

studies. When I began to teach two young Kammu men to read and write Thai, one of them told the story and said that it was no use for them to try to learn such things. Since their ancestors had eaten the hide with their alphabet written on it, Kammu people could not learn to read and write. At first I did not know what to say, because I certainly did not want to make them despise their own sacred tales. Then I found a solution: I said that this tale explains why the Kammu have no script of their own, but it did not say that the Kammu could not learn the alphabets of other ethnic groups. The two young men became fully literate in an amazingly short time.

In the comments to the Burmese wonder tale "The Snake Prince" it is said that in that tale "a woman actually gives her third and youngest daughter to a snake" as if this were unique. We do, however, find the same idea in our Kammu tales. There a woman gets envious when she sees how prosperous a neighbor's daughter becomes after marrying the Snake Prince. She goes out, finds a python, carries it home, and lets her daughter sleep with the snake. Precisely the same conversation between mother and daughter as in the Burmese version is carried out during the night while the snake is swallowing the girl, and in the morning the girl is dead.

Contrary to the Kammu tale, the Burmese version is of special interest because it not only has an unhappy ending but also a happy one. Both of these are given, and they sound like two totally different tales with the section quoted above as a common introduction.

This would be enough to show that even more important and enjoyable than the folklore discussions in Part 1 is Part 2, which consists of 101 priceless tales. With these and the 114 tales found in Annemarie Esche's *Märchen der Völker Burmas* (Leipzig: Insel Verlag, 1976) and the many tales in the minor publications listed in the bibliography, we begin to get at least some idea about Burma's rich and variegated lore. It is especially gratifying that both the volume under review and Esche's work present tales from several of the many Burmese minorities. For the minorities, it is not only the folklore but also the languages that are in danger of extinction.

NOTES

1. Personal communication from Inga-Lill Hansson, Senior Lecturer in East Asian Linguistics, Lund University.

2. So far only a slightly divergent version has been published (see "The Flood: Three Northern Kammu Versions of the Story of Creation," by Lindell, Kristina, Jan-Öjvind Swahn and Damrong Tayanin in Alan Dundes's *The Flood Myth* [Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988]).

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AUSTRONESIA

FOX, JAMES J. and CLIFFORD SATHER, Editors. *Origins, Ancestry and Alliance: Explorations in Austronesian Ethnography*. Canberra: The Australian National University, Department of Anthropology, 1996. viii + 336 pages. Maps, tables, index. Paper A\$35.00 (sea); A\$40.00 (air); ISBN 0-7315-2432-2.

This book contains fourteen articles or chapters including an introductory chapter written by

James Fox, one of the book's editors as well as the principal organizer of the Comparative Austronesian Project of the Australian National University. The project organized a number of workshops and symposia on variegated aspects widespread among Austronesian-speaking peoples with the general intention of bringing together researchers from various fields to fill the gap that has resulted from both an increasing "localization" of academic interests and from a widening differentiation of modes of analysis. One conference for this project was held in January 1990 on the same topics that would become the title of this book. The essays collected here are selected from the papers originally read at the conference, which, we are told, produced another volume dealing specifically with the ideas of hierarchy. As the theme of hierarchy is also discussed in this book under review, it is probable that a much wider range of topics are covered here than in the other volume. The diverse subjects treated in this book might inform us in a telling way of the topical and thematic width of the comparative study of Austronesian ethnology.

The thirteen articles following the introduction can be classified on the basis of a number of criteria, but the most significant one is whether or not a given article discusses its topics broadly in line with the perspectives Fox gives on the Austronesian characteristics of origin structures, which consist of origin groups, origin discourses, the notion of ancestry, and hierarchy based on precedence. The articles that generally follow Fox's perspective are as follows: Jukka Siikala's "The Elders and the Younger—Foreign and Autochthonous Origin and Hierarchy in the Cook Islands" (chapter 3); Fox's own "The Transformation of Progenitor Lines of Origin: Patterns of Precedence in Eastern Indonesia" (chapter 7); E. D. Lewis's "Origin Structures and Precedence in the Social Orders of Tana 'Ai and Sikka" (chapter 8); Michael Vischer's "Precedence among the Domains of the Three Hearth Stones: Contestation of an order of precedence in the Ko'a ceremonial cycle (Palu'e Island, Eastern Indonesia)" (chapter 9); Barbara Dix Grime's "The Founding of the House and the Source of Life: Two Complementary Origin Structures in Buru Society" (chapter 10); and Sandra Pannell's "Histories of Diversity, Hierarchies of Unity: The Politics of Origins in a South-West Moluccan Village" (chapter 11). Except Siikala's article on the Cook islands, essays in this category deal with the societies within the geographically specific area of Eastern Indonesia. Occupying nearly half of all the papers in the book, this cluster of articles shows us in an impressive way the main target of this book, which is a coherent approach to comparative ethnography. Of particular interest is the ideology that relates the precedence of origin to the higher hierarchical positions in these societies and that tends conspicuously to be expressed with botanical metaphors such as roots and tips of plants. This connotes that the ancestry is conceived not so much in terms of descent therefrom as in terms of ascent thereto. Origin discourses by the same token trace back ascent lines to ancestors who are shared by members of a given origin group. This is indeed a major reason for why Fox uses the term "origin group" rather than descent group or the more locally colored term of "house."

Among the rest of the papers, a number of couplings are discernible. Aletta Biersack's "Rivals and Wives: Affinal Politics and the Tongan Ramage" (chapter 12) and F. David Bulbeck's "The Politics of Marriage and the Marriage of Politics in Gowa, South Sulawesi, during the 16th and 17th Centuries" (chapter 13) both analyze historical materials. The first in order to elucidate the working of the kin-affinal network of Tongan ruling dynasties, and the second to reconstruct by a statistical method the ranking systems and vicissitudes of Makassarese elite lineage groups. Both papers give us concrete and illuminating examples of marriage strategies and tactics for maneuvering in traditional political spheres. Ken'ichi Sudo's "Rank, Hierarchy and Routes of Migration: Chieftainship in the Central Caroline Islands of Micronesia" (chapter 4) also uses oral history in order to determine principles of chieftainship in the Satawal islands. Relying upon solid ethnographic evidence, Sudo finds

there two distinct principles, one based on precedence of occupying lands and the other on relations to the powerful island of Yap.

Another coupling is Clifford Sather's "All Threads are White: Iban Egalitarianism Reconsidered" (chapter 5) and Aram A. Yengoyan's "Origin, Hierarchy and Egalitarianism among the Mandaya of Southeast Mindanao, Philippines" (chapter 6). Both papers are impressively balanced pieces of work that try to consider in-depth the egalitarian tendencies or inclinations of the societies in question while not neglecting their hierarchical aspects, potential or actual. Yengoyan's treatment of the *bagani* system as an expression of hierarchy and of gambling of rice as an economically equalizing mechanism is persuasive in presenting the contrasting values inherent in Mandaya society. Sather's paper discusses in full logical relations among hierarchy, equality, and *égalité*. Distinguishing between the last two concepts, as he rightly propounds, is the first step necessary to avoid confusion aroused by controversy over so-called Iban inequality. Sather succeeds in taking this first step by applying his theoretical idea to a number of concrete aspects of Iban cultural expressions and social behavior.

The last coupling is Peter Bellwood's "Hierarchy, Founder Ideology and Austronesian Expansion" (chapter 2) and Charles O. Frake's "The Cultural Construction of Rank, Identity and Ethnic Origins in the Sulu Archipelago" (chapter 14). As an archaeologist of the southern Pacific region, Bellwood submits a hypothetical theory that would explain the dynamics of the Austronesian expansion from a highly universal angle, that is the existence of the founder-focused ideology among the Austronesian speakers. He argues that the younger branches of the founding groups in established lands would tend to migrate to new lands in order to enhance their rank as the founders of new groups, a rank that would be denied to them in the old lands. This argument assumes by extension the existence of hierarchical rank systems at the dawn of the Austronesian expansion, which Bellwood propounds on a linguistic basis. Frake, on the other hand, is definitely skeptical about this assumption. After having considered varying social systems in the zone of the southern Philippine Sea and their historical formations (especially, ethnic identity and rank formations), he suggests that the shaping of a hierarchical system is a product of historical experience, and then concludes that no commonality of such historical experiences can be evidenced in widespread Austronesian speaking societies. He goes so far as to say that "one could as easily argue that the fundamental Austronesian ethos has been egalitarian rather than hierarchical."

The fundamental difference seen between Bellwood's and Frake's views concerning the Austronesian heritage of cultural and social values is symbolic of the complexity of the composition of this book. Whilst the core cluster of papers stands out as representing a coherent collection of ethnographic comparisons, the remaining papers seem to form a somewhat diffuse collection of individual works rather loosely connected by the common themes of hierarchy, rank, origin, or alliance. This by no means is to say that each individual paper is diffuse in itself. On the contrary, all the papers are extremely informative as well as exploratory, and as such they should be regarded as important contributions to ethnography even beyond the sphere of the Austronesian world.

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MASKARINEC, GREGORY G. *Nepalese Shaman Oral Texts*. Harvard Oriental Series, vol. 55. Cambridge MA: The Department of Sanskrit and Indian Studies, Harvard University Press, 1998. xii + 695 pages. Bibliography,