

# みんなくりポジトリ

国立民族学博物館学術情報リポジトリ National Museum of Ethnology

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## INTRODUCTION

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A new generation of field research by young Japanese anthropology scholars in Micronesia, starting from the 1970's, has resulted in a considerable number of works on family/kinship ties, social organization, religion, ethno-science and other fields of study. In the field of pre-history, working hypotheses concerning the early chronology and routes of migration, based on the study of artifacts such as earthenware, axes made of shells, and relics found in settlement sites, have been developed. In the field of linguistics there have been remarkable achievements, particularly in comparative linguistics and syntax. One of the main problem areas for Japanese scholars in Micronesian studies has been what may be termed the universality and particularity of Micronesian folk cultures. This problem echoes the reservations many have had concerning the concept of Micronesia as one homogenous cultural area, particularly in the fields of archaeology and linguistics. It is closely related to the question of regional diversity found in various aspects of cultures in specific areas within Micronesia. In short, scholars are faced with the question of how to evaluate and gain a comprehensive understanding of the universal and particular elements in the folk cultures of this "micro world" of Micronesia, with its 120 inhabited islands and less than 300,000 inhabitants.

The archaeological record shows a clear difference between the Marianas, where traces of migration dating back to the 15th century B.C. have been found, and the Central Carolines, where the first migrations are estimated to have occurred around the 10th century, A.D. Furthermore, a regional gap exists between the area comprised by the Marianas, Yap, Palau and Truk, where the technology of making earthenware has been found, and the islands east of Ponape, where the existence of such technology had not been confirmed until recently. Studies in linguistics have revealed significant differences between Chamorro and Palau, which belong to the Hesperonesian (Western Austronesian) group of languages, and the other languages, which belong to the Melanesian linguistic family. Furthermore, among the seven sub-groups of the Melanesian group, the nuclear Micronesian languages including Trukese have been found to have particularly close links with the languages of the northern New Hebrides. It has also become clear that the languages of the people of Kapingamarangi and Nukuoro, who are Polynesian outliers (immigrants from Polynesia), belong to the Polynesian linguistic group.

This diversity is also evident in the sphere of material culture. Weaving technology has been found in islands west of Ponape but not in the Marshall and Gilbert Islands. Houses in Palau and Yap are characterized by stone foundations and saddle-shaped roofs, whereas those on other islands have gables roofs and no flooring. In the islands of the Marianas, Yap and Palau, betel-chewing is popular, a practice non-existent on the other islands. In Polynesia and eastern Melanesia, as well as in Ponape, *kava* (*sakau*) is used as the venue for rituals. Even random enumeration of particular cultural elements illustrates regional peculiarities. On the other hand there are many elements shared by all of Micronesia which are not restricted to common flora. For instance, the entire Micronesian area is characterized by single outrigger canoes. In particular, large triangular sails, and canoes with asymmetrical left and right sides and identical stem and stern are common to all of the atolls (low islands).

However, studies in the social anthropology of Micronesia have revealed several problems which have not yet been completely resolved. The various islands have given rise to distinct cultures, as dictated by differences in local ecological conditions, *i.e.*, whether an island is a coral island or a volcanic island, and by variations in the social organization and technology adapted and to develop the environment. For instance, a marked difference can be observed between the yam-taro and breadfruit-taro culture complexes. Significant regional differences between individual islands can also be found. For instance, a distinction must be made between island states with highly-developed chieftain systems, such as Yap, Ponape and Kosrae, which comprised a maritime trading zone and gave rise to a complicated social status system, and the societies of Truk and Central Carolines, which do not have social hierarchies aside from those based on sex, age and kinship relations.

Furthermore, with respect to kinship terminology, although the Hawaii (generation) type is predominant, variations such as the Crow type and the Iroquoian type also exist. With respect to the basic principle of social (kinship) group formation, except for Yap, which had a strong tendency toward patrilinealism, and Gilbert Islands, where the element of ambilineality enters the picture, the entire region is predominantly matrilineal. Nevertheless, even in the matrilineal societies of Ponape, patrilocal/virilocal patterns of post marital residence are evolving due to the effects of German and Japanese occupation. Palauan society, on the other hand, is characterized by the traditional patrilocal-avunculocal pattern of residence.

To analyze and explain problems related to the universality and particularity in the folk cultures of Micronesia we made use of both the synchronic and the diachronic approaches. The synchronic approach focused on the differences in the ecological environment of the islands (volcanic islands and atolls), comparing and contrasting various aspects of the cultures that developed in the process of adaptation to natural conditions. Useful indicators for cultural differences are the flora and the means by which it is utilized, the chieftain system and social status system, kinship organization, behavior for showing reverence, the complex of traditional knowledge, and magical and religious beliefs, among other topics. As a result we were able to

clarify the complex of cultural elements common to all Micronesian societies which form the undercurrent of the characteristic culture of Micronesia. These elements include a strong propensity toward matrilineal descent, the importance of links between siblings of the opposite sex, the secretive, ritualistic nature of knowledge and technology, and the cultivation of rootcrops and fruits trees, etc.

On the other hand to understand both the universal and particular nature of these cultural elements the diachronic approach was indispensable. Therefore, we also paid attention to legends concerning the origin of clans, the history of exchanges between islands, the effects of foreign occupation etc., drawing from the findings of studies in comparative linguistics, archaeology and ethnology. Furthermore, in order to explicate divergencies in the basic culture of Micronesia, we did not limit ourselves to the area of Micronesia itself when tracing the routes of ethnic migration. We also addressed the question of continuities and discontinuities in the cultures of archipelagic Southeast Asia, Melanesia, and Polynesia.

Chapter I discusses the ethno-historical and systemic placement of Micronesian folk culture within the larger context of Oceanian culture, drawing from findings in various related fields of study. It begins with the investigation of the possibility of a particular culture complex having been introduced into Polynesia via Micronesia.

Ishikawa discusses the breadfruit culture complex, and assumes that customs involving breadfruit demonstrate the mutual historical relationship between Eastern Polynesia and Micronesia. The elements of the complex, such as terms denoting breadfruit trees, the custom of underground preservation, terms denoting fermented breadfruits, stone pounders, special cooking methods, and so forth, are distributed in both these two areas. From the distributions of elements he assumes that the development of the breadfruit culture complex was not independent and believes that a disregard of the Micronesian route to account for the migration of the Polynesians is too extreme.

Discussing the ethno-historical ties with Eastern Micronesia and Polynesia, from the viewpoint of prehistory, Takayama reports the results of archaeological excavation on Makin Island, in the Gilbert, conducted in 1983. His excavation yielded lure shanks, dated to about A.D. 500. From this, he asserts that the Eastern Polynesian type of bonito spinner probably developed first in the Gilbert-Ellice-Rotuma region, and also, but to a lesser degree, in Samoa and Tonga.

Discussions follow of the systematic links of nuclear Micronesian languages, as well as the linguistic differences and similarities between the eastern and western regions of Micronesia. Although the languages of the Western Carolines have many features in common with those of the Philippines and Eastern Indonesia, to the west, certain linguistic elements were introduced from the south, via Melanesia, especially the area of the New Hebrides, and the Western Carolines display characteristics of a linguistic boundary zone.

Sakiyama reconstructs a secondary (regional) Protoform, differentiated from the Proto-Austronesian linguistic forms on the basis of an ethnic lexicon of culturally significant words.

Attempting to determine the degree of closeness of Ponapean to the Trukic languages, Sugita surveys the aspectual systems of three Micronesian languages: Trukese, Woleaian and Ponapean. He provides a detailed description of the Trukese aspectual system (preverbal aspect markers, verb reduplication and directional suffixes), and which he then compares with the corresponding systems in Woleaian and Ponapean.

Chapter II attempts a structural analysis in terms of kinship organization of the divergencies in inheritance, succession and residence patterns within the overall framework of matrilineal descent common to Micronesia. Particular focus is placed on the inherent contradictions, and the mechanisms that evolved to adjust to these contradictions, in matrilineal societies by analyzing the problems of nurturance by the father on Satawal Island and Truk Islands.

Sudo attempts to clarify how control or authority over a woman and her child is shared between her husband and her brother, in the matrilineal Satawalese society. He examines the sharing of authority by looking at each step of a child's (beginning with conception, continuing through childbirth, infancy and coming of age, and ending with a child becoming of full man or full woman). He concludes that the so-called "structural contradiction in matrilineal society" is compensated for in Satawalese society by a mutually complementary relationship between the father and the maternal uncle. The former assumes responsibilities in the domestic sphere before a child's coming of age, and the latter in the social sphere after adulthood has been attained.

In matrilineal Trukese society the responsibility of nurturing children falls on the fathers. Kawai first discusses the aspects of what are termed "nurturant" acts by the fathers directed toward matrilineal groups. Secondly he examines the association of the concept of the father's obligation toward his child with the fundamental obligations of ordinary males. Finally, he concludes that male responsibilities of this type are easier to understand in contrast with symbolic female roles used to identify and perpetuate the group by symbolically reproducing the people, blood and land (food) of the matrilineal group.

Chapter III discusses and analyzes the various aspects of the chieftain system in Micronesia. This system embodies various aspects of social life, including rituals for offering the first produce, exchanges of food, the system of titles, and communication networks. The characteristics of chieftain systems in Micronesia and Polynesia are also mentioned.

Shimizu discusses the structural relationship between chieftainship and feasts which is an important element of prestige economy in Ponape. A detailed analysis of the synchronic aspect of the feasting process shows that it is based on the same set of principles as is the class structure of Ponapean society under chieftainship. On the other hand, an analysis of the "string" of procedures shows that feasts are organized as an expression of respect to the main guest, through contribution of property to him and distribution of the property and "honor" by the guest. He concludes that if the synchronic aspect of feasting is a metaphor of chieftainship,

their diachronic aspect is a metonymy of the latter, and that feasting and the chieftainship on Ponape are two aspects of a single socio-political system.

In Yapese society, the various elements and groups are linked by networks maintained by the villages. Those networks, termed *tha'*, are channels through which the voice (power) of the *tabnaws* (estate) is transmitted. Ushijima observes closely the process of formation and organization of the traditional communication networks that exist between *tabnaws* or villages, and finds that there is a highly volatile property for change within the seemingly rigid social framework. He concludes that wars contributed greatly to the creation of the new *tha'* and encouraged the reorganization of relationships among villages.

Yamamoto presents the cases of Samoan chieftainship which are thought to be significant for comparing chieftainship in Micronesia with that in Polynesia. Because of the specific system of territorial organization, the Samoan system is unique among the traditional Polynesian political systems, where titles are organized on a genealogical principle. In Samoa, territorial organization has been highly developed as basis for the integration of chiefly titles. Yamamoto examines in detail a particular territorial organization of a small district in Western Samoa, then discusses important titles in regard to their genealogies, historical relationships, geographical formations, and legitimacy for their representativeness. Detailed analysis of the complicated territorial organization of Faleata shows that, in Samoa, there is nothing like the single overarching principle observed in Tonga in integrating chiefly titles, instead, inconsistency and contradiction are the historical explanations which relate titles in order to integrate territory.

Chapter IV deals with the worldview and taxonomic categories which lie behind systems of traditional knowledge and technology, such as house-buildings, food and oral literature, which are learned only by selected individuals and taught in secret rituals.

By analyzing symbolic meanings of song and dance, Ishimori examines some aspects of traditional cosmology on Satawal Island. On this island, in contrast to *pwaay*, which are sung and danced in rituals or under non-ordinary settings, *wuur*, songs concerning heroic events, can be sung in everyday and ordinary life. The fact that *wuur* is related to play inevitably leads to the trichotomy of "sacred", "profane" and "play", instead of the ordinary/non-ordinary dichotomy, which is parallel to the dichotomy of "profane" and "sacred". He insists that an analysis based on this trichotomy may clarify symbolic meanings of songs and dance on Satawal, and reveal some aspects of traditional cosmology in a Micronesian society.

The Satawalese categorization of food is examined by Akimichi, with principle emphasis on the polysemic usage of words in socio-cultural contexts. Polysemic use of food categories not only connotes spatial cognition by the people, but also subsequently native perception of odors. These distinctions may provide cognitive/transactional bases of opposition between sea/taro patch and supernatural deities/human beings. The odorless coconut is an exception which is neutral and free of those constraints, hence, the position of coconut is unique in this island. Akimichi's

analysis may clarify the environmental and cognitive differentiations related to the coconut in Oceanic culture.

Sugito's paper describes the application of traditional knowledge in the construction and renovation of buildings of Elato Atoll. He presents the typology and process of building, the system of measurement, techniques of renovation of buildings, and traditional knowledge, called *rong*. Two types of knowledge are locally distinguished; *reepiy* (common knowledge) and *rong* (esoteric knowledge) kept by a specific membership and concerning the deities, *yalius*. On Elato most traditional knowledge has been forgotten with Christianization since 1954. However, this particular *rong* is the one of the few elements that still remains, since it is technically effective and useful in the daily life of the islanders.

Attempting to analyze the cosmological and mythical typology of women in human society, Komatsu compares the tale from Ulithi Atoll of the man-eating female monster having a vagina with sharp and strong teeth, with a type of folktale of the female monster, called *yamanba*, in Japanese folk society. He attempts to interpret the "vagina dentata" monsters, or *yamanba*, as the fearful creatures or latent "strangers" from the standpoint of symbolic anthropology.

Chapter V focuses on the phenomenon of culture change, and in particular on the acceptance of Christianity and its contact and interaction with traditional culture.

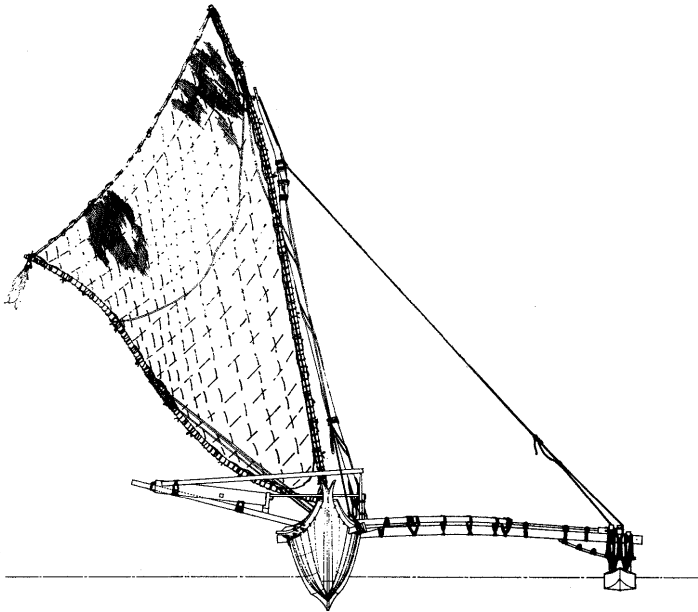
Aoyagi analyzes the process of diversification of the gods, or of the objects of worship, of the Modekngai religion, focusing on the activities of the leaders of this religion. The Modekngai religion is a new religion which originated in 1914 on Palau. This new religion is a type of religion which lacks both a well-defined doctrine and missionary work. Aoyagi examines how Modekngai incorporated local gods into it on diffusion. In the process of diffusion of such a religion gods or objects of worship may be changed according to the intentions and wishes of the people who accept it.

Nakayama describes in detail the process of the reception of Christianity on Ponape that was begun in 1852 by the American Protestant missionaries. He analyzes the acceptance by commoners, the causes of the confusion, the chief's opposition to Christianity, and then chief's conversion to Christianity, by 1886. By putting the paramount chiefs above the ministers, the congregation was grafted onto the traditional authority system. Many Ponapeans identified the traditional supreme deity and the clan gods with the Christian God. Ponapean society responded to the new situations according to its existing values and institutions. Therefore, belief in the traditional gods and spirits remained important in native life, as did the authority of the *Nahnmwarki* and traditional political systems.

Finally, Chapter VI reviews trends in Micronesian ethnological studies in Japan since 1884.

# Chapter I

## Cultural History of Micronesia



Front View of a Sailing Canoe, Satawal Island



