Fijian-English Dictionary

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Tasmanian by origin, Ronald Gatty was raised in Fiji with a copra plantation on the island of Katafaga, in the Lau archipelago. As a young man he spent several years on diving and fishing boats around the South Pacific. His father complained that he had "gone native".

His father, Harold Gatty, was an aviator, first man with the American Wiley Post, to fly an aeroplane around the world. That was eight days in 1931, in the single-engine Lockheed Vega, the Winnie Mae. He then led the way in commercial aviation throughout the South Pacific with Pan American Airways in the mid-1930s. In 1951 Harold established Fiji Airways, which was the precursor of Air Pacific and he built most of the airports in Fiji. His lifetime collection of South Pacific books and manuscripts later became a significant part of Fiji's National Archives and an inspiration to his son who later moved on to the U.S.A.

Studying botany, economics and anthropology, Ronald Gatty earned an M.Sc. and Ph.D. at Cornell University, New York, U.S.A. He was the first student to be admitted directly to graduate study without having an undergraduate training. He was then for many years Professor at City University of New York. His wife Janette has been Professor of French history and literature at the same university. Both had been early members of Cornell University's Southeast Asia Programme.

He returned for a time to the South Pacific as plant explorer in herbal medicine for a subsidiary of the pharmaceutical company Johnson & Johnson. This took him travelling through virtually all parts of Melanesia and Polynesia collecting herbal remedies. In 1985, Gatty retired back to Fiji for private gardening, reading, writing and probing about in the surrounding jungles. Several horses kept him company with his wife Janette and a few Fijians.

Fijian-English Dictionary RONALD GATTY

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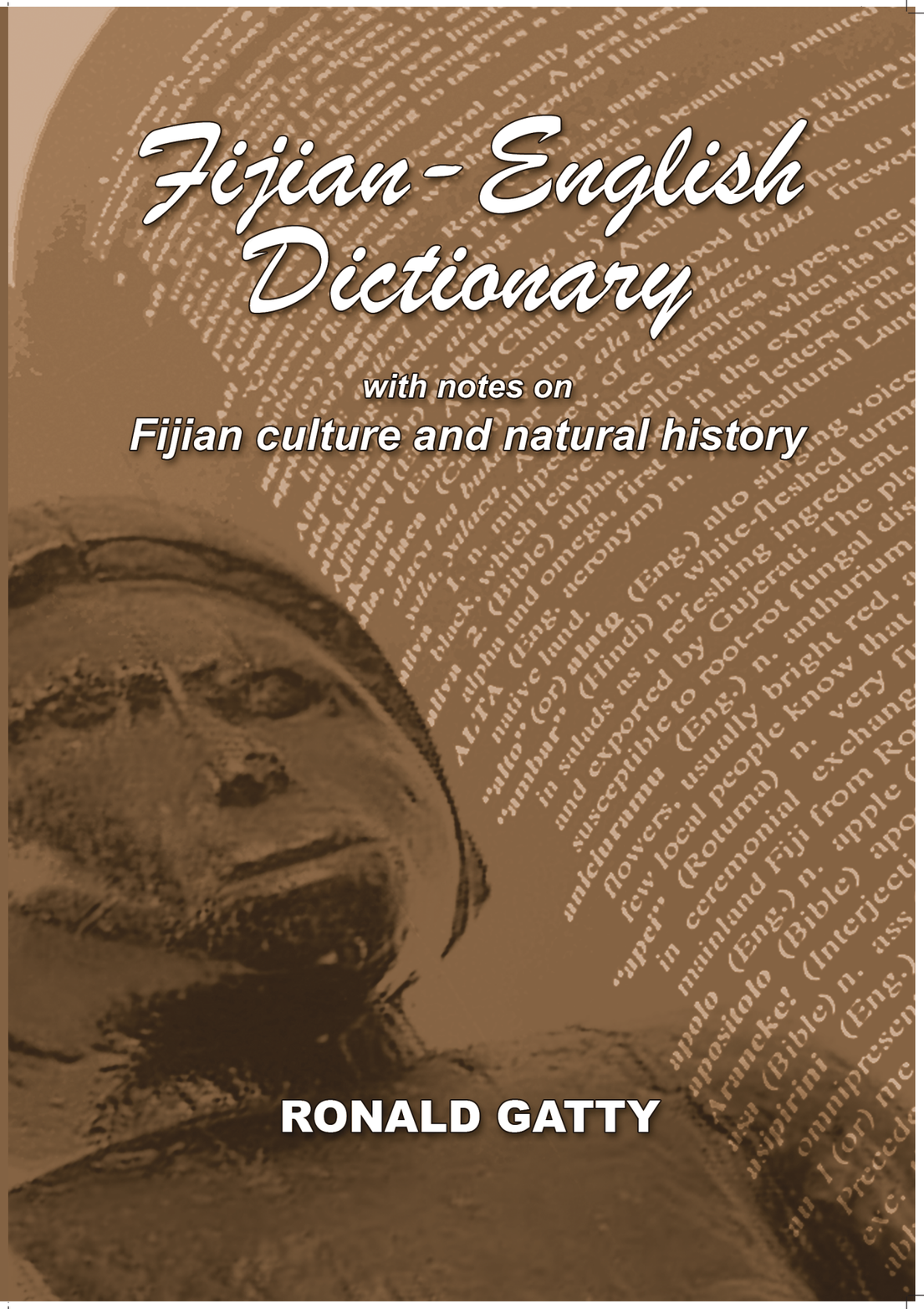
with notes on

Fijian culture and natural history



RONALD GATTY