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Plum Pudding and the Twelve Course Christmas Dinner

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ABSTRACT Anthropological experiences are typically focused on “the others,” that is, people one happens to meet in the course of field work, and who live in ways significantly different from oneself. A common assumption in American anthropology since the time of Franz Boas has been that the people of these different cultures are endangered, and are likely to disappear under the onslaught of western technology. Insights gained from and reflections upon an experience at a Christmas dinner in Fiji with British colonialists led the author to a deeper understanding that the “anthropological tables” may be turned.