

Disease, drugs and valuable lessons on the hippy trail

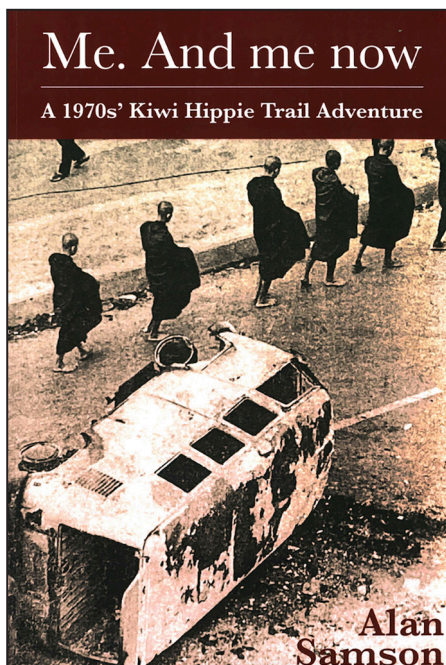
Me. And me now. A 1970s Kiwi hippie trail adventure, by Alan Samson. Auckland: Writers Ink, 2021. 296 pages.

FOR young New Zealanders the OE (Overseas Experience, often pronounced ‘oey’) is a part of their life. The point, however, is that they return. It is a strange phenomenon, but it seems that for many young New Zealanders, there is something inexplicable that calls them back.

So it was with Alan Samson, a former *Pacific Journalism Review* reviews editor among many journalistic accomplishments, whose wanderings around Asia make up the bulk of this book.

Curiously, however, his return seems to be of as much concern as his wanderings. The end of the book is weighted with the story of his sudden determination to get home at any cost because he was desperately ill, and of his recuperation and eventual transformation into a journalist.

His book is a fascinating glimpse into a world that was, despite the ever-present threat of nuclear Armageddon, much freer than it is now. You really could wander around the world, hitching and walking and staying in guest houses, sheltering from the rain and local conflicts and seeing a world immensely different from anything you had ever known.



Occasionally familiar faces would drift past. Samson encountered David Attenborough—who had briefly abandoned his army of porters and BBC camera crew—twice in Indonesia.

He met Tenzing Norgay, whose fellow porters looked puzzled when he declined their assistance as he strode on perilous mountain paths towards Nepal and seems to have been accompanied (or encountered) on a regular basis a fair number of other young white people doing exactly the same thing, but possibly with more interest in opium and the local prostitutes.

Eventually the stress of travel, poor food and disease caught up with him and he sent a telegram (remember them?) home announcing his return. He was so ill that he was quarantined in his mother’s house for six months.

Still, Samson clearly feels it was all worth it, if only because it let him see so much of the world, to experience so many countries and to accustom him to having to understand so many viewpoints just to survive.

A fascinating book about a fascinating time.

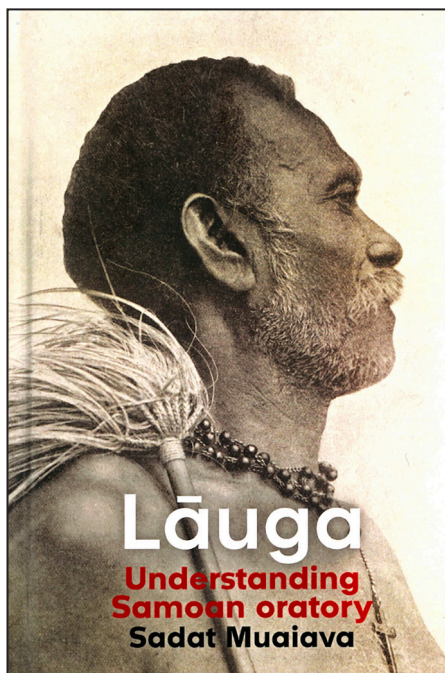
New guide to Samoan oratory

Lāuga: Understanding Samoan oratory, by Sadat Muaiava. Wellington: Te Papa Press, 2022. 336 pages.

THIS beautifully produced book is a guide to the art of Samoan public speaking that is embedded in the practices of chiefly speeches (*lāuga fa'amatai*) or sermons (*lāuga fa'alelotu*). It is intended to guide those who may be asked to speak at significant occasions, especially those within the Samoan diaspora who may have lost some of their familiarity with this significant cultural skill.

The author provides instructions and guidelines for those unfamiliar with or even intimidated by the idea of speaking formally and explains how and under what circumstances protocol and social relationships guide their performance and their audience's expectations.

Because *lāuga* draws on many sources for information, the book is balanced with examples and personal recollections. It also looks at related rituals and cultural performances such as welcomes and acts of atonement.



For non-specialised audiences Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern's apology for the Dawn Raids using a traditional Samoan gifting ceremony, the Sua, will probably be the most familiar.

It includes Minister for Pacific Peoples Aupito William Sio's speech in support of the apology and the presentation of gifts that accompanied it. This provides an example of the power and use of words and the significance given to them in Samoan culture.

The minister said: 'She has humbled herself for the sake of the Pacific people of Aotearoa—an act of aroha. She has covered herself with a fine mat as act of humility. She has asked forgiveness for the wrongs committed by others.'

Then he went on to say: 'Our elders say "stones turn to dust, but words live