

theoretical direction, and hopefully this volume will stimulate further work.

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From Primitive to Postcolonial in Melanesia and Anthropology, by Bruce M Knauff. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1999. ISBN cloth, 0-472-09687-7; paper, 0-472-06687-0; x + 320 pages, maps, tables, figures, photographs, notes, bibliography, index. Cloth, US\$59.50; paper, US\$19.95.

For almost a quarter of a century, the writings of Bruce Knauff have been characterized by a willingness to honor the complexities of Melanesian ethnography, coupled with a sobriety of judgment. This book exemplifies these qualities. As its title underlines, if the anthropological imagination of Melanesia began with a view of primitive and self-determining indigenous communities, it is now recognizing that the age of encompassment is in full swing—postmodern capitalism, the politics of the nation-state, and the infiltration of western culture increasingly define Melanesian modernity. Against the grain of much of what passes as transcultural anthropology, Knauff aims to appreciate and affirm the cultural diversity and areal distinctiveness of Melanesia against such theoretically and globally reductive approaches. He self-consciously situates his study in the interstitial zone between a globalism that seems to bracket what is distinctive locally and a localism that fails to grasp how the west's encompassment of others

inflects the trajectory of local communities. Analyzing a variety of topics, from images of the body to the changing character of conflict, he argues that culture practices are seldom stable over an extended time period and that, contrary to a founding premise of Melanesian ethnography, culture is not shared in a relatively uniform manner by a population of same-speaking people. Throughout the text, Knauff raises the critical issue of the ways in which ethnography in the colonial context inflected the description of local practices. In particular, he argues that ethnographers underplayed the violence of Melanesian headhunting and warfare as a counterweight to a colonial administration that was all too ready to pacify local societies by however brutal means were necessary. The specific point illustrates the broader reality that anthropologists have only begun to appreciate how their liminal position within the political structure of encompassment informed their theory and ethnography. Each chapter in its own way also illustrates two other critical points. First, the advance of the west cannot be grasped simply as some machine of domination that subsumes and subordinates Melanesian societies, such thinking tending to elide both the power of local forms of agency and the ways in which indigenous societies always contained the terms and possibility of their own seduction. Second, an understanding of the relationship between the west and the indigenous world depends on an understanding of the mediating structures, including and especially the assortment of western agents and institutions that have imposed themselves on Melanesian lifeways. *From Primitive to Postcolo-*

nial not only represents an important turn in Melanesian anthropology, but does so in an exemplary way.

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Nanshin: Japanese Settlers in Papua and New Guinea, 1890–1949, by Hiromitsu Iwamoto. Canberra: Journal of Pacific History, 1999. ISBN 0–9585863–0–6, iv + 179 pages, tables, maps, illustrations, bibliography, index. Paper, A\$27, US\$30.

Set in the political and intellectual context of the Japanese *Nanshin* (Southward Advancement) Project from the late nineteenth century, this book documents an interesting history of some two hundred Japanese settlers in Papua New Guinea between 1890 and 1949. Originally part of a PhD dissertation at the Australian National University, the main thesis looks into Japanese emigration to America and the South Pacific in the western capitalist “world system” of the late nineteenth century, as the result of a “peripheral” nation providing labor to the western powers. The surprising twist in the case of Papua New Guinea, as this book documents, is how a Japanese community, though negligibly small in terms of population, served a national ambition to colonize the South Seas, when Japan became a formidable, core colonial power.

The book has six numbered chapters, in addition to a separate introduction. The introduction explains theoretical and methodological concerns and provides statistics (1894 to 1939) of Japanese travelers and settlers in New Guinea and their home

places in Japan. The author proposes that the combination of Japan’s national interest in southern expansion and Australia’s rejection of Asian settlers under the White Australia immigration policy determined the fate of Japanese long-term residents in and around Rabual for almost half a century.

The book reads like a chronicle of the rise, development, and sudden ending of a Japanese national discourse—*Nanshin-ron* (southern advancement discourse), or expansion of immigration and trading in the South Seas (including Micronesia, Melanesia, Australia, and so on). The story of the Japanese living in New Guinea is used as an example by Iwamoto to illustrate how it fitted into the larger picture of expansionist plotting in Tokyo, which involved politicians and intellectuals, especially members of the Colonization Society (established in 1893).

Each chapter covers a different historical period since the late nineteenth century and has identical subdivisions, beginning with an account of the activities and proposals of the southern expansion advocates in Tokyo. Iwamoto then discusses how the Japanese perceived New Guinea, how they conducted business and involved themselves in local politics in New Britain, how migration and settlement became relevant to political development in their homeland, and how the Australian colonial administration responded to their advancement in New Guinea.

The second main theme that runs through the entire volume and is intertwined with a reconstruction of Japanese southern ambitions, tells a fascinating story of a single Japanese pearl diver and adventurer, Isokichi Komine.