

There was a boy and a girl. Their parents died. They had no food. They were orphans (bebenon). It was dry season. The rivers dried up and everyone in the village went fishing. These two children went with them. When the small boy caught fish the people would push him aside and take them. He got only a few to take home. They kept doing this. He felt sad and went home when they took his fish. One time he went with his small sister. They went to another lagoon to catch fish. The village people started looking for them, "Where are these small children?" They looked and found them at the lagoon. They hit and pushed them aside and got all of the fish again. It started to rain, so the small children went to the foot of the mountain where there was a large tree. They went under it to protect themselves from the rain. The people were catching fish in the rain. They looked for protection from the rain. They went up and found these two children under the big tree. They chased the two children out and took their place. The two children were out in the rain. The boy got some herbs and rubbed them on a stick and hit the side of the mountain. He said, "You mountain, why are you standing there? Come and cover these people up." So the mountain came down and swallowed the people up.

The two children got their fish and went home. The people inside the mountain called out for help, but no one could help them. People in the village asked after these people, "Oh, they have plenty of fish so they can't come." During the night they baked their fish and taro (the children). When it was getting towards morning they put their food into a basket and started off. The boy was bigger than the girl. They went to the place where the mountain came down. They called out, "Are you still alive?" They replied, "Tell this mountain to go up and let us out." The small boy said, "You stay there and die."

They left that place and started off walking. In the evening they camped in the middle of the bush. They ate their taro and fish. They started off the next day. They were just wandering - running away from their people. In the middle of nowhere (amai (to) nukare) they ran out of food. Only the small girl would eat. They started walking the next day. He told his sister, "You stay here, I'll climb this tree. I'll climb to the top." He did this and looked forward and then back to the beach. There was no smoke anywhere. Then he came halfway down and looked towards the mountain. He saw smoke going up. He climbed down and told his sister. So they started walking towards the rising smoke. They reached the place where the smoke was rising. They expected to see people but there were no people around. The smoke was rising from a log. The small boy took a stick and tried to get fire from the log. But this log was an old lady, Embeotofo, so when the boy hit the log with the stick she cried out in pain, "Oh! Who is this?" The boy turned to his sister, "Oh, we thought this was a real fire so we tried to take some. Now we will die soon. What should I call her, auntie, mother or grannie? She is an old woman so I'll call her grandmother. Grannie! It's me. I came from a faraway village. I didn't know you were a real person (tamata) and I tried to get fire from you." The old lady said, "Oh good! Who is with you?" "My small sister." She said, "Come... the two of you stand on top of me." The small boy was frightened so he stayed where he was. So Embeotofo said, "Don't be frightened! Come with your small sister and stand on top of me." So they climbed onto her.

The log started floating out. This was a swamp, but in the middle there was an island. Embeotofo brought them to this island. They got off. On this island was a house, coconut trees - everything that is needed for food. She showed them the house. "That is your house, there are your coconuts, sago and betel nut. Go and have a rest in your house and then go and inspect your gardens. All of this is mine. Everything is mine. I'm not a real person to live with you. I'm going up." Then she floated out again. So they went up and rested in the house. The boy got up and said,

"Let's go and look at the gardens. When they went to the garden there were ripe bananas everywhere - birds were eating at them. Everything was there. Then they came back to the house. They brought some bananas and taro with them. The old lady said, "When you go into the house everything that is there is all yours." There were stringbags, tapas and pots. They looked around. Then they came down from the house, cooked their food and ate. It got dark so they went in and slept. The next morning Embeotofo floated back to the small children again. She called to them to come down to her. They ran down and exchanged greetings. She reminded them that the things were all theirs and then floated out again. The children went back to their house. Embeotofo would float up and down all the time and call in to see the children. She said, "There are no people around. No people from this side, that side, inland or from the coast. Everything here is yours." They stayed.

One day she came in and called to the children. They ran down to meet their grandmother. By this time they had both grown up. "Everything - armlets, necklaces, tapa - these are all yours", she said. Then she floated away. She came back the next day. She called to the boy, "Come down by yourself." They were very sad for this was the first time she had asked the boy to go alone. He went down. They greeted each other. Embeotofo said, "There are no villages from where you came from, or at the beach, or inland, or where the sun rises or sets. There is no boy here for your sister to marry or a girl for you to marry. So tonight you will sleep with your sister and become husband and wife." The boy started crying. Embeotofo floated off. He went up to the house. They cried the whole day. When it got dark they slept separately. They didn't do what the grandmother said. The old lady came back the next day and called out to the boy to come and see her. "Did you do what I asked you to do?" The boy said, "No." The old lady said, "I keep telling you that there are no villages for you to give your sister to so that in exchange you will get a woman (exchange = veodi)." He went back and the old lady drifted out. The brother and sister started crying. In the evening the girl got up, "Our grandmother is not a real person so we must do what she tells us to do." So she went up to the house and instead of two mats, she spread one. So they went up and slept together as husband and wife. The next morning the old lady called the boy down. She said, "Did you do as I said?" "Yes", he said, "Oh, very good! Her husband and your wife." She floated out. And he went up to his sister. He married her.

They went to the garden, fishing everywhere until she was pregnant. The old lady kept visiting them until one day she called them both down. She said, "Oh, your wife is pregnant." "All right." Then they separated. The wife gave birth to a boy and Embeotofo wanted to see the child, so she called the couple down. They told the old lady that the wife gave birth to a baby boy. "Oh good! Look after him properly." She went out again and they went up. They looked after the child until it started walking. Then they weaned the child. After this, she got pregnant again. Embeotofo came back again. She kept coming to see the child. She called and they came down. "Your wife is pregnant again?" "Yes." "Look after her until she gives birth." Embeotofo went out and the husband and wife went up. Later the wife gave birth to a baby girl. The children grew up and they got married to each other.

They had children who also had children. It went on like this until a village grew out of this first boy and girl. The clan called Jorega - this is their story. When I went to Saangade I saw the island where this happened. This island is a mountain and it is called Embeotofo. Our belief is that if a Jorega person dies there will be a landslide on the island. The Baregi people will look across and see the slide and they will know that an adult has died from Jorega. If a bit of soil slides, they know that a child has died. If my daughter married Michael John, that would be all right because we have this story. But if any other Maisin did this they would say, "That is not right. You are not Jorega."

Notes:

Joyce says sometimes orphans are treated badly but not by a village - in the family. "Maybe they have other children to look after."

