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Land Tenure in the Marshall Islands

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
Preface	iii
Acknowledgements	iii
Introduction; Land Tenure	1
Physical Description	2
Land Use	3
Mechanics of Division of Copra Share	4
Deviations from the General Pattern	4
Inheritance Pattern	5
Patrilineal Usufruct Rights	6
Adoptive Rights	7
Usufruct Rights Acquired by Marriage	8
Wills	8
Rentals	9
Enclaves	9
Reef Rights	11
Fishing Rights	12
Game Reserves	12
Indigenous Attitudes Toward Land	13
Concepts of Land Ownership	13
Categories of Land	15
<u>Bwij in Aje</u> - <u>Imonaje</u> - Divided Land	16
Conclusion	32
Addendum	33
Literature Cited	35
Appendix	35

FIGURES

Fig. 1	Map of the Marshall Islands	facing	1
Fig. 2	"	6
Fig. 3	"	17

PREFACE

This report is the result of research in the field while the author was employed by the Government of the Trust Territory as Anthropological Field Consultant for the Marshalls District, August 1950 to August 1951 and from October 1951 to the present date.

It is felt that the information obtained will be of immediate practical value to those concerned with adjudication of land disputes and other analogous problems.

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J.E.T.
Majuro
3-11-52

INTRODUCTION: LAND TENURE

Land in the Marshall Islands is placed in many categories, each with its own descriptive name and rules of inheritance. The land is of paramount importance to the Marshallese people whose agricultural economy is based on copra production and much of whose diet comes from their land. This land area is so small--74 square miles scattered over 29 atolls and five islands throughout 375,000 square miles of ocean, that it is patently precious to its 11,000 inhabitants, each of whom is born with land rights.

The Marshallese system of land tenure provides for all eventualities and takes care of the needs of all of the members of the Marshallese society. No one need go hungry for lack of land from which to draw food. There are no poor houses or old peoples' homes in the Marshall Islands. The system provides for all members of the Marshallese society; it is, in effect, its social security.

The Marshallese have an attitude of security which is undoubtedly due to a great degree to their system of land tenure. Despite the fact that they have seen three foreign powers take over their islands--German, Japanese, and American, they still have possession of most of their land, unlike the unfortunate indigenes in many other areas of the world.

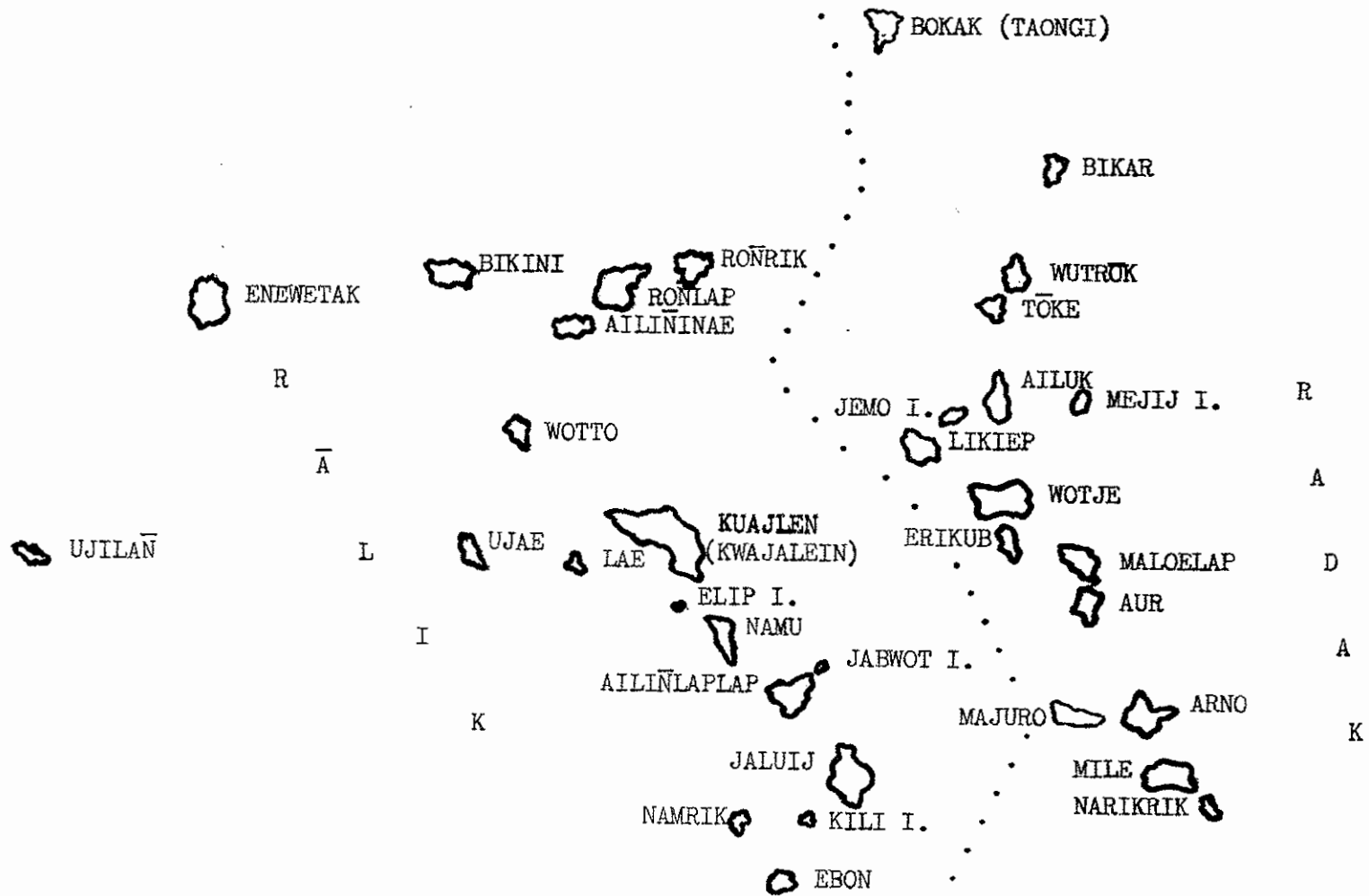
The present policy forbids sale of land to non-indigenes and, at long last, steps are being taken to return lands occupied by American forces during the war and to pay retroactive rent for their use.

It is anticipated that former Japanese Government lands and land seized by the Japanese for military installations will be made available for the use of the Marshallese people. Other land needed for U.S. military and Civil Administration use, a relatively small amount, may be leased or purchased from the owners. High level policy in regard this important matter is undecided, however, at this writing.

Although the Marshallese system of land tenure may seem overly complex, it has developed to meet the needs of this particular group of people and is an integral part of the culture. Any radical change by outsiders would disturb the society and do irreparable damage--as any student of social-anthropology well knows.

Future administrators would do well to respect this system of adjustment to the environment which the Marshallese people have evolved and should allow any changes in the system of land tenure to come from within the culture. The U.S. Naval Administration, in accordance with the Trusteeship Agreement, has on the whole respected indigenous customs and has not attempted to force the Marshallese people into an American mould or to drastically modify the culture. It is hoped that the future administrations will follow this wise course.

MARSHALL ISLANDS



DISTANCES BETWEEN MARSHALL ISLANDS

UJILAN to MILE -- 700 miles

EBON to BOKAK -- 600 miles

Figure 1.

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

The typical Marshallese land-holding or wāto consists of a strip of land stretching from lagoon to ocean and varying in size from about one to five acres in extent. Each wāto has its own name and history.

Sometimes the wāto may be broken up into two or three wāto(s) with transverse boundary lines. The boundaries, kōtan wāto are marked off by lilies, red shrubs, or frequently by slashes on coconut trees. These markers are called kakōlle.

The extended family (bwij) members may live on the wāto or merely make copra on it and use its food resources: coconuts, breadfruit, pandanus, arrow root, taro (mainly in the Southern Marshalls) and fish from the adjacent marine areas, if they possess more than one wāto as is usually the case. On most of the islands, the people live on their wāto(s). The structures found are usually a cook house, one, two, or three sleeping houses, and a copra drying shed.

The houses are mainly constructed of native materials with sheet metal and salvage lumber used in varying degrees throughout the islands. The sleeping house area is covered with small coral stones from the beach--ionle in Rālik, iōle in Radak. These serve as drainage and prevent the area around the house from becoming a morass during the rains. This permeable covering is renewed regularly by the women of the household. This was the typical household arrangement prior to the coming of the foreign regimes.

When the Germans and later the Japanese set up their capital at Jabwor in Jaluit Atoll, people from all over the Marshalls were attracted to the "Big City" for various reasons. Those who did not have land or relatives in the atoll were forced to live in large "guest houses" each of which accommodated as many as sixty people, i.e., Arno house, Wotje house, Namu, Ailiñlāplap, etc.--almost all the atolls. These were of wooden construction--ca. 40' x 60' in dimension. The traditional pattern of living was changed by this congregation of people from different atolls in large population centers.

Although the beehive metropolis of Jabwor was destroyed by American bombers, the "guest house"--communal quarters type of dwelling, was perpetuated on Majuro Atoll which became the new seat of government under the American regime. Here, two large former Japanese army barracks are used by the Arno Atoll people and the northern Radak people respectively. Another large house is known as the Mille house and used by the people from that atoll. Still another group composed of individuals of mixed Gilbertese-British-German-Marshallese ancestry, in varying combinations, occupy a group of houses known as the "Gilbertese Village".

The "villages" on Majuro and Kuajlen constructed by the Naval Administration for its employees represent another change in the traditional pattern of life. The household routine remains relatively unchanged in the new type surroundings except that living is done in closer proximity than before. Cook houses, bath houses, and benjo(s) are shared by all who live in the communal houses and "CivAd Villages".

The CivAd [Civil Administration] center of Majuro is atypical also in that a "squatters'" town has arisen on Jarej (Rita), one of the islands adjacent to the CivAd center. Many Marshallese, attracted to the administrative center by much the same motives that attracted people to Jabwor in the Japanese period, have occupied abandoned quonsets or have built houses of their own of salvage material. A small quasi-"shanty town" has arisen on the island, perpetuating the Japanese acculturative influence of Jabwor. Spoehr gives an excellent account of an acculturated Marshallese community in Majuro. (2).*

Aside from a few atypical communities, the pattern of land usage remains as it was before the advent of foreigners except, of course, that the large villages have added stores, council houses, dispensaries, and church buildings. The system of land tenure and usufruct has changed but slightly despite the acculturative forces of three different regimes.

LAND USE

Members and associated members of the bwij (lineage) work the land, clearing it of underbrush and performing other tasks necessary for the simple type of agriculture practiced in these low-lying coral atolls with their limited resources. In some instances people will be allowed to work land not belonging to their lineage and when lineage members do not require its use, i.e., when they have more than enough land for their own needs or want to help some less fortunate person.

The head of the lineage (alab) is in charge of the land and workers on the land, and a share of the food produced on the land as well as a share of the money received from copra sales is collected by him. The alab represents his or her lineage in their relations with other members of the society, the iroij, and, today, as a member of the atoll council, vis-a-vis the representatives of the American administration.

The iroij (paramount chief) also receives a percentage of the money received for each pound of copra produced on land in which his suzerainty is recognized.** This share varies, ranging from 1 1/2 mills in part of Ralik to 1 cent in the Radak chain depending upon the amount of copra potential of the atoll or island and the attitude of the people toward their iroij. "First fruits" and a share of the food taken from the land and sea are also presented to the iroij, formally and informally. In Radak where the position of iroij erik (little chief or king) still exists, the iroij elap gives that subordinate intermediary a regular percentage of the money he has received from the alab in return for services rendered as his representative over a certain area.

* See Bibliography

** Except on Ujilan Atoll, home of the displaced Enewetak people. The pattern is different here in that each of the two iroij lablab has an island and a wato of his own which he works with the help of the kajur. He does not receive income from any other land. This same pattern was followed on Enewetak.

Here we have a system of land use roughly analogous to the feudal system of medieval Europe ... a stratification of individuals with reciprocal duties and obligations as well as privileges.

MECHANICS OF DIVISION OF COPRA SHARE

The cash crop, copra, is sold by the individual producers to the copra buyer on the atoll or island or more often to the local general store which is usually a cooperative enterprise owned by all or a large segment of the atoll population. After the iroij share (which varies) has been withheld by the alab, his share, usually 30% of the total cash, is retained and the remainder turned over to the dri jermal ro (workers). The senior dri jermal under the alab may keep all of the cash and give the other workers spending money, clothes, food, etc. whenever they need it, or he may distribute the cash on a per capita basis to those who have actually made the copra. The former is the general method of division of proceeds from copra sales.

Sometimes the alab may keep all of the proceeds less the iroij share and allow the workers to do the same thing with the next copra sale. The workers may also follow the same procedure rather than attempting to divide the money up regularly with the alab, this being especially advantageous when there are a large number of workers on a small piece of land.

Although there are some deviations from this pattern, the recognition of the interests of iroij and alab are manifested by the general adherence to the payment of the share.

DEVIATIONS FROM THE GENERAL PATTERN

The most notable exception to the general pattern of land tenure is the atoll of Likiep owned in fee simply by the descendants of two European adventurers who purchased the entire atoll from the iroij lablab of Northern Radak (JURTAKA) in 1877, with all rights and privileges appertaining thereto.

The land is worked by these "mixed-blood" descendants and a larger group composed of descendants of the original inhabitants of the atoll and others brought in from neighboring atolls. This latter group produced copra on a share-crop basis.

Relationships between the two groups have been strained for years, the "owners" complaining of absenteeism and non-production and the workers complaining of peonage and oppression. Investigations were made of this situation, and a working agreement was negotiated early last year. Conditions seem to have been ameliorated; however, as was anticipated, complete mutual satisfaction and accord do not prevail on Likiep today. This is a salient example of the problems created by the intrusion and implementation of foreign concepts of land tenure into an indigenous system.

Before the turn of this century, the twenty or more inhabitants of Ujilaa Atoll were forced to leave their atoll forever to make room for a German copra plantation. They went to Jaluit and Enewetak; their descendants are dispersed throughout the Marshall Islands today.

Large scale alienation of land occurred again during the post-World War II period when the inhabitants of the atolls of Enewetak and Bikini were required to leave their atolls which became testing grounds for atomic warfare. The Enewetak people, transplanted to the uninhabited but much smaller atoll of Ujilañ, have been able to make a fairly successful adjustment to a less-favorable environment and have modified their traditional land tenure system in their new home. (See APPENDIX).

The Bikini people, on the other hand, have not been able to make a successful adjustment, due principally (in the opinion of this observer) to unfavorable ecological conditions. Kili, their new home, is a small island, limited in land area and lacking the natural resources afforded by a lagoon environment. Kili is isolated from the rest of the Marshalls many months of the year due to heavy surf, another factor for discontent.

The land tenure pattern on Kili differs markedly from that which prevailed on Bikini. A communal type of land tenure prevails in which the former iroij lablab (king) of Bikini is not recognized.

The traumatic exodus, the limited land area, the personalities of the iroij involved and his heir, ill-advised statements by outsiders, and erroneous press releases, were some of the factors responsible for discontent and change in the socio-economic pattern.

The general attitude of everyone concerned at this writing is one of insecurity and dissatisfaction. This unfortunate situation aside from its obvious aspect of a transplanted group in the throes of adjustment to a new environment is another excellent example of sudden change in a socio-economic system brought about primarily by external forces. For a detailed report on the removal of the Bikini people, see Mason, L., (1).

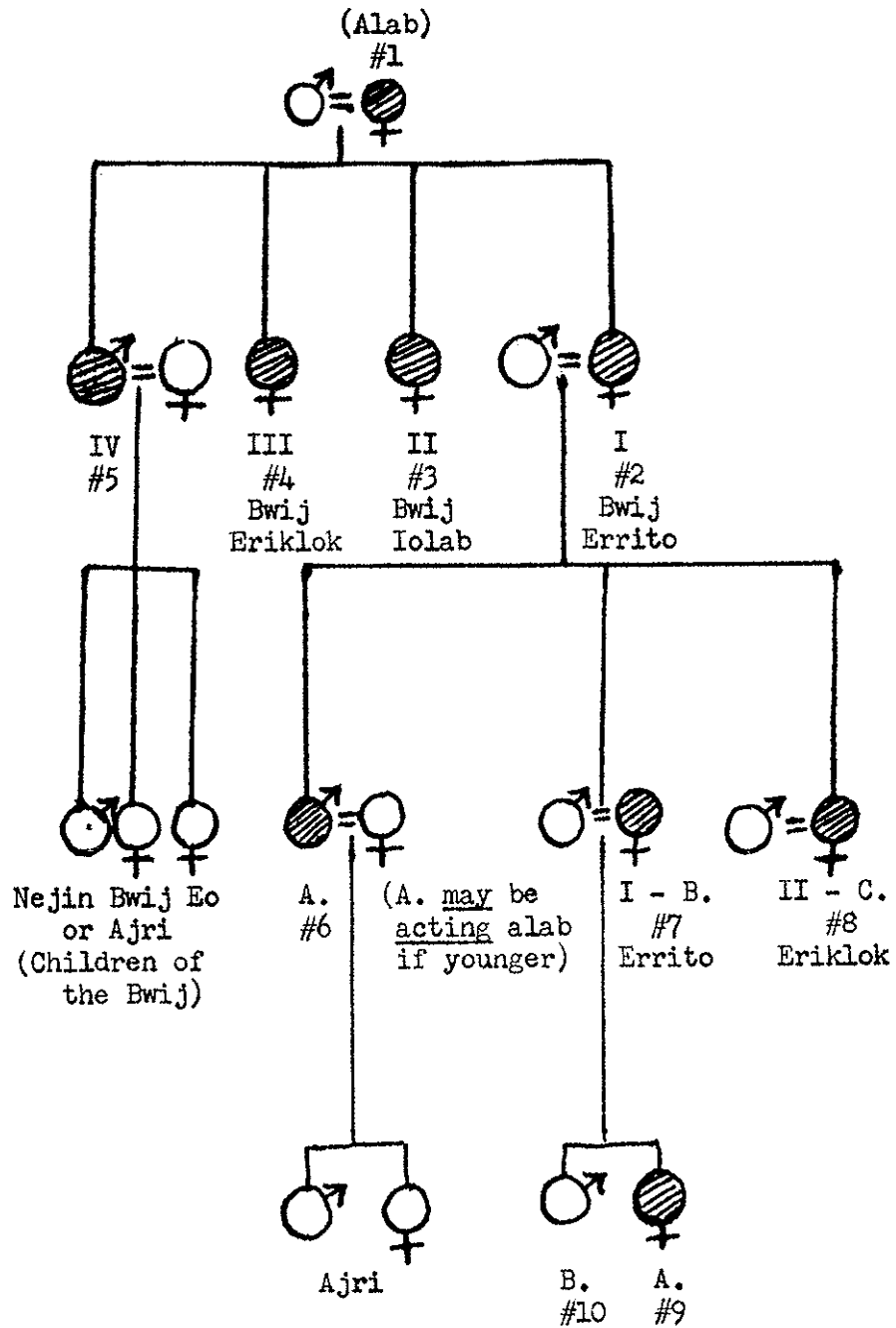
INHERITANCE PATTERN

The Marshallese system of inheritance of clan membership and of land rights (all of lanoren-kabijukinen land and most types of burij in aje) is matrilineal. Lineage (bwij) members trace descent from a common ancestress (alab) for the purpose of claiming land rights. The original lineage normally has been split into associate lineages or bwij descended from sisters. These associate bwij are known as the older bwij--bwij eritto or jiob, middle bwij--bwij iolab (all intermediate bwij are known as bwij iolab no matter how many there are), and younger bwij--bwij eriklok, etc., according to the relative ages of the common ancestresses who belonged to the same clan (jowi).

Initially the senior sibling in the bwij--bwij eritto is alab or bwij leader followed by all of her surviving brothers and sisters in chronological order. After all of these siblings have been alab, the next generation, personified in the oldest child of the eldest female, becomes alab and is in turn succeeded by his or her siblings in chronological order. This pattern of succession continues in one maternal line of descent until the line becomes extinct; in this case, the next associate bwij in order of seniority will inherit the "alabship" and rights in a particular piece of land or lands. Every Marshallese is, as may be seen, a potential alab.

THE IDEAL INHERITANCE PATTERN OF LAND RIGHTS

BWIJ EO (THE LINEAGE)



II, III - Lineages will inherit land rights in succession - "in toto" if the "bwij" senior to them becomes extinct - "bwij eo elot".

● -- Cross hatch -- maternal line of descent of a lineage.

Figure 2.

Although theoretically, relative age is the determining factor in succession to the position of leadership, actually a younger brother will assume all of the duties and responsibilities of the position from an older sister who by virtue of seniority is alab. He will become alab "de facto" but she will remain alab "de jure" and will be respected and deferred to as alab. Her brother will bring her the alab'(s) share of the produce of the land but will relieve her of all of the burdensome duties connected with the position, e.g., iroij Kabua Kōna, of Ralik has three older sisters, but he assumed the alab position because he is a man. After he dies, his older sister remaining will assume the position of alab, followed by her eldest child, in the pattern previously described.

Males assume this trusteeship position; are alab first unless the women are very strong or have no male relatives to take over for them. If the male who inherits the alab position is too old, feeble, or otherwise incompetent, the next in line of succession will assume the responsibilities of the alab; will be in effect, the representative or regent for the alab. The alab will be recognized and honored as such by his own people, however, if the whole bwij (maternal lineage) becomes extinct (bwij elot) which has happened, e.g., Ralik iroij, the alab or iroij positions may be inherited patrilineally for the one generation, from fathers to sons and daughters in chronological order as described previously, after which they pass in matrilineal line of succession. This is the ideal pattern of inheritance and is recognized as the mantin ailiñ kein (the Marshallese custom) and is followed in the main. However, as in other cultures, the custom is sometimes honored in the breach. Deviation from the accepted custom is the basis of disputes, several of which are burning issues on various atolls today.

PATRILINEAL USUFRUCT RIGHTS

Although land rights, with very few exceptions are inherited through the maternal lineage, individuals are not excluded from usufruct rights in their paternal lineage land. Even though an individual may never become leader alab on his father's lineage land (unless the entire paternal bwij and all associated bwij become extinct), he does have the right to live and work on his father's land. These use rights are inherited patrilineally by succeeding generations, each of which has a descriptive name. (The same terminology is used for titles of individuals of iroij descent to indicate the amount of royal "blood" possessed by the individual title holder.)

1st generation of <u>ajri</u> (children) of the paternal <u>bwij</u> - <u>bwirak</u>
2nd generation " " " " " "
3rd generation " " " " " "
4th generation " " " " " "
5th generation " " " " " "
6th generation " " " " " "
7th generation " " " " " "

The ajri are allowed to live on and use their paternal land if they are cooperative and do their share of the work. Shirkers and trouble makers and those who do not give the alab his copra share or refuse to make ekkan, etc., may be removed by the alab of the particular land involved, however. These rights may be extended to include the seventh generation, tibier, but are usually taken advantage of only as far as the fifth generation; the ajri rights become weaker with each succeeding generation and are absolutely concluded with

the seventh generation, tibjer, which translated means "depart from glory".

Individuals usually forego their usufruct rights on the paternal land before many generations have passed. They are usually satisfied with the use of their maternal bwij lands and their spouse's lineage lands.

This system operates to equalize land rights, prevent over-crowding and serves primarily to strengthen the in-group feeling among relatives.

ADOPTIVE RIGHTS

Adoption of children or kōkajariri (v. and n.), (rough translation: "look out for the child") has always been a common practice in the Marshalls. Adoption here, however, does not mean alienation of the child from his biological parents as it usually does in our culture. The Marshallese child becomes a part of another extended family group but also retains his ties, emotional and otherwise, with the biological parents and other bwij relatives. The child may reside with either the foster or biological parents, or with both at different periods, as is usually the case. This pattern of extended relationships obviously makes for a greater degree of emotional security as far as the adopted child is concerned.

An adopted child, kōkajariri, is also described as kanni lujien (rough translation: "stomach food"), i.e., the child will be eating the same food as his foster father and from the same land; i.e., he is intimately connected with his foster father.

Adopted children are allowed the right to work on and enjoy the benefits derived from the land with the permission of the alab and the bwij.

Kōkajariri may remain on the land after the foster parent dies. The children of the kōkajariri also have rights in the land which become progressively weaker with ensuing generations. These rights must also be confirmed by the alab.

The adopted child possesses much the same rights as the biological children except that he may only become alab of land of the bwij into which he has been adopted upon the extinction of all bwij relatives. A case is now pending on Majuro in which an adopted son of an alab now deceased, the last of her bwij (bwij eo elot), claims to be alab of his foster mother's bwij lands. His claim has been contested by other relatives of the deceased alab.

In addition to the rights acquired by adoption, the kōkajariri also retains his birthright in his bwij land. The adopted child is also under obligation to his foster parents and regards them as jemma (father) or jinō (mother) as the case may be, giving them the same respect and loving care in their old age that is owed and given the biological parents, e.g., "A" was adopted by "B" and his wife when he was a small child, in 1899. The biological father and mother of "A" went to another island in 1904 and remained there for eight months; during this time "B" cared for his adopted son. The father of "A" built a house nearby his own home for "A" and his foster parents with whom the latter lived most of the time even after his father and mother returned from their trip. He was not alienated from them or any other of his biological relatives, however, but retained a close relationship with them.

In the ensuing decades, "A" and "B" maintained a close father and son relationship. "A" recently brought his now aged foster father to live with him on Majuro and has assumed the responsibilities for his care although "B" has four grown children of his own. This one example shows the differences in Marshallese and Western concepts of adoption.

Individuals who possess the inherited rights in their bwij land have unquestioned usufruct rights and may even become alab. Ajiri or those who possess paternal rights are considered to have less right in the land. Kōka-jariri, adopted children, are considered to have fewer rights than the members of the bwij or the ajiri.

USUFRUCT RIGHTS ACQUIRED BY MARRIAGE

Residence after marriage is neither strictly patrilocal or matrilocal, nor is there a regular periodic bi-local residence pattern as in parts of Melanesia. A man may live and work on the bwij land of his spouse or vice versa. Matrilocal residence, however, is considered more desirable in view of the fact that the interests of the offspring are bound closer to the maternal bwij land, where someday they may become alab and where they possess "real" dri jermal rights.

Marshallese have been marrying into other atoll groups for centuries. This process has become progressively accelerated with improved transportation and communication. Opportunities for marriage outside of the home atoll have increased tremendously and today many Marshallese possess land rights in widely separated areas throughout the Marshalls. This, of course, has done a great deal to break down atoll ethnocentrism.

If a married couple should reside on the wife's bwij land and the wife should pre-decease her husband, the husband has the right to remain on the land providing there are children; in that case, the widower may not be evicted even if the alab should so desire. The offspring (who have a vested interest in their bwij land) look out for their father's welfare and help him to remain on the land.

If there are no offspring, the widower does not have a real claim and the alab may evict him or allow him to remain at his discretion. The latter course is usually followed unless the widower is a trouble maker or shirks his responsibilities. Informants have never heard of a widower or widow being evicted from their deceased spouses' bwij land. In most cases, the in-laws want them to remain. If a widower should remarry to someone outside his deceased wife's bwij, they both may remain on the land, at the discretion of the alab, but this is not usually done.

WILLS-- KALLIMUR (WILL OR PROMISE)

In pre-contact times the iroij would, if they felt that their demise was imminent, call their people together and name their successor, normally following the accepted custom of inheritance.

The German government started to register wills and the Japanese government insisted that everyone, iroij and kajur alike, should make a properly registered and documented will. This edict was complied with in the main during the Japanese occupation but fell into abeyance after the Japanese were expelled from the Marshalls. Since that time only a few individuals, mostly iroij, have executed written wills.

RENTALS

The concept of rental of land or houses was non-existent aboriginally. This concept was introduced by foreigners who wished to acquire sites for their commercial ventures, and who did so.

Transactions of this type involving Marshallese alone have been very rare. In fact, only one such case is operative today. This case occurred very recently and has political motivations rather than a mere desire for monetary gain.

The land involved had been rented previously to a Japanese entrepreneur. Interestingly enough in the recent dispute, the alab involved, in pressing her claim for rent, made the distinction between land used for business purposes (bakery and store) and that part of her land being used for dwelling purposes. Rentals were demanded for land falling in the former category only.

An individual who has obtained the alab'(s) permission to erect a house, etc., not on his own bwij land may from time to time voluntarily bring food to the alab of that land. However, the concept of rent "per se", is not implied.*

ENCLAVES

TREES (kān)

Individual trees may be given to a person outside of the bwij by the alab. Nearly every wāto on Majuro has trees (coconut mostly) that have been set aside for Protestant Church use. There are also many gifts of this kind on Arno and Ebon and other, but not all, of the atolls. Many of the government schools have received trees also. Trees are called ni kān (coconut tree) or mā kān (breadfruit tree), etc., depending on the type of tree. The affix kān means tree or stump.

Only the recipient may use the produce of the tree involved. He may give the alab or others permission to use the tree in his absence, however. A gift of this sort may revert to the donor upon the demise of the recipient, (it is considered a transaction between two individuals) or the recipient may be allowed to retain the kān at the discretion of the alab.

* See ADDENDUM

TARO PATCHES (sing. bwil; pl. bwil ko)

A bwil or taro patch within a wāto may be given to individuals outside of the bwil or it may be retained within the bwil, at the discretion of the alab. An example of the different categories of bwil which may be found on one wāto may be seen on Eram wāto on Ebon Atoll, one of the southern Marshalls, where the largest amount of taro is to be found. Viz: 1. One bwil is assigned as iroij bwil (bwil an iroij). It is tended and cleared by the dri ierbal but is not harvested except when the bwil makes special ekkan (ar makie)—"our (bwil) alone", to the iroij. The bwil produce is not used for any other purpose, and bwil an iroij are inherited by the heir of the iroij.

2. One bwil assigned to "A" who is a kōkajariri (adopted child); she tends the taro patch and harvests the taro for the use of herself and family. The alab will not touch this taro patch; if he should do so (cultivate it, etc.), it would imply that he wished to evict the person to whom it had been assigned. (This is also true of land in general). A new alab will subtly signify his approval of previous assignments to bwil and will ratify same by saying to the incumbent: "I would like a basket of taro from your bwil."

3. Another bwil was assigned to "B" and his brothers. Before the turn of the century, "B" had been born into a lineage holding Eram wāto. At that time, male and female twins were considered as being incestuous, having spent the pre-natal period in juxtaposition--within their mother's womb. "B" was, unfortunately, one of these. According to custom, his twin sister was allowed to live ("to become alab") and "B" was buried alive. He was exhumed immediately, however, by a pitying neighbor who reared him as her kōkajiriri (adopted child). When "B" had grown to young manhood, "C", his female cousin, invited him back to the bwil lands. She had attended the Protestant Mission School on Kusaie and disapproved of the rejection of "B" by their lineage. "C" was the senior female in her lineage and next in line to be alab, consequently very powerful and much respected. "C" allocated a bwil and the dri ierbal rights in two of their bwil wāto(s) to "B". Although "B" could never become alab because of the "incestuous" circumstances of his birth, he was tacitly accepted within his bwil by the other bwil members. When "B" died, his bwil was inherited by his son who holds the use rights to it today.

4. There are six other bwil or Eram wāto, the taro of which is used by the dri ierbal of the wāto. An alab may reserve all of the bwil for himself to be used for ekkan. In this case the dri ierbal will not use the produce from the taro patch unless the alab gives them explicit permission. This is not the case on Eram wāto, however; the alab allows the dri ierbal free access to the bwil which was not true of some of his predecessors.

5. Another type of bwil is that which is exchanged for another bwil or a good breadfruit tree (mā kēn). This is usually done to cement ties of friendship and marriage, e.g., about thirty years ago a bwil on Eram was given to "C", a man who had married into the bwil, in exchange for a breadfruit tree located on "C"'s bwil land. The taro from this particular bwil was considered to be the property of this individual and respected as such. Conversely, the fruit from the particular breadfruit tree was considered to be the exclusive property of the alab and people of Eram.

About nine years ago, "C" commenced "stealing" the breadfruit from the tree and later signified his desire to regain his former property by climbing the tree and openly stripping it of its fruit. This angered the people of Eram,

who felt that "C" had broken tradition and affronted them by taking bread-fruit from the tree while continuing to use the bwil and then seeking the return of the tree (which was a very good one).

6. Temporary usufruct rights: a section of a taro patch may be allocated as a source of food for people who are visiting an island for a short while (this is not an outright gift), e.g., Namrik Atoll people visiting their children who were attending the Japanese Government School at Ebon were afforded this privilege.

7. Gift, as kitre to one's wife: taro patches may be given by a man to his wife as kitre. There are some instances of this on Ebon, Likiep, and Meijij, etc. Permission of the alab and bwij must be obtained before a bwil may be given as kitre. Failure to do this may cause serious disputes, e.g., on Meijij, an iroij who had worked a taro patch without any assistance from his relatives gave the pwil to his wife as kitre three years before he died. This was done without consulting his bwij. After he died, his bwij contested this gift. The dispute was finally settled amicably a few months ago. The bwij agreed to allow the childless widow to use the bwil until she dies, at which time it will revert to the bwij. The bwij may allow the descendants of a woman who received kitre to retain possession of the taro patch involved. Non-Meijij Marshallese who heard of this case stated that the woman's bwij is entitled to possession of this bwil according to custom.

REEF RIGHTS

Throughout the Marshalls the reefs were claimed by the iroij as emo or personal property if the fishing was good around them. The iroij would declare: "Wur in buruan." (My own reef) or else "Wur in iroij" (reef of the iroij). After this tabu was instituted, no one else was permitted to fish that particular reef on penalty of death or expulsion from his land. In 1934 the Japanese authorities "broke the tabu" by declaring the reefs open to everyone. From then on everyone who so desired has utilized these once forbidden fishing grounds.

These reef areas were usually near the entrance to the lagoon where fish are especially plentiful, e.g., within Arno Atoll about one half mile from the shore of Malel Island lies a reef called "Moen". This reef is the habitat of many tuna and other fish which feed around it. The tabu described previously applied here also. The reef fishing on Ebon is very good, several isolated reefs are the habitat of a large fish "ellok", whose flesh is considered particularly good. There were five wur in iroij here: Tokainbarao, Wodrenlap--(translation: big reef), Tokimkil, Buruan Lewoj--(translation: Lewoj, an old Ebon iroij, wants the reef), and Naminaujedr.

These choice fishing spots were reserved for the iroij lablab alone as previously described. Other people were afraid to disobey the tabu until it was lifted by governmental edict. Small islands were also occasionally taboed, e.g., Kaben, a small island with a few trees on it on Wotto Atoll, was taken by the iroij for his personal use because of the abundance of coconut crabs on it.

On Likiep Atoll a stretch of beach on the main island extending from the site of the Catholic Mission to the Northern tip of the island, a distance of about 2000 meters, was forbidden territory. It was emo to fish within thirty

yards of the shore along this area, which is the habitat of large schools of ton (mackerel). The "owners" of Likiep considered themselves as iroij and instituted this prohibition in German times. Here again the tabu is not enforced today. Emo (forbidden) fishing sites were in existence on every atoll.

FISHING RIGHTS

According to custom, the property rights extended out to the area where people stood, usually waist deep, in order to fish with a pole. Momo and rijo were the fish commonly sought. These rights belonged exclusively to the lineage, bwij, whose land holding, wato, bordered the marine area.

This custom continued until 1934 when the Japanese authorities declared that all marine areas, up to the high water mark, belonged to the Japanese government. Marshallese informants believe that this change was made in order to allow the Japanese to claim logs, barrels, lumber, and other items of flotsam and jetsam. These objects were highly prized in this area where heavy timber was scarce and especially so in pre-contact days when metal was only obtainable from the above mentioned sources.

The iroij lablab of the particular area into which these materials drifted claimed exclusive rights to them. The loss of royal prerogatives and attendant revenue was, of course, resented by the iroij, who were powerless to prevent it, however. This break with tradition has continued under the American trusteeship and is apparently accepted by everyone today.

GAME RESERVES---"BIRD ISLANDS"

The Northern Radak atolls of Bikar, Bokak (Taongi), Tōke, the island of Jemo, and the islands of Erik and Luij in Erikub Atoll have been used from time immemorial as game reserves. These areas are the habitat of myriads of sea turtles and nesting fowl. Periodically, turtles and turtle eggs, birds and their eggs were taken, as described later (see emo).

Due to the scarcity of water supply, these islands have never been regularly inhabited. The Germans used this fact to justify the seizure of the atolls of Bikar and Bokak as government property. The Japanese took them over with all the other German government properties. They were not exploited by either foreign power, however, and the Marshallese from Northern Radak have continued to utilize their resources.

Larmoj, the iroij lablab of northern Radak, whose ancestors owned the two atolls, claims personal title to Bikar and Bokak as mo land and has stated that the German claims were invalid. This writer agrees with the Marshallese position that land used as a source of food supply, etc., should not be alienated from its owners merely because it is not regularly inhabited and cultivated.

It is recommended that the United States Government withdraw all claims to Bikar and Bokak in favor of the Marshallese who feel that they have never legally lost their rights in them.

INDIGENOUS ATTITUDES TOWARD THE LAND

Land is considered to be the most valuable asset to the Marshallese who are so dependent upon it for their day-to-day existence. Land disputes have been and still are the cause of almost all family schisms. People are always plotting to obtain more land, by marriage today and by warfare, marriage, and black magic in the past.

Black magic, ekabel, was sometimes used to kill off the older members of the lineage, particularly in the case of the iroij bwij: "Rubrur ñon ro nejin" (destroying the obstacle to her children), i.e., removing the obstacle (person) to her children's succession to land rights. A non-relative is always asked to make the magic. It is believed that the illness or death sought for the enemy will "boomerang" and also afflict the person who performs the magical rites if he or she is related to the proposed victim of black magic. According to informants, ekabel, is sometimes performed today.

Land is regarded as sacred "something to fight for and die for" and has been, as far as may be ascertained, sold or given away to outsiders only because of fear of either physical or moral force. A salient example of this attitude was observed recently at Majuro. A rumor had been circulated to the effect that the United States Government was planning to reimburse the owners of the land upon which the administration functions are located by giving them pieces of former German-Japanese government lands located in Majuro and nearby atolls. This rumor created a tremendous amount of anxiety, insecurity, and distrust on the part of the individuals concerned. This writer was deluged with queries as to the validity of the rumor. The consensus of opinion of the Marshallese involved was: "We will never willingly accept any other land in exchange for our lineage lands."

They will not willingly accept complete alienation of their land. The individual Marshallese is fully aware of the particular categories into which his lineage lands fall and what rights he possesses in them. Genealogies, both royal and commoner, are traced back in some cases ten or more generations and many of them have been written down, are carefully preserved by their owners, and used as evidence to support claims in land disputes.

The younger generation of Marshallese, however, those under thirty or so years of age, as a whole are not fully cognizant of the less basic concepts and customs of land tenure.

CONCEPTS OF LAND OWNERSHIP

In the pre-contact period, the iroij lablab (the senior ranking member of the senior lineage of the ruling clan (jowi)) was the acknowledged owner of all the land and moveable property in his realm in a socio-economic system roughly analogous to the feudal system of medieval Western Europe or closer at hand, to the social system of pre-contact Polynesian cultures with the reciprocal rights and obligations of all classes within the framework of the society. The subjects of the iroij could not be evicted from the land without good reason, however, (mainly for offenses against the iroij himself), and their rights were as a rule, respected by the iroij. The more commoners (kajur) an iroij had in his

realm, the more power he possessed--a large reservoir of human beings to draw upon for labor and warfare. (The word kajur itself means power). It was therefore manifestly incumbent upon the iroij to treat his subjects with consideration and retain their loyalties.

A regular channeled tribute system, ekkan, was adhered to by the subjects of the iroij. In the latter part of the nineteenth century with the development of copra as the cash crop, the share of the iroij and the people who produced the copra was established. (See LAND USE)

The concept of iroij ownership of the land apparently continued and was unquestioned until Japanese times, prior to World War II. At that time the Japanese introduced the concept that the iroij owned the land and the kajur owned the trees growing upon the land. This was probably done to facilitate acquisition of the land needed for military bases and installations.

Some informants believe that the new concept was a result of Japanese misunderstanding and jumping at conclusions. It is alleged that when the Japanese officials queried as to who planted the trees, the Marshallese replied: "The kajur did." The Japanese then supposedly assumed that the trees were the property of the kajur who had planted them. As a corollary, we may logically assume that the iroij upon being questioned, informed the Japanese that the land belonged to the iroij, as per custom.

This foreign concept of separate ownership title to the land and of all of the trees growing upon the land was implemented by the Japanese officials who paid some of the iroij and alab(s) involved for land and trees respectively. The foreign concept of division of ownership plus the fact that the foreigners beginning with the Germans had supplanted the iroij as the supreme authorities were undoubtedly contributing factors to the gradual shift of orientation which has continued to the present time and which was accelerated by the social disruption attendant upon World War II and the American invasion and occupation of the Marshalls. The concepts of "liberty", "freedom", and "democracy" were freely disseminated by the new rulers without, it is believed, adequate definition or explanation. This further contributed to change in attitude in regard to socio-economic concepts on the part of a segment of the population especially, as might have been expected, on the younger element who were in closest contact with the Americans.

The general attitude today in regard land rights (as far as this writer has been able to determine) is one of joint ownership of land rights with the iroij possessing certain rights and the kajur possessing other rights in the land, holding these rights as a member of a lineage (bwij) in common with the other bwij members.

The general concensus of opinion seems to be that the Japanese concept was an artificial one and that the trees cannot be separated from the land. The concept of joint ownership of land rights is stronger in Ralik than in the Radak Chain, probably because the true iroij have become extinct with a few exceptions in Ralik while the true iroij still flourish throughout the Radak Chain.

The prevailing opinion was exemplified by the actions of the last "Marshallese Congress", where representatives of the mass of the population,

the "House of Assembly", met with the iroij, "House of Iroij". At that time, this matter was debated at length. The iroij declared that they owned all of the land and were upheld by a small percentage of the older kajur. However, the majority, young and old, disagreed, stating that the land is owned by everyone.

A small anti-iroij sentiment exists today, largely composed of younger men most of whom have been closely associated with Japanese and Americans. These individuals (none of whom are organized as a group) are anti-iroij only in the sense that they are opposed to deferring to certain individual iroij. They are not against the institution of iroij per se. In fact, the desire to retain the economic prerogatives of the iroij for themselves is the principal motivation for their deviation from the norm.

At the other end of the pole are, of course, the iroij and their adherents, most of whom are the older and more conservative element. It is anticipated that the iroij position, "where disputed", will become correspondingly weaker as this older and more conservative element dies out.

It is hoped that the administration will continue the "laissez faire" policy insofar as possible in regard to the land rights situation. Any disagreements may be brought before the District Court if the disputants themselves fail to reach an amicable agreement. (This is the current available mechanism for settlement of land disputes of which there are many.) However, at this writing, only one case involving land rights has been brought before the District Court. Apparently the Marshallese are wary of legal processes that are outside of the local culture pattern and are reluctant to bring the highly important problem of land rights before an outsider. This writer has personal knowledge of many instances where land disputes have been channeled through to the traditional authorities rather than through the alien American mechanism for handling these problems.

The administration should not support one group or the other involved in land disputes; but should remain neutral offering advice to all sides if requested. This obviously requires a great deal of "tight wire walking", so to speak, but it is absolutely necessary if the governing authorities are to have the confidence of everyone and accomplish their mission. The Marshallese are watching every move that the Administration makes regarding land matters. Any ill-advised move by the administration might very well upset the present balance, causing any of those who may be uncertain and wavering in their attitudes to follow the administration's lead. It is, therefore, obviously necessary for the administration to treat all situations involving land rights with the utmost discretion. These problems should be worked out by the Marshallese people themselves with the minimum of American interference and that only when absolutely necessary.

CATEGORIES OF LAND

Land is divided into three general categories:

- A. Lāmoren or Kabijukinen (rough translation: old "family land").
- B. Ninnin (literally: "nurse from the breast")--land allocated by a parent to offspring.

C. Imonaje (burij in aje)--(Literally: "divided land").

The terms lāmoren and kabijukinen are applied to the same type of land, the ancestral land holdings of the maternal bwij; however, there is a shade of difference of meaning in the two terms. Lāmoren (literally: "old stone", from the lā--"beach stones", pebbles; placed around the home site, inside and out) refers to the ancestral land (earth) itself, while kabijukinen or birbir (foundation) as it is sometimes called, has a poetic connotation of deep affection and sentiment and is used in much the same way on a larger scale, as the Japanese sometimes describe their homeland by the word "Yamato" rather than the more commonly used "nippon" or as the Irish refer to "the ould sod", the Russians to "Mother Russia", etc. The majority of land holdings in the Marshall Islands belong to this category.

Burij in aje (imon aje) is the descriptive term for land that was given by the iroij for outstanding services in war and peace time. Many types of land are included in this general category each with its own descriptive name.

With the end of local warfare (during the German period) gifts of land resulting from warfare, i.e., marujinkot, waenbwe, etc., ceased. Other burij in aje such as rewards for magic, medicine, and navigation, etc., are made very rarely today. Ninnin (land given by a parent to an offspring) is still made occasionally today, however.

BURIJ IN AJE - IMONAJE - DIVIDED LAND

Imonaje (Rālik and Radak) is land given to a person who helps the iroij by nursing, bringing food, etc., makes medicine, etc. The iroij may give food, mats, rope, etc., instead of land. This is known as mweien kalotlot (goods for nursing) or mweien tiriamo (goods of sorrow) and is given by the iroij only, to anyone. The iroij may make imonaje to a kajur, either alab or dri jermal; no one else may do so.

In the old days two men remained with the wife of the iroij at all times in the capacity of watchmen or body guards. One remained outside at all times--escorted the iroij's wife, brought food to her, etc. This functionary was called dri jutak loto (translation: "man who stands by the iroij's room). These men received imonaje land for their services. They were related to the iroij on the father's side; they were last in succession and least likely to try to kill the iroij to gain his position; therefore, the most trustworthy.

An informant acted as dri jutak loto for the late iroij lablab Murjil of northern Radak ca. 1916 to 1919. He is a cousin to the said Murjil on the paternal side. His food was given to him by the iroij. He carried a knife with him at all times but was never forced to use it. Informant stated that he had to stay awake on guard against possible attack many nights because of trouble between two iroij--Murjil and Tonua, iroij of Airōk (Maloelap). This trouble lasted for about one year.

The person nursing the iroij as a baby is known as the dri-jutak lomamal; this person belongs to an iroij bwij, one of whose members has the honor of being the dri-jutak lomamal. The dri-jutak loto position goes to a brother or son like regular paternal inheritance, in order of seniority. The iroij always

chooses the woman he wants as wet nurse for his children from his bwij or that of his father, whether iroij or not.

Land was always given for these services; informant received land for his services. He became alab and receives the iroij erik share now but is not a real iroij erik, and he is not called by that title. There are no positions or title of this kind now, dri-jutak, etc. After iroij Murjil died (during the middle phase of the German occupation), these positions became extinct.

The offices were continued during the life time of the incumbents, from youth until their health failed and they were unable to discharge the duties of their positions. At that time, the iroij instructed the outgoing dri-jutak loto or dri-jutak lomalal to name the successor--someone he trusted in his bwij or on his paternal side as the case might have been.

Burij in aje is also used to describe land given by the iroij to refugees from an area devastated by typhoon, drought, tidal wave, etc. The iroij or leroj might allocate land to their respective spouses as burij in aje.

Inheritance Pattern:

The recipient of burij in aje, imon aje may either assign it to his bwij or to his children, as he so desires. In the latter case, all of the children will share in the use rights of the said land. The eldest of the children will become alab as per the customary matrilineal inheritance pattern.

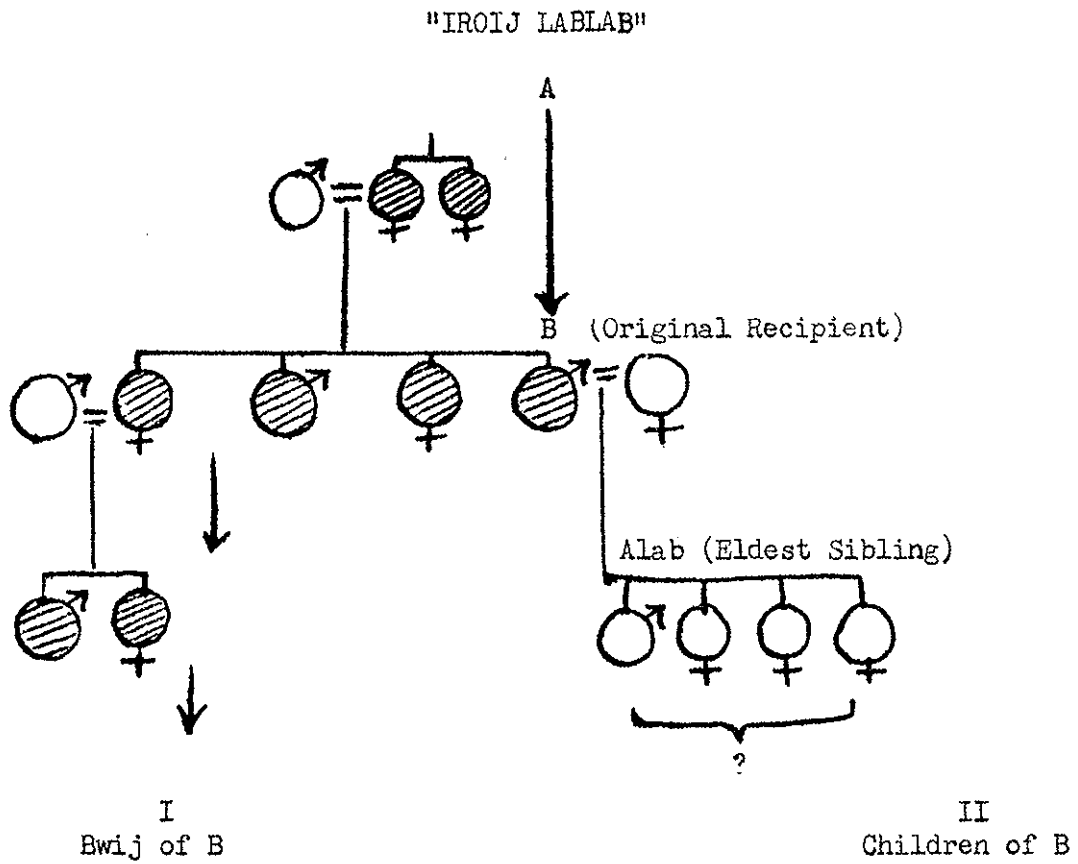
The decision as to future disposal of the land may then be made by the alab in the succeeding generations. The land may be retained within the bwij or divided again between the siblings. It is alleged that in most cases, the land is retained within the bwij. Siblings usually cooperate with each other in this matter "because they all shared the same breast".

Jikin Kolotlot--Imon Kolotlot--Jemlok (The Ending) is land given for nursing or caring for iroij or alab when ill. Given on death bed usually or prior to death when person is becoming old. Gift must be approved by the iroij elap. The recipient may be a medicine man (dri uno) who nursed the donor of the land, e.g., when iroij Tōbo was ill on Arno in 1950, many people gathered about him, as is the custom; some of them brought food to him, carried him to the outhouse, bathed him, etc. His dri uno remained near him at all times during his long illness. This functions as a sort of "sick care insurance". Land of this type is passed down through the bwij. During the German period, Kwier Island on Kwajalein Atoll was allocated to Leanmo as jikin kolotlot by iroij Jeimata and his half-sister, Libetok, upon the death of the former iroij lablab Leit. (See NOTE).

NOTE:

1. Men in kolotlot is personal property; clothing, fish hooks, money, etc., not belonging to all share holders of the land. The money, etc., is given to the eldest child to divide among the siblings. Adopted children are not included. Money may not be given to an outsider "because this creates disputes" as informants have explained. A man may leave a house, cistern, etc., to his (NOTE continued on p. 18)

"IMON AJE", "BURIJ IN AJE"



"IMON AJE", "BURIJ IN AJE" (divided land) may be allocated to either "bwij" (I) or children (II).

Figure 3.

Imon Ato (Rālik), Montutu (Radak) (come ashore to get land)--land, not an island, given to a person who adopts, nurses, guards, and cares for the child of an iroij, gives him special anointment (kokabit) with coconut oil, etc. The guardian (kwor) may be either a man or a woman and his or her bwij become kwor also. Any member of this bwij may correct the child of the iroij when he misbehaves, by beating him and pulling his hair (usually very tabu) and may stop him from fighting; i.e., they are in the position of parents to the child of the iroij, whom their bwij member has nursed. The iroij provides food for the child and the guardian. When the child has grown up, his iroij father gives the land to the guardian (kwor). Someone other than the wife of the iroij nursed the children of the iroij. People vied for this respected and lucrative position.

Enen Tutu--an island given for the above services.

The person who receives this type of land may allocate a portion of it to his children who will have dri jermal rights only and may not become alab unless their father's bwij becomes extinct. These dri jermal (worker) rights are inherited by their children, but the land (enen tutu and montutu) as a whole belongs to the bwij of the original recipient and is passed on through this bwij.

Jikin In Kokabit--land used as a special place in which to give magical medical treatment. It is forbidden land (emo), a restricted area. The bwirak (noble) children of the iroij use the area, not the iroij. This is one of the devices used to enhance the prestige of the bwirak; as an informant explained:

Everyone knows who the iroij is; he does not need as much mo as his bwirak offspring."

The jikin in kokabit is usually a small island, but it may be a small piece of land. In either case, the land area is not large enough to till. This land may belong to any individual but may not be used or even walked on by the "owner". The purpose of these tabus is to prevent people from seeing the magical treatment.

The bwirak were anointed to make them strong and attractive and brave in war. Sexual intercourse was forbidden--sometimes for as long as six months following the treatment. If the treatment did not prove fruitful, people

(NOTE continued from p. 17)

son if he has built it himself. It will be very difficult to do this, however, if his brother, uncle, or other bwij members helped him to construct same.

2. Incorporeal property such as knowledge of magic, medicine, navigation, etc., is traditionally guarded jealously and transmitted within the iroij group or to individuals whom the iroij may designate. Possession of this secret knowledge has served to enhance the iroij position, adding to their prestige and bolstering their position as leaders of the society. This was especially true in the pre-contact period and immediately following, before an education (reading, writing, etc.) became available to all.

would say, "He spoiled his kabten" (head anointment), i.e., he had indulged in the forbidden sexual intercourse. These sites are still tabu although it is not certain whether or not the magical medical rites are still practiced. It is said they were up to the end of the Japanese regime.

Wuliej Lap (big grave)--the plot of land in which the iroij are buried. This area is forbidden (emo) to anyone not of the iroij ancestry, with the exception of the guardian bwij, kwor. It is believed that supernatural sanctions will automatically operate against those who violate the tabu.

This writer recently visited the wuliej lap on Mejruirok Island, Jaluit Atoll in which lie the remains of Litokwa, Lajutok, and other Ralik iroij. Two Marshallese youths, one a member of the field party and native of another atoll (Kwajalein) and the other a local resident, refused to get within 150 feet of the small plot of ground in which the iroij are buried. The grandson of Litokwa, however, visited the graves with complete unconcern, explaining that he had the right to do so.

Ninnin (v. and n.)--land given by a father to his children; it belongs to the bwij. A man's daughter and son will only have dri jermal (worker) rights. The bwij may not take these rights away from them.

The senior bwij member is always the alab. If the alab should try to take away the land right, the iroij will intervene and prevent it. The dri jermal rights are passed down from parents to children from then on, but alab rights go down through the bwij. Alab and iroij may allocate this land, not dri jermal. A dri jermal may never allocate alab rights to another kajur. He may, however, allocate dri jermal rights to his children--real or adopted. He may ninnin only if the bwij agrees. The alab himself may not assign bwij land away unless permission is granted by the bwij.

The alab has authority over division of food and work assignment, etc., but on land division matters, he must consult with his iroij and his bwij. He cannot do anything on his own accord in land division matters. This is true today and was true in the past, i.e., the alab is not the final authority or autocratic leader. He must consult with his lineage on these important matters. He does not have the exclusive rights in the land, e.g., an alab on an atoll in Northern Radak recently expressed the desire to evict the children of his mother's younger sister from the bwij land because they had been "too haughty", refused to bring him food (ekkan), etc. He complained to his iroij who told him that if he evicted the cousins from the land, he would be violating the custom (manit eo). The dispute was then settled amicably.

If the bwij does not concur with the desire of the alab or dri jermal to ninnin to his children, the children may remain on the land as airi in bwij. They will work for the alab's successor and have practically the same rights as the dri-in-bwij (people with matrilineal dri jermal rights). The difference lies in the inability of the airi to become alab (unless the entire bwij and associate bwij become extinct). Everyone must have the alab's permission to cut trees, build houses, etc.

After the recipient of ninnin dies, his or her children may be allowed to remain at the discretion of the bwij, i.e., the iroij or alab gives ninnin to one generation only, his son or daughter.

A lesser chief, iroij erik, may make ninnin to his kajur (commoner) son but he cannot leave him all his iroij erik rights and title. These must go to someone of iroij blood. If the iroij erik has no relatives left, the kajur child may take the iroij erik rights but not the title. "He is not a 'real' iroij erik." Cases were cited by informants where iroij erik have given a kajur child part of their lands as ninnin but not the iroij erik rights. The ninnin goes down through the children and their children.

The iroij lablab may make ninnin of special land parcels (wato) to his children, but the bwij members are not excluded. Ninnin as may be seen is a mechanism by which a father in this matrilineal society may provide for his children. One informant stated, "Everyone likes to make ninnin because they help out their children and everyone likes to receive ninnin because they get more land."

This method of land division often creates problems; on Meji, for example, it has been cause of disputes since German times. Some of the people who had received ajri rights refused to pay tribute or ekkan of produce from the land to their alab(s) on the ground that they had ninnin rights and did not have to recognize their uncles' authority; conflict ensued.

Sometimes the alab made the division before his death so each of his children had rights in a portion of land. The recipient generation of ninnin and their female children have dri jerbak rights in the land. The male descendants of this generation have ajri rights only. There is much of this today; especially on Maloelap, Aur, and Wotje.

Ninnin land is always given by the father to his children. The donor may be such a strong personality that he is able to go against the wishes of his bwij relatives to allocate the land outside of the bwij. There have been instances of this deviation from the norm. Most types of imonaje may become ninnin.

Morjinkot (Ralik), Bokman Mare (Radak), ("take at the point of the spear") --land given by iroij to a warrior for bravery in battle. After the battle was over, victorious iroij always called the iroij erik and alab(s), "the ones who know more than the others", together to talk it over. They sat and listened to the iroij. He would then call the men to his house and would say, "I give you (such and such a land holding)--morjinkot. Then he would pass the word to the assembled people who had come to honor him, bearing ekkan. Morjinkot was always given by the iroij only to kajur. Whenever land was given as morjinkot, the people living on the land might be allowed to remain on the land as workers for the new alab or they might be sent away and new people placed on the land. The iroij told the original dwellers on the land where to go.

The recipient could give the land to his children or to his bwij. It was not supposed to be given to anyone but a relative. The permission of the bwij had to be obtained in order to give land to son. If the original recipient gave it to the bwij, it followed the custom through the bwij. Once the land is passed down through the bwij, it must continue this way. It is up to the first recipient to decide: "He is a very important man". If it should start through the paternal side, it must continue this way; may not be changed.

This is very important but is sometimes violated and causes trouble. Sometimes, a man would give the land to his wife; this was "wrong", and was done very rarely. When land was given to the wife and from her to her bwij, much trouble started. Usually the first man who received morjinkot from the iroij gave the land to his bwij rather than to his children. A man receiving morjinkot could by-pass his brothers and sisters.

The recipient would tell the iroij how he wanted to dispose of the land he had received as morjinkot. The iroij then informed the iroij erik and alab(s) of the disposition of the land. The iroij could prevent the man from disposing of the land if he thought it was not right.

If the man's bwij had fought hard in the war, the iroij would instruct the man to leave the land to the bwij; or if the man and his son or his brothers were good fighters, the iroij might favor the paternal side, i.e., dependent upon actions in the war; which group fought the hardest. If the man had no brothers, sisters, children, or relatives on the paternal side, the land went to the bwij. Although this land is given to an individual, the bwij is included--paternal relatives also. Recipient conferred with his uncles, and they all divided the land.

A man usually had to confer with his alab for disposal of morjinkot (after he received it) even though the alab had no part in the war. The land was divided among the recipients and his siblings, only to clear and work, not to keep. The siblings were assigned to different wato(s) if more than one wato was given by the iroij, e.g., Lanar Island, Arno after the intra-clan (dri Mweijor) war of Tawij vs. Ujelañ.

Maternal relatives and paternal relatives both used the land. Maternal relatives have a "real right" in the land. Paternal relatives could get food from the land but did not have "real" rights in the land. After the senior bwij member died, the next senior person in the bwij became alab.

The land usually went to the whole bwij when the iroij made a morjinkot grant. All of the fighting men, dri terinae, were accompanied into battle by their female relatives who acted as "supply and hospital corps", carrying water and food for their men folk, usually in a coconut shell container. The women involved were called dri bok boka (person who brings a water or food container). The saying was, "They are following us to take care of us when we are hurt." The auxiliaries did not carry weapons but remained a little behind the warriors, watching and waiting for a male relative to fall wounded or dead at which time they would rush to his side to succor him or carry away his body.

The warrior's uncle would be alab on the land whether he went to war or not. The warrior was under him. After the old alab died, the alab title went to his siblings according to the customary matrilineal system, and after them, to the warrior's older brothers and sister, in order. In a case like this, the man who received morjinkot could never become alab until after his senior's demise, i.e., the benefit accrued to the bwij rather than the individual.

Ninnin could, however, be made in the first instance. The alab could make the division ajej for all of his children. This may be done generation after generation. This has been done on Mejiij Island (as previously mentioned). There one may see small wāto(s) with only fifteen trees. This caused much friction. The alab divided up the land among all of the bwij members. This was last done during Japanese times. The Mejiij people realized how impractical this was and have stated that they believed the practice of ninnin has been the cause of much trouble.

The children usually work the land together, and it is inherited like lāmoren land through the bwij.

A man could not allocate the land to his son alone; the bwij had to share. . . It was impossible for the land to be given to an outsider. On Wotje, land was given (in one case) to relatives of the mother due to extinction of the bwij. The iroij elap Jortaka turned the land over to the oldest of the mother's relatives. Informant never heard of a man giving land to anyone outside the bwij. The iroij would become angry." The land will automatically go to the next senior bwij when the oldest bwij becomes extinct, as has occurred during time of war.

Waienbwe--land given by the iroij as a reward for forecasting the future. A dri bubu (magician) was attached to the iroij'(s) court and advised him as to the appropriate time for going to war, building a new house, going fishing, etc. But land was given for giving advice on war only; food, mats, etc., were given for prophecies not connected with warfare. A dri bubu was given land one time only by the iroij for past, present, and future prophecies. The dri bubu was and is a highly respected person and many tabus were and are still attached to his activities.

Informant's father learned magic from Bouliej, iroij lablab of Northern Radak, who taught his sons and grandsons. He was very proficient at bubu. In the past, the iroij knew more about magic than anyone else. However, the restrictions, especially sexual, caused the iroij to maintain a magician in his entourage. This knowledge, according to legend, was taught by two demigods, Lewij and Laniej, who came down from heaven and lived at Buoj Island in Ailiñlaplap Atoll for a while, teaching tattooing as well.

Waienbwe was a reward for personal services and could be ninnin to the recipient's children or could be passed on through his bwij at his discretion. The recipient becomes alab whether he is the senior member of the bwij or not. He may have an uncle or brother who is senior to him and his alab, but this man will be alab on the bwij land only. The recipient of waienbwe or kworaelen land will be an alab himself on this land.

Kwodraelim--land given by iroij to a man who sailed with him and bailed out his outrigger canoe (very hard work and necessary to keep the canoe afloat and enable it to keep under way) in war time and peace time. This type of land could be passed on through maternal or paternal side--son or daughter at the discretion of the recipient--like waienbwe. The reward of kwodraelim could be deferred until a later date. It was like waienbwe in that it was given as a reward once to an individual and was inherited like waienbwe.

Anburo (older word: kitre)--general term for presents of food, clothing, etc., given by a man to a woman before and/or after he marries her. Anburo (literally: "of the heart") and kitre ("out in the open") as opposed to bonerik (something one hides to buy the heart of the girl one loves). Kōbwōj is the new slang expression for the latter type of gift. An analogy is drawn by

informants, with two sailing canoes in a race. The paddling done by the men in one of the canoes which gives the extra advantage and wins the race is like the kōbwōjwōj (gift) given by one of two men who are courting the same girl. The word has a slightly ribald connotation.

Taro patches are sometimes given as kitre.

Katleb--land allocated by the iroij lablab to a kajur. The word was derived from katleb (large planting), i.e., the iroij plants (trees) people on the land. "Plant the whole tree", i.e., "Plant the island, all of it, with people". Katleb means all former inhabitants were cleared off the land, no one remaining on it at time of the gift. Whenever land was given as morjinkot (reward for bravery) after a war, the inhabitants might be sent away if any survived, or they might be allowed to remain as workers for the new owner. If the people were thrown off the land because one of their bwij had offended the iroij (collective punishment), this iroij would not take care of their needs for land. However, another iroij, hearing of this expulsion, might invite the dispossessed ones to his side and would settle them on his land, thus gaining more adherents.

Katleb does not necessarily imply punishment. If the iroij moved people off the land merely to provide land for others (not to punish transgressors), he would find land for the people whom he had dispossessed. He usually "confiscated" land from a bwij that had plenty of land.

Some katleb land had no people on it when it was "planted", due to a natural disaster, e.g., land on Ebon where all people had been killed by a typhoon about 150 years ago.

Katleb is always given to an individual, not to a bwij. The individual may call the bwij in if he wants to. He may give it to his children as informant's ancestor did 100 years ago. Katleb land may be given away to outsiders, but informants have never heard of this happening. "A man naturally wanted to take care of his kin folk or children." Only the original recipient could give it to whomever he wished, but after that it followed the regular custom through the bwij. Katleb is then inherited through the maternal side (bwij) like lamoren land.

Mo land, Kotra (Rālik and Radak), Juluburin Ne (Radak only)--personal land of the iroij. Each iroij lablab had land called mo. He might say, pointing to an island or a parcel of land, "That is my mo." From that moment on, that particular land was forbidden to anyone but the iroij or people to whom he gave special permission. The word emo itself means forbidden or tabu.

When an individual is being treated for certain ailments, he is mo. Sexual intercourse is forbidden both to himself and the dri uno (medicine man) who is treating him during the period of treatment.

This term is derived from Jemo, an island in northern Radak, which according to tradition is the residence of Lawi Jemo, the spirit or ekjab of an iroij lablab of long ago. It was believed that Lawi Jemo, the high iroij of Jemo, dwelt in a huge kañal tree from which he sometimes emerged to walk around the island. On these occasions he is said to have appeared as a tall, strong, handsome man "because he was an iroij."

Jemo is the home of myriads of turtles and birds whose flesh and eggs have been a valuable source of protein for the people of the neighboring atolls. Stylized ritual was connected with the first food gathering expedition of the year which occurred in the summer time (rak). A fleet of canoes would sail from one of the neighboring atolls under the command of the iroij. The kakollol (or navigation aid used to fix the position) of Jemo is said to be a large flock of birds that fly out to meet the canoes about ten or fifteen miles from the island. When the birds were sighted, the helmsmen would exclaim: Droror timnej or Droror mej (eyes down), as a sign of honor and respect to Lawi Jemo.

When the canoe of the expedition came in sight of Jemo Island, the women in the party had to hide under mats in the canoe; otherwise, bad luck in gathering flesh and eggs was certain to follow, so it was believed. As soon as Jemo was sighted, it was emo to use ordinary Marshallese--the laroij language was mandatory.

When the canoes were being hauled up on the beach, special roro (work chants) were used:

"Rubrub kane in madren e wulik
Karoñroñ ie jitoñ,

"Jitoñ rik jitoñ."

"Break up firewood, firewood,
So that we will be able to
rest by the fire,
Charred wood, a little charred
wood."

This was followed by:

"Rubrub jitoñ in ib jen ko karoñroñ ie jitoñ.
Jitoñ rik jitoñ."

"Break up charred firewood so that we shall gather strength at
the charred firewood."

These canoe chants were used on all of the "bird islands". They were used as late as July, 1949, on Jemo. "To make the people stronger." Several elderly informants on Ailuk and Wutrōk (nearby atolls) expressed their belief that Lawi Jemo gives them strength to haul the canoes up on the beach when they use these chants.

The iroij and all of the expedition went ashore. The iroij had to lead the first trip of the year, and he was the first person to step ashore.

Before the party commenced their search for eggs, etc., divine sanction was requested. Everyone assembled on the beach before proceeding inland and cut a leaf of coconut frond. With the iroij leading the way, they walked toward Lawi Jemo (the kañal tree) in single file, each individual carefully stepping in the footprints of the person in front of him so that only one set of footprints would appear--as if only one person had been there.

Women were required to hold mats over their heads while on the island so that they could only see the ground well enough to gather eggs, etc. They were forbidden to see Lawi Jemo. Strict silence was observed on the way to worship Lawi Jemo.

When they reached the tree, each man placed his coconut leaf over a branch of the tree and then sat down in front of the tree and waited for a breeze to come and blow the leaf off. When this occurred, the kebbwi in bwil (ritual name for the iroij on this occasion) would say: "Warin" (we are lucky). If some branches also fell, the same word would be repeated.

This kind of ritual (kabun) is called katobar.

Lawi Jemo had signified his approval. Everyone then proceeded (not in single file) to a special place where marutto, a small, rare plant, grew. The iroij made medicine by pounding the marutto plant. Three yellow leaves and three green leaves were pounded together, and the extracted juice was drunk by all. This was done to prevent anal bleeding and diarrhea which might result from the unaccustomed meal of turtle and birds' eggs. Kirin leaves were made into a medicine using the same recipe if marutto extract proved ineffective. (This treatment for diarrhea is still used today throughout the Marshalls; sometimes the leaves are merely sucked.) After taking the preventative medicine, turtle eggs were gathered independently.

Before eating, everyone reassembled before the sacred tree to resume the ritual. The iroij or a senior aiab whom the iroij had appointed stood before Lawi Jemo and commenced chanting:

"Jej iar um"--"we start to pray."

"Jelbo I jelbo, jelbo I lip ke kijen Lawi Jemo--"we worship, we worship, we worship--these eggs fed to Lawi Jemo."

"Ikri, ikbi eañ eo, Lajibwinemon"--"move it, take it, to the north for Lajibwinemon is the iroij of the north."

"Non rak Lorok"--"to south for Lorok is the iroij of the south."

"Non rear Lokbea"--"to east for Lokbea is the iroij of the east."

"Non kabilon Lokabilon"--"to the west for Lokabilon is the iroij of the west."

As each direction was named, four eggs were thrown out in that direction as an offering to the ekjab. The eggs were then recovered and the principal in the ritual consumed all of them. The remaining eggs were divided up and eaten by the others in the party after the leader had eaten the sacrificial eggs.

A special chant, roro, was used to obtain supernatural aid in pulling turtles ashore:

"Bwili erok ki"-- "push, rolling on shore."

"Erök ki, erök ki"--"rolling on shore, rolling on shore."

"Eraror wan tapeo"--"roll the food-bringing turtle. This roro is still used by some of the older northern Radak people who believe in its efficacy.

While on the "bird island", sexual intercourse was forbidden and as previously mentioned, the use of everyday Marshallese was forbidden. It was believed that supernatural punishment, mij i lāroij (sickness of the lāroij) would strike the transgressor in the form of dysentery accompanied by severe anal bleeding.

The lāroij language (stone, lā, or foundation of the iroij was mandatory at all times. This ritual language (which is still known today by some of the older people) may have been the ancestral tongue of the Marshallese, modified by centuries away from the homeland; it may have been an exclusive chiefly (iroij) language or an archaic courtesy language. At any rate, it may provide a clue in comparative linguistic studies today, e.g.:

<u>A.</u> ENGLISH	<u>B.</u> COLLOQUIAL MARSHALLESE (FORBIDDEN)	<u>C.</u> LAROIJ LANGUAGE (MANDATORY)
man	emman	dri kabbil
woman	kōrā	maar
boy	ladrik	laberik, naberik
pandanus	bōp	karkar
breadfruit	mā	waerar
coconut	ni	kebor
preserved pandanus	mokon	wairik
bird	bau	bebelber
octopus	kwet	werak
shark	bāko	niñniñ
sting ray	jemjo	jejanjōr
come	itok	jekabuñ
go	ilok	jekabuñlok
child	ajiri	nabdri
ship	wa	jitōñ
eggs	lip	unniñ
rat	kijrik	kilukor
sand	bok	jejakiki
fire	kijeek	mejwar
turtle	wun	wa

When the expedition was ready to depart from the island, the dri meto (navigator in charge of sailing) would order: "Jen rubrub, (let's sail!), ekwe, rube jitōñ kōne" (put the boat in the water). After all was ready: "Wai jitōñ kane" (anchors aweigh!). All these orders were given in the laroij tongue which was used until the canoes were half way home. A special roro was continuously chanted by the helmsman to remind people not to use ordinary Marshallese: "Ainānā - nānā - ini - nene ene".....repeated (meaning unknown).

This ritual and special language was used on all of the "bird islands" each of which had its particular ekjab, all of whom dwell in trees with the exception of the ekjab of Bokak, Jo Bokak, a red bird (mum) who has been seen recently.

After this initial trip made by the iroij or senior person in the hierarchy, anyone else could make ensuing trips during the rest of the year. This ritual was apparently a method of conservation. Rather than allow people to swarm all over the island, possibly frightening away nesting fowl and egg-laying turtles, the iroij and senior people led the way and the food gathering proceeded in an organized, methodical fashion.

The early missionaries successfully used their prestige and persuasive powers to discourage the worship of Lawi Jemo and the other ekiab. This kabuñ (ritual) was last performed at Jemo during German times, according to a reliable informant, shortly after which the tree, Lawi Jemo, was cut down for boat timber. Today people gather turtle eggs and birds' eggs, etc., at any time of year and walk wherever they wish on Jemo. None of the tabus are observed as far as may be determined. This is true for the other bird islands as well. This religio-economic pattern clearly illustrates the close affinity of the aboriginal Marshallese religion to the ecology.

Mo or kotra land (Radak and Rālik), juloburin ne (Radak only) is land belonging to the iroij elap alone. When the iroij saw an island he liked, he had three tabu signs made and placed on the land (usually very good land), one on each end and one in the middle. These "signs" are called itkiju or iabne (no foot), i.e., no foot but the iroij'(s) may step here, and were made of a plaited coconut frond tied to the end of a stick (informant made one for illustrative purposes). The word kotra itself means the leaf (coconut frond) that makes land mo (tabu). The itkiju were placed in position one time only and were not renewed...."people know about it."

Magic (bubu) was made on the itkiju. It is believed that if any unauthorized person takes food from the island or ever sets foot on it, he will get sick and/or die. Permission to go on the land had to be obtained from the iroij. If any people had been living on the land, they were forced to leave. An uninhabited island was usually chosen, however. When the iroij died, the people could return to the land unless the new iroij continued the kotra. The iroij appointed special temporary workers who had no real workers' rights and who shared the proceeds from copra sales or the produce of the land with the iroij.

This land may be passed from father to son or it may remain within the bwij. The iroij may do what he wishes with it; it is his personal property. If the iroij should leave no close kin, the workers on the land may have it. The next iroij may not recover any of the mo land that his predecessor may have given away.

An informant's father received two pieces of land on Wotje Atoll this way. His father was iroij erik in Northern Radak. His father, Jibunemon, was paternal uncle to Murjil, the iroij lablab of Northern Radak. The informant's father had the itkiju (tabu) signs placed on the two parcels of land, and the land was inherited by the informant who is in possession of it today. Informant is a member of the noble class.

There are other parcels of kotra or mo land in Ebon, Ailiñlaplap, Majuro, and other atolls, viz:

MO LANDS OF IROIJ KABUA KABUA

Ailiñlaplap Atoll:

<u>Islands</u>	<u>Wāto ko</u> (pieces of land)
Toleōn	Batō
Edridr	Barōneknouij
Enekanloto	Lolinmak
Tōbo	Unbar
Mattōn	Kōkomōnmōn
	Kaiuikan
	Otojome
	Kimemekan

There are no alab(s) or people with real dri jermal rights on these lands.

Jaluit Atoll: Ebon Atoll:

<u>Islands</u>	<u>Islands</u>
Arbwe	Eneor
	Mōneak

There were alab(s) and people with real dri jermal rights on these lands before iroij Neiu took them over as mo in German times. An agreement was made whereby the proceeds from the copra produced on these lands was divided on a 50-50 share basis. This division is still in force.

In Japanese times about 1921, Lobareo, iroij elap of northern Radak, had a juloburin ne (translation: sole of foot / of iroij only may touch this land /), island in Maloelap Atoll on Taroa Island, Drinjen wāto, which he had inherited from his uncle, the previous iroij elap, Murjil. He used to take all of the money from the copra proceeds--iroij erik and iroij elap share, alab and dri jermal share. This is the richest land on Maloelap.

The iroij may give juloburin ne land to his children or to his bwij. Royal "blcod" is a prerequisite for holding this type of land. If there are no royal descendants left, the iroij elap takes the land back.

Lobareo later turned Drinjen wāto over to his son (Laibwij) who inherited all the rights except iroij elap rights which were inherited by Jajua, the next iroij elap of northern Radak. There are no permanent workers on Drinjen today and no alab. Informants have never heard of iroij juloburin ne are passed down from alab to alab; however, there are no permanent workers either, only iroij elap and alab.

Metak in Buro (pain in heart)--land given by an iroij to his cast-off wife as "her husband", i.e., a sort of alimony.* This done at the discretion of the iroij. One informant knew of a case like this at Wotje Atoll.

Metak in buro land remains in the bwij. The cast-off mate was tabu sexually to other men forever after unless the iroij told a man that he could take her sexually. This latter usually happened. A woman who had sexual intercourse without this permission was sometimes killed and the land was confiscated by the iroij. When a kajur husband was cast off by a leroiij, he did not receive metak in buro land. He also was tabu sexually at all times. Women avoided him for fear of being killed for having sexual relations with him. His illicit sex partner was the only one killed.

Lowio--land that had never been used before because of heavy underbrush. There were many of these areas in the old days. There is no lowio land today. If a kajur wanted land, he asked the iroij permission to clear a parcel of lowio land to have rights in it. If the individual cleared the land by himself, he could leave it to his desired heir.

If his bwij helped clear the land, the bwij inherited the land. The iroij might do the clearing with his own workers and he would keep the land as his personal land. This last happened during early Japanese times, e.g., on Majuro Atoll on Ajeltak Island, Mwōnbat wāto has an iroij and temporary workers only today. Dalap, Monworwor wāto is in the same status but now occupied by an air strip. On Ronroñ Island, Enlen wāto, iroij Lañlan cleared it himself in 1912 and changed the name from Tur (a geographic term) to its present name. Dri jermal were put on this particular land permanently and are working it today.

Lowio by an iroij may mean that the land may have been used by a kajur but not worked or cleared by him. The iroij cleared the land and the kajur "lost" their rights in it, i.e., a sort of punishment for not carrying out duties and obligations.

Erenteb--"something, i.e., a gift, to put your shavings (from the canoe) in." In the old days canoes were very important in the economy and in the frequent wars. In the absence of metal tools, canoe building was a difficult and time-consuming task.

When the iroij wanted a new canoe, he sent hundreds of his people out to cut a huge breadfruit tree for the hull and other trees for the supports of the outrigger, the platform, etc. Only a few men in a few lineages knew how to construct a canoe. Special knowledge of measurements was and still is handed down within the lineage.

Folded pandanus leaves were used to "blue print" the canoe. Two of these skilled men were usually in charge of the building of a huge canoe for the iroij. These men were rewarded by the iroij with gifts of mats, rope, food, etc.--never land. The other workers received nothing from the iroij but food while they were working on his canoe. One informant saw the iroij Murjil's canoe built and land was not given. Informants have never heard of land called erenteb.

* Nets, mats, boats, clothing, etc., given to a cast-off wife by the iroij are called mweien tiriamo (these goods- things - of sorrow) or jenlok (the ending).

The man or men in charge of the canoe building was forbidden to have sexual intercourse while the canoe was being built. A dri bubu made magic to aid in building a good canoe. Bola was used before the canoe was built to find an auspicious time. A canoe should be made when there was no danger of surprise attack that would prevent completion or allow capture of the canoe.

Enen-Kojou (land-of-make disgrace), Jou-Mij (die without land)--the iroij never took land away for adultery if just kajur were involved. However, if an iroij or leroi were involved, he or she would get land from the erring husband or wife.

If a kajur male was married to a leroi who had sexual relations with another man, the kajur might have complained to the iroij elap who would say iroij loman (iroij custom), i.e., the iroij may do anything they wish. However, if a leroi had a kajur husband (known as iroij exman both in Ralik and Radak) who committed adultery, she confiscated the land of her husband's sex partner. She did not have to consult the iroij elap about it. She possessed enough power herself. The leroi could tear her rival's vagina open as additional punishment if she wished; this was done many times according to informants.

A kajur male who had sexual intercourse with the iroij elap'(s) wife was described by a special term, lan ebunti (the heavens will fall upon the people / concerned /). The offending male was always speared to death by an iroij erik or bwirak-tak (lesser royalty). The offending wife could be cast off without metak in buro or killed, at the discretion of the iroij elap, but her land was not confiscated. The iroij confiscated the land of his wife's lover, kojjou (throw away). His whole bwij was thrown off the land and told: Jou mij (you will die because you have no land). The land was then called enen kojjou. Informant told of a case of this type that occurred in Wutrök Atoll in pre-German days.

A kajur male who had sexual relations with the wife of an iroij was killed and his land was given to an outsider, usually the person who executed him. His whole bwij was then evicted from the land.

Presumably this idea of collective punishment for individual transgressions of one member of the lineage was designed to prevent commoners from violating the iroij sexual rights and to accentuate the exalted position of the iroij class and everything pertaining to it. The iroij could dispose of the confiscated land as he pleased.

In the case of a kajur woman who committed adultery with the husband of a leroi, the offending woman was often taken to the ocean and drowned by all the leroi. An informant had heard of this happening in pre-European times. In one case, during Japanese times, according to an informant, a kajur male had sexual intercourse with the kajur wife of a bwirak lablab (son of an iroij lablab father and a libwirak--lesser royalty--mother). When his crime was discovered, the offended husband and all of the iroij erik and bwirak beat him into unconsciousness. The husband then forgave his wife and continued living with her.

All of the iroij were tabu sexually to kajur except on invitation of the iroij or leroiij. The land of the offending mate leroiij (if he was a kajur--iroij emman) could be confiscated by the leroiij. If so, all of his bwij was evicted and another bwij put on the land. The evictees would move to the domain of another iroij, as in the case of land alienation of the iroij'(s) bwij. This land was passed on through the bwij of the new occupants and was then classified as kotleb.

The offenders: leroiij'(s) mate and the woman involved, were either killed, beaten, or had their land confiscated, any of the three; however, they had no choice of punishment.

The leroiij sometimes ordered her husband's death and sometimes her rival as well but usually had them beaten. The most usual punishment was confiscation of land. If the iroij'(s) wife was of iroij "blood", she could sleep with another man and not be subject to punishment by the iroij. He could only "get revenge" by sleeping with another woman or he might merely scold his wife. "Both iroij and leroiij have the same power so they cannot punish each other."

Conversely, if an iroij offends his (leroiij) wife, she may obtain revenge by sleeping with another man. This method of "paying back", as it is called, is often practiced today by Marshallese of all classes. The leroiij'(s) kajur lover could not be punished according to custom and neither could the kajur sex partner of the iroij. An iroij who had sexual relations with the wife of another iroij from the same area could not be punished.

The wife, if a commoner (lijela) could be thrown out after being beaten but her land was not confiscated. If a leroiij was offended against by another leroiij, the same thing applied as in the case of the two iroij. Informant laughingly told of an iroij who slept with the lijela (commoner wife of an iroij lablab). When the cuckold found out about it, he became angry but did not do anything about it. "A kajur would have been killed." This incident occurred shortly before World War II. However, for example, if an iroij from the Ralik Chain came to Radak and trespassed sexually on a Radak iroij'(s) wife, war would ensue. This almost precipitated a war on Majuro more than one hundred years ago.

A bwirak (lesser iroij) who slept with a lijela would have his land confiscated but not killed; presumably because he was a member of the royal class. The land confiscated by a leroiij from her rival could be given to the husband of the adultress. This was only done occasionally, and this land was passed down through the man's bwij. Land of this type was called mweien tiriamo (goods of sorrow). The land of a man who slept with the lijela (commoner wife of an iroij) was never given to his wife but was kept by the iroij.

Kaamnak--(not a land title; verb) "to put someone on the land, house, etc. Similar to kotleb land; it may be any type of land. It has often been land given by one iroij to another, e.g., Jebrik Lokotwerak, iroij lablab of one-half of Majuro Atoll during Japanese times, gave an island on Majuro Atoll to Litokwa, an iroij from Ebon Atoll in the Ralik Chain. Litokwa had promised to kaamnak land to Jebrik in return. He did not keep his promise, however, so Jebrik took the land back. This type of land is used by the iroij recipient, and after his death, it reverts to the iroij donor.

Kotra land, iroij personal land, has been given as kaamnak. Kaamnak provided the iroij with a place to stay when they visited outside their own atolls, e.g., Toemein iroij of northern Radak, had land of this type in Jaluit Atoll in the Ralik chain during the Japanese times.

While the iroij is away from his kaammak land, the money share from the land is given to the original iroij. Food is given to any of the recipient iroij'(s) workers who may be on the land, e.g., workers of iroij Toemein on his kaammak land on Jabor, Jaluit Atoll.

The usufruct rights in kaammak may be transferred to a third party, e.g., during the Japanese period, iroij Jebrik Lotokwerak of Majuro gave Jable, a piece of land on Majuro, to iroij erik Lañlan of Majuro as kaammak. The latter had a boat made by a half-caste, Joachim de Brum, and turned this land over to him for his use in payment for the boat. He predeceased his half-caste friend, and the land reverted to the original donor.

Workers of this type of land will remain on the land, make ekkan, and give the copra share to the new iroij when he is there. This individual will inform the original iroij who will reply "keep it" (money and ekkan), i.e. temporary tenure is recognized by everyone involved.

CONCLUSION

The Marshallese system of land tenure has been modified in certain respects due to the acculturative influence of the bearers of western culture. Warfare has been eliminated from the pattern of culture and consequently land ownership does not fluctuate as radically as in the days of inter-clan and familial strife.

With the introduction of foreign administrative authorities and foreign concepts, the authority of the royal (iroij) class has progressively become weaker. However, as was stated initially, the system of inheritance and usufruct has been retained albeit modified in regard usufruct and is operating today with no overt indications of overall disintegration and with all indications of continuance. Whether further acculturation and exposure to the concepts of the American socio-economic system will cause a breakdown of the present Marshallese system of land tenure remains to be seen.

It is strongly recommended that the program of returning the former Japanese government lands to the former Marshallese owners and the payment of claims against the United States government for occupation and damage to land be expedited. It is further recommended that the land shall never be allowed to pass into non-Marshallese hands.

This is the explicit desire of the Marshallese people and was presented in a joint, unanimous resolution in the meeting of the second "Marshallese Congress" in August of this year. As such, it deserves the most serious consideration by the powers that be.

This is particularly important in view of the steady increase in population due to the superior facilities offered by the American medical program which has almost entirely eradicated venereal and other diseases that have prevented large population increase in the past.

There is no serious population pressure at the present time, but the time may come when it will become necessary to utilize every piece of land to the maximum extent as in the Southern Gilberts. This eventually should be anticipated and prepared for.

ADDENDUM

A possible future trend was seen only this week in the request of an alab on Jarej Island, Majuro Atoll (adjacent to the Administrative Center) to collect cash rentals from various individuals whose bwij lands are in other areas and who have built retail stores and bakeries on this individual's bwij land.

GLOSSARY

A brief resume of terminology used in connection with land rights follows:

- Ailif..... atoll
- Ajri..... literally "child"; as used in reference to a person living and working on his father's land.
- Alab..... the senior member of the bwij; the head man or woman of a wāto or group of wāto(s).
- Bolē..... divination by means of stones (counted out in series).
- Burij..... land (noun).
- Bwij..... literally "navel"; the extended family group or lineage; used to refer to the maternal lineage primarily but is also used to refer to the paternal lineage, e.g., "that is my father's bwij land." Bwij is sometimes used as a synonym for jowī (clan).
- Bwij eo elot..... means that the bwij has become extinct; all the lineal descendants of the founder of the bwij have died.
- Bwirak..... title of lesser royalty; libwirak--feminine.
- Dri jerbal..... literally "work people"; everyone who works on the land with the exception of the alab. This is a comparatively new term that came into usage with the introduction of a cash economy with copra as its base. The people who have the indisputable rights in a particular piece of land are those who might possibly become alab through their matrilineal lineage. The ajri or children of the male alab form another category and yet another consists of those individuals who are real outsiders, being neither paternal nor maternal relatives but who have been allowed to work on the land.
- Ekkan..... tribute paid to the iroij: food, mats, etc.

<u>Eno</u>	forbidden, tabu.
<u>Ene</u>	island.
<u>Eonene</u>	the main island.
<u>Iroi emman</u>	commoner husband of a <u>leroi</u> .
<u>Iroi elap</u> or <u>iroi lablab</u>	king or paramount chief; the <u>alab</u> of the senior royal <u>bwij</u> ; <u>leroi</u> --queen or chiefess.
<u>Iroi erik</u>	literally "little chief"; secondary chief; used in the Radak chain only.
<u>Jikin</u>	place (noun); referring to a piece of land.
<u>Jikin kwellock</u>	place of assembly; village
<u>Jikin jemeir</u>	land of paternal relatives; 3rd person plural.
<u>Jikin jineir</u>	land of maternal relatives; 3rd person plural.
<u>Jowi</u>	clan, matrilineal and strictly exogamous with one exception: <u>jirikrik</u> , "because there are so many <u>jirikrik</u> ".
<u>Kajur</u>	commoner.
<u>Kökajiriri</u>	adopted child; literally: "to rock and fondle in one's arms", i.e., to "look out" for a child.
<u>Lijela</u>	commoner wife of an <u>iroi</u> .
<u>Mañoren</u>	maternal nephews or nieces.
<u>Mañoren lōboren</u>	eldest female mañoren (the most important because her children will eventually become <u>alab</u>).
<u>Nukin</u>	relatives, paternal and maternal.
<u>Radak</u>	eastern chain of atolls and islands: Bokak, Bikar, Wutrōk, Ailuk, Wotje, Erikub, Maloelap, Aur, Majuro, Arno, Mille, Tōke, Likiep, Narikrik, Jemo Island, and Meji Island.

- Rālik..... western chain of atolls and islands: Rōnlap, Wotto, Lae, Ujae, Kuajlen (Kwajalein), Ellip Island, Namu, Ailiñlaplap, Jaluit, Namrik, Ebon, Kili Island, Ujilañ, Ailiñinae, Roñrik, Enewetak, Bikini, and Jabwot Island.
- Rārōk..... islands (ene ko) or wāto(s) (wāto ko) used for making copra but not regularly inhabited; also used to describe waste land, full of coral boulders and sand left by a typhoon; area of poor soil. Usually the S. or S.E. portion of an atoll. Called aeañ when on N. or N.W. and liklal when in the western portion.
- Rukorea (Rālik), Wuleba (Radak). maternal uncle.

Dialectical differences in terminology (Rālik and Radak chains) are noted where existent in this paper.

Diacritical marks: ā--as in back, sack; ō--approximately as "u" in murder; ñ--"ng" as in sing, king, etc.

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APPENDIX

MODIFICATION OF THE LAND TENURE SYSTEM ON UJILAÑ BY THE DISPLACED ENEWETAK PEOPLE

When the former inhabitants of Enewetak were re-located on Ujilañ, the naval authorities allocated one-half of the atoll to each of the iroij lablab Johanes and Abream, following the pattern that prevailed on Enewetak.

In 1949 each iroij then divided the land allocated to him, among his people. Each individual (from the youngest child to the oldest adult) received a plot of land some of which support less than ten coconut trees. The alab does not receive a share of the dri ierbal copra nor (as previously stated) does the iroij.

As may be seen, this new pattern of allocating individual land holdings is a drastic modification of the traditional Marshallese land tenure system. Whether this change was brought about by acculturation from the neighboring Ponape District within which Ujilañ was incorporated administratively during the Japanese period, or whether it was a result of suggestions by American administrative authorities is not clear at the present time, due to lack of detailed information. Further investigation is needed here.