

## Book and Media Reviews

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tion Day lapsed for almost a decade. Japanese commemorations—such as peace memorials, bone-collecting missions, cremation rituals, and pilgrimages—became far more popular and profitable in terms of tourism. However, the American Memorial Park was eventually created in the 1990s, and it manifested American loyalty and liberation. As in Guam, there were also critiques of the commemoration; for example, Taotao I Redondo, a peace activist group, drew attention on Tinian to the harmful efforts of war and nuclearism. Comparing and contrasting how differently Chamorros experienced, remember, and commemorate the war in Guam and in the Northern Marianas illuminates how profoundly divergent experiences of Japanese and American colonialisms has shaped our severed culture.

The last major chapter, “On the Margins of Memory and History,” speaks to the suppressed, controversial, and painful memories of war in the Marianas, such as Chamorro collaborations with Japan’s colonial police force and the presence of sexual slavery. Chamorro police officers were recruited to enforce Japanese laws in the Marianas; sadly, some officers enjoyed tormenting and punishing their fellow Chamorros, thus causing intracultural tension that still resonates today. Camacho also takes readers into the painful memories of military sexual slavery in Guam and the lives of Chamorro women who constantly faced sexual violence. Such memories from the war are often suppressed because they cause shame, anger, fear, and trauma. By invoking these painful memories, Camacho creates a public space in his work for

these memories to be commemorated. As he profoundly notes, the process of making history is “as much about forgetting as it is about remembering” (160).

*Cultures of Commemoration* is itself a commemorative act. It honors the centrality and diversity of Chamorro experience, agency, and memory; moreover, it honors the ancestral bonds of Chamorros across the archipelago. Overall, Camacho shows how commemorations have the power to shape cultural beliefs and collective memory and, at the same time, how culture has the power to fashion commemorations to reflect historical and ideological shifts. Considering the further militarizing of Guam and the Northern Marianas as a result of the cold war between the US and China, this book teaches us an important lesson at this pivotal moment in our history: if we conscientiously shape our public memories and histories of the past, then we will be better able to determine our future.

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*The Testimony Project: Papua*, edited by Charles E Farhadian. Jayapura: Deiyai Press, 2007. ISBN 978-979-96077-6-8; xvii + 179 pages, black-and-white photos. Paper, US\$14.99.

The straightforward prose used by Charles Farhadian stands as an example to all anthropologists who strive to make their source material available to people beyond restricted academic audiences. Transcripts of extended interviews with twelve

Papuan leaders contain stories about their religious faith, abuse by Indonesian security forces, and their resulting political struggles. These compelling narratives depict indigenous intellectuals who were forced to grapple with knotty moral problems while stuck in situations not of their own choosing. Testimony is a genre that is ripe for contemporary scholarly analysis in the Pacific, and this volume is a welcome reminder of the role individual experiences can play in revealing contemporary realities.

Some of the accounts in this book are by many of my own Papuan mentors and interlocutors. Intimate biographic details, personal parables that were news to me, reveal intense experiences that shaped the moral life of these men and women who were struggling to live under a military occupation.

Octovianus Mote describes violence he witnessed while he was a high school student in West Papua's capitol of Jayapura, from 1978 to 1981. "During those years," Mote recounts, "the military killed a lot of people in the gardens—like hunting wildlife. They would put the bodies in a large rice bag, with the feet of the victim showing" (104). After seeing these incidents as a teenager, Mote came "under conviction" in a process the anthropologist Susan Harding has described in *The Book of Jerry Falwell* as crossing "through a membrane into belief" (2000, 59). Mote became determined to help resolve long-standing political problems through tactical engagements with powerful institutions as an adult. "I tried to be a bridge between the government, churches, and parliament in West

Papua, reminding them that we all were working together, that we all have the same commitments" (109).

Benny Giay recounts how his imagination was captured by the teachings of foreign missionaries, even as he worked to understand the cosmologies of his own people. After advanced theological training in Manila, where he was transformed by encounters with liberation theology, Giay earned a doctorate in anthropology from Amsterdam. Returning to West Papua, after rejecting lucrative career opportunities elsewhere, he became swept up in the human rights movement. When a pastor was shot dead by Indonesian soldiers at the pulpit on Christmas Day, Giay began pushing the leadership of his church to take a stand. Gradually he began to leverage his position in the church to oppose human rights abuses and to advocate for a peaceful solution to broader political problems.

Amidst Giay's account of political struggles, he also relates some of his personal struggles—offering intimate details about the relationship between politics and the contingencies of daily life. His first wife, Rukiah, died in August 1999—just as he was about to join an international team in investigating alleged crimes against humanity by the Indonesian government. The sudden onset of illness, an inconclusive diagnosis, and the timing of her death led many to conclude that Rukiah had been poisoned by government agents. "I was not at home when Rukiah died," Giay shares. "And that was very difficult for me" (32). After Rukiah's death, he temporarily withdrew from human rights advocacy

and political organizing to take care of his two daughters. Giay has since returned to this work and has stepped forward to lead the KINGMI church, a Protestant denomination with tens of thousands of indigenous Papuan members.

*The Testimony Project* also contains colorful stories and surprising tales. Nicolaas Jouwe, Papua's self-styled president-in-exile, recounts that the deal to transfer West Papua to Indonesia was sealed during an intimate encounter between John F Kennedy and Indonesia's first president, Sukarno. Citing personal friends in the US State Department as sources, Jouwe reports: "In January 1961 Sukarno went to the US to see Kennedy, who was sick at the time. He had something wrong with his back. . . . Sukarno brought some Javanese oils to massage his back. . . . he went to Kennedy with the oil and gave him a back massage. After the massage, Sukarno went out. A little later Kennedy came out. As they sat together, Kennedy asked Sukarno, 'Mr. President, what can I do for you?' Sukarno said, 'Mr. President, that is a good question. I fought my entire life for one thing: West Papua. I want to get West Papua.' Kennedy said to him, 'It can be arranged.' On that day, the future of New Guinea was decided" (162).

Alongside this almost risqué account of rumored presidential liaisons, Jouwe describes many other adventures in the realms of diplomacy in the 1960s. If he was a national hero in the political imagination of West Papua at this earlier moment in history, lately he has become a more ambivalent figure. In *The*

*Testimony Project*, Jouwe reports being approached by Indonesian government agents who invited him to return to his homeland. Initially Jouwe rejected these overtures, reasoning: "Everybody would say, 'See he accepts Indonesian rule. We don't accept it. If you come to Indonesia everything will collapse, because they will think you've given up to the enemy'" (172-173). Since the publication of *The Testimony Project* in 2007, Jouwe has abandoned his long-standing political commitments. He visited West Papua in 2009 and has since taken up residence in Indonesia's capitol of Jakarta.

*The Testimony Project* is a rare collection of stories from a part of the world where field research is difficult. Indonesia has effectively banned visits by independent researchers, journalists, and human rights advocates. Certainly, this collection has shortcomings. Many names of people and places are misspelled. Printing raw interview transcripts resulted in wandering narratives, with plot lines that are often difficult to follow. Still, these revealing firsthand accounts are an invaluable resource. *The Testimony Project* is a must-have for any Southeast Asian or Melanesian library collection.

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