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RAMARUI, AGUSTA and MELII K. TEMAEL. 2000. *Kerresel a klechibelau: Tekoi er a Belau me a omesodel:Palauan language lexicon*. Koror, Palau: Belau National Museum. xv + 518 pp. ISBN: 9-82904101-8. US$36.00, Cloth.

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What can you say about a dictionary? It has words and it has definitions and information about the language and usage. This particular Palauan dictionary has 13,791 entries in 581 pages, and is beautifully hardbound with traditional Palauan illustrations. It is the kind of book that people will treasure. And since it was published by the Belau National Museum in relatively small numbers, its sturdy construction and heavy paper will make it last until it is printed again sometime in the distant future.

This is no ordinary dictionary. It is so much more than its description would indicate, for it is the first monolingual Palauan-to-Palauan dictionary compiled by two Palauan educators. In other words, it was written by Palauans for Palauan speakers. Its publication comes after more than fifty years of effort by many people to document the lexicon of this language. In Early's (2004:1, 2, 12) survey of monolingual dictionary work in the Pacific, he stated that although there is substantial ongoing work towards the development of monolingual dictionaries in the Pacific, none has yet appeared. However, with the publication of this dictionary, that situation no longer holds.

The dictionary entries, written in the orthography used in most educational materials, do not contain many of the facts about the language that the Palauan-English-Palauan dictionary does. For example, it does not identify the many loanwords found throughout: such as Japanese *katsudo* 'movie' and *dengki* 'electricity', or German *mak* 'dollar', or Spanish *ikelesia* 'church'. Since these words have been in the lexicon for some time, most Palauan speakers presumably do not recognize them as borrowings. In cases like these, it seems best to defer to the Palauan authors as to how much information to include in each entry.

The entries typically contain a headword and for multisyllabic words, the primary stress, followed by a short definition and in some cases an example or two of its use.

bilis (*bil`is*) billis a ta er a bedengel a eua a ochil el charm.
'dog' 'dog is a four-legged animal.'

cholebed (*cho`lebed*) cholebed a mengelebed.
'hit' 'hit (perfective) means hitting.'

cholebedii (*cholebed`ii*) cholebedii a mengelebed er ngii.
'hit it' 'hit it (perfective) means hitting it (completely).'

Palauan is a morphologically complex language, which in some instances is reflected in a separate entry. For example, a verb with perfective marker as in *cholebed* 'hit' and *cholebedii* 'hit completely' are entered separately. Other morphemes, such as the plural marker for humans, *re-*, as in *re-chad* 'people', do not appear in separate words. The authors have decided that some of these morphemes need to be shown in words with separate entries and others do not. Since they have made these judgments, I defer to their native speakers' intuition.

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This first monolingual dictionary in the Pacific was the result of many years of dedicated work by a number of people in and outside Palau. Fr. Edwin McManus, a Jesuit priest who spent many years in the municipality of Ngeraard in the Palau Islands, developed, mimeographed, and distributed various versions of his *Word list and grammar notes—Palauan-English and English-Palauan* from 1955 until just before his death in 1969. It was a work of love, typed on a very old, rusty manual typewriter on messy mimeograph masters. I received my own copy when recruited as a contract ESL teacher in Ngeraard in 1964. As an outsider, I found it essential in my study of the language. At the same time, the Palauan teachers in my school also found it useful in their study of English.

Before his death, Fr. McManus realized that his dictionary should be published, but before that, it needed extensive revision. With this in mind, he consulted with Clayton Carlson of the University of Hawai'i in order to develop a more linguistically sound orthography and to revise the grammar notes. The revised work was sent to Georgetown University, where it was prepared for publication. Fr. McManus died before the dictionary could be published, and the work was set aside (Josephs 1990:ix–xvii). In 1973, Lewis Josephs, a linguist at the University of Hawai'i, undertook the revision of the McManus dictionary with the support of the Pacific and Asian Linguistics Institute, whose director was Donald M. Topping. The result of this work was the 1977 revision of Fr. McManus's Palauan-English dictionary, edited by Lewis Josephs et al. This revision reflected the work done by the Palau Orthography Committee, and was still a Palauan-to-English and English-to-Palauan work.

In time it was recognized that a further revision to the 1977 dictionary was needed. Once again, Lewis Josephs undertook a complete revision, resulting in the 1990 *New Palauan-English dictionary*. This dictionary contained many new entries, information about the orthography, and a more extensive discussion of the language structure. This is an excellent source for any English language speaker to use to find definitions of Palauan words in English. It is also very useful for the Palauan speaker who is looking for Palauan definitions of English words. However, for those Palauan speakers who wish to, or simply need to, search for the meaning of a Palauan word through the medium of Palauan, there was no such dictionary—that is, until the present dictionary was developed and published.

Because this dictionary is written entirely in Palauan, it represents an important milestone in the development of the Palauan language as a medium of broad communicative and educational use. No longer will it be necessary for Palauan students and other speakers of Palauan to know English in order to access definitions of Palauan words. This is an issue of accessibility and, in my opinion, evidence that speakers of Palauan are working to maintain the language as a viable medium of education and wider communication.

In my review of Josephs's *Handbook of Palauan grammar* (Gibson 1999:439), I asserted that "The ideal textbook [for Palauan students] … would be one written in the Palauan language, with all explanations in Palauan, and with a glossary of terms in Palauan." This dictionary meets this ideal for Palauan students.

Finally, in addition to its educational value, the monolingual Palauan dictionary can be seen as a significant building block for fostering and maintaining the use of the language for education and a medium for wider communication. Of course, texts alone will not guarantee that this language will survive the onslaught of the English language. However, so long as Palauan speakers are dedicated enough to undertake such work on the language,

the signs are positive for the health of the language. That Palauan speakers take the vitality and use of the language seriously can be seen by a bill just passed by the Palauan Senate (SB 7–79 SDI) on May 10, 2007 (*Marianas Variety*: 2007). This bill "... is an effort to protect verbal and written Palauan language and grammar from further degradation due to the popularity of English and other languages among the younger Palauans." For those who are concerned about language endangerment or loss, this monolingual dictionary represents more than a glimmer of hope.

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