

Kings's Journal entry for January 19 – 26, 1779

Excerpt from James Cook and James King, *A Voyage to the Pacific Ocean...in the Years 1776, 1777, 1778, 1779, and 1780*, 2nd. Ed. 3 vols. G. Nicol and T. Cadell: London, 1785. Newberry call Number: Case fG 13.19 Vol. 3.

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I shall now return to our transactions on shore at the observatory, where we had not long been settled before we discovered, in our neighborhood, the habitations of a society of priests, whose regular attendance at the *Morai* had excited our curiosity. Their huts stood round a pond of water, and were surrounded by a grove of cocoa-nut trees, which separated them from the beach and the rest of the village, and gave the place an air of religious retirement. On my acquainting Captain Cook with these circumstances, he resolved to pay them a visit; and, as he expected to be received in the same manner as before, he brought Mr. Webber with him to make a drawing of the ceremony.

On his arrival at the beach, he was conducted to a sacred building called *Harreno-Orono*, or the house of *Orano*, and seated before the entrance, at the foot of a wooden idol, of the same kind with those on the *Morai*. I was here again made to support one of his arms; and, after wrapping him in red cloth, *Kaireekee*, accompanied by twelve priests, made an offering of a pig with the usual solemnities. The pig was then strangled, and a fire being kindled, it was thrown into the embers, and after the hair was singed off, it was then presented, with a repetition of the chanting, in the manner before described. The dead pig was then held for a short time under the Captain's nose; after which it was laid, with a cocoa-nut, at his feet, and the performers sat down. The *ava* was then brewed, and handed round; a fat hog, ready dressed, was brought in, and we were fed as before.

During the rest of the time we remained in the bay, whenever Captain Cook came on shore, he was attended by one of these priests, who went before him, giving notice that the *Orono* had landed, and ordering people to prostrate themselves. The same person also constantly accompanied him on the water, standing in the bow of the boat, with a wand in his hand, and giving notice of his approach to the natives, who were in canoes, on which they immediately went off paddling, and lay down on their faces till he had passed. Whenever he stopped at the observatory, *Kaireekee* and his brethren immediately made their appearance with hogs, cocoa-nut, bread-fruit, &c. and presented them with the usual solemnities. It was on some of these occasions that some of the inferior chiefs frequently requested to be permitted to make an offering to the *Orono*. When this was granted, they presented the hog themselves, generally with evident marks of fear in their countenances; whilst *Kaireekee* and the priests chanted their accustomed hymns.

The civilities of this society were not, however, confined to mere ceremony and parade. Our party on shore received from them, every day, a constant supply of hogs and vegetables, more than sufficient for our subsistence; and several canoes loaded with provisions were sent to the ships with the same punctuality. No return was ever demanded, or even hinted at in the most distant manner. Their presents were made

with a regularity, more like the discharge of a religious duty, than the effect of mere liberality; and when we inquired at whose charge all this munificence was displayed, we were told, it was at the expense of a great man called Kaoo, the chief of the priests, and grandfather to Kaireekaea, who was at that time absent attending the king of the island.

As everything relating to the character and behaviour of this people must be interesting to the reader, on account of the tragedy that was afterward acted here, it will be proper to acquaint him, that we had not always so much reason to be satisfied with the conduct of the warrior chiefs, or *Earees*, as with that of the priests. In all our dealings with the former, we found them sufficiently attentive to their own interests; and besides their habit of stealing, which may admit of some excuse, from the universality of the practice amongst the islanders of these seas, they made use of other artifices quite dishonorable. I shall only mention one instance, in which we discovered, with regret, our friend Koah to be a party principally concerned. As the chiefs, who brought us presents of hogs, were always sent back handsomely rewarded, we had generally a greater supply than we could make use of. On these occasions, Koah, who never failed in his attendance on us, used to beg such as we did not want, and they were always given to him. It one day happened, that a pig was presented us by a man whom Koah himself introduced as a chief, who was desirous of paying his respects, and we recollected the pig to be the same that had been given to Koah just before. This leading us to suspect some trick, we found, on further inquiry, the pretended chief to be an ordinary person; and on connecting this with other circumstances, we had reason to suspect, that it was not the first time we had been the dupes of the like imposition.

Sunday 24. Things continued in the state till the 24th, when we were a good deal surprised to find that no canoes were suffered to put off from shore, and that the natives kept close to their houses. After several hours suspence, we learned that the bay was *tabooed*, and all intercourse with us interdicted, on account of the arrival of Terreeoboo. As

Monday 25. we had not foreseen an accident of this sort, the crews of both ships were obliged to pass the day without their usual supply of fruits and vegetables. The next morning, therefore, they endeavored, both by threats and promises, to induce the natives to come along-side; and as some of them were at last venturing to put off, a chief was observed attempting to drive them away. A musquet was immediately fired over his head, to make him desist, which had the desired effect, and refreshments were soon after purchased as usual. In the afternoon, Terreeoboo arrived, and visited the ships in a private manner, attended to only by one canoe, in which were his wife and children. He staid onboard till near ten o'clock, when he returned to the village of Kowrowa.

Tuesday 26. The next day, about noon, the king, in a large canoe, attended by two others, set out from the village, and paddled toward the ships in great state. Their appearance was grand and magnificent. In the first canoe was Terreeoboo and his chiefs, dresses in their rich feathered cloaks and helmets, and armed with long spears and daggers; in the second, came the venerable Kaoo, the chief of the priests, and his brethren, with their idols displayed on red cloth. These idols were busts of a gigantic size, made of wicker-work, and curiously covered with small feathers of various colors, wrought in the same manner with their cloaks. Their eyes were made of large pearl oysters, with a black nut fixed in the centre; their mouths were set with a double row of the fangs of dogs, and, together with the rest of their features, were strangely distorted. The

third canoe was filled with hogs and various sorts of vegetables. As they went along, the priests in the centre canoe sung their hymns with great solemnity; and after paddling round the ships, instead of going on board, as was expected, they made toward the shore at the beach where we were stationed.

As soon as I saw them approaching, I ordered our little guard to receive the king; and Captain Cook, perceiving that he was going on shore, followed him, and arrived nearly at the same time. We conducted them into the tent, nearly at the same time, where they had scarcely been seated, when the king rose up, and in a very graceful manner threw over the Captain's shoulders the cloak he himself wore, put a feathered helmet upon his head, and a curious fan into his hand. He also spread at his feet five or six other cloaks, all exceedingly beautiful, and of the greatest value. His attendants then brought four very large hogs, with sugar-canes, cocoa-nuts, and bread-fruit; and this part of the ceremony was concluded by the king's exchanging names with Captain Cook, which, amongst all the islanders of the Pacific Ocean, is esteemed the strongest pledge of friendship. A procession of priests, with a venerable old personage at their head, now appeared, followed by a long train of men leading large hogs, and others carrying plantains, sweet potatoes, &c. By the looks and gestures of Kaireekee, I immediately knew the old man to be the chief before mentioned, on whose bounty we had so long subsided. He had a piece of red cloth in his hands, which he wrapped round Captain Cook's shoulders, and afterwards presented him with a small pig in the usual form. A seat was then made for him, next to the king, after which, Kaireekee and his followers began their ceremonies, Kaoo and the rest of the chiefs joining in the responses.

I was surprised to see, in the person of this king, the same infirm and emaciated old man, that came on board the Resolution when we were off the North East side of the island of Mowee; and we soon discovered amongst his attendants most of the persons who at that time had remained with us all night. Of this number were the two younger sons of the king, the eldest of whom was sixteen years of age, and his nephew Maiha-Maiha, whom at first we had some difficulty in recollecting, his hair being plastered over with a dirty brown paste and powder, which was no mean heightening to the most savage face I ever beheld.

As soon as the formalities of the meeting were over, Captain Cook carried Terreeboo, and as many of the chiefs as the pinnace could hold, on board the Resolution. They were received with every mark of respect that could be shewn them; and Captain Cook, in return for the feathered cloak, put a linen shirt on the king, and girt his own hanger round him. The ancient Kaoo, and about half a dozen more old chiefs, remained on shore, and took up their abode at the priests houses. During all this time, not a canoe was seen in the bay, and the natives either kept within their huts, or lay prostrate on the ground. Before the king left the Resolution, Captain Cook obtained leave for the natives to come trade with the ships as usual; but the women, for what reason we could not learn, still continued under the effects of the taboo; that is, were forbidden to stir from home, or to have any communication with us.