

Mark R. Peattie, *Nan'yō: The Rise and Fall of the Japanese in Micronesia, 1885-1945*. Pacific Islands Monograph Series, no. 4. Honolulu: Center for Pacific Islands Studies and University of Hawaii Press, 1988. Pp. xxii, 382, maps, illus., references, index. US\$30.00 cloth.

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The author, a specialist on modern Japanese history and Japanese colonialism, makes clear from the onset that his emphasis is on the Japanese and not the Micronesians whose response has already been addressed by "qualified social scientists" (p. xvi). Peattie's book does, indeed, cover the Japanese side in detail and fills an important gap in Pacific studies. The book also seems relevant to the present in light of Japan's strong economic presence in the Pacific today. While one of the major lessons of the Pacific War was the realization Japan no longer had to possess markets to control them, one can still question after reading Peattie whether certain attributes of the Japanese character have really changed that much.

The use of the abbreviated title *Nan'yō* (literally, "South Seas") seems to me misleading and maybe unnecessary. The author admits that "Nan'yō is an extremely vague term" that has "at various times been used to refer to Micronesia, Melanesia, the South China Sea, and Southeast Asia from the Andaman Islands to Papua" (p. xviii). While the best argument he advances is the narrow use of the term in the title of the Japanese government bureau that administered the islands (*Nan'yō-chō*), in my own research on the Japanese in Southeast Asia, the term "Nan'yō" is encountered at every turn. Moreover, as a former Fulbright student at Nanyang (*Nan'yō* in Japanese) University, I find the narrow use of *Nan'yō* for Micronesia a bit strange.

Peattie capably traces the penetration of Micronesia from the first contacts fueled largely by private initiative through the period of the League of Nations mandate and finally to Imperial Japan's eventual defeat in World War II. His characterizations of the early Japanese pioneers, particularly Mori Koben or "the man who would be king" on Truk, are extremely well done. He covers in detail how Japan acquired and administered the mandate along with the particulars about various Japanese enterprises and schemes for the islands. The ample insertion of rare photographs (a total of forty-two) and maps (thirty-one used) throughout brings the book to life; especially valuable are the portraits of noteworthy Japanese and the detailed maps of individual islands, including ones showing crucial battles of the Pacific War.

The Japanese colonial administration, self-serving and bureaucratic as it was, did make many improvements to the infrastructure of the islands as chronicled by the author. The negative results, besides the overt policy of Japanization, were largely due to the huge influx of Japanese migrants and the military buildup. Other than rather superficial comparisons with the French "policy of assimilation" (pp. 104-105), Peattie avoids an analysis of Japanese colonialism from a larger perspective. Comparisons with Japanese strategies in Manchuria, with the Greater East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere, and an analysis of the domestic conflict over priorities abroad might have proved valuable.

The Japanese militarization of Micronesia, in defiance of the provisions of the mandate, and subsequent conflict with America in the Pacific are topics of considerable import to students of the Pacific War. Peattie provides considerable insight into the strategic view of the Japanese and into the Japanese side of the war. On the other hand, the repatriation of Japanese civilians and troops deserves more than the two pages the author devotes to it because of the numbers and difficulties

involved. This transition required more than two years and would have appropriately been included in the epilogue.

Peattie concludes that a new, wealthy Japan is no longer “obsessed by a national quest for a tropical holy grail” (p. 320). That wealth, it must be added, has allowed them to buy large pieces anyway. Outside of the abundant artifacts still dotting the landscape, the memories of a bygone age have largely disappeared except among the older Micronesians who went through the experience. It is to Peattie’s credit that he has been able to superbly reconstruct this important episode in Pacific history. His wide use of sources, both Japanese and English, carries this work far beyond anything to date.