

Annual Editions

ANTHROPOLOGY



93/94

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93/94

Editor

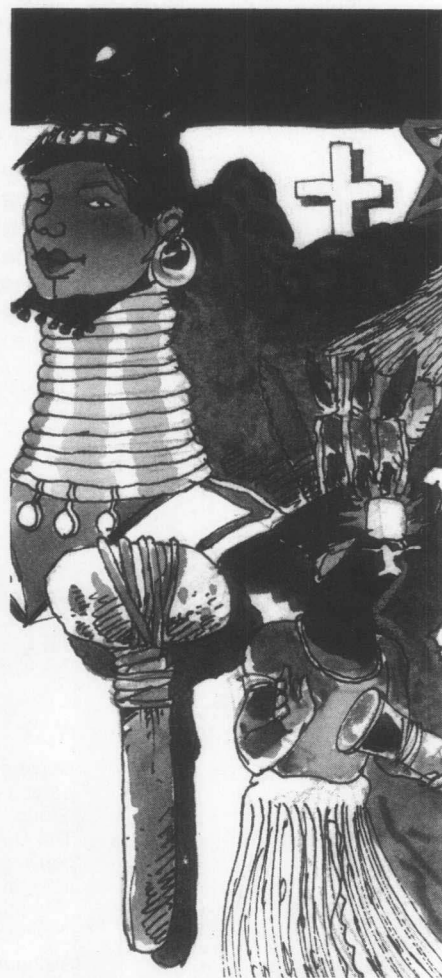
Elvio Angeloni
Pasadena City College

Elvio Angeloni received his B.A. from UCLA in 1963, his M.A. in anthropology from UCLA in 1965, and his M.A. in communication arts from Loyola Marymount University in 1976. He has produced several films, including "Little Warrior," winner of the Cinemedia VI Best Bicentennial Theme, and "Broken Bottles," shown on PBS. He most recently served as an academic advisor on the instructional television series "Faces of Culture."

Cover illustration by Mike Eagle

Sixteenth Edition

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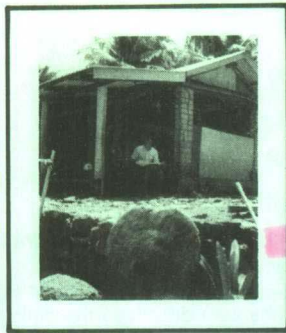
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Sixteenth Edition

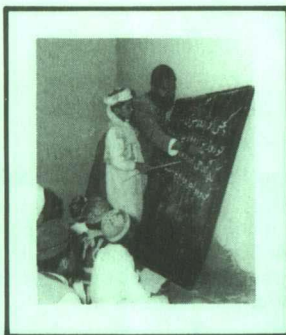
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Unit 1

Anthropological Perspectives

Five selections examine the role of anthropologists in studying different cultures. The innate problems in developing productive relationships between anthropologists and exotic cultures are considered by reviewing a number of fieldwork experiences.



Unit 2

Culture and Communication

Six selections discuss communication as an element of culture. Ingrained social and cultural values have a tremendous effect on an individual's perception or interpretation of both verbal and nonverbal communication.

Topic Guide Overview

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1. **Once Upon a Time**, Martha C. Ward, from *Nest in the Wind*, Waveland Press, Inc., 1989.

6

While doing **fieldwork** in an exotic setting, an anthropologist usually experiences **culture shock**—the challenge to not only understand, but to live, a radically different **life-style**.

2. **Doctor, Lawyer, Indian Chief**, Richard Kurin, *Natural History*, November 1980.

15

In transforming an anthropologist into one of their own, villagers of Punjab say, "You never really know who a man is until you know who his grandfather and his ancestors were." In this way, Richard Kurin finds, selecting a village for **fieldwork** is a matter of mutual acceptance and mutual **economic** benefit.

3. **Amazon Journey**, D. Werner, from *Amazon Journey: An Anthropologist's Year Among Brazil's Mekranoti Indians*, Prentice-Hall, 1990.

20

A very first **field experience** is not just a struggle to overcome the physical elements and **cultural barriers**. One must also deal with self-doubts and preconceptions.

4. **Eating Christmas in the Kalahari**, Richard Borshay Lee, *Natural History*, December 1969.

26

Anthropologist Richard Borshay Lee gives an account of the misunderstanding and confusion that often accompany the **cross-cultural experience**. In this case, he violated a basic principle of the !Kung Bushmen's social relations—**food sharing**.

5. **Celebrating Impermanence: Gypsies in a Spanish City**, Miriam Lee Kaprow, from *The Naked Anthropologist*, Wadsworth, Inc., 1992.

30

Contrary to her **anthropological expectations**, Miriam Lee Kaprow found that the Gypsies of Spain avoided orderliness, consistency, and commitment to **tradition**. Even **individualism**, she discovered, can be institutionalized.

Overview

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6. **The World's Language**, Bill Bryson, from *The Mother Tongue*, William Morrow & Company, Inc., 1990.

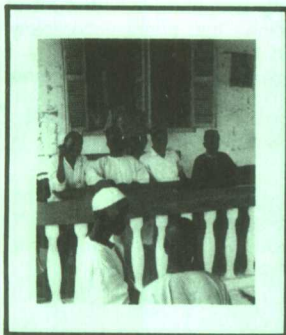
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English has become the most global of **languages**. Its ability to express subtlety of **thought** combined with a simplicity of **grammatical structure** and **pronunciation** has contributed to its becoming one of the greatest growth industries of our time.

7. **Language, Appearance, and Reality: Doublespeak in 1984**, William D. Lutz, *Et Cetera*, Winter 1987.

43

When **language** is used to alter our perception of reality, its main function—that of **communication** between people and social groups—is in grave danger.



Unit 3

The Organization of Society and Culture

Five selections discuss the influence of the environment and culture on the organization of the social structure of groups.

8. **Shakespeare in the Bush**, Laura Bohannon, *Natural History*, August/September 1966. 48

It is often claimed that great literature has **cross-cultural** significance. In this article, Laura Bohannon describes the difficulties she encountered and the lessons she learned as she attempted to relate the story of *Hamlet* to the Tiv of West Africa in their own language.

9. **Navigating Nigerian Bureaucracies; or "Why Can't You Beg?" She Demanded**, Elizabeth A. Eames, from *The Naked Anthropologist*, Wadsworth, Inc., 1992. 53

In wending her way through Nigerian **bureaucracies**, Elizabeth Eames expected efficiency, impartiality, and fairness. Instead, she found that the only way to get anything done was to pursue friendly **personal encounters** based upon **mutual obligation**.

10. **Who's Interrupting? Issues of Dominance and Control**, Deborah Tannen, from *You Just Don't Understand*, William Morrow & Company, Inc., 1990. 57

Gender differences in **conversational style** have more to do with dominance, control, and showing interest in others than does the question of who interrupts whom.

11. **The F Word**, Valerie Steele, *Lingua Franca*, April 1991. 66

Even as academics deny the importance of **fashion** in the clothes they wear, stylistic choices seem to express certain **values**, ranging from an Angelican upper-class tradition to an American free-spirited proletarianism.

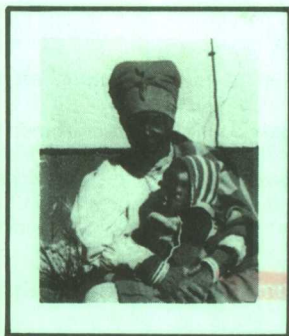
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12. **Lessons in Living From the Stone Age**, Vilhjalmur Stefansson, *Harper's*, July 1939. 72

While somewhat antiquated in its language, this account of **Eskimos** (Inuit) during and after first contact shows them to be a simple, direct, and **humane people**—at least until they came under the influence of the **modern market system**.

13. **The Blood in Their Veins**, Farley Mowat, from *The Snow Walker*, Little, Brown, & Company, 1975. 77

They did what had to be done, to the point of forgiving what otherwise could not have been forgiven. This was the way of **survival** in traditional Inuit (Eskimo) culture—until its last flickering moments.

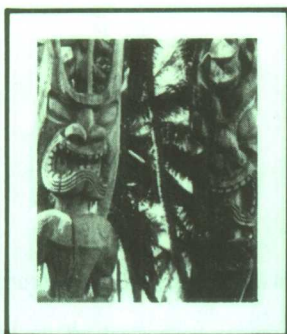


Unit 4

Other Families, Other Ways

Five selections examine some of the influences on the family structure of different cultures. The strength of the family unit is affected by both economic and social pressures.

14. **Mystique of the Masai**, Ettagale Blauer, *The World & I*, March 1987. 83
Living in the midst of tourist traffic and straddling two nations struggling to modernize, the Masai have retained their **traditional culture** longer than virtually any other group of people in East Africa.
 15. **Life Without Chiefs**, Marvin Harris, *New Age Journal*, November/December 1989. 91
Modern-day **egalitarian** bands of **hunters** share their food—and their **political power**—as did their forebears. But when **agriculture** was invented, people settled down, produced surpluses, and began to accumulate **private property**. As control of a group's resources fell to select individuals, **big men**, **chiefs**, and—with time—presidents emerged.
 16. **Strings Attached**, Lee Cronk, *The Sciences*, May/June 1989. 96
In some societies, **gift giving** represents a tie between friends and a way of maintaining **good relationships**. In others, it is an elaborate and expensive means to **dominate** one's rivals.
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- | | | |
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| 17. Memories of a !Kung Girlhood , Marjorie Shostak, <i>Human Nature</i> , June 1978. | | 102 |
| A woman of the hunter-gatherers recalls her childhood . Her remembrances are a reflection of a fading way of life as well as a reminder of the basic humanity that we all share. | | |
| 18. When Brothers Share a Wife , Melvyn C. Goldstein, <i>Natural History</i> , March 1987. | | 107 |
| While the custom of fraternal polyandry relegated many Tibetan women to spinsterhood, this unusual marriage form promoted personal security and economic well-being for its participants. | | |
| 19. Young Traders of Northern Nigeria , Enid Schildkrout, <i>Natural History</i> , June 1981. | | 111 |
| In Hausa society, women live in strict Muslim seclusion. Children , who are free from the rigid segregation that so restricts adults, play an active and indispensable economic role. | | |



Unit 6

Religion, Belief, and Ritual

Seven selections examine the role of ritual, religion, and belief in a culture. The need to develop a religion is universal among societies.

Overview

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26. **Psychotherapy in Africa**, Thomas Adeoye Lambo, *Human Nature*, March 1978. 150

In spite of the technological advances and material benefits of **modern medicine**, **traditional healing** methods are found to more effectively cope with the psychological and social aspects of illness. When the old and the new forms of treatment are combined, the consequences are beneficial for both the individual and society.

27. **The Mbuti Pygmies: Change and Adaptation**, Colin M. Turnbull, from *The Mbuti Pygmies: Change and Adaptation*, Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1983. 156

Although informal in appearance, the **ritual** life of the Mbuti Pygmies provides individuals with deep feelings of personal security, individual responsibility, and overall **social equality**.

28. **The Initiation of a Maasai Warrior**, Tepilit Ole Saitoti, from *The Worlds of a Maasai Warrior*, Random House, 1986. 159

In virtually every society, there are certain rites or ceremonies that are used to signify adulthood. This article describes the Maasai circumcision ceremony that **initiates an individual** into **adulthood**.

29. **The Real Vampire**, Paul Barber, *Natural History*, October 1990. 164

The lore of the **undead** in European history is based upon a combination of eyewitness accounts, imaginative dreams, and the sheer terror of unexplained death.

30. **Rituals of Death**, Elizabeth D. Purdum and J. Anthony Paredes, from *Facing the Death Penalty: Essays on a Cruel and Unusual Punishment*, Temple University Press, 1989. 168

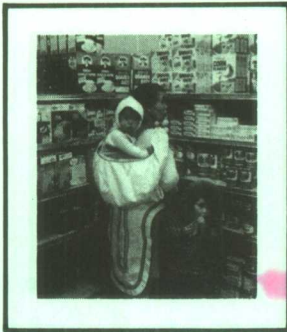
In a parallel manner, **capital punishment** in the United States and **human sacrifice** among the Aztecs have a similar social function: to assure citizens that society is not out of control, and that God is indeed in his heaven.

31. **To Kiss**, Vaughn M. Bryant, Jr. and Sylvia Grider, *The World & I*, December 1991. 175

Mixing the Celtic belief in the **magical powers** of the **mistletoe** with the Roman custom of sealing a **betrothal** with a **kiss** has resulted, for some modern-day peoples, in a very spicy concoction.

32. **Body Ritual Among the Nacirema**, Horace Miner, *American Anthropologist*, June 1956. 179

The **ritual** beliefs and **taboos** of the Nacirema provide us with a test case of the objectivity of ethnographic description and show us the extremes to which human behavior can go.



Unit 7

Sociocultural Change: The Impact of the West

Eleven articles examine the influence that the developed world has had on primitive cultures. Exposure to the industrial West often has disastrous effects on the delicate balance of a primitive society.

Overview

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33. **Death and Taxes**, Samuel M. Wilson, *Natural History*, April 1991. 184

Throughout history, **governments** have lived off the surplus produced by the populace, but for New World peoples the apparent inevitability of death and **taxes** was all too literal.

34. **Tribal Warfare**, R. Brian Ferguson, *Scientific American*, January 1992. 186

Contact between Europeans and Native Americans may have shattered a delicate balance that had existed among local tribes. One result was widespread **violence**.

35. **Why Can't People Feed Themselves?** Frances Moore Lappé and Joseph Collins, from *Food First: Beyond the Myth of Scarcity*, Random House, 1977. 192

When **colonial** governments force the conversion of **subsistence** farms to **cash crop** plantations, peasants are driven into marginal lands or into a large pool of cheap labor. In either case, the authors maintain, they are no longer able to feed themselves.

36. **Growing Up as a Fore**, E. Richard Sorenson, *Smithsonian*, May 1977. 197

In the context of a bountiful **subsistence system**, Fore **children** were taught spontaneous expression and exploratory freedom. Hidden within this receptive character, however, was an Achilles' heel, for it permitted the willing adoption of a **cash crop economy** and a consequent reformulation of the identity and practices of the Fore.

37. **The Transformation of the Kalahari !Kung**, John E. Yellen, *Scientific American*, April 1990. 202

After centuries of stability, an apparent relic of ancient **hunting and gathering** groups is abandoning many of its traditional ways. In doing so, it reveals a pattern of **social change** that may help to explain the disappearance of foraging peoples throughout the world.

38. **Civilization and Its Discontents**, Katharine Milton, *Natural History*, March 1992. 209

When forest-dwelling Indians are exposed to manufactured goods, it is love at first sight. The honeymoon is soon over, however, as a continuous supply of **material possessions** brings about the deterioration of their **health** and **traditional culture**.

39. **Dark Dreams About the White Man**, Thomas Gregor, *Natural History*, January 1983. 213

Although the culture of the Mehinaku Indians remains intact, their inner tranquility has been laid to waste by increased **cross-cultural interaction** with Brazilians. This is illustrated by Mehinaku **dreams** that are haunted by the white man.

40. **A People at Risk**, Peter Gorman, *The World & I*, November 1991. 217

The lure of gold has drawn hordes of miners onto Yanomami lands. Along with the miners has come a **ecological** nightmare and the prospect of tribal **extinction**.

41. **Lost Tribes, Lost Knowledge**, Eugene Linden, *Time*, September 23, 1991. 222

Preserving **tribal wisdom** is increasingly being recognized as not only the key to saving traditional peoples and their lands, but also makes good **science** and good **business**.

42. **Bicultural Conflict**, Betty Lee Sung, *The World & I*, August 1989. 228

In describing the **cultural conflicts** endured by Chinese immigrant children in America, Betty Lee Sung provides us with a better understanding of where China has been and where America is going.

43. **Easter Island: Scary Parable**, Louise B. Young, *World Monitor*, August 1991. 236

Although the people of Easter Island nearly destroyed their **habitat** and themselves, the decline of their mysterious culture contains a stunning lesson for all of humanity.

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To the Reader

In publishing ANNUAL EDITIONS we recognize the enormous role played by the magazines, newspapers, and journals of the *public press* in providing current, first-rate educational information in a broad spectrum of interest areas. Within the articles, the best scientists, practitioners, researchers, and commentators draw issues into new perspective as accepted theories and viewpoints are called into account by new events, recent discoveries change old facts, and fresh debate breaks out over important controversies.

Many of the articles resulting from this enormous editorial effort are appropriate for students, researchers, and professionals seeking accurate, current material to help bridge the gap between principles and theories and the real world. These articles, however, become more useful for study when those of lasting value are carefully collected, organized, indexed, and reproduced in a low-cost format, which provides easy and permanent access when the material is needed. That is the role played by *Annual Editions*.

Under the direction of each volume's Editor, who is an expert in the subject area, and with the guidance of an Advisory Board, we seek each year to provide in each ANNUAL EDITION a current, well-balanced, carefully selected collection of the best of the public press for your study and enjoyment. We think you'll find this volume useful, and we hope you'll take a moment to let us know what you think.

The sixteenth edition of *Annual Editions: Anthropology* contains a variety of articles on contemporary issues in social and cultural anthropology. In contrast to the broad range of topics and minimum depth typical of standard textbooks, this anthology provides an opportunity to read firsthand accounts by anthropologists of their own research. By allowing scholars to speak for themselves about the issues on which they are expert, we are better able to understand the kinds of questions anthropologists ask, the ways in which they ask them, and how they go about searching for answers. Where there is disagreement among anthropologists, this format allows readers to draw their own conclusions.

Given the very broad scope of anthropology—in time, space, and subject matter—the present collection of highly readable articles has been selected according to certain criteria. The articles have been chosen from both professional and nonprofessional publications for the purpose of supplementing the standard cultural anthropology textbook that is used in introductory courses. Some of the articles are considered classics in the field, while others have been selected for their timely relevance.

Included in this volume are a number of features designed to be useful for students, researchers, and professionals in the field of anthropology. While the articles are arranged along the lines of broadly unifying themes, the *topic guide* can be used to establish specific reading assignments tailored to the needs of a particular course of study. Other useful features include the *table of contents abstracts*, which summarize each article and present key concepts in bold italics, and a comprehensive *index*. In addition, each unit is preceded by an overview that provides a background for informed reading of the articles, emphasizes critical issues, and presents *challenge questions*.

Annual Editions: Anthropology 93/94 will continue to be updated annually. Those involved in producing this volume wish to make the next one as useful and effective as possible. Your criticism and advice are welcomed. Please fill out the article rating form on the last page of the book and let us know your opinions. Any anthology can be improved. This continues to be—annually.



Elvio Angeloni
Editor

Topic Guide

This topic guide suggests how the selections in this book relate to topics of traditional concern to students and professionals involved with the study of anthropology. It can be very useful in locating articles that relate to each other for reading and research. The guide is arranged alphabetically according to topic. Articles may, of course, treat topics that do not appear in the topic guide. In turn, entries in the topic guide do not necessarily constitute a comprehensive listing of all the contents of each selection.

TOPIC AREA	TREATED IN:	TOPIC AREA	TREATED IN:
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TOPIC AREA	TREATED IN:	TOPIC AREA	TREATED IN:
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Anthropological Perspectives

For at least a century the goals of anthropology have been to describe societies and cultures throughout the world and to compare the differences and similarities among them. Anthropologists study in a variety of settings and situations, ranging from small hamlets and villages to neighborhoods and corporate offices of major urban centers throughout the world. They study hunters and gatherers, peasants, farmers, labor leaders, politicians, and bureaucrats. They examine religious life in Latin America as well as revolutionary movements.

Wherever practicable, anthropologists take on the role of the "participant observer," for it is through active involvement in the lifeways of the people that they hope to gain an insider's perspective without sacrificing the objectivity of the trained scientist. Sometimes the conditions for achieving such a goal may seem to form an almost insurmountable barrier, but anthropologists' persistence, adaptability, and imagination may be employed to overcome the odds against them.

The diversity of focus in anthropology means that it is earmarked less by its particular subject matter than by its perspective. Although the discipline relates to both the biological and social sciences, anthropologists also know that the boundaries drawn between such disciplines are highly artificial. For example, although it may be possible to examine only the social organization of a family unit or the organization of political power in a nation state, in reality, it is impossible to separate the biological from the social from the economic from the political. The explanatory perspective of anthropology, as the articles in this section exemplify, is to seek out interrelationships among all these factors.

The articles in this section illustrate varying degrees of difficulty an anthropologist may encounter in taking on the role of the participant observer. As Martha Ward describes in "Once Upon a Time," while doing fieldwork in

an exotic setting, an anthropologist usually experiences culture shock—the challenge not only to understand, but to live a radically different life-style.

While Richard Kurin ("Doctor, Lawyer, Indian Chief"), Richard Lee ("Eating Christmas in the Kalahari"), and D. Werner ("Amazon Journey") apparently had few problems with the physical conditions and the personalities of the people they were studying, they were not completely accepted by the communities until they found ways to participate as equals in the socioeconomic exchange systems. For Miriam Lee Kaprow, social acceptance was the least of her problems as she struggled to find a unique and distinct "culture" in the Gypsy way of life.

Much is at stake in conducting anthropological fieldwork, since the purpose of anthropology is not only to describe and explain, but to develop a special vision of the world in which cultural alternatives (past, present, and future) can be measured against one another and used as a guide for human action.

Looking Ahead: Challenge Questions

What is culture shock?

How can anthropologists who become personally involved with a community through participant observation maintain their objectivity as scientists?

In what ways do the results of fieldwork depend on the kinds of questions asked?

How does cross-cultural experience help us to understand ourselves?

In what sense is sharing intrinsic to egalitarianism?

How can we avoid the pitfalls of cultural relativity and ethnocentrism in dealing with what we think of as harmful practices in other cultures?

Why do the Gypsies of Spain avoid structure in their lives?

Unit 1



Once Upon a Time

Martha C. Ward

... Many people have fantasies in the traditions of the painter Paul Gauguin and the writer James Michener about bare-breasted maidens, pristine beaches, and waiving palms in the South Pacific. Most do not know about the vast ocean area of Micronesia in the northern Pacific above the equator. Micronesia means "tiny islands" and is a scattering of land with a combined area no larger than Rhode Island stretching between Hawaii and the Philippines. The United States has administered these chains of tropical islands as a Trust Territory from the United Nations since the end of World War II. Many Americans know about Guam, which was discovered by Ferdinand Magellan and has been the site of U.S. military bases since the United States acquired the island from Spain in 1898. But the 2,141 tiny islands covering three million square miles, an area as large as the continental United States, have been largely undiscovered in popular consciousness.

Pohnpei, in the center of Micronesia, is a high island forged millennia ago by volcanic action. It is about equidistant in nautical miles between the cities of Honolulu and Manila. The main island, which even now reveals its volcanic ancestry, has a roughly pentagonal shape and a maximum diameter of thirteen miles. A fringing coral reef encircles the volcanic core, forming a loose protection and a line between lagoon and the open ocean

beyond. Within the lagoon, the coral bottom is a world of rare beauty only divers can appreciate. There are low coral islets with sandy beaches in the lagoon, but the main island is largely surrounded by dense mangrove swamps that provide wood, food, and protection from erosion. Because of the swamps, the island fails to correspond to idealized notions of Pacific Islands. Visitors are surprised to see so few beaches, yet awestruck by the towering cliffs of Sokehs Island, the mountain forests, the dramatic colors of the vegetation, and the textures of tropical life. Pohnpei is justifiably regarded as one of most beautiful islands in the Pacific.

It rains most of the time. More than 200 inches a year fall on the lowlands and the uninhabited mountain center receives about 400 inches. In a sense, the island creates its own rain system by collecting the clouds as they pass. There are few cloudless days, which is all to the good since the heat can be intense. The rain creates both incredible humidity and magnificent waterfalls tumbling down basaltic cliffs. Rivers of clean, cool water run from the interior and in them people bathe, swim, and wash clothing.

I moved to this lovely island as part of a medical research team in the early 1970s. It was the fulfillment of a dream about doing fieldwork that I had harbored since high school. The core of our research team consisted of three anthropologists. The senior member

was Dr. John (Jack) Fischer, who had worked in Micronesia when the United States Navy inherited it from the Japanese after World War II. He spoke Japanese, Trukese, and Pohnpeian. Because of the years he and his wife, Ann, spent there, his linguistic fluency, and his respect for the Pohnpeians' customs, he was something of a cult hero. Jack was also a former Marine, had three degrees from Harvard University, was a professor at Tulane University, published extensively, and had been District Anthropologist in Pohnpei when its name was spelled Ponape. During the research team's first summer there, his job was to develop contacts, establish the project, and lend his credibility to its success.

My husband, Roger, was a graduate student doing dissertation research. He wanted to study traditional medical systems and the diagnosis and curing of disease as Pohnpeians viewed it. Among other jobs, he served as budget director and motor scooter mechanic. Later our focus broadened to include such topics as sex, sorcery, incest, and politics.

I had already done fieldwork in the United States and completed my degree. When the grant was approved for this project, I took a research leave from my teaching post at a university in New Orleans. My job in the field was hiring, training, and supervising interviewers to administer the census, sample, and questionnaires. Somehow, baking cakes was also included. Roger and I had to learn the language quickly in order to manage the entire field portion of the project through to the completion of the medical examinations. Other members of the professional team, including a cardiologist, a psychologist, an epidemiologist, and several nurse-administrators, joined us for brief periods.

We had a large grant from the National Institute of Health to study the complex relations between social change, modernization and the high blood pressure that leads to heart attacks. The Pohnpei project had been started at the University of North Carolina School of Public Health by a group of dedicated professionals led

by Dr. John Cassel, well-known in the fields of public health, cardiology, and medical anthropology for his research on high blood pressure. Most Westerners know about the dangers of heart attacks for themselves and others; we know about blood pressure rising with age. Researchers believed that lifestyle, heredity, and many factors in the way Westerners lived or thought or felt influenced their health. But many areas of this puzzle remained unclear and even disputed. Several field studies such as ours had been started. Other studies that took blood pressures and did physical exams had been conducted in many locations, including the South Pacific.

To make a complicated theoretical and statistical issue simpler, we had looked for an island to provide science with a natural experiment. Water provides the boundaries that artificial borders do not. We wanted to test some theories about the cultural, social, and psychological determiners of blood pressure and heart disease. Studies done in societies which are changing rapidly, urbanizing and industrializing, generally showed higher blood pressure levels that rise with age. In smaller, less stressed societies that are not so exposed to radically new life styles, blood pressure does not rise with age and heart disease is absent or rare. . . .

FRUIT IN THE HANDS OF THE GODS

Once upon a time, a man named Sapkini built a large canoe. He believed that such a canoe could sail far away and find land. He knew that the sky is a roof and that it touches the sea at its edges. Where the sky meets the sea, his people would find land. They sailed with the hopes of a good land. On the way, they met an octopus. "I am Litakiti and I live in a shallow place in the water that flows from north to south." In the place the octopus had described was a reef. A small piece of coral rose above the reef, so small that it fit between the canoe and its outrigger.

The people brought rocks and stones from faraway lands. But the waves broke up the stones. So they planted mangrove trees to protect the island. But still the ocean was too close. So they decided to

build a fringing reef around the island. Two women brought soil and the island grew larger. On the top the people made an altar. So the name of this new land was called *Pohn-Pei*, Upon-the-Alter.

The feast house of the High Chief of Nett was quiet. Men and women sat cross-legged on raised platforms along the three sides below the thatched roof. The fourth side was open to a view of stars in a clear sky. On the rocky ground between the platforms rested large flat stone. The men seated beside the stones removed their shirts and women placed flower wreaths in everyone's hair and rubbed scented coconut oil on their bare backs.

At a signal, the men began to pound the broken roots and twigs heaped on the stones in front of them. The rocks they held in their hands made deep ringing sounds as they struck. When the roots and twigs were broken down by the pounding, the men spread them with slow and practiced gestures into a long bundle of fibers. One of the men picked up the two ends of the bundle and began to twist it, much as a wet towel is wrung. With gentle strength he continued to coil the bundle against itself until a thick brown liquid oozed out. Another man caught the flow with a round bottomed coconut cup. Rising to his feet, this man approached the High Chief, seated on the woven mats at the head of the U-shaped feast house. Averting his gaze, he extended the cup across his bent forearm, offering it to his Chief who drank the viscous liquid.

Later, as turns came around, I had my first taste of kava. It was astringent and slimy. It tasted like all the strong roots our ancestors used for medicine had been mixed together and looked like strings of swarthy mucus. The first sip numbed my lips, tongue, and throat. I surreptitiously picked out pieces of woody debris from my teeth.

Understanding none of the speeches, I enjoyed the feel of coconut oil on my arms, the smell of fresh flowers in my hair, and the shadows cast by the light of kerosene lanterns. I was fascinated by the serenity of the gestures, each of which seemed to carry an ancient tra-

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dition. Of course, I had read of the pepper plant whose roots were pounded on basaltic stones selected for their acoustic properties, and I knew that the communal drinking of kava is the heart of ceremonial life, much as communion is for Christians. I had heard that sipping too much would induce sleepiness but never intoxication as I thought of it. I had yet to understand that the preparation of kava has the power to promote communal harmony and peaceful social relationships. I had yet to need its healing powers.

One of the men moved over next to Jack, Roger and me and began to tell the story about the octopus and the reef. Another man translated it into English. I took notes as a good anthropologist should. Here, after all, was a genuine origin myth recounted by genuine natives. I had not asked the questions to which he was clearly giving me the answers. As the kava cup circulated again through the prescribed ritual sequences, I felt overwhelmed by the enormity of learning, then understanding, and then communicating the ancient meanings of this culture. I was inundated with sensations and information.

Later, we adjourned to a western-style house for a buffet. The tables were laden with dishes featuring breadfruit, taro, and yams cooked in different ways, some dishes seasoned with coconut milk or mashed bananas. The pork had been cooked in soy sauce. Some of the younger men spoke excellent English and, as I later learned, had degrees from American universities. The conversation revolved around development prospects for the island (a perennial topic). They discussed the pros and cons of the nascent tourist boom, the hope for a Pohnpeian-owned fishing industry, and the excitement surrounding the newly inaugurated Continental Air Micronesia Airlines jet flight to the islands. The men gossiped about Trust Territory politics and recent High Court decisions.

The evening was marked by the contrast between traditions older than any in my own brash, young culture and the pseudosophistication of modernization. It was my first glimpse into the vitality of the Pohnpeians' customs

and their struggles with the forces of a world beyond their control. I tried to reconcile the glamor of doing fieldwork on an island of extraordinary tropical beauty with the realities of life in a colonial Third World island.

Only a week before, Jack Fischer had met me and my husband, Roger, at what was fondly called an airport. The landing of a 727 jet on the small islet in the lagoon was still a novelty to the Pohnpeians. Seaplanes had occasionally landed in the lagoon before a bare coral landing strip was built through a flattened mangrove swamp running between the watery ends of the islet. There were no lights, no tower, no radio contact between plane and ground, and no ground services of any kind. Once the strip was built, the two Continental jets, each carrying a mechanic and spare parts managed to land in Pohnpei three times a week when the weather was favorable. The new airport was a new two-room, traditional-style building of bamboo and thatch. As the 727 banked to land, the passengers could see a stunning rock formation called the Sokehs cliffs towering over the bays and lagoons.

My first sight of Kolonia, the capital of Pohnpei, was not favorable. This shanty town was supposed to be an example of urbanization, ethnic diversity, and development. It was home for most of the outlanders—those who come from other islands of Micronesia—and the foreigners, mostly a handful of Americans in the Trust Territory government. My first impression was one of overwhelming vegetation: breadfruit, palms, bananas, hibiscus, taro, lime, mango, bamboo, coconut, and hundreds of others I could not name. Weeds and mildew grew everywhere else. Rampant vegetation concealed the density of population. Many houses were built off the road where trees and terrain obscured their presence. The few miles of unpaved roads were dusty in the dry spells and muddy after rains.

My second impression was not only of the primitiveness that permeated the town, but also the feeling of civilization gone berserk. Huge piles of rust-

ing, rotting trash stood outside the new airport building and the headquarters of the district administration. Women drew water from outdoor spigots while abandoned cars rusted nearby. Newer cars that had not yet succumbed to the hardships of the tropics were parked wherever they had stopped.

The stores and businesses had no signs because local people knew their names. The town had a Protestant church, a Catholic mission, the ruins of a Spanish fort, the district hospital, administrative offices, several good restaurants, and nineteen bars. But there were no zoning laws, building codes, city planning, or attempts to build an urban life. Everything was haphazard, temporary, jerry-rigged. The tropics are a great equalizer, and even new construction had begun to rot and age quickly. Cheap materials, such as tin and cinder block, were ubiquitous. In the incessant rain, they rusted in earth tones of reds, ochres and browns.

In the midst of this urban disorder, Jack had found for a home an appalling shack on a side road leading from Kolonia's main street. The roof of the lean-to kitchen had collapsed. The walls came only halfway up to the rusty tin roof. The only door had to be lifted into place. Mosquitos, flies, geckos, lizards, mice, and—to my special horror—rats were the shanty's main tenants. He was unjustifiably proud of the dump that was to be his home for three months. Roger was unnerved by the thought of sleeping on the floor, animals or no, while I was disgusted by the thought of having to follow the custom of removing my shoes to enter. To placate me, Jack generously agreed to refer to the rats as ground squirrels and to run an illegal electrical line from the jail on the hill into the shanty so there could be a light.

Jack needed his hovel for the visits of two other researchers, Floyd and Ian, so he arranged for Roger and me to live temporarily in a real house usually occupied by a Peace Corps administrator. My senses had not yet acculturated, so I judged this house only by western standards and took for