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**FORMAL AND INFORMAL LEARNING IN THE MARSHALL ISLANDS OF MICRONESIA  
WITH SPECIAL EMPHASIS ON THE CULTURE OF UJELANG ATOLL**

**AN ABSTRACT OF A THESIS  
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**by  
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## ABSTRACT

FORMAL AND INFORMAL LEARNING IN THE MARSHALL ISLANDS OF MICRONESIA  
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Micronesia, or the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, is a relatively unknown place to most Americans. The Islands and their people offer a wealth of interesting cultures made more interesting by the fact that the Islanders have lived under four major world powers. This has forced the Micronesians to adapt to many cultures and many educational systems. They are now adapting to the American culture and an American educational system.

The Author spent two years living in the Marshall Islands District of Micronesia, as well as living in, or visiting Truk, Ponape, and the Mariana Islands. During this time he was able to observe the effect that America has had on these people and their life style.

In essence this dissertation attempts to do three things. Firstly, to record the culture and the informal educational systems of the Marshallese; secondly, to examine the American systems as they are imposed upon the Islanders; thirdly, to attempt to present the effects of this imposition upon the culture, life-style, and educational systems of the Islanders.

The author attempts to do this through presentation of both factual material and personal observations. The reader is invited to "live" the life of the Islanders through their day to day activities and to "listen" to the thoughts and feelings the Micronesians express through legends, songs, and even "letters to the Editor."

The thesis begins with a panoramic view of the geography and history of Micronesia from "high" island to "low" island, and from outrigger explorers to the American amphibious invasions. All the island groups of Micronesia are touched on briefly. There is an overall look at the ecology of Micronesia. Life on an atoll is explored in depth through an examination of Ujelang Atoll in the Marshall Islands. On Ujelang we view the family, daily activities, religion, land ownership and use, economics, and government. As an agriculture agent on this Atoll, during a two year Peace Corps assignment, the author became very familiar with the people and their way of life.

The Marshallese personality, ways of learning, and self-concept are examined as the paper leads up to a look at American formal education and its effect on the above factors. Marshallese life in transition is investigated in the light of the many agents of change to be found in Micronesia. These agents are many and varied, ranging from the Peace Corps to the Military, to the Atomic Energy Commission.

The author attempts to emphasize the fact that culture is a changing concept and always in a state of flux. This sometimes produces positive changes and, sometimes, frightening ones. Yet the adaptability of man, even in a tiny Island community, somehow sees him through.

The paper ends with a presentation of cultural and educational change as seen through the eyes of the author and of several Islanders. The study does not attempt to answer the problems of a society in transition. It is presented with the hope that the Americans reading this

paper will become more aware of their effect on the weaker peoples of the world, and perhaps learn the trait that all Marshallese regard as the most desirable for a human being to have, Joij, "Kindness."