



THE SAMOAN CREATION STORY

IN THE BEGINNING...




In the beginning, there were only the heavens and the waters covering the earth. The god Tagaloa looked down from the sky and decided to create a place on earth where he could stand. He fashioned a resting place by creating a great rock called Manu'atele (*Greater Manu'a*). Pleased with his creation, Tagaloa thought, "It would be well to have another resting place." He divided the rock of Manu'atele into smaller pieces, forming stepping stones in the sea. From these pieces, he created the islands of Savai'i, Upolu, Tonga, Fiji, and other islands scattered across the ocean.

MORE ISLANDS



When Tagaloa had finished shaping all of these islands, he returned to Samoa. Finding the distance between Savai'i and Manu'a too vast, he placed a rock halfway between them and designated it as a place of repose for chiefs, naming it Tutuila.


OFF, NO, ON WITH THEIR HEADS, AND ARMS, AND LEGS, AND BEATING HEARTS



Tagaloa then sent a sacred vine to cover the rocks. As the leaves of the vine decayed, worms emerged from them. These worms had no heads, legs, or breath of life. Tagaloa descended and provided the worms with heads, arms, legs, and beating hearts, transforming them into human beings.

A NATURAL NAMING PROCESS

He then placed a male and female on each island he had created:



Sa and Vai'i on the island Savai'i


U and Polu on the island Upolu

Tutu and Ila on the island Tutuila

To and Ga on the island Toga (*Tonga*)


Fi and Ti on the island Fiti (*Fiji*)

HAIL TO THE KING(S)



After populating the islands, Tagaloa decided that men should govern them, so he created the title of Tui (king). He established different Tui titles, including Tuiaga'e, Tuita'u, Tuiofu, Tuiolosega, Tuiatua, Tuia'ana, Tuitoga, and Tuifiti, thus appointing lords to rule over the islands.

A KING...OF KINGS!



Tagaloa then reflected on all that he had created and decided there should be a king greater than all others, who would reside in Manu'atele, his first creation. He chose the son of Po (night) and Ao (day) to be the king of kings. When the boy was born, it was

discovered that his abdomen was attached to his mother's womb. He was named Satia i le Moaatoa (*attached by the abdomen*), and the whole island group became known as Samoa (*sacred abdomen*). The child's birth caused a great wound as he was torn from his mother's body, which gave the place of his birth the name Manu'atele (*the great wound*). When he reached adulthood, he became the king of all the Tui and held the title Tuimanu'a Moaatoa.

