THE KIRIBATI CANOE
Lesson Forty-Five

Objectives: This lesson introduces you to the Kiribati canoe, one of the most distinctive and useful of Kiribati artifacts. You will learn the names of some of the parts of a 'standard' canoe, and a little about their uses.

Activities: Study the accompanying drawing with the names of the parts below it. Ask and answer a series of questions like "what is part 1?" "part one is te ie"., etc. Once you have some of them memorized, try the same thing by merely pointing to the part of the picture.

Translation of Key:

Parts of the canoe:

1. keel
2. lee side
3. outrigger float
4. outrigger side
5. sail
6. sheet of sail
7. mast
8. float attachment
9. spar (gaff) of sail
10. plank
11. outrigger boom
12. thwart
13. edge of plank
14. lower edge of sail
15. rib
16. stay from mast to outrigger
17. steering paddle
Iteran nako te waa:

1. te kabi
2. katea
3. te rama
4. raama
5. te ie
6. te baba
7. te aneang
8. te tootoo
9. te inaleta
10. te rai
11. te kafo
12. te kiaro-moti
13. te inao
14. te inainano
15. te aiai
16. te ata
17. te bweeuru
Additional Activities: Study the narrative, which explains something about the canoe and its parts. When you think you have mastered it, expand the activity you did in the first part of the lesson by asking what a particular thing is used for.

Translation of Narrative:

The Kiribati Canoe

The float is used for balancing the canoe.
It is connected to the body of the canoe by the outrigger.
The canoe moves by means of the sail.
Before the Europeans came with cloth, the sail was woven of pandanus leaf, like a mat.
There is a mast to stand the sail in position.
The paddle is used to move the canoe when there is no wind.
And there's a bailer to bail out the canoe when the sea water comes in.
Henry's canoe is only big enough for one person.
It has no sail because it's a paddle canoe.
There are some canoes which are very big.

Outside Activities: Who builds the canoes? Does everyone build his own, or are there special canoe-builders? How long does it take to build one? What are the differences between the different kinds? Is the racing canoe the same as a fishing canoe?
Narrative
for Study:

Te Waani Kiribati

E bongana te rama b’a e kabeta te waa.
E kabaeaki te rama ma rab’atan te waa n taiari kiaro.
E buti te waa n te ie.
Im’aain rokoia l Matang ma te kunnikai ao e runangaaki
ien te waa n te baa ni kaina n aron te kie.
Iai aneangin te waa ae e katea te ie.
E kaboongaaki te bweenarina ni kabuta te waa ngkana akea
te ang.
Iai te anima ae e kaboongaaki ibukin kaikan te waa ngkana
e kakanoa n taari.
E rangi n tau ab’akin waan Eneri ibukin ti taimanna.
Akea’iena b’a te waa n oo.
Iai waa tabeua aika a rangi n ab’aab’aki.

Note:

Two excellent sources are available for further reading on Kiribati
canoes: The earliest is by Arthur Grimble, published in 1924 in
an anthropological journal; it is reprinted in Rosemary Grimble’s
"Migrations, Myth and Magic from the Gilbert Islands". The second,
which draws heavily on it, is "Canoes of Oceania," by A.C. Haddon
& J. Hornell (Bishop Museum Press 1975.)

Another work of interest, recently available in the Gilberts, is
"Taratai" by James Siers, which tells of building and sailing in a
Kiribati type canoe; it has appendices of related interest.