

information about the Franklin expedition. Dr. Houston in his postscript to the journal usefully ticks off what new information it provides, and the list is short. Back, after all, was not present at the violent crisis in the expedition when Hood and then Michel were shot, and he makes no mention of Greenstockings, the young woman over whom he and Hood supposedly contended. On the other hand, his journal does seem to hint at the possibility of more cannibalism after Beuparlant died, although it is a very faint hint, and it also provides new detail on Back's search for help at the bitter end of the expedition. The journal also gives vivid images of the Indians whom the expedition encountered, most of descriptions manifesting the mixture of admiration and distaste that characterized so much of the European response to "primitive peoples."

But the main value of Back's journal is that it records, albeit in a rather tight-lipped way, the toughness and courage of those nineteenth-century explorers of the North. The voyageurs, the Indians, and the Inuit, who spent most of their lives in that austere environment, were tough and courageous, but so were many of the explorers themselves—no matter how one evaluates their motives or their methods. Neither Dr. Houston nor Ian MacLaren gives enough credit to Back for his sheer hardihood, his stamina, or his courage. (MacLaren attributes most of his behavior to ambition, as if ambition stood alone in the human psyche, absorbing and negating all other qualities. Only at the very end of his essay does the word "courageous" appear, and one senses that it is used grudgingly.) The image I am most left with after reading the book is typically understated by Back. By September 23, 1821 it was evident that the expedition faced disaster. Back went ahead of the main party with three of the men across the frozen tundra. After eleven hours of trudging, famished, he made a meal of tripe de roche and then set out again. "I began now to feel excessive weakness, and was obliged to use a stick to support myself—but notwithstanding this assistance I was driven backward by the wind—The night was cold" (p. 176).

Terse and understated as it is, that is a telling picture of an arctic ordeal—and of the stamina and courage needed to survive it as Back did.

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CIRCUMPOLAR RELIGION AND ECOLOGY: AN ANTHROPOLOGY OF THE NORTH. Edited by TAKASHI IRIMOTO and TAKAKO YAMADA. Tokyo: University of Tokyo Press, 1994. xiii + 458 p., index. Hardbound.

The twenty-five papers contained in this attractively bound volume were originally presented at the inaugural meeting of the international Northern Studies Association, convened in 1991 at Hokkaido University in Sapporo, Japan. The occa-

sion brought together anthropologists and northern specialists from seven countries to exchange ideas on connections between natural environments and traditional and contemporary religious beliefs and practices, and on the distribution of common cultural features among indigenous peoples of the Eurasian and North American arctic and subarctic zones. The result, though neither systematic in approach nor comprehensive in coverage, nonetheless offers a worthwhile sampling of descriptive detail and theoretical viewpoints on a rapidly-changing part of the world.

In keeping with the conference's organization, the editors have grouped the papers in six sections. The first, "Northern Studies: Past and Present," contains two very different pieces: Tatsujiro Kuzuno's account of customary Ainu religious beliefs and their reflection of the natural world, and Frederica de Laguna's longer essay, the symposium's keynote address, on the development and accomplishments of American and European research in circumpolar prehistory and ethnology. Her discussion of A.I. Hallowell's "historico-geographical" interpretation of widespread bear ceremonialism is especially pertinent to the symposium's overall ethnological perspective. The next four sections, each entitled the "Religion and Ecology of ...", consist of ethnographic cases or comparative studies of the peoples and cultures in four geographic zones: Japan and Siberia, the Alaskan and Canadian Arctic, the Canadian Subarctic, and far-northern Eurasia. (The glaring omission of Greenland is unexplained.) Each of these sections, in turn, concludes with brief comments from discussants who are not themselves northernists; their common purpose is to point out leading similarities and differences between circumpolar cultures and cultures elsewhere, some as far afield as Africa and Papua New Guinea. The book closes with Takashi Irimoto's "Anthropology of the North," a discussion of some of the major themes touched on during the symposium as a whole.

As one might anticipate in a volume of conference proceedings, the reader discovers here a loosely woven and occasionally uneven patchwork of essays whose styles of analysis and interpretation vary no less than do the myriad ways humans comprehend and order and act in relation to the natural world around them. Given that nearly all the papers here are devoted to high-latitude hunting cultures, however, a few common (and expected) themes inevitably do emerge from the lot; the material and intellectual dimensions of human-animal relations and of survival strategies in harsh conditions are prominent among them. These main themes are plainly evident in Part II (Japan and Siberia), where three authors—Spevakosky, Watanabe, and Yamada—offer varying views of the symbolic and productive importance of animals and animal cults in traditional Ainu practice and belief. Other papers in this section include Hamayon's on Buryat and Mongol shamanism as a means to control nature, and Obayashi's historical reconstruction of basic subsistence among the ancient Emishi of Japan.

In Part III on the Eskimos and Inuit of arctic Alaska and Canada, a brief contribution by Black and longer ones by Kishigami and Turner range over somewhat different ground,

examining the ecological and socio-historical implications of religious syncretism and conversion to Christianity in contexts of inter-ethnic contact. Mixed in here are Saladin d'Anglure's structural interpretation of Inuit shamanism, a paper which argues for the (heretofore overlooked) centrality of the moon in traditional cosmology, Miyaoka's linguistic analysis of the Yupik worldview, and Burch's discussion of "rationality" and "ecological harmony" in pre-contact Inupiat and Caribou Inuit subsistence adaptations. Still in the New World, Part IV includes two papers that consider the interplay of sacred ideas and everyday social and economic practice among Athapaskan-speakers of the western Canadian subarctic: Ridington treats the Dunne-za (Beavers) thought-world as a form of technology, and Sharp shows how Chipewyan animal sacrifice demonstrates distinctions between supernatural and natural causation. On another plane, Feit looks at the Waswanipi Cree shaking tent ceremony as a dynamic institution, responsive to changing social, ecological, and ideological conditions. And different again is Irimoto's use of comparative data on Ainu and northern Dene hunting to demonstrate commonalities in ecological strategy and associated beliefs.

Part V, about Northern Eurasia, includes Hulkrantz's analysis of ecological imperatives in the religion of coast vs. forest-dwelling Saami, and Pentikäinen's examination of Khanty shamanism as a form of ethno-politics and an expression of national identity. Finally, Sasaki attempts to identify cultural and economic types among peoples of Sakhalin and the Lower Amur region of Siberia.

This volume reveals its origins as a symposium all too prominently: many papers are weighed down with needlessly dense language and even denser expositions of evidence and argument. No less bothersome, the concluding essay proclaims that the integrated focus on religion and ecology advanced throughout the book adds up to a new anthropological paradigm! This claim deserves no comment and will receive none here. Setting aside such scholarly abstractions and hyperbole, all expectable in the circumstances, the book still has much to recommend it, at least to the specialist reader. First, it does feature a few well-written and original studies, a welcome tonic to the heavy "scientizing" tone otherwise on offer. Feit's full contextualization of a central Cree ritual, and the humanistic perspective on Dunne-za intellectual culture taken by Ridington, come readily to mind as shining examples. And Burch's piece on the rational and nonrational underpinnings of arctic hunting strategies is equally praiseworthy, especially for the clarity of its argument. Perhaps the main strength of this volume is its great wealth of ethnographic detail, much of which derives from Japanese and Russian sources not readily accessible to North American researchers. There is even an index, unusual in anthologies, to help guide browsers to areas of particular interest. A few detailed maps would improve this side of things immeasurably.

In the main, *Circumpolar Religion and Ecology* is not a book for the casual or uninitiated reader. It properly belongs on the shelves of research libraries and on the desks of

anthropologists and other specialists in aboriginal religions and cultural ecology.

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FARTHEST NORTH: THE QUEST FOR THE NORTH POLE. By CLIVE HOLLAND. Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, New York: Carrell and Graf; London: Robinson, 1994. viii + 305 p., 16 illus., 4 maps, bib. Hardbound. Cdn\$29.99.

In the preface, Clive Holland informs us that he planned his book to tell "the story of the quest for the North Pole from earliest times to the recent past." He calls it "an enthralling story spanning four centuries and embracing many different motives, many different modes of travel, and many remarkable men." Holland has succeeded in his objective, with panache. The expeditions are so varied and interesting that I have chosen to summarize them and their achievements in this review.

Holland has chosen widely and wisely from the writings of the explorers themselves, and states his role as "mainly to provide continuity and context: to blend together extracts from the explorers' narratives into one unfolding historical drama" (p. vii). This drama, he adds, "has all the best ingredients: ever-present danger; heroic courage; tragedy and triumph; sensationalism; the quest for glory, fame and wealth; unsolved mystery; astounding incompetence; deep hatreds; and a feud so bitter that it still simmers 80 years after the event" (p. 1).

The feud mentioned is that between Frederick Albert Cook and Robert Edwin Peary. I read this chapter first, as soon as the book arrived, and found it objective yet restrained. Cook got nowhere near the pole, but probably wished to spoil Peary's hour of glory by claiming to have got there first. Peary did not allow for ice-drift, had a suspiciously swift return, and—the National Geographic Society to the contrary—probably ended up about 80 km west of the pole, near 89 degrees latitude.

The northward quest began in 1596, when Willem Barentsz discovered Svalbard (Spitsbergen is the main island) and reached 79°49' N; Barentsz died on the return trip. In 1611, the first whaling expeditions to Svalbard began. In 1773, Constantine John Phipps found an impenetrable wall of ice east of Greenland, and reached 80°37' near Svalbard.

A whaler, William Scoresby, Sr., reached 81°30' in 1806. The ships of the Admiralty expedition, led by David Buchan and John Franklin, failed to get any farther north in 1818. William Edward Parry in 1827 attempted an ice-sledging expedition, with dreadful toil, fighting the southward ice movement, and yet became the first to reach 82°45', still well over 450 nautical miles from the pole. Only in 1868 was