

# Fäeag Rotuam Rotuman Language

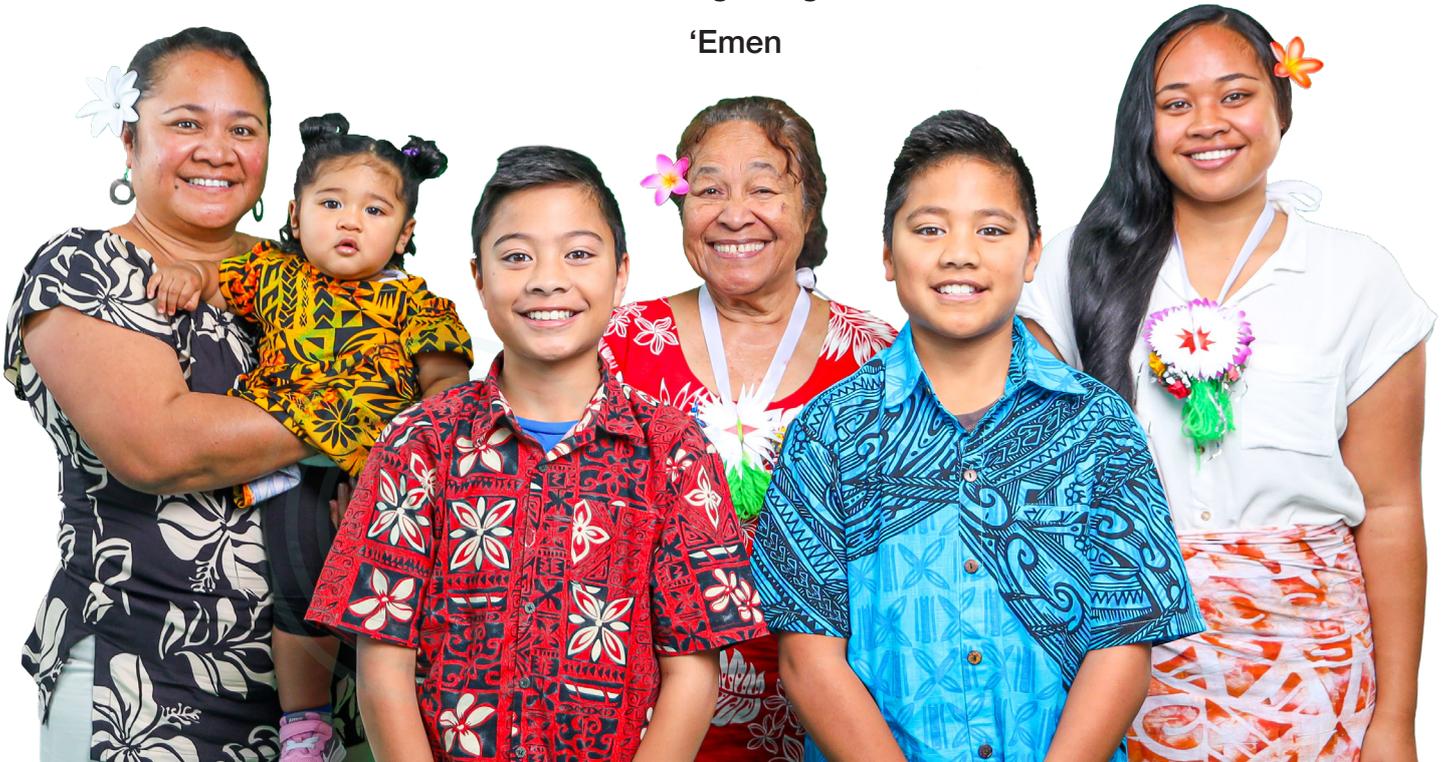
Educational Resource



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## THE LORD'S PRAYER

Ro'ait Ne 'Os Gagaja, Jisu Karisto  
'Otomis Ö'faat tãe 'e laḡi,  
'Ou asa la áf'ák la ma'ma',  
'Ou Pure'aga la leum,  
'Ou rere la sok, fak ma 'e laḡi,  
la tape' ma 'e rán te'.  
'Äe la nãam se 'amisã, 'e terañit 'e 'i,  
ta 'etemis tē la 'ã la tau mar  
ma 'Äe la fau'akia te' ne 'otomis sara,  
la fak ma ne 'amis tape' ma rē vaḡhia  
se iris ne sar 'e 'amisag.  
ma 'Äe se hoa' 'amis se faksara;  
'Äe la saï'akia 'amis 'e raksa'a,  
ko pure'aga,  
ma ne'ne'i,  
ma kolori,  
mou ma ke se 'äeag,  
se av se 'es gata'ag ne tore  
'Emen





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# ROGROG NE ĀV TĀ HISTORY

Legend has it that Rotuma's first inhabitants originated from Samoa led by Raho, a chief, followed by the arrival of Tongan settlers. Later, additional settlers arrived from Tonga and Kiribati, although other data suggests that there was contact with Tuvalu (formerly known as the Ellice Islands), Futuna and Uvea, and Fiji.

The first known European sighting of Rotuma was in 1791 by Captain Edward and the crew of HMS Pandora while searching for the mutineers of the Bounty. From there on, during the first half of the nineteenth century, contact with Europeans increased dramatically. Soon after, in the mid nineteenth century missionaries from the Wesleyan and Roman Catholic Churches established themselves on the island. Wesleyan teachers arrived on Rotuma in June 1841 followed by the Roman Catholic Marist missionaries who settled on Rotuma in 1847, withdrew in 1853 but returned to Rotuma in 1868 and established their mission in Fag'uta.

Consequently, the two religious groups competed against each other in the efforts to convert as many Rotumans to Christianity as they could.

Unfortunately, mounting conflicts between the French priests and white missionaries culminated in a war between the two religions in 1878 in which the Catholics were defeated. According to recent data, the Catholics make up close to one-third of the population and the Methodists and other churches make up the rest. The dissension caused by this war, fueled by previous political rivalries, compelled the chiefs of Rotuma's seven districts to petition England for Rotuma's annexation. On 13 May 1881, the island was officially ceded to Britain. The churches play a crucial role in the lives of the people. After the Deed of Cession, Rotuma became a British colony and was closed as a port of entry under the Fiji Government in 1970 when Fiji gained its independence.



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# 'ON FŪAƷ NE AS TA ROTUMA

## MEANING BEHIND ROTUMA

Upon initial discovery of Rotuma by Europeans, it was named Granville Island owing to its natural beauty, its clear sea and sandy shores, the richness and greenery land and foremost the friendliness of the people.

Before Christianity arrived in Rotuma, Rotumans were worshipers of spirits. **Tagroa**

was considered to be the supreme deity in the Rotuman pantheon and lived in a distant land in the sky called **Hanuā Fāvi** meaning Land which hangs from the Sky. Owing to his supremacy in the spiritual realm, **Tagroa** – who was also referred to as **'Ait Mana** - became associated with the all-powerful Christian God who is now known in Christian churches as **'Aitu / Ait**.

### Mana

The Almighty God,  
The All-Powerful

### Rotu-Ma, Rotu

Christian worship

### Ma

Mana supernatural also  
Ma (persons) to accept  
the decision or advice  
or statements of



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# HAITOHIĀG NE FUĀG FAK PUER NE HANUA CHIEFLY SYSTEM

Prior to Rotuma being divided into seven districts, the island was headed by the first Sāu, Sāuniftoga, who was appointed by Raho. However, in time, the office of Sāu became purely symbolic with no real powers although he still acted as the religious head of the people and he held office for a fixed period of between six months to a year. The new Sāu was chosen by the retiring Sāu normally from amongst the district chiefs.

However, following the Motusa War of 1869 - 1870, the office of Sāu was abolished. Furthermore, in light of preparations for cession in 1879, the chiefs of Rotuma conferred the honour of 'Sāuship' on the Queen of England through her representative, Sir Arthur Gordon.

According to oral history, Rotuma did not have a traditional form of government until Raho appointed a Sāu to rule over the whole island. The island was ruled as a single district until a disagreement arose over the appointment of a succeeding Sāu, causing this initial district to be divided. Successive divisions meant that by the time of Cession, there were seven itu'u, which remain to this day.

At the head of the itu'u is a chief - gagaj or fa'es itu'u (chief of a district) who is appointed by

a clan (kainaga) which lays claim to the chiefly title - mosega. On his succession to the chiefly office, his residence is called fuag ri and he assumes leadership - pure over all the lands associated with the fuag ri. An interesting feature of the Rotuman chiefly system is that one is not born a chief (gagaj), but made one. It constitutes for the fact that any man who becomes a chief is given a chiefly name during a ritual ceremony - huliag ne 'umefe, which means 'to turn over the eating platform', takes place.

The districts are divided into sub-groupings of households - ho'aga, and these work under the leadership of a sub-chief - gagaj 'es hoaga. He is installed into his leadership role in the same manner as the gagaj 'es itu'u. All district headmen and the majority of ho'aga headmen are titled. Titles, which are held for life, belong to the clans associated with specified house sites or foundations known as fuag ri.

Titled men and dignitaries such as ministers and priests, government officials, and distinguished visitors occupy a place of honour on formal occasions or ceremonies. They are served food from special baskets and kava. However, in the daily routine of village life they are not especially privileged.

# HATAG NE FĀMORI POPULATION

Data reveals that there are more Rotumans in Fiji and abroad than on the island of Rotuma itself. The latest figures shown in the 2018 census and past censuses are as follows:

ROTUMANS ON ROTUMA AND IN FIJI , 1986-2017*					ROTUMANS IN NZ 2006 - 2018**			
	1986	1996	2007	2017		2006	2013	2018
Rotuma	2588	2619	1893	1594	NZ Alone	621	783	981
Fiji	6064	7631	8442	>8406	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>621</b>	<b>783</b>	<b>981</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>8652</b>	<b>10250</b>	<b>10335</b>	<b>&gt;10000</b>				

\*Population Censuses, Fiji Islands Bureau of Statistics, Suva, Fiji

\*\*2018 Census, Stats NZ, Wellington, NZ



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## ROTU RELIGION

The London Missionary Society introduced Christianity in Rotuma in 1839. Then came the Methodist in 1842 who landed in the district of Oinafa, followed by the Catholics in 1846.

The enmity between the Methodists and the Catholics was so great that they fought wars in 1871 and 1878.

The English and the French missionaries had a hand in this and they fought to find converts. Recent years has seen the arrival of the Seventh- Day Adventists, Jehovah's Witnesses, Assemblies of God, and Mormons (the Church of the Latter-Day Saints) - who have found converts among Rotumans

Nowadays, Rotumans think of themselves as Christians, attending services, singing and praying to God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. However, we still adhere to our culture and customs.

For example, after a burial, we still observe the fifth day kakau sasi and feast; while at funerals, we still carry out the ritual he' 'atua - "calling of the spiritis".

However, a modern adaptation is that when a Christian minister is at the head of a funeral la'o (a visiting party), the mafua (elder) calls out, "Aitu 'e rere kalog" or "Momoa' 'e Lagi" (God above or Warrior of Heaven) instead of the name of a traditional chiefly spirit.

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## AGA MA GARUE 'E ROTUMA LIFESTYLE ON THE ISLAND

Heavy influences from a variation of Western Polynesian cultures, Samoa, Tonga, Futuna, 'Uvea and more recently from Fiji have impacted on Rotuman lifestyle. Kainaga or kinship relationships and strong emphasis on communal sharing are part of social life in Rotuma, although there is also the increase of value of money.

Parents, grandparents and elder siblings play a vital role in caring for infants and children. Value emphases are placed on sharing, cooperation and respecting the autonomy of others. Majority of the households rely on their supply from the garden and from the sea as well as from the government boat that calls into the monthly with supplies such as meat, rice, flour, sugar and other necessities.

# MAK A'PUMUA'ĀKI(T) A TREASURED SONG

Mama'o Konusi

9th March 1924 - 30th October 2005

The song was first sung in 1958 in the Suva Town Hall in commemoration of Hospital Week. Mama'o was moved and took a liking to a Samoan tune he had heard. This tune inspired the piece 'Atumotu' to which he had arranged and composed for the Rotuman Choir to sing in preparation for Hospital Week in Suva. With a vibrant tune and eloquent description of the beauty of Rotuma, the song took its mark in becoming one of the most treasured songs where most consider it as our Rotuman anthem. Ravai Shaw provided the English translation of the song.



"Queen Victoria Memorial Hall, time of Fiji Agricultural Industrial Show 1908", Wishart Ryan, Fiji Museum, P32.4/84

## 'ĀTUMOTU HELAVA LA KELE

'Ātumotu helava la kele

paṇi sio 'e tafa ne hule

Pua, ragakaṛi, hata mara ma tiere

Rotuma 'otou hosa ne 'āi pumuet

### CHORUS

Helava ne, 'os hanue

Rogo lelei ne 'oris garue

Kalua 'e, hanisi ne

Gagaja la 'utuen se rere

Asa ne 'otou hosa ne 'āi

Pumuet, ne gou he'a la kele

Rotu-ma 'otou 'ātumotu

Helava la kele

La rogoena 'e 'oris garue

Paṇi 'e kia'a ne asoha

Fisi ma'a lelei ka helava

Rava ne maīro, kori sea ma 'āipoa

Hili kaḷu 'e laloga ne Rotuma

Tukuena 'e peau ne lala

Tāe la maœna se laloga

'Otu hosa ne 'āi pumuet ka a'helava

Isalei Rotuma la gou se mao'ākia

An island so beautiful to see

In the light of the moon

Sweet fragrance of frangipani, ginger, ripe  
pandanus and gardenia

Rotuma my precious sweet bloom

### CHORUS

So beautiful our home

Flourishing and prosperous

Embraced and filled with love

God be praised

The name of my precious sweet bloom

I so treasure and long to see

Rotuma my home

So beautiful to see

May it continue to prosper and grow

Lit by the red glow of sunset

Radiant and beautiful

Trails of perfumed flowers

Adorn and permeate throughout Rotuma

As the waves drew me away

It soon fades from the horizon

My precious and beautiful flower

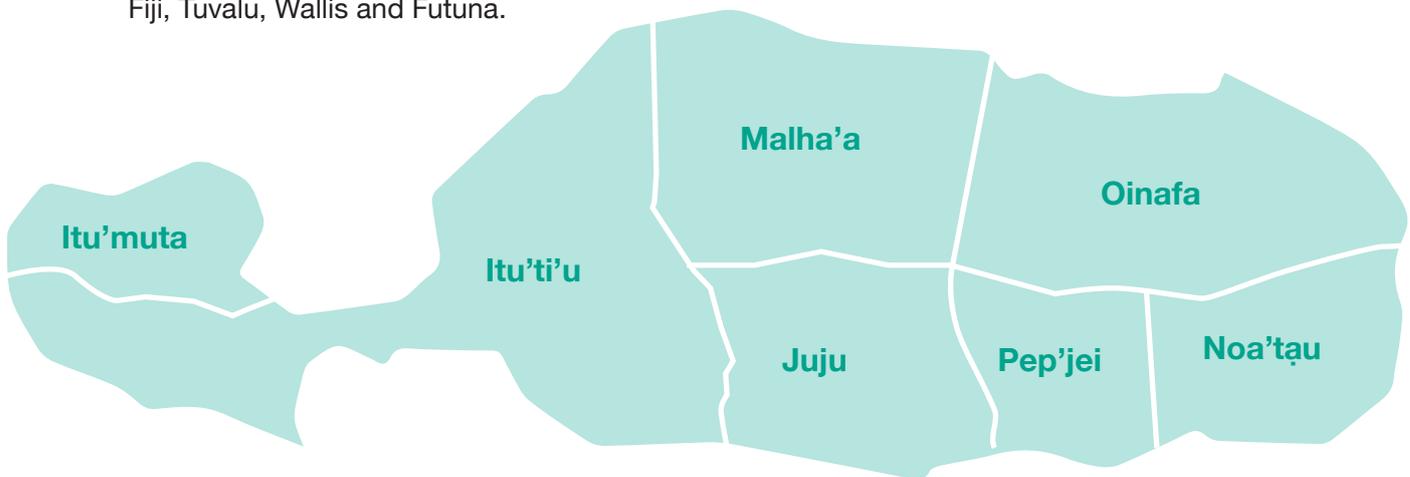
My beloved Rotuma I will never forget



## FŪ'ĀK NE HANUA GEOGRAPHY



Rotuma is a Polynesian volcanic island located at 12° 30' 10" South latitude and 177° 04' 42" East longitude near the intersection of the conventional boundaries of Micronesia, Melanesia and Polynesia. The island is surrounded by Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, Fiji, Tuvalu, Wallis and Futuna.



## ROTUMA 'E JAJ(A) NE FITI ROTUMA ON THE MAP OF FIJI

Rotuma is formerly known as Granville Island, also depicted as the “Garden of the Pacific”, from its rich green fertile land and clear sea.

Rotuma's central location in the Pacific made it a transit point during the era of ancient Pacific voyaging. Our ancestors were great navigators and with knowledge shared with other Pacific peoples were able to explore neighbouring islands. Early European explorers and whalers stopped over on the island to restock while mutineers and beachcombers used it as a haven. These encounters were transient and it was not until the arrival of the Christian missionaries that Europeans purposefully came

to settle on the island. Though their influence and rivalries brought about internal strife and civil war to the island, this period is often perceived as a transition from the dark ages into the light with the development of the Rotuman language and culture.

Rotuma is a Polynesian volcanic island located at 12° 30' 10" South latitude and 177° 04' 42" East longitude near the intersection of the conventional boundaries of Micronesia, Melanesia and Polynesia. The island is surrounded by Tuvalu to the North, Fiji to the South, Wallis and Futuna to the South East and the Solomon Islands to the West

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# JAJ(A) NE ITU' HIFU

## MAP OF THE SEVEN DISTRICTS

Each district is unique in its own way:

### Noa'tau - NOAH-TOW-OO

Traditionally considered the most senior ranking of the districts given that the district chief - specifically the title of Gagaj Maraf - is deferred to as the highest ranking title on the island

### Oinafa - OY-NAH-FAR

Features the main wharf and first point of entry as well as one of four primary schools on the island - Paptea Primary

### Itu'ti'u - EE-TOO-TEE-OO

Features the Government station, Rotuma District Council, Hospital, Police Station, Post Office/Shop and mini-market - all in Ahau, St Michael's Catholic Church and Motusa Primary

### Malha'a - MARL-HA-AH

Features the only airport and second point of entry, the only Rotuma High School and Malha'a Primary

### Juju - CHOO-CHOO

Formerly part of Fag'uta with Pepjei, Christ the King Church and Primary School

### Pepjei - PEP-CHE-EE

Formerly part of Fag'uta together with Juju

### Itu'muta - EE-TOO-MOO-TA

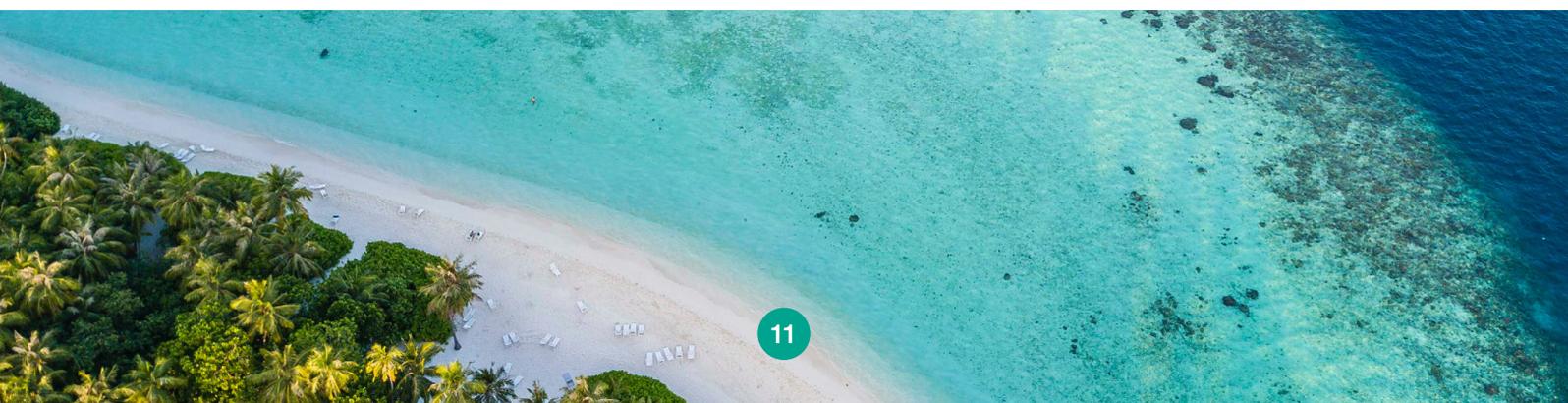
Formerly part of Itu'ti'u

There are some islands located at a distance between 50 metres (160 ft) and 2 kilometres (1.2 mi) from the main island, but still within the fringing reef:

- Solnoho (south)
- Solkope and Sari'i (southeast)
- 'Afgaha and Husia Rua (far southeast)
- Husia (Husia ti'u) and Husia' mea'me'a (close southeast)
- Hāua mea'me'a and Hāua (Hāuati'u) (close together northeast)

Additionally, there is a separate chain of islands between 3 kilometres (1.9 mi) and 6 kilometres (3.7 mi) northwest and west of the westernmost point of Rotuma Island. From northeast to southwest, are:

- Uea
- Hāfhāi
- Hāfhahāi
- Hāfhāveiaglolo
- Hatana Hāfliua
- Hāfliua





# FÄEAG ROTUAM TA LANGUAGE

## ‘ON ‘EA’EA NE FÄEGA – PRONUNCIATION GUIDE

Fäeag Rotuam ta (The Rotuman Language) has five basic vowels:

**A, E, I, O, U,**

These basic vowels have the same pronunciation as other Pacific Languages and Te Reo Māori. There are also five variations to these vowels:

**Ä, Å, Ȧ, Ö, Ü,**

These are slightly different ways of pronouncing the vowels **A, O** and **U**.

LETTER	PRONUNCIATION	LETTER	PRONUNCIATION
<b>A a</b>	A sound in FAR / CAR	<b>Ä ä</b>	A sound PAW (American Eng.)
<b>E e</b>	E sound in EGG / PET	<b>Å å</b>	Long A sound in CAT / BAT
<b>I i</b>	EE sound in FEET / SWEET	<b>Ä ä</b>	Short A sound in CAT / BAT
<b>O o</b>	O sound in CORE / SHORE	<b>Ö ö</b>	U sound in FUR (American Eng.)
<b>U u</b>	OO sound in BOOK / LOOK	<b>Ü ü</b>	As in German <sup>1</sup>



## ‘ON ‘EA’EA NE FÄEGA – PRONUNCIATION GUIDE

To pronounce ü correctly, round your lips as if you were to say “oo” in “cool” or “stool”, but move your tongue to say “ee” (as in “see”) instead (but don’t move your lips).

The basic vowels can be short or long with the long vowel sound indicated by a macron above the vowel. Long vowel sounds are slight dragged out.

**A, E, I, O, U,    Ā, Ē, Ī, Ō, Ū,**

It is important to show this distinction as it affects the meaning of words. For example:

<b>Koko</b> (mischievous / bad)	<b>Kōkō</b> (thorny / prickly)
<b>Toto</b> (blood)	<b>Tōtō</b> (to speak / utter)

Fäeag Rotuam ta has fourteen consonants which comprises of 13 letters and the glottal stop:

**F G H J K L M N P R S T V ['] (glottal stop).**

These are always consonantal and are pronounced as in English with a few differences:

The G is pronounced as the <b>NG</b> sound in <b>SING</b> .	The J is pronounced like <b>CH</b> in <b>CHURCH</b> and never as J in <b>JUDGE</b> or <b>JUG</b>
The <b>R</b> is slightly rolled	The ['] glottal stop is the sound made in the middle of the phrase <b>Oh-oh</b> or <b>Uh-oh</b>

# 'ON JĪPEAR NE FÄEGA

## NOTES ON SPELLING

Unlike neighbouring Pacific languages, Fäeag Rotuam ta allows for words to end in consonants. This feature makes it unique among Polynesian languages and makes Fäeag Rotuam ta similar, in this regard, to Micronesian languages such as Marshallese.

Whereas neighbouring Pacific languages must end words with vowels such as VAKA / VA 'A (Canoe), in Fäeag Rotuam ta you are able to spell this out as VAKA or VAK (Canoe) or as VA 'A or VA' (Roots).

Most words in Fäeag Rotuam ta have two forms (as demonstrated above) – a Long form and a Short form.

As with the other consonants and the macron, the inclusion or omission of the [ ' ] glottal stop can change the meaning of the words:

Ofi / Öf (To) Finish	Ofi / 'öf To chase or cut (snip)
Uli / ÜI To steer	'Uli / 'ÜI Wheel / Tyre / Skin

## MAF NE PUKU – THE ALPHABET

<b>Aa</b> Ava / Av Time	<b>Ee</b> Esu / Es Pawpaw	<b>li</b> Isu / Is Nose	<b>Oo</b> Ono / On Six	<b>Uu</b> Usa / Uas Rain
<b>Aa</b> Afafu / Afaʻ Mist	<b>Ää</b> Är 'aki / Är 'äk To Guess	<b>Ää</b> Äfe / Äf Thousand/Liver	<b>Öö</b> Öʻfa Father	<b>Üü</b> ÜI 'aki / ÜI 'äk Tosteer
<b>Pp</b> Ponapa/Ponap Pineapple	<b>Tt</b> Tanu / Tan Water	<b>Ff</b> Fa 'purou Hat	<b>Gg</b> Gasava / Gasav Week	<b>Hh</b> Hefu / Hef Stars
<b>Jj</b> Juli / Jül Type of Bird	<b>Kk</b> Kalofi / Kalöf Eggs	<b>Ll</b> Lähapa / Lähap Leg	<b>Mm</b> Magkō Mangoes	<b>Nn</b> Niu Coconut
<b>Rr</b> Rotu/Rot Church / Prayer	<b>Ss</b> Solo/Sol Mountain / Hill	<b>Vv</b> Vao Net	<b>'[GlottalStop]</b> 'Uhi/ 'Üh Yam	<b>Fa 'i/Fa 'i</b> To write

## MAF NE FIKA – NUMBERS

Most numbers in Fäeag Rotuam ta have a long for and short form – the Long Form of numbers is used as Ordinal Numbers i.e. First, Second, Third, Fourth, etc. while the Short Form is used for as Cardinal Numbers.

TENS		AND	ONES	
Saghul	10		Tā	1
Ruaghul	20		Ruḷ	2
Folaghul	30		Fol	3
Hākaghul	40		Hāk	4
Limaghul	50	ma	Liḷ	5
Onaghul	60		On	6
Hifaghul	70		Hif	7
Vaḷaghul	80		Vaḷ	8
Sivaghul	90		Siḷ	9

NUMBER	LONG	SHORT	
0	Zero	'Ō	
1	One	Tā	
2	Two	Rua	Ruḷ
3	Three	Folu	Fol
4	Four	Hāke	Hāk
5	Five	Lima	Liḷ
6	Six	Ono	On
7	Seven	Hifu	Hif
8	Eight	Vaḷu	Vaḷ
9	Nine	siva	Siḷ
10	Ten	Saghulu	Saghul
11	Eleven	Saghul ma tā	Saghul ma tā
12	Twelve	Saghul ma ruḷ	Saghul ma ruḷ
13	Thirteen	Saghul ma folu	Saghul ma fol
14	Fourteen	Saghul ma hāke	Saghul ma hāk
15	Fifteen	Saghul ma lima	Saghul ma liḷ
16	Sixteen	Saghul ma ono	Saghul ma on
17	Seventeen	Saghul ma hifu	Saghul ma hif
18	Eighteen	Saghul ma vaḷu	Saghul ma vaḷ
19	Nineteen	Saghul ma siva	Saghul ma siḷ
20	Twenty	Ruaghulu	Ruaghul

When expressing an ordinal number, the prefix 'On is attached to the full form of the word to create the ordinal number i.e. Second – 'On Rua; Tenth – 'On Saghulu.

CARDINAL NUMBERS		
1	One	Rua
2	Two	Folu
3	Three	Hāke
4	Four	Lima
5	Five	Ono
6	Six	Hifu
7	Seven	Vaḷu
8	Eight	Siva
9	Nine	Saghulu
10	Ten	Saghulu

ORDINAL NUMBERS		
1st	First	'On Tā
2nd	Second	'On Rua
3rd	Third	'On Folu
4th	Fourth	'On Hāke
5th	Fifth	'On Lima
6th	Sixth	'On Ono
7th	Seventh	'On Hifu
8th	Eighth	'On Vaḷu
9th	Ninth	'On Siva
10th	Tenth	'On Saghulu

As you move past ten, cardinal numbers are constructed using the short form of the **TENS** value and the short form of the **ONES** with the word **ma** in between. This is illustrated below:

- 11:** TEN and ONE  
SAGHUL ma TA
- 34:** THIRTY and FOUR  
FOLAGHUL ma HĀK
- 99:** NINETY and SEVEN  
SIVAGHUL ma HIF
- 66:** SIXTY and SIX  
ONAGHUL ma ON

# FÄEAG 'ES 'AO

## USEFUL WORDS

### KĀUNOHOGA – FAMILY

ENGLISH	LONG	SHORT
Male	Fā	
Female	Hāni	Hān
Parent	O'i	Ö'
Parents	O'o'i	Ö'ö'
Child	Le'e	Le'
Father	Ö'fā	
Mother	O'honi	Ö'hön
Namesake	Sigoa	
Son	Le'fā	
Prince	Tinirāu	Tinrāu
Daughter	Le'hāni	Le'hān
Princess	Sina	Siñ
Baby	Le'susu	Le'sus
Small child	Le'mea'me'a	Le'mea'mea'
Grandparent	Ma'piga	Ma'piāg
Grandparents	Ma'ma'piga	Ma'ma'piāg
Grandchild	Ma'kiga	Ma'kiāg
Grandchildren	Ma'ma'kiga	Ma'ma'kiāg
Grandfather	Ma'piāg fā	
Grandmother	Ma'piāg hāni	Ma'piāg hān
Grandson	Ma'kiāg fā	
Granddaughter	Ma'kiāg hāni	Ma'kiāg hān
Sibling	Sāsiāg	Sāsiāg
Cousins	Sāsiāg	Sāsiāg
Sister	Sāsiāg hāni	Sāsiāg hān
Sister of Mother	Sāghāni	Sāghān
Sisters of Mother	Sāghāina	Sāghāiān
Brother	Sāsiāg fā	
Brother of Father	Sagavāne	Sagavān

### RAKO – EDUCATION

ENGLISH	LONG	SHORT
Education	Rako	Rak
School	Ri Rako	Ri Rak
Class	Kilasa	Kilas
Year	Fāu	
Room	Rumu	Rum
Teacher	Le' Rē Rako	Le' Rē Rak
Teacher (M)	Fā Rē Rako	Fā Rē Rak
Teacher (F)	Hān Rē Rako	Hān Rē Rak
Principal	Le' Rē Rak Pure	Le' Rē Rak Puer
Reading	Hat tē	
Writing	Fā' tē	
Maths	Rē Fika	Rē Fiāk
Physical Ed.	A'ne'ne' Foro	
Sports	Mane'a	Manea'
Singing	Suā maka	Suā mak
Playing Instruments	Jāu tē	
Dance	Maka	Mak
Art	Pān tē	
School mates	Kāurakoga	Kāurakoag
Friends	Kāumane'aga	Kāumane'ag
Talent / Skill	Fāiva	Fāiāv
Knowledge	'Inea	
Wisdom	Poto	Pot

## TUTUR NE AG FAK ROTUMA PILLARS OF ROTUMAN CULTURE

ENGLISH	LONG	SHORT
Mutual Compassion	H̄aihanisiga	H̄aihanisiag
Unity	Hugag'esea	
Co-operation	H̄aigarueaga	H̄aigarueag
Mutual Respect	H̄aifaktē'ākiga	H̄aifaktē'ākiaḡ
Mutual Care	H̄aiāf'ākiga	H̄aiāf'ākiaḡ
Kind / Compassionate	Huḡ māeav hanisi	Huḡ māeav hanis
Industrious	Huḡ fe'eni	Huḡ fe'en
Wise	Huḡ atmaḡ	
Long suffering	Huḡ rōt'āk tē	



Greetings	Noa'ia [NOAH-E-YAH] said quite fast Noa'ia 'e maḡuri [MAW-OO-REE] slightly different to Te Reo
Greetings Everyone	Noa'ia gagaj 'atakoa Noa'ia 'e maḡuri gagaj 'atakoa

The basic greeting in Rotuman is an expression of gratitude for the wellbeing of the person receiving the greeting. It literally translates as “THANK YOU FOR BEING ALIVE” and is comparable to the Tongan Mālō 'e lelei. In greeting others in this manner, you thank them for the care they have taken in ensuring their own wellbeing and health. In receiving this greeting, it is not uncommon to in turn thank them by saying **Noa'ia** or **F̄aiākse'ea**.

How are you (singular)?	Ka 'āe tapen?
How are you (dual)?	Ka 'aḡaḡ tapen?
How are you (plural)?	Ka 'aḡus tapen?

In these examples TO THE , the 'āe, 'aḡaḡ and 'aḡus are comparable to 'oe, 'oulua and 'outou in the Samoan query “Oa mai 'oe / 'oulua / 'outou?” depending on the number of listeners being spoken to.

I am fine, thank you	Gou lelei f̄aiākse'ea
Please	Figalelei
Thank you	F̄aiākse'ea [FOR-YAK-SEE-YAH]
Thank you (alternative spelling)	F̄aiāksia

In expressing gratitude in Rotuman, one acknowledges the burden, hassle or strain borne by another person for your sake. It is an unspoken strain: F̄aiāk (strain / hassle) se'ea (unspoken) on the part of the other person and it is in acknowledging this tiredness, that you express your gratitude.



## HAPPY ROTUMAN LANGUAGE WEEK

May you (sg.) be blessed, this week of the Rotuman Language

**Ajalum 'äe 'e gasav ne fäeag rotuam te'is**

May you (dual) be blessed, this week of the Rotuman Language

**Ajalum 'auar 'e gasav ne fäeag rotuam te'is**

May you (pl.) be blessed, this week of the Rotuman Language

**Ajalum 'aus 'e gasav ne fäeag rotuam te'is**

## HAVE A GOOD WEEK – ON SPECIAL WEEKS [GENERIC]

May you (sg.) be blessed, this auspicious week

**Ajalum 'äe 'e gasav pumuä te'is**

May you (dual) be blessed, this auspicious week

**Ajalum 'auar 'e gasav pumuä te'is**

May you (pl.) be blessed, this auspicious week

**Ajalum 'aus 'e gasav pumuä te'is**

## HAVE A GOOD DAY

May you (sg.) be blessed this day

**Ajalum 'äe 'e teran te'is**

May you (dual) be blessed this day

**Ajalum 'auar 'e teran te'is**

May you (pl.) be blessed this day

**Ajalum 'aus 'e teran te'is**

## HAVE A GOOD WEEK

May you (sg.) be blessed this week

**Ajalum 'äe 'e gasav te'is**

May you (dual) be blessed this week

**Ajalum 'auar 'e gasav te'is**

May you (pl.) be blessed this week

**Ajalum 'aus 'e gasav te'is**



# 'OU FÄEAG'ÅK NE 'ÄE INTRODUCTIONS



What is your name?	Ka sei ta 'ou asa?
My name is _____	'Otu asa le _____
How old are you?	Ka 'äe fau his?
I am _____ years old	Gou fau _____
Where do you live?	Ka 'äe noh 'e tei?
I live in _____	Gou noh 'e _____
Where are you from?	Ka 'äe le' ne tei?
I am a person from _____	Gou le' ne _____
Where are you from? (Asked to Male)	Ka 'äe fā ne tei?
I am a man from _____	Gou fā ne _____
Where are you from? (Asked to Female)	Ka 'äe hān ne tei?
I am a woman from _____	Gou hān ne _____
Where do you (go to) school?	Ka 'äe rak 'e tei?
I school at _____	Gou rak 'e _____
Where do you work?	Ka 'äe garue 'e tei?
I work at _____	Gou garue 'e _____
Who are your parents?	Ka sei ta 'ou ö'rua?
My parents are _____ and _____	'Otu ö'rua le _____ ma _____
Who is your father?	Ka sei ta 'ou ö'fā ta?
My father is _____	'Otu ö'fā ta le _____
Who is your mother?	Ka sei ta 'ou ö'hön ta?
My mother is _____	'Otu ö'hön ta le _____
Where did you come from?	Ka 'äe leum 'e tei?
I came from _____	Gou leum 'e _____
Where are you going?	Ka 'äe la' se tei?
I am going to _____	Gou la' se _____

# UT NE FAMORI A'MOU LA' SIN

## COMMONLY FREQUENTED PLACES

ENGLISH	RELEVANT SHORT FORM
Work	Garue
Workplace	Ut Garueag ta
Church (Building)	Rī Rot ta
Church Service	Rotu
My Home	'Otu hanue ta
Park	Marā' ta
Beach	Hune'el ta
Playground	Marā' mane'ag ta
Bakery	Rī Funuag Faraoa ta
Shop	Koroa ta

ENGLISH	RELEVANT SHORT FORM
Gas Station	Relevant Short Form
Restaurant	Rī Hahalag Pensin ta
Cinemas	Rī ' tēag ta
Pools	Rī keleag maḷ ta
Town	Taḅ kakauag ta
Hospital	Taon ta
Doctor	Haḅpet ta
Dentist	Taḅ ta
Vet	Taḅ ne 'al ta
Office / Office of	'Ofes ta / 'Ofes ne

## FÄEAG HAĪĀF'ĀKIG HOI'ĀK

### MORE POLITE PHRASES

ENGLISH	RELEVANT SHORT FORM
Please come in	Noa'ia ma surum
Excuse me – said when passing in front of someone with slightly bowed posture	Turo'
Thank you for the food	FaĪākse'ea 'e rē tēla'ā
Thank you for the food	FaĪākse'ea 'e ös tēla'ā
Thank you for your kindness	Noa'ia 'e hanisi
Goodbye – to those who are leaving	Hö' ma aḷalum
Goodbye – to those who are leaving	La' ma aḷalum
Goodbye – to those who are staying	Fu' ma aḷalum
Goodbye – to those who are staying	Fu' 'aḷamus ma aḷalum

## 'OU LA FAR'ĀK NE TA TĒET

### MAKING A REQUEST

ENGLISH	RELEVANT SHORT FORM
Please	Figalelei
I want to ...	Gou pā ...
Drink	'lom
Eat	' tē
Sleep	Mös
Go to ...	La' se ...
Sorry i.e. Please be forgiving	Hanis ma röt'āk
Sorry i.e. Please do not be angry	Hanis ma se fek

## 'OTOU A'HÄE – MY THOUGHTS / EMOTIONS

ENGLISH	LONG	SHORT
Happiness / Joy	Oaf'ofa	Oaf'oaf
Love	Hanisi / 'Ofa	Hanis / 'Oaf
Fear	Fea	
Anger	Feke	Fek
Worry / Sadness	Kokono	Kokon
Downcast	Hanono	Hanon
Peace / Contentment	Fürmaria	Fürmaria



## HUÅL NE FAU TA MONTHS OF THE YEAR

The months of the year are transliterations of the English months.

January	Janueri
February	Fepueri
March	Maja / Maji
April	'Epereli
May	Mē
June	June
July	Julai
August	'Okosita
September	Sepitempa
October	'Okotopa
November	Novempa
December	Tisempa

## TERÅN NE GASAV TA DAYS OF THE WEEK

Due to the often-conflicting influences of Christian sects on Rotuma, there is no consensus when it comes to the names of the days over the weekend. The following table sets out the days of the week as reckoned by the adherents of Roman Catholicism and Methodism.

DAY	METHODISM	ROMAN CATHOLIC
Monday	Månrē	Månrē
Tuesday	Rån Rua	Rån Rua
Wednesday	Rån Folu / Fol	Rån Folu / Fol
Thursday	Rån Häke / Hāk	Rån Häke / Hāk
Friday	Rån Lima / Liām	Rån Lima / Liām
Saturday	Terån A'ita/A'iāt	Rån Ono / On
Sunday	Terån Sapatō	Terån Ha'a

Adherents of Seventh Day Adventism observe the Sabbath on Saturday and therefore refer to that particular day as **Sapatō**.



# AG FAK ROTUMA CULTURE

## KATO'AGA – TRADITIONAL CEREMONIES / CELEBRATIONS

Culture and tradition are significant aspects of Rotuman life and is considered an inheritance passed down from our ancestors - an inheritance that is practiced to this day. All aspects of Rotuman life are governed by culture and tradition, beginning with the individual and expectations on how one speaks, dresses and behaves and extending to the wider community and expectations on how relationships are developed, preserved and reinforced between individuals, families, clans, villages and districts.

This is seen in the use of special respectful or honorific terms when addressing chiefs or elders; and in the expectation that people wear a belt or a sash around their waistline over their **hā'fali** (sarong or wrap-around) when they attend ceremonies or take part in community tasks or events.

**Hāifaktē'ākiga** (Respect) and being respectful is of great importance to Rotumans.

In all ceremonies, regardless of size, the somber, respectful rites and rituals must be carried out before any feasting, merry-making and entertainment can take place - this can be in the form of cultural presentations of food and/

or a religious ritual relevant to the occasion. Food is a central aspect of any occasion and is generally prepared in abundance or in excess. Though food for ceremonial presentation is traditionally prepared in an earth oven or **koua**, modern Rotuman gatherings and feasts also incorporate foreign or fusion cuisines into the menu. It is also a common practice to prepare a **'Afa** (basket) of food cooked in a **koua** for dignitaries in attendance - this could be chiefs, clergy, elders or other important people.

Seasonal fruits are also included in the menu and also form part of the cultural presentation of food. Though becoming an uncommon occurrence today, events tended to be open invitation with anyone able to attend. Having said that, there was also a cultural expectation and indeed the norm that guests came to the event bearing gifts of food and mats.

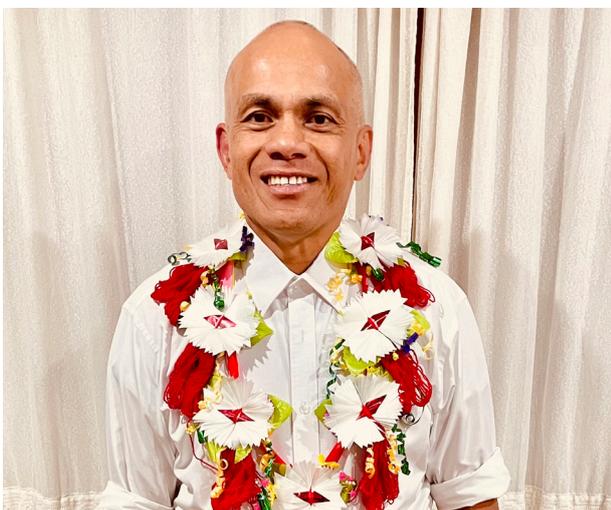
At the commencement of such events, the chiefs, distinguished guests and elders are seated in places of honour in the venue before being presented with traditional garlands or **tefui** which are marks of respect and welcome. The food or **koua**, is then ceremonially presented by means of an oration carried out by a **mafua** - someone who is well versed in such rites. **Kava** may also be prepared and presented to the distinguished guests along with the cooked food which is prepared by women and served on individual eating platforms (resembling low tables) known as **'umefe**. Before eating, a blessing is often offered by a member of the clergy and with such formalities completed, the "main table" can then be opened for all guests to eat. All these rites and rituals are carried out to ensure that respect is maintained through the course of the event.





The most common traditional Rotuman dance is known as a **Tautoag Hafa** and is a communal dance involving both men and women singing and dancing to the beat of a traditional rolled mat "drum". Traditional attire included a **hā'fali** with a **fali** or '**oro** tied around the waistline and either a shirt for men or a top for women called a **mon uam**. All these aspects bring together our love of food, merrymaking, song and dance and thus make our **kato'aga** celebrations of life and thanksgiving.

Gratitude and thanksgiving during traditional dance performances is usually expressed by means of acclamation similar to shouting "Bravo!". Rotumans use the expression "Ma'rie! Ma'rie! Ma'rie!" to express approval and praise of the performance. Women may spray perfume or scented talcum powder around the necks of performers or rub scented coconut oil or vaseline on their cheeks in a practice known as **Nau tē**. This is traditionally carried out in a respectful manner without excessive application of the spray, powder or oil.



The following are important events that call for ceremonial rites to be observed:

- **Mamasa** (to be dry): A celebration for anyone returning from abroad or a first time visitor, whether native or foreigner, and for anything of great importance such as a boat, brought into the island for the first time, to help transport people from Rotuma to Fiji or any port.
- **Terân a'sū** - Birthdays
- **'Oj'aki** - A ritual of a first born child
- **Sū** - Weddings
- Celebrations of achievements, ranks, promotions, grand service etc.
- Visitations – to the chief, the sick, families with new arrivals on the island
- **Hen Ra'u'ifi** - Ritual apology
- Christmas gifts
- **Koua** for the chief
- **Aragvaka**: Funerals
- **Takai ta**: The return (to parental home) of a living spouse after the death of a spouse
- Ritual apology / plea for mercy
- Feast for someone have recovered from any form or severe or serious ailment or unexpected ill-fate etc.
- Appointment / anointment of a new chief
- Special ceremony held with a presence of the seven district chiefs of Rotuma



Rotuman Marriage, 1890-1910, by Thomas Andrew. Te Papa (O.001003)



## MAMIAG FORAU CEREMONIAL ANOINTING



## MAMASA

### WELCOME VISITORS AND RETURNEES

The **Mamasa** is a ceremony traditionally performed for a person who returns home (**forau**) or a first time visitor. The word **mamasa** refers to the act of drying people who have disembarked from a canoe or boat after their journey. A **Mamasa** required a **päega**, a **koua**, a **tēfui** and scented oil. A change of clothes for the returnee(s) (**osi**) was also required - generally a **hā'fali** and a shirt or top. In some instances songs and dances were composed to commemorate the voyage(s) taken or the purpose of the visit.

A **päega** was prepared for the returnee(s) to sit on. A young woman came forward in ceremonial fashion with a **tēfui** wrapped in the leaf of an **'apea** (type of root crop), the oil, and **osi**. She assisted the **forau** to change their outer clothes (this was done in the modest fashion) then anointed them with oil, pouring a few drops of oil on their head, then rubbing it on their faces, limbs, and other exposed areas. She then ties the **tēfui** around their necks. A modern practice is to also spray the **tēfui** and their clothes with the perfume.

The feast at the **Mamasa** followed the usual procedures with the appropriate variations to the announcement of the **päega**. The **mafua** announced the ceremony. After the feast, the **forau** presented their gifts from abroad to the people who prepared the feast. The dancers were thanked in the usual way with an **apei** and mats because they would have come in a **la'o** with a **apei** and mats before performing.

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## GARUE NE SI'U – ARTEFACTS

**Apei:** fine white mats made from the same kind of pandanus leaves as the **Agrua** (very large mat), but they are processed differently. The green leaves are dipped in boiling water for about two minutes, then coiled one by one and put in a basket to keep them from shriveling. After a short while, the leaves are uncoiled one at a time and the black parts ('ar'ara) removed with a sharp shell or lid of a tin can. This process is called **rag sa'aga**.

The shiny part of the leaves (**sa'aga**) are then tied together, placed in the sea and weighed down by heavy rocks to prevent them from washing away. These are left overnight and taken out before sunrise.

Once removed and drained of the Seawater, the leaves are soaked in fresh water for about 12 hours. They are then removed and loosely coiled around the hand, and, with the two ends pinched together, shaken down into a curly spiral to keep them from shrinking. These are placed on a fan-palm leaves with all the ends towards one side. When all the coils have been shaken into spirals, their ends are loosely tied (**talía**) in parts using the 'ar'ara tied to one another to form a long rope of spiralled **sa'aga**. These are either hung on the line to dry or are laid out on stones or white sand.

After a couple of days they the 'ar'ara is removed and the spirals are sunned for another day to dry the ends.

Once thoroughly dry, the jagged edges are removed from the **sa'aga** and the darker leaves are separated from the lighter ones. Separate large coils (**hula**) are now made of darker leaves (**huḷ kele**) and lighter leaves (**huḷ fisi**). Both types are cut into narrow strips about 3/8 inch wide using a needle (in the past, an **asi** shell).

When the **apei** are plaited, the lighter strips of sa'aga are woven on top of the darker ones. The smallest **apei** measures 12 feet x 5 feet. The edges are decorated with wool (in the past with red feathers) and each woman creates her own design so that people can recognise who has plaited a particular mat.

When the **apei** is completed, a **koua** must be prepared with a pig and **fekei** included in it. This imbues the **apei** with the mana and makes it a sacred object. In this way, an **apei** becomes a "woven god", an idea put forward by Professor Vilsoni Hereniko, an academic of Rotuman heritage based in Hawaii.

When a woman refers to an **apei** she has made, she calls it her is **kākā'e** (tip of her fingers). When taken to a ceremony, an **apei** is folded (not rolled) in half, then folded with ends tucked in until it forms a bundle about 2-1/2 by 2 feet.

At all functions except funerals women carry the bundles with the decorations showing. At funerals, the **apei** are folded in bundles so that the decorations are hidden - as a mark of mourning.

**Apei** are the most important items at Rotuman ceremonies. When a chief goes to a function, he must be accompanied by an **apei** (and usually by a **koua**). At a funeral, mats are carried with one end in the palm of one hand, while the other end is grasped by the other hand (**apei'aki**) to lift, support or carry, on palms of the hands.





## TĒFUI TRADITIONAL GARLAND

**Rotuma Tefui 'Aipoa** - Our identity and the significance - a biblical interpretation. Ordination Sermon by Fekau George Aptinko, Auckland, 2018.

This narrative is a brief account of our Rotuman garland (**Tēfui 'āipoa**) that reflects our identity, culture that is unique to our origin, and the diasporas to other parts of the world. This brief account is primarily a biblical based interpretation and translation, reflecting the transitional of the paganism society to Rotuma Christianity. It marks the goodness and greatness of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ's work of redemption that was received with humble adoration by our ancestors. The **tēfui** and the components reflect the connection of our people to the **Ait Mana**, who created heaven and earth and every living thing.

The origin of the transition from the pagan **tēfui** to the Rotuma Christian **tēfui** took place around the period of the early Christian missionary movement in the Pacific. An estimated timeframe would be the early to mid-1800 AD when our Island leaders became subject to the supreme power and grace of the Almighty God (**'Ait Mana te laḡi**).

So, it reflected the transition of our people from paganism to Christianity. The change would include the language, culture, and values in Christian society. Christianity is a Western religion; hence the influence would have a reasonable degree of westernization.

Rotuma is the only island that can be referred to as having components or connections to all three groups (Melanesian, Micronesian, and Polynesian). In many ways, there are similarities

to each of these three groupings. But one of the very few things that position out significantly portraying the identity and belonging of Rotuman authenticity is the cultural garland commonly known as the **tēfui**. The Rotuman cultural garland **tēfui** is not just unique; it is different from the rest of the Pacific Island garlands.



There has been a reason as to why our ancestors had chosen the elements used in a **tēfui** and the existence. The six main components of the Rotuman **tēfui** are the stars, the diamond or the middle of the star, the fringes, the fragrances, the foundation (cross) and the cord that ties the stars together.

Holistically, the **tēfui** discloses about the land, the people (leaders and followers), values or qualities dear to the Rotuman people, and the relationship between the people and the environment and amongst themselves. Each element used and the specificity of how the **tēfui** is made is not for decoration around the neck but a logo of pride for one's identity, bond with the land, and one's community.

The **tēfui** is a symbol of unity of the people and pureness of the environment, proof of the fertility of the land, the mark of being a true Rotuman – is a cultural pride meant to wear around one's neck during **kato'aga**.

The breakdown of the components of the **tēfui** and the interpretation that gives an unambiguous argument of this translation version (see pages 27-28).

## REPRESENTATION AND SIGNIFICANCE

The male flower of the pandanus tectorius is white in colour representing purity and holiness as this was when the church intervened and people left their magic lei's and started on a new beginning. Also, it already has a sweet smell that stands out even with not much flowers added. A complete **tēfui** worn by men have seven stars and the one worn by women have one star. The seven stars represents the seven districts of Rotuma. It could also symbolise the book of Genesis God creation of heaven and earth in seven days.

The fruit of the female Pandanus tectorius (**hata**) is red diamond shape. The fragrance from the fruit of the female pandanus is sweet and complements the stars made from **paufu**. The red colour of the **hata** is the precious blood of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ that was shed on the cross. The blood that washed away our ancestors sins and cleanse them from the filth of their pagan worship as in Ephesians 1: 7 In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace.

Sea Weed (**lum ta**) or park of hibiscus stem (**kāuat ta**). The sea weeds represent the marine ecosystem complimenting the land ecosystem. Even if the hibiscus stem is used it has to be soaked in sea water before used. Land and sea connection depicted. Gods greatness in his work of creation.



Tefui – (Jio heta)



Fragrances: Specific Selected flowers (Cananga odorata, Hymenocallis pedalis, Syzygium neurocalyx, Ocimum tenuiflorum). Signifies the fertility and beauty of the land, fragrance of the people's way (qualities). The use of the small fragrance and the big fragrance signifies how young generation and old generation could support and complement each other promoting peace and harmony in our context.

Back part of the **fui** has the cross symbol usually of coconut tree shoot – is taken from the white shoot and are trimmed and cut to equal sizes pieces. Two white pieces taken after soaked in water are crossed and held together at the back of the **fui**. The cross is the foundation symbolize the cross Jesus was crucified and died for all. To our ancestors the message of the cross is salvation as in 1 Corinthians 1:18 For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.

**Vasvas** - the park of the hibiscus stem or the hau tree. The cord signifies unity for the seven districts. The cord represents the Holy Spirit. The cord binds the components of the **fui** and

the seven **fui's** together to the final "**tēfui**" Our ancestors acknowledged the Christian God is the triune God, the unity of God the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit. Life in the Christin God is unity empowered and bind by the Holy Spirit.

Culture evolves Rotumans yet must understand why there is a change or why must a change because if we do not understand why we do things, then there is no meaning, no purpose, and no significance in such cultural practice. The contemporary versions of our original **tēfui** have to uphold the essence of how and why it came to existence.

There is a lurking threat of cultural extinction for the Rotuman's in terms of cultural artifacts and language. Our generations MUST take their culture seriously if they want to maintain or preserve the outstanding values of our culture. We have the opportunity to invest in the continuity of our culture. The **tēfui** in itself shows the world an important part of the Rotuman identity. Most importantly, this generation will acknowledge and appreciate where the source of divine power and grace that affects the transition from the beginning.



## MAKA TRADITIONAL DANCE

**Tautoga:** The **Tautoga** is the most performed cultural dance in Rotuman ceremonies and in most celebratory events. It comprises of three parts - **Sua**, **Tiap Hī** and **Tiap Forau**.

The **Sua** and **Tiap Hī** are melodic chants with unique vocal arrangements that resonate the traditional sounds of our Rotuman people. The lyrics and actions are metaphorical expressions that are specific to the occasion.

**Tiap Forau** is the Rotuman adaptation of foreign music and dance. This is the segment of the **Tautoga** where the tempo increases and people from the audience or the dignitaries spontaneously become part of the performance.

The most common form of the **Tautoga** that is performed is the **Tautoag Hafa** which is a communal dance involving men, women and children. The formation consists of men on one side and women on the other making up a minimum of three rows facing to the front. The rows interchange to the front during the **Sua** and **Tiap Hī**. In a **Tiap Forau**, the men and women in the back row, dance their way to the front from each side. A less common form of the **Tautoga** is the **Tautoag Fā** which is performed only by men

Rotuman dance is deliberate and graceful. Women are elegantly reserved in their movements while the men poise boisterously to the rhythm of the music.





# TĒLA'Ā FOOD & DELICACIES

Fekei - Traditional dessert: Fekei is by far the all time favourite delicacy and is usually cooked in an earth oven. The fekei is a sweet pudding made from starch, sugar and coconut milk; other ingredients are added to this depending on the type of fekei being made. There are several types of fekei but the most common (and probably popular) two are mara ma 'a'ana (tapioca starch and taro) and fakakāi (banana)

Below are recipes for these fekei adapted for families to use in a diaspora setting. For best results, eat as soon as it is done.

## RECIPES – RECIPES



### Mara ma 'A'ana - Taro Pudding

(the tuber or edible part of a taro plant)

#### Ingredients:

Taro: 4-5 medium sized corms peeled and grated

Tapioca Starch: 1 small 500g packet

Coconut Cream: 1-2 1L packs Brown Sugar: To taste

#### Method

1. Mix grated taro with tapioca starch, adding some water to keep mixture moist;
2. Wrap in banana leaves or put into well greased loaf tins and cover with foil
3. Place in a **koua** or bake in a preheated oven (180°) for 1.5 hrs When the mixture has cooked through, remove from leaves / tins and place immediately into a pot with the coconut milk; Stir and mix until coconut milk is cooked through and has soaked into the mixture. Add sugar to taste. Serve and Enjoy!



### Fakakai - Banana pudding

#### Ingredients

**Sāe** (a type of banana characterised by the bunches growing upright instead of hanging downwards)

Tapioca starch Coconut Cream Brown Sugar: to taste

#### Method

1. Peel and boil the sāe until cooked
2. Add the cooked sāe into the cassava starch and mix thoroughly Wrap in banana leaves or put into well greased loaf tins and cover with foil
3. Place in a **koua** or bake in an oven
4. When the mixture has cooked through, remove from leaves / tins and place immediately into a pot with the coconut milk;
5. Stir and mix until coconut milk is cooked through and has soaked into the mixture. Add sugar to taste. Serve and Enjoy!.

# HANUJU

## STORYTELLING / MYTHS AND LEGENDS

Over the centuries, Rotumans, like fellow Pacific Islanders, have passed down a wealth of knowledge through storytelling. Many of us cherish memories of our elders sharing these same stories as popular bed-time stories or favourite pastimes. We can remember listening intently to every word, soaking in every detail, and having a few belly laughs now and then.

**What storytelling looks like today?** Today, storytelling is everywhere but has taken a new form. Media in all its forms has given us an opportunity to hear and tell stories at any given moment. Just press a button and immediately, you can see what's happening in the world.

It is important to separate ourselves from our tech-reliant world for a moment and understand that this is not our Rotuman culture. Our culture,

similar to that of our Pacific neighbours, is one that encourages gathering together, feasting and sharing through spoken word. It is one that cares about what's happening in the lives of family and community, no matter how trivial. One that reconnects us to our not-so-distant past and to our ancestors who told a great deal of **hanuju**. We come from a culture that believes in the importance of understanding one another, and supporting each other while finding out ways to nurture our Rotuman identity through the essence of our language and culture.

When participating in a **hanuju** the storyteller begins with "**Hanuj!**" to which the audience responds "**Mā!**"

On the next page is a well known **hanuju** based on one of the islands in Rotuma.

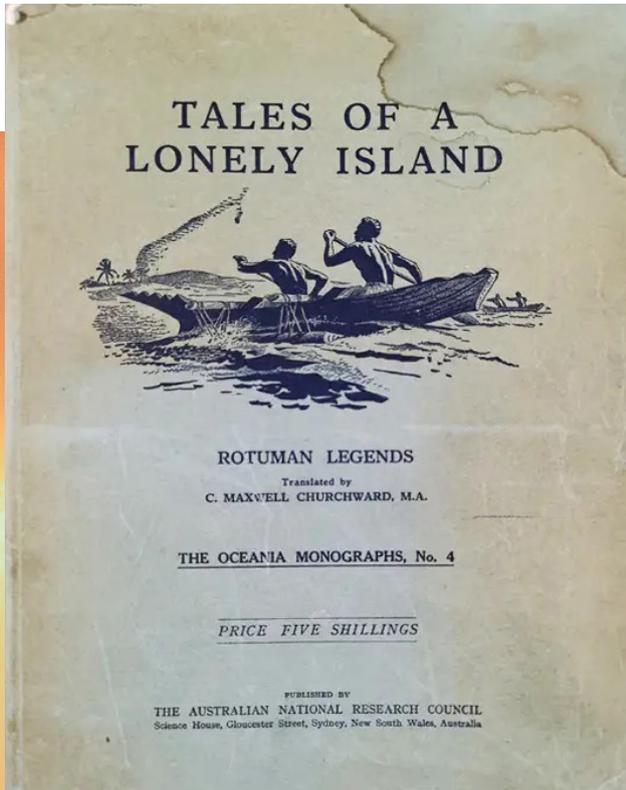


Image from Auckland Museum Research Library Te Pātaka Mātāpuna



## THE LEGEND OF THE SPLIT ISLAND

### THE LEGEND OF THE SPLIT ISLAND

The **Fikou Puer ta** (hermit crab leader) from **Solroroa** at **Itumuta** and the **Sokra'a** (sailfish) from the beautiful bay at **Oinafa** were very good friends for a long, long time but in everything that they did in life, the **Sokra'a** always finished first and the always finished last. The **Fikou** was always embarrassed of its lack of achievements in life. As the leader of his people, **Fikou** looked for ways to overcome this embarrassment and prove to the other creatures that they could win at something.

One day the **Fikou** spoke to his friend the **Sokra'a** and said, "My dear friend, I was thinking of our friendship and how one day we will inevitably be separated. But before that day comes I would like to have a race with you and prove to the world my speed". This greatly surprised the **Sokra'a** and he responded, "My dear friend, do not waste your time because you will prove nothing and will still come last as always". But the **Fikou** was insistent and the **Sokra'a** finally agreed to the race. The **Sokra'a** told the **Fikou** that the starting point would be **Afgaha** island in the district of **Oinafa**, and that the finish line would be the island of **Hāfliua** which could be seen from **Solroroa** where **Fikou's** people lived.

The day before the race, early in the morning **Fikou ta** called a meeting of all the **fikou** in Rotuma presented them with his plan. The **Fikou Puer** said, "I need 10 strong **fikou** to win the race. I will start the race, and eight others will be placed along the route at set intervals while my son will be at the finish line on top of **Hāfliua**

island". They happily agreed to the plan.

Race day was beautiful and sunny and the **Sokra'a** was in high spirits because he was confident of the win. However, his mood soon turned to annoyance as he shot past the **Fikou** at the starting line only to find that his friend had somehow managed to get past him along the way. Try as he might, by changing his technique, swimming as fast as he could or even flying out of the water with all his skill, the **Fikou** was always ahead of him. As they neared the finish line, the **Sokra'a** leapt out of the water and saw the **Fikou** sitting atop **Hāfliua** island, waiting for him. "How could this be? I am going to lose this race!", he thought to himself as he surged forward with all his might. He was going so fast that, as he leapt out of the water towards the finish line, he hit the island with his long sharp nose and split the island in two - leaving only the rock that the **Fikou** was sitting on wedged in the gap between the two new halves of the island.

And that is how **Hāfliua** got its name - a reference to the stone / rock



Image from <http://www.safari-photos.com/starship/journal/nov99/6.htm>



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