



Te Parau Api - Story Leads and Ideas

July, 2006

In this issue:

[Save as PDF](#) | [Past Issues](#)

- ↓ [Rediscovering Polynesia - The Expedition of a Lifetime](#)
- ↓ [The Spirit Grows - Tales of Polynesia](#)
- ↓ [A Walk Through Time](#)
- ↓ [Going Local - Motu Aito](#)
- ↓ [Heiva I Tahiti - The Festival of All Festivals](#)

Ia ora na! We are very pleased to bring you our second edition of the "Te Parau Api." In this issue, we have a wonderful opportunity for those looking to discover "Polynesia" with a renowned archaeologist, the release of a new book linking the islands of Hawaii to the islands of Tahiti; an update on Heiva I Tahiti - the Tahitian Olympics, and much more!

If you need any further information on these subjects, please contact Bill Threlkeld at (310) 752 4400ext. 105, or via email at bthrelkeld@tahiti-tourisme.com.

Rediscovering Polynesia - The Expedition of a Lifetime

Centuries ago, in the village of Maeva on the lush island of Huahine, Tahiti's respected district chiefs once lived side-by-side, worshiping ancestors at their respective *marae* – open-air stone structures built for religious rites and ceremonies. Most fortunately, Maeva was not lost to history nor to commercialization – the quaint little town still stands as the center of life for the island's inhabitants.

Te Mau Fenua Ma'ohi (Tahitian for "Polynesia") – particularly the island of Raiatea, the second-largest of the Society Islands – figures prominently in Polynesian prehistory. Historically, Raiatea (once called Havaiki) is often considered to be the cradle of Polynesian civilization.

This fall, travelers can experience the colorful and significant history of these two influential islands via an expedition led by noted archaeologist Dr. Yoshihiko Sinoto, of the acclaimed Bishop Museum in Hawaii. Sinoto, honored with a Tahitian knighthood, Japan's Order of the Rising Sun, and Bishop Museum's Robert J. Pfeiffer Medal, has been recognized throughout Hawaii and the Pacific for his research in Tahiti's Society and Marquesas Islands. He has also conducted extensive study on the two isthmuses of Huahine – Huahine Nui ("Nui" meaning "big"), and Huahine Iti ("Iti" meaning "small").

The expedition will take place September 23 through October 1. During the eight day expedition, Sinoto will be the group's guide on the islands of Huahine and Raiatea, visiting archaeological and cultural sites where he has discovered and restored many important *marae*. A circle island tour of Huahine will include a visit to the town of Maeva, a stop at Fare Pote'e (a reconstructed traditional meeting house now being used as a cultural center), and a route along the Mata'ire'a Hill trail, where the partially restored remains of an island settlement considered an integral component of the unique Maeva Village Archaeological Complex still stands.

On Raiatea, Sinoto will take the group to Opoa, the ancient political and religious center of the Society Islands, where visitors will see the famous *Marae Taputapuatea*, *Marae Hauviri*, and other ceremonial artifacts, including an ancient archery platform.

The expedition includes round-trip airfare from Honolulu to Papeete, accommodations at the Te Tiare Beach Resort on Huahine and Raiatea Hawaiki Nui hotel on Raiatea, ground transportation, and welcome and farewell dinners. Optional excursions are available for the

group while in Papeete, including an “In Gauguin’s Footsteps” tour and a Grand Circle Island Tour. A Moorea circle island tour or 4x4 safari excursion on Moorea are offered as other options. Price is \$3,450 per person, based on double occupancy.

To book reservations, please contact Rachel at Travel Ways (808) 597-1425.

[Back to top](#)

The Spirit Grows - Tales of Polynesia

The modern traveler’s impression of Tahiti comes from images of overwater bungalows silhouetted by spectacular sunsets and palm trees swaying over crystal blue lagoons, and French cuisine served with a Polynesian flair. In order to truly understand Tahiti, and perhaps to truly *experience* Tahiti, it helps to first understand the history of *Polynesia* and the native stories of the people who inhabit this South Pacific paradise.

Virtually undiscovered by English-speaking North Americans, the native stories of Polynesia now have been brought to life in a moving, inspiring compilation entitled *Varua Tupu* (“*The Spirit Grows*”). In the book, editors Frank Stewart, Kareva Mateata-Allain, and Alexander Dale Mawyer present the first ever collection of original works representing authentic Tahiti – contemporary fiction, poetry, memoir, and essays in the English translations from many of French Polynesia’s native authors.

Woven within a series of photographic essays and lifestyle images, the authors present English translations of native stories from Polynesian writers as well as photo essays and archival images of Tahiti from the collection of the Musee de Tahiti et des Isles. Also featured is a collection of original paintings by Bobby Holcomb, a beloved Tahitian artist who succumbed to cancer in 1991.

Now available in bookstores, *Varua Tupu* allows readers to experience Tahiti through the unique words, images and paintings of native Polynesians. Published by Manoa and the University of Hawaii Press, 220 pages, illustrated with full color throughout. Suggested retail price, \$29.95.

“Sitting on the woven mat, Havai looks out at the sea. Her eyes follow the waves that roll and shudder under the wind. Twilight has come, and close behind, the black shore of night is approaching, but Havai doesn’t light the lamps.” -Excerpt translated from “*Vai: River in a Cloudless Sky*,” by Rai A Mai.

To order this book, please visit: www.uhpress.hawaii.edu; or call 1-888-UHPRESS; or by writing, UH Press, Order Dept., 2840 Kolowalu Street, Honolulu, HI 96822-1888 USA. Visit Manoa online <http://manoajournal.hawaii.edu>.

[Back to top](#)

A Walk Through Time

A short walk from Le Meridien Tahiti resort, the Museum of Tahiti and Her Islands (Musée de Tahiti et des Iles) is a visual feast for anyone hungry for information about the islands of Tahiti. Consisting of several galleries, the museum covers everything from natural history to anthropology to art. Make sure to set aside enough time to get through all of the exhibits, which include authentic cultural artifacts such as tikis, shell jewelry, and fish hooks. Although most of the exhibit descriptions are in French (English descriptions are abbreviated), many of the items need no explanation. Prepare to be awed by the resourcefulness of the native islanders.

The museum is open Tuesday-Sunday, 9:30 am-5:30 pm. Phone: 011-689-54-84-35, e-mail: musee@mail.pf

[Back to top](#)

Going Local - Motu Aito

At Motu Aito Paradise on the Tahitian atoll of Fakarava, you’ll live as if in a postcard. Owners Manihi and Tila Salmon have transformed a ribbon of empty sand into a comely homestay, with

six bungalows built from pandanus, coconut trees, and kahaia wood, each one accented with shells, coral, and driftwood. The property is located on a small *motu* (islet) at the southern end of the atoll. Without any modern conveniences to distract you (i.e. TV, telephone, internet) you'll quickly plug into the *Paumotu* (the name for local islanders) way of life, which can be as busy or indolent as you like. Tag along with Manihi to check the fish traps, elaborate figure-eight-shaped contraptions designed to cage your unsuspecting dinner. The *Paumotu* have always relied on the atoll's natural resources for food, clothing, and furniture—ask Manihi about the various uses for local trees *miro*, *puatea*, and *gnao gnao*. Both Tila and Manihi also lead daily yoga sessions—your downward dog will never feel so good. Perhaps the most unusual hotel amenity is the spectacle of the Salmons' dog Titou attacking the black-tip reef sharks that get a little too close to shore. The name Fakarava means "beautiful reef," and here on this strip of land peeking above the translucent green lagoon, it's easy to see why.

For more information, contact Motu Aito Paradise, phone: 011-689-41-29-00, e-mail: motu-aito@mail.pf ; www.fakarava.org .

[Back to top](#)

Heiva I Tahiti - The Festival of All Festivals

A common question often asked by travelers – "Is Tahiti hot in July?" Culturally, the answer is a resounding "yes!"

Tahiti's most colorful – and celebrated – event of the year, **Heiva I Tahiti**, occurs during the month of July throughout the islands, offering travelers a unique sensory-packed Tahitian experience that can't be found any other time of year.

The list of **Heiva I Tahiti** events reads like a Polynesian-inspired version of the Olympics: Javelin throwing? Check. Outrigger canoe races? Check. Fire walking? Check. Stone throwing contests? Check.

But perhaps the most competitive, and arguably most exciting, part of the month long "Tahitian Olympics" are the dance competitions. In many ways synonymous with life itself for Tahitians, dance is a passionate art form, and the Heiva dance competitions are full of competitiveness, excitement, and vitality.

Currently, Heiva is in full swing, with much more to come throughout the month. On July 1st, the **Heiva I Tahiti** opening celebration was held as the Heiva Parade marched through Papeete, leading to the official opening ceremony at Cultural Village. That evening, the official inauguration of the Heiva was held on Boulevard Pomare in Papeete. On July 5th, a fire dancing performance was held at Mahana Park in Paea on the west side of Tahiti. The Heiva Va'a i Tahiti Outrigger canoe races began on the Papeete waterfront June 30, and continued July 1, 6, 7 and 8.

This year, famous song and dance troupes like Temarama and Tamarii Teahupo'o competed at Place To'ata in Papeete from 7 p.m. to 10:30 p.m. on July 6, 7, and 8. The competition will continue on July 15, and 16.

On July 13, 14, 15, and 19 there will be sailing canoe regattas, stone lifting competitions, javelin throwing, and banana bearer races at the Paofai Cultural Village in Papeete. The culmination of the Heiva I Tahiti festival will be the finals dance competition, held at Place To'ata at the waterfront in Papeete on July 28.

Heiva I Tahiti. Let the games, and the excitement, begin!

For more information on Heiva I Tahiti, contact Tahiti Tourisme, (310) 414-8484, www.Tahiti-Tourisme.com

[Back to top](#)

