

subjection, are considered as personal property, and cannot marry without the consent of their masters.

The religious belief is of the simplest kind. The name of their principal divinity is Wanigain, or Tabu-eriki. He is their most popular god, and considered by some the greatest. About two-thirds of the people worship him as their tutelar divinity. The rest do not acknowledge him, but have other deities; and some worship the souls of their departed ancestors, or certain birds, fish, and animals. A female deity is the object of adoration to very many. She is called Itivini, is reputed to be of a cruel disposition, and all the little children who die are supposed to be killed and eaten by her. The natives always refuse to eat the animals, fish, &c., worshipped by them, but will readily catch them, that others may partake of the food.

Tabu-eriki's image has been before described, and a wood-cut representing it will be found at the end of the chapter. The coral stone which represents him is always tied round with cocoanut-leaves, and these are changed once a month, to keep them constantly green. The worship paid to this god consists in repeating prayers before this stone, and depositing beside it a portion of the food prepared for their own use. This is done not only at the time of festivals, but at their daily meals, and also whenever they desire to propitiate his favour; the first fruits of the season are also offered to this god. Every family of any distinction has one of these stones, which is considered by many of them rather in the light of an altar than of an idol.

The female deity, Itivini, is worshipped in a small circle, formed by a number of coral stones, three feet in diameter, which is covered with white gravel; in the centre a cocoa-nut is set up. At the time prayers are offered to her, this nut is bound with a wreath of leaves, and anointed with cocoanut-oil.

There is another female deity, called Itituapea, who is worshipped at a flat coral stone situated on the reef between the islets of Kuria and Oneoka; the two are known on the chart by the name of Kuria. Any one passing it, either on foot or in canoes, never fails to invoke her favour, and if they have any food, leave a part of it on the stone, which is never taken away.

The skulls of ancestors are carefully preserved by their family, and held in great reverence. When they desire to invoke their spirits, these skulls are taken down, wreathed with leaves, laid on a new mat, anointed with oil, and presented with food. Fish and animals that are held sacred are only addressed with prayers by their worshippers.

According to Wood, the names of Tabu-eriki, Itivini, and Itituapea are unknown at Makin, and the only spirits the natives of that island