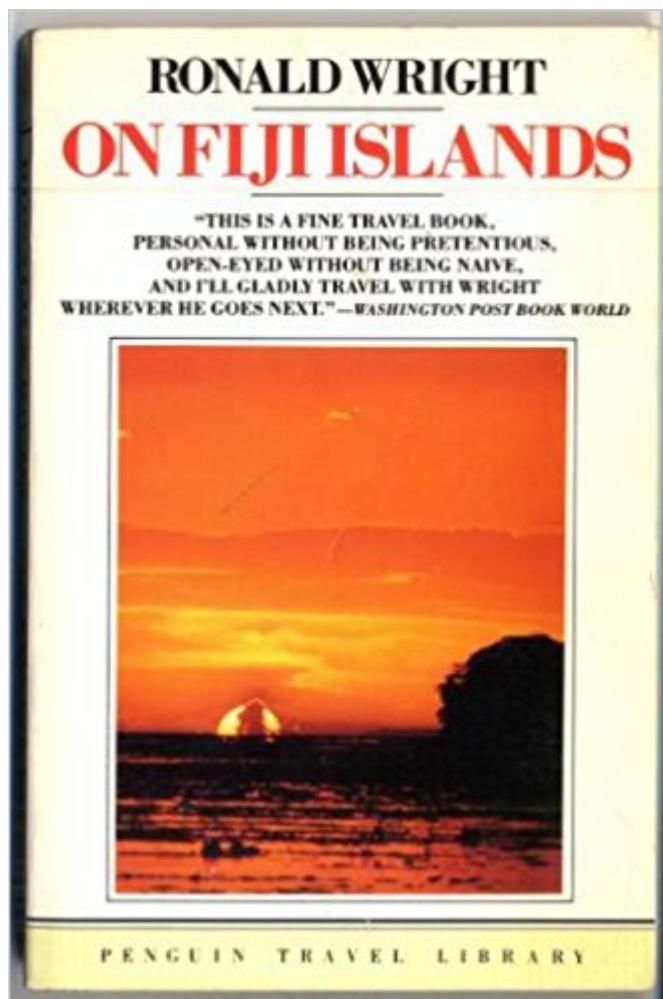


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On Fiji Islands (Travel Library)



Synopsis

RONALD WRIGHT'S EXPLORATION OF THE FIJI ISLANDS BEGINS IN THE FIJI MUSEUM WHERE A CAPTION IDENTIFIES THE OBJECT DISPLAYED AS THE "FORK USED IN EATING MR BAKER". PERHAPS NOWHERE ELSE IN THE WORLD IS THERE A CULTURE THAT HAS COME THROUGH THE COLONIAL EXPERIENCE WITHOUT BEING DEEPLY SCARRED BY IT:IN ONLY A HUNDRED YEARS SINCE THE WESLEYAN MISSIONARY BAKER WAS EATEN BY NATIVES,FIJI HAS BECOME A CIVILIZATION THAT HAS ADAPTED,EVEN EMBRACED WITH 20TH CENTURY. WRIGHT BELIEVES THAT THIS ABSENCE OF TRAUMA IS IN PART DUE TO THE INSULARITY OF THE MANY COEXISTENT BUT INTROVERTED COMMUNITIES THAT EXIST ON THE ISLANDS IN THE FIJI GROUP - THE SEPARATION ALLOWS A "UNITY" THAT IS HARMONIOUS IN COMPARISON TO OTHER COUNTRIES WITH PARALLEL HISTORIES. WRIGHT WILL EXAMINE THIS THEME AND ITS RELATED TOPIC OF THE INSULARITY OF MODERN TRAVELLERS AGAINST THE HISTORICAL,POLITICAL,AND ANTHROPOLOGICAL BACKDROP OF THE FIJI ISLANDS - SEEMINGLY ONE OF THE WORLD'S MOST EXOTIC LOCALES. AS IN THE AUTHOR'S HIGHLY-PRAISED "CUT STONES AND CROSSROADS",WRIGHT WILL DRAW THESE STRAINS TOGETHER SKILLFULLY,ALLOWING THE READER BOTH A VIVID PORTRAIT (18/3/87). OF THE ISLANDS AND A RARE EXPOSURE OF THE NUANCES OF A FOREIGN CULTURE.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

In little more than a century, Fiji islanders have made the transition from cannibalism to Christianity, from colony to flourishing self-government (1970) in a variegated society. Theirs is a Third World success story; they have accepted some aspects of Western civilization without losing essential values of their own culture. Anthropologist Wright (Cut Stones and Crossroads here explores how this bridge was achieved. He went to the Islands with a fellow Canadian who had previously worked there on an archeological project. They toured city and countryside, observing village life and taking part in communal ceremonies. On his own, Wright visited Rabi, where the Banabans resettled after their home, Ocean Island, was dug from under them (for phosphate fertilizer); and he went to Bau, a sacred island. He attributes the remarkable state of affairs in Fiji to the fact that the natives have kept their social structure intact, and they have retained ownership of 83% of the land. Part travel memoir, part history and anthropology, this is a compelling story. Copyright 1987 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

area studies/trav Within the last 150 years, Fiji, the original "Cannibal Islands," has been colonized and Christianized and has seen a huge importation of Indian laborers. Despite all these dramatic changes, the Fijians have retained their own land and culture. Intrigued by this unique history, anthropologist Wright traveled extensively throughout the Islands, visiting both cities bustling with Indian merchants and quiet Fijian villages in the remote interior. He vividly describes his experiences. However, this is not just a travel book but a weaving of contemporary impressions with underlying history. Wright feels that it is impossible to understand current Fijian culture and problems without a grasp of the past. The result is a compelling combination of travelogue and history book. An excellent bibliography is appended. Judith Nixon, Purdue Univ. Libs., W. Lafayette, Ind. Copyright 1986 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

This was a fun book to read while traveling in Fiji. It provides a great perspective of the history of the islands complete with interesting and sometimes entertaining antecdotes of the author's travels through Fiji. The text alternates between the author's personal travel experiences and a drier (but still interesting) history of Fijian native culture and colonial influences.

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