

“smallness” as a euphemism for economic nonviability. Those that colonial structures divided for their own spoils now assert their distinctive identities within wider political amalgamations such as the Association of Small Island States and the Pacific Islands Forum. The influence of the British, Americans, and Australians in engendering different solutions to today’s challenges is a mind-game that is likely to distinguish a Nanumean’s thinking from any outsider’s viewpoint. They are likely to differ among themselves about what things from the outside world should be considered necessities, and what from the island must be preserved for the future. But exploring those possibilities will help place their communities within their idiosyncratic framework rather than using an outsider template such as a particular political or ecological rubric.

This text will be welcomed by those complementing their teaching with clear, readable ethnographic accounts that allow the peoples’ voices to be heard. At the same time this ethnography provides an introduction to many aspects of social structure, work, and political organization, showing how these have responded to changes. Each chapter includes notes and suggestions for further reading, and the study guide at the end of the monograph includes a number of questions to encourage student debate. It is highly regrettable that no index has been included, as that would have facilitated access to the complex ideas for which students are seeking answers. It would also have been useful to have the figures listed in the contents. The concepts we endeavor

to introduce to students are embedded, but not too covertly, in this new, readable ethnography, which offers an optimistic entry for this Tuvalu community to the new millennium.

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The Pattera of Guam: Their Story and Legacy. 25 minutes, VHS 1/2 inch, 2001. A video documentary by Karen A Fury Cruz, Pattera Video Project, P O Box 24856, GMF, Barrigada, Guam 96921. US\$15 plus shipping and handling.

This video documentary was made to honor the *pattera*, or midwives, of Guam. With the still photographs interspersed among interviews, the story is told of the critical role these women played in society, sadly followed by the negation of their knowledge and skill. The video starts at the beginning of the twentieth century with the shift from Spanish to American colonial rule and the adoption of a western biomedical approach to health care. In 1907 young Chamorro women were invited to study nursing at the US naval administration medical school. The training lasted two to three years, with several additional months needed for certification as a nurse midwife. The nurses worked in the hospitals and with the Red Cross, and the *pattera* functioned independently in the villages. From that time until the 1950s when their licenses were revoked, *pattera* attended virtually all the births on Guam, caring not only for the mother and newborn,

but for the entire family. The story of the loss of this invaluable health care resource is made all the more poignant by the interviews with three elderly *pattera*, who reminisce on camera about their careers. These women exhibit great intelligence, dedication, compassion, and a sense of responsibility for the charge that was entrusted to them by the families who came for their help in the middle of the night.

The video is less than half an hour long yet manages to cover a great deal of material. One gets a sense of the home births by listening to the *pattera* talk of how they positioned the fetus, and the way they involved the whole family in the birth. They were well trained in the biomedical approach and knew when to refer a mother to the hospital if she was having complications, but they also were knowledgeable about Chamorro beliefs. *Pattera* understood the importance of burying the placenta under the house, and knew when to recommend herbal medicines for a mother or newborn.

One learns of the toll this work took on the *pattera*'s own family. Because she usually stayed with the new mother for three days, the *pattera* had to rely on her extended family to care for her own children during that time. One adult man told that as a boy he enjoyed going with his mother when she made her visits because the families were so grateful to her, they treated him very nicely and gave him all sorts of good food to eat.

"And then the war came," as one woman put it simply, and things changed abruptly. During the Japanese occupation many villagers went

to the hills, others to concentration camps. The *pattera* cared for the sick wherever they were, with whatever materials they had. Change came again in 1955 when the US government stopped renewing licenses for midwives and told them births must occur in the hospital in order to modernize medical care. The *pattera* were encouraged to avail themselves of refresher courses, but many felt threatened and declined. The last recorded home birth attended by a *pattera* was in 1967.

The *Pattera of Guam* is a very well made record of midwifery in Guam and the intended and unintended consequences of western biomedical hegemony. It approaches the story of *pattera* with historic material and social commentary supported by personal narratives. The video is a nice companion to the book, *An Historical Perspective of Helping Practices Associated with Birth, Marriage and Death among Chamorros in Guam*, by Lilli Perez Iyechad. The video answers some of the questions raised by the book about who these *pattera* were, so clearly important in village life. It also contributes to Iyechad's analysis of reciprocity around the birth with comments made by the sons and daughters of *pattera*. One son talked of how during the war when no one had any money his mother would come back to their house with gifts of fruit, corn, or other foods. Sometimes the men of the new baby's family would come over to the *pattera*'s house and put up a roof, or fix things around the place. A daughter told how her mother was often asked to be a godparent to the child she delivered.

This was a nice honor of course, but also meant a substantial financial obligation on the part of the *pattera*, who was expected to reciprocate with gifts throughout the life of the child.

This video manages to accomplish something few documentaries have done, and that is to present equal parts data and passion. It effectively conveys the spirit of *pattera* while instructing about the social and political context within which they practiced. One is left wishing there were more documentaries made along the same lines, but about other occupational groups, such as healers, fishers, nuns, and so forth.

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An Historical Perspective of Helping Practices Associated with Birth, Marriage and Death Among Chamorros in Guam, by Lilli Perez Iyechad. Mellen Studies in Sociology, Volume 27. Lewiston, NY: The Edwin Mellen Press, 2001. ISBN 0-7734-7677-6; vii + 263 pages, maps, tables, figures, photographs, appendixes, glossary, bibliography, index. US\$89.95.

In certain respects, this book is a conversation between the author, Lilli Perez Iyechad, and Laura Maud Thompson. Thompson, who died last year at the age of ninety-five, came to Guam as an anthropologist in 1938 at the invitation of the US Naval Governor of Guam and studied daily life among Chamorros. Now, fifty years later, Iyechad, a Chamorro doctoral student at Bryn Mawr College, has

returned to her home in Guam to study the changes in traditional forms of reciprocity that have occurred as a consequence of rapid westernization. She considers this research the sequel to Thompson's book, *Guam and Its People*, published in 1947.

The study of gift exchange and reciprocal behavior in Oceania has its own tradition, with numerous examples in Micronesia demonstrating how these adapt to ever-changing social and political contexts. Guam has experienced waves of colonizers beginning in the 1500s and although many Chamorro cultural practices have been altered as a result, the principle of reciprocity continues to function as a major influence on behavior. Among families and their networks, the system of reciprocity not only provides members with a sense of social support, but also outlines prescribed avenues of social interaction.

As a way to understand reciprocity and its impact on everyday life, Iyechad centers her discussion around a core cultural practice known as *chenchule*. This refers to the action of giving a gift or donation during major life events or other meaningful family celebrations. The strength of the book is in the descriptive material in chapters on marriage, birth, and death, with additional analysis of two significant family events, the novena and village fiesta celebrating the feasts of the patron saints. Findings about the "helping practices" during these rituals are placed effectively alongside early Chamorro explanations of the events, accounts by Spanish missionaries who observed Chamorro practices, and descriptions recorded immediately