

Pika-Pika: The Flashing Firefly: Essays to Honour and Celebrate the Life of Pauline Hetland Walker (1938–2005) by Her Friends in the Arts and Social Sciences. Edited by Anthony WALKER. Delhi: Hindustan Publishing Corporation. 2009. 384 pp.

Reviewed by Jennifer ALEXANDER

I read this volume of diverse essays, whose only common theme is the person, Pauline Hetland Walker, with whom each individual author had a friendship or professional attachment, with a great deal of interest. Lovingly crafted and edited by the husband of the late Pauline Walker, the individual essays document the high regard in which Pauline was held and the wide range of her intellectual and artistic interests. Anthony Walker, an anthropologist renowned for his seminal works on the Toda of South India and the Lahu of highland mainland Southeast Asia and southern China, has solicited contributions from scholars whose diversity of subjects reflect the intellectual passions, artistic interests, and experiences of Pauline. In his own words, "Pika-Pika is an eclectic multidisciplinary book" (p. 14), so-called because in "a poetic words of Richard Moore, one of the contributors to the volume, the pulsating light of fireflies mediates between the mountains and plains as Pauline did between nature and culture (p. 278).

Given the diversity of these chapters and the journal for which this book review is prepared, in this review I focus mainly on those which reflect an ethnographic encounter with Asia. Each chapter starts and ends with a reference to Pauline, initially the circumstances of the author's and Pauline's acquaintance or meeting and subsequently a comment on their shared intellectual or artistic interests, with the substantive part of the chapter focusing on a particular aspect of their mutual passion. "Sacred Music of the Karen Hills," by Elizabeth Hinton, is an example. Hinton, herself the accompanying spouse of a prominent anthropologist who worked in northern Thailand, expresses Pauline's profound love of the fine arts. Utilizing the fieldnotes and tapes of her late husband, Peter, she documents the close association of music with

seasonal and life cycle ceremonies of the Pwo Karen. She investigates the role of music and song in both New Year and Mid-Year ceremonies as well as weddings and funerals. In contrast, the substantive part of the other three papers in Part One focus on the Modern Jazz Quartet (Bill Egan), dance and trance in Haiti and beyond (Erica Bourguignon), and Pauline's role in promoting the fine arts in Singapore through reviews she wrote for the Straits Times (Vineeta Sinha).

Part Two further explores Pauline's interest in the arts: literature, poetry and the stage. Peter Hyland examines early modern performance at the London's Rose Theatre, James A. Matisoff considers Lahu religious poetry, and Roger Long analyzes Javanese *wayang kulit* (shadow puppetry). This last essay illustrates the adaptability of the shadow puppetry to technological innovations as well as to sociological, religious and political change.

In Part Three, John and Jean McKinnon discuss women potters in Vanuatu and the legacy of Lapita while Paul Geraghty documents the life of Taraivini Wai, a prominent female potter on Nasilai, Fiji. He notes Pauline's own first-hand experience of a very different tradition of pottery as well as her close friendship with Wai. Part Four deals with various crafts: Tarun Chhabra gives a detailed account of Toda dress and embroidery patterns, and Shuichi Nagata discusses the commercialization of Hopi Native American crafts. The third chapter, by Tan Cheebeng, documents the gradual decline of traditional crafts among the Kenyah Badeng of Sarawak in East Malaysia. Under the impact of modernization and development, initially the introduction of logging and consequently the resettlement from Long Geng to Sungei Koyan to make way for the construction of the Bakun Dam, the lives of the Kenyah Badeng have been transformed. Traditional crafts such as bush knives made by men and finely woven rattan mats and bags made by women are among the numerous features of daily life that have disappeared in the course of less than two decades.

Part Five illustrates Pauline's concern for women's issues. The three chapters encompass body modification in Africa and America (Mary T. Howard), the mountain goddess fertility association in northeast Japan (Richard Moore) and sex slaves under Japanese Occupation (Kim Myung-hye). Kim's paper, based on interviews with Korean "comfort women," reveals the appalling abuses suffered by them at the hands of the Japanese during the Second World War. This scholarly contribution is a welcome addition to a subject which has only in recent years

received the media attention it deserves.

Traditional healing practices, the subject of Part Six, encompasses the faith healers of the Himalayas (Deborah S. Akers) and an analysis of sickness and healing in traditional Brunei Dusun society by Pudarno Binchin, an indigenous ethnographer. The three chapters in Part Seven are concerned with myth and ritual. Paul Cohen, provides a fascinating historical account of the religious, political and economic background of the present day revival of Buddhism among the Tai-speaking people of the Upper Mekong region which borders on China, Thailand, Laos and Burma. Gregory Forth adds to his extensive repertoire on ethno-ornithological research among the Nage of Flores with a comparative account of some Indonesian bird myths. Donald Tayler, the third contributor to this stimulating trio, traces the origins of the famous myth of *El Dorado*, the gilded man, to the sacred mountain of the Ika of Northeastern Columbia.

The volume is nicely rounded off with a comprehensive account of Pauline's principal writings and editorial work between 1957 and 2005 and a scholarly index and glossary. And last, but certainly not least, the cover produced by Michael Arun, Anthony and Pauline's son, wraps up a work of art lovingly crafted.

Anthony Walker has here organized an admirable collection which not only documents the high esteem in which his late wife was held, but also incorporates a significant body of research and scholarship on diverse topics. Although predominantly an Asian collection (twelve chapters), the other eight chapters ensure an eclectic mix incorporating Oceania, North and South America, the Caribbean, Great Britain and East Africa. The authors are similarly diverse in disciplinary orientation, ranging from anthropologists through linguists to theater and literary specialists. Pauline Hetland Walker has indeed been lovingly honored by each and every one of the authors. All essays are well worth reading and accessible to both general and specialist audiences.

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