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HS 13
(Forum 7)

ifeas

Institut für
Ethnologie und
Afrikastudien

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Gunter Senft

Max Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics, Nijmegen

***Days that I have loved ... but the
times they are changin'...***
**30 years of anthropological-
linguistic field research on the
Trobriand Islands in Papua New
Guinea**

In this talk I look back on my anthropological-linguistic field research on the Trobriand Islands in Papua New Guinea between the years 1982 and 2012. After a brief report of "how it all started" I first present the Trobriand Islands and their inhabitants and describe my first weeks as a "greenhorn" in this Pacific field, referring mainly to some of the mistakes I made and to misunderstandings between me and my Trobriand hosts. Then I present the research projects I carried out during 16 long- and short-term fieldtrips and discuss aspects of language and culture change that I observed during my various stays in the field. Finally I deal with the dramatic change that affected the Trobriand Islanders' social reality with respect to the loss of technological knowledge, the impact the schools have on the society and the consequences of both the population explosion on the Trobriands and the climate change.

Gunter Senft (PhD 1982) was senior investigator at the Max Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics in Nijmegen (The Netherlands) and extraordinary professor of general linguistics at the University of Cologne (Germany). He retired in February 2018 and is now an associate researcher at the MPI in Nijmegen. He has been studying the language and the culture of the Trobriand Islanders of Papua New Guinea since 1982 and conducted field research on the Trobriand Islands for 45 months during 16 long- and short-term field trips between 1982 and 2012. His main research interests include Austronesian and Papuan languages, anthropological linguistics, pragmatics, semantics, the interface between language, culture, and cognition, the conceptualization of space and spatial reference, serial verb constructions and systems of nominal classification.

Weitere Informationen: www.ifeas.uni-mainz.de



The *milamala*
harvest
celebrations are
beginning.

Gunter Senft,
Tauwema 1982.