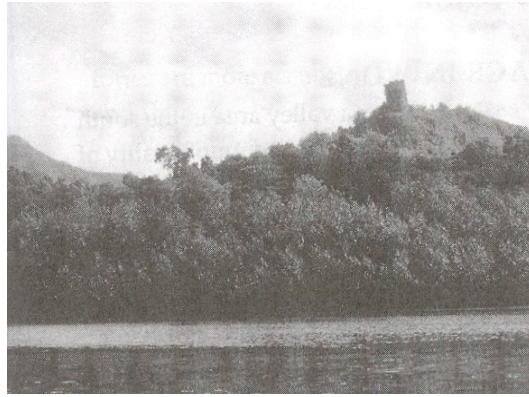




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WONE SOHTE LOHDI History and Place on Pohnpei

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Approaching Wone from the sea and through the surrounding mangrove forest. The thumb-like rock projection to the right is Silauh. (Photo courtesy of Suzanne Falgout.

A SENSE OF PLACE IS STRONG among the people of Pohnpei. Despite the disruptive pressures brought on by colonialism and more recently globalization, an identification with place continues to inform peoples' sense of themselves and their past. Histories of Pohnpei, once a world and now an island, reside in a variety of forms, including the names given to the land and seascapes, many of which have changed over time to reflect the arrival of different clans or groups who established themselves in a particular locale only to be replaced or displaced by yet other and later groups. Visitors from Europe, America, and later Asia also gave names and histories to the island, its geographical features, and surrounding seas. These more recent colonial histories have worked to reduce the complexity of Pohnpei's past by denying earlier local histories of place in favor of neater, simpler, more ordered historical narratives. The problem is not confined to the study of Pohnpei's past, but affects the practice of history in Oceania as a whole. I seek in this essay to revisit these earlier histories of peoples and places on Pohnpei and, in the process, to argue for an island's histories rather than an island's history-histories that continue to defy denial, dismissal, evasion, or cooptation.

MY HISTORY AND PLACE IN WONE

The geographical focus of my essay is Wone, a valley area in the south of Pohnpei and a part of the present-day chiefdom and municipality of Kiti. Readers should know that personal experiences and relationships heavily inform my writing. Indeed, I am a child of Wone. My wife Kathy and I served as Peace Corps volunteers there from 1970 to 1973; I taught at the Wone Public Elementary School my first year and then joined Kathy at the Catholic Mission School for the next two years. We left Wone in 1973 for graduate school in the Washington, D.C., area but returned to Pohnpei in 1977 to teach at the Community College of Micronesia in Kolonia, the island's current seat of government and commerce in the north. Much of our free time in Kolonia was spent with Wone people who lived, worked, or attended school in the Kolonia area. On weekends and over extended vacation periods we often returned to Wone to stay with family and friends and in the section (*kousapw*) of Ohlapel. This was before electricity, telephone service, running water, and the restoration and paving of the island's circumferential road.

Twenty-one years old when I first reached Wone, I preferred the company of older people to my peers. I enjoyed listening to accounts of Wone's past while sitting and drinking kava or *sakau* around a *peitehl* (large pounding stone). I not only heard and learned something of the histories of Wone, but of the practice of history. I came to understand and appreciate how histories on Pohnpei are by their very nature personal, political, partial, fragmented, contested, privileged, and not at all hesitant to acknowledge the involvement of deities and other spirits. I recognized that the past continues to be present on Pohnpei; its histories can be heard, seen, read, and remembered in the surrounding land and seascapes, in the physical sites associated with individuals and events, and in the enduring remains of structures built by *mehn kawa* (the people of before). I learned, too, that there are different kinds of histories. The foundational accounts involving lineages, titles, ritual practices, clan arrivals and movements, and related land rights are considered sacred knowledge; they are the possession of a privileged few called *soupwoad*, who are careful, cautious and selective as to how, when, and with whom they share their histories. There are other kinds of histories of more recent vintage and involving contact or encounters with the outside world; these are called *soai* (stories). These recent his-

tories are more secular in character and hence are more widely known and shared.

We left Pohnpei in June of 1980, this time for graduate school in Honolulu, Hawai'i. Wone sometimes came to us in Honolulu, mostly in the form of friends, family, or acquaintances referred to Tripler Army Medical Center for treatment of illnesses that were often too far advanced to be cured. On occasion, Wone's past figured prominently in the cause of an affliction. Bernard Ladore, the medical officer for Wone, was referred to Tripler in 1981 with a debilitating but undiagnosed illness. Ladore was originally from U in the north of the island. Assigned to Wone shortly after the completion of his medical training, he had married a local woman, purchased land, raised a large family, received an honorific title from the Nahnmwarki or paramount chief of Kiti, and become quite prominent in community affairs. Doctors in Honolulu could not identify the cause of Bernard Ladore's illness other than to surmise that it might be the aftereffects of an earlier, undiagnosed stroke. Ladore returned to Pohnpei and Wone after a stay of about six weeks in Honolulu. He died among his family the following year. Local stories attribute Ladore's illness to his disturbance of Palehr, a sacred site in Ohlapel where earlier chiefs and priests had gathered to pray for the bounty and security of Wone's lands. Ladore had removed several large boulders from the site to use in the construction of a *nahs* (community house) on his own nearby land at Pohntui. The protective curse put on Palehr by its long-ago builders is said to have killed him. Such is the power of the past on Pohnpei's present.

OFF POHNPEI'S SHORES—1828

As a more formal preface to this essay on the role of place in the practice of history, I begin with the story of an early encounter whose particulars are located in the seas around the island of Pohnpei, but whose more general themes and features are quite common to Pacific historiography.¹ On January 15, 1828, a Russian naval expedition, commissioned by the Imperial Academy of Sciences in St. Petersburg and under the command of Captain Fedor Petrovich Lütke, appeared off Pohnpei. The island had been first visited in 1595 by Pedro Fernandez de Quiros. In the more than two centuries between the visits of Quiros and Lütke, there had occurred at least one brief but violent encounter between Pohnpei and the Western world, a number of recorded sight-

ings by different European voyagers, and the consequent bestowal of new names for the island by these voyagers to memorialize themselves or their homelands. Lütke, however, assumed himself to be its discoverer and called Pohnpei and the surrounding atolls the Senyavin Islands after Admiral Dmitry Nickolaevich Senyavin. Lütke's flagship also bore the name of the Russian naval hero.

The *Senyavin* and its supply ship, the *Moeller*, approached the island from the south. Staying outside of the island's fringing reef, the two ships sailed north and along Pohnpei's western coastline. The responses given the expedition by those coming out from the shore varied in their welcome, hospitality, and threats of violence. In the south, off of Wone, a large number of canoes approached the two ships. Women standing on the platform areas between the hull and outrigger seemed to dance; they made pronounced movements with their heads, hands, and feet while those seated in the canoes proffered what the voyagers understood to be items of trade. Farther along the island's western shore, the two ships observed an opening in the reef near Rohnkiti. A longboat under the command of Lieutenant Dmitrii I. Zavalishin was dispatched to take soundings of what appeared to be a deep channel. No sooner had the longboat left the ships than it was surrounded by canoes from the Rohnkiti area. Zavalishin sought to be diplomatic, giving a short speech explaining his purpose. Perhaps he thought the gesture, if not his words, would be understood. His effort met with chants, dances, offerings of coconuts, and what appeared to be invitations to come ashore. Frustrated by this welcome, Zavalishin and his survey party returned to the ships. A second effort the following day met with like greetings and offers of hospitality that proved more insistent, aggressive, and near violent.

On the third day, the ships reached a large, attractive natural harbor at the north of the island. Lütke sent Zavalishin's survey party, along with a second armed boat, into the harbor to find an appropriate place to anchor. As the boats passed through the reef into the harbor area, they were immediately surrounded. Dispensing with the greetings and offerings that had marked the earlier encounters, the Pohnpeians in the canoes roped the rudder of the lead boat and tried to pull it and its crew toward shore. Pistol shots fired into the air failed to discourage the Pohnpeians. Only after a thundering broadside of canon fire from the *Senyavin* temporarily quieted the Pohnpeians were the two boats able to extract themselves and return to the ships. Lütke commemo-

rated the encounter by naming the northern bay area Port du Mauvais Accueil, or "Harbor of Poor Welcome." It goes without writing that the accounts of Lütke, his officers, and the accompanying scientists aboard the two ships tell us much about the expedition but precious little about those Pohnpeians whom it engaged. The actions, motivations, and understandings of Pohnpeians are narrated though the preconceptions, presumptions, and general worldview of those aboard the *Senyavin* and *Moeller*. Lütke described the language of the island as rough, unpleasant to hear, and difficult to understand. The chants, songs, speeches, and conversation coming from the various canoes encountered during the visit struck Lütke as an incomprehensible cacophony. I have a strong hunch that these greetings contained not only words of welcome but histories of identification from the peoples of the different regions encountered. Lütke, however, could not hear any of these; other things concerned him. Efforts to discern the names of the island and its most prominent geographical features and surrounding atolls led to a confused mixing of wrong names and misunderstood answers. Lütke, for example, understood "Kantenemo" to be the name of one nearby island when, in fact, "*kaidehn ih mwo*" translates as "that's not it." Lütke departed the area on January 18. He blamed the general failure of communication on the people of the island; he wrote that their excitable nature, their lack of concentration, and the harsh, toneless character of their primitive jabbering precluded any meaningful contact or exchange.

LOCAL HISTORIES AND PACIFIC HISTORIOGRAPHY

It has become quite commonplace in Pacific historical studies to employ first or early contact accounts as a strategic introduction to the writing of allegedly more accurate, culturally sensitive, and locally focused histories. Certainly, scholarly or academic history in the Pacific has moved beyond a strictly empirical approach and blatantly colonial focus. Many of us have embraced the search for agency, the application of culture as an analyzing concept, and the discovery of resistance in the activities of the everyday. Distance, however, continues to separate Pacific historians from the subjects of their study. Peter Hempenstall has described a 1994 conference of the Pacific History Association that took place on Tarawa in Kiribati. Reflecting on the gap between the conferees and their hosts, Hempenstall writes, "Spectators and collec-

tors of Pacific cultures, we could not decode the complexities beneath the surface, the political economies of the communities that danced for us, the class cleavages, the family alliances and conflicts that make up the daily living for any community. Nor could we recognize the unspoken agendas in all that was done for us, to us."² Hempenstall's haunting, all too familiar sentiments apply not only to the problems of academic conferences convened on Pacific Islands, but to the very practice of a form of history that remains in so many ways foreign, objectifying, and unable to get beyond itself.

Conventional academic or scholarly histories are not the only threats to local accounts of the past. Local histories, to paraphrase Prasenjit Duara, need to be rescued from nation-making processes that promote a homogeneous national consciousness at the expense of different and preceding histories and identities.³ Critiques of colonialism can also be blinding. Even the most liberal, empathetic, and avowedly radical studies can remain colonialist in their methodologies and colonizing in their inadvertent silencing or displacement of more local voices and histories. In its efforts to debunk colonialist versions of islands' pasts, much discursive analysis avoids any substantive engagement with more local histories; the result is a privileging of Euro-American thought and argument. When acknowledged, local forms of historical expression tend to be regarded as incommensurable, inaccessible, unreliable, or not "real." Our histories of contact and encounter in the Pacific may allude to these other local histories, but only briefly and usually as a legitimating preface to our essentially colonial stories. It would seem that most Pacific historical studies are really European or American histories by another name. Colonialism, then, continues to affect, and deeply, the practice of history in Oceania.

There do exist other ways of doing history in Oceania—other ways that are grounded in place, that are referenced to a time before the coming of Europeans, and that are expressed through the dancing, chanting, singing, carving, and speaking as well as writing of these pasts. Greg Denning has written that there is no history of Oceania free of the contact with the Euro-American world through which it comes to us outlanders.⁴ That is true, I think, but the conversation over the practice of history in the Pacific should not end here. I intend this essay as a reminder of these other and earlier histories, their rootedness in place, and their persistence in the face of more foreign and dominating forms of historical expression. I argue for local histories that continue to defy

easy dismissal, cooptation, or evasion by colonialist, nationalist, and post-colonialist approaches.

There is needed here a comment about the nature of historical practice on Pohnpei.⁵ Local histories on Pohnpei offer accounts of the island's more distant past that are sustained and complemented by the surrounding landscape and seascapes, the changing names given those features, and the remains of physical structures built by earlier generations and imbued with special historical and cultural significance because of the remembered events that took place on them or that their construction inspired. Put another way, markers of the past are all about-overhead, underfoot, on the land, and in the sea.⁶ Indeed, the focus of history extends beyond animate beings. On Pohnpei, the reef, forests, mountains, hills, rivers, streams, boulders, and rocks all have histories.

I do not employ these statements as argument for a literal and romanticized approach to the past on Pohnpei. The substantial work done on the politics of history, the selectivity of memory, and the art of forgetting will not allow us to say that the past was as it is spoken or written about now.⁷ To argue for pure and simple histories would be to deny the partiality, contentiousness, partisanship, exclusions, omissions, and forgetfulness that are a part of any history making. Conversely, to admit to the problematic of doing histories from local sources and associated landscapes is not to deny the general resonance that these histories continue to hold for the island's modern-day inhabitants. There needs to be a place for the particularity of local histories that keeps them from getting lost in what Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak has termed "Western high theory"⁸ or in the reductionistic and sweeping generalizations of a world history that concerns itself with comparison, patterning, common themes, and the presumption that history can only be written. As noted earlier, I ground my reflections in the south of the island and around an area called Wone. In this consideration of Wone's more distant past, I rely heavily upon the work of the Pohnpeian archaeologist Rufino Mauricio and the ethnohistorian Suzanne Falgout.⁹

EARLY WONE OR ONOHNLENG— AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL HISTORY

Wone, once known as Onohnleng, stretches from Semwei in the west to Rohi in the east; its histories are rich and deep.¹⁰ Silauh, a large,

thumb-like rock that rises from the hills behind Wone, would have been one of the first geographical features noticed by the Dipwinmen, Dipwinwai, and Soun Eir clans upon their arrival from unspecified areas to the south, designated in Pohnpeian by the term "*eir*." Approaching Wone from the sea today, one passes through the reef, past the small reef island of Penieu, through channels that parallel the near-shore island of Mwudok, and toward the mangrove forests that hug and hide the shoreline. How different that view would have been twenty-five hundred years ago is difficult to assess. Wone no doubt appeared an attractive area to weary voyagers. One of the island's three major valley systems, Wone possesses a rich, alluvial flatland, three sizable rivers with several tributary streams, and a variety of flora and fauna that provided sustenance, nourishment, and the raw materials from which women and men might fashion their utensils, tools, clothing, weapons, and dwelling structures. Bounding this valley are sloping hills and, farther inland, a series of mountain peaks that from west to east include Dolenrohi, Dolokole, Dollap, and Pohnluwer.

The archaeological record, coupled with linguistic evidence, suggests that the Dipwinmen were among the very first to arrive on the island, perhaps as early as 500 B.C.¹¹ and as part of a migration of peoples out of the northern and central areas of Vanuatu.¹² An examination of oral traditions, primarily those transcribed and translated, reveals a general pattern of initial territorial localization oriented toward the direction from which the settlers arrived.¹³ The Dipwinmen, for example, stayed primarily in the south, where they came in time to be the area's ruling clan; the Dipwinwai, however, later dispersed to the northeast and established themselves in what are now the chiefdoms or municipalities of Net, U, and Madolenihmw.¹⁴ Little is known about the third of Wone's earliest clans, the now extinct Soun Eir.¹⁵

There exists considerable debate and uncertainty about land tenure and residence patterns in early Pohnpei. The earliest histories of Wone or Onohnleng suggest that landholdings and residence patterns were clan based, with different clans establishing themselves in a given area either by right of initial settlement or by war. Wone's other chiefly clan, the one that eventually allied itself through marriage with the Dipwinmen, was the Lipitahn. The members of this clan came from the Radak, or southern Marshalls chain, via Katau, an ancient Pohnpeian placename thought in this case to refer to the island of Kosrae.¹⁶ Rather than

remain in the east, the Lipitahn moved into the southern and southeastern areas of the island.

Large boulders proved the sturdiest, most plentiful, and readily available building materials. Pohnpeians used them to construct altars, house platforms, tombs, walls, and terraces while lining their ground pits, ditches, paths, and walkways with rocks and smaller stones. Boulders, rocks, and stones could also possess or carry supernatural power. The likening of the island to a *pei* (foundational platform built of rocks) had its practical reflection in all of the structures Pohnpeians made to support and sustain life on the island. There were different kinds of dwellings: size, complexity, and style distinguished or set apart the dwelling structures of high-status people. Supporting or secondary structures housed attendants or served as sites for the performance of rituals and other tasks associated with the rank and responsibility of the primary occupant. Archaeologists tell us that the increasing complexity over time of house platforms, residential sites, and tomb architecture indicate the importance of status differentiation in the sociopolitical histories of Wone and other areas on Pohnpei.¹⁷

The earliest accounts of Pohnpei's past speak of the difficulties of settling the new land. Establishing oneself on the island was as challenging as it was promising. It would serve no purpose here to fashion a master narrative out of Wone's oral, transcribed, and even written histories. Sectional and clan accounts are not easily reconciled, nor should they be, as the practice of history on the island revolves around accounts that are partial, varied, and contesting. Among the more general themes prevalent in these foundational histories, however, are stories of want, struggle, experimentation, improvisation, discovery, divine assistance, clan wars, encounters with malevolent spirits, and a general search for order. Beyond questions surrounding the literal accuracy of these accounts, there emerges a story of different peoples endeavoring to find a place for themselves in a new land and amid other established or newly arriving groups. Order there would eventually be. Wone's histories speak of the rise of a chiefly culture centered about the title of Soukisenleng at the time when Wone itself was known as Onohnleng.

There is much that is not known or that has been forgotten about the rise of Onohnleng and under the holders of the title of Soukisenleng.¹⁸ There is no exact date for the rise and rule of Onohnleng, no cer-

tainty as to the number of men who held the title of Soukisenleng over time, and little specificity as to the individual titleholders and the distinctive features of their reigns. What is remembered is that Soukisenleng was as much a spiritual or religious figure as a secular ruler.¹⁹ No place in Wone attests more to this feature of Soukisenleng's prominence than the *kousapw* (section of land) called Ohlapel. The name "Ohlapel" refers to Soukisenleng; it translates as "holy man" and calls attention to the separate and aesthetic life practiced by the titleholder and those who served him. Ohlapel, formerly known as Pohnsilap en Onohnleng, or the "Forehead of Onohnleng," is a high area above the Wone flatland that for a long time marked the limits of interior settlement in the south of the island.

Ohlapel served then as the ritual center of Onohnleng. Its prominence, power, and sacredness were manifest in a variety of sites and structures both within and approaching its borders. Ohlapel is bounded at its base by the Sounkroun River, which empties into the sea. Below Ohlapel, along the Sounkroun River, lie the remains of Pahsoan, an extensive feasting complex. Pahsoan translates as "foundation" and is remembered as the locus for the chiefly and ritual culture that revolved around Soukisenleng. Just below Pahsoan are the ruins of a smaller site, Nakepetor, where tribute from the land and the sea was examined, stored, and, at the appropriate time, prepared for presentation to Soukisenleng.

Entrance into Ohlapel proper was through a gate of columnar basalt pilings that was itself named Ohlapel. Proceeding up the hill by the path used today to enter Ohlapel, one encounters Alepowe, the site where the installation of a new Soukisenleng took place. Farther up Ohlapel is Palehr, where Soukisenleng and his priests prayed to their deities and carried out the *pwung en Wone*, an extended ceremony designed to ensure the bounty of the land and sea. Below Palehr is a piece of land called Doleni that holds a large walled enclosure where Soukisenleng's priests (*samworo*) are said to be buried. The surviving histories of these priests of Soukisenleng are sketchy. We know that they were drawn initially from the subclan of the Dipwinmen known as Opwtenpeine. Later, members of a second subclan, the Inanwaias, replaced the more senior line. Later still, members from other subclans of the Dipwinmen served as *samworo*. We know that chief among these priests was Saum en Leng, whose responsibilities included oversight of the burials (*lulung*) at Doleni. Saum en Leng also maintained the

Pohr en Sed, a basalt-lined well or channel that contained saltwater from the sea and that may have provided the avenue by which the eel god Ilake reached Ohlapel.

The histories of Onohnleng make mention of the Saudeleurs, who attempted to control much of Pohnpei from their megalithic complex of human-made islets at Nan Madol, located just off the southeastern coast of Pohnpei and in an area known then as Deleur. Nan Madol and Deleur are now a part of the current chiefdom of Madolenihmw. Some of the stone ruins in Wone or Onohnleng resemble closely the architecture of Nan Madol, suggesting contact and exchange if not political influence. Onohnleng under Soukisenleng seems to have existed, however, as a largely autonomous entity during the time of the Saudeleurs. Local histories suggest that Soukisenleng, as the chief of one of the island's major valleys, played a significant role in the establishment of a new political order for the island after the fall of Nan Madol to the local demigod Isohkelekel.

Many of the histories of Onohnleng and the larger island mention the fear, anxiety, and threat of violence that people felt before, during, and after the collapse of Nan Madol. Such was the sense of danger that men used coconuts as pillows for their head to keep them from sleeping too soundly. People also placed loose rocks at the entrances to their dwellings so that the approach of intruders at night could be heard when they stepped upon the makeshift alarm. In the absence of an overriding power, different areas of the island struggled with each other over territory, resources, and political and ritual preeminence. Madolenihmw and Onohnleng engaged in a series of wars, the most remembered of which occurred at a place in Wone called Nahndolenpahnais. This was the site of a cliff-top fortress that guarded the interior borders of Onohnleng and the richer, more fertile lands in Soukisenleng's lower domain.

The capture of the fortress by warriors from Madolenihmw put Soukisenleng's rule in serious jeopardy. Efforts to recapture the fortress by different clan groups from within Onohnleng all failed. Faced with final defeat, Soukisenleng turned to a subclan of the Dipwinmen who dwelled in the *kouspaw* of Onohnleng called Rehntu but who lived largely outside of his control. These were the Dipwinmen Lisermwudok, known for their bravery, fighting skills, and uncultured ways. They received Soukisenleng's urgent summons to battle shortly after returning from a fishing expedition and when their catch had just been

placed in a closed rock oven to cook. With no time to wait, the oven (uhmw) was ordered opened. Though the fish was still quite raw, the members of the Dipwinmen Lisermwudok each ate a scale and then proceeded to battle. From this hurried meal came the phrase "*lou en Dipwinmen*," or "cooked well enough for the Dipwinmen." Recapturing the fortress through its most narrow and protected gate, the Dipwinmen Lisermwudok were able to save Onohnleng. The phrase "*Wone sohte lohdi*," or "Wone has never been conquered," commemorates this feat and carries with it the ring of an enduring pride and independence.²⁰

It is difficult to sequence the wars fought by Onohnleng. It seems, though, that with its eastern borders secured and with the fall of the Saudeleurs at Nan Madol, Onohnleng looked to expand its influence over areas to the west. A war in defense of Dipwinmen clanmates in the area called Kapihleng, or Kiti, brought much of the west of the island under Soukisenleng's control. Eventually, there emerged a *wehi* (chiefdom) called Kiti and governed by the Dipwinmen and their allies, the Lipitahn. There developed two lines of titles, with the senior or paramount title being that of Nahnmwarki and belonging to Soukisenleng. While the Nahnmwarki and his line of titles tended to more ritual matters, the Lipitahn clan, through marriage alliances with the Dipwinmen, occupied a second line of titles whose focus was more administrative. The leading title in this line was that of Nahnken. The holder of this title was theoretically, sometimes in actuality, the son of the Nahnmwarki. Despite the separation of functions, the administrative requirements of this expanded domain brought Soukisenleng, now the Nahnmwarki of Kiti, into the realm of politics and from the sacred hill that was Ohlapel to the Wone flatland, more particularly Alenieng. Good parts of Wone or Onohnleng's more recent history can be read in the ruins or remains of this site. It may be that this change in the physical locus of power led to the ascendancy of the name Wone over that of Onohnleng.

The placement at Palehr of a large rock, Oneros, meaning "closed to Wone," brought formal closure to Ohlapel's prominence as a place of ritual power. At Alenieng, the erection or placement of another large rock, Onedo, or "Wone comes here," signaled the establishment of a more secular seat of power and over a considerably expanded domain that now stretched as far west and north as Pehleng. What prompted the choice of Alenieng as the new seat of political and ritual power is

unclear. The word itself translates as "path of the wind," suggesting that it was a central, physically comfortable site for its chiefly occupants, attendants, and the large and important gatherings that took place there.

The remains of feasting houses, secondary structures, a well, stone altar, sunken graves, smaller residences, foreign-style houses, and Christian churches can be found on the site. The most prominent of Alenieng's many surviving features is the remains of a *nahs* (feasting house) named Ngohlehu. A large, u-shaped structure with a wide front platform and raised sides, Ngohlehu was remarkable for its length, its design, and its political statement. Representative of a style of *nahs* called *koupahleng* that appeared with the fall of the Saudeleurs and the establishment of a more localized chiefly system, Ngohlehu's roof was eleven *ngap* (arm spans) in length. The arm span served as a varying measurement of length and was usually determined for a particular project by the largest male in the building party. The name itself, Ngohlehu, is the number eleven in a counting system used to specify the length of objects. The last Nahnmwarki or Soukisenleng to use Ngohlehu was Hezekiah, or Ejikaia. He and, later, two of his family members were entombed in a separate, walled structure built just in front and to the right of the forward central platform. The transformation of the *nahs* into a burial site ended its public use and induced succeeding Nahnmwarki to build their own separate feasting and dwelling structures at Alenieng. Prior to Ejikaia's internment in the center of Ngohlehu, the holders of the title of Soukisenleng were usually buried at a place called Naneseniak in lower Ohlapel. Changes in the location of burial sites as well as tomb styles, then, provide a history of the changing character and locus of power in Onohnleng.

The arrival of people from places Pohnpeians called *wai* contributed to the secularization of Onohnleng's polity. Euro-Americans brought with them a host of ideas, technologies, practices, and material goods that deeply affected life on the island and in Onohnleng. The harbor at Mwudok was a major point of call for British and American whaling vessels seeking respite and provisions; trading vessels stopped there as well, though not with the frequency of visits at more popular harbors such as Rohnkiti along the west coast of the island. Congregationalist missionaries sent by the Boston-based American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions reached the island in 1852 and, over time, established several mission stations at various locations. Wone

proved resistant and unwelcoming, a posture the missionaries understood as resulting from the influence of disreputable foreigners on the Nahnmwarki.

Death, however, showed itself the most powerful and devastating source of change. The whale ship *Delta* out of Honolulu brought smallpox to the island in 1854. The disease ravaged all of Pohnpei, taking about half of the island's population. Given its proximity to Mwudok, Wone was particularly hard hit. The priestly line that attended to Soukisenleng and the spiritual needs of Onohnleng all but perished. The Dipwinmen Lisermwudok, the sub clan that had preserved Soukisenleng's power by recapturing the fortress at Nahndolenpahnaais, suffered tremendous losses as well. Subsequent epidemics of dysentery and influenza over the next decades decimated the population further.

The religious and political struggles now affecting the entire island showed themselves in pronounced physical relief at Alenieng. Nahnmwarki Ejikaia converted to Protestantism and permitted the construction of a Protestant church at Alenieng. His successor, Mensila, was distrustful of the Protestant Church and the way it was embraced by his rivals in other parts of Kiti. Mensila turned to Catholicism and the Spanish colonial presence as a counter to the Protestantism of his enemies. He allowed his son to be baptized in 1889; he himself became a Catholic in 1897, taking the Christian name of Miguel, or Mikel.

At the eastern end of Alenieng on a spot called Kehpin Kehl, Nahnmwarki Mikel authorized the construction of the first Catholic church in Wone. Today, all that remains of this structure are the basalt steps and part of a wall. In 1889, Mikel permitted the Spaniards to build a fort at Pohnenginsapw, also at Alenieng. An octagonal free-standing wall made of columnar basalt and clay fill, topped with a wooden fence, enclosed the fort, its large central building, and associated smaller structures; the fort had three separate entrances and was surrounded by a rock-lined ditch. The circumferential road built by the Spaniards led right up to the fort entrance. The fort itself was only about sixty feet from the Protestant church at Alenieng. The noise and activity at the nearby fort made it difficult to conduct services at the Protestant church. The situation only exacerbated the tensions between the two churches and the rival factions that supported them. Perhaps the Spanish presence also affected Nahnmwarki Mikel's sense of architecture. At Alenieng, Nahnmwarki Mikel built his own foreign-style house

(*imwentwai*); the foundations of Nahnmwarki Mikel's *nahs*, referred to as Nabs en Kalangiso, are also found there.

Alenieng, around which the struggles for power in larger Kiti took place, declined after the departure of the Spaniards from the island in 1899. It now became the site for a succession of Protestant churches and related buildings as Mikel's successor, Pol, sided with the Protestant faction; the Catholic church was moved first to Rohi and then to Pohrasapw, nearer the center of the Wone flatland. Nahnmwarki Pol himself spent most of his time on Dolotik, a reef island off central Kiti, and had built for himself at Alenieng a smaller, more temporary dwelling classified as a *nasepwehl* and named Imwentakai. This modest structure bore witness to the distance, distractions, and general disturbance that were eroding Wone's political and cultural preeminence. The death of Pol also marked a change in the Dipwinmen subclan that held the title of Nahnmwarki. A member of the Dipwinmen Lipohnrahleng, Sigismundo, Pol's successor, left Alenieng altogether for Enipein, an area of land on Wone's western border. The decline of Ohlapel and the abandonment of Alenieng marked the end of Onohnleng or Wone as a site of government and power. The dynamics of Onohnleng's decline, then, have to do with the complex interplay of forces that involved foreign beliefs, practices, and disease as well as local marriages, alliances, rivalries, and the ebb and flow of clan and subclan fortunes. Rebellion, world war, physical hardship, material impoverishment, and the self-serving policies of three separate colonial regimes would affect life in Wone over the course of the twentieth century. These, however, are histories for another time.

LOCAL HISTORIES OF PLACE/GLOBAL DESIGNS²¹

I realize that my summary overview of Wone's more distant past runs the risk of seeming yet another timeless, romanticized narrative that argues for the worth and viability of local histories over more national or even global forms. My purpose, however, has been to underscore the persisting and vibrant relationship between place and history on Pohnpei and, by extrapolation, larger Oceania. The importance of place has been of prime concern to geographers and ethnographers in recent decades. Anne Buttimer understands place as an integral part of a larger *lebenswelt* (lifeworld) that is constituted by relatively stable asso-

ciations, by relatively known and shared histories, and by collectively traversed and recognizable spaces that are imbued with meaning and histories.²² Margaret Rodman adds that places are not inert or neutral, but marked and defined by associations and memories that are emotional, spiritual, and experiential.²³

The creation of place is also about the making of history. Arjun Appadurai reminds us that the production of locality, meaning the attachment and sense of identity that results from the transformation of space into place through socioeconomic activity, is not simply a matter of engaging the physical environment.²⁴ Space and time are themselves socialized through complex and deliberate human practices that include work, performance, ritual, and remembering. The transformation of space into place necessitates, then, a conscious moment that may come to be remembered or commemorated in a form of historical expression that itself changes and multiplies over time. Histories of place, then, not only mark events, occurrences, or individuals, but are reflective of changing contexts, priorities, interpretations, and competing versions.

All of this is not to deny the affected nature of place in an increasingly fluid and mobile world characterized by the expansion of global capital, the consequent flow of ideas, technologies, consumer goods, and cultural practices, and intensified movement and migration. Modernity, colonialism, and development, however, are not the only historical challenges to the construction of locality. The retention of local histories becomes an increasing struggle in light of the hierarchical pressures imposed by the rise of the nation-state, the increasing disjuncture between territory, subjectivity, and collective social movement, and the steady erosion of locality due to the forces and forms of electronic mediation. In light of these changes, Doreen Massey seeks to dissociate the idea of place from nostalgic yearnings and simple, self-contained, and timeless histories.²⁵ The identity of place is no longer exclusive but has become unfixed, contested, and multiple. Places are not defined by physical boundaries or borders but have links and connections with other areas that make places porous and open.

Massey's contention might seem to diminish or at least significantly alter local histories that are grounded in place. Arif Dirlik writes, however, that with the attenuation of nation-states' roles in mediating between capital and place, places have recaptured a special prominence at a moment when globalization seems to have acquired hegemonic

status in locations of power.²⁶ Dirlik employs the concept of groundedness to argue that an affirmation of place as specific, defined, and bordered does not assume immutable fixity; an affirmation of place does not close out the extralocal.²⁷ Rather, groundedness implies control from within over the conduct and organization of everyday life and against those faceless abstractions that include capital, globalization, and the nation-state.²⁸ Even someone as skeptical of Pohnpei's histories as Glenn Petersen²⁹ finds in the island's foundational accounts a general, if ambivalent, sense of connection and interaction with a larger world and an assertion as to the primacy of Pohnpeians in the making of their land and their history. There is, however, an asymmetry in all discussions concerning the global and the local, an asymmetry that subordinates the local to the global. The reassertion of place against the universalizing pressures of global capitalism is important. For all its complexities, placed-based imagination—and by extension place-based histories—enables a critique of power that is thoroughly radical in its questioning of the fundamentals of life and knowledge that inform contemporary existence.³⁰

I return to the phrase "*Wone sohte lohdi*," "Wone has never been conquered." In addition to its event-specific association, there is, I think, a historiographical resistance or defiance in this statement that speaks both to the continued importance of place in the doing of history and to the distinctiveness of different places and their histories. In short, there are many places on Pohnpei, each with their own varied and surviving histories. Despite persisting skepticism in the academy, there are voices that speak their histories from places on the other side of the beach. Whether or not these voices are heard is another, extremely important matter. Lata Mani writes that Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's question, "Can the Subaltern Speak?" forecloses too quickly on a set of issues involving voice, agency, audience, and medium.³¹ I think the dismissal, denial, or evasion of local, place-based histories invites a similarly premature foreclosure. It might well be that local place-based histories fail to satisfy the criteria and criticism of academic or scholarly histories, nationalist agendas, or post-colonial critiques. My strong suspicion is that, however touched or affected they reach us, local place-based histories still reflect critical and fundamentally distinct understandings of the past not easily recognized or accommodated by more foreign practices and concerns. We run the risk, then, of being like Fedor Lütke standing on the deck of the *Senyavin*, unable or unwilling

to acknowledge the histories of the places before us—histories whose material artifacts may lie overgrown but not necessarily lost or forgotten in the weeds.

Notes

I am honored to be a part of this collection honoring the career of Prof. Robert C. Kiste and on the occasion of his retirement from the University of Hawai'i at Manoa's Center for Pacific Islands Studies. I can think of no other individual who has done as much to promote the cause of Pacific Islands studies, both in the region and beyond. I certainly owe him a great deal. Without his support and encouragement, I would not be in a position to teach and write history here at Manoa. I owe a debt of gratitude as well to Prof. Murray Chapman for his kind assistance in guiding me through some of the more recent writings from the field of cultural geography that have informed this piece. Finally, I wish to thank Mr. Julio Villazon, or Wasai Kiti, who inspired me to write about Wone's more distant past during his extended visit to Honolulu from October 2000 through November 2001. *Kalangan en kupwuwomwi*, Wasai.

1. My summary account of Lütke's encounter with Pohnpei is drawn from David Hanlon, *Upon a Stone Altar: A History of the Island of Pohnpei to 1890*, Pacific Islands Monograph Series no. 5 (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1988), 31-36; see also Fedor Lütke, *Voyage autour du monde exécuté par ordre de Sa Majesté l'empereur Nicolas Ier, sur la corvette le Sèniavine, dans les années 1826, 1827, 1828, et 1829 par Frédéric Lutké commandant de la expedition*, vol. 2 of 4 (Paris: Firmin Didot Freres, 1836), 3-31.

A copy of Lütke's account, along with that of the expedition's zoologist F. H. von Kittlitz, can also be found in Paul Hambruch, *Ergebnisse der Südsee Expedition, 1908-1910*, 2, B, 7. *Ponape*, vol. 1 of 3, ed. Georg Thilenius (Hamburg: Friederichsen, De Gruyter, 1932), 78-97.

2. Peter Hempenstall, "Atoll Diary," *Meanjin* 53.4 (summer 1994): 727.

3. Prasenjit Duara, *Rescuing History from the Nation: Questioning Narratives of Modern China* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995).

4. Greg Denning, *Islands and Beaches: Discourse on a Silent Land, Marquesas, 1774-1880* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1980), 42.

5. For an extended consideration of the nature and practice of history on Pohnpei, see David Hanlon, "The Path Back to Pohnsakar: Luelen Bernart, His Book and the Practice of History on Pohnpei," *Isla: A Journal of Micronesian Studies* 1.1 (Rainy season 1992): 13-36.

6. Richard J. Parmentier, *The Sacred Remains: Myth, History, and Polity in Belau* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 11-12.

7. The issue of sources in the doing of local history is a critical, indeed controversial, one. The anthropologist Glenn Petersen (*Lost in the Weeds: Theme and Variation in Pohnpei Political Mythology*, Occasional Paper no. 35 [Honolulu: Center for Pacific Islands Studies, University of Hawai'i, 1990]) has reviewed the corpus of transcribed foundational histories for Pohnpei. He concludes

from his examination that "no single source can be used to speak authoritatively about what happened in Pohnpei traditional history. We find the details of any event in any given account will be contradicted by details in some other account" (v). Petersen argues that, in general, "variation among the versions is so great that individual accounts and texts cannot be used to construct the past; there is much too little agreement among them for us to be sure that anything they describe actually took place" (1-2). Petersen reads these histories as charters for various practices and institutions and as cautions against the dangers of foreign control and centralization of power. He argues for a recognition of these divergent and competing histories rather than their reconciliation into a single, coherent metanarrative history of the island. His point is an important one.

I find myself in agreement with Petersen's cautions but much less comfortable with his reduction of Pohnpei's foundational histories to those decidedly political and contemporary themes allegedly prominent in all of these histories, namely the assertion of local autonomy and the search for good government. I am not at all convinced that Pohnpeians regard their histories as simply or even ultimately about these themes.

8. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, *In Other Worlds: Essays in Cultural Politics* (New York: Methuen, 1987).

9. Rufino Mauricio, "Peopling of Pohnpei Island: Migration, Dispersal and Settlement Themes in Clan Narratives," *Man and Culture in Oceania* 3 (1987): 47-72; Suzanne Falgout, *Master Part of Heaven: The Ethnohistory and Archaeology of Wene, Pohnpei, Eastern Caroline Islands*. Micronesian Archaeological Survey Report Series no. 22 (Saipan: Trust Territory Government Historic Preservation Office, 1987).

10. The historical usage and relationship of the names "Wone" and "Onohnleng" can be gleaned, perhaps, from their translation (Kenneth L. Rehag and Damian G. Sohl, *Ponapean-English Dictionary*, PALI Language Texts: Micronesia [Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1979], 18). *Wone*, sometimes rendered as *one*, and *onohn* are etymologically related and quite similar in meaning. One is the transitive form of the verb "to mend or repair"; *onohn* is the intransitive form, meaning "to be repaired or mended." *Leng*, or *lahng*, refers to heaven or the sky above. Onohnleng, the older name for Wone, refers to an earlier, divinely sanctioned and repaired or mended polity, with Soukisenleng being the principal intermediary between the earth and sky worlds. The use of the name Wone probably came later and most likely reflects the secularization of the area's power. For accounts of Onohnleng under Soukisenleng, see chapters 26, 27, 32, 46, 48, 50, 53, 55, 56, 58, 59, 60, 65, 74, 78, 83, and 84 of Luelen Bernart, *The Book of Luelen*, trans. and ed. John L. Fischer, Saul H. Riesenbergh, and Marjorie G. Whiting. Pacific History Series no. 8 (Canberra and Honolulu: Australian National University Press and University Press of Hawai'i, 1977).

11. Patrick Vinton Kirch, *On the Road of the Winds: An Archaeological History of the Pacific before European Contact* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 178.

12. Mauricio, "Peopling of Pohnpei Island," 67.

13. Ibid., 52.

14. Ibid., 62.

15. The histories of Pohnpei's surviving eighteen clans are complex, often vague, and sometimes deeply intertwined. Mauricio ("Peopling of Pohnpei Island") speculates that the Soun Eir and Dipwinmen clans may have "formed a single unit in the past" (61). Over time, this single social unit split with the Dipwinmen, emerging as a distinct and separate clan identity.

16. Mauricio, "Peopling of Pohnpei Island," 51.

17. J. Stephen Athens, *Archaeological Investigations at Nan Madol: Islet Maps and Artifacts* (Guam: Pacific Studies Institute, 1980); William S. Ayres, "Archaeology at Nan Madol, Ponape," *Bulletin of the Indo-Pacific Prehistory Association* 4(1983):135-142; William S. Ayres and Alan E. Haun, *Ponape Settlement Archaeology: Interim Report 77-2*. Submitted to the Ponape State Historic Preservation Program, Micronesian Archaeological Survey (Saipan: Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, 1980); William S. Ayres, Alan E. Haun, and Rufino Mauricio, *Nan Madol Archaeology: 1981 Survey and Excavations*. Submitted by the Pacific Studies Institute, Guam, to the Historic Preservation Committee, Ponape State, Federated States of Micronesia, and the Historic Preservation Program, Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, Saipan, 1983; Joyce E. Bath, *Sahpwatakai: Archaeological Survey and Testing*. Micronesian Archaeology Survey Report no. 14 (Saipan: Trust Territory Historic Preservation Office, 1984).

18. I rely on Falgout, *Master Part of Heaven*, to present this overview of Wone or Onohnleng's history. In some instances, my spelling differs from hers. I prefer "Wone" rather than "Wene"; "Onohnleng" in place of "Ononleng"; "Soukisenleng" to "Soukiseleng"; "Ohlapel" instead of "Olapel"; and "Alenieng" over "Aleniang."

19. Falgout (*Master Part of Heaven*, 5) translates Soukiseleng as "Master Part of Heaven." The English equivalent of Mauricio's ("Peopling of Pohnpei Island," 62) spelling, Soukisehnle, is "Master From Heaven" or "Master Born of Heaven." While preferring the latter two translations, I rely on the orthographic guidelines found in Reh and Sohl's *Ponapean-English Dictionary* for the spelling I employ, Soukisenleng. The Pohnpeian language continues to resist orthographic standardization; this is a particular challenge for translation from Pohnpeian into English, especially for the translation of older texts or writings where Pohnpeian spellings can vary significantly. The slightest variation in spelling can have dramatic effect on the meaning of a word.

20. Falgout (*Master Part of Heaven*, 37) translates lohdi as "surrendered." Following Reh and Sohl (*Ponapean-English Dictionary*, 53), I take lohdi in this instance to mean "conquered."

21. I am playing here on the title of Walter Mignolo's recent work, *Local Designs/Global Histories: Coloniality, Subaltern Knowledges, and Border Thinking*, Princeton Studies in Culture/Power/History (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2000). Mignolo argues, among other things, for an attention to local or subaltern histories generated in colonial borderlands and as a response to the conditions of coloniality. The local histories that I revisit in this essay have traveled across borderlands but are the products of times and places

before the advent of colonialism. These histories, then, have histories of their own that predate the presence of different colonialisms on Pohnpei.

22. Anne Buttner, "Grasping the Dynamism of the Lifeworld," *Geographical Review* 66.2 (1976):277-282.

23. Margaret C. Rodman, "Empowering Place: Multilocality and Multivocality," *American Anthropologist* 94.3 (September 1992):640-656.

24. Arjun Appadurai, "The Production of Locality," in *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization*. Public Worlds vol. 1 (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), 178-199.

25. Doreen Massey, *Space, Place, and Gender* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994).

26. Arif Dirlik, "Place-Based Imagination: Globalism and the Politics of Place," in Roxann Prazniak and Arif Dirlik, eds., *Places and Politics in the Age of Globalization* (Lanham, Md.: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2001), 34.

27. Ibid., 22.

28. Ibid., 41.

29. Petersen, *Lost in the Weeds*, 10.

30. Dirlik, "Place-Based Imagination," 41.

31. Lata Mani, *Contentious Traditions: The Debate on Sati in Colonial India* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 159.