

island of Kili, situated about two hundred miles south of Kwajalein and one of the southernmost of the Marshall Islands. Since the 1870's Kili had been managed as a coconut plantation, first by Germans and later by a Japanese company, with native laborers recruited from adjacent atolls. Abandoned finally during World War II, the island was uninhabited and overgrown when the displaced community arrived from Kwajalein by naval transport in November of 1948. Today the ex-Bikinians continue to live on Kili and appear likely to remain there indefinitely.

In the decade following their departure from Bikini the migrating islanders time and again were confronted with strange ecologic and social situations which called for some alteration of the culture pattern if the community was to retain corporate identity, a goal which throughout tended to be upheld by the majority. On occasion the habitat quite obviously exerted a restricting influence, although permitting alternate courses of action within the range of limitation. Just as clearly did the habitat fail to determine any particular course of action. Significantly, however, once the choice had been made either by the community as a whole or by segments of it, the ecologic factor became a prime determinant in shaping the social and cultural patterns that began to emerge. Especially noteworthy was the fact that differential adaptation by various components of the migrant population, when confronted with ecologic change, threatened to undermine the social integrity of the group owing to conflicts between intrusive behavioral and value systems and those which had formerly prevailed on Bikini. These intrusive elements seemed to appear largely as a result of increased interaction between individu-

At Bikini was assigned to one of several of the ten islands through which the main island was crossed. The workaday basis of productive activity was the matrilineal extended family, usually comprising two or three households and occupying one of the more extensive lineage landholdings which crossed the main island from ocean to lagoon to include a complete range of natural resources. Only rarely did the entire community join in cooperative ventures, such as fish drives, roof thatching, or feast preparation. Otherwise labor was organized along sex lines. Men worked with wood, made sails from coconut husk, fished and sailed canoes, and collected pandanus, arrowroot, and coconut as needed. Women cared for the children, cooked food, plaited mats and baskets from pandanus leaf, and washed and mended clothing. Both sexes contributed to crop production but only women made handicraft for trade. Daily work schedules were casually organized and, particularly for men, avoided long periods of sustained effort on one task. Although many young adults had left Bikini for short visits, medical attention, and wage employment, the marked tendency toward local endogamy among Bikinians reinforced the individual's sense of belonging to the community. Any attempt to break down the isolation and self-sufficiency of the atoll group was strongly resisted by those in control.

When the evacuated population arrived off Rongerik one morning in March of 1946 aboard a naval vessel they looked about and made the inevitable comparison with their ancestral home. They found Rongerik Atoll to be less promising in its principal directions though possessed of a similar variety of economic plant and marine species. The land and lagoon Rongerik was only one-fourth the size of Bikini, and of its ten islands

worked but two could be regarded as even temporarily habitable. On the larger of these, 110 acres in extent, the Administration had located a cluster of tent dwellings near the lagoon. Fish and arrowroot seemed to be in good supply but the small coconuts and poor varieties of pandanus prompted the newcomers very soon to plant sprouts and cuttings of better quality obtained from Bikini.

By midsummer, after a typical northern Marshalls season of little rainfall and having suffered a forest fire in May which burned an estimated 30 per cent of the main island's resources, the islanders commenced to learn more directly the deficiencies of Rongerik. As local areas in the lagoon became overworked fishing brought smaller returns. Men extended their operations beyond the reef but were less familiar with deep-sea techniques. A first alternative in the face of these frustrations was to increase the purchase of trade food. However, the small number and poor quality of coconuts made impossible any copra production for export. Women had to spend more of their time in handicraft manufacture (fans, belts, and mats) but here, too, meager supplies of coconut and pandanus leaf limited their output. With these sources of money income restricted on Rongerik, a number of men and some women left the community to work for wages as unskilled laborers at Kwajalein air base. This attempt to bolster the home economy had even less success. The small earnings tended to be dissipated in higher living costs and distractive novelty before they could be converted into food for relatives on Rongerik. Moreover, the absence of able persons from home weakened the labor force needed to extract sustenance from the burdened atoll. Another attempt to relieve the situation sent small parties of older people and children to Bongelab Atoll by outrigger canoe, about six hours distant by sail, where the inhabitants gladly took them in for a few weeks until their health could be restored by normal diet. But the strain of a sea voyage demanded more frequent repair of sennit lashings on outrigger parts, and the sennit made from short weak fiber of Rongerik coconut husk proved unequal to the task. When the sea grew rougher with the approach of winter this project had to be abandoned.

Sixteen months after relocation the problem of existing on Rongerik had reached such proportions that the migrants put their exploitation of atoll resources on a community basis. By this time lineage and extended family had lost some of their former importance in economic matters. The eleven lineage heads now acted in concert as a formally recognized Council rather than as relatively independent chiefs of their respective kin groups. The senior ranking head served as chief of the governing body. At frequent intervals the Council assigned persons to working parties to fish, plant, collect food, make handicraft, and clean up the village area. These assignments were made with less regard for kinship ties than for individual capabilities and a maximum use of the limited facilities. The Council bought food for the community and distributed it in equal shares to all. Income from the sale of handicraft went into a common fund in a futile attempt to balance the rapidly rising trade debt. In January 1948 the Administration directed an investigation of the crisis on Rongerik. Recommendations for immediate removal of the people were acted upon as the only remaining alternative to meet the problem raised by resettlement of Bikinians on an atoll too small to support them permanently (Mason, 1950).

From March until November the Rongerik refugees lived in rows of closely spaced tent huts on the ocean side of Kwajalein landing field. In this artificial setting the community found no use for an economic system of its own. Three times each day the members walked to a nearby mess hall that served Western fare to three or four hundred Marshallese laborers who lived on the island and worked for the Americans. For eight months did the Administration provide all food and lodging at no expense to the

in the migrant community as determined by traditions of rank and kinship, his innate capabilities and acquired skills, and his relative optimism or frustration at the moment as he responded to ecologic conditions. Three principal alternatives, and later a fourth, are suggested as significant by analysis of the behavior of individual members of the relocated group.

One of these characteristic reactions may be regarded as negative and the other two as positive if the practicalities of the adjustment problem at Kil are considered. Typical of the first group were those persons who wished to reconstruct BIRAM at KIL

social life on Kwajalein Island.

A more constructive though basically conservative view was expressed by some ex-Bikinians who recognized the impossibility of the community ever returning to an atoll environment. The Administration had stated repeatedly that Bikini never again could meet the requirements of subsistence economy, and other Marshallese atolls of sufficient size were already inhabited. Persons in this category sought to restore the social defenses which had protected the integrity of the inbred community on Bikini, and to preserve an economy founded on subsistence use of local resources in order to minimize trade contacts. Bikini lagoon they could put aside as a nostalgic figment in the full realization that successful adaptation to Kili would require serious revision of their economic methods. In this they were encouraged by the promise of a far richer economy than could ever have been achieved on Bikini. Their principal need in this undertaking was to acquire the techniques for cultivating such plants as taro, breadfruit, banana, and sweet potato which flourished in this wetter climate but grew only poorly if at all in the northern atolls. Efficient management of taro patches, for example, called for a change in their customary approach to work, from a formula of casual labor and immediate returns to one of long arduous toil for harvests in the future. As for the local deficiency in marine food they envisioned at least two remedies: limited production of copra in exchange for tinned meat and fish, and greater exploitation of poultry and swine. The former presented no problem of supply, but new methods of drying coconut would have to be mastered, and there remained always the difficulty of maintaining trade contact because of the reef barrier. Pigs and chickens they had raised on Bikini though haphazardly and only for feast food. At Kili if taro and sweet potatoes were to survive, pigs would have to be penned and fed, another task added to the daily round. Among these individuals conservatism was evident in the general wish to see lineage land rights restored. However, many of them had noted the emerging importance of the nuclear family in economic activity and, with this in mind, supported the Council's regulation of work so long as effective progress was made by the community in rehabilitating the island.

A third alternative was elected by others who also saw the necessity of making a permanent settlement on Kili but who favored a more commercial exploitation of island resources, and by a system that gave little consideration to kinship obligations. Some of these persons, lowly placed by birth, sought to better their status by material means, a device favored by many Marshallese in recent years. Some Kili people had developed associations with islanders at Kwajalein and rebelled at the prospect of social isolation on Kili. And some demanded more individual freedom, chafing under

economy, in fact to the very existence of the community without the insurance of subsistence reserves. Plans to solve this difficulty have included purchase of a cargo boat to be based at Jaluit Atoll where the Administration has set aside land on the lagoon for a Kili colony. Brief periods of clear weather even in the winter season permit communication between these two places.

In the history of Kili since 1948 each of the above alternatives has predominated momentarily. A few individuals have deserted the island, solving their problem by emigration to other communities in the Marshalls. Those who remained behind plumbed the depths of depression during the winter of 1952, and for a time the Administration seriously considered another resettlement but lack of a suitable site aborted this move. A community development program initiated by the Administration in 1953 was remarkably successful in demonstrating the feasibility of a dependable food production locally and in exploring the possibilities for commercial exploitation. Most recently the colonial venture on Jaluit Atoll shows much promise in solving the communication problem.

Social isolation of the community, still desired by some members, is apparently unrealistic in the light of general developments in the rest of the Marshalls. Ultimate integration of the Kili group, within itself and as part of Marshallese society, seems likely to hinge on the ability of Kilians to find some common denominator in the positive alternatives noted above, namely, an economy based on a practical balance between subsistence production and commercial development. Within this pattern members of the group will probably be able in time to work out their individual adjustment. The course of events since 1948 has been influenced greatly by the continuing reactions of Kilians to the ecologic situation, reactions that were determined initially by historical and sociological factors. As the community progresses in making an integrated adaptation to the Kili habitat, the ecologic factor is not only limiting but is contributing creatively to changes in technology, sexual division of labor, the role of kinship in economic organization, and the importance of status achievement on individual merit. The interplay of historical, sociological, and ecologic factors is constant, and evaluation of the Kili situation at any moment needs to take consideration of this process.

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