

Globalised Reciprocity: Expanding Sāmoan World and Chieftainship. Matori Yamamoto. Kobundo, 2018, Tokyo. Hardback, illustrated, 281 pages. ISBN: 978-4-335-56137-5.

Masami Tsujita Levi, National University of Sāmoa

Sāmoa's ceremonial exchange is the craft of art, combining highly developed oratory, a complex system of gift giving, and reciprocal relationships between chiefly titleholders and families. Its sophisticated system has intrigued many researchers including the Japanese anthropologist Matori Yamamoto who has studied Sāmoa's ceremonial exchange and chiefly system for the last 40 years. *Globalized Reciprocity: Expanding Sāmoan World and Chieftainship* is Yamamoto's new book written on this topic in the Japanese language. In this review, I will summarise some of her findings and analysis. The book analyses the power and reciprocity involved in Sāmoan ceremonial exchanges in both Sāmoa and in its diaspora community abroad. It examines transitions in the *matai* system since 1970s to the present through looking at the changes in the usage, quality, commercial value, type, and meaning of fine mats or *'ie tōga* in the ceremonial exchange that helps sustain the *matai* system. Yamamoto looks at the internationally expanding Sāmoan communities and examines the dynamics of ceremonial exchanges of *'ie tōga* based on her field research in Sāmoa, New Zealand, Hawai'i and the US mainland since 1978.

The book consists of seven chapters and a conclusion. Chapter 1 conceptualizes gift exchange and the system of reciprocity in Sāmoan ceremonial exchanges in light of studies by Mauss, Lévi-Strauss, Sahlins and others who examine the usage, value, and exchange pattern of *'ie tōga* in the historical and cultural context in Sāmoa. She refers to Linnekin, who looked at the commercial value of *'ie tōga* during the colonial period, while Schoeffel examined the traditional role and meaning of *'ie tōga* in ceremonial exchange. Yamamoto broadens her study to look at both the commercial and ceremonial values of *'ie tōga* within Sāmoa's system of gift giving and reciprocity, both past and present.

Chapter 2 examines the Sāmoa's *matai* system that governs ceremonial exchange and details the roles of *fa'alupega*, *fono*, and the *ali'i-tulafale* relationship using the data from the author's fieldwork in the Faleata district. In Yamamoto's opinion, unlike other Polynesian societies where chieftainship is organized along the lines of ramage (a descent group of individuals who share the same ancestor), Sāmoa's *matai* system is a complex village-based political system maintained through power and reciprocity as illustrated in oratory, *fono* seating arrangement, order of *'ava* distribution, and the *ali'i-tulafale* relationship. However, the system of ranking titles is also based on the reciprocal balance between titleholder families that allows plural titleholders to hold almost coequal levels of authority. A feature of the *matai* system, according to Yamamoto, may motivate titleholders and families to outdo each other in their generosity.

Chapter 3 describes the fundamental structure of exchange system and analyses the flow of *'ie tōga* at different rites of passage such as weddings, celebrations of birth, bestowal of chiefly titles, funerals of *matai*, and church dedications. In the past, *ie tōga* were made for high *ali'i* by mat weavers and passed onto *tulafale* for ceremonial use. In recent years, however, new *'ie toga* belong to the family of those who wove them and thereafter are exchanged between families through their *matai* of all ranks at various ceremonies. Within the current system, the number of *'ie tōga* collected for a ceremony does not necessarily reflect the power and status of *ali'i* or *tulafale*. This change, according to Yamamoto, has somewhat influenced the equalization status among chiefs of different traditional ranks.

Chapter 4 analyses changing trends in items of exchange that included *oloa* (items belong to male property) and *tōga* (items belong to female property) and the impact of an expanded market economy. Traditionally, *oloa* exchange items included pigs, crops, weapons, tools, and boats. In recent

years, some of these items have been replaced with cash and imported goods such as corned beef or salted beef. On the other hand, the exchange of *siapo* has become no longer practiced although it may be replaced by bolts of imported cloth, and *'ie tōga* has become the only *tōga* exchange item in recent years. This change has accelerated the commodification of *'ie tōga* and eventually resulted in reducing the quality of mats due to the lack of supply and cost of those of the finest, most labor-intensive type. Yamamoto contends these transitions are a result of the expansion of a market economy in Sāmoa. At the same time, purchasing large quantities of import goods now used in exchange has helped expand the market economy in Sāmoa. Nevertheless, she argues that, although the exchange items have changed, the fundamental cultural principles underlying of ceremonial exchange has not been altered.

Chapter 5 focuses on Sāmoan communities in New Zealand and the United States. It looks at the history of Sāmoan migration and the role of remittances in ceremonial exchanges both in Sāmoa and abroad. Cash remittances flow from overseas relatives to the families in Sāmoa while the flow of *'ie tōga* is the other way around. Yamamoto attributes these flows of remittances and *'ie tōga* to the sense of reciprocity by the Sāmoans in Sāmoa who feel obligated to do something in return of receiving remittances. She also argues that gifted *'ie tōga* have become an important means by which families in Sāmoa could ask their overseas relatives for sending them money in return. As a result of such transnational exchange, *'ie tōga* has become an important “currency” of the Sāmoan World, a socio-cultural entity built upon Sāmoans in Sāmoa and abroad.

Chapter 6 examines the impact of the proliferation of *matai* titles on the roles of titleholders. Yamamoto argues that the need for cash in ceremonial exchange has contributed to the proliferation of *matai* titles. This proliferation was once attributed to the former electoral process that gave only titleholders a vote. However, Yamamoto looks at the role of titleholders living in urban areas and overseas to identify the motivation behind splitting titles to confer them on multiple holders. She argues that by bestowing *matai* titles on Sāmoans living outside their village, those chiefs who bestow the titles can acquire greater access to cash for ceremonial exchange. Consequently, the responsibilities of *matai* have been divided by the titleholders' residential location. *Matai* living in the village associated with the title govern the family and village matters, while their town and overseas counterparts take care of financial matters.

Chapter 7 looks at the evolution of different types of *'ie toga*; the coarse mats popular in 1970s to 1980s and the reintroduction of much softer and more finely woven mats or *'ie sae* in the mid-1990s. Programmes initiated by Sāmoa's non-governmental organization Women in Business Development (WIBD) not only encouraged the revival of the art of finer weaving, but also helped weavers regain pride in their art and enhanced the quality of fine mats. In the meantime, the WIBD project allowed women to earn cash income by weaving mats. The government also supported the effort to enhance the quality of fine mats. Even though the *'ie sae* has not been as popular as expected due to the long weaving time and high market costs, larger fine mats or *'ie tetele* have become a key item of exchange in ceremonies. Yamamoto concludes that, despite changes in the type, size and quality of fine mats, the ceremonial exchange connects Sāmoans at home and abroad, and maintains reciprocity and cultural values.

Overall, this valuable book provides detailed descriptions of Sāmoa's ceremonial exchange and the *matai* system, and how they have changed and how they have retained traditional continuity. Its analysis could have extended to apply Sāmoan cultural values as well as reciprocity. As Yamamoto argues, despite the tidal wave of changes faced by Sāmoa, the fundamental structure of the longstanding tradition—ceremonial exchange—has been maintained. According to her, the power and reciprocal relationships between titleholders that sustain the *matai* system are maintained through ceremonial exchanges. However, Sāmoan principles such as love, mutual respect, mutual support, and sharing also underline the bestowal of titles and ceremonial exchanges. Love for the family, in particular, explains why Sāmoans commit themselves so firmly, even take out loans, to

participate in ceremonial exchanges. Love and reciprocity play are key in the Sāmoan migration-remittance chain and support the continuation of ceremonial exchange and the *matai* system.

The book *Globalised Reciprocity: Expanding Sāmoan World and Chieftainship*, written in Japanese, has many useful insights and theories about the changing landscape of Sāmoa's ceremonial exchange. An English translation of the book would make it accessible to a wider audience and stimulate further discussion.