

“THE WAY OF THE PACIFIC”

by Fanaafi Sooaemalelagi *

You replaced our traditional beliefs,
You replaced our natural diets,
You replaced our languages,
You replaced our dress,
And now you have replaced our sustainability.
With what?

You have mined our guano (Nauru),
You have felled our rainforests
(Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands,
Western Samoa)
You have filled our rivers with cyanide and tailings
(Bougainville, Papua New Guinea)
While you took our gold.

Sure, we sold our guano,
Our rainforests and our gold.
But at what price?

Now you are selling us outdated pesticides
(some banned in your own countries).
Selling us poisons
With instructions written in English or French.

Now you are selling us turkey tails (70% fat),
Tinned Beef (30% fat),
Mutton flaps (45% fat),
Meats not fit for dog food in your own country.
And we are buying and eating all you can serve up to us.

Thankfully, you are providing us with the necessary
hospital care,
Even the refrigeration to store these delicacies in.
You even provide us with sugar.
How Sweet!
Doses that are consumed by islanders that are lethal.
Sure, it's suicide,
But nobody is calling it that.

Is there anything immoral in that?

You explode or implode (who cares) your nuclear bombs.
You trial them on Christmas Island, French Polynesia,
Marshall Islands,
With what consequence?

Is there anything immoral in that?
Where is the remorse today?
You travel through our oceans
Looking for waste-dumping grounds for your rubbish.
You are still over-exploiting our marine resources,
Discarding bi-catches that are not only wasteful and
non-sustainable,
But immoral.

Where are the successful partnerships here in the
Pacific?

Show us one successful model of development
That could be a showcase to us all.
Afterall, who are our development advisors?

Your models of development are yet to be proven.
Our models of development began successfully,
People were put first,
And equity was a priority,
In fact a prerequisite.

Please. Give Pacific islanders a chance
To show you what an idyllic lifestyle is all about.
Afterall, isn't that our dream
The same dream that many travellers to the Pacific
have.
It also happens to be our dream as well.

Trouble is, today,
Our dream is becoming a nightmare
Thanks to your modern development ideals
That are not synonymous with
The way of the Pacific.

Is there anything immoral in that?

IS THIS THE WAY OF THE WEST?

We were led to believe
That you were our development partners,
Scholars of sustainability,
Believers in equity.

Our development advisors.

If you want our development advice,
It's free.
We don't charge for our wisdom,
It's just not wise to do so.

*A Pacific writer