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Indigenous Science



Stewardship of Culture,
Environment and Resources

**Tok
Blonza
Pasifik**

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Cover:

Photograph of Kathy Bird and Silina Masi at Kathy's home on the Peguis Indian Reserve, Manitoba, Canada. Kathy is a steward of traditional medicine. Silina is the Coordinator of WAINIMATE (Women's Association for Natural Medicinal Therapy) in Fiji and she is learning how Kathy stores and preserves her medicines. Photo by Troy Hunter, September 1999.



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About the Magazine

Tok Blong Pasifik is a phrase in Pidgin, a language used in parts of the Pacific. A rough equivalent would be "News from the Pacific". **Tok Blong Pasifik** (ISSN: 1196-8206) is published by the Pacific Peoples' Partnership (PPP), (formerly South Pacific Peoples Foundation). Our aim is to promote awareness of development, social justice, environment and other issues of importance to Pacific Islanders. Through the magazine, we hope to provide readers with a window on the Pacific that will foster understanding and promote support for Pacific Island peoples. PPP gratefully acknowledges support for this publication from the Canadian International Development Agency.

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We welcome contributions to **Tok Blong Pasifik** and readers' comments. A priority is placed upon contributions from Pacific Islanders and others living in the Islands. As an issues focused magazine, **Tok Blong Pasifik** often includes material that is contentious. Views expressed do not necessarily reflect the views of PPP or financial supporters of the magazine. We reserve the right to edit material.

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Tok Tok

Recognizing Indigenous Science

by Troy Hunter

I am a member of the Ktunaxa First Nation from British Columbia, Canada. I am the Coordinator of Indigenous Programmes at Pacific Peoples' Partnership (formerly South Pacific Peoples Foundation).

It is an honour to be a Guest Editor for *Tok Blong Pasifik*. This special edition focuses on Indigenous Peoples and how their knowledge, what we call "indigenous science", can contribute to sustainable development. Also, this is the first issue to be published under the new name Pacific Peoples' Partnership (PPP).

This name change was approved by the Board of Directors in 1999 and during the Annual General Meeting was ratified. The reason is to reflect current realities. For instance, my position is to work with Indigenous Peoples in both the Pacific and Canada, and this new name fits right in well with our project work. Furthermore, PPP has instituted an internship programme now in its second year.

We have made placements of indigenous Canadians in indigenous organizations in the Pacific. It is truly a partnership between the host organization, PPP, the intern and our funding partners (i.e. Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, CUSO).

This year marks the twenty-fifth anniversary of Pacific Peoples'

Partnership. Our Pacific Networking Conference 2000 is set from May 5 to 7. The conference committee, staff and board welcome the attendance of Pacific Islanders, First Nations, PPP members, dignitaries and just about anybody else that is interested in attending the conference titled, "Indigenous Wisdom: Stewardship of Culture, Environment and Resources".

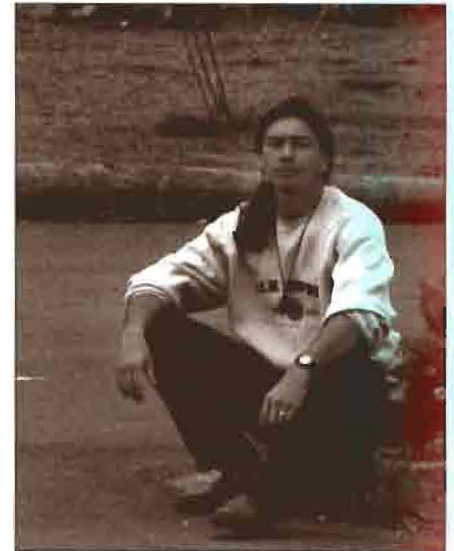
The conference theme echoes the theme of this special issue of *Tok Blong Pasifik*. We have been planning this conference since the last one that was held in 1998.

Our goal is to support Indigenous Peoples in their efforts to build a better life for themselves and to help preserve the environment around them. Life is too fragile and too precious to take lightly. We as human beings are the ones that must learn to walk lightly upon our sacred Mother Earth.

Everything that happens, happens for a reason. There is a reason you are reading this magazine now and there is a reason that you are where

you are. Sometimes there are reasons for things that are not understood at the time but later the true reason reveals itself.

I know the indigenous aspect in looking at life, the environment, this planet is also shared by other views. We don't mean to discredit or devalue scientific methods of "Western



Self portrait of Troy Hunter at the Tanna International Airport in Vanuatu.

Civilization" as we know it. We merely want to ensure that Indigenous Peoples are recognized for their extremely valuable contributions to modern societies. The time has come to share this planet and respect the peoples of the land who have spent thousands of years experimenting, testing and acquiring knowledge about the plants and environment around them.

Indigenous science is rooted in the earth, water, air and in faith. For instance, traditional medicine often requires more than just taking a dose of medication. There are specific things performed. It isn't something that can easily be bought and sold on the open market; it is something that demands much more respect than that.

Last Summer, my wife and I had the pleasure of escorting Ellen White, an elder of the Snuneymux First Nation, to Fiji and Vanuatu. Ellen is an herbalist and is gifted with her spirituality.

Our journey included spending time with some of the healers of the Fiji Islands through an organization very

"It is time to recognize indigenous science because it is a cornerstone to sustainable living on this small planet we call earth."

familiar to PPP. WAINIMATE (Women's Association for Natural Medicinal Therapy) was our host organization in Fiji. There we learned about the work they are doing there and we shared some of our knowledge as well.

There were two very special ladies who hosted us and then later, they came to Canada to tour around to visit some of the First Nations and other communities in the country. Maggie Vuadreu and Silina Masi of WAINIMATE were chosen for the tour.

Our first weekend together in Canada was spent at Gabriel's Crossing in Saskatchewan. The folks out there organized a weekend gathering at the home of Maria Campbell. There we met with a dozen students from Mozambique that were in Canada to study Community Health services, as well as a group of Aboriginal Peoples that call themselves "Protectors of Mother Earth".

That first night, Maggie and Silina sang some Fijian songs and the Mozambiquans sang some of their music. It was a very happy event. The stars were all out shining and the fire was blazing, sounds filled the air and that is when the northern lights lit up the night sky and danced to the indigenous rhythms that filled the cool September air. Everyone was in awe to see the dancing lights shimmering above our heads.

Everything happens for a reason. The people you meet, the places you see and what is learned or forgotten is all part of the journey that we are on together.

This planet is the only one that we have and there is so much that is not understood about how everything



Silina Masi and Maggie Vuadreu demonstrate a Fijian toothache remedy. Photo was taken at Gabriel's Crossing, Saskatchewan, Canada by Troy Hunter.

really works. I was recently speaking with Te Tika Mataiapo - Dorice Reid, President, Koutu Nui of Rarotonga. She had just completed the Climates of Change conference in Victoria, BC, Canada. What she witnessed was that the scientific community is now beginning to open their minds to the indigenous sciences.

It is a fundamental shift in attitude for scientists to accept that there are supernatural forces that cannot be explained.

In Rarotonga, the ra'ui system has been reinstated and is a success in bringing life back to the reef and community. With indigenous science, we know that all things are connected. What you eat, breathe, think and do, all have an effect on the individual's well being. When the individual is well and their belief systems are well, they can then go out into the community and advocate for positive change to happen. That is what is going on in Rarotonga and is also what is being instituted in the education systems of Micronesia.

I have heard that culture is treatment. The question is what does culture treat? It would seem to me that culture is treatment for the individual, the community and the environment. There is a movement to repatriate objects back into the communities from where they came. Indigenous groups are opening up cultural centres in many places around the world. Perhaps, this is key to finding a place where indigenous science can be recognized and taught.

Our elders are the keepers of the knowledge and they want to share the information that they have. To be able to pass on the traditional knowledge to the next generations to follow is fundamental to a society's well being. It is time to open the door to a learning unlike what academic institutions are currently teaching. It is time to recognize indigenous science because it is a cornerstone to sustainable living on this small planet we call earth.

*All my relations! Taxas.
Troy Hunter for PPP.*





PACIFIC NEWS UPDATES

Regional

Pacific Arts to be Acclaimed at Famous Louvre Museum

PARIS, - Pacific arts, along with Asian, African and native American expressions, will enter the famous Paris Louvre museum on April 15, it was reported. Known in France as “faraway arts” to some, “primal arts” to others, these cultural pieces have a strong supporter, French President Jacques Chirac himself.

The official entry into the Louvre will be marked by a two-day open exhibition starting on April 15, which will be officially opened by Chirac. The exhibition, which is coordinated by collector Jacques Kerchache, will comprise 120 pieces on a surface of 1,400 square metres.

In 1990, Kerchache had initiated an awareness campaign calling for an equal recognition of “faraway arts” on the world scene. His manifesto, called “The world’s masterpieces are born free and equal”, was signed by some 350 artists, anthropologists, philosophers and art historians. Kerchache conceived the exhibition with the aim of proving that a culture can be understood by an initial “emotional contact”, even before

history or evolution are known.

Apart from Africa’s 46 sculptures, Oceania is well-represented with 28 sculptures from Melanesia and Polynesia. Among pieces exhibited will be arts from the Solomon Islands
[Source: *Oceania Flash*, Apr 8/2000]

Tension Continues In East Timor

Militia activity has increased since February 21, when the INTERFET international military force that intervened in East Timor handed over responsibility to a UN peacekeeping force. There have been several attacks on aid workers and refugee convoys, as well as increased incursions from West Timor into East Timor. While the bulk of troops in the UN force are the same ones who made up INTERFET, militia leaders apparently feel that the UN will lack the resolve to deal with militia activity. Large numbers of “refugees” continue to live in refugee camps in West Timor, around 150,000 according to West Timor authorities. The West Timor deputy governor acknowledged in mid-February that at least 500 people had died in the camps since September, mostly from disease. Attempts to get refugees back across the border into East Timor have been jeopardised by the increase in militia activity and by a February 19 incident when Indonesia military forces on the border fired on

refugees crossing the border during a family reunion day. The shooting apparently began after rocks were thrown at the soldiers.

[From: *Bali Post*, Feb 18/2000; *The Australian*, Feb 28/2000; *ABC*, Feb 20/2000

UN Administration Resists Timor Power Sharing

Tensions have risen between officials of the UN Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET) on the one hand and the World Bank and East Timorese leaders on the other. The World Bank-UNTAET tug-of-war has focused on the World Bank’s first major grant of US\$21.5 million to assist with East Timor’s rebuilding. The World Bank tied their funding for the Community Empowerment and Local Governance Project to the election of East Timorese local government councils, who will control the allocation of a large part of the World Bank funds. The UN resisted the creation of local councils at this time as an undermining of their authority in East Timor, further increasing already strained relations with East Timorese leaders.

[From: *Sydney Morning Herald*, Feb 22/2000; unpublished sources]

Punishing the Instigators of East Timor’s Violence

Indonesian President Abdurrahman Wahid has suspended General Wiranto from Cabinet after an Indonesian human rights inquiry implicated Wiranto in East Timor’s pre- and post-referendum violence. Wiranto, who denies any wrongdoing, was in charge of the Indonesian military at the time. While suspending Wiranto pending a resolution of the charges, Wahid also said that he would pardon

Wiranto if he was found guilty of any crimes. UN Secretary General Kofi Annan, during a recent visit to East Timor, threatened the creation of an international war crimes tribunal if Indonesia does not prosecute those responsible for East Timor's nightmare. However, the threat may be an empty one as it is believed that some Security Council members would block any such tribunal.

[ETAN News, Feb 27/2000; Sydney Morning Herald, Feb 22/2000]

Pacific Voices at Canadian Climate Change Conference

Two indigenous Pacific visitors brought an important Pacific perspective to a March "Climates of Change Congress" in Victoria, BC, Canada. Te Tika Mataiapo, Chief Dorice Reid of the Cook Islands, and Maori carver Te Aturangi Nepia Clamp of Aotearoa/New Zealand provided conference participants with an understanding of the severe impacts that climate change will have on Pacific Island nations. Commenting after the conference, Chief Reid and Te Aturangi noted their pleasure at seeing the increased respect that some Western scientists are giving to indigenous science and ways of living in harmony with our planetary home.

[From: unpublished sources]

Melanesia

New Caledonia Implements GST

The government of New Caledonia has introduced a 4% tax on goods and services, effective March 1, to increase local government revenue as part of the gradual transfer of responsibilities from the French

government under the Noumea Accords. Introduction of the tax was delayed when the pro-independence FLNKS party submitted the issue to the French constitutional committee. The new tax has a narrower reach than a GST that was introduced several years ago, then scrapped. The latest tax exempts "essential services" such as public transport.

[From: Pacific Report, Mar 1/99]

Polynesia

Girls Die in Tuvalu Fire

A fire in the girls' hostel at Tuvalu's only secondary school has resulted in the death of 18 girls and the hostel matron. The girls were unable to escape the fire due to being locked in the hostel for the night. The tragedy has drawn protests from around the region and globally, with women's organisations noting that protecting young women from men by locking them up is targeting the victims, not the source of the problem, violates the girls' rights and results in tragedies like the Tuvalu fire.

[From: Victoria Times Colonist, Mar 10/2000; unpublished sources]

Te Ao Maohi Economy Shifting in Post-Nuclear Testing Era

Recently released statistics show that the territorial government of French Polynesia (Te Ao Maohi) has increased investment in economic development and infrastructure projects from CFP12.4 billion in 1993, during the nuclear weapons testing era, to CFP31.3 billion in 1998. Another CFP186 billion was invested in similar initiatives by the French government. 53% of these investments were in the tourism sector. The territory's gross domestic product has risen by 15.8% during the same period and in 1999,

for the first time, tourist arrivals have exceeded 200,000 (210,800). The focus on enclave tourism developments and cruise ships, most controlled by outside economic interests, has prompted a number of protests from local Maohi people concerned about the erosion of their land base, the type of development being promoted and the environmental impact of some developments. Some of these protests have succeeded in delaying or forcing the cancellation of hotel projects. Many local Maohi leaders favour smaller "eco-tourism" developments controlled by and benefitting local communities.

[From: Oceania Flash, Mar 1/2000 & Mar 6/2000; unpublished sources]

Protesters Block Moorea Lagoon

Local residents and environmental activists on Moorea Island in Te Ao Maohi have been maintaining a blockade of their lagoon to prevent dredging of sand from the lagoon for a tourist hotel project. The sand mining permit, renewed by the Council of Ministers of the territorial government on February 23 despite local opposition, will allow hotel owner Louis Wan to mine sand worth US\$400,000 for the cost of hiring the dredging equipment. Opponents fear that the dredging will damage the lagoon, one of the environmental highlights of Moorea. The blockade has continued despite a court order that provides for daily fines of CFP1 million (approx. US\$10,000).

[From: PCRC Action Alert, Feb 28/2000;

Oceania Flash, Mar 6/2000]



PPP in action

Pacific Peoples' Partnership has hired Raven August as Conference Assistant under the internship programme. She works along with Troy Hunter, Coordinator Indigenous Peoples Programme; Mutang Urud, Internship Coordinator; and Stuart Wulff, Executive Director.

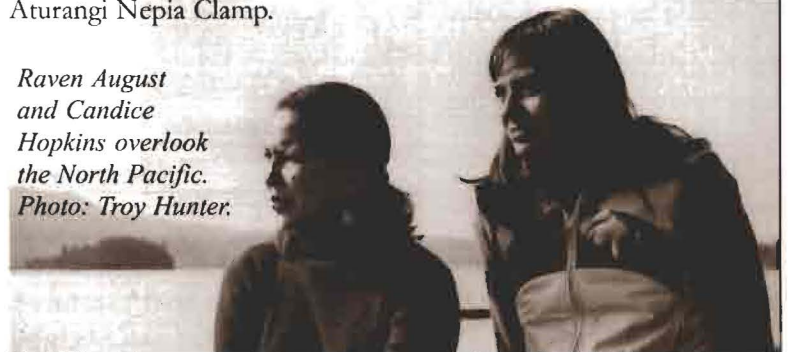
Staff at PPP have been actively planning for the Pacific Networking Conference (PNC) 2000 titled, "Indigenous Wisdom: Stewardship of Culture, Environment and Resources". In February Troy Hunter attended a workshop hosted by the Association for Social Anthropologists in Oceania. Both him and Mutang attended a conference titled "Protecting Knowledge, Resource Rights in the New Millenium".

Alifereti Bogiva of the Fijian Affairs Board was a guest of Pacific Peoples' Partnership and presented at the Protecting Knowledge conference which was organized by the Union of BC Indian Chiefs.

Candice Hopkins completed her Internship with WAINIMATE and has since come back to Canada. Lee Wittman is still in Indonesia and will be there until June. Katsitaronkwes Jacobs and Connie Saunders are expected to be back in time for the PNC 2000.

PPP has secured funding from IDRC and CIDA which will support the following Pacific Islanders to attend the PNC 2000: Motarilavao Hilda Lini, Chief Viraleo Boborenvanua, Patrina Dumaru, Avisake Ravuvu, Te Tika Mataiapo - Chief Dorice Reid, Marita Edwin, Hespy John, Isabella Sumang, and Gabriel (Gaby) Tetiarahi. Other persons confirmed include Rev. Akuila Yabak, Ravenska Wagey and Te Aturangi Nepia Clamp.

*Raven August and Candice Hopkins overlook the North Pacific.
Photo: Troy Hunter.*



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Protecting Knowledge

Traditional Resource Rights in the New Millennium

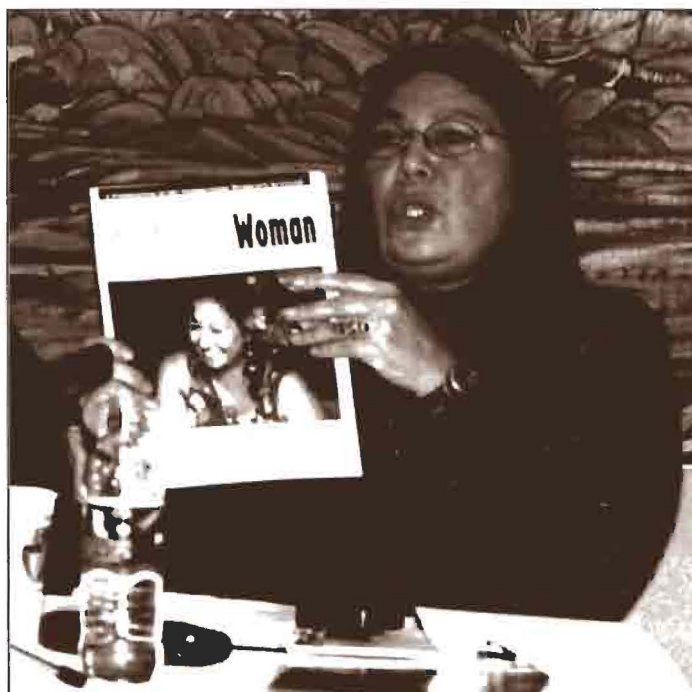
by Priscilla Settee

Close to 400 people attended the Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs conference on "Protecting Knowledge, Traditional Resource Rights in the New Millennium", held from February 24 - 27, 2000 on the University of British Columbia campus in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada.

Also participating were representatives from the Fijian and Kenyan governments and Pacific Peoples' Partnership's Troy Hunter. Madame Erica-Irene Daes Chairperson of the U.N. Sub-Commission's Working Group on indigenous populations opened the three day event with a presentation which called for new ways of knowing and indigenous pedagogy.

Conference participants heard presentations on rethinking tourism and the negative impact of tourism globally on Indigenous Peoples. We also heard how various tribal nations are taking care of resources within their own territories. Topics included protection of art and creative expressions, the use of oral traditions in protecting knowledge and there were a number of presentations on legal and non-legal instruments for protecting indigenous knowledge.

Presentations included information at the international arena around knowledge protection including the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), an explanation of Article 8j of the convention, and Trade Related Intellectual Property Rights. The Convention on Biological Diversity was established in 1991 at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in Rio De Janeiro, Brazil. Briefly the objective of the convention is the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, including to ensure that the interests of Indigenous Peoples are represented in



Priscilla Settee holds a copy of Indigenous Woman magazine, of which she is the editor. Photo by Troy Hunter.

regards to resource benefits and sharing. Finally participants heard from a number of community based organizations and people about some of the issues which need to be considered when planning resource sharing benefits.

At the conclusion of the meeting a draft statement was produced which provided some food for thought for future direction in this growing field of protection of indigenous knowledge. As a first for the country of Canada, the Union of BC Indian Chiefs has provided much information on where to go from here. The road forward

will present many challenges for educating our people and influencing higher learning institutes such as universities about the need for protecting this knowledge not only in Canada but globally. This conference also demonstrated the importance of developing and maintaining international linkages with other Indigenous Peoples. The Union of BC Indian Chiefs has the Protecting Knowledge Conference papers posted at <www.ubcic.bc.ca>.

Priscilla Settee, Co-ordinator of Indigenous Peoples Programmes at the Extension Division, University of Saskatchewan was one of the conference presenters on the topic "Traditional Ecological Knowledge, Some Policy Considerations". She is also the Editor of Indigenous Woman magazine.



Traditionally Respecting the Environment

by Te Tika Mataiapo (Dorice Reid)

In the Cook Islands, a formalised council of Traditional Leaders, the Koutu Nui was concerned about the state of the marine environment. They realized that there was a need to restore the highly depleted marine biological stock in the Rarotonga lagoons. In February 1998, the Koutu Nui declared a ra'ui (traditional reserve) in five areas of Rarotonga's lagoon and its adjacent reef slopes.

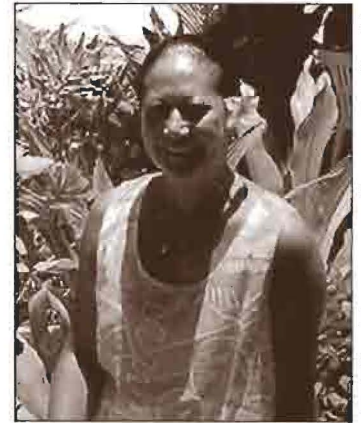
A ra'ui is a form of traditional resource management which bans the harvest of specific resources. Some of the reasons for installing a ra'ui include the protection of diminishing species or to stock up for a special feast. The Chiefs get together and decide on what will be protected and where the boundaries are to be located. The community will then be called together so that they could be advised of the ra'ui and for how long it will be in effect.

As a result of installing the last ra'ui, we now have in the township of Titikaveka which passes the deepest part of the lagoon on the entire island of Rarotonga but in that area is what we call the coral garden, it has been roped off with buoys and is now a permanent ra'ui. The Maori word for it is ra'ui mutukore, which means ra'ui forever. In other words, it is now a sanctuary. It's the first time it has ever happened in the history of the Cook Islands. Traditional practice has only been for several months, simply to accumulate the stock. For instance if we are expecting a group to come from another island, we would prepare the crops and reserve chickens or pigs and we would put a ra'ui on the crops,

coconut trees, grapefruit trees, mango trees, depending on what is going to be in season at the time when the visitors arrive. We also put a ra'ui in the lagoon as a marine protected area but it only would be for a matter of months, simply to accumulate fish stocks and not necessarily to allow them to breed.

The way that our forefathers conserved resources was only on a temporary basis because they never took more than what they needed as we do in this day and age. We seem to take far more than in excess of what is needed because of the fridge or the deep freeze or we can it. So what has happened in February in the area of the ra'ui, is we have for the very first time a ra'ui mutukore, a permanent ra'ui: ra'ui forever. This is something the traditional leaders have done.

At first there was some hesitation in establishing a permanent sanctuary but we came to understand and realized the fishing practices of today are quite different to what they were in the days of our forefathers. In some cases there was



Te Tika Mataiapo - (Dorice Reid). Photo Source : www.cyberactivesites.com/littlepoly



Childrens artwork originally printed in Ra'ui 2000 calendar. The theme of the paintings in the calendar is the Rarotonga marine ra'ui, a traditional natural resource management system. Artwork courtesy of the Rarotonga Koutu Nui (chiefs).

the benefit of their families and households. The combining of the efficient elements of the indigenous science base of Vatulele with the appropriate aspects of modern science, respects the context within which the masi production has evolved, and helps it to be sustainable in the current social, cultural, religious, and economic environment.

The case of Vatulele has shown that masi production, a product of indigenous science and example of a traditional agricultural activity often overlooked by modern development bodies, can in fact thrive in today's fast changing world. Furthermore, the fact that women are key players in this activity exemplifies a strength that modern agriculture has for years overlooked. The continued involvement of women in the decision-making process will help to ensure that this indigenous science base and traditional art will continue to thrive in Vatulele, as well as being a model for other communities to follow in their sustainable footsteps.

Patrina Dumaru is the Coordinator for Ecowoman and Katsitsaronkwas L. Jacobs is a Mohawk from Kabnewake and is an intern through Pacific Peoples' Partnership.



A Vatulele woman beating the already soaked bark into barkcloth (Masi). Photo by Patrina Dumaru.

(Continued from Page 11)

making sure they get their money's worth, personal safety, safeguards to protect against liability claims.

The tourism should be distributed evenly throughout Fiji. It is important to try to share the wealth or benefits to raise the standard of health and livelihoods in the villages and rural areas. The ventures will promote local villages to make earnings for the people in their own communities. Some opportunities that cultural and eco-tourism offer is the revival of arts and handicrafts, traditional foods, tour guiding, horse riding, canoeing, dances.

We know that we have to protect the knowledge and intellectual properties. If developers go through the Fiji Eco-tourism Advisory Committee, they can be advised and directed for appropriate protocols. We have to consider the carrying capacity on the culture, which is a very important consideration. The danger may be a trade-off between having lots of money but losing the culture. What we are trying to do is safeguard against that by finding the right balance.

We are learning from mistakes. The existing eco-tourism projects provide us with a valuable learning experience. Marine areas are one of the least developed areas in eco-

tourism by the traditional fishing right owners. The emphasis for eco-tourism is on the land; the potential for eco-tourism marine resources is there but is not developed. We believe eco-tourism can be a profitable and sustainable venture.

In regards to cultural tourism, we should consider establishing an indigenous international eco-tourism marketing association where we could link up with the major centers in the world.

Alifereti Bogiva is the Intellectual cultural and property rights officer in the Culture and Heritage Section of the Fijian Affairs Board. He has held this position for four years. Prior to that, he worked with forestry for about twenty-five years dealing mainly with community forestry section and Silva-cultural research. He was one of the pioneers of forest conservation in Fiji. Bogiva helped with developing alternative Native Forest Development by the traditional landowners with the introduction of forest-based eco-tourism development as in Bouma, Tavenni and Koroyanitu in the Province of Ba. He also assisted with planning and developing in consultation with the landowners of Naror, Nadroga with the establishment of the first sacred cultural site eco-tourism operation. The community did not have enough land to farm to sustain them. They themselves wanted to bring tourism into their community as a means of sustainable development.



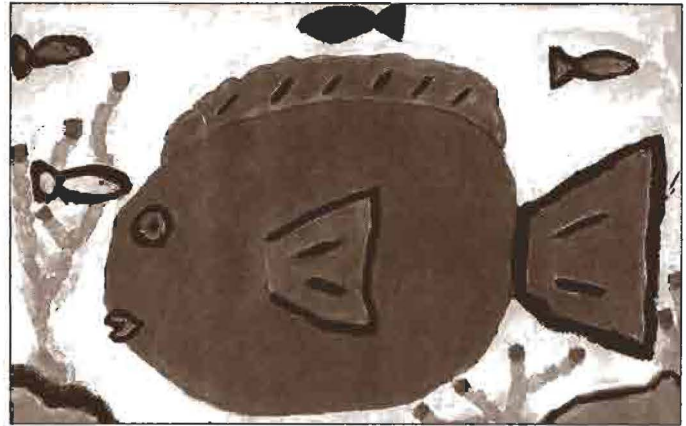
irresponsible fishing. In the very near future we are going to have to address the fishing methods and were going to have to ban nets with very small openings. The size of the gill nets should not be smaller than a four-inch gap to allow the little ones to get through. At the moment, there is no condition as to what size net a person can have. And there are no rules as to how long a net can be. Some people leave their nets out overnight and in the morning they pull it up but all the fish have already died. All of these things, we are going to address as well.

Even though we have gone through this conservation of marine protection, which is wonderful for the lagoon and the fish, there is now a shift in attitude about how much to take out of the lagoon. There is a new consciousness by the communities about being more responsible. Families are now going to the beach where the ra'ui mutukore is in place. The children are feeding the fish and the fish are eating out of their hands. You can imagine the response from the families who are enjoying the sanctuary towards anyone who goes out there with these huge nets to catch fish, more than what they need. There seems to be a new mentality there about what we do about the exploitation of our fish.

What has happened with the ra'ui is absolutely wonderful. Not only is that particular lagoon filling up with fish, but also much more importantly is the health of the lagoon. I am convinced it's to do with the ra'ui that has been established. The marine life is coming back. We are now seeing a certain species of fish that we haven't seen for years, they are coming back into the lagoon. The coral is growing again. When you go into the lagoon, you see different colours of coral. We haven't seen that for a long time. You go walking out there and the fish just follow you around. It's something that our children and adults haven't experienced. There is just so much excitement and enjoyment by families.

“We prefer that the people have respect for the environment and resources and wouldn't even want to go and touch.”

There are visitors in a particular area and the people who have shops around that area are seeing hundreds each day. The visitors come to go down to that particular area. Not just the islanders but also the visitors know this particular coral garden on the island, as well. People move on and



they spread the word about the coral garden at Rarotonga. It's particularly good for our own people, the way it is replenishing, but on the other hand, our visitors are enjoying it. I have always said, what is good for our people will be good for our visitors too. From a traditional viewpoint, this is the essence of what we want to do with marine protection and resource conservation. If we take care of our people then we are also taking care of our visitors too.

Where they lifted the ra'ui, the traditional leaders told the people, “you must not take fish out of this area to sell. You will go and fish enough for your family, enough to eat, you will not take excess”. The people do come down and keep an eye on what is going on. Families are actually respecting that. They're have been fishermen who have gone out into the lagoon and taken fish out and sold it in the marketplace but because of this new shift in attitude by people about conserving the resources, ‘just take enough for what you need’ is generally the attitude. You will get fresh fish being sold at the market generally speaking from the other side of the lagoon. The ra'ui extends thirty meters beyond the edge of the coral reef.

It's a sanctuary, not a reserve. There is still no legislation for it. There are no laws that say if you go and fish in the sanctuary, you will end up in court, and we don't want to do that to our people. We would love them to learn through education not through legislation. We want people to respect the ra'ui rather than having fear about getting caught for doing something wrong and ending up in court. We prefer that the people have respect for the environment and resources and wouldn't even want to go and touch. Our approach to conservation is not through fear but through respect.

Te Tika Mataiapo (Dorice Reid) is President of the Koutu Nui, a formalised council of traditional leaders in Rarotonga.



Pohnpeian Traditional Knowledge

by Andrew Scourse

Last year, Andrew Scourse, came across a manuscript that was wrote by a chief of the Soumpwok clan. Scourse says, "progress was made in the study of Pohnpeian anthropology with the recovery of a substantial manuscript detailing ethnomedicine and several other aspects of the traditional culture of Pohnpei".

The manuscript is in two parts, the first part consists of the ethnic knowledge of the chief's family passed down as an inheritance in Pohnpeian families. The second part was written by a collection of knowledgeable chiefs and elders, including the then Nahnmwarki of Madolenihmw, Moses Hadley, in an effort to preserve some of their disappearing knowledge during the 1970s. Overall, the manuscript is almost 300 pages, and contains 180 pages of medical knowledge as well as a detailed record of such things as honorific language, feasting tradition, and winahni or local magic.

This discovery has several important ramifications for anthropology and historic preservation in Micronesia. The time at which it has been discovered is a critical time for Pohnpei, and indeed much of Micronesia, not only has the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) reached an important crossroads in its political history with the renegotiation of the compact, but much of the traditional knowledge is in danger of extinction with the current elderly generation. The material contained in the manuscript is well qualified to assist, and bring more attention to current anthropological research in Micronesia as well as to emphasise the urgency of this work.

The ethnomedical portion of the manuscript is particularly important as it is one of the first major collections of medical knowledge to be available for academic study. Usually, such knowledge, and the prestige attached to it, is only given to selected people and closely guarded. The closed nature of knowledge in Pohnpeian society has previously prevented anthropologists from studying certain aspects of society especially medicine, and it is hoped that this medical knowledge will provide some preliminary insight into the area. The issue of how to develop the knowledge will need careful consideration within the larger framework of Micronesian historic preservation. In particular, careful attention will have to be paid to ensuring that any resulting



Making Pohnpeian sakau (kava). Photo by Andrew Scourse.

pharmaceutical development suitably benefits the local community and 'owners' of the medical knowledge. Also, the cultivation of medical plants, in the event of their becoming a profitable source of income, will have to be carefully managed to avoid further disruption of the interior jungle as sakau cultivation has disrupted it.

From a wider anthropological perspective, the material will be useful for reappraisal and further development of the current understanding of the traditional culture, and fits well with several new and developing projects in sustainable development and ethnomedicine in Micronesia and the Pacific states.

Interested parties are invited to contact Andrew by email: aps34@cam.ac.uk or phone: 44 1223 523064 (from outside the UK). The Cambridge team going out to Pohnpei this Summer to further develop ethnomedical research may be contacted through James Dunham, jpd27@cam.ac.uk. Also their website address is www.micronesia-center.com.

Andrew Scourse is a twenty year-old student from Cambridge University, England.



Indigenous Science and Education

by Joakim Peter (Jojo)

What we're trying to work on are ways to reform our curricula in school to teach our young people our traditional methods, for example traditional science in the marine environment. Such curriculum could be named, "Traditional Management of Island Marine Ecosystems" or something to that effect. Those knowledge systems have been created and used by our ancestors for the longest time. Young people both men and women would learn those skills when they were young and would grow up with an appreciation for the traditional methods of fishing, harvesting the reef area, stewardship of the reef, building stone fish traps, etc.

The stone fish-traps are actually allocated according to the clan system on the islands. The reef area is traditionally owned by the clan systems. Each clan has a portion of the reef and each portion of the reef usually have one or two stone fish-traps. The harvesting of fish through those traps is related to the Indigenous Peoples knowledge of the moon cycles, behaviours of tide of the reef, wind directions, currents and fish behaviours. In a way, it's kind of like a system that works perfectly with the environment.

More and more young people go through the modern education system and end up studying other systems. They get exposed to other methods, for example the gill nets, which are very unfriendly to the environment. Gill nets are indiscriminate to what they catch and there is no season for it. Basically a person can put in a fish net and chase all the fish that he or she can into it and it doesn't involve the community. One or two individuals will have their own fishnets and they will go fishing by themselves. It is unlike the traditional approach to resource stewardship where fishing for example was a group or community activity.

What we're trying to do at the College of Micronesia is to look at ways in which we can take these traditional knowledge skills, which are

very environmentally friendly and put them into our learning systems so our young people can relearn the indigenous science. What we're doing is re-teaching our community and our society our traditional skills. I am sure there are parallels in the Native American community with these kinds of skills where they understand the environment and how it behaves without trying to dominate it or exploit it for economic purposes.

Being at the college, it gives us a little bit of leverage to work with young people who are in the grades of kindergarten to grade twelve as well as first and second year college students. If we are successful in working on the curriculum and trying to refocus it to more traditional and local skills, we hope that by the time these people graduate from our high schools and are moving onto college, not only would they know the skills that are suited for the environment, they should have a greater appreciation of the environment and a greater sense of respect, which is very important. People tend to destroy things that they don't have any respect for. We feel that if we are able to teach our young people something about the importance of the environment, just maybe they will be more respectful towards it.

There are very destructive fishing activities that go on right now, such as dynamiting or fish poisoning (*see page 17 Chuuk Lagoon*).

Those methods are very destructive not just because they kill indiscriminately, they destroy the reef and the environment as well. The people doing these destructive things won't necessarily think twice about doing it either. I ask myself why don't these people respect the environment; the answer is that we never taught them to respect it.

There are still some people who are very knowledgeable about the traditional ways and are still practising it in some areas. Those are the people we would like to bring into the education system to teach the



Joakim Peter (Jojo) during Association for Social Anthropologists in Oceania conference in Vancouver, BC, Canada in February. Photo by Troy Hunter.

young people. Not only is this good for the environment, it is good for the attitude towards our elders because they hold this incredible body of knowledge. In a way it is not only getting in touch with this greater body of knowledge but also getting in touch with our elders as skills teachers.

The way the education system is set up right now and has been running for awhile, distances us from our elders as teachers of traditional skills. The way things are right now is that there is no respect for the traditional skills, the elders and their knowledge, nor is there respect for the environment in which these traditional skills are applicable. That has been an issue of cultural contention for us and is considered a very important issue.

The basic challenge we are up against is with the attitude of the people. The reason that people send their kids to school is so that they can make it in the modern day society. It is very difficult to convince parents that indigenous science is worthwhile learning in school.

It will take a lot of work and convincing but I think it can be done because we have already seen really bad examples of the consequences when it's not done. We have seen the bad and ill effects. In the world

right now, there is a high rate of diabetes, hypertension and heart-related problems, these are diseases related to lifestyle. We need to teach people to do things differently. The parents can be major obstacles for this. Also education administrators and policy makers are the ones who set directions for the schools and they too need to be convinced that indigenous science is a good and worthwhile topic. It is important to educate everybody all around.

We are collaborating with a Native American who is an anthropologist by training his name is Dr. James Nason. He is at the University of Washington in the Native American Studies Department and is also a Director for the Burke Museum in Seattle. He was one of the people involved in setting up the Native American Studies at University of Washington and he is also one of the founding members for the Association for Social Anthropologists in Oceania.

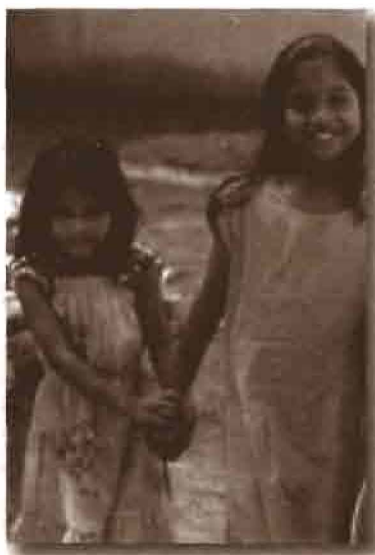


Photo of girls courtesy: Chuuk Visitors Bureau

He has been helping Native American tribes establish their own museums that focus on Native American collections and those museums support the education movements towards localizing knowledge. Dr. Nason and I presented during a session at the Association for Social Anthropologists in Oceania (ASAO) meeting that was held in Vancouver during February. The presentation was called Collaboration in Chuuk.

In 1969 Dr. Nason went to my island to do his fieldwork when I was just five years old, now I am learning from him. It is sort of like we have come full circle, we

now are sitting at the same table and he is showing me what he has been working on and I am very grateful to be working with him. I tell him all about our problems (i.e. lack of economic opportunity, lack of skills and knowledge, lack of appreciation for the land) and what we are doing and he says, "those are the exact same issues we as Native Americans were dealing with before".

“education administrators and policy makers are the ones who set directions for the schools and they too need to be convinced that indigenous science is a good and worthwhile topic”

We are taking baby steps right now. We are just starting and it is a very new project. We don't know if we are going to succeed but we are committed to doing it and we hope it will turn out okay. We try to teach the young people about

having a positive attitude towards this because otherwise it is just pointless for people to be pushing it. We are targeting the education system at all levels but we are also looking at the community as well. There are people who have dropped out of the school system but there is some hope that maybe something in it might be attractive to them. With the young people that were growing up twenty years ago, there was this sense that they were disconnected from the traditional tribal knowledge. It was a matter of getting them reconnected to the elders and the traditional skills teachers of the culture and land. Now things are moving but it wasn't until we started convincing people that this is worthwhile.

Jojo is a student of history and is the Director of the Chuuk Culture and Education Studies Projects, College of Micronesia - FSM Chuuk Campus.



Fijian Wisdom

Traditional Resource Management and Tourism

by Alifereti Bogiva

The Fijian Affairs Board main goal is good governance and good leadership for the indigenous Fijians. This includes the good management and wise use of natural and cultural resources. Our Elders and forefathers have been living off these resources. Our task today is to pass on these resources to our children. With the current economic development movement, there needs to be a legal binding agreement between the government, land owner and developer on how to manage these resources wisely. It should be a win-win situation. It is about cultural stewardship. The Sustainable Development Bill (SDB) will encourage consultation and creating awareness with the traditional landowners. The bottom line is to protect the livelihood of indigenous communities.

The significance of the site should not be compromised by the promise of economic development. The culture has to live on, that is how the Fijian Affairs Board views the SDB. It is a tool for wise development and should be passed by Parliament soon so it will be law in Fiji.

The people should know the name of their land, the boundaries, and what is in the land including plants, fish, birds, creeks, valleys, and bridges. We should know how our Elders use the land. In Fiji, you own land for a special reason. We should know why. Where two pieces of land connect, there is a relationship. There is a common boundary. It is a bond of evidence to their relationship to the end of time. There is a lot of respect, concerning the relationship within the Mataqali (family clans in Fiji). The boundary does not restrict the hunting or fishing. The people can go anywhere to hunt or fish. Gardens and plant resources belong to the Mataqali. This is part of the roles and responsibilities of a Mataqali.

Our teachings are very old, they have been there for ages. It is a continuity of culture; it is maintaining culture (traditional knowledge). You may be young in age but your role and responsibility is not young. You are born into talent,



Cultural Intellectual Property Rights Officer, Alifereti Bogiva of the Fijian Affairs Board participated in a conference called, "Protecting Knowledge: Traditional Resource Rights in the New Millenium" during February 2000. The conference was hosted by the Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs. A Northwest Coast carved pole is in background. Photo by Troy Hunter.

knowledge, a practice. It is a god-given gift. Our culture will live on if the Mataqali is kept up in the family.

Vanau and Mataqali values are respected. We respect our relationship with the land, the trees, the water, the air and all fish, birds, animals. It is key to sustainable development in the traditional way. Sustainable development is a new concept designed by planners and developers to acknowledge indigenous science (traditional knowledge) as the key to the continuing of resource use and to sustain the livelihood of Indigenous Peoples' reliance to the lands.

We are just developing eco-tourism in Fiji. It is about ten years in the process and we have now developed an eco-tourism policy. Eco-tourism management infrastructure is being developed through the policy. (i.e. national level advisory, provincial or regional local advisory committees). We are very conscious with the culture related activities of eco-tourism. We want to introduce accreditation for eco-tourism operations; to maintain quality, protect visitors by

(Continued on Page 29)

Traditional Medicine Conservation

The Work of WAINIMATE in Fiji

by Candice Hopkins

All countries from ancient times to the present day have used plants as a source of medicines. Today, according to the World Health Organisation (WHO), as many as 80% of the world's people depend on traditional medicine for their primary health care needs. The greater part of traditional therapy involves the use of plant extracts or their active principles. (WHO, 1993 – From Guidelines on the Conservation of Medicinal Plants, WHO/IUCN/WWF (1993), Gland, Switzerland.)

Studies carried out on behalf of the World Health Organisation have shown the number of people using medicinal plants is large and on the increase. (WHO, 1993). Fiji is no exception to this. Fiji is home to a vast variety of plants growing in a wide range of ecosystems. Fiji's Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan estimates that over 50% of Fiji's plants are endemic, species found nowhere else in the world. Many of these plants are used by healers for their medicinal purposes. If these plants, and the knowledge concerning their medicinal use are lost, the whole world is affected.

WAINIMATE -Women's Association for Natural Medicinal Therapy- recognises the urgent need for the conservation of medicinal plants and consequently the traditional knowledge inextricably linked to them.

Women have traditionally played a strong role in caring for the family. Close to nature they looked upon its wealth of supplies to keep the family healthy. Much of Fiji still depends on the traditional knowledge on the healing properties of plants orally passed down for generations despite Fijian legislation "discouraging traditional medicine" in favour of often times costly, and inaccessible western medicine alternatives.

WAINIMATE uses the strong link already existing between Fijian women and nature to conserve medicinal plants. Data compiled by WAINIMATE through Healers Profile Surveys have reduced the decline in medicinal plant resources to three main causes. Consistent development, logging at an annual rate of 5-8% - although not extreme this is moderate and needs to be addressed- and over-exploitation of the plants by the healers themselves.

WAINIMATE works on many levels to conserve medicinal plants and traditional knowledge. Healers Profile Surveys

gather information at a grassroots level. This information is essential to the conservation of medicinal plants as it provides valuable information on their status and highlights those becoming scarce or hard to find. This information when organised through a national body can act as an early warning system. WAINIMATE is in the process of entering this information into a database.

Conservation practices are being undertaken at the grassroots level. *Ex-Situ* conservation -when medicinal plants are conserved outside of their habitat- is undertaken by WAINIMATE members in the form of botanical gardens. These gardens when not exploited for purely economic gain play an important educational role. Visitors and locals alike gain insight into the use of medicinal plants, ideally, this creates respect for medicinal plants and traditional knowledge. These botanical gardens can also function as study areas. Information can be obtained for research and monitoring of wild plant populations.

With this in mind, medicinal gardens have been established at many important centres in Fiji and the Pacific region. In Fiji, gardens can be found at The University of the South Pacific, The Reproductive Health Clinic, Valelevu Health Clinic, Nadi Administration Office and regionally in Kiribati and the Solomon Islands.

Recognising the threat posed by the healers themselves through the over-exploitation of the plants, WAINIMATE healers have been cultivating their own medicinal plants as a source of supply. The cultivation of medicinal plants includes planting individual or community gardens for the benefit of the whole village. Collecting medicine in this way does not deplete wild stocks and ensures sustainability of medicinal plants. Cultivating plants has advantages over wild-collecting. Wild-collected plants "normally vary in quality and composition, due to environmental and genetic

differences. In cultivation, this variation - and the resulting uncertainty of the therapeutic benefit - is much reduced. The plants can be grown in area of similar climate and soil, they can be irrigated to increase yields and they can be harvested at the right time. Cultivation also greatly reduces the possibility of mis-identification and adulteration.” (WHO, 1993) The WAINIMATE vice-chairperson and recognised healer, Maggie Vaudreu’s garden consists of over 83 medicinal plants.

Through planting medicinal gardens at such locations as the University of the South Pacific and Ministry of Health Clinics WAINIMATE hopes to build public support for the conservation of medicinal plants -**Saving the plants that Save Lives**- and the recognition of the value of indigenous knowledge.



Fijian healer, Maggie Vaudreu points to where the location that Ellen White an herbalist from the Snuneymux First Nations in Canada will plant a tree. Kalera Vaudreu, daughter of Maggie, is holding the shovel. The tree was given the name “Victoria” to represent Ellen’s Visit to WAINIMATE as part of the Pacific Peoples’ Partnership Indigenous Science programme. Photo by Troy Hunter taken at the Fijian Ministry of Health, Reproductive Health Clinic.

Traditional medicine practitioners and the knowledge they possess are undervalued in Fiji as a result of many factors. Fijian legislation -discouraging traditional medicine practice - develops the base for and allows a deeply embedded hegemonic structure to develop. This fluid structure is active at all levels. At the grassroots level traditional healing and cultural beliefs are stereotyped. These stereotypes are reinforced by the spoken word and collective belief attaching traditional healing with witchcraft. This results in marginalisation of traditional healers because they resist being assimilated. Unfortunately, as a result of this pressure much of the traditional cultural beliefs have been lost and actively forgotten.

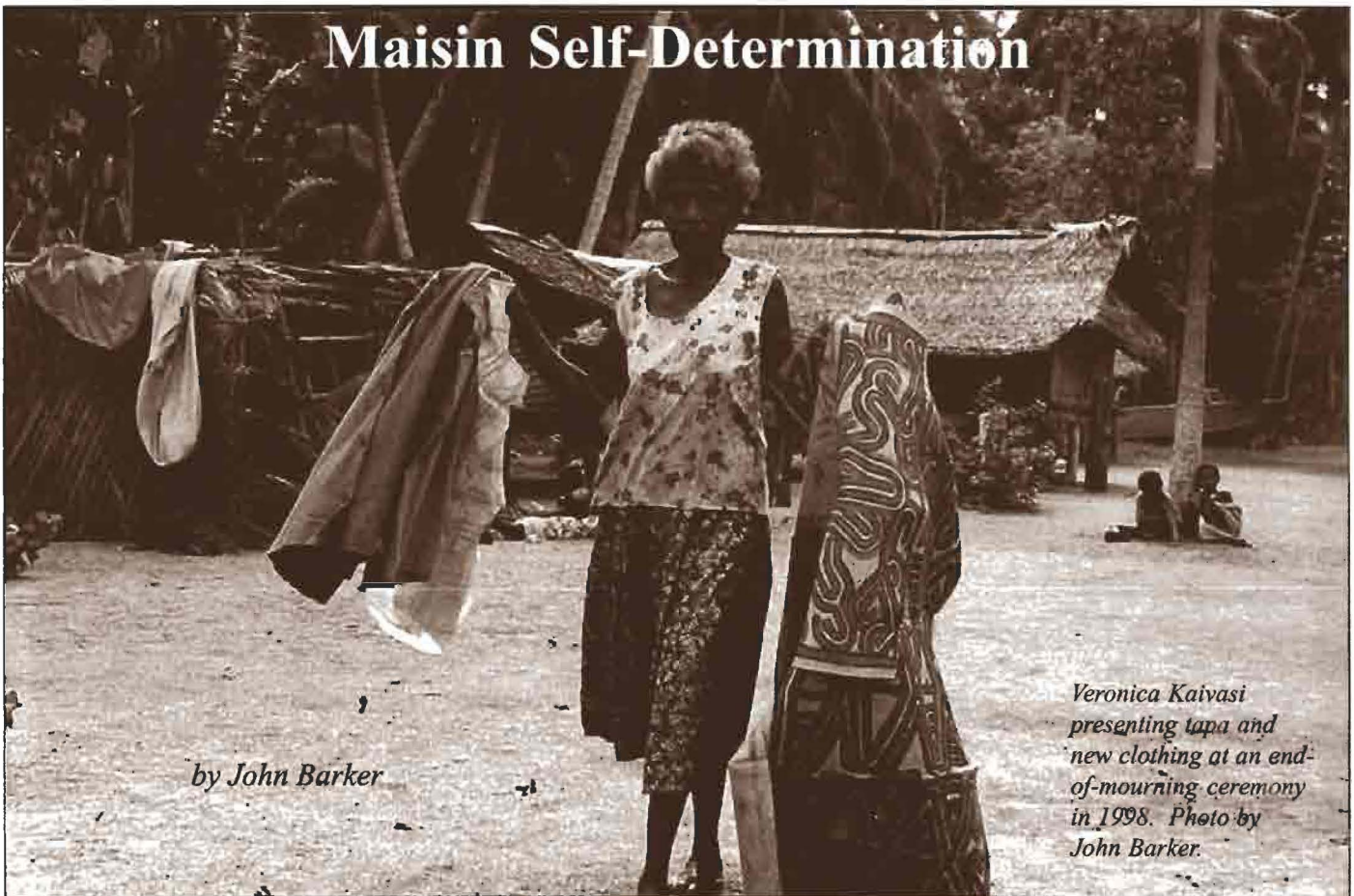
One of the ways to counteract existing stereotype is to shift cultural belief, which is metaphysical, into the area of science. Science and scientifically proven findings are usually taken as a form of truth. Therefore, WAINIMATE is working with bodies like the University of the South Pacific and the Fiji School of Medicine to test the active ingredients found in medicinal plants. Medicinal properties have been found in many of the traditionally valued plants. This establishes recognition of the value of medicinal plants and will create interest in these public bodies for their conservation. Keeping in mind the threat of exploitation this poses to the indigenous knowledge used to provide these plants for testing, a memorandum of understanding has been formed between all parties to ensure this knowledge does not go unrecognized or under-recognised.

With scientific value of the medicinal plants now firmly established what is the status of the conservation of traditional knowledge linked to them? This question is already starting to be answered in places like China, where traditional medicine practitioners work side by side with professionally schooled doctors. The value of the traditional healing has been recognised and its safe and effective use encouraged. In Fiji, proven and valued medicinal properties of plants may provide a base where conservation of traditional knowledge can reside. People are starting to remember beliefs that have never been forgotten only covered up with the transparent layer of existing legislation and the hegemonic structure it creates. A collective voice is now given the space to remember and is starting to speak.

Candice Hopkins is an indigenous artist from the Tagish First Nation in Canada. She completed an internship with WAINIMATE through the Pacific People’s Partnership Internship Programme.



Maisin Self-Determination



by John Barker

*Veronica Kaivasi
presenting tapa and
new clothing at an end-
of-mourning ceremony
in 1998. Photo by
John Barker.*

Numbering around 3,500 people, the Maisin are amongst the smallest of the 700 or so language groups making up the population of Papua New Guinea. But they are making a big noise. In 1994 and 1996, Maisin villagers raised funds to take out full page ads in national newspapers to declare all ancestral lands off-limit to logging and mining companies. Last year Maisin leaders won a temporary court injunction against a logging company that was poised to begin operations on Maisin lands. Their David versus Goliath struggle against this government-approved project gained worldwide attention when the Maisin were featured on CNN's television and internet networks. As I write, the Maisin and their supporters are waiting upon the Supreme Court's decision as to whether the injunction will be made permanent.

Local opposition to clear cut logging has been growing within Papua New Guinea over the past fifteen years. There is much to object to, but most of the complaints have centred upon the generally dismal record of compensation and

Maisin tapa is now offered for sale at a number of art galleries around the world, in the Greenpeace catalogue and even on the Internet

royalty payments. When competing for timber concessions, logging companies typically commit themselves to pay generous royalties and taxes, to improve the local infrastructure of roads and ports, and to prepare cleared land for commercial plantations. Actual payments have almost always fallen far short of expectations. In several especially egregious cases, logging operators have received generous government grants and loans after declaring themselves to be working at a loss. Apart from NGOs concerned with conservation, most of the protests against industrial logging in Papua New Guinea have thus come from local landowners demanding promised royalty payments and compensation for the blasted landscapes left behind after logging operations.

The Maisin were the first local group in Papua New Guinea to declare their opposition to logging and mining before any operations started. They have consistently demanded that the government place their ancestral lands into the protected category of a conservation area. Their opposition

to logging presents the industry and its supporters with two threats. The first is that a large and valuable area of coastal forest will be set off limits to commercial exploitation. The second and more serious threat is that the Maisin will set an example that other groups of landowners may be tempted to follow. There is much at stake, then, in the case now before the Supreme Court Chief Justice.

The Maisin were not always so opposed. In the early to mid-1980s, when Anne Marie Tietjen and I began our association with the community, virtually everyone saw logging as their economic salvation. I left the Maisin area in November 1986 expecting to find a major logging project in place within a few years at the latest. When I returned, in April 1997, I was startled by the change in attitude. Near universal desire for logging had been replaced by an equally passionate opposition. After two return visits and meeting with Maisin delegations to the United States, I am convinced that most Maisin, young and old, male and female, have firmly decided that they have little to gain and much to lose from logging.

There is no simple explanation for this change in attitude. But at least part of the reason lies with a growing realization of the value of the forest to a local way of life. Like most rural people in the country, the Maisin support themselves through subsistence gardening, fishing, hunting and gathering, using techniques that have changed little from the time of contact with Europeans, 110 years ago. Far from towns and road systems, Maisin villages retain a pristine 'traditional' look. Their bush material houses still line the palm-shaded beaches of Collingwood Bay in Oro Province. Their main modes of transportation remain foot and outrigger canoe. They retain their language in the face of the growing popularity of Tok Pisin. But appearances are deceptive. Like other coastal peoples with early access to missionary-run schools, a whole generation of Maisin benefited from the expansion of education and employment opportunities during the late colonial period. Today a quarter to a third of the total Maisin population live in distant towns, where they hold relatively well-paying jobs in the government and private sectors. The regular gifts of goods and money from working relatives have become a mainstay of the village economy.

Many of those "left behind" in the village felt envious of their relatives in town and resentful of their own growing dependence upon them. Village life simply did not measure up to the supposed glories of the town. Often when my wife and I praised the beauty of the villages and the

supportive nature of community life, our friends would correct us. "We are poor and dirty," they declared. "We are too lazy to get development." Since at least the 1920s, the Maisin had taken up a series of local cash cropping projects. All had failed. (Curiously, few Maisin then counted their beautifully designed tapa cloth, which even then enjoyed a great appeal in the national tourist market, as a success). Villagers saw the vast forest stretching behind the coast up to the mountains as their best hope for turning things around. Logging would bring royalties, jobs, new plantations and, above all else, a road connecting the villages to the towns.

By the early 1990s, the towns looked far less attractive, both to the Maisin who worked there and to the villagers who visited them. Violent crime was rising at an alarming rate, especially in the provincial capital of Popondetta, where many Maisin live. From the perspective of the first generation of Maisin to be employed, now approaching retirement, the villages looked increasingly attractive. They now took a greater interest in village politics, especially the various plans floating around for local development. Early in 1994, villagers told a visiting researcher that they did not want a road built to their area, as roads only brought the violence of "raskals".

Doubts about the wisdom of a major logging project turned to certainty in 1994 when word reached the villages about a secret agreement signed between a logging company and a small group of men in town claiming to represent the four language groups around Collingwood Bay. Leaders quickly organized meetings in the villages and elected a delegation to take a petition protesting the plan to the government in Port Moresby. While they managed to defeat this threat, the Maisin realised that they needed to create a new organization to fend off future projects and to find some legal protection for their lands. With the assistance of a number of local and international NGOs, notably Greenpeace, the Maisin created a new local organization, the Maisin Integrated Conservation and Development group (MICAD), under the able leadership of Sylvester Moi, a retired medical worker living in the largest village. They also played a major role in the formation of Conservation Melanesia, now one of the key players in the national conservation movement.

Over the past six years, the Maisin have engaged in a challenging experiment. They are simultaneously trying to develop a new form of local government, prepare the legal grounds for having their lands declared a conservation area, and to teach local people about their own impact upon the environment. The experiment has involved Maisin taking a

crash course in conservation and small scale development through workshops inside and outside the area, hosting teams of scientists and surveyors examining the flora and fauna as well as boundaries, and rethinking the relationships between villagers, men and women, and the young and the old.

Along with these changes comes an encouraging renewal of appreciation in older forms of subsistence activities, in exchanges, and in a variety of cultural practices that had been fading out. These are no longer seen as signs of backwardness. All the same, the Maisin still have a need for money and they worry about their dependence upon working relatives. They are exploring a variety of locally-based projects including raising exotic insects for the overseas markets, limited tourism and crocodile farming.

Tapa cloth remains the most successful of the local products. Tapa is produced mostly by women from

locally grown plants. Today people only wear tapa on ceremonial occasions, but the cloth remains a central item of wealth. Maisin mark marriages and deaths with large exchanges of food, money and often hundreds of pieces of tapa. Maisin first began selling tapa cloth to outsiders in the 1930s. Artifact stores in the towns began selling Maisin tapa to tourists and expatriate workers beginning in the 1960s and a small but stable market has existed ever since. Under the leadership of MICAD, the Maisin have now formed a very successful tapa cooperative meant to improve the quality of the cloth and find new markets. Lafcadio Cortesi of Greenpeace International and two Peace Corps volunteers have worked hard to find new national and international buyers and distributors. As a result, Maisin tapa is now offered for sale at a number of art galleries around the world, in the Greenpeace catalogue and even on the Internet. In recent years, the US company Patagonia has considered licensing Maisin tapa designs for a new line of clothing, thus raising for the first time the thorny issue of cultural copyright.

Although these rushed changes cause considerable stress in the villagers, the Maisin really have little choice. Their lands are still under serious threat. In early 1997, for instance, *The Times of Papua New Guinea* uncovered a plan then under consideration by the highest levels of the Papua New Guinea government that would have seen some 100,000 hectares of forest cleared for a gigantic dwarf coconut plantation, meant to produce coconut sap for a new health drink. The backers of this bizarre project envisioned moving some 50,000 Philippine farmers onto the cleared land. No one consulted the local landowners. Nor were they consulted

two years later when, on the basis of the claim of two local men to be the “chiefs” of all of Collingwood Bay, the Lands Department granted a logging company a 99 year lease to all forest land in the area. The company in question actually had its heavy equipment on barges ready to be shipped to Collingwood Bay when the alarmed Maisin approached the court for a stay.

The government rejected the first two of these logging projects because they violated both the constitution and laws of Papua New Guinea, which require the approval of recognised landowners. Whether it would have rejected them without the pressure from the Maisin and their allies is an open question. What is clear is that the Maisin have received

limited encouragement from the government in their present court case. The fact that the court case is continuing requires comment. Soon after the Maisin won their temporary

injunction, the Forest Department cancelled the company’s logging permit. After former Prime Minister Bill Skates lost his position in a vote of no confidence, the Lands Department itself came under investigation for several suspicious land permits, including that in Collingwood Bay. In light of these scandals, the government has declared a moratorium on new logging concessions. And yet the Maisin face a diminishing but real threat that a logging project they do not want will be allowed to operate in their lands.

One supposes that the company and its allies hope to wear the Maisin down by prolonging the case and raising its legal costs. The Maisin are determined, however, and so far they have raised enough funds among themselves and from friends to prepare and present their case. But even if they win this case as expected, there will surely be another around the corner. Until the government recognises the forests of Collingwood Bay as a protected area – an outcome clearly desired by the local people – one of the last remaining stands of coastal lowland forest survives under a constant threat. And, perhaps, so too does the constitution of Papua New Guinea.

John Barker is an Associate Professor in the Department of Anthropology and Sociology at the University of British Columbia. Since 1980, he has worked in research partnerships with the Maisin in Papua New Guinea and the Nuxalk and Nisga’a First Nations in British Columbia.

“The Maisin are determined, however, and so far they have raised enough funds . . . to prepare and present their case”





Sto:lo - Maisin Exchange

Indigenous Exchange Across the Pacific Ocean

In June of this year, a remarkable meeting across aboriginal worlds will take place. Three women and three men of the Stó:lo Nation will leave their homes in the Fraser Valley to live in Maisin villages. Over a two week period, the Stó:lo guests will share in the lives of Maisin host families and attend village meetings and feasts at which they can discuss the common problems the two communities face. In September, a delegation of six Maisin will travel to British Columbia to pay a visit to their new Stó:lo friends.

Stó:lo and Maisin lives and cultures differ in profound ways. Like many

Canadian First Nations, the Stó:lo are struggling to regain their language, culture and lands after a century and a half of dispossession. The Maisin, in contrast, retain control of their lands and live close to the ways of their ancestors. Still differences like these accentuate the commonalities. Stó:lo and Maisin alike share an abiding concern with the stewardship of ancestral lands. The Stó:lo hope that the Maisin can teach them about the benefits and problems of communal land ownership. The Maisin look forward to learning about ways of initiating and managing locally controlled development and

conservation projects. Both groups want to explore ways of maintaining respect for elders and for traditions in the face of the temptations of global capitalism.

There is much that all of us can learn from these kinds of exchanges. Fortunately, the Stó:lo and Maisin communities have generously agreed to allow their meeting in Papua New Guinea to be filmed by two of Canada's most accomplished documentary filmmakers, Rina Fraticelli and John Walker. The documentary will be aired on the CBC programme, *The Nature of Things*, hosted by Dr. David Suzuki, in 2001.

It's been more than 50 Years since World War II ended but Chuuk Lagoon still being blasted.

Chuuk Lagoon is the largest single barrier reef in Micronesia, enclosing reefs and a lagoon with 26 volcanic islands and 22 low coral islets. It is also the largest urban center and the capital of Chuuk State in Micronesia, home to nearly 50,000 residents living mostly on several of the larger volcanic islands. The atoll is noted for an exceptional diversity of fish, marine invertebrates, and coral species. After the war the human population expanded rapidly, placing ever-increasing demands on marine food resources (reef fish and shellfish). Fishers have removed explosives from the residual World

War II munitions on the atoll, making them into bombs and using them to blast reefs to stun, kill, and collect fish. Blast fishing is still a serious threat to reefs, especially in the more remote western lagoon, beyond the watchful eyes of villagers and government enforcement. Blasting has damaged about 10 percent of the reefs in the lagoon according to a 1994 survey. Heavy urbanization, especially on Tonowas and Weno, has spurred dredging and filling for land expansion and development, while sewage discharges into the lagoon

from the islands has reduced water quality and subsequently underwater visibility at many of the dive sites. Reef fish populations are being depleted from heavy fishing pressure, and nesting sea turtle populations have nearly been eliminated from the area. Rubbish is haphazardly dumped into mangrove areas on the most populated islands, further degrading water quality.

Source:
World Resources Institute
(www.igc.org/wri/indictrs/micrones.htm).

lukaot ol risosis (look after the resources)

Community led resource management in the South Pacific

by Richard Hoath



Ni-Vanuatu women paddle an outrigger canoe towards Efate Island in the Republic of Vanuatu. Photo by Troy Hunter.

Natural resources are the main assets of Pacific people and their sustainable management is a key to maintaining and improving the social and economic status of rural people throughout the Pacific. In the rural areas across the South Pacific people continue to be connected and dependent on the land. But landowners face external pressures for non-traditional commercial land use where often the long term social and environmental impacts of the new activity are unknown before commercial use begins. Permanent loss of natural resources due to over-exploitation is forcing people away from traditional subsistence lifestyles. Communities and governments across the South Pacific are beginning to say “no” to large scale exploitation of forest resources, and “yes” to small scale alternatives where resource management is returned to traditional landowners.

A majority of South Pacific people still live a subsistence or semi-subsistence lifestyle. A lifestyle where people have a direct connection with the land. Rural people in the South Pacific have traditionally practised resource management as simply part of their subsistence lifestyle. These practices are not overt actions but rather just part of daily life as they gather and grow food, treat illness with traditional medicine, build housing, practice cultural traditions, and prepare for natural disasters.

People know when each seasonal resource is ready for harvest and harvest these food resources only during this time. In

parts of Vanuatu crabs are only collected when the rosewood tree flowers. Areas containing future food sources are protected such as tree beds where scrub duck bury their eggs, and forest areas where wild yams are kept as an emergency food source. Communities are vulnerable and must keep resource practices to respond to natural disasters, such as by placing a tabu on fishing from coastal reefs in order to let fish come back after cyclones.

Customary uses of forest resources are still very important to the traditional lifestyle in the villages. The village chiefs will set aside sacred traditional areas and place bans on activities like pig hunting until the time is right to use the resource. Resources such as the Canarium nut are valued as a food source, a traditional gift, and used as musical beads in traditional custom dances.

In the past, people could easily and sustainably satisfy their resource needs from abundant local crops, forest products, and sea resources. There was little need for trade or movement of resources. Local resources did not have an assigned monetary value.

Rapid population increases, urban migration for education or work or other lifestyle advantages, increased domestic movement of goods, the need for cash in rural communities, and foreign interest in local natural resources have all

contributed to a continual shift away from the subsistence rural economy to the cash economy.

The perceived local value and importance of natural resources is being changed by external demand and the cash income resulting from land use decisions that favour this demand over local use. Over the past 80 years many forests were cleared to make way for coconut plantations, and more recently cattle introduced as overseas copra prices dropped. Land is cleared to grow produce to be transported and sold in urban markets. Foreign companies bring large scale resource practices such as logging, fishing, and oil palm plantations. Non-indigenous cash crops such as cocoa, coffee, and rice have been introduced.

This change in resource use to provide income has brought benefits to rural areas. People need income generating opportunities to pay cash for school fees, medical bills, transport costs, building materials, church donations, community infrastructure items such as maintaining the water supply, basic food staples, and support for extended family members. However, communities are seeing the social, economic, and environmental impacts of moving away from traditional local resource management.

Disputes over land ownership and boundaries create divisions between communities as one group begins to generate cash income from their "owned" land. Internal community conflicts can occur as the changes in the use of time and money create inequality between members. Rapid population growth is increasing demand on natural resources and external cash based services.

Landowners can be lured by the promise of easy cash income from leasing their lands to outsiders. With little information about true resource value, and often no government monitoring, agreements are signed that give the control and the profit to the outside company.

Often foreign controlled resource development companies do not live up to their commitments to the landowners. Schools are never completed, roads are poorly built, boundaries are not followed, royalty payments undervalued, and surrounding resources permanently damaged. Landowners must go outside the local traditional land dispute resolution process and launch complex legal battles with the foreign companies.

Outside endless demand for certain resources, such as timber and fish, is encouraging harvesting of natural resources without consideration nor knowledge of their sustainable yield, and introduction of new resources, such as palm oil plantations, without local dialogue on the social or environmental impact. Unexpected and uncontrollable side effects of resource exploitation, such as siltation of rivers, are common. Traditional resource management practices prove insufficient to monitor and maintain availability of resources, and recover from over-exploitation of resources critical to the local traditional subsistence lifestyle.

In the past there was little need for formal land use planning. Traditional resource management was appropriate and effective given that resource use and benefits were controlled locally. Non-indigenous activities like large scale logging bring changes suddenly and unexpectedly, such as loss of a clean water supply, or the introduction of cash into the community.

Communities are now seeing the need to plan for the sustainability of their resources over a much longer term. They first need to understand how too much commercial disturbance will cause both commercial and traditional resource uses to be lost. Development organizations often provide the training and information so that landowners can

learn about the impacts of external disturbances, understand how resources can regenerate after over-exploitation, discuss resource use alternatives, and come together as landowners to plan for the long term economic, environmental, and socially sustainable use of their resources.

Information and local dialogue are the keys to landowners practising modern

sustainable resource management. There is a tremendous amount of local knowledge and local strengths that can be incorporated into modern resource management practices. Any outside assistance effort must start by understanding the local situation, draw on past local experience, determine local strengths and weaknesses, and consider the priorities of the local people.

Strengths such as the *wantok* system (referring to the close family and clan ties in Vanuatu and Solomon Islands) is an effective way of involving and receiving assistance from people in positions of influence. Communities with similar characteristics can be linked together to share their failure

"There is a tremendous amount of local knowledge and local strengths that can be incorporated into modern resource management practices."

and success experiences. Information can be distributed through the many informal communication channels. Examples of effective resource management that use locally available technology can be made visible so that others can learn and copy these approaches.

All the groups of landowners, including women and elders, can be involved in all phases of land use planning projects. Traditional and modern practices should be discussed and researched. The communities themselves can then see the missing links between their own traditional practices and introduced or researched methods. And through active involvement the community will be able to understand, implement, and take ownership over resource management practices.

Modern resource use approaches come from outside and are introduced with new people whose roles may not be comparable to village societies. These approaches can only work if they are used within existing structures. The introduction of new plants and species must consider the current lifestyle of the people. When local people place their hopes for survival on introduced crops and crops fail the livelihood of the whole village is affected, as experienced with rice being introduced in the Solomon Islands.

“In the past we have been assisted by aid donors, but they always just come in and do the project without talking and educating us. We need this information before we can take the right steps.” These were the comments from Stewart Maearo, Ataa, Malaita who came to the Solomon Islands Development Trust last July to hear more about eco-forestry. “In the past, if a logging company comes in they think it is development. People did not understand the effect of selling their resources. Now we hear there are alternatives. That is why I have come to SIDT today. With information we can decide what is best to improve the standard of life in the village.”

Increasing numbers of village resource owners across the South Pacific are taking back control of their valuable forest resources. The *eco-timber* alternative to large scale destructive logging gives village landowners the chance to manage and utilize their forest resources sustainably through providing a range of quality tropical hardwoods directly to local and export markets. All harvested timber comes from sustainably managed sources, with environmental, technical, and

business support and monitoring by regional agencies such as the Foundation of the Peoples of the South Pacific (FSP).

“This project is not about exporting eco-timber. We are here to provide the information and training communities need to manage their forest sustainably. Exporting eco-timber is simply a tool that enables land owners to keep their forests intact while still having income needed for family and community commitments.” Felix Narasia, the eco-forestry coordinator with SIDT explains.

“Exporting eco-timber is simply a tool that enables land owners to keep their forests intact while still having income needed for family and community commitments.”

In Vanuatu, annual school fees for 5 children can be paid from the net revenue communities received from milling and selling eco-timber from 1 tree.

There are still many parts across the South Pacific where people live from the land. Areas where the local assets are the natural resources and the environment. But the wave of development and the demands from the outside world are quickly reaching even these remote places.

With government support and external assistance land owners are beginning to control resource use within their indigenous lands. They have the information needed to make informed land use decisions, enter into equitable arrangements with external groups, join traditional and modern resource management practices, and retain their direct links with the land. And most importantly, indigenous landowners begin to know that they can do it.

Since 1997 FSP has been implementing the European Commission funded South Pacific Community Eco Forestry Project to develop country specific models for community led resource management in Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, Fiji, Tonga, and Kiribati.

This article was compiled by Richard Hoath, FSP Regional Marketing and Business Advisor, in collaboration with FSP project staff: Felix Narasia and the EFU extension foresters in the Solomon Islands, Mark Kalotap in Vanuatu, and Joe Mateboto in Fiji, and with acknowledgement and respect to community members in Chuchulu village Solomon Islands, and Hasavaia village, Vanuatu for their willingness to share their stories of indigenous resource management. You can get in contact with FSP by email to <rboath.fsps@fsp.org.vu>.



Caring for Yawulyu – Singing the Land

The Kapululangu Women's Law and Culture Centre

by Zohl dé Ishtar

On the edge of Western Australia's Great Sandy Desert, in the small Aboriginal community of Wirrimanu, the women have begun to organise. They have created Australia's most isolated women's centre in an effort to maintain and revive their traditional practices and beliefs in their sacred Tjukurrpa (Dreaming). Having only recently come into contact with Kartiya (European-Australians), they are the custodians of one of the world's strongest indigenous heritages. Zohl dé Ishtar, who lives with the women as the coordinator of the Kapululangu Women's Law and Culture Centre, tells their story.

Wirrimanu (aka Balgo), is situated on the edge of the Great Sandy Desert, south of Halls Creek (Western Australia). Standing upon the crest of red rock mesa country, surrounded by vast expanses of red sand dunes covered in spiny spinifex grasses and stunted acacia trees, it is one of Australia's most isolated Aboriginal communities and the home of Australia's, and the world's, strongest traditional indigenous cultures.

Three hundred plus people live in Wirrimanu, along with 40 Kartiya. They come from seven language groups – Kukatja, Pintupi, Ngardi, Wangkatjunga, Walmatjarri, Djaru and Warlpiri. The people live in two camps – Kakarra (east) and Wilura (west) Camps – which are placed around a circle of Kartiya operated services. People live in the camps which are closest to the traditional lands of their language group. There are three other Aboriginal settlements around Wirrimanu. Together they are called the Kutjungka Region (meaning 'in/of one'). It is a shifting population with people continuing to live a semi-nomadic lifestyle as they circulate between the different communities.

Prior to a Catholic mission being established at Balgo in 1939, the people of this region lived a nomadic life, thriving in their homelands, living their lives unencumbered by impacts of the western world. Only a few intrepid Kartiya (European Australians) "explorers" had ever entered this desert region, and they did not stay long, unable to survive there without the assistance of the people of the land. The local people were still coming into first contact with Kartiya as recently as the late 1960s, with Australia's last Aboriginal family to contact Kartiya coming into Balgo as recently as 1984. This family only came out of the desert because prolonged drought caused their relatives to worry for them.



Windjina-Rain Maker, original screen print by Lily Karedada from the region of Kalumburu, Kimberley, Australia.

This unique history has meant that Wirrimanu's current elders were aged 12 years or older at first contact, and were often adults, and had raised their own children, before they came into contact with the alien world that was to challenge and change their lives forever. (Two of Wirrimanu's women and three men are currently aged about 70-75 years old, and would have been aged about 30 years old when they met their first Kartiya.) Thus they bring with them into this current era a remarkable knowledge and experience of traditional ways. Each elder carries a strength of bearing that comes from knowing, connecting with, their land in a deeply spiritual way. This is reflected in their contemporary lives where even the mundane things of daily life are affected by this influence. But mostly it is witnessed by their strong belief in, and practices of, their cultural and spiritual (religious) beliefs and heritages.

It is a flavour of life that impacts on the lives of younger generations. Their daughters who were brought up and schooled in the mission dormitories during the era of the Australian government's assimilation policy days; and their children (now teenagers) who are struggling to make sense of two worlds; and even the youngest, the children, still at school who have the unenviable challenge of possibly making a future for themselves in the wider world that is now, at least on the surface, slightly less racist. All experience a life pattern that arises from the land in which they live.

Wirrimanu people suffer many problems inherent in other isolated Aboriginal communities (e.g. overcrowded, poor housing conditions, rubbish, sewerage, power, water) but it has an additional reputation as a particularly harsh and difficult community. The social problems impact on the children who turn to petrol sniffing, drugs and alcohol resulting in childhood crimes and imprisonment. Other childhood problems are early pregnancies, suicides and drug-related deaths. Balgo is equally identified by its lack of many services other Australians take for granted, and the few services which do function here struggle on a daily basis.

Kapululangu was established by the women elders to assist them to care for their families' social, psychological, emotional, physical and spiritual wellbeing. Its history reaches back to 1987 when the women organised the Desert Women's Project. The project was so successful that, in 1990, the women incorporated as Manungka-Manungka which continued until 1993 when unfortunate circumstances beyond the control of the organisation resulted in its collapse. Determined to organise for the maintenance and revival of their culture and the advancement of their peoples' needs, the women formed Kapululangu in April 1999 and it was incorporated in 1999.

Kapululangu's main aims are to assist Wirrimanu women to practice, maintain and revive their traditional, cultural and artistic activities and to continue their ceremonial life including ritual events, songs, dances, painting, customary law and land relationships; pass their cultural knowledge and

skills on to younger generations; and enhance their communities' spiritual, physical and psychological wellbeing.

To this end the women formed the Kapululangu Women's Law and Culture Centre, Australia's most isolated women's community cultural centre. The Centre offers many programmes, such as Tjilimi: a women's camp providing an opportunity for women to live together in a female-orientated environment (includes girls), caretakes Law and Culture Centre. There is also a women's Arts and Crafts Workshop: a place and opportunities for women to get together, do painting and other arts and crafts (basketry, coolamoon and wood carving) - to develop skills aimed towards creating income-earning production for women to alleviate poverty. Another programme is Growing Up Our Kids - Kapululangu Children's Culture Activities Programme: a programme of school time, after-school and vacation activities for kids (including boys up to 10 years old). - to educate in cultural heritage, build self-esteem and pride in identity, protect against social problems such as petrol sniffing, childhood crimes. There is the Yawulyupirri, Women's Dancing Ground at the Centre which assists women to participate in, and pass

on, cultural knowledge. Such programmes also include trips to the ancestral country for ceremony, food gathering, bush medicine for women and children. These trips help to maintain the spiritual connection to and fulfil responsibilities for the ancestral lands and to educate young women and children in their cultural heritage.

The Kapululangu Women's Law and Culture Centre acts as a keeping house. It is the repository of one of Australia's most important collections of sacred

ceremonial equipment. This is done in order to maintain and protect women's Law equipment and spiritual treasures to ensure its availability for future generations. The documentation of women's life-stories, songs, and knowledge and the archival of the same is done to ensure that knowledge and language is also available for future generations.

All of these programmes and facilities are the initiation of the women of Wirrimanu and are achieved through their



The Horse Creek Massacre, original screen print by Queenie McKenzie from the region of Turkey Creek, Kimberley, Australia.

voluntary efforts. Four senior Tjukurrpa-Law women live in and caretake the Centre. Kapululangu engages a Kartiya (European-Australian) coordinator who also works voluntarily. The Law and Culture Centre is housed in an old tin shed built in 1987. The office (the hottest place in Wirrimanu) consists of one lap top and a phone-fax machine. Workers have to work within an environment contaminated with fine dust, mouse droppings, poisonous spiders, disease-carrying mosquitoes and all too frequent death adder snakes.

This contrasts with the unique qualities which form the Law and Culture Centre. The Centre is built on a women's sacred site, part of an extensive interplay of Tjukurrpa Yiwarra (Dreaming Tracks) that weave their way through, across and under this ancient, red land. The Tjukurrpa (Dreaming) is the Creation Time when the ancestors traveled, danced, sung and painted their way through the land, creating its many forms (mountains, rivers), before entering the earth through caves and waterholes where they remain today. They taught the Aboriginal people how to live with the land, the ceremonies that they had to perform to keep it alive, how to survive (how to hunt and cook, etc.) and laid down the law which the people were to follow so that they would keep themselves and the land strong forever.

Strong in their culture, many women spend their days at the Centre producing incredibly powerful works of art (acrylic art on canvas), for which they are internationally renown. Or they might weave baskets, or just sit around playing cards and talking. Even the seemingly mundane factors of daily survival are steeped in culture, despite the adoption of some Kartiya ways.

Throughout all of this comes the sounds of women's voices in song. Singing is a constant that permeates all aspects of life. The turlku (songs) are powerful because they were sung by women thousands of years ago and stem from the Tjukurrpa (Dreaming/Creation) era. They are sacred knowledge which has been preserved throughout the ages by oral tradition, now passing into the present era as the women's birthright and sacred responsibility to maintain.

It is not only the women that sing – their paintings sing too. Women paint their ancestral lands vibrant with the sacred knowledge given to them by their fathers, mothers and grandparents. As they paint they “sing” their paintings. They ride above the land which they are storytelling, and, looking down, see it as a three-dimensional map. They sing the songs that belong to, and have been passed to them as an intricate part of that land. The songs then are caught within the paintings. Those who view the paintings and have the

knowledge of that particular site will then “hear” the paintings, in that they will recall, and mentally sing, the songs that they also have learnt about that site. And so, for Aboriginal people, paintings are a three-dimensional experience wrapped in sound.

At night the women will often group together, adorn themselves with red ochre, and dance to their own singing. A woman might lead the event on the basis that she has a special relationship with the Tjukurrpa portrayed in the story-song. She might have been conceived or born on the site, or she might have inherited rights to it through a parent or grandparent. If she has lived at and/or visited the area she will be particularly strong in her identification with it, but if it is her conception or birth site then she is considered the actual reincarnation of the ancient beings related to that site. Many women share rights and responsibilities to the same site and have designated roles in helping to look after, “grow up”, that land.

Throughout the year there are Law Business meetings where people gather in large groups to fulfil their obligations to the Tjukurrpa. Christmas time is usually reserved for boys' initiation rituals, the “growing up of boys”, in which women play a fundamental role. This is a ceremony that extends over weeks, perhaps months, and involves every adult member of many communities. All have a responsibility to, and a role in the process of, “growing up new men”, even the boy's sisters. During this time women and men perform their own rituals – Yawulyu and Tjurra respectively – as well as dancing in conjunction with each other. Other rituals and ceremonies are held throughout the year that may involve both or either gender.

There are many levels of knowledge. Knowledge is passed on from one generation to the other. Children learn culture through watching and participation, rather than actively being taught as in the Kartiya way. Few questions are asked, few answers given. Women have the sole responsibility for the education of girls and for boys aged under ten years old, when they begin to enter into the control of male elders. A boy's entrance into manhood is not truly begun until he is fifteen years old and takes many years. While boys must be taught to be men, girls become women when they begin to bleed, and so are regarded as having entered adulthood at a younger age. Traditionally women would take a husband at puberty, whereas boys could not “marry” until they had become men, usually aged around 20 or older. The women, when they teach their children, will often draw in the sand to illustrate their point. This process is called walkula. Sand-drawing is also used by women between themselves. As they

sit around chatting a woman might reach out and make marks on the ground to illustrate and emphasize her point.

While they are complementary, women and men hold different aspects of the same Tjukurrpa stories. Although there are many public ceremonial activities, it is considered dangerous for men to witness women's sacred activities, and vice versa. People doing so are considered to be at risk of becoming ill. The boundaries between the different spheres are so distinct that death was often meted out as the punishment for the violation of sacred Law. This is reflected at the Kapululangu Women's Law and Culture Centre, which men can not enter or approach. Similarly, women will not approach the Men's Law and Culture Centre which is situated on the opposite side of the community. Both Centres are located slightly beyond the parameters of the Camps and, removed from the hustle of everyday life, host the potential for revived cultural practice and maintenance.

The women at Kapululangu desire to create an enduring and efficient community resource that enables them to care for their children through the teaching of their cultural heritage. Their purpose is to maintain and revive their cultural and spiritual practices so as to ensure that their unique knowledges, languages and stories are available as a living resource for future generations to access; to lead their children towards an increased pride of Aboriginal identity and self-esteem through the development of personal social skills in an environment that unites both traditional and contemporary lifeways, as a protection against social pressures; and to enjoy and participate in the continuation of their cultural practices for their own benefit.

There is much to be done at the Centre. Our first priority is to obtain a vehicle to support all of our programmes and to assist women and children to access their ancestral country. We need to obtain funding to cover the costs of our annual programme and administration. We urgently need a new building to house the office and the Tjilimi, which would have the added benefit of liberating the small space in the tin shed as an arts workshop. We need materials and tools to



Radjerra screenprint by Doris Gingingara from the region of Maningrida, Arnhem Land.

carry out our activities. We aim, eventually, to be able to employ the women who tutor the children and pay them appropriately for their knowledge. We want to set up an income-earning business as an aid towards alleviating the financial pressures that women face as they attempt to feed their families. All of this needs funding and, at present, Kapululangu is (relatively) unfunded.

The amazing thing is that, despite the lack of funding,

the women have created Kapululangu – an increasingly viable and vibrant community project. The women have achieved all of this themselves, and their determination insists that they will succeed and achieve even more. As custodians of one of Australia's, and the world's, oldest living cultural treasures they deserve to be fully supported. They are, after all, caretaking their heritage for the benefit of us all.

Zobl dé Ishtar is the founding director of Pacific Connections, an organization that supports the campaigns and visions of Indigenous Peoples throughout the Pacific. Zobl is the convenor of Women for a Nuclear Free and Independent Pacific, Australia, and she works as the Oceanic Representative (Female) with the International Peace Bureau. She has spoken and written extensively about indigenous Australia and Pacific challenges and campaigns, and consistently attempts to create situations where indigenous women can be heard. Zobl has two postgraduate degrees - a Master of Applied Social Research and a Master of Philosophy, Sociology.

Illustration of prints by Australian Aboriginal women artists appear courtesy of Alcheringa Gallery.

To assist, donate to, or contact Kapululangu:

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(All donations \$2 and over are tax deductible).*



Roundtable on Gender and Economic Reform

by Jennifer Robinson

Nadi, Fiji – As Pacific countries work on reforming their political structures and national budgets, they need to remember that economic reforms have different impacts on different social groups, particularly women and men, said participants during the first “Pacific Roundtable Meeting on Gender and Economic Reform.”

Held in March, the regional meeting attracted more than 60 delegates from Forum Island countries, regional non-governmental organisations, and multilateral institutions to discuss how gender analysis can be applied to a country’s economic, trade and investment policies to more accurately reflect the role women and men play in society.

Recommendations from the roundtable will be presented at the Forum Economic Ministers annual meeting in July in Niue.

The meeting addressed a number of topics, including national budget processes and tools for examining budgets for gender impacts. The importance of recognising the impact of gender roles in budgets lies at the heart of making economic reforms more fair for men and women, as well as promoting healthy economic development, said meeting organiser and Forum Secretariat Gender Issues Adviser Gayle Nelson.

“Economic reform is supposed to be balanced between economic and social change,” she explained. “Right now, part of the puzzle or picture is missing. We believe that if you promote gender equality, you’re promoting the success of sound economic development.”

Gender isn’t something we’re born with genetically, clarified guest speaker Dr. Rhonda Sharp of the University of South Australia. It’s something we’re taught — boys do certain tasks, while girls do others.

Although words signifying gender aren’t typically used in budgets, it doesn’t mean

they’re “gender neutral,” she stated. In fact, this “gender blindness” may lead governments to create budgets that impact negatively on women and children.

For example, she said studies have shown that men on average earn higher incomes than women. When governments shift taxation from incomes to indirect taxes, men are more likely to benefit and women suffer. Social cutbacks also affect women differently than men. A reduction in hospital beds mean women often have to add to their workloads to look after sick family members. A gender sensitive budget forces another look at these issues.



Trade and investment topics should also include a discussion of their impacts on gender, said economist Mariama Williams of the Institute for Law and Economics and DAWN-Caribbean. “Foreign investment is not a free good,” she said. “There is a cost and we have to integrate that.”

Female labour is becoming increasingly important to trade liberalization and investment throughout the world as a source of “cheap labour,” said Williams. Since women aren’t seen as the primary breadwinners in their families, their wages are often lower. With women out of the home, the family structure changes shape and often leads to increased violence against women. They are also still seen as needing to continue their work at home in addition to the demands of joining the workforce.

“Gender equality implications of trade policy and trade liberalisation arise because

trade liberalisation, per se, does not eliminate gender inequality in access to resources, power, and decision-making,” she said. “Rather trade liberalisation may build on or exacerbate the negative conditions already affecting women’s lives.”

Pacific countries are all tackling areas of policy and decision-making involving economic reform, trade and investment, and gender. But, looking at these issues from a gender analysis perspective is quite new for the region, said Forum Secretariat Secretary General Noel Levi.

“Because of its crosscutting nature, we know that gender should be a consideration within all policy and legislation related to the development of our countries,” he said. “We recognize that within our region some countries are already addressing these issues, while others need to incorporate them into their planning processes.

“But, we are still challenged by the need for better tools to understand and measure the actual contributions women make to the economies of their countries. At the same time, we must continue to support governance models that create more informed electorates and involve populations more effectively in the management of their countries.”

Two of the primary challenges for the region to create these tools are: the development of frameworks to capture information about women’s contributions and mechanisms to promote models of good governance that focus on gender equality, he said.

The meeting – organised by the Fiji-based Forum Secretariat – was sponsored by the New Zealand Overseas Development Agency (NZOD), Department for International Development (DFID), the Canada-South Pacific Ocean Development (C-SPOD) Programme, Canada Fund, Asian Development Bank, and the Commonwealth Secretariat.





Ecowoman

Indigenous Science and Agriculture

A Focus on Women and Masi Production in Fiji

Patrina Dumarua and Katsitsaronkwaa L. Jacobs

Traditionally, agriculture in the Pacific consisted of communally-based subsistence production. As in most indigenous cultures, agricultural practices were integrated into the social, cultural, and religious contexts of daily life. Within these contexts, the traditional knowledge of such practices was easily “passed from generation to generation by oral teaching or demonstration” (Morrison, J. et. al, 1994).

Although Pacific agriculture was characterised by a clear domination of certain staple crops such as sweet potato and taro, a great diversity of crops prevailed not only for food, but for medicine, tools, and for the production of items of cultural significance (masi, kuta, etc.). As a matter of survival, this diversity was carefully preserved and nurtured. The continued usage and development of this diversity made up the indigenous science base. However, with the advent of Western agriculture and other influences, the traditional knowledge of indigenous agricultural systems has slowly been eroded and pushed into the background.

In contrast to the generally low labour and energy inputs of indigenous systems, modern agriculture put more land under production using high energy (fertilisers, pesticides, etc.) and labour inputs, introduced consumer-oriented production of specialised crops (monocultures), and shifted the traditional structure of communally-based farming towards individualistic systems. The advent of these practices affected not only the agricultural techniques themselves, but also caused significant disturbances to the environment, as well as to the social, cultural, religious, and economic

structures to which the traditional practices were linked.

The resulting problems were apparent: the use of inorganic fertilisers and pesticides caused serious ecological and health concerns; unwise land management resulted in the degradation of previously fertile areas; diversity was lost due to the focus on the vulnerable monoculture systems; social concerns developed due to the breakdown of the traditional systems and uneven income distribution; and, the economy became subjected to the whims of the global market and political economy (Overton, J. et. al, 1999).

This is not to say that the Pacific did not reap any benefits from the new commodity-based agriculture. The inflow of money resulted in improvements in education, housing, and the access to goods, and progress could be seen through the development of roads, water supply, and electricity. However, these changes occurred at a pace and in a direction that were not necessarily consistent with the needs of the people they were meant to benefit.

The last few decades have seen a growing awareness of the need to re-examine these ‘modern’ agriculture systems, and a subsequent shift towards more sustainable methods. Low-input organic farming, integrated pest management, and natural soil conservation strategies are among the sustainable solutions put into practice throughout the world. The fact that these strategies have not taken off in the Pacific (or with other indigenous societies) suggests that the solution in such cases is more involved than simply implementing



these new methods. Nor does the solution lie in simply returning to traditional agriculture systems which were not always fully sustainable either.

As suggested in John Overton's paper:
To recover these systems, what is needed is not only the relearning of past agricultural techniques and the preservation of genetic material, but also an appreciation (if not a readoption) of the social and cultural context within which they operated, including social structures, religious beliefs and gender relations. It requires a recognition of indigenous science and, more difficult, an appreciation of the values and ideologies that created and reproduced that science.

In other words, the preservation of indigenous science involves not only the preservation of traditional agricultural knowledge, but also the social, cultural, religious, and economic structures to which it is tied. Permaculture techniques or "progressing with the past" are terms used for combining the efficient elements of indigenous science with aspects of modern science, while respecting the context within which it evolves.

Such systems can be truly successful only if the needs and wants of the people involved are fully understood and appreciated. This can be achieved through participatory techniques such as Participatory Learning and Action (PLA), a community consultation method designed to identify problems and capabilities of a community. ECOWOMAN has used and promoted this method extensively for this purpose, particularly to ensure that the voice of women is heard in the decision-making processes.

The following case study focuses primarily on the important role of women in the production of masi, a traditional agricultural product and craft which was once prevalent throughout the Pacific, and has slowly disappeared from the traditional knowledge base of many communities. This case study explores an example of traditional masi production in Fiji which has managed to transcend the generations through its evolution to suit the changing social, cultural, and economic realities.

**Case Study:
The Indigenous Science of Masi Production in Ekubu Village, Vatulele Island, Fiji**

These findings were collected through a Participatory Learning and Action (PLA) workshop conducted by ECOWOMAN in partnership with WWF (World Wide Fund for Nature) in August, 1999.

History of Masi in the Pacific

Masi, more commonly known in the Pacific as 'tapa', is the Fijian name for the decoratively printed barkcloth found in a number of Pacific Island cultures. Barkcloth in the Pacific is usually made from the various species of trees belonging to the genera *Broussonetia*, *Artocarpus* and *Ficus*. Of this, *Broussonetia papyrifera* or the paper mulberry tree is used for the highest quality cloth (Kooijman, 1972:1).

Masi making developed out of the need for clothing and, in Fiji, it is known that masi was manufactured and used for many centuries prior to written history. Masi also had the distinction of being the clothing for the gods (Troxler, 1977:5). Consequently, masi received the highest place of honour in the ceremonies and rites of birth, puberty, marriage, hospitality, war tribute, worship, treatment of the sick, death, and above all the installation of a chief (Troxler, 1977:5).

Masi making was prevalent in the Pacific far before European contact. The growing, cultivation, and production of masi was intricately tied to the cultural, social, and religious web of daily life. However, with the advent of modern agriculture and other Western influences, only a few remaining Pacific Island countries, particularly Samoa, Tonga and Fiji pursue the art passed down from their ancestors. In some areas such as Hawaii and Niue, masi making ceased

many years ago. The traditional knowledge associated with the agricultural methods and production of the masi is now being revived. Today, however, masi is not only a necessary part of traditional life, but a major creative outlet and income generating activity for women who are the most important participants in this activity.

The case of Vatulele has shown that masi production, a product of indigenous science and example of a traditional agricultural activity often overlooked by modern development bodies, can in fact thrive in today's fast changing world.



While the cultural significance of masi is still recognised, its growing economic significance in today's modern economy is fast becoming apparent. With the South Pacific Region increasingly seen as a tourist hotspot, demand for authentic and traditional crafts has risen. Furthermore, the increasing appreciation for indigenous culture and artifacts has also triggered such a rise in demand. This is also in addition to the significant local demand for a traditional wealth still highly valued in a traditional/modern dichotomous society. However, with only a few communities currently continuing to practice this art in Fiji, the masi used in ceremonies such as births, marriage, deaths, installation of a chief, as well as presented to maintain blood and friendship ties, has become a commodity with monetary value.

Masi in Vatulele

Vatulele is a predominantly low-lying, limestone island stretched out in a north-south direction. There are four villages on the island, Ekubu, Taunovo, Lomanikaya, Bouwaqa and they all lie on the island's eastern lagoonal coast. The population of Vatulele in 1995 was 990 comprising 201 households (Provincial Profile Report, 1995). The commercial economy of the island is based mainly on the production of masi and the exclusive hotel development has also provided employment and income for the people of Vatulele. Marine harvests and copra are also of economical value but the returns are not significant.

From the data collected during the PLA workshop, it was found that the masi trade had a profound impact on the development of the village of Ekubu. The historical profile developed by the elderly men showed that upon the emergence of masi as a significant income-generating commodity, particularly in the 80s and 90s, infrastructural development increased considerably. Certain community members also linked the benefits from masi sales to improved living standards which includes better access to services such as education, health, housing and communication.

The development of masi as an economically significant commodity for this community has occurred with minimal assistance from outside institutions such the Agriculture and Forestry Departments, and the Arts and Craft Council. This shows that contrary to the benefits reaped elsewhere from the imposition of modern agriculture, the wellbeing of this community has been determined and dependent on the indigenous scientific knowledge of masi production passed down to them by their ancestors.

Given the significant development that has occurred in this community through the lucrative returns from masi, the community still maintains, to a great extent, its traditional societal structure to which this traditional art was inextricably tied. Some studies have found that men were more involved in the agricultural stages, and women dominated in the actual processing of the raw material as well as in the art of it. More recent studies have shown that women in Fiji were generally involved in the cropping and cultivation of pandanus and mulberry trees (Sofield, 1985:59-60). Although the gender roles involved in this activity have been somewhat altered, the women are still the key players in the backbone industry of this community.

The production of masi in Vatulele has been so successful that the demand for masi often exceeds the capacity of the community to supply. Whether this low supply is due to natural or human resource limitations has yet to be explored. However, this indicates that the community has more potential to take advantage of the high demand. Furthermore, masi production in general has a lot more potential as a commodity, which might help in its revival in other Fijian communities.

Unfortunately, some factors may hinder the continued growth of masi production in Vatulele. The pressure on the ecosystem is increasing from the growing population, as well as from the rising market demand for masi. Given the vulnerable ecosystem of this limestone island, these factors could prove to be dangerous threats to the wellbeing of the community. Several threats to the future of the masi plant were also identified. A water problem, declining virgin areas from clearing for the cultivation of other crops, and bush-burning are all factors that can affect the widespread availability of masi.

Through the continued participation of the community, ECOWOMAN hopes to provide the tools and knowledge to solve these problems in order to preserve this important traditional art. In order to make the most efficient use of the high demand, a suggestion has been to harness the information and expertise of the Ekubu Village masi producers and match it with agriculture and small business experts. Through a series of workshops the proposed project would aim to enlist support from agriculture research to improve the sustainable crop production of masi, to facilitate the exchange between masi producers and artists for the improvement of consistent and quality products, and to empower women to handle the income from masi sales for



Pigs, Grade-Taking and Kastom Money

by Kirk Huffman

Traditional money in Vanuatu is actually quite a complex situation because there is just not one particular form. In Vanuatu there are 83 inhabited islands, with a population of 170,000 people, 113 different indigenous languages, most of those with sub-dialects and the cultural variation situation is just about as complex as the linguistic one. There are not just lots of different types of languages and cultures; there are lots of different types of traditional currency.

The most commonly recognized form of item used in economic transactions in Vanuatu is the pig. Throughout the country, pigs are used as a form of traditional exchange. The most famous for that exchange are those pigs where the upper canine teeth are knocked out and the lower canine teeth grow unimpeded without being scratched down by the upper canines. It will take about six years growth for the lower canines to grow into a full and complete circle. It's the tusk curvature of these pigs which denote the value of them. Not female pigs, it has to be castrated male pigs. Female pigs don't have currency value. The more the tusk is curved, the higher the value of the pig.

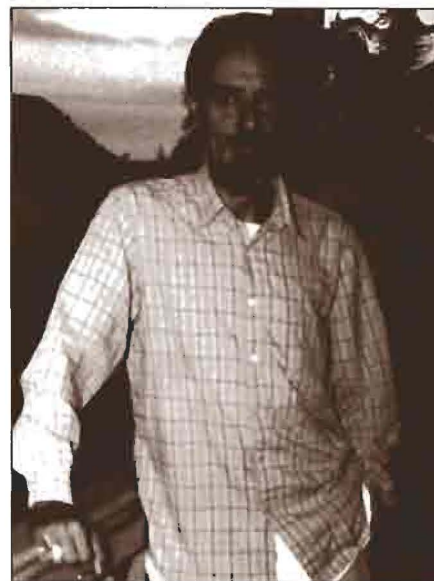
In certain areas of northern central Vanuatu there is the traditional ranking system where a person may not necessarily inherit the leadership. It is bought into. It's sort of like a system whereby thematically, all men are created equal but a man spends his whole life trying to be more equal than others by buying his way up this series of sacred steps, this sacred ladder that leads to the world of the spirits. Each step, each status in the ladder has a

price in pigs and a person will spend their whole life amassing pigs with the correct tusk curvature. A person has to be sponsored by somebody that is a few steps up higher on the ladder. He then continues to buy his way up to a higher chief and then a higher chief, etc.

It's not the kind of chief like in America. It is a different kind of chief; it is a big man system. The chief will reach the world of the spirits, the world of the dead and the higher he gets, the closer he becomes to reach the world of the ancestors spirits, which is where it all happens. He becomes more and more sacred the higher he gets and it is done with pigs. Without the tusker pig it can't be done.

A man will amass together the requisite number of pigs for the particular social rank that he wants to purchase. He will invite everybody along to the ritual because the more people who come along, the more people will recognize his status. At the height of the ritual, he starts sacrificing his pigs. He destroys his material wealth and then distributes in the form of food, dances and things like that. He will have people dancing at his grade-taking ritual. He has to pay the dancers. To be considered a rich man in Vanuatu, a person has to bankrupt himself. This perpetual bankrupting system is done on behalf of his people to keep them happy and well fed.

Almost all of the rituals that are done are to appease the spirits of the ancestors to make sure that there is sun, rain, fertility and things like that. This is done using pigs as currency. Other areas will have other types of minor currency as well. The best-known



Kirk Huffman is the former Curator of the Vanuatu Cultural Centre. He shares some insights concerning traditional money in Vanuatu. Photo by Troy Hunter.

types of minor currency in northern Vanuatu are these red money mats, woven from pandanus. They are dyed with red designs. In some areas of the country, they can be worn as female and male costumes.

In some areas the men will wear the woven dyed money mats as sort of a breach cloth around their waist. In other areas of Vanuatu people don't have the traditional right to wear those as costumes. In these other areas men will be wearing penis wrappers and the women will be wearing fibre skirts.

Money mats are so widely used in parts of northern Vanuatu, particularly on the island of Pentecost, Maewo and Ambae. They are sort of like small change. Your basic unit of currency in Vanuatu is a castrated male pig whose tusks go round one circle. That is equivalent to a hundred dollar bill or more, perhaps forty thousand vatu an



Pig killing ceremony. Photo source: Pacific People's Partnership archives.

equivalent of some four hundred US dollars.

There are some pigs whose tusks actually go round twice. They have to be really specially looked after. Those pigs are so sacred, they have actually got names and they become very famous. The owners of those pigs will charge the people who come around to see the pig. People will come from other islands by canoe or by marching just to see the pig. Payment to view these pigs could be a stick of tobacco or even a small pig.

The pigs that have tusks that go round twice have to be kept fenced in. Once they get beyond a certain stage, it is very difficult for the pig to actually eat properly. So for these really sacred pigs, very often, the wives of the man will pre-masticate the food for the pig and then mouth feed it; although, that practice is dying out now.

I was at this one ritual in 1986 where a pig had two tusks coming out of the

right side and one out of the left. That pig cost the guy 80,000 vatu to buy. He kept it hidden up. He put it on an island far away and he smuggled it across by canoe and he kept it hidden away. At his ritual, he had two hundred pigs on the dancing ground. The climax of the ritual was when he unveiled this pig in the middle of the dancing ground and there was this pig with three tusks. There were about six hundred people on the dancing ground and suddenly there was this pig with three tusks and everybody sort of went "wow!".

After the ritual, the individual who had then killed the pigs had the right to put a certain amount of pigs tusks on his right wrist. In the northern islands for ritual purposes when somebody wears a pig's tusk around their wrist, they are somebody of note. There are special ways to wear them; the curved side must be facing upwards.

There are also grade-taking rituals for women. Women who undertake such rituals become renowned high-ranking women. Most of the literature that has been published about grade-taking systems is concentrated on the men's side of things because expatriate men usually write it. Also the missionaries said that the traditional lifestyle was the work of the devil. For some reason or another, the influence of Christianity tended to destroy the women's grade-taking system much more easily than the men. The Christian missionaries have tended to say that their influences have made better the social position of women. In some instances it is true, but in many instances it isn't because the introduction of Christianity destroyed the women's grade-taking system to make women important within the world of women all the while without destroying the men's grade-taking systems in the same areas. So what actually happened in some

areas with regards to the social position of women is it has actually become worse because they have lost their access to power; whereas, the men have still got it going on.

In the north around the Banks and Torres Islands of northern Vanuatu there is another type of traditional currency: stringed shell money. The general term for that is som. All of the cultural systems in the Banks and Torres Islands in Northern part of Vanuatu are based upon the manipulation, production and distribution of stringed shell money. Most of it was made on a very small island in the Banks group on an island called Ra in the reef islands in northern Vanuatu. The population of Ra was never very big, it only varied between a minimum of 25 and a maximum of 68 people or so. The whole population of Ra devoted their whole time since the beginning of time until the 1950's just to the production of shell money.

A particular type of shell was used. The top would be knocked off and filed down before it was strung out on a hibiscus. They spent centuries doing this. It was like the island of Ra was the national bank of northern Vanuatu. They had no food gardens on the island of Ra and they weren't allowed to keep male pigs there either. The other islands in the Banks group came perpetually in canoes and they fed the people of Ra. This was done so that the people of Ra could spend their time making shell money. These people were fed and they were professional money makers. That continued right on up to the mid 1950's but unfortunately there was an incredibly bad cyclone up there with tidal waves swept over the island. The people managed to shelter in some sort of rock but after that, they were taken out and resettled on a different island. The

nonstop production of shell money that was going on for nearly several thousand years was stopped literally overnight.

There are discussions now amongst the chiefs in northern Vanuatu to try and get that production of shell money going again because that is the basis of a very complex sort of system going up there in the Banks Islands. In the north, to purchase social rank a person uses shell money rather than pigs. Now what has happened is that the influence of pigs has been introduced into the system from the south. The last couple of centuries they were using both shell money and pigs as currency to buy social rank as well as everything else in the Banks Islands including to buy food.

Hand lengths or fathoms measured shell money. Two arms stretched out of shell money were considered a basic unit. For something that a person might have wanted to get, they might have needed fifty lengths to buy it. With these forms of traditional currency, a person wasn't just buying material things, but also spiritual things as well. For example on one island, to get to the world of the dead, a person had to have a copyrighted spirit song. Each person would have to go to a professional song maker at an early stage in his or her life and either an uncle or aunt will then pay the professional song maker in stringed shell money for him to compose a spirit song for the child. He then teaches the child the song and that is copyrighted for that person. The song has to be held and remembered throughout a person's life and it is bought with the shell money.

There is another type of money that is very rare and is only used up in the Banks Islands up on Vanua Lava and parts of Gaua. There is a type of

stringed feather money. The feathers from around the eyes of a particular type of bird are pulled out and placed in red and white bands around a row of strings. That was another type of money but only used in that one particular area but unfortunately, it has now died out.

Down in the southern islands of Vanuatu, it is a slightly different system. They don't have tusker pigs down there. In Tanna, they have got pigs but they don't have the tradition of knocking out the upper canine teeth so that the lower tusks will grow. That is not part of their tradition. Even up to the early 1980's despite the fact that the curled pigs tusk is on the national flag of Vanuatu and its on the money, the people there were unaware of pigs with curled tusks. However, they value pigs very highly on Tanna but there is no grade-taking system there. There is no way a person can use pigs to buy his way up the chiefly system. Tanna has a different type of leadership system, one that almost everybody is chief at least one time or another in their life. In Tanna there are talking chiefs, sun chiefs, weather chiefs, war chiefs, etc.

The type of pig on Tanna that has got the most respect value for ritual



In the northern islands for ritual purposes when somebody wears a pigs tusk around their wrist, they are a person of note. Photo by Troy Hunter.

exchange purposes is a hairless pig, which is termed glabrous. It has no body hair, it is like a naked pig and looks sort of like a pig-like hippopotamus. It is not used to buy an agreement but is used to influence an agreement with a presentation of the hairless pig. They are the most highly valued type of pig on Tanna and they are not found in the northern islands. They are classed so high, that they are on the same level as an important man.

In rituals involving the hairless pig, there will be a painting on the pigs forehead of an inverted pyramid which indicates a high ranking man. It will also have strapped around its waist a special type of beaten bark belt which only high men on Tanna are allowed to wear. The pig will actually be a high ranking man but on four legs.

On Tanna and some of the islands nearby like Futuna, forms of kava root can be used as a traditional currency. It's not just a plant that is used for traditional religious purposes for drinking; it's also a plant that can be used in exchanges as a type of sacred money as part of ritual transactions. They don't have shell money or the woven mat money there. On Tanna, the traditional currencies are the hairless pigs and kava roots which are bound in a special way to indicate for what purpose they are presented.

Those are some of the main forms of what outsiders would call traditional money: pigs, money mats, shell money. There are also many sorts of minor variations. If a person wanted to purchase food, he or she would exchange food for food. It's not like that sort of thing where a pig would be used to buy six hundred yams. Once a pig has tusks, it is already becoming too sacred for common purposes; it has to be used for ritual purposes.

However, a small pig could be traded for ten yams or something like that.

In certain areas in Northern Vanuatu there is the world's largest ratio of what is commonly called hermaphrodite pigs but are also called intersex pigs. Those pigs have both female and male genitalia. Those types are pigs are found in significant numbers on a strain of five or six islands in the north. In typical Vanuatu way, there are lots of different types of hermaphrodite pigs.

The hermaphrodite pig was never castrated. They have special value but only in certain cultures. For example, on the islands of Malakula and Ambrym, hermaphrodite pigs have no cultural value. They are known to exist and there are names for them in their language but there is no ritual use for them. But in the island of Ambae, Maewo, northern and central parts of Pentecost, eastern parts of Santo and in parts of the Banks Islands,

hermaphrodite pigs are very highly valuable for ritual purposes and they're worth more than an ordinary castrated male tusker pig. Their tusks grow differently. People who are into pigs such as the ni-Vanuatu can actually tell just by looking at the tusks if it comes from a castrated male pig or if it is from a hermaphrodite pig. The hermaphrodite pig's tusk has a different type of sheen to it.

Hermaphrodite pigs are worth a lot more for ritual purposes than ordinary tusker pigs. For example, if a man wants to purchase a particular type of social rank on one particular island, say North Pentecost or Ambae, for that particular rank he might need five full tusker castrated male pigs. But if he has one or two hermaphrodite pigs with full tusks, that is the same as the five full tusker castrated male pigs.

Hermaphrodite pigs tend to be a bit more time consuming. Some people say that their tusks are a little more fragile. You have to look after them quite a bit because if you let them run wild they'll bang into a tree and break the tusks. If a tusk is broken that is it. Even if traditionally out here where tusker pigs are valued, you might have for example the most giant pig ever seen on earth but if the tusks are not that long, its not worth a thing. If you have got a really scrawny pig that is so thin it can hardly move but its tusks go around twice, that's it, you're in the White House.

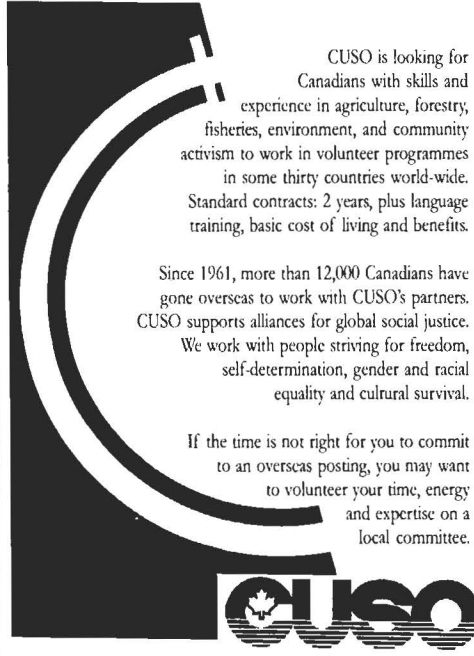
With the woven pandanus money mats, a person can actually buy pigs or with one pig of a particular age or size he can buy money mats. They are interchangeable in some areas. The good thing about these types of currency is that they are self-sufficient. There is no worrying

about overseas business. Also modern money doesn't have the same cultural weight as traditional money. If somebody loses ten-thousand vatu, it is not the same as losing a pig worth the same amount of money. If a person loses a pig worth the same amount of money, that's a real problem.

There is no general sort of common form of currency that is useful for everything except, shell money and certain types of the mat money in the northern islands. A group of people in the northern island are very smart. They are a bit fed up with modern money. The value of modern currency depends upon what happens overseas. So what they have done is set up their own banking system in northern Pentecost. They have created a system where they have their own bankbooks written in their own language. They have a certain type of script that only they themselves can understand. In their system, all the traditional forms of currency are interchangeable.

If a person wants to send their child to school in northern Pentecost and doesn't have modern money, he or she can bring in money mats to the bank and they will change it into modern money and pay the school fees. If they don't have the money mats for a ritual but they have a pig, they will bring in the pig and exchange it for money mats. The bank will find the mats and give them the mats and in turn, the bank will keep the pig. This is a system that was started just a few years ago. All the currency systems are interchangeable: money mats, pigs and modern money. It seems to work very well. The way I see that is it's the ideal system out here.

Kirk Huffman is the former curator of the Vanuatu Kaljoral Senta (Cultural Center).



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Pacific Islands Museums Association

by Jodi Bacchiochi



The Pacific Islands cover 1/3 of the earth's surface and are home to 1/2 of the world's languages. Stemming from these two facts one can imagine how diverse and multi-faceted this region is. Try to imagine the Pacific Island youth knowing nothing about their culture...it won't happen because of the dedication and persistence from the people in the region. This is what the Pacific Islands Museums Association (PIMA) is setting out to do in collecting, documenting and preserving the oral traditions, strengthening and gathering resources for training and advocacy, and promoting excellence in heritage management.

Pacific peoples have celebrated cultural contacts for millenia. Museums and cultural centres were only an added innovation of the late 20th century. Following on from many contacts, PIMA was officially incorporated as a non-profit organisation in Fiji in 1999. Members of the association consist of museums, cultural centres, profit and non-profit organisations and individuals which support the PIMA vision, aims and activities. To be a member of PIMA is to become a part of the team for the preservation and growth of the heritage of the Pacific Islands.

This year PIMA will be active on a regional and international level. In collaboration with two PIMA member institutions, PIMA will coordinate two regional workshops: Conservation and Design of a Travelling Exhibition, Noumea, New Caledonia October 9-20, 2000; and Preservation and Copying of Audiovisual Collections, Vanuatu Nov 27-Dec.1, 2000.

Another fascinating initiative is the PIMA/CUSO project which is trying to be arranged. It will involve two Pacific Islanders doing internships in two Canadian Museums with Pacific Collections in their holdings. The museums are the Redpath Museum in

Montreal, Quebec and the Museum of Anthropology at the University of British Columbia, Vancouver. These two institutions are particularly interested in hosting people from the Pacific because their founding collections are from the Pacific and they have already commenced to create a network of collaboration through PIMA in the past two years. Therefore, with CUSO's assistance both Canada and the Pacific will benefit from this cultural and skills exchange.

One of the major aims of the internship is to assist in researching, documenting and organising the host institutions exhibitions for 2001, a symposium, and a book about the museums' Pacific collections, which will eventually travel to the Pacific. Part of the interns' programme is to share their experience with other heritage specialist in the Pacific by facilitating the PIMA Workshop #5 in Noumea 2000 Oct 9-20 "Conservation and Design of A Travelling Exhibition". As well as assisting in the exhibition, the interns will be working with artists in the Pacific and cultural leaders on some issues such as intellectual property rights.

PIMA workshops, meetings and activities are forums for innovation, the sharing of ideas, and the development of shared philosophy, policies, practises and actions. Our quarterly **PIMA News** serves the same purpose, publicising PIMA events and other

events of interest to the Pacific, and providing practical advice on fundraising, conservation and curatorship. **PIMA News** features a rotation of stories on all museums and cultural centres of the Pacific.

The PIMA website <www.pacificislandsmuseum.org> adds further up-to-the minute communications and marketing for PIMA and museum products. PIMA is building further services to its members, on site conservation work at individual member museums, advisory services and travelling exhibits.

PIMA's future is very promising, with its members playing a leading role in shaping it. Both institutions and individuals in the Pacific Islands have voting rights, and input and participation are sought from around the world. Finally, the museums and cultural institutions in the Pacific have PIMA as a voice.

For more information on PIMA contact the PIMA Secretariat Office c/o Fiji Museum, P.O. Box 2023, Suva, Fiji, tel 679 315 944, fax 679 305 143, jodib@pacificislandsmuseum.org

Jodi Bacchiochi is a Canadian who is currently working for the PIMA Secretariat. She is a graduate of the Cultural Resource Management Programme from the University of Victoria, Canada.



Women in Fisheries

By Jennifer Robinson

Unpaid work by women isn't unimportant work, say women involved in fisheries throughout the South Pacific. In fact, women's traditional roles in Pacific societies are often a bonus in helping conserve marine wildlife. Although statistics show women play a vital role in the economies of Pacific Island countries, women say they are struggling to have their say in community fisheries management because governments, industry, and banks often don't recognize their informal day-to-day fishing activities as work. Women are therefore less able to receive loans for creating small businesses; less likely to receive skills training in industrialized positions; and less likely to be reached with valuable information about conservation practices.

"It is a challenge to convince planners, policy makers,



A Fijian woman proudly displays her catch at the market place in Suva. An estimated 45.3 per cent of Fijian women are involved in some aspect of the fishery (Robinson photo).

government and communities that what women do are essential tasks although much of what they do may be 'unpaid' work," said Vina Ram-Bidesi of the Women in Fisheries Network during a recent two-day workshop on women in fisheries management.

The workshop balanced the practical experiences of the village women along with the scientific knowledge of field researchers, said workshop co-organizer and Canada-South Pacific Ocean Development (C-SPOD) Programme II field programme coordinator Dr. Kenneth Mackay. The workshop achieved the mixture by bringing together 20 women from villages all over Fiji, NGO workers and academics through the sponsorship of the C-SPOD Programme. "Fisheries and oceans are very important to women in the Pacific," Mackay said. "They supply food and income to many rural women and women are involved in harvesting, processing, and marketing. But, their role is often overlooked by governments and development projects."

Along with drawing regional attention to their struggle, the workshop also helped focus international eyes on the importance of Pacific Islands women in fisheries management, said Aliti Vunisea, an organizer of the Women in Fisheries Network. "It was important for the conference organizers to recognize



women," she said. "They felt important and acknowledged. They felt like what goes on at the village level does have an impact at the international level."

The significance of the fisheries to Pacific Islanders cannot be underestimated. Not only does the ocean provide food; it is also an important source of income and employment, explained Ram-Bidesi. However, that way of life is becoming threatened by human activities, such as over-harvesting.

In a traditional setting, women who glean from reefs and fish to feed their families have power to influence village leaders, such as their husbands, and take part in women's village committees. But, as women move away from subsistence and artisanal fishing into a more industrialized workplace the type of work they perform becomes limited. They then become marginalized into low paying unskilled jobs and overlooked for promotion and training, which reduces their control and influence over the decision making process.

Since market forces determine wages, and jobs assigned to women require few skills, women are often the most vulnerable group of workers in the labour market. "Women don't have the bargaining power," Ram-Bidesi said. "Women are really the backbone of the industry, but they bear the instability of market conditions."

According to the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC) Fisheries Section, determining how many women are involved in aspects of fishing in the South Pacific is a difficult task because no statistics have been compiled at a regional level. In Fiji, SPC statistics show women are the dominant producers and sellers of shellfish, crustaceans, molluscs and seaweed. In a recent study by N.J.F. Rawlinson, 45.3 per cent of Fijian women surveyed were involved in fishing, making them the most active fishing group in the country.

Some Pacific countries are starting to sit up and take notice of the role fisher women can play in helping conserve vital and steadily depleting marine resources. In Samoa, the government has introduced a community-based approach to fisheries management. Not only does the programme encourage villagers to manage and conserve their inshore fishery resources and promote offshore fishing; it also recognizes the ongoing conservation work of women.

"The village fisheries programme has observed that women in villages are very active in village



A Fijian woman preparing to package a string of shelled sea clams during the Saturday morning rush at the Suva marketplace (Robinson photo).

fisheries conservation," said Iulia Kelekolio of the Samoa Fisheries Division. "Women influence others by their actions and by providing advice to their husbands about conservation issues." The efforts of the Samoan women are paying off. They are securing the use of traditional beliefs in resolving arguments and are learning the value of marine protected areas through their cooperation and teamwork. Now, when fishing rules are broken, women are usually the people who discipline the rule breakers.

Despite the recent regional and international attention, women in the Pacific still face an uphill battle in having their work and roles in fisheries management recognized. More funding is needed for skills training at the village level, as well as more interactions and

cooperation between researchers and the women they're trying to help, said Vunisea. Presently, the Women in Fisheries Network is attempting to raise funds for workshops on skills training and developing small businesses. "It's up to the network to encourage the women and share our research," she said. "If we don't, we're not really helping them."

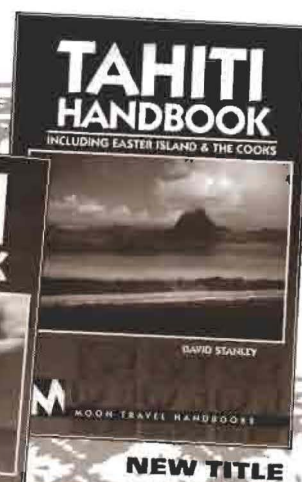
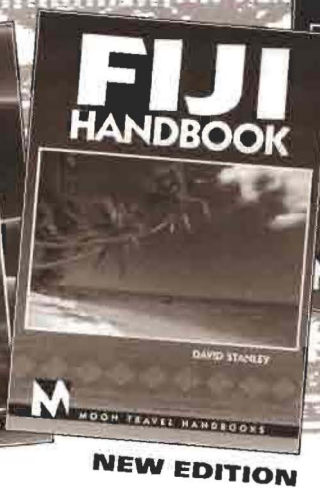
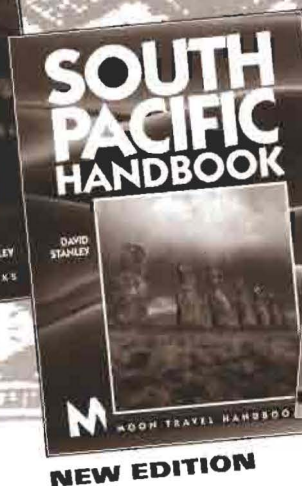
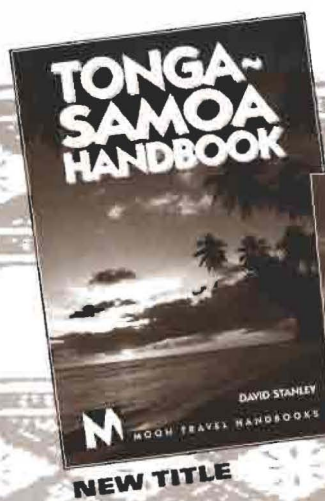
Formed in 1993, the Women in Fisheries Network is a collection of women and men interested in protecting and promoting women's work in fisheries. Aside from the conference workshop, the group also has recently run workshops for rural women in Fiji.

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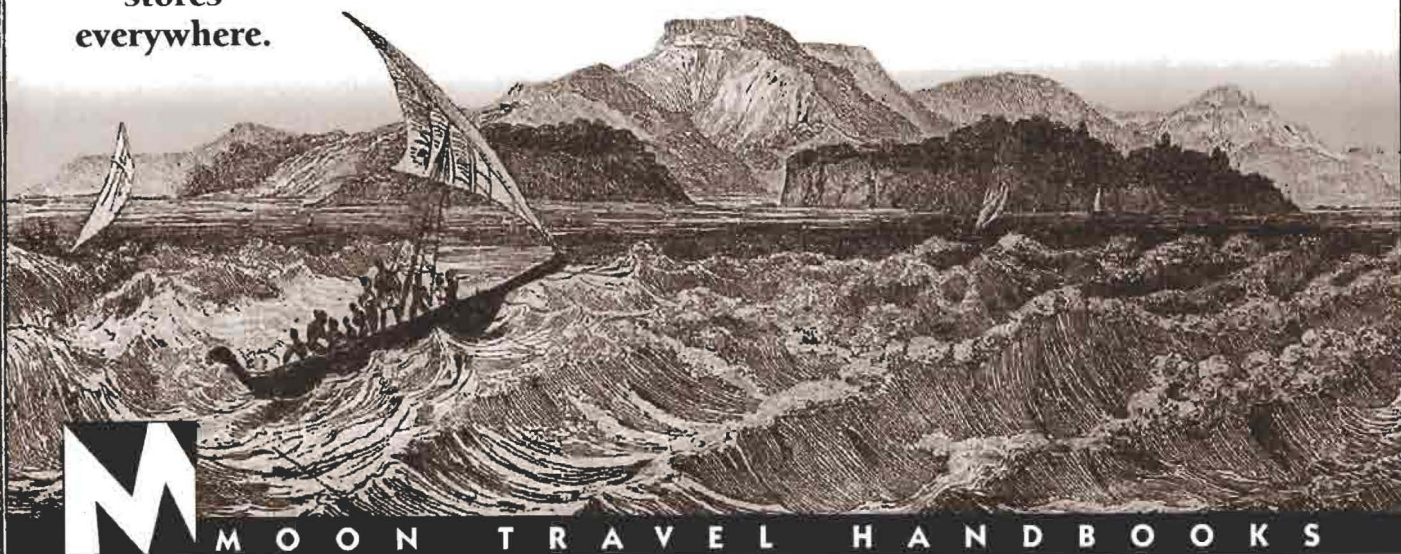
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