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Between Dreams

Resistance and Representation in Asian Aotearoa

EDITED BY GRACE GASSIN

A NEW HISTORY OF ASIAN AOTEAROA BY A DYNAMIC COALITION OF VOICES

This landmark collection presents fresh, progressive perspectives on what it means to be 'Asian' in Aotearoa.

Te Papa curator Grace Gassin draws together journalists, researchers, activists, filmmakers and political commentators to relate experiences of living between cultures and to explore the legacies of New Zealand's diverse Asian diaspora histories.

Featuring a broad range of taonga from the museum's collections, this timely book brings these social histories into focus, revealing shared themes of resistance and representation that offer ways to reckon with the past and imagine new futures.

Contributions by: Umi Asaka, Mohan Dutta, Christopher Fung, Rebekah Jaung, Tze Ming Mok, Keith Ng, Sun-Min Elle Park, Sapna Samant, Balamohan Shingade, Isaac Te Awa (Ngāpuhi, Kāti Māmoe, Kāi Tahu, Waitaha) and Sidney Wong.

SALES POINTS

- A vibrant design, highly illustrated featuring essays, objects and artwork.
- Affordable price.
- Features a broad range of authors in various fields of expertise including journalists, activists, academics and curators, many representing a new generation of voices.
- Auckland Writers Festival (16 May): Contributors Tze Ming Mok, Rebekah Jaung and Balamohan Shingade will join Nathan Joe for a panel to examine and discuss the book's themes.
- Breaks away from colonial framings of ethnic histories and 'model minority' narratives.
- In 2021, the release of the Aotearoa New Zealand Histories draft curriculum to be taught in secondary schools generated a storm of debate. This book is a response to that.
- Asian communities comprise a significant ~15% of the national population.
- There will be strong media interest and individual essays will be well suited for potential serialisation.

ABOUT THE EDITOR

Dr Grace Gassin (林素真) is Curator Asian New Zealand Histories at Te Papa. Raised in her mother's Malaysian Chinese family, Grace proudly identifies as a second-generation Chinese (Hokkien) New Zealander of mixed heritage. Grace's overarching focus is on highlighting the diverse historical and contemporary experiences of New Zealand's many Asian diaspora communities. Her wide-ranging interests also encompass the politics of inclusion and interpretation that frame our understandings of Asian diaspora histories, and transnational dimensions of Asian Australasian diaspora experiences. She is also a committed delegate for E tū union.

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Transitional Justice Committee (POIHJTJC), attended the forum and was given the opportunity to lead the delegation on visits to locations around Taiwan. The delegation included leading lights of Māoridom such as scholar and lesbian rights activist Ngāhuia Te Awekōtuku MNZM, Professor of Psychology Linda Waimarie Nikora, and former MP and Te Pāti Māori co-leader Te Ururoa Flavell.

As Pisuy got to know her guests, she was fascinated to learn about the diverse issues they encountered as Māori living in Aotearoa. She soon relayed this to her manager, the POIHJTJC's Reconciliation Commissioner Professor Jan Hsieh, who encouraged her to consider studying in Aotearoa. Jan then organised a formal exchange with the Māori delegation, known as 'Tino Rangatiratanga – Journey of Self-Determination and Sovereignty', which Pisuy was able to join as a participant.²²

During the first stage of the exchange, the Māori delegation was welcomed again to Taiwan by their hosts, who included Pisuy.²³ The Taiwanese delegation subsequently received their own welcome in Aotearoa, where they attended the 2020 Waitangi Day celebrations and met other leaders from within te ao Māori. While the delegation's scheduled agenda initially seemed very formal, as most sponsored exchanges do, the reality of the trip proved much more relaxed and intimate. 'Actually, we just treat him [Te Ururoa Flavell] like the grandfather,' Pisuy laughs. 'He's very simple, you don't [imagine] he is, that maybe he's a big man in Aotearoa. We [exchange participants] didn't know that [when we met him in Taiwan]... so when we came to New Zealand, we [said] sorry, we are so impolite to you! And he said no, not impolite because you are whānau so, actually, you are like my grandchildren.'²⁴

With support from their new Māori whānau, the Taiwanese gained insight into issues affecting Indigenous people beyond the scope officially outlined in their itinerary. A memorable moment for Pisuy was taking part in the Auckland Pride Parade, alongside her Taiwanese and Māori friends, in full cultural dress. She and her Taiwanese peers were accompanied by their new friend and leader of the march, Ngāhuia Te Awekōtuku, who had been one of the key leaders of Aotearoa New Zealand's original gay liberation march in 1972.²⁵

Since they began their studies in Wellington in 2024, both Pisuy and Panay have been able to witness up close some key moments in the fight for Indigenous rights in Aotearoa, including the debates and hikoi responding to the coalition government's Treaty Principles Bill. This has been every bit as valuable as their formal curriculum, enabling them to witness the struggles of Māori first hand, says Panay. 'Because usually [in] Taiwan, you didn't always think [of the issues Māori still face]... you think, oh Māori [situation] is good, they revived the language. But so many things happen here.'²⁶

When the time comes for the women to return to Taiwan, they will take with them not only treasured memories and new connections, but also rare insights into how colonialism manifests itself in a country once touted as having the 'best race relations in the world'.²⁷

//

Panay's Uncle Salizan is an acclaimed Taiwanese poet. With Salizan's blessing, we republish two of his poems here.²⁸ In 2015, Aotearoa was the guest of honour at the Taipei International Book Fair. Salizan attended and 'heard about different literature, so I flew over to hear the story of the Southern Cross'.²⁹

**To Tell You 'Mihumisang' —
Discovering New Zealand,
Find Joy in Reading the Pacific¹**

On this side of the mountain,
The postures of the Pacific are not seen,
Yet the winds it blows are felt in hands.

On this side of the mountain
The sound of Pacific waves are not heard,
Yet the wavy mountain shapes are in sight.

A call of
'Kia ora'

I heard
On the other side of the ocean
The call of the whale rider.

I saw
On the other side of the ocean
The *Star Waka* delicate carved.³

I will paddle
Towards
'Aotearoa'
Heading to
The Hill of Wool.⁴

To say
'Mihumisang'⁵
To the *Fast Talking Pī*.⁶

**跟你說一聲 Mihumisang⁷
— 發現紐西蘭·閱讀太平洋**

在山的這一邊
看不到太平洋的姿態
摸得到它吹來的風

在山的這一邊
聽不到太平洋的濤聲
看得到層巒的波浪

一聲
Kia ora

我聽見
海的那一端
鯨騎士的呼喚

我看見
海的那一端
雕刻精美的《*Star Waka*》⁸

我將划著槳
划向那
棉棉白雲下的大地⁹
走向那
《羊毛山丘》¹⁰

跟《快嘴太平洋島民》¹¹
說一聲
Mihumisang¹²

- 1 'Mihumisang' means 'to breathe well'. The author was invited to participate in the Taipei International Book Fair 2015 and read his poem at a poetry reading session on 13 February.
- 2 A reference to the Chinese theme of the Taipei International Book Fair 2015.
- 3 A poetry collection by visiting New Zealand poet Robert Sullivan, titled *Star Waka*.
- 4 A book by visiting New Zealand poet Jenny Bornholdt, titled *The Hill of Wool*.
- 5 Greeting in Bunun, an Aboriginal tribal language of Taiwan.
- 6 A poetry collection by visiting New Zealand poet Selina Tusitala Marsh, *Fast Talking Pī*.
- 7 參與2015年台北圖書展，並於2/13參加當天詩歌現場表演。
- 8 當天朗讀的詩人羅伯·蘇利文 Robert Sullivan 的書名，中文為《星舟》，waka 為毛利語船之意。
- 9 此句為毛利語 Aotearoa 的中文意思，毛利人稱呼的一座島嶼。
- 10 當天朗讀的詩人珍妮·伯恩侯特 Jenny Bornholdt 的書名《The Hill of Wool》。
- 11 當天朗讀的詩人莎琳娜·圖希塔拉·馬許 Selina Tusitala Marsh 的書名《Fast Talking Pī》。
- 12 布農語：你好的意思。

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successive generations. In June 2008, after many decades of activism, the Japanese parliament finally recognised AINU as an Indigenous people, and recent political and cultural gains by AINU have begun to revive interest in attus-making practices.

THIS KAPARAMIP, MADE IN 2015, took Akemi five months to produce. Made from indigo cotton fabric, the garment has been appliquéd with large patterns cut from white cotton fabric; both this technique of embroidery and the garment itself are called kaparamip – ‘kapar’ meaning thin and ‘amip’ meaning garment.

Akemi used the *ikarari* technique (couching stitch) to embroider the white appliqué with dark green thread – these patterns protect the wearer from evil. The patterns on the back of the garment are accentuated by bright red crosses stitched into the gaps. Historically, the colour red represented something of importance or value.

THIS BASKET WAS HANDMADE by Akemi in 2010. *Saranip* are carry-all shoulder bags originally used to hold vegetables, hunting tools, fishing tools such as nets, or even lunch boxes.

In order to make the *saranip*, threads were made by tearing the dried inner bark of the *Ulmus laciniata* (cut-leaf elm) into narrow pieces, which were shortened and twisted together to make twine. The bag was then hand-woven from bottom to top – this method of weaving differentiates the *oshikesaranip* from other types of *saranip* woven on an *ite-se-ni* (loom).

Creating twine is a time-consuming process – it took Akemi almost three months to make enough twine for this *saranip*. Weaving the bag, meanwhile, took a week.



3.

NEW ZEALAND'S ASIAN PACIFIC INHERITANCES

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Bev Moon, *Fortune*

THIS ARTWORK, *FORTUNE* (A Knitted Yum Cha for my Mother's 90th Birthday), was conceived and created in 2021–22 by artist Bev Moon, who is descended from Taishanese men who first arrived in Aotearoa New Zealand in the 1880s. It is a loving tribute to her mother, Yip Sue Yen, and grandmother Lee Choy Kee, two of only 500 Chinese women and children to be granted refuge in Aotearoa following the Japanese invasion of China in 1937.

For this work, Bev painstakingly hand-

knitted replicas of yum cha delicacies her mother and grandmother used to prepare. Through this labour-intensive process, she renders visible the significant amount of work that both women performed in their daily lives. Moon's mother and grandmother before her were also talented knitters, and Moon's skill in creating the many complex elements of this work can also be read as a homage to the intergenerational knowledge they passed down to her.



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