

The third problem is that the descriptions of individual Kenyahs' strategies and choices are missing from the illustrations of their participation in the market economy. Although Devung discusses their strategies, he does not focus on individuals. Because individual members' understanding of the world and experiences vary even within one community, such differences constitute a variety of interests and therefore the taking into account of individuals' choices and strategies is critical in order to understand the limitations of "traditional" lives in the current environment of the globalized economy and modernization.

Despite these problems, overall this volume is rich in cultural detail and documents well the Kenyahs' relationships to their natural environment. The book as a whole creates a polyphonic picture of Kenyah culture and society and provides comprehensive as well as multi-dimensional information about them. As it provides information which is not processed by theories, even if readers do not have any anthropological or other specific academic trainings, they can easily understand the present situations of the people. Furthermore, the volume significantly contributes to ethnographies of Southeast Asia through recording oral literature and reconstructing regional histories from narratives. Documenting narratives on history is especially crucial because publications of the history of the Kenyah, whose society is non-literate, by Kenyahs themselves are very rare.

Chie SAITO  
Suzuka International University  
Suzuka City, Japan

### PAPUA NEW GUINEA

SLONE, THOMAS H., translator, editor. *One Thousand One Papua New Guinean Nights: Folktales from Wantok Newspaper*. Oakland, CA 94611-2058: Masalai Press, 2001. *Volume 1: Tales from 1972–1985*, xxviii + 500 pages. Paper US\$39.95; ISBN 0-9714127-0-7, *Volume 2: Tales from 1986–1997*. xx + 590 pages. Indices, glossary, references, maps, illustrations. Paper US\$44.95; ISBN 0-9714127-1-5.

Thomas H. Slone, a staff scientist on cancer research, has made a strong entry into the field of Oceanic folkloristics. In addition to these extensive volumes, he has also placed on the World Wide Web two bibliographies, one on Melanesian-English dictionaries, the other on Papua New Guinea folktales. The indices completing the second volume include the tale tellers (or writers), their villages, languages, maps of the provinces, a glossary of flora and fauna, and a motif index of thirty-five pages.

A quick glance at the index reveals that Slone has leaned heavily on Basil KIRTLEY's two indices (1971, 1995). This in turn bears out Kirtley's contention that the folktales of Polynesia, Melanesia, and Micronesia are strongly interrelated on the motif level. William LESSA's extensive comparative study of Ulithian tales reinforces Kirtley's work by tying his Micronesian tales from Ulithi Atoll to the rest of Oceania, both on the motif and tale level (LESSA, 1961). In my own work, I made extensive use of the above scholars, leaving me little reason to doubt the interrelationship of narratives from the above three culture areas (MITCHELL 1973, 1990).

Slone states (xxii) that he had studied Tok Pisin (Papua New Guinea Pidgin English) prior to his three trips to Papua New Guinea, where he encountered the local newspaper *Wantok*, with its standard feature on *Stori Tumbuna*, or Ancestor Tales. He decided they should be translated.

His motivation was not an unusual one. The whole region was changing rapidly and he felt these tales worthy of preservation.

These narratives run from 1972 to 1997, totaling 1047 (his count). A few he did not translate, for they were duplicate tales published earlier in the series. The tales are published in the order in which they appeared in *Wantok* and in most cases are identified by teller and locality. All are carefully motified at the end of each tale, using the THOMPSON (1955–1958), KIRTLEY (1955, 1971), and HOFFMAN (1973) motif indices. There is no attempt to arrange them by genre, and they range from legend to origin myths to Märchen. Overall there is strong indication of belief, especially in accounts of the supernatural (which predominate). Not uncommon are concluding comments, such as “This is a true story that is still told” (322). Other remarks indicate some reworking of tales: “This is a very long story. I forgot some parts and just shortened it” (649). Other unsolicited statements indicate many more “ancestor tales” could be garnered: “If you want, I will write again. I have many ancestor stories” (230). And, as to be expected, there is evidence that missionizing has had its effect. After an account of a ghost woman who lives in a tree and to whom pigs were offered, the teller concludes: “The people of this village did this until the mission came and revealed the word of God. After that this custom ended” (599).

A goodly number of variants of the tales collected by Lessa and myself appear in Slone’s work. As KIRTLEY reported in his dissertation, published in 1955, there is no extensive cosmogony-cosmology to be found in Micronesia-Melanesia, such as has been reported for Polynesia. The following comments about these Melanesian tales will be made in reference to LESSA’s (1961) comparative work (1973, 1990).

While Slone’s extensive sample contains no trickster figures like the Polynesian Maui or the Micronesian Olofat, the many animal tales make up the lack and profess to explain animal and bird characteristics as due to the many scurvy tricks played on one another. Thus, we have the bird that unfairly made itself handsome at the expense of its friend (101–102), all very similar to Micronesian tradition (MITCHELL 1973, 48–50). Included here are accounts of abused children who become birds (SLONE, 698; MITCHELL, 1990, 59–90).

Once one passes to the more structured Märchen, the similarities are many; and the tellers appear especially fond of particular types. Take, for example, the Swan Maiden tale. I have noted thirty-three variants, ranging from the classical account of maidens who remove their bird skins to bathe, thus allowing a lurking male to steal one and secure a lovely bride (853–54), to an offbeat one in which a faithful dog carries out the theft. But the results are the same. His master secures a fine bride.

Along the same line is the popularity of the Kind and Unkind Sons. In search of a missing arrow, the Kind Son befriends an old woman and is rewarded with two beautiful wives. The Unkind Son gets two old hags for loutish behavior. There are other tales that also received high mention: disasters follow the killing of supernatural eels; floods follow the breaking of tabus; ghosts of women dead in childbirth bring grief; cannibalistic spirits masquerade as friends on nocturnal fishing trips; men trick close relatives into sex by pretending to be ordered to do so by spirits. Even the tale of a man who seduces women by extending his penis underground and the woman who killed her partners by having a poisonous snake in her vagina found its way into the *Wantok*. One could go on, but all of the above are to be found in Micronesia. KIRTLEY’S (1955) and LESSA’S (1961) works stand. The narratives of Oceania are strongly interrelated.

What then of further value to folklorists? If one were to assume a purist’s approach and insist on field collecting with all its appurtenances, one’s reaction could be somewhat negative. But here are hundreds of texts to be used for comparative purposes; and were one to take upon himself the task of a “Folktales of New Guinea,” here is a great starting point. In attempting a broad survey of an extensive area, one cannot possibly spend the customary year

or two in each area. He must have a good idea where to go and whom to contact. Slone has established a solid basis for future investigation, in addition to saving newspaper narratives from the oblivion of tropic heat, mold, and termites.

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Roger E. MITCHELL  
 University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire

## INDIA

ADHIKARY, QIRON. *Feminist Folktales from India*. Oakland: Masalai Press, 2003. iii + 97 pages. Illustrations, geographical index, map, references. Paper, n. p.; ISBN 0-9714127-3-1.

CROOKE, WILLIAM, and PANDIT RAM GHARIB CHAUBE. *Folktales from Northern India*. Edited and with an Introduction by Sadhana Naithani. ABC-CLIO Classic Folk and Fairy Tales. Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, Inc., 2002. 1 + 425 pages. Index. Hardcover US\$45.00; ISBN 1-57607-698-9.

Here are two newly available collections of folktales from India, and both are most welcome as sources of narratives for pleasure and cultural knowledge. Beyond offering these universal, pleasing attributes of folktales, the two books could not be more different in nature. Qiron Adhikary, described on her back cover as a Bengali writer “born and raised in Singapore and Malaysia” and currently living in San Francisco, intends to provide in her collection of twenty-three retold, undated tales from many parts of India “positive female images and role models.” In Crooke and Chaube hundreds of folktales emerge from well-documented ethnographic work undertaken about a century ago, in colonial times, which are quite innocent of selective priorities.

*Feminist Folktales* makes no claims to scholarship. Adhikary includes a “Geographical Index” and map showing the stories’ places of origin, but gives no indication of the actual sources for the tales themselves, even though she does meticulously list credits for her nice illustrations