

gins, some of its mysteries, and the early recording of its cultural use in Palau. Although *udoud* has little material value, it has tremendous cultural value, and it is still an important part of Palauan society.

Some Palauans are seeking ways to regain some of the Palauan money from museum collections in Europe, and especially in Germany. Because the *udoud* is still extensively used in Palau, and because Palauan individuals seek to obtain it, it is not imagined that European museums will consent to returning any of it very soon. The pieces which are currently on display in the Palau museum are facsimiles, not genuine articles. They are made of fungus.

Counterfeit *udoud* may be a serious problem in the future and cause a dwindling of traditional cultural use. However, there are enough pieces now to have caused the *belung* of Koror, to join with other *mechas ra Belau* to formulate "rules" for the wearing of *udoud*, and to promulgate the rules and call for fines to be paid by those violating the rules.

This suggests that *udoud's* position in the Palauan society and culture is still very strong and will continue to be such in the immediate future.

## Bibliography

- Kubary, J. S., "Ueber das Einheimische Geld auf der Insel Yap und auf den Palau Inseln," *Ethnographische Beiträe zur Kenntnis des Karolinen Archipels*, Leiden, 1889, 23–4. Translation by Mark L. Berg.
- Kubary, J. S., "Das Palau-Geld," *Journal des Museum Godeffroy*, Hamburg, 1873, 50. Translation by Mark L. Berg.
- Robert E. Ritzenthaler, *Native Money of Palau*, Milwaukee Public Museum Publications in Anthropology, No.1, 1954.
- Yanaihara, Tadao, *Pacific Islands Under Japanese Mandate*, New York, Oxford University Press, 1940.

Kramer, Augustin, "Palau," in Thilenius, G., ed., *Ergebnisse der Sudsee Expedition, 1908–1910*, Hamburg, 1927.

Useem, John, *Report on Yap and Palau*, U.S. Commercial Company Economic Survey, Honolulu, October, 1946.

Beck, Horace C., *Notes on Sundry Asiatic Beads*, Man, Vol. 30, No. 134, 1930, p. 166–182.

Heine-Geldren, Robert, *Prehistoric Research in the Netherland Indies*, New York, Southeast Asia Institute, 1945.

Keate, George, *An Account of the Pelew Islands*, London, 1789.

Smith, Vincent A., *The Oxford History of India*, 3rd edition, Oxford, England, 1967.

Parmentier, Richard J., "Sacred Remains: An Historical Ethnography of Ngaremenglui, Palau," doctoral dissertation, University of Chicago, 1981.

Van Der Sleen, W. G. N., *Handbook on Beads*, Musee du Verre, Liege, 1967.

Kalingal, George, "Indians in Micronesia," *Politics in Micronesia*, University of the South Pacific, Institute of Pacific Studies, Fiji, 1981.

**FRANCESCA K. REMENGESAU** was born in 1937 in the Japanese League of Nations Mandate of Palau in the Western Caroline Islands. Following the Pacific War she was educated in the Palau public schools under the American Trusteeship administration, and then went to Guam to attend the George Washington High School. Subsequently, she went to America for her higher education and was graduated from California State University at Los Angeles in 1964.

Ms. Remengesau has worked in the government and private sectors, and is currently the director of the "New Beginnings II" program for alcohol and drug abuse education at the University of Guam.

In 1918, on his orders, a school in Ngaraard was burned. Temedad proposed to unite all Palauans against foreigners, and all these activities were attempts to assert a conception of the old order of Palau—a society that the Japanese sought to change.

Today Modekngei still survives, although in more constructive forms, and many Palauans are adherents.

## Counterfeit *Udoud*

Tourists can purchase counterfeit *udoud* at the Palau museum and in many of the gift shops in Koror. It is generally made of black or red coral, and costs anywhere from five to thirty-five dollars a piece, depending on its size. Palauans usually do not wear this type of counterfeit *udoud*. It is the tourists who buy it and wear it as jewelry outside of Palau, or simply keep it as a memento of their trip to the islands.

This counterfeit coral *udoud* is easily identifiable as counterfeit, and as far as is known, there has never been a problem of this type of counterfeit money being substituted for the genuine article.

However, there is more to the reality of counterfeit *udoud*. Recently in Koror, *udoud* was being used for a cultural purpose—an exchange between families—and three pieces were reportedly refused by one family as being “fake.” Unofficial and cursory investigations of this event have revealed that the *mechas* of Palau believe that there are many other pieces of counterfeit *udoud* around these days which can cause problems with regard to its current official cultural use.

Apparently the counterfeit *udoud* comes from Indonesia, especially Bali, where many people—including Palauans—travel for business and pleasure. Reportedly, one traveler arranged to have an artisan in Bali manufacture a number of pieces of *udoud* which were then taken to Palau to be introduced as real Palauan money for cultural uses.

There are also reported counterfeit pieces being made as far back as German times. This was probably because the Germans collected the *udoud* in fines for various purposes, especially in the beginning period of their administration when Reich marks were not sufficiently in circulation in Palau.

Even today, Germany has the largest collections of *udoud* in their museums, and this is because many German officials, missionaries, and public officials who returned from the islands with *udoud* as souvenirs later donated it to the museum. The museums also bought piece for their collections.

In a situation where *udoud* was being collected as fines from the Palauan, it is not far-fetched to imagine that some enterprising Palauans would manufacture counterfeit pieces to give to unsuspecting Germans officials. But, if the practice of counterfeiting *udoud* is today being used by Palauans on other Palauans, then we have a possible new situation which could have serious cultural implications.

Genuine Palauan money may have certain physical characteristics which distinguish it from false money. But these are unknown now with any precision. A scientific survey and examination of all extant pieces would have to be made to begin to formulate scientific baseline data to physically identify genuine *udoud*. This may not be an impossible task, but it is surely impractical.

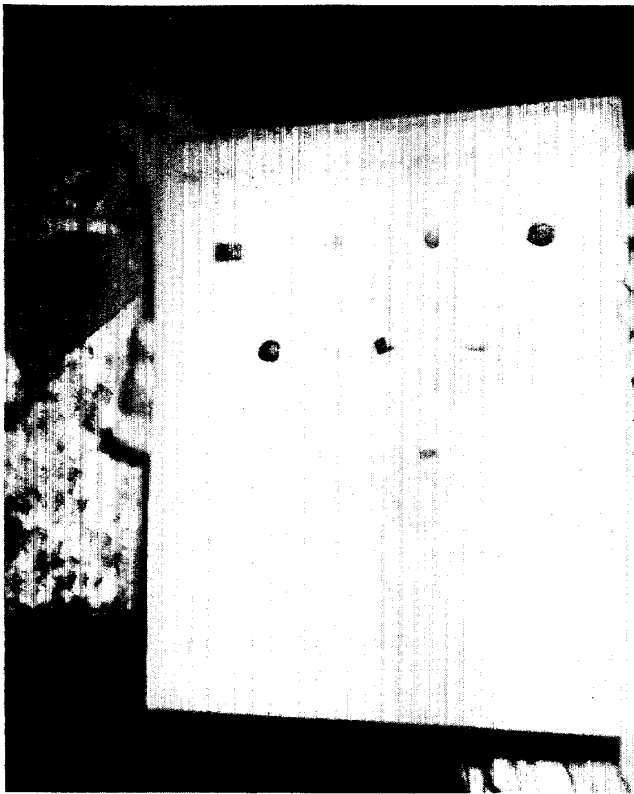
Another thing which distinguishes real money from counterfeit is the cultural story that is attached to each piece. There are *mechas* in Palau who supposedly know all the pieces and keep a sort of inventory in their minds. When *udoud* is exchanged in cultural practices, if the stories are dubious or incorrect, this may be one way of rooting-out counterfeit pieces.

Here again, there are many problems associated with devising a system of validating genuineness through testimony and corroboration of stories, and it is probably only a little less practical in doing it this way than in doing it by devising physical means of identification.

Clearly, this is a potential problem for Palau which may be worsening as time passes. The matter of counterfeit *udoud* and its identification needs to be much more carefully and completely investigated.

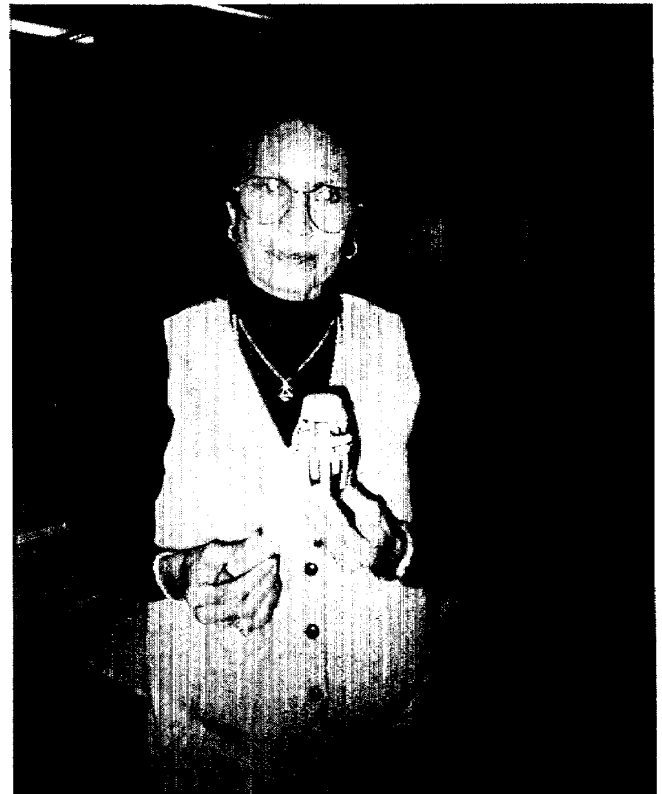
## Conclusion and Future Use of *Udoud*

I have attempted here a comprehensive and rather exhaustive explanation of the Palauan *udoud*, its ori-



**Palauan *udoud* gathered by Germans about 100 years ago in Palau. Now in the collections at the Ethnology Museum in Leipzig, Germany.**

Photo: Dirk A. Ballendorf.



**Author Francesca Remengesau holding an inlaid Palauan money jar from the Henry Wilson Collection at the British Museum, London.** Photo: Dirk A. Ballendorf

has to do with the fact that it has come from outside.

The establishment of the origin of *udoud* with greater certainty then, will not only increase the value of the present pieces, it will also renew the waning cultural interest in the use of *udoud* for traditional purposes, and thus strengthen the cultural identity of Palauans everywhere.

Moses Sam, director of the Palau Office of Historic Preservation, has commented that "the younger people of today want to know where the money comes from. This will not diminish its value, it will instead heighten the Palauans' sensitivity to their cultural traditions." (29 May 1988, Koror).

### **The Palau Modekngai and *Udoud***

Modekngai is a religion in Palau, founded in the early 1900s by a man named Temedad from the village of A'ol. Modekngai means "to bring them together" referring to both the ancestral spirits and the Palauan people. Religious authority is derived from the ancient Palauan god, Ngiromokuul. Modekngai began as a

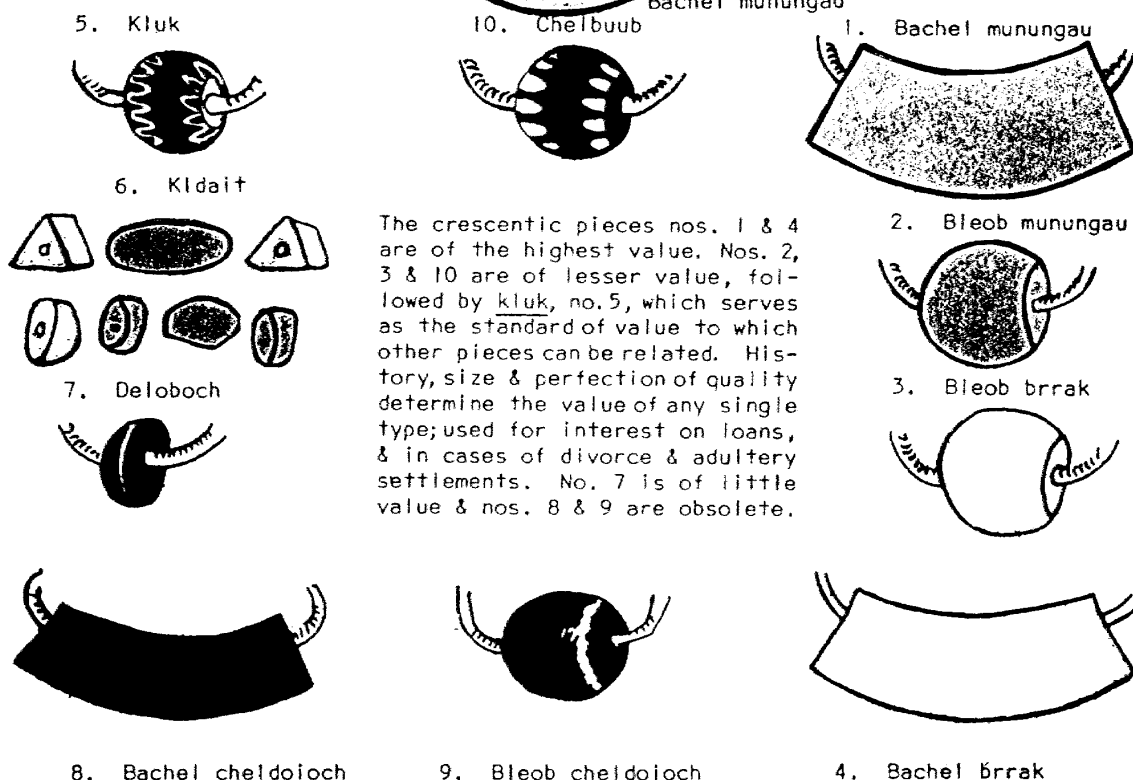
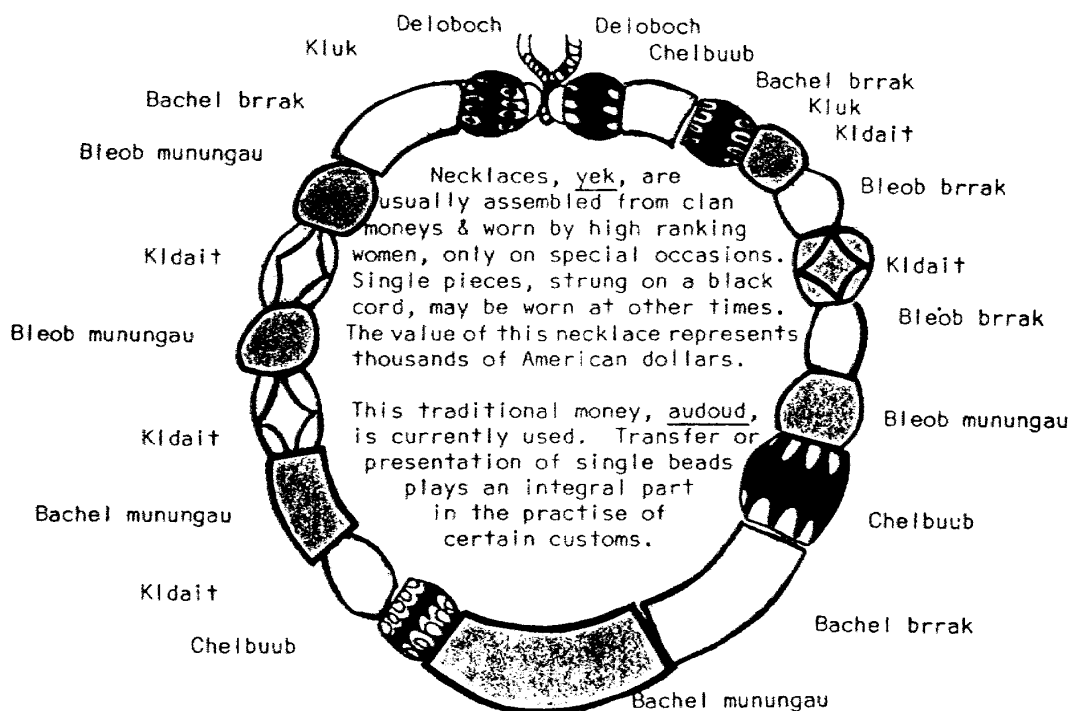
political movement as well as a religious doctrine, and it was always anti-foreign.

Temedad began his preachings at the end of the German administration and continued on into the Japanese period. He was thought to have occult powers through the performance of various feats and the experiencing of strange occurrences.

In 1916 Temedad had what was probably an epileptic seizure and communicated with Ngiromokuul, whom he claimed empowered him to dictate taboos. Subsequently, he declared that all traditional Palauan money was "contaminated" due to Japanese presence. Many brought their money to Temedad to be cleansed, for which he exacted a fee; some "unpurifiable" money he kept.

He soon gained prestige and considerable wealth. A'ol became the center of Modekngai authority, and people came to pay tribute. Temedad recalled old political rivalries, settled arguments, cast out demons, and reportedly raised one woman from the dead. Soon the Japanese hospital became unpopular and patients were brought to Temedad instead.

# PALAUAN MONEY



1788) both the glass and pottery money operating at that time. Augustin Kramer, a German anthropologist who visited Palau in 1908 suggested (Hamburg, 1927) that the Malayan peoples brought the *udoud* to Palau. Ritzenthaler (*Ibid.*, 1954) indicates that from the available evidence he has found, that Indonesian origins are the most likely for the *udoud* to have immediately come from.

However, the ultimate origin of many of these beads, especially the glass ones, remains in doubt. Beck (Milwaukee, 1930) in analyzing beads of the area says that a few seem to date from the Greek or Roman period, and a few are comparable to beads from South India and Malaysia.

Beck thinks that such beads were introduced into Indonesia from these other places in prehistoric times, and other investigators have supported this thesis (Heine-Geldren, New York, 1945).

### Historical Basis of the *Udoud*-India Linkages

There is no authentic political history of India previous to the expedition of Alexander the Great into the Punjab in 327 B.C. Seleucus, Alexander's successor in Syria (312–280 B.C.), maintained a limited authority in the Punjab and established relations with Chandragupta, ruler in the Ganges valley, whose dynasty established Buddhism in India.

This Greek influence left a deep mark upon the art and science of India. In the seventh and again in the eighth century, the Moslems invaded northern India, but they were driven out by the Hindus in 750 A.D.

Their great invasion, led by Sultan Mahmud of Ghazni, Turkish ruler of Afghanistan, occurred late in the tenth century. In the twelfth century the Afghan Moslems rose to power, and, about the beginning of the thirteenth century, Delhi became the Mohammedan capital of India.

In 1398 the great Mongol conqueror Tamerlane invaded India and in 1526 his descendant Baber established there the Mogol Empire which was enlarged and consolidated by Akbar the Great, 1556–1605, and which lasted until 1857. The consequence of these invasions is that India is peopled by widely diverse races speak-

ing 222 different languages, and practicing numerous art forms and innumerable religious rites. (Smith, Oxford, 1967)

In 1498 India was first visited by the Portuguese navigator Vasco da Gama, and from 1500 to 1600 the Portuguese enjoyed a monopoly of Indian trade, until they aroused a religious struggle of Christian against Moslem and their power declined. During this period, Indian glass beads which Portuguese used in trade could have found their way to Palau through the East Indies.

In the beginning of the 17th century the Dutch and English drove the Portuguese entirely from the field, and during the 17th century they were rivals, but gradually the Dutch withdrew from the mainland to the East Indian islands. The French, in the 18th century under Dupliex, secured great influence in southern India, but in 1761 with the loss of Pondicherry to the British, their power was broken. (Smith, *Ibid.*)

The British East India Company established the first English trading post at Surat in 1614, and they carried on trade for more than 100 years until the decay of the Mogol Empire necessitated military action in self-defense.

Subsequently, and until 1784 the East India Company managed the British control. In that year the administration of India was placed under a separate Secretary of State. It was in 1783 that the British East India Company packet *Antelope*, Captain Henry Wilson, ran aground in Palau and subsequently reported the existence of Palauan *udoud* (Keate, 1789, London).

### Current Usage of *Udoud*

Today, *udoud* have a strong influence on Palauan society and culture. This, despite the fact that no new *udoud* have been created or introduced in recent years, and that the pieces are not used to make actual purchases. *Udoud* are most often given as gifts at ceremonies for weddings, births, funerals, and newly-built houses (Parmentier, 1981). In terms of actual value, *udoud* can be worth from US\$100 to \$100,000.

Ritzenthaler reports (Milwaukee, 1954) that in 1948 there were some 2300 pieces in circulation. Trying to buy one today is virtually impossible. Originally and also today, a good deal of the value of the native money

to leave Ngeaur. Ardirgun took her leave from her stepparents saying, "I am pregnant. If you had cared for me until my time, all my insides would be money, and this would have been your property. Since it has turned out differently, you shall only have this much." At this she scratched her thick fingers and genuine Palauan money fell onto the ground. Afterwards the woman left and disappeared into the ocean with her mother.

This was how the family of Ucherbelau, the Matelgou, had become the richest in Palau at an early period. The second legend concerns Ngkeklaui, and is regarded as the most authoritative and the earliest of the four:

A fish carried on its back the land of Ngot, whose shore was covered with genuine Palauan money. In the same place lived the daughter and many redshank birds (snipes), who were her children.

One of these, an okak (whimbrel) known as Adalrok, visited Palau and came to Keklaui, the home of its grandmother. Here it began to break an *udoud* with its beak. The woman of the house, Narueleu, saw it, and when her son just returning from shark fishing, addressed the Adalrok, it announced its death and bid him look into its beak in which the money would be found.

In all, Keklaui obtained seventy pieces, all yellow money, and the family of Naruelau was the second wealthiest in Palau. Later the family became poor, and the money went over to the family Karman in the same region.

In the other article, Kubary mentions that the family of Karman still had the largest barrak, called adaltal a barrak (detail a barrak, "mother of barrak") which was of an indeterminately great value in the 1880s. This third legend concerns Ngcheangel (Kayangel) and its chief Rdechhor:

Ardahor (Rdechhor), chief of Kayangel, went fishing with his son and reaching the Kossol reef, fastened his canoe to a coral black, that was really a quill of the dorsal fin of the dukl fish (type of trigger fish), the spouse of the atomagay fish.

While the father and son slept, the dukl carried the canoe to the land of Nrot where the son awoke, disturbed by the rustling of the canoe on the beach. He

went ashore, gathered a basket full of the brightly colored stones on the beach and threw them at the numerous redshanks, so that only a few remained in the basket.

When the father awoke they found themselves again at the former place, and the father took the rest of the stones which proved to be *udoud*.

The last, and shortest legend, deals with a woman from Ngerchelongs:

Another story has it that Arakalon (Ngerchelongs) also obtained its money from an unknown country. The wife of the Iratey (Uong era Etel, the chief of Mengellang village) was put out on the reef because of her quarrelsomeness; here she was saved by a manerer (mengerenger, or sea snake) and was taken by it to a country from which she returned with *udoud*.

All these legends acknowledge that the origin of Palaun money was outside of Palau. Palauans in the 1870s and 1880s still believed in an island swimming about freely in the ocean dispensing money, Kubary tried to connect the source of the money with other islands in the region and with southeast Asia.

People in Yap said palauan money was used and known before the large aragonite discs came into fashion; many pieces of it are found in Yap even today, some with holes drilled for threads, some not. Kubary knew firsthand that the Yapese took such pieces to Palau to exchange for Palauan articles. Another circumstance connecting Palau and Yap, was that Keklaui was founded by the Yapese, and was the home of Palauan money inside Palau.

But, it is Kubary's contention that, although the Yapese played an important role in Palau at an early time (including the founding of the Idid clan in Koror, from which the Ibedul is chosen), the societies had grown so different by the late nineteenth century, that they had little in common besides names of people and places.

## External Origins of *Udoud*

The earliest recorded western visit to Palau was by the British Captain Henry Wilson, whose ship *Antelope* was wrecked there in 1783. Wilson reported (Keate,

He was told many secrets and admitted to many rite, all of which enabled him to study the customs of the people freely, as no one before him had been able to do.

In April 1872, Kubary climbed the highest mountain on Babeldaob—about 2,000 feet above sea level. He produced a very accurate map of Palau which was published in Hamburg in 1873, the original of which is today in the Hamburg Museum.

But the contributions of Kubary which I will dwell upon here are in the area of description and understanding of the traditional Palauan money, called *udoud*. Kubary discussed Palauan money at length in two separate articles. The first is “Die Palau-Inseln in der Suedsee,” in the *Journal der Museum Godeffroy*, Hamburg, 1873, where Palauan money is discussed under the heading: “Das Palau-Geld.”

Later, in a collection of five articles entitled “Ethnographische Beitrage zur Kenntnis des Karolinen Archipels” (Leiden, 1889–95), the lead article “Über das einheimische Geld auf der Insel Yap und auf den Palau-Inseln” (concerning the indigenous money of the island of Yap and in the Palau Islands”), deals at greater length with Palauan money.

Kubary presents four legends of how Palauans traditionally accounted for the origins of their money. The first tells of a bird that gave birth to a fish which in turn gave birth to a human young girl who lived in the village of Keklau, and upon maturity, scratched her fingers together and produced *udoud*.

The second tells of a bird who gave birth to a fish that carried a whole village on its back. In the village lived a woman who gave birth to birds. These birds spewed forth *udoud* from their beaks.

The third is about a man who was the chief of Kayangel—a small atoll to the north, off-shore, from the big island of Babeldaob. He and his son went fishing and tied his canoe to the dorsal fin of a large fish that pulled the canoe while the two men slept to a strange land where the *udoud* lay scattered on the beach, and the two collected it.

The fourth legends tells of a woman who was made to stay out on the reef because of her quarrelsomeness, and who was saved from being swept away by a sea snake which took her to a strange land from which she

returned with *udoud*.

These legends are interesting enough and short enough to be given here in longer form and detail so that a better flavor for Palauan legends can be gained. All their legends appear in both Kubary articles, but since the latter article (Leiden, 1889–95) presents them more briefly with greater detail and better spelling, this is the translation I have selected. I am using also the modern spellings of the Palauan words.

The legends claim that the money was brought into Palau at four different places: Ngkeklau village (Ngaraard) on the northwest coast of Babeldaob; Ngcheangel (Kayangel) Atoll; Ngeaur (Angaur) Island, and the peninsula of Ngerechelong, at the northern end of Babeldaob. The longest legend concerns Ngeaur and is given first:

The bird kiuid (starling) came from Ngerusar hamlet in Airai to Keklau, and drank water from a knothole of a bars tree. It became pregnant and bore a small fish that remained in a waterpouch in the bark of the tree until the people found it. Someone took it home in a shell, where it grew so quickly that as a result, it had to be placed in even larger shells until it occupied a large tridacnae shell; it finally had to be put out to sea as a young temekai (grouper), a large kind of serranus.

The dukl, a large balistes or trigger fish, was its spouse, and the large serranus that bore an entire country, Ngorot, on its back, from which it took its name, went to Ngeaur, where it born a young girl. The child was named Ardirgun, and she went ashore and played with the children of the island, where she was invited into the residence of Ucherbelau.

During the day the strange child played ashore, but went to the beach in the evening to go out to sea with her mother. But since the people had grown to love her they wanted to keep her, and with her mother's permission Ardirgun remained in the family of Ucherbelau until she became a woman. She grew so quickly and became so large, just as her mother had earlier in Keklau, that soon people were disgusted with her, so they built a separate house for her and threw food to her.

This treatment grieved the woman, and she complained to her mother of her sorrow, who advised her

do so, I secretly left the camp on 4 February 1863, and managed to escape across the border.”

Kubary stayed in Berlin with his uncle until the end of March 1863. Later, he returned to his high school in Warsaw and there met some of his former insurgent colleagues. But, the patriotic spirit and pressure of public feeling in Warsaw created such an atmosphere that Kubary decided for the second time to leave his native city.

He asked for an assignment in the civil organization of the insurrection, and at the end of May 1863 was made chief administrator of the Krakow Province, then a part of the Austrian Empire. Kubary was intrusted with important tasks such as making an inquiry into the confiscation of imported arms destined for the insurgents and seized by the Austrian authorities.

Subsequently, he was attached to the commissioner in the insurgent underground at Krakow, where he received an order to collect taxes, but in trying to accomplish this task he failed, and resigned.

In June 1864 Kubary returned to Warsaw, but continued to engage in political insurgency. His life was apparently a series of fits and starts with his medical studies and his political activities, and finally felt compelled to leave his family and abandon his university studies.

In March 1868 he went to Berlin and worked for a time in a stucco works. He next went to Hamburg and Altona where he continued to work in the building trade. In Hamburg he had the good fortune to visit the Godeffroy Museum which was dedicated to the natural history and ethnography of the South Seas.

In March 1869, the curators of the museum, Dr. J.D.E. Schmeltz, and Dr. R. Krause, introduced Kubary to Johann Cesar Godeffroy, the owner of the then famous trading company and museum bearing his name. Godeffroy was impressed by Kubary's intelligence and linguistic abilities and offered him a five year contract as a collector for the museum.

Kubary spent more than a year in Hamburg studying at the museum, and then set out aboard one of Godeffroy's ships, for the south seas. On 1 February 1871, Kubary arrived in Palau and took up residence in a *bai* at the invitation of one of the chiefs of Koror. In the weeks that followed he made expeditions around

Palau on the large island of Babeldaob and undertook to collect a number of artifacts and specimens.

Following a trip to some of the smaller islands a storm caused the loss of a valuable collection of natural history items. In general, Kubary got along well with the Palauans and was able to play the skillful role of diplomat in order to gain good opportunities and not antagonize others during his many visits to the numerous islands and villages of Palau.

Kubary's contributions to the European knowledge of 19th century Palau was considerable. The total number of birds he recorded in Palau came to 57 in the Godeffroy Museum's checklist of 1880. He found about 180 species of fish in Palauan waters, including three fresh water species in lake Ngardok.

Kubary collected a lot of mollusks and sea creatures on the reefs and lagoons; several were named after him, such as: the nudibranch *Nembrotha kubaryana*, a sea-cucumber *Holothuria kubaryi*, a stick insect the *Phybalosoma kubaryi*, and a crow, the *Corvus kubaryi*.

While on Palau, Kubary also gathered a few plants and helped to add at least thirteen native names to the local botanical index, and finally a collection of stones and rocks aided in the understanding of the geology of the islands.

All was not always easy for the young naturalist. In April 1871, in a letter to his mother, he said: "On 1 April, thank God, two years of my contrast have elapsed! I say Thank God . . . and I am also adding a request that the remaining time will pass quickly, or, what would be still better, that [Godeffroy] will release me as soon as possible. Here I am losing five of the best years of my life, am aging quickly, and for that [Godeffroy] pays me disgracefully. On several occasions here I have had several offers of quite different employment, but I have not wanted to accept, deceiving myself into believing that in the next letter from Herr Godeffroy I shall get a considerable improvement in my situation."

In January 1872 Palau was struck with an epidemic of influenza which took a heavy toll on the entire population, and did not spare the chiefs. Kubary, as a former student of medicine, successfully fought the epidemic, and this brought him great esteem as well as the confidence of the Palauans.



The fourth legend tells of a woman who was made to stay out on the reef because of her quarrelsomeness, and who was saved from being swept away by a sea snake which took her to a strange land from which she returned with *udoud*.

Robert E. Ritzenthaler, an American anthropologist with the CIMA project, described (Milwaukee, 1954) some other legends besides those described by Kubary, although similar. One told of a man-god from Melekeok who came into the community and produced *udoud* from his testicles.

Another, which Ritzenthaler thought was the most feasible of all the legends because it could be based on historical events, told of two Portuguese ships which came to Palau some 400 years ago and were wrecked on the reefs. The men cut up the cabin decorations and made *udoud* out of them to use for trading. The ships' officers were noblemen and intermarried with the Palauans to produce the two highest clans of Palau, the *wudis* and the *idid*.

All these legends acknowledge that the origin of Palauan money was outside of Palau. While Palauans in the 1880s and 1890s still believed in an island swimming about freely in the ocean dispensing money, Kubary tried to connect the sources of the money with other islands in the region and with southeastern Asia.

People on Yap said that Palauan money was used and known even before their own Yapese money of large stone discs came into fashion; many pieces of *udoud* are found in Yap, some with holes drilled for threads and some not.

Kubary knew firsthand that the Yapese often took such pieces to Palau to exchange for Palauan articles. Another circumstance connecting Palau and Yap was that one particular village in Palau called Keklau was founded by Yapese and was also the home of Palauan *udoud* inside Palau.

However, it was Kubary's contention that although the Yapese played an important role in Palau at an early time, the societies had grown so different by the end of the nineteenth century that they had little in common besides the names of people and places.

It was more probable that the people who introduced the *udoud* to Yap and Palau came from somewhere else and settled in both places and elsewhere. The Yapese

claimed they came from the north. Judging by the materials used to make the pieces of money (clay, glass, imitation pearls and porcelain), Kubary surmised the origin of the materials could not be the Carolines, but rather in some place with well-developed porcelain and glass industries; those are only found in Asia.

In concluding his article on Yapese and Palauan money (Leiden, 1889), he stated his belief that the materials had been brought by proto-Malayan peoples to the western Carolines.

## Kubary's Life and Connections with Micronesia

Johann Stanislaus Kubary has been such an important contributor to the early literature on Palauan *udoud*, that a more in depth look at the man and his life, especially in Micronesia, is important.

Kubary was born on 13 November 1846 in Warsaw, Poland. His father, Stanislaus, was butler to an Italian opera producer, Jan Quatrini, who well-known in Warsaw at the time.

Johann's mother, Telka (nee Schur), was a native of Berlin, but she had lived in Warsaw since childhood. Her husband died when Johann was six and later she married a Pole named Tomasz Marcinkiewicz, who was a shoe and bootmaker by trade. Marcinkiewicz owned a small footwear factory in Warsaw, and the family was quite settled. So, Johann was actually brought up by his stepfather who was active in Polish politics.

In January 1863, when Kubary was a student in the sixth form of high school, the uprising against Russian domination started in Poland. As a member of a patriotic organization, he joined the insurgents.

The rallying point for his unit was in a forest near the frontier of east Prussia. The group consisted of forty men, but their fighting equipment was completely inadequate and consisted of only two rifles, one double-barreled shotgun, and twenty converted scythes.

The rest of the volunteers were provided with wooden staves. Such a situation demoralized the young sixteen year old boy, and as he wrote to his mother: "... realizing that to wage a war in this manner invites only a beating, I proposed to my colleagues . . . to run away with me to Prussia. As they did not wish to

# TRADITIONAL UDLOUD OF PALAU: MYSTERIES, RECORDINGS, AND FUTURE USE

by

Francesca K. Remengesau

University of Guam

## Introduction

"*Udoud*" is the traditional money of Palau, and is unique in Micronesia. *Udoud* was first seriously investigated by the German ethnographer Johann Stanislaus Kubary. Except for Yap, where large aragonite stone discs are used for money, Palau's is the most highly developed and complex monetary system.

The money itself consists of polychrome and clear glass beads, and crescentic bar gorgets, and beads of pottery; all these are generically called *udoud*. The ceramic and glass prismatic pieces are called *bachel*, and the bead-like pieces are called *bleab*. Ceramic *udoud* is found in yellow, red, or orange varieties; the glass beads come in a wide variety of colors and degrees of transparency. All *udoud* feature a hole through which a string or cord can be passed. All are of foreign importation.

There has been quite a bit written of a scholarly nature about *udoud*. Popular accounts about *udoud* have appeared occasionally in newspapers and as features stories in magazines published in the Pacific region especially. However, of this latter type of literature, there is virtually nothing that is sufficiently in depth to give an overall view of the *udoud* and its continued use in the Palau society today.

In this paper I will attempt to correct this failing by presenting a comprehensive accounting of the *udoud* and its current use and cultural situation in Palau.

The earliest western commentator on Palau *udoud* was Johann Stanislaus Kubary who came to Micronesia in the 1870s as a collector for the shipping and trading firm of *Johann Cesar Godeffroy and Sohn* of Hamburg.

In the 19th century it was common for German trading firms to have small museums— oftentimes not more than storefronts in or near their offices— with collections of artifacts obtained in the regions of their foreign trade.

Kubary was hired by Godeffroy to undertake such collections, and he did an extraordinarily fine job off it where Micronesia was concerned.

Kubary discusses the origins of Palauan money in two separate writings (Hamburg, 1873; Leiden, 1889-95) and presents four legends of how Palauans traditionally accounted for the origins of their money.

The first tells of a bird that gave birth to a fish which in turn gave birth to a human young girl who lived in the village of Keklau, and upon maturity scratched her fingers together and produced *udoud*.

The second tells of a bird who gave birth to a fish that carried a whole village on its back. In the village lived a woman who gave birth to birds. These birds spewed-forth *udoud* from their beaks.

The third is about a man who was the chief of Kayangel. He and his son went fishing and tied his canoe to the dorsal fin of a large fish that pulled the canoe while the two men slept to a strange land where the *udoud* lay scattered on the beach and the two collected it.