

The old man and woman who caught the pigs and birds (My title) #45

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I will tell you the story of the old man and woman.

Now, in this story the old man's name was Erirau and the old lady's name was Bekekau. The village in which they lived had many houses built close together. These old people had their house at the very end of the village. Every day they slept until morning, then they went into their garden, broke ground and planted and then came back. Coming back, they put away their knives and ax and, together, they went down to the sea and washed their legs. The old man looked out to his land at the point. He saw that place and muttered worriedly the names for his land. He muttered, "Guiwa, Teowa, Siyumu, Gabamu." He worried and counted his places. But the old woman, his wife, said, "Evening and morning you keep fussing like that about your places. Why don't we go there, get some food, eat and come back? Every time you are fussing about those places." It was always like that, they went in, cleared and planted, came out, put down their knives and ax, went down to the sea and washed their legs. That old man looked towards his land and worried. "Guiwa, Teowa, Siyuimu, Gabamu." His wife kept saying, "Bother! Old man I keep saying but you never listen. You keep worrying like that, just like that, about your land. I don't hear you leaving it. Why don't we go there, sleep and come back?"

One day they were doing this again. They came down to wash their legs. The old man worried and said the same words. They went back up to their house and sat down. The old man said, "All right, tomorrow we go, when we come from the garden you put small taro into your stringbag. On the next day we will go in and work and then come out. Then you will put the netbag on the canoe platform. We will take a mat and small bed sheet and put them down. Then we will push off." This is what he said. So they slept until morning, went to the garden, cleared and planted and came back with food in the netbag which they put down. And then again another morning they went in, worked and came back. And then they went with food in the netbag to the canoe, put down the mat and bedsheet and got everything ready. They brought down their cooking pots and loaded them. Then the man and his wife pulled and pulled the canoe until it was down. The old man stood at the back and his wife stood at the front. They got their pole and they were poling, poling and poling towards a very long sandy beach. They went and went, they went around one point, poled and poled, and went around another point. Then the man said, "All right. Here we will go up."

They turned around, went up a river and stopped the canoe by the bank and pushed the poles into the canoe. The sun was going down, so they went up and cleared a place where they could sleep. They were going to sleep when the man said to his wife, "Very early in the morning when you hear the noise of the Beom birds, you get up and cook the food. As for me, I will be sleeping, will wake up and go into the bush. I will cut sticks, carry them and start making pig traps -- bird traps and pig traps. This is what he said to his wife, and she heard him. And so very early in the morning she got up and began cooking the food. The old man got up, took his knife and ax, went into the bush and cut sticks and carried them to a place. He tied together the pig trap he set it up, and then he put down a bird trap. He moved on and then he put together a pig trap until he was finished. He moved on like that and then he put down bird traps. He kept on doing this, he tied and moved on, he tied it and moved on. While he did this, the old man sang his pig trap song. In that song he sang both his and his wife's names. He sang like this:

Erirauwe Bekekawe emendeyaiye bekekawe
nayaye Bekekawe emendeyaiye Bekekawe
Erirauwe Bekekawe Emendeyaiye Bekekawe

Like this, he sang his pig trap song.

He was singing as he tied and moved on. The pigs were falling into the traps making a big noise and many birds were going into the traps and struggling. The birds filled the sky with their cries ("stomach noise"). The old woman was cooking back at their camp when the big noise was being made. She called to her husband, "Old man, what is this noise? What are these bird noises?" That old man called to his wife and said, "e turituri ." He kept doing this, tying and moving on, singing the pigtrap song. The pigs and the birds kept going in. The old woman didn't know what these loud and smaller noises were. The old man kept making and setting up his pig traps. He sang his song, mentioning his and his wife's names:

Erirauwe Bekekawe emendeyaiye Bekekawe
nayaye Bekekawe emendeyaiye Bekekawe
Erirauwe Bekekawe emendeyaiye Bekekawe

While he sang the song he lined up the traps and then the pigs and birds would go in. The pigs were falling and making pig noises and the birds went into the traps fluttering; their noises sounded as if the other side of the sky was breaking. The old woman was scared and called out to her husband, "Old man, what are these noises?!" The old man said again, "e turituri."

He was saying that as he prepared the traps. He went to the other side of the hill and stopped there. From there the old man turned back. He hit and killed the pigs and pulled them out, and he hit and killed the birds, untied them and put them together. He did that as he came back to his wife. Then he said to his wife, "Everything's done. So dish out the food and we'll eat. After that we'll carry out the pigs and birds, singe and butcher them on a platform we put up." He said this. His wife dished out the food and they ate. He got up and with his wife tied the legs of the pigs and tied the birds and carried them down to their place and stacked them. They kept on doing this, stacking the pigs on top of each other. They put down the birds. They went all over the place. They said, "We did it. Everything's o.k. It's done."

Then the man with his wife went and cut sticks. They put together a platform for the pigs and the birds. They made a fire and singed the pigs. They pulled them down, butchered them, tied back the legs and carried them up to the platform. They carried them up and they carried them up. The pigs were finished. Next they singed the birds, butchered them and took them up and took them up, like before, until they finished the job. They put leaves over the pigs. They cut and carried out wood. They made a smokey fire, and built a wind block. Then the man and his wife took the pig guts, which she cooked and they ate. Then they smoked the meat.

They slept. That morning the wife cooked some food and they ate. They said, "All right. Let's go back. Let's go back to our village." So they cooked and ate their food, got up, pulled down the platform and carried down the pig in one stack and the birds in another.

They got the canoe platform ready. they put down the mat and then carried down the pig and loaded in onto the canoe. They kept doing is until the job was finished. On top they put a mat to cover the meat. They put down sticks to hold the mats. They did it up properly. They said, "O.k. We've done it. Finished. Let's go back. We will go to our village."

So they went back. They poled and poled and poled and poled. Oh... the old man and woman went to their place and were going to sleep. Their children came out from their gardens and said, "Wre are the old man and woman? Ther is no fire burning in their house." The other old men and women staying in that village replied, "Oh no. They came out and carried their things down to put on their canoe. We saw them going this way."

The old man and woman slept until the morning. They loaded on the pigs. The wife stood at the front and the husband stood at the back and poled and poled and poled, first past one point, and then they poled and poled again and went around another point. They were now looking at their village. They kept on poling and came in to stop at the village front. They pulled up the prow of the canoe, put away the poles and put everything into order. With his wife the man kept on carrying up and carrying up the pigs and put them on his verandah. Then they went down and carrying, carrying up many times they put down all of the birds on top. The village people had gone into their gardens. The man and his wife started to share the pig. They left a pig and a bird at each house in this village with so many houses all close together and mixed up. They left a lot of food. Then they left the rest at their own house. They carried theirs up to their house and put it on a platform and then they rested.

The people who had been in their gardens started coming out. As they went up to their houses they saw the pigs and birds. They said, "Where did this come from?" They said, "Oh, that man and his wife went away and slept somewhere, they brought back everything here, this bird and pig. They shared it. Our's they put here." That's what they said. So they baked and cooked and started eating and then they rested, then they ate again and then finished.

O.K., this story is finished. This is the story of the old man and woman whose names were Erirau and Bekekau. So they went away and the old man sang the pig trap song with their names in it. He sang: (song). He sang their names as he tied the pig traps just like that. So this is the story of the old man and woman, Erirau and Bekekau.