

Olga Gostin, *Cash Cropping, Catholicism, and Change: Resettlement among the Kuni of Papua*. Pacific Research Monograph No. 14. Canberra: National Centre for Development Studies, Australian National University, 1986. Pp. xxi, 170, maps, illustrations, index.

*Reviewed by Eugene Ogan, University of Minnesota*

In 1963, the New Guinea Research Unit of the Australian National University inaugurated a series of publications designed to present the results of interdisciplinary, applied research carried out in what was then the Territory of Papua New Guinea. The NGRU Bulletins were aimed at a wide audience, including administrative personnel, and eschewed theoretical matters of primary interest only to specialists. Although *Cash Cropping, Catholicism, and Change* is part of a series published by ANU's National Centre for Development Studies, its format and content are firmly in the earlier NGRU tradition, displaying the strengths and weaknesses of the approach.

Gostin's monograph describes the movement of about two thousand speakers of an Austronesian language from scattered hamlets in the foothills northwest of Port Moresby to a concentrated settlement at

Bakoidu, southwest of their mountainous homeland and closer to existing roads and a small airstrip. Unlike many other Pacific island relocation schemes, the Kuni migration was not directed by the government but received its initial impetus from prodding by an individual Roman Catholic missionary, Fr. A. Boell. Beginning in 1961, the Kuni not only abandoned their homeland for a new residential pattern, but also became increasingly involved in the money economy, growing rubber as a cash crop.

The author's fieldwork spanned a twenty-year period. The main bulk of the material presented was gathered in 1963-1965, when a cooperative rubber plantation was being established. This early, extended research formed the basis of the author's 1967 Ph.D. thesis, of which the monograph is obviously a reworked version.

Gostin has presented her material in a relatively straightforward manner, beginning with a "background" chapter including a history of European contact, with special attention to missionization. She then goes on to consider cash cropping and attendant changes in leadership, kinship, and social organization. Chapter 6 describes the syncretic form of Kuni Catholicism that has been incorporated "into the very fabric of everyday life" (p. 107). Chapter 7 focuses on four specific areas of social change: death and mourning customs, birth ceremonial, patterns of distribution and consumption, and "making business"-the increasing commercialization of other social activities. The monograph concludes with a consideration of "the nature of change."

There can be no doubt that anyone interested in social change in Papua New Guinea will find this short monograph useful. The unique circumstances of Kuni resettlement and subsequent developments offer a basis for comparison and contrast with other studies of social change that could enlighten administrators and planners. However, the title seems to promise social scientists more than the work actually delivers. The criticisms that follow relate to such more specialized interests and are not intended to deny the value of Gostin's work for a general audience.

In the first place, the revision of a twenty-year-old thesis always presents problems for author and reader. Even though Gostin takes pains to state that her "ethnographic present" refers to her second, 1971 field trip and adds the results of her final, 1983 visit in the form of post-scripts, the presentation suffers some loss of clarity. There is the related question of how much subsequent scholarship by others should have been incorporated in the new version. One has the feeling that a certain

number of titles have simply been inserted in the bibliography and in footnotes without actually absorbing the relevant content into the monograph.

A social anthropologist is therefore liable to perceive a number of shortcomings. After all the comparative studies of Melanesian social organization published in the last two decades, there is no reason to be surprised that descent-patrilineal in this case-is not the most critical element in Kuni society. By now, most anthropologists who work in the Pacific see descent as only one variable-along with ego-centered kinship, residence, and exchange (especially at marriage)-to which any society gives differing weights in the process of social life. Thus much of the author's discussion of the distinctive "flexibility" of Kuni society really stems from her apparent disregard of modern social analysis. Social scientists should also be aware that the "Catholicism" of the title is discussed only in terms of the specificities of Kuni missionization. There is no consideration of the social and cultural dimensions of Catholicism stemming from the Weberian tradition.

To repeat: there is no reason to demand that author or publisher direct any work to an audience of social anthropologists. Within the constraints that can be traced back to the old NGRU Bulletin series, this monograph is a creditable offering. However, the potential reader should be aware of those constraints, so as to appreciate the positive features of the work without disappointment in a search for something that was never intended.