING
INFORMANT: BASILIO.....OF NASELAI, REWA
INVESTIGATOR: VILLIE D.

THE GONEDAU OF BUREBASAGA

There is a GONEDAU known as the VU or SPIRIT. He is ROKO TUI DREKETI'S fisherman and he is responsible for the Chief's fish and how it is caught. The spirit lives underneath the sea in a reef known as CAKAU YAWA. This place is said to be near Suva Point. This GONEDAU knows the time or day the Chief wants to eat turtle. He knows the Chief's desire and he will do it. Near Suva Point, the Chief's GONEDAU, who are real human beings live there. They are the people who will take care of everything that might happen. When the spirit or GONEDAU feels that the Chief wants to eat turtle, he will break the turtles paddles and throw the turtle towards land. The real GONEDAU, who spends most of their time at the beach will spot the turtle floating and they will know straight away that the Chief wants to eat turtle. So, they will bring the turtle ashore and take it to ROKO TUI DREKETI.

This is what usually happens in the olden days and still happens today. But for us living, we will still do our duty for our Chief, ROKO TUI DREKETI. If there is a village function we will do what is expected of us. There are times when the ROKO TUI DREKETI asks if we could catch some turtles for the VUNNALU. They have to follow everything done before they go out fishing. The customs are observed and followed.

In our village, when the ROKO TUI DREKETI wants to eat fish, he will present a SEVUSEVU or YAQONA to the fishermen. His MATANIVANUA will take this and informs the GONEDAU of the ROKO TUI DREKETI'S WANT. We will call a meeting and then discuss it, The MATANIVANUA will return with the message that we have accepted it. The YAQONA that the MATANIVANUA brought is then pounded. And we drink this YAQONA with our other helpers. When the YAQONA is made, someone will drink and then someone follows, after that, they will tell the MATANIVANUA that they have accepted, and tell him when they will go out fishing. Early in the morning, we take our nets out and into the sea. When we return for our nets, there are turtles caught in the nets. We will blow the DAVUI to show the number of turtles caught. Those people at the beach will know that we have caught some turtles, when they hear the sound of the DAVUI.

Another fish, the KABATIA, also is known to be the Chief's food. The fishing gears are prepared and it is done according to its custom, before it is put into the water. The GONEDAU will go in a boat and there is a leader who takes care of everything and sees that it is done accordingly. Someone will paddle the canoe. When they reach a NUKU RAMA - a place of the sea bottom where it is sandy and clear - they will stop the boat. It is a custom that from where you load the nets, it is here where you will have to unload it. At these sandy-holes, of the sea bottom, you can slip your hand into it and if you are lucky enough, you will be able to catch some KABATIA fish. When you catch one, it will go into the boat from the side you have to go into the boat the same way and place. Every KABATIA fish caught will be taken to the Chief's house. The scales are not removed or cleaned but it is taken with it.

- Who could the Chief send to tell the GONEDAU of his message?

The MATA is the one responsible. He will take a small bundle of YAQONA to present to the GONEDAU before he tells them what the Chief wants. In other cases, the BU or their god will tell the GONEDAU what the chief wants. He shows this by supplying the turtles, which is found floating near the sea-shore, and all the GONEDAU has to do, is bring it ashore and take it up to the Chief.

- How do the GONEDAU know the best fishing grounds?

The GONEDAU knows the place where they will catch turtles or any other fish. Usually it is near the gulf or inside it. They will return to the village after fishing. When they return the traditions are observed and then the fish caught will be taken up to the Chief's house. If the MATA came to see the GONEDAU at night, they will go out fishing at night. If he comes at daytime, then they will go at daytime. Once the message is accepted, immediately, they will do it. They will do their duty as expected of them. In our village, there are two groups of people known as the Chief's GONEDAU. One is the GONEDAU TEVORO or the god and us, the real people.

That is all that I can remember about the GONEDAU in our village.

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