

sages for Layard telling of friends long dead, remembering the killing of seven Presbyterian missionaries in 1914, the last Maki on Atchin in 1942, and their eventual conversion to Christianity. They bemoaned the loss of kastom, although less intensely on Catholic Vao than on Atchin, where most had converted to the Seventh-Day Adventist religion.

Haidy Geismar continues the story from 2003 in her superb chapter on “visualising the past on Atchin and Vao” (257–292). She highlights how people incorporate photographic images into historical narratives. Her project, a collaboration with Numa Fred Longga of the Malakula Cultural Centre, not only entailed repatriating photographs from foreign museums to source communities to foster the national reanimation of kastom; it also occasioned indigenous documentation and reflection. Her interlocutors were eager to retrace Layard’s steps. In many of her restaged photos, senior men simulate ancestors in situ and embody connections, for example, by touching slit gongs on ancient dancing grounds to emphasize contemporary claims to their ancestral ples (place).

Geismar acknowledges how, given “the gender segregation that is at the heart of much customary knowledge and practice on Malakula” (264), men, and especially older men, dominated public meetings and official recordings while women rather discussed Layard’s photos in private with her. She was subject to “complex, hierarchical and often restrictive politics around knowledge transmission” (264), restricted by both gender and seniority. Layard’s *Stone Men of Malekula*, as “an embodiment of male

ancestral authority, has been co-opted by elder men [to] maintain traditional gendered hierarchies of authority” (268). That book’s stunning graphic images are widely circulated and the text is locally seen as an accurate record of genealogies, histories, and local language. In such processes of “cultural reawakening,” Geismar stresses, images of the past can make things happen in the present. This book is a superb testament to that.

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*Surviving Paradise: One Year on a Disappearing Island*, by Peter Rudiak-Gould. New York: Sterling Publishing, 2009. ISBN cloth, 978-1-4027-6664-0; xi + 242 pages, acknowledgments. Cloth, US\$21.95.

Greg Denning’s metaphoric islands and beaches remind us just how painful culture crossings can be—how difficult it often is for individuals to successfully traverse the boundaries that help define who we are and how we understand the world around us. Peter Rudiak-Gould’s *Surviving Paradise: One Year on a Disappearing Island* is a narrative of one such crossing. It is a contemporary memoir of the author’s endeavor to navigate the metaphorical beach that ostensibly separates his own American culture and the culture in which he was immersed for a year as a volunteer teacher on Ujae Atoll in the Marshall Islands. The result is a candid—and at times callous—reflection on the commensurability of

cultures and the challenges inherent in culture contact.

In the first six chapters, Rudiak-Gould confronts the disconnect between his own preconceived fantasies of Ujae as a “far-off paradise” (4) and the reality of the Ujae he encounters and tries to get to know. Upon arrival, he is shocked to discover that what he thought would be a tropical “distant haven, a world of nature—preindustrial . . . [and] pristine” is in actuality a site of complexity and contradiction (20). Rudiak-Gould quickly discovers how little he knows about his temporary home and experiences a profound feeling of culture shock that is reflected in the titles of the first few chapters: “Moon Landing,” “A Beautiful Prison,” and “Tropical Paradox.” He feels oppressed by the unexpected heat and bland diet, understands little of local culture and customs, and is largely unable to communicate with those around him. He feels trapped by the island’s smallness and isolation, experiences an extreme sense of loneliness, and considers returning home. He is an outsider, a stranger, and Ujae is largely incomprehensible to him. “Sorry, this isn’t the Ujae I was looking for,” he muses (7).

Despite this shaky beginning, Rudiak-Gould perseveres in his effort to cross the beach. In chapter 5, aptly titled “Learning to Speak Again,” he reaches out to members of his host family, neighbors, and soon-to-be students and begins learning what he can about Ujae and the Marshall Islands. After weeks of fumbling clumsily through interactions with people in a language he doesn’t understand, he slowly begins to speak and understand Marshallese. He takes every opportu-

nity to explore Ujae’s physical land- and seascapes and gradually begins to adjust: “As hard as this new life [is], it also offer[s] moments more sublime than anywhere” (59).

School starts in chapter 7, and the author is immediately confronted with the overwhelming challenge of teaching in an education system and school plagued by the vestiges of American colonialism. He often wonders why he is even there—if his presence in the Marshall Islands is needed or valuable or if “teaching English [is tantamount to] linguistic imperialism, Western paternalism, or worse” (63). He is shocked that Marshallese teachers are required to teach in English (and yet often know very little English themselves) and that the textbooks used by the school are “intended for American children learning to read in English, not for foreign children learning English itself” (72). The effect is that the majority of his students are unable to read or write in either English or Marshallese. This combined with Rudiak-Gould’s lack of teaching experience or knowledge of Marshallese culture makes for a difficult situation for students and teacher alike.

By chapter 8, Rudiak-Gould has settled into a routine on Ujae and has in many ways started to cross the beach. His initial feelings of culture shock begin to dissipate as he grows accustomed to the pace of life on the island and develops meaningful relationships with neighbors and members of his host family. In the remaining chapters, he shifts his attention away from what Ujae seems to lack and learns to love Ujae on its own terms. He makes a concerted effort to participate in community and family life: he

goes sailing, attends birthday parties and other functions, and learns to spearfish. On one occasion, he purchases a drum of gasoline and organizes a weekend expedition with a few friends to an island across the lagoon. Perhaps most significantly, he learns to speak Marshallese fluently—an important skill that allows him to integrate into the Ujae community and gain a deeper knowledge of local culture, history, and contemporary issues. (In fact, Rudiak-Gould devoted so much time and effort to studying Marshallese language that soon after his year on Ujae he wrote and published *Practical Marshallese* [2004], a language textbook now widely used by English speakers learning Marshallese.)

I have mixed feelings about *Surviving Paradise*. On the one hand, it is a vividly descriptive, thoughtful, and humorous account of the author's experiences—many of which, as a former teacher in the Marshall Islands, I can relate to at a very personal level. I appreciate Rudiak-Gould's attempt to weave Marshall Islands history into the narrative: short excerpts on Marshallese origins, World War II, nuclear testing, American colonialism, the Kwajalein missile range, and the Marshallese diaspora provide a helpful backdrop for readers unfamiliar with the region. He also includes portraits of Marshallese values and traditional practices and offers reflections on Marshall Islanders' efforts to preserve their culture and adapt to contemporary needs and circumstances. Finally, Rudiak-Gould addresses the critical issues of global warming and rising sea levels, which threaten the very future of the Marshall Islands and other coral atolls. In these and other

respects, *Surviving Paradise* is a rich and provocative account of a tiny place with a complex past, a vibrant present, and an uncertain future.

Despite these and other strengths, certain elements of *Surviving Paradise* are highly problematic. For example, Rudiak-Gould's descriptions of his early experiences on Ujae are as honest and distressing as his attitude is dismissive, patronizing, and hypercritical—and many readers will have a hard time getting through the first few pages as a result. He depicts Ujae island as a “faraway nowhere” (59), a “beautiful prison” (9), and a “backwater in a country that [is] itself a backwater” (11). He describes his class at school as a “sea of bored, chocolate-colored faces” (2), compares the voices of women singing in church to those of “cartoon chipmunks” (15), and likens nasalized Marshallese vowel sounds to “the Coneheads' call of alarm or a pig being slaughtered” (65). He criticizes Marshall Islanders for everything from waste disposal to parenting styles, and he bemoans “Marshallese time” as the source of many of Ujae's woes. And while it may have been Rudiak-Gould's intent to illustrate the profound sense of culture shock, confusion, and loneliness he experienced during his first few months on Ujae—to capture in words just how difficult and painful culture crossings can be—the effect is that he portrays the people of Ujae with much less dignity and respect than they deserve. Unfortunately, these and other descriptions at times overshadow Rudiak-Gould's many successful beach crossings—and they have left this reader searching for a more compassionate approach to reflecting

on the difficult process of crossing cultures.

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*The Global Health Care Chain: From the Pacific to the World*, by John Connell. Routledge Research in Population and Migration Series 12. New York: Routledge, 2008. ISBN cloth, 978-0-415-95622-2; eBook, 978-0-203-88511-6; 197 pages, maps, preface, bibliography, index. Cloth, US\$105.00; eBook US\$105.00.

John Connell's finely researched and informative book is a Pacific regional companion to his 2008 edited volume *The International Migration of Health Workers*. *The Global Health Care Chain: From the Pacific to the World* draws on a survey of more than five hundred health workers in nine island states—Kiribati, Marshall Islands, and Palau in Micronesia; Fiji and Vanuatu in Melanesia; and Cook Islands, Niue, Sāmoa, and Tonga in Polynesia—and three destination states—Australia, Canada, and New Zealand. He also pulls together a large literature including academic studies and technical reports by international agencies. Beginning with an overview of globalization of skilled migration as it affects the Pacific, the book contextualizes the rise of Pacific migration, examines various health care systems in the Pacific, describes how skilled health workers are trained in the various Island states, considers why these workers decide to migrate or stay at home, and analyzes the impacts

of their migration choices on Island health services.

Globalization draws the highly skilled from every corner of the world to the metropolitan centers that offer the best working conditions and pay—a negative trend for the health systems of less-developed countries and especially for the small Island states of the Pacific. Health professionals are among the most expensive to train and have the easiest access to overseas job markets, not only in Australia and New Zealand but also in the Arabian Gulf states and Canada. Some Pacific Island states recruit from within the Pacific, as well as from other developing countries. For example, Fijian nurses work in the Marshall Islands and Palau, and Samoan doctors work in American Sāmoa. Men and women from Pacific Island communities where nursing was once seen as demeaning or unmanly now regard it much more positively because of the overseas employment opportunities it offers.

Higher wages are not the only reason for leaving, or for not returning after training. Returning graduates are often as frustrated by their working conditions as they are by their salaries. Small, poor countries lack the medical equipment and other resources that encourage professional development, and few can support highly specialized staff. Migration-prone Pacific Island states also have the problem of meeting rising expectations, knowing the life-extending technologies available to their relatives overseas and wanting them at home. But providing specialized facilities for renal or cardiothoracic or oncology care is likely to mean fewer basic services in rural