

entirely representative of the Kiribati musical or dance repertoire. You would not know from *Akekeia!* that people in South Tarawa love rock, country, and techno music and performing te twiti in both mwaneaba and night-club (te twiti, or the “twist,” is the generic term for western-style dancing). You would not know that people on many islands perform and enjoy Cook Islands, Fijian, Tuvaluan, and Tahitian-style dances to taped music. Yes, “traditional” dance is very important, but people practice and consume a whole range of musical forms in addition to the “things of the land.”

Similarly, if Kiribati dance is bai n abara, what is Kiribati dance in Fiji, or in Aotearoa New Zealand in the middle of winter at the Police Academy at Porirua? Like in any diasporic community, I-Kiribati practice their culture on new lands and in new social, political, and cultural environments. This emphasizes the growing recognition that while culture and identity are rooted in specific indigenous locations, they travel and live on in similar and different ways through the bodies, voices, and practices of peoples living in all kinds of places.

KATERINA MARTINA TEAIWA  
*University of Hawai'i, Mānoa*

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*Seksek 'e Hatana / Strolling on Hatana: Traditions of Rotuma and its Dependencies, with excerpts from an archaeologist's field notebook*, edited by Aubrey L Parke. Suva: Institute of Pacific Studies, University of the South Pacific, 2001. ISBN 982-02-0323-6; 308 pages, map, photographs, Rotuman and English, glossary, bibliography, index. Paper, US\$37.00.

*Kato'aga: Rotuman Ceremonies*, by Elizabeth K Inia. Edited and typeset by Alan Howard and Jan Rensel. Suva: Institute of Pacific Studies, University of the South Pacific, 2001. ISBN 982-02-0341-4; 266 pages, Rotuman and English, pronunciation guide, map, photographs, appendixes, notes, glossary. Paper, US\$14.00.

These two books offer readers glimpses of Rotuman narrative and ceremonial practices. *Seksek 'e Hatana* begins the task of creating a cultural geography by tying oral traditions to the landscape of Rotuma and its off-shore islets, while *Kato'aga* details the occasions and customs associated with collective celebrations. Both works contain some materials in the Rotuman language with translation into English and provide a glossary at the end of the volume. Each work also provides an overview of indigenous spiritual beliefs essential as an encompassing framework for interpreting the descriptions of events and translations of the verbal arts. Parke opens with this section, while Inia appends it to her chapters.

Inia herself is a Rotuman, who is reporting from extensive personal experience and a review of pertinent literature (although a conventional

bibliography does not appear in her volume). Parke is currently an archaeologist affiliated with Australian National University, who was posted to Rotuma as district officer in 1964. He gathered the material for *Seksek 'e Hatana* at that time, working closely with local residents who are acknowledged at the outset of the work as its authors. Elizabeth Inia is included in this list and mentioned specifically for assisting in acquiring materials for Parke's collection. Both Parke and Inia in their respective contributions are aiming primarily to provide resources for Rotumans who may wish to consult this material in contemporary times, although interested scholars and lay readers will find information of value as well.

Inia divides her book into two main parts. The first focuses on components of ceremony describing material culture, local technologies, excerpts of botanical knowledge, sociopolitical structures, gendered responsibilities, and means of officially reckoning contributions of food and mats produced for collective events. Some of these components are illustrated photographically. She then launches into descriptions of various classes of ceremony, including those marking the life cycle occasions such as death and birth with which she opens Part Two. An accounting of traditional marriage rituals and modern marriage customs concludes the second part of the book. In between, Inia addresses recovery from illness or the end of punishment for transgression. These occasions are marked publicly to prevent recurrence. Ceremonies to heal, farewells and welcoming, installation of chiefs, collective means of paying homage, and special festivities for marking

highly significant events, most recently associated with Christianity, are all included.

Each descriptive segment in Inia's work attends to the order of events, the proper etiquette for organizing and implementing collective practices, relevant information and means for communicating this, and the symbolic significances of some specific practices. Where appropriate, the place of kava ceremonies within the larger set of activities is addressed. Ritual pronouncements, chants, and musical lyrics are given in Rotuman and translated into English. The functional significance of these verbal arts is usually noted, but without further interpretation their symbolic import beyond the fact of their performance at particular moments remains unclear. Photographs usefully illustrate features of funerals, chiefly installations, paying homage, the special festival called koua puha, and weddings.

Two appendixes and a glossary close Inia's work. These are valuable components of the whole. The first appendix addresses indigenous spirituality, explaining relevant vocabulary, classes of spirits, conceptual frameworks, and the cosmological imprint on land- and seascapes. A helpful map locates the many named underworlds. The introduction of Christianity, connections between new and old religions, and the implications of change are briefly addressed. Appendix 2 offers a series of ceremonial poetic texts, many of them composed by Inia herself. These are worthy in and of themselves, but as with the texts included in the main body of the book, they stand uninterpreted. Their value will be enhanced by future

attention to the figurative tropes, aesthetics of style and genre, and performance. As a whole, Inia's work, as she intends, offers opportunity for Rotumans to reflect on their practices, to debate traditions, and to consider alternative accounts and interpretations. She imagines her community rooted in common heritage yet facing the challenges of modernity. *Kato'aga* is constituted as a resource for Rotumans to use as they continue to articulate their past(s) with present moments.

Following an overview of the spirit world, Parke organizes his material in eighteen chapters. These focus on origin myths, death, the spirit world, classes of supernatural beings, and their relations with humans. He has a section on warfare with chapters following on supernatural warrior beings. Mythical stories of interactions among various creatures and of interactions and interbreeding among humans and animals are the focus of three chapters. Supernatural features of houses and caves are the topic of chapter 14. Chapters 15 and 16 briefly detail isolated features of weddings, kava ceremonies, chiefly hierarchy, subsistence strategies, and technology. Short discussions of other customs, including music and dance, proper decorum, and signs or omens are included. Chapter 17 lists notable landmarks for which little information is available. The final chapter briefly compares the spirit worlds of Fijians and Rotumans. Parke mentions a declining interest in the spirit world on the part of Rotumans and raises the possibility of Fijian influence on Rotumans' changing systems of belief.

Most sections of Parke's book

present a brief orienting discussion followed by a series of narratives, sometimes given in Rotuman with an English translation; at other times only an English language version is included. There is little interpretive discussion or contextual information beyond the name of the narrator or collector of a tale. Although diverse genres are represented, Parke does not explicitly differentiate among the types of Rotuman verbal arts. Field notes describing Parke's visits to sites mentioned in a group of narratives may be added and sometimes descriptions of relevant conversations or interviews with Rotumans as well as accounts of witnessed events will accompany the narratives. Parke makes little attempt beyond juxtaposition to integrate these diverse sources of information. The reader will benefit by returning to each chapter several times in order to piece together disparate elements. A map and some valuable photographs are included at the beginning of the book, but the quality of production and detail is poor. Especially given Parke's interest in the landscape, a series of maps locating the sites discussed would have been an important addition. Later chapters emphasize brief ethnographic vignettes over local narrative. Despite interpretive shortcomings, this volume is a useful archive that should prove especially beneficial for readers with independent cultural and historical background.

A comparison of Inia's and Parke's volumes proves enlightening. They have similar interests and acknowledge common collegial ties and scholarly influences. Both have compiled collections of Rotuman sayings in previous works. Their present

books each adopt a style of encyclopedic or dictionary-like entries. They overlap in their attention in these works to Rotuman spirituality and connections with the landscape. They are in agreement on the basic information for categories of spirits and their relations to humanity, though each moves in directions not taken by the other even on shared topics. As such, the works complement one another and add to a growing literature on beliefs and practices of mid-to-late-twentieth-century Rotumans.

Given the pervasive language and culture shifts ongoing in Oceania and, in particular, the changes taking place among Rotumans both at home and abroad, these volumes are of special significance as repositories primarily outlining recent past practices, beliefs, and cultural geography, available for use as present interests may dictate.

JANET DIXON KELLER  
*University of Illinois,  
 Urbana-Champaign*

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*Cargo Cult as Theater: Political Performance in the Pacific*, by Dorothy K Billings. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2002. ISBN 0-7391-0238-9; x + 267 pages, maps, photographs, notes, bibliography, index. Cloth, US\$90.00.

One Melanesian cargo cult hit prime-time news in 1964. The 22 June issue of Newsweek breathlessly asked, “What Price LBJ?” The article went on to report that people on New Hanover, in Papua New Guinea’s Bismarck Archipelago, had raised money to “‘buy’ President [Lyndon

Baines] Johnson, who would then rule the island—bringing with him, of course, cargoes of Hershey bars, cigarettes, and other luxuries. Before long, followers had given . . . \$987 to make an early purchase of LBJ.” This was, of course, four months before the November 1964 elections in which Johnson would wallop Barry Goldwater, the choice, not the echo. One senses underneath the cute story of befuddled Islanders trying first to vote for, and then to “buy” LBJ an early, oblique critique of Johnson’s “Great Society” that would treat poverty with welfare subsidies. Some years later, the Johnson cult also made it onto the cover of a trashier publication, *The Weekly World News*, its headline: “wacky tribe thinks that former prez LBJ” is their “big-eared god.”

Anthropologists, too, interested themselves in cargo cult. Dorothy Billings arrived in 1965 to check out the scene. But Australian administrators headquartered in Kavieng, New Ireland, refused to let her onto New Hanover. She set up shop instead in administratively approved Mangai village, about thirty miles down the road from Kavieng. Billings eventually received permission to go to New Hanover during a second fieldtrip, in 1967, and she returned to the region another seven times between then and 1998. She built these doubled field sites into a career, exploring stylistic contrasts between individualistic, competitive New Hanover and communitarian, egalitarian New Ireland.

Overviews of Melanesian cargo cults have commonly featured the Johnson cult, but this is the first comprehensive description of the movement. Billings combines the story of