

from the time when Fulton wrote the final draft (seven since his death). His daughter has inherited her father's characteristic persistence and diligence and has consulted an array of academics, her father's acquaintances, and compiled a multitude of other sources to make the final publication more engaging. Fulton's personal photos are a fantastic addition and bring many of the places and faces to life. The odd poem such as "Ode to Cus Cus" (his dog), well-placed audio transcripts and his correspondence—such as letters exchanged with one of the missionaries he rescued during the war—contrast nicely with more formal patrol reports, much of the narrative, and other wartime correspondence. Finally, the inclusion of carefully researched maps is useful for the more geographically minded.

Undoubtedly there are other voices to consider and a few questions left unanswered, but these are minor frustrations. They are perhaps understandable, almost predictable silences that offer additional insight into Fulton's character and his generation. Given the distinctive historical periods, the somewhat eclectic roles Fulton undertook, and the locations touched on, *No Turning Back* is a stimulating personal tale that offers a mix of perspectives for those interested in delving more deeply into Australian and Pacific history.

ROB HILLIARD
Fitzwilliam College,
Cambridge University

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One and a Half Pacific Islands/ Teuana ao Teiterana n aba n Te Betebeke: Stories the Banaban People Tell of Themselves/I-Banaba Aika a Karakin oin Rongorongola, edited by Jennifer Shennan and Makin Corrie Tekenimatang. Wellington, NZ: Victoria University Press, 2005. ISBN 0-86473-523-5; 264 pages, tables, figures, maps, photographs, written in English and Banaban languages, glossary. NZ\$39.95.

One and a Half Pacific Islands is a remarkable and moving book, compiled to commemorate the sixtieth anniversary of the relocation of the Banaban people from their home island in the central Pacific to Rabi Island in Fiji following Banaba's desecration by phosphate mining. A goal of the book, stated in the preface, is to preserve the history and experiences of the Banabans in local fashion: by telling stories. These stories intimately reveal the Banabans' unique—often tragic—history, as told from numerous viewpoints. A number of narratives are presented in both English and the Kiribati language currently spoken by Banabans. Participants include individuals from Suva and Rabi, as well as Tarawa (Kiribati), New Zealand, Australia, Hawai'i, and Europe.

Most stories center on significant twentieth-century historical events: phosphate mining, World War II, and the Rabi relocation. The lives of the Banabans changed permanently and dramatically shortly after 1900, when phosphate was discovered on their small, isolated island, known as Ocean Island to the outside world. After negotiations for mining rights (not entirely understood by the Banabans),

the British annexed Banaba to the Gilbert and Ellice Islands Protectorate, later to become a British colony. Subsequent mining activity virtually destroyed much of the island. Later, during World War II, the Japanese occupied the island and used the Islanders as slave labor. Eventually, food shortages caused great suffering, and the Japanese exiled many Banabans and other Islanders to other parts of Micronesia, retaining about 150 men to work as laborers. Tragically, when news arrived about the Japanese surrender, the laborers were lined up at a cliff and shot by soldiers. Only one person survived, I-Kiribati Kabunare Koura, whose riveting account of the event and the circumstances of his own survival is one of many personal stories of wartime tragedy.

After the war, the British government declared Banaba—with its now stark landscape of coral pinnacles and rusting mining equipment—unfit for human habitation and relocated the population to Rabi. Life on Rabi was initially a struggle, as the Islanders adjusted to a different geography and climate, while living in tents as they awaited the construction of permanent dwellings. Additionally, the Banabans were coping with a spiritual break from their homeland. The British resumed mining until 1979, leaving behind equipment and buildings to deteriorate on their departure. Today, approximately two hundred Banabans have returned to Banaba, eking out a living on a sliver of unmined land on their once lush island. Banaba was incorporated into the independent Republic of Kiribati, a fact that remains a controversial political issue for many.

The personal accounts comprised by the book have been grouped into four main sections: “Taraan oin Abau—Glimpses of the Homeland”; “Ara Ikawai—Our Leaders”; “Ara Ataei—Our Youngsters”; and “I-Matang—Those From Outside.” Directly preceding the first section, eight pages of color images immediately engage the reader’s attention and provide a visual context for the Banabans’ stories to follow.

“Glimpses of the Homeland” opens with a historical overview of Banaba featuring descriptions of the indigenous lifestyle and the events of the twentieth century, followed by several local legends that editor Makin Corrie Tekenimatang collected from elders in the 1940s. The section concludes with first-person accounts about two important aspects of Banaban culture: catching frigate birds and gathering water at the underground caves. Numerous maps and historical photographs enhance the material.

“Our Leaders” features the moving, highly personal stories of elders and other respected members of the Banaban community. These private histories, some conveyed by descendants of those who have passed away, vividly reveal how past events have left their mark through the years, especially on those bearing emotional scars from past tragedy. For example, Teweiariki Teaero relates stories told to him by his grandmother, Kateia, about the terrible conditions that developed on Banaba after the arrival of Japanese soldiers. Severe food shortages forced women to forage in the darkness for food to feed their children, while men were required to fish for the soldiers. Teweiariki’s grandfather hid two fish in the sand hoping to save them for his

family, but he was caught and publicly decapitated. Banabans including Kateia were forced to collect Japanese excrement and spread it on the vegetable gardens, a humiliating experience that hurt her pride for the rest of her life. The reader also learns that editor Tekenimatang was forced to watch as her father was also killed by Japanese soldiers on Banaba, allegedly for stealing food but in reality for “failure to kowtow” (75).

Tekenimatang also gives a detailed account of arriving, when she was fifteen, in Rabi, where initially everyone lived in tents and the school was merely an awning. She describes how students sat on rocks or coconuts and wrote on toilet paper—such details vividly bring the past to life. This section also features positive experiences, including stories by and about teachers, church and community leaders, well-known musician and composer Kanimea Takirua, a traditional healer, and others whose personal reflections reveal much about Banaban worldviews. Some contributors observe how Banaban life today features aspects of both traditionalism and modernity, and describe choices that must be made in the contemporary context. Others describe aspects of indigenous knowledge such as fishing and carving.

Accounts of contemporary daily life and family dominate the stories of children and teenagers in “Our Youngsters.” Typically, these accounts emphasize hopes for the future, not reminiscences of the past. Although many express strong sentiment about Banaba and a desire to visit the homeland, another common theme is love for Rabi and the life there.

The last section, “Those from Outside,” focuses on those who shared

experiences with the Banabans during the twentieth century. It begins with excerpts from the diary of Albert Ellis, who, following his discovery of phosphate on Banaba, visited in 1900 to investigate its quality. He describes in great detail the testing and sampling process, negotiations with the “natives,” and considerations of infrastructure development. His objective and highly detailed descriptions contrast with the personal accounts that are typical in the book.

Visitors—including Lilian Arundel, daughter of the Pacific Phosphate Company’s manager, and author William Mahaffy—provide detailed, engaging accounts of early twentieth century Banaban life, including useful information about water and toddy gathering, dancing, flora and fauna, local traditional stories, land division, fishing, and the cult of the frigate bird. The section also includes affectionate contributions by Jennifer Orange and Joan Milne, granddaughter and daughter of Albert Ellis, including part of a letter Albert wrote to his daughter after he revisited Banaba in 1948 at the age of seventy-eight. Joan’s memories of life as a four-year-old child on Banaba are particularly engaging. The thoughts of those who have been involved in Banaban arts, particularly dance, including Beth Dean Carell and Jennifer Shennan, are also included.

To read this book is an emotional journey—a moving and reflective experience that becomes even more intimate through the photographs that accompany many of the essays, which literally allow the reader to gaze into the eyes of the storytellers. Especially poignant is the fact that several of the individuals who contributed stories to the book passed away before the book

was published. The book imparts an understanding of the Banabans' situation as a special case for aid from the other nations that have benefited from phosphate, since the Banabans have "fallen between the cracks" and do not benefit from aid given to either Fiji or Kiribati, the political entity under which their homeland of Banaba now falls.

The editors have accomplished an admirable feat in collecting a wide range of stories and arranging them into such logical and compelling order. *One and a Half Pacific Islands* is a significant contribution to the literature on history from the Islanders' points of view. Through these unforgettable stories, the reader confronts in a highly personal way a largely overlooked society victimized by twentieth-century politics and industrialization.

MARY E LAWSON BURKE
Framingham State College

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The Songmaker's Chair, a play by Albert Wendt. Directed by Dennis Carrol, Kumu Kahua Theatre, Honolulu, 16 March–15 April 2006.

The family name of the characters in this play, Sa-Peseola, has been glossed as "a health giving song." It is synonymous with the term "songmaker" on different levels. Albert Wendt's 1991 novel *Ola* has a revealing quote: "I've often felt, with some dread, that instead of being the fisher I've been fished up, a creature born out of the imaginations of the creatures in the refuse heap; that I'm their captive taulaitu/songmaker/shaman, the vehicle for their awakening" (9).

One gloss of the term "taulaitu" is "anchor of the spirits." I have drawn on the quote from *Ola* because it places the taulaitu on the same spectrum as the songmaker and the shaman. *Ola* is a very self-reflexive work and orients Polynesian culture within world cultures. The use of the star maps at the end of *The Songmaker's Chair* hints at its broader contexts as well.

The pese, or song, in this play comes through a variety of media, including the ghetto blaster that plays religious and popular Samoan songs in Samoan, and the live singing voices of the aiga (family) who voice the traditional song in Samoan as well as the Peseola-ized rap in English. That rap is a miniature of the play—one of the family sagas that has played out in a variety of Wendt texts, including the sagas of the Tauliopepe and Malo aigas in *Leaves of the Banyan Tree* (1979), of Faleasa Osovae's aiga in *Pouliuli* (1977), and of the Mautu aiga in *The Mango's Kiss* (2003), each set in Sāmoa, and also in glimpses in Wendt's latest collections of poems, *Photographs* (1995) and *The Book of the Black Star* (2002), partly set in Ponsonby, Auckland. *Sons for the Return Home* (1973) is also a relevant work in regard to migration. One of the poems in *Black Star* reads, "We Will Read the Star Maps Our Ancestors forged across the heavens and learn the paths of one another and alofa [love, affection]." The paths of the individuals within the aiga are various, as in the drama: paths of struggle and of material success. The coherence brought to this play is created by its sense of family, which swirls around the parents, especially Malaga. (Because I don't believe in