

which he keeps behind a screen in the spirit-house. It is about four feet high; the base is about fifteen inches square; it is hollow within, has an ear on one side of it, and a mouth and nose on the other.

This oracle is covered with scarlet and white seeds, about the size of a large pea, which are stuck upon it in fantastic figures with gum. To the priest this is a labour-saving machine; for, on ordinary occasions, instead of going through the performance we have described, he merely whispers in the ear of the model, and pretends to receive an answer by applying his own ear to its mouth.

The occasions on which the priests are required to shake, are usually of the following kinds: to implore good crops of yams and taro; on going to battle; for propitious voyages; for rain; for storms, to drive boats and ships ashore, in order that the natives may seize the property they are freighted with; and for the destruction of their enemies.

When the prayers offered are for a deliverance from famine, the priest directs the people to return to their houses, in the name of Ndengei, who then at his instance is expected to turn himself over, in which case an earthquake ensues, which is to be followed by a season of fertility.

When it is determined to offer a sacrifice, the people are assembled and addressed by a chief. A time is then fixed for the ceremony, until which time a taboo is laid upon pigs, turtles, &c. On the appointed day, each man brings his quota of provisions, and a whale's tooth if he have one. The chief, accompanied by the others, approaches the mbure, and while he offers up his prayers, the people present their gifts. The latter then return to their houses, and the offering is distributed by the priest.

When a chief wishes to supplicate a god for the recovery of a sick friend, the return of a canoe, or any other desired object, he takes a root of ava and a whale's tooth to the mbure, and offers them to the priest. The latter takes the whale's tooth in his hands, and then goes through the operation of shaking, &c., as has already been described.

Besides the occasional consultation of the gods through the ambati, there are stated religious festivals. One of these, which is said to be only practised in districts subject to Tui Levuka, takes place in the month of November, and lasts four days. At its commencement an influential matanivanua (landholder) proceeds just at sunset to the outside of the koro, or town, where, in a loud voice, he invokes the spirit of the sky, praying for good crops and other blessings. This is followed by a general beating of sticks and drums, and blowing of conchs, which lasts for half an hour. During the four days, the men