

# **Flow, Paths, Links and Displacement: the Transformation of Mobilities among the Langalanga, Solomon Islands**

Paper to be presented at 18<sup>th</sup> IAHA conference,  
panel 'Transformations and Trans-placements: Mobilities in Pacific Islands'  
Academia Sinica, December 9<sup>th</sup>, 2004

Pei-yi Guo

Assistant Research Fellow

Institute of Ethnology, Academia Sinica

langa@gate.sinica.edu.tw

## **Abstract**

This paper explores the patterns of population movement from ancient migration to recent relocation among a coastal group, the Langalanga, in the Solomon Islands. It examines how local identity and the formation of local groups are shaped through movements across places, and how they are transformed in the ages of colonization and globalization. Mobility in the Pacific Islands has long been attracting local as well as scholarly attention in the aspects of history and cultural construction. Similar to many people in the Pacific Islands, the Langalanga are constantly on the move—be it permanent or temporary. The fluid nature of population movement and group formation constitute, together with other cultural characteristics, the core of Langalanga culture. Such trans-placements on the one hand encourage journeys, explorations and building networks, while on the other hand they preserve the sense of rootedness and attachment to places. Through the flow of people—individual or collective—and along the paths of journeys, the Langalanga emerged as a unique cultural group; they build up and link their lives, memories and relationships with others, including their ancestors. The British colonial rule and administration, especially the alienation of land, and the penetration of capitalism and global economy over time transformed the patterns of mobility and the patterns of people-place relationships. Flow sometimes becomes rootlessness, and links turns into displacement.