

Iwao Ushijima and Ken-ichi Sudo, eds., *Cultural Uniformity and Diversity in Micronesia*. Senri Ethnological Studies, no. 21. Osaka: National Museum of Ethnology, 1987. Pp. 423, maps, figures, photographs, biographical notes. ¥4300.

*Reviewed by William H. Alkire, University of Victoria, Victoria, B. C., Canada*

Since 1978 the National Museum of Ethnology in Osaka has periodically published the results of Japanese ethnological research in its Senri Ethnological Studies series. Two of the twenty-one volumes that have appeared deal with Micronesia (the one under review and no. 17, published in 1984), and they clearly demonstrate that Japanese ethnologists have resumed an active program of field research in this area of the Pacific.

*Cultural Uniformity and Diversity in Micronesia* contains, in English, fourteen articles based on recent Micronesian research, an introductory chapter summarizing and categorizing the contributions, and a concluding historical essay providing an overview of Japanese ethnological work in Micronesia from 1884 to 1986. The volume somewhat unexpectedly (given its title) also contains one additional article on Samoa. The editors have grouped the substantive contributions within six sections, labeled chapters.

Chapter 1 includes four essays on Micronesian culture history--two based on archaeology and two dealing with linguistics. The common theme of the archaeological essays concerns prehistoric linkages between eastern Polynesia and Micronesia. In the first, Eikichi Ishikawa (in part, utilizing archaeological data) identifies two subsistence "complexes" in Oceania, one based on breadfruit cultivation and preservation and the other on taro production. His "breadfruit complex" is distributed throughout Micronesia and Polynesia, but absent in Melanesia. This leads him to look again at a "northern migration route" theory for the settlement of Polynesia by way of Micronesia, a thesis first proposed

by Peter Buck in *Vikings of the Sunrise* (New York, 1938, 42-51). In recent years that theory has been largely abandoned because of contrary "Melanesian oriented" linguistic evidence. In the second archaeological essay, Jun Takayama and Hiroaki Takasugi see close links between Micronesia and eastern Polynesia, based on similarities in fishing lures. These writers, however, imply the ties are temporally shallow.

The two linguistic articles are something of a study in contrasting methodologies. Osamu Sakiyama reaches a number of sweeping conclusions concerning what he calls a "secondary regional protolanguage" based on evidence of similarities in a rather restricted word list. On the basis of his evidence he concludes that the Micronesian worldview, which in early times was "open and wide-ranging," became more limited and closed, thereby reflecting decreased interisland sailing patterns. This conclusion, although interesting and provocative, might be questioned given the limited evidence presented in its support. By way of contrast, Hiroshi Sugita's comparison of aspectual systems of Trukese, Ponapean, and Woleaian is meticulous in its scholarship and reserved in its generalizing conclusions.

The book's second chapter includes two essays concerning "structural flexibility in matrilineal societies." The first, by Ken-ichi Sudo, discusses nurturing practices on Satawal, pointing out that a father and his matrilineal descent group play an important role in the nurturing of his child until that individual reaches adulthood, when responsibilities shift to the child's mother's brother. This conclusion offers further evidence for a degree of reciprocity between matrilineal groups via patrilateral connections in the Carolines. Sudo sees relevance between his conclusions and Mabuchi's hypotheses concerning contrasting "Indonesian and Oceanian" structural types in Oceania. In the next essay, Toshimitsu Kawai considers "paternal nurturing" on Truk, linking it to issues of cross-sibling solidarity, a topic much discussed in recent Oceanic literature (for example, Mac Marshall, ed., *Siblingship in Oceania* [Honolulu, 1981]).

Two of the essays in chapter 3 (entitled "Socio-Cultural Aspects of Chieftainship") deal with Micronesia. The third is the aforementioned article by Matori Yamamoto on Western Samoa. Akitoshi Shimizu provides a most comprehensive analysis of the various actors, relationships, and phases associated with Ponapean feasts. He emphasizes that feasts both parallel and integrate a variety of social and political activities on that island. Iwao Ushijima, in his essay, is concerned with the dynamics of Yapese political structure. On Yap a chiefs authority derives from the

land he “speaks for” and is exercised via shifting communication networks. He proposes that the frequent traditional wars reported on Yap altered such communication networks and resulted in reorganized alliances.

“Folk Knowledge on Coral Islands” is the somewhat ambiguous label that links the four essays of chapter 4. In the first, Shuzo Ishimori examines the symbolic meaning of song styles on Satawal and finds they can be classified according to a trichotomy labeled “sacred, profane, or play.” Tomoya Akimichi, in his essay, finds that the food classes of Satawal can also be expressed as a tripartite scheme, that is, vegetable staples, marine animal protein, and coconuts. Shigenobu Sugito turns his attention to house construction and architectural knowledge on Elato. As well as a typology of buildings and a description of construction methods, he emphasizes the restricted nature of much specialized knowledge in traditional times within this society. The final article of the chapter examines the symbolic meanings of a Ulithian folktale, classified by Kazuhiko Komatsu as of the *vagina dentata* type. Komatsu postulates morphological similarities between this tale and the *yamauba* (great mother) tales of Japan. This parallel leads him to make reference to both Jungian and symbolic anthropological interpretations.

Chapter 5 contains two articles on the role of Christianity in Micronesian acculturation. In the first Machiko Aoyagi discusses the Modekngai religion of Belau (Palau), a regionally well-known revitalization cult. She details how the cult “drove out” some local spirits but incorporated others along with Christian elements. Kazuyoshi Nakayama’s paper is a historical study of the spread of Christianity on Ponape from its introduction in 1852. He notes that missionary success in part followed from their understanding of the traditional political structure, an understanding that facilitated the “grafting” of the new to the old. Apparently it was a process where neither traditional chiefs nor traditional clan gods were displaced.

The final chapter of the book reviews the contribution Japanese anthropologists have made to our knowledge of Micronesia. Their familiarity with the region began with a visit by Tsuenori Suzuki to the Marshalls in 1884, peaked during the prewar period with the research of Ken-ichi Sugiura on Palau and Ponape between 1937 and 1941, and slowly reemerged following the war with the work of the authors represented in this volume.

Overall, I believe this volume makes a significant contribution to the anthropological literature on Micronesia not only through the substan-

tive content of its individual essays, but in two other ways as well. First, it appries the non-Japanese-reading anthropological community of the important and wide-ranging interests of their Japanese colleagues. This sample of their work should stimulate greater interest in and awareness of their contributions. Second, it is valuable to note that the orientation and conclusions found in many of these essays are strikingly parallel to many of those utilized and reached in the English-language literature. Specifically, I cite the central conclusions of the volume (as summarized in pages 1-6) on such issues as matrilineality, cross-sibling sets, and specialized or technical knowledge. Although several of the individual authors list the English-language work in their bibliographies, few actually cite that work in the course of their analyses. It is difficult to judge, therefore, how many of their conclusions were influenced by or derivative of those earlier ones. The editors, however, appear to credit the volume's authors with a degree of originality (for example, pp. 2-3), that a comprehensive review of the extant literature might question. If "independent invention" rather than "diffusion" accounts for such similarities it speaks well of contemporary anthropological field methods and analysis.

Finally, one should note that the volume is an attractive one with numerous line drawings, charts, tables, maps, and illustrations that significantly contribute to ease of reading and comprehension. Only a small number of the essays are marred by lapses in proofreading that allowed typographical, spelling, and grammatical errors (and a few malapropisms) to slip through. Only the volume's introduction is significantly flawed in this regard.