



Unity of Heart: Culture and Change in a Polynesian Atoll Society

Keith Chambers, Anne Chambers

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Thousands of years ago, Polynesian voyagers discovered and settled Nanumea atoll, a tiny cluster of coral islets in the middle of the Pacific Ocean. The community prospered, first evolving into a traditional culture finely tuned to the atoll's limited environment and then weathering new changes imposed by missionaries, colonial officials, and Westernization itself. Now one of eight separate island communities comprising the modern Pacific nation of Tuvalu, Nanumea faces new challenges: rising sea levels, globalization, and massive social and economic changes. Using personal stories that evoke the difficulties and excitement of fieldwork, Keith and Anne Chambers draw on more than twenty-five years of ethnographic research in Nanumea to craft an engaging account of Nanumean culture and social organization. Readers will come to appreciate how the community's intense sharing obligations, service-oriented chieftainship, and a flexible system of extensive kinship reckoning define a lifestyle that differs fundamentally from modern Western society.

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