



Dubu: Platform v Church

Feature | Perspective



The Dubu vs The Church Perspective

Why did our ancestors call it “dubu,” and how did that same word come to mean “church”?

This is an image of a dubu - the classic four-post platform that has anchored Motuan life for generations. I'll explain its preparation and construction in a later post, because the dubu holds deep significance in Motuan culture and society, far beyond what many realise.

But for now, I want to share the question that has always sat with me: why did our ancestors call it “dubu,” and how did that same word come to mean “church”?

I have asked this for years. And I have never found a clearer or more satisfying answer than the explanation recorded in 1952 by Pastor Taunao Agaru.

I’ve copied the relevant parts below, and to my non-Motuan speaking followers, I apologise in advance... you’re about to witness the Motuan language in its full beauty and depth.

Here we go...

Turagu logora e, egu hahegani sin? binai, mani a itaia, DUBU - anina be dahaka? Seneda danu mai edia dubu hanua ta ta lalodiai unu dubu anina binai, idia ese tubudia, tamadia vada e mase lau-laudia itoma henidihodia ruma ladana e gwauraia “dubu.”

Aria eiava mavaru e gwauraiva negadia ai, e nanaduva, bena anianidia e laohaiava dubu ai e habouva, bena hanua taudia e gogodiava, iboudiai e laova una dubu ai, do asie anianiva, a tubu tama diravadia e hanamodia gunava.

Etomava, tubu tama diravadia ese edia biru bae hanamo bona edia aniani bae habada, edia uma gaudia iboudiai bae havara namonamo etomava, unu daidiai edia tomadiho gabuna, e karava hanua ta ta lalodia ai, bona edia medu bae hadiho. Bena e aniani hebouva tubu tama diravadia ladadia ai, idia unu e kara tomava, badidia bini.

Idia e urava, tubu tama diravadia ese, edia biru bae hanamo, bona medu bae hadiho, edia uma gaudia iboudiai bae mauri goevagoeva, edia uma anidia bae bada, bona bae hamomo herea, etomava, unu daidia ai edia tomadiho gabuna e karava ladadia etomava, "Dubu." Unu dubu ita ese danu ta ita, audia e rerevava, rerevadia idau idau, mai hairaidia danu.

Ema bona ina hari dina Evanelia vada e diho, Dirava ena hereva e mailaia Tauru amo, ruma matamana Poreporenai e haginia, ladana e hatoa Dubu, Dirava Korikori ena Dubu.

Una Dubu anina be ma ini heto, Tanobada bona Guba, Latana bona lalona gaudia iboudiai, bona ita taunimanima idauidau danu ibouboudai, Dirava Maurina ese e karada, ina Tanobadai, bona ita taunimanima ese eda Dirava korikori mauri hanaihanaina, itomaheni dihona Rumana. Bena una Ruma lalonai, baita hebou eda Dirava maurina hanaihanaina baita hanoa, badina la ese gau ibou-diai e kara ini tanobadai, ita iubulaida bona ihamaurilaida, ina tanobada ai.

A bada hereana be, eda Mauri hanaihanai Dirava dekenai, miana gauna baita noia hanaihanai, nega iboudiai, una Dubu lalonai, bona eda kerere baita gwaurai hedinarai, ia vairanai, mauri hanai-hanai iabina helaoreana. Matt. 21. s. 12-14, John 14. s. 13-16 mani a itadia.

Iboumui ai ba mahuta,

Lau turamui,
Pastor T. AGARU

Pic taken 15 years ago during one of the Hiri Moale Festivals.

P.S. For nearly two decades I've been taking photos, researching, and writing about Motuan culture. It's a personal hobby, a blend of curiosity, pride, and my love for digital media - all aimed at helping preserve the stories and traditions of our people.

And yes... I do still have a full-time job.

This piece is dedicated to my grandparents Rtd Rev. Vai Hekure (Kwaradubuna) and Sina Konio Dika Toua (Apau-Vahoi)

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