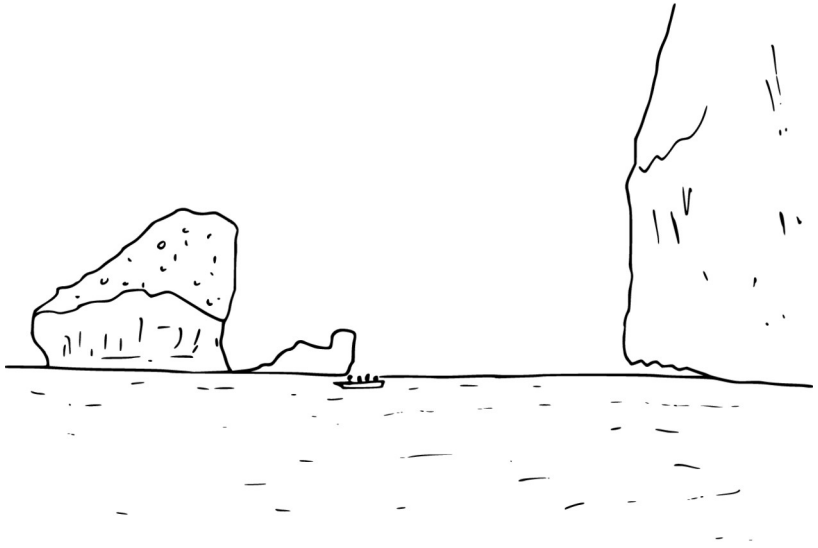


Fig.077 Illustration showing natives out on a fishing expedition among large rocks. Often times the stories they tell are explanations on why particular rocks have particular shapes. These type of lore does not only have a mythological purpose but can instruct natives on whether certain places are safe or dangerous.

Storytelling Among the Natives of Lower Asia

When a native boy is abducted he quickly learns to "read and write" and acquires a "fair knowledge of literature" (Mukerjee 2003). Also interestingly natives are born with one name but get other names after being initiated or after the "death of a relative". Additionally every man composes songs as he "cuts a canoe or a bow or as he paddles a canoe". He then teaches it to his "female relatives" so that they can lead the chorus as he sings it to the public. If it is successful he "repeats it several times" and makes it part of his "repertory". But while everyone can compose songs only the medicine-men are the "authorities on the legendary lore" and elaborates "his own doctrine" which he "hands on to his followers" who in turn produce "slight modifications of their own". There are legends as to "the origin of mankind" or legends explaining "the origin of the smaller islands and the creeks" or legends that relate how "the ancestors first obtained fire" or how a "great catastrophe overwhelmed" them because they made noise when the cicadas were singing or how at first "there were no pigs" and then they invented a new gameand those playing "were turned into pigs". There are also legendes about the first ancestor who was the monitor lizard since like humans he can "climb trees, run on the ground and swim in the water" (Radcliffe-Brown 1922).