

Tangata Simiona, ed. *E Au Tua Ta'ito Nō Te Kūki 'Airani [Legends from the Cook Islands]*. Suva: Institute of Pacific Studies, 1979. Pp. viii, 88, illustrations.

This small booklet presents for the first time a panorama of some significant myths, stories, and legends surviving in Cook Islanders' traditions. It is a collection based on accounts from various well versed Cook Islanders and their textual evidence relating to myths and legends has been amply strengthened wherever possible by location names that have survived to the present. Although the stories are aimed at the Form III secondary level in Cook Islanders' education, the editor emphasizes an underlying purpose of increasing the availability of books in the local language for local participation and permanent preservation.

The eleven legends basically written in the Rarotongan language, begin with Maru'aka'ita, a short legend from the island of Mauke set in the pre-Christian era. Maru'aka'ita was a successful fisherman who took for granted the kindness and love of his sister. The one sided relationship ended at the death of the fisherman as a direct result of his own meanness. Other stories present an insight into the way of life in the various islands of the Cook group. *Te Vaka Ko Takitumu*, the story of the Takitumu ca-

noe in Rarotonga; *Te Vaka O Ru*, Ru's historical journey to Aitutaki island; and other legends present a conflicting society based on survival, love, peace, and war.

Throughout the book one encounters the editor's extraordinary love of folklore and the respect and sympathy for the traditional beliefs and customs of Cook Islanders. Although there is some evidence of dialectual difficulties due to the intermixing of the Cook Islands languages by the various story tellers, the simplicity of specific experiences from most of the islands overcome any major misconceptions. John Brown's seemingly oversimple illustrations add character to the book and echo a common distaste for unessentials.

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