

# Sikaiana Photo Archive

- These slides are a general overview of 3 ½ years of ethnographic research conducted among the Sikaiana people of the Solomon Islands from 1980-1993. Viewers are cautioned that there may be many changes over the past 25 years and this does not claim to represent current Sikaiana life.
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# Ritual Redefined:

## Greeting the Prime Minister in 1982

- Solomon Mamaloni, the Prime Minister of the Solomon Islands, visited Sikaiana in 1982. At the time, his government was supporting decentralization of governmental services and he wanted to show his support for rural areas.
- For his visit, the Sikaiana people performed some of their traditional practices. They greeted his arrival with part of the traditional *Teika Llee* which was performed when a large fish or animal washed onto the reef. They then carried him ashore and performed part of the *Manea* ceremony, which was traditionally performed when the island's central ritual house (*hale aitu*) were refurbished. They also performed several traditional dances.
- The same part of the *Teika Llee* had been performed in 1980 to greet the Bishop of Malaita when he came to visit Sikaiana.
- These forms of greeting were also done in previous years when Sikaiana was visited by important people, for example the Resident Commissioner, when the Solomon Islands was still a Protectorate. I do not know when Sikaiana people started using their traditional ritual as a way to greet visitors. The island had a rapid conversion to Christianity after the arrival of missionaries in 1929. It is very unlikely that these ceremonies were performed as part of the traditional ritual system (as opposed to a ceremonial re-enactment) after 1929.



The Sikaiana people hold coconut palms and wave them as the visitors come ashore. I was told that in the traditional *Teika Llee* this was done to placate a large animal that had washed up on the reef.







The Prime Minister comes ashore.



Prime Minister is carried ashore.



Carried ashore.



John Kilatu and Fane Telena re-enact the ritual roles of the *aliki* (chief/priest) and *sapai ulu* (female ritual assistant) during the Manea ceremony. Prime Minister is in background, Sikaiana people watch.



*Aliki and sapai ulu. Prime Minister at right with Catechist, Reuben Tenai.*



Fane Telena as the ritual assistant, *sapai ulu*. Note she is wearing a skirt that is made on the blackstrap loom (*mea tau*).



John Kilatu as the *aliki*.



The Prime Minister is at right next to John Kilatu as the *aliki*. The event is being held on the main path. The church is the large building with 2 doors in far background.





Prime Minister speaking. Note that Fane Telena is sitting to Kilatu's right. Prime Minister's staff is on right.