BOOK REVIEWS

MISSION, CHURCH, AND SECT IN OCEANIA. James A. Boutilier, Daniel T. Hughes, and Sharon W. Tiffany, editors. Association for Social Anthropology in Oceania (ASAO) Monograph No. 6, University Press of America, Lanham, Maryland, 1984. 514 p., 2 figures, 9 tables, table of contents, editor's preface, bibliography. Library binding, $34.50, paper text $19.50.—This monograph will mark a turning point in anthropological thinking regarding the cultures of the Pacific region. The change will not be a rapid deviation, for old habits can be very persistent, but there will be a definite alteration.

What will be the nature of the change? For that we have to digress a bit as an introduction. The populations of the Pacific, like the islands on which they live, are mostly small, scattered, and comparatively unimportant on a world-wide scale. They possess no vast untapped resources, no teeming populations suffering from drought and malnutrition, no press of poverty-stricken shantytowns housing migrants from the countryside seeking a better life in the city. Not that untapped resources, drought, malnutrition, poverty, disease, and migrant shantytowns do not exist in the Pacific; quite the contrary, they do. But they do not exist on a scale sufficient to attract much attention. This can clearly be seen by opening almost any text on the topic of development in "third world" or "less developed" nations. Invariably the opening sentence will read something like " . . . the people of Central and South America, Africa, Asia, and the Middle East . . .". Especially for one who lives and works in the area, the omission of "Oceania" or "the Pacific islands" is very conspicuous.

The people of the Pacific are therefore frequently excluded from discussions of change and development, because the small size and remoteness of the islands and their populations simply do not attract much attention in comparison with other regions. As a corollary, because they do not attract much attention in discussions of development, the peoples of the Pacific are widely viewed as living lives that differ but little from precontact patterns. This view holds among professional anthropologists as well as among the general public. Many anthropologists have attempted in their field work to describe a Pacific island culture with the implication that, apart from "introduced" elements (frequently explicitly excluded) they were describing cultural systems that had remained essentially the same throughout contact history. Whether it was in the Solomons, Tonga, Ponape, Fiji, the Cooks, Palau, or wherever, it was as though some immutable essence was being described. As a result we have a host of statements about " . . . in Tahitian culture" or "on Kosrae . . ." or "among the Manus . . ." and so on. The implication is that that is the way they always have been and always will be.

But no cultural system can seriously be viewed as existing in a state of eternal limbo. The view that cultures are adaptive systems providing populations with a means for coping with their environments (sociocultural as well as biophysical) suggests that, as the sociocultural environment has changed in the historic period, concomitant changes are to be expected in the means of coping. This is precisely the contribution of the volume at hand. It is most refreshing to read a monograph in which it is expressly shown that present-day islanders do not live in the same cultural worlds they were living in at contact, and furthermore, that the islanders themselves have played major roles in bringing about the transformations.

All too frequently (as in Douglas Oliver's well-known *The Pacific Islands* and Alan Moorehead's popular work *The Fatal Impact*) the islanders have been viewed as innocent subjects of changes wrought upon their lives by more powerful outsiders. The new direction I refer to has to do with this view, and is signalled in this monograph by Shulamit Decktor-Korn's statement on page 419:

> "Implicit in much of the general treatment of missionization is a view of the natives as victims, or, at best, persons merely responsive to initiatives taken by the missionaries. I suggest that we might more productively view missionization as a dynamic process in which local people themselves are active agents and manipulators . . ."

Sione Lātūkefu expands on this theme in the concluding essay of the monograph:

> "The authors in this volume have recognized that indigenous cultures never remained the passive victims of their colonizers. Their accounts highlight the dynamic and active response of the islanders, who were always selective in their acceptance of new ways and managed to manipulate situations to serve their own purposes. In some places, the response took the form of un-

> sophisticated cargo cultism; in others, it entailed a remarkably rapid adoption of new ideas which they interpreted to accord with their existing cultures, thereby transforming those cultures to meet their changing needs." (page 460)

The dismissal of cargo cults as "unsophisticated" is unfortunate and would appear to betray an unfamiliarity with the extensive literature on these movements (for example, Schwartz 1976 and Worsley 1968 among many others), but we have here a view that, rather than representing an essentially precontact condition with some external impositions, Pacific Island cultures should be seen as having undergone significant transformations, transformations that have been effected as the result of the active involvement of the islanders. Furthermore, the role of the islanders has even been manipulative (a word used by both authors), which means that the islanders have managed situations to meet their own motives, goals, and choices.

The volume is a republication of a monograph in the Association for Social Anthropology in Oceania (ASAO) series. It initially appeared in 1978 when the ASAO's publishing arrangements were with the University of Michigan Press. Like all ASAO monographs, it is the result of a symposium held at one of the Association's annual meetings, in this case 1975. The ASAO monograph series is now published through the University of Press of America, which is also republishing several earlier volumes in the series. The reappearance of this particular volume is most welcome, since not only does it set a new tone in its treatment of change in the Pacific, it also deals with a topic (missionization) that has heretofore undergone all too little examination.

It is not a one-sided volume. Of the three editors, one (Boutilier) is an historian, one an anthropologist (Tiffany), and the third (Hughes) was a missionary early in his life and later an academic anthropologist. A diversity of viewpoints is thus represented among the organizers of the volume. Diversity is also present among the contributors: anthropologists comprise the largest number (ten), but there are three missionaries and another historian as well. One of the authors is a Pacific Islander, three are from the British sphere (here the U.K., Australia, and New Zealand), eleven are North American (U.S. and Canada), and one is a Netherlander. Diversity is also manifest in the situations dealt with in the various essays: two deal with Polynesian settings, three with Micronesia, and six with Melanesia, while the remaining five take up general matters in the region as a whole. When we look at the form of Christianity represented, we find that four papers discuss situations in which the missionaries are (or were) Catholic, in four others some type of Protestantism is central, and in another three there are or have been several forms of Christianity. Unfortunately no attempt is made to examine the role of Shinto and Buddhism in Japanese-administered areas between 1914 and 1945 (cf. Shuster 1982). Unfortunately, too, the early Catholic missionary efforts in the Marianas and nearby island groups in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries are also ignored; Gottfried Oosterwal's introduction to the first section of the book sets the baseline tone for the monograph (page 32) at the arrival of the London Missionary Society's *Duff* in Tahiti in 1797.

The book is divided into four sections. In a general introduction by Kenelm Burridge titled "Missionary Occasions" and in the first section (titled "Missionaries and Anthropologists" and consisting of Oosterwal's introduction and two essays by Charles Forman and Daniel Hughes) the thesis is presented that missionaries should primarily be viewed as agents of culture change. I was strongly reminded here of an incident during my first field work in the Solomon Islands; I asked a (Catholic) missionary what he saw as the main problem in his work. Without hesitation he said that the major problem was the fact that he was a westerner (Australian, in his case) presenting western things; Christianity, he felt, played only a very small role in his difficulties. In these several essays the authors explore the motives and goals of missionaries, their roles in health care and education, the varying numbers of missionaries in the field in the twentieth century, their views of anthropologists and anthropologists' views of missionaries.

In the second section, titled "Missionization in Historical Perspective," there are four papers. Sione Lātūkefu examines the role of islanders (Fijians, Tongans, and Samoans) as missionaries in New Guinea and nearby islands. A case study of social change concomitant with missionary presence in the Mortlock Islands near Truk is the topic of an essay by James Nason. His paper and that of Peter Black (in section four, discussed below) are the only two in the volume that attempt systematic discussions of change over the entire contact period. The third paper, by James Boutilier, reviews the role of missions in education in the Solomon Islands, while the fourth, by Harold Ross, takes up the subject of competition between missions on the island of Malaita.

The third section is titled "Local-Level Missionary Adaptation." The first (by Jeremy Beckett) of the four papers takes up the organization of different types of religious groups in the islands of the Torres Straits. In the second, Frances Harwood examines the formation

of a local religion in the Solomon Islands as a reaction to the exclusivist policies of Methodist mission leaders. The (seemingly self-contradictory) goal of making the Catholic church in the Marshall and Caroline Islands an "indigenous" institution is discussed by Francis Hezel. Finally the effects of the Vatican II council on a specific Catholic missionary order (Marist) in the Pacific are reviewed by Gerald Arbuckle.

But all of this, in which the prime focus has been on the missionaries, is backdrop for the fourth section, "Indigenous Response." The section opens with an essay by Peter Black on the ways in which the teachings of the first missionary (Father Marino, a Catholic priest) on Tobi (southwestern Carolines) have been reinterpreted and selectively incorporated into the indigenous world view. Black notes that only seven things are remembered about the missionary's time on Tobi:

> " . . . out of a much wider range of potential memories the Tobians have chosen these seven items. There is no way to tell at this late date whether they are grounded in fact or fantasy, though it is certain that they all contain particularly Tobian meanings. In this sense the alien missionary's teachings have been processed by the islanders so that they have become congruent with indigenous ideas. Understandings have arisen about them that are remote from the understandings of orthodox Catholicism but fit with the rest of Tobian culture. Transformation has taken place not in the borrowed religious practices, but in the words and deeds of its (sic) conveyor." (pp. 342–343)

In short, the Tobians have become, not really Catholics, but perhaps more accurately "Marinotobians." They have developed a new religion that combines a recognizable and visible outer shell of introduced items with an inner heart of traditional understandings. Black goes on to say that (page 343):

> "Further analysis reveals that these seven items form a coherent ideological complex with definite properties. The complex is nonfalsifiable, possesses a certain dynamic, and has both positive and negative functions for the people who use it. It is also an idiom which expresses certain Tobian truths about man, society and the supernatural."

Having worked out this new synthesis, Black points out, the Tobians are remarkably resistant to additional religious innovation or reinterpretation, even if the innovator is another Catholic priest. Only if the innovation can be shown to be in keeping with their interpretation of Father Marino's seven teachings does it stand a chance of acceptance.

In the second essay Dorothy Counts reviews the reaction of the Kaliai of New Britain to missionary endeavors:

> " . . . the Kaliai response to twenty-five years of missionization has been pragmatic. The Kaliai have borrowed from the mission those ideas which seem to explain Kaliai experiences and those programs which help them to achieve their own goals. These borrowed ideas are adapted to Kaliai beliefs and experience and are used to reach Kaliai ends. When the mission's offerings fill a clearly felt need, they are embraced. When the mission's programs do not meet Kaliai needs, they are ignored. And when they threaten the Kaliai view of progress, they are resented." (page 393)

The third chapter in the section is that of Shulamit Decktor-Korn, and deals with the formation of new church denominations in Tonga. Her comment regarding the need to view islanders as active agents of change has already been referred to in this review. Sharon Tiffany's essay on Samoa follows Dector-Korn's and takes up the issue of the reasons for and consequences of switching membership between denominations. Sione Lātūkefu concludes the section and the book with a brief chapter that reviews the many facets of missionization brought to light in the monograph and underscores the issues the contributors have raised. As pointed out earlier, he is particularly concerned to note the key role the islanders have played in changing their cultures. The essays by Nason on the Mortlocks, Beckett on the Torres Straits, Harwood on the Christian Fellowship Church of the Solomon Islands, and Ross on mission rivalries on Malaita might well have been better placed in this section, since all of them deal with "indigenous response." Such a placing would also have allowed a meatier, perhaps more insightful analysis of the various responses in a comparative setting.

Be that as it may, the varied perspectives, settings, and interests that alternate through the book give it a tantalizing richness that might be considered by some to be a major weakness. What is presented is a series of cameo descriptions of missionaries, missionary life, missionary activity, and islander response. It all hints at an underlying structure, but that structure is not revealed. However, that is the stimulus that inheres in the book, for although no central analytical problem or issue is actually addressed and there is not even an historical overview of missionary activity in the Pacific, the monograph stirs one to ponder the ma-

terial presented and to recognize that somewhere there must be an underlying structure that will bring much (though doubtless not all) of the material presented into a coherent whole.

And our view of Pacific island cultures will never be the same; large scale and significant changes have taken place, and the islanders themselves have been major actors in bringing this about. The cultures have been transformed in a "dynamic and active response" to changing external circumstances. That is to say, there has been on-going adaptation on the part of the islanders, and the cultures are not the same as they always have been. At the same time there has also been cultural continuity, for much of the response has been to adapt external items to conform to existing internal qualities. This point raises a problem rarely addressed in cultural anthropology: we are aware that there is such a thing as cultural continuity (see, for example, Keesing 1958 and Spicer 1971), but how are we to identify and predict it?

But the book does not pretend to be something it is not. It is intended to point to a problem area rather than present a series of questions that have been systematically investigated. Its editors are to be congratulated for producing it, and we can only hope it will have the seminal influence it deserves.

KENNETH E. KNUDSON, *Department of Anthropology, University of Guam, UOG Station, Mangilao, Guam 96923*

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A FIELD GUIDE TO THE BIRDS OF HAWAII AND THE TROPICAL PACIFIC by H. Douglas Pratt, Philip L. Bruner and Delwyn G. Berrett. Illustrated by H. Douglas Pratt. Princeton University Press. Princeton, New Jersey. 408 pp., 45 Plates. $50 cloth, $19.95 paper.—This is a much needed field guide that describes the birds of Hawaii, tropical Polynesia, Micronesia and Fiji. Excluded are New Zealand and Melanesia. It is the first field guide available for many of these islands and will be valued by people interested in birds in these areas.

The plates are handsome and have lifelike colors. Pratt has managed to fit an amazingly large number of birds into each plate so as to reduce the number of plates and expense. This field guide uses the style of the Roger Tory Peterson Field Guides, with an emphasis on field marks rather than extensive verbal descriptions. Each plate is faced with a page with the common names of the birds and a brief description of the key field marks. However, the pictures do not have any of the useful arrows employed in Peterson's Field Guide to point out the important diagnostic features to the inexperienced. This makes it difficult for the novice to decipher essential identification marks when only a limited observation time is available. Additional information is given in the text portion of the book which is helpful, and some of this information could have been incorporated into the plates where the facing page was not full.

Identifiers have to confront the problem of variation of birds from one island to another. A strong point of the book is that many of the variants and extreme forms are shown. The illustrations are arranged partly taxonomically and partly geographically. The widespread aquatic birds are arranged by taxon, and the terrestrial birds are arranged by island group, with plates for Micronesia, Polynesia and Hawaii, and a separate set of illustrations for birds introduced to the region. The organization of the illustrations may cause some problems until the reader is familiar with the book. In particular, the reader should review the birds of their islands before using the book in the field. For example, in Palau, one of the most common birds visible in Koror is the chestnut mannikin. This bird is illustrated only on the plate for introduced birds, and there is no mention of it on the plates for the Micronesian land birds. On the other hand, the Philippine turtle dove, introduced to the Marianas, is illustrated on the page with the other Micronesian pigeons and doves. Extinct birds are also illustrated, partly in the hopes that some will be rediscovered.

In addition to the illustrations, the book contains 3