

social organizational and environmental realities experienced by this population. Iyam's suggestion that the Biase would be "content to experience modernity in meaningful but sustainable bits" (p. 214) rings true to this context, as does his contention that "development projects designed around communal organizational principles that have ceased to exist" (p. 216) are not an uncommon cause of project failure. The key to success, he argues, is strengthening local managerial capacity among the Biase by focusing on age grade, lineage, and women's associations. I would have liked the author to revisit some of the ecological themes discussed in earlier chapters in more detail in the concluding chapter.

The Broken Hoe is not an exercise in postmodern ethnography as advocated by some American ethnographic theorists writing in the 1980s. From a literary point of view, this is a straightforward realist ethnography told from an authoritative authorial position. It favors a descriptive over an analytical mode. But the "I was there" stance of modernist EuroAmerican authors is here replaced by an implicit claim to native cultural authority. At the same time, the author makes extremely intriguing use of the first person plural pronoun, alternating with third person description. The first person plural often stands in as the voice of custom or tradition as these terms would have been used by ethnographers of the older British school. The author is always modest in his claims for the role of custom in Biase social life, and uses the first person plural primarily in an empathetic mode. All in all, it is a useful read and a welcome contribution to the slim ethnographic record pertaining to small population groups of the Niger delta region.

The Postwar Japanese System: Cultural Economy and Economic Transformation by William K. Tabb, Oxford: Oxford University, 1995. vi, 414 pp.

Reviewed by Patricia Mary San Antonio, University of Maryland-Baltimore County

In *The Postwar Japanese System: Cultural Economy and Economic Transformation*, William K. Tabb has written an ambitious and interesting book analyzing the development of Japanese economic success in cultural context. Anyone who studies Japan finds a large literature about Japanese culture, history, and economy, but little integration between the different academic subdisciplines, writing traditions, or topics. In his book, Tabb focuses on integrating the historical, economic, and cultural information he presents.

The book is divided into 12 chapters, and the tone for each is set with opening observations drawn from a variety of sources. Tabb relies on the writings of social scientists, historians, and economists, giving readers a sense of the possibilities in the study of Japan, the vastness of the literature, and the many attempts to understand the economic and cultural life of Japan. Clearly, the author is fascinated by the sheer complexity of the issues he describes. Such a wealth of information can be daunting to the casual reader, however, and repetitive to the reader with a good background in Japanese studies.

The introduction clearly sets out the goals of the book and includes a statement about the contents of each chapter, an important feature in a book of this complexity. The introduction also includes a good basic description of the contemporary Japanese economy. This description is unusual for a book about the Japanese economy, because the author is very creative in discussing the importance of culture, Western ideas about Japan, and Japan as an "other" against which the West has measured itself. The work in the first

chapter fits easily with modern anthropological scholarship about Japan and modern Japanese studies in general. Tabb's discussion about the meaning of culture in general and Japanese culture specifically is very thoughtful, and would be of special interest to readers with little background in anthropology or cultural studies. Later in the book, Tabb describes the emergence of Japan's bubble economy, the recession in the early 1990s, and Japan's plans for the future.

The second chapter focuses on the historical development of economic structures in Japan. Tabb's comparisons to the trajectory of British manufacturing show an uncommon resourcefulness that will surely engage most readers. Tabb also provides a nice overview of economic structures and terms that would be useful to a reader unfamiliar with the Japanese company and economic system.

Chapters Three and Four provide a history of Japan before and after World War II, and Japan's relations with the United States. Chapters Two through Four, although very thorough, cover territory familiar to most who have studied Japanese business or history, with an adequate review of such issues as trade and competition, the Japanese natural resource shortage and energy picture, manufacturing quality and innovation, and banking systems in the two economies.

Tabb includes a detailed description of the Japanese auto industry in Chapter Five, followed by a discussion of Japanese labor relations in Chapter Six. Whereas a general sense of the Japanese workplace is widely known outside the country, Tabb focuses his discussion on the social costs and abuses associated with the Japanese workplace. The increasing pressure, tremendous workload, and time expectations are brutal. Outside Japan, the Japanese workplace is often imagined as an idyllic place where loyalty to the company and the dedication of workers stands in contrast, say, to an increasingly cynical American assessment of business. For all its benefits, however, most Americans would not choose to live or work as do Japanese. In Japan itself there is controversy over the expectations of employers and, recently, several well-publicized cases of death by overwork. Women have little opportunity, and the material standard of living in Japan is not in step with the country's economic success or industrial advancement.

The seventh chapter deals with Japanese politics and the effect corruption has had on the economy. The labyrinthine political system and the financial scandals in Japan are difficult to follow, although several scandals discussed in Western papers are detailed here. It is here that Tabb discusses Japan's bubble economy, the speculation that fueled it, and the consequences of the following recession for the Japanese government, business, and citizens. Increasingly in the later chapters, the author describes how globalization affects Japan. Tabb focuses in Chapter Nine on analyzing trade between Japan and the United States, and especially on the friction over access to different industries. The final three chapters (10-12) focus on the effects of international changes on the Japanese economy and the increasing interdependence between Japan and the West. Tabb discusses possible future changes in Japan in a postmodern world, where nations are increasingly interdependent. The author is especially interested in the effect of the economy on Japanese self-image and foreign relations. Tabb's final comments about how the Japanese are struggling to change their economic goals and are beginning to deal with their surplus have a renewed importance in light of the recent economic problems in South Korea and Thailand. Tabb's analysis makes it clear that along with the West, Japan must be a part of the solution.

Overall, the book provides a thorough, if dense, overview of Japanese culture and the Japanese economy to the general reader. For readers with a strong background in Japan there is enough detail in Tabb's book on a variety of topics to be useful. I especially liked the amount of discussion devoted to cultural content. The discussion of culture was handled well, which is rare outside of anthropology. For all that, some of Tabb's comments show, I think, a misunderstanding of the nature of culture. For example, early in the book,

the author comments about Japanese commitment to the group and the pressure on group members to perform. Tabb writes:

Because social ties and personal sense of worth are connected closely to group memberships and loyalty is key to acceptance, the pressure can be unbearably intense--much of the function of Japanese education and corporate indoctrination procedures is to strengthen the individual to bear it (p. 25).

This is ethnocentric and ill-advised. Japanese have a profoundly different orientation of the individual to the group. It is true that the pressure may be intense, but Japanese have a need to be in a group and a tolerance for group activities beyond the comprehension of most Americans. Companies may use the group identity in a cynical way and Japanese children are enculturated into group activities just as are American children into individualism and self interest, but I doubt that Tabb would use the term "indoctrinated" for the latter. Tabb appears to regard the natural state for human beings to be the same as the American idea of the self, with Japanese needing to be trained to bear the terrible pressure of something different.

Tabb's book is also very interesting in terms of his discussion of global issues involved in the Japanese economic system and Japan's relationship with the United States. I was struck by one comment in particular. Tabb discusses how world insularity is being challenged by international trade and the global economy. He writes:

How the Japanese respond will not be in the control of the sophisticated West handlers whom we have grown used to seeing on our televisions speaking English, with their intimate grasp of who we are, and their clear agenda of what they want us to think of Japan. The future course of events will be decided by domestic politics and consciousness of more typical Japanese, and we do not know them very well. (p. 327)

I agree that we in the United States do not know typical Japanese very well, but it is one of our great challenges to try and learn about them.

The Postwar Japanese System is an interesting and useful book. William Tabb handles the complexity of the subject well and provides the reader with many possible avenues for further thought and study.

Dividing the Commons: Politics, Policy, and Culture in Botswana by Pauline Peters. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1994. xv + pp. 273, index.

Reviewed by Dan Bauer, Associate Professor of Anthropology, Lafayette College.

Pauline Peters' "Dividing the Commons" is many things. It is a descriptive analysis of political processes surrounding access to herding resources (land and water) in Botswana over this century. It is also an attempt to further debate on development policy itself, through a masterful analysis of an ethnographic and historical example. Two features are instrumental in uniting the work: Garrett Hardin's paradigm of the "tragedy of the commons," and the image of the fence as the device that either makes good neighbors, or divides us from one another, and from ourselves. Hardin's famous 1968 model of the "tragedy of the commons" is seductively simple. In using common resources it is always to the individual's interest to add an increment of use to the common property because that individual gets the whole return on that increment but shares with the community the cost