

explained in part by the difficulties inherent in measuring knowledge lost over time. This suggests important goals of future research: developing a methodology to determine rates of knowledge loss (and its persistence), and then setting priorities for studying the most endangered knowledge systems.

The third section, "Perpetuating the World's Biocultural Diversity: Agenda for Action," provides a method of applying the research presented in the earlier sections. This section does not present just a simple view of indigenous and traditional peoples' interactions with their biophysical environment, but also challenges popular notions and reveals the complexity involved in understanding these issues.

The final section, "A Vision for the Future and a Plea," provides some glimmer of hope for an otherwise gloomy situation. Richard Norgaard notes that, despite the language losses that have occurred, we may be entering a period of reculturalization. This is a seeming paradox whereby global processes are leading to greater concentrations of power beyond the nation state, while ethnic and regional expressions lead to greater autonomy. If Norgaard and others (e.g., Ronald Cohen) are right, the dire situation documented in this volume could improve. The inclusion of the code of ethics of the International Society of Ethnobiology as an appendix complements this final section through its encouragement that researchers become active participants in promoting the well being of indigenous and traditional peoples.

Researchers such as Darrell Posey and Michael Warren (to whom the volume is dedicated) stressed the importance of people and culture in the conservation equation. Much of the research presented in this volume will also help solve this complex problem. The premise that cultural diversity can not be separated from biological diversity is convincingly argued by some of the top researchers in the world. Contributions from ethnobiologists are many, representing well over half of the volume. As in most edited volumes, there are a few papers that do not fit as well as they could. Overall, however, the volume makes an important contribution to our understanding of biocultural diversity and will certainly be well read and frequently cited in years to come.

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First Fish, First People: Salmon Tales of the North Pacific Rim. Judith Roche and Meg McHutchison (eds.). University of Washington Press, Seattle. 1998. Pp. 199. Map, photos, illustrations. \$24.95 (paper). ISBN: 0-295-97739-6.

Among all of the organisms that provide the basis for human subsistence, few have loomed as large within particular aboriginal societies as the salmon of the north Pacific Rim. The indigenous peoples who depended on salmon and their yearly return rightly held these fish in awe. Salmon were a staple food source and played a key role in deeply held beliefs, rituals, and oral traditions. Today,

despite dramatic changes in these societies and in the fish populations on which they have depended, the intimate relationship between humans and salmon persists. Roche and McHutchison's *First Fish, First People*, an illuminating collection of writings by indigenous authors from around the north Pacific, gives a glimpse of the many past and present roles that salmon have played in these societies.

The distinctive tone of this book can be attributed to the unique voice of each author. All are talented indigenous writers, representing myriad nations: the Ainu of Japan, the Ulchi and Nyvkh of eastern Siberia, the Tlingit of Alaska, the Okanagan and Coast Salish of western Canada, the Makah, Spokane, Cocur d'Alene, and many other tribes of the American Northwest. As the salmon unified their ancestors' cultures, so the topic of salmon is what unifies this eclectic collection of ethnographic essays, historical recollections, poems and stories.

By and large, the authors include some of the most prominent and educated representatives of their respective societies. They include such notable indigenous intellectuals as award-winning author and filmmaker, Sherman Alexie, who helped identify and bring together authors for this unique project. The collection begins with two haunting prose poems by Alexie, "The Powow at the End of the World" and "That Place Where Ghosts of Salmon Jump." Alexie's words express an abiding sadness and anger provoked by the transformation of the Spokane River, which runs through his homeland. As in many rivers of this region, dam construction obliterated salmon runs, eliminating the fish from the territories of many tribes.

Following Alexie's lead, each of the book's chapters juxtaposes past upon present images in order to convey the traditional roles of the salmon and the implications of their loss. Shigeru Kayano and Shiro Kayano provide illuminating overviews of the role of salmon in Ainu culture—they present many facets of this relationship from traditional songs of salmon, to the production of salmon-skin shoes, to the draconian Japanese prohibitions on subsistence salmon fishing in the twentieth century. Next, Gloria Bird provides a detailed, first person narrative from the perspective of a woman assisting in the traditional fishery on the interior Columbia River. A vivid poem by Miekko Chikappu follows, evocatively combining imagery of the returning salmon with bits of Ainu lore. Elizabeth Woody juxtaposes her insightful discussion of the transformation of Celilo Falls—a tremendously important multi-tribal fishing site of the Columbia River, now drowned behind dams—with a compelling semi-fictional tale of contemporary people from this region. Nadyezhda Duvan provides a welcome glimpse of the elaborate myths and rituals surrounding the salmon and its annual return to Ulchi territory. Nora Marks Dauenhauer provides a rich mixture of Tlingit poems and reminiscences from childhood fishing camps in Alaska. In spare but vivid words, Ito Oda explicates the role of Ainu ritual and worldview in shaping salmon harvesting practices. Sandra Osawa provides a historical overview of 150 years of inequitable competition over the dwindling salmon runs in the American Northwest that has placed Native fishermen at odds with White interests. Vladimir Sangi tells a Nyvkh tale of human encounters with salmon, providing a rare view into the lives and practices of these people of the Russian Far East. With a tone reminiscent of magical realist prose, Lee Maracle alternates between mythic imagery and descriptions of aboriginal struggles to maintain their fishing rights. In

the book's final chapter, Jeanette Armstrong recounts the many impositions that industrialized societies place on the aboriginal relationship with salmon, degrading the health of indigenous societies and salmon runs alike.

This diverse collection of essays leaves the reader with impressions, glimpses of the relationship between people and salmon, rather than a singular, definitive narrative. The value of the North American contributions in particular tends to be artistic rather than ethnographic, though many of these chapters are rich in historic detail. The Japanese and Russian accounts, elusive within English language literatures, are generally richer in ethnographic content. The volume's foremost strengths and its greatest weaknesses emanate from the distinctive characteristics of its authors. As educated spokespeople of their respective societies, most are gifted, expressive authors. However, as members of a germinal aboriginal intelligentsia, many live under circumstances quite distinct from the experiences of many aboriginal peoples in this region. As Nora Marks Dauenhauer (p. 116) writes in her poem "How to Make Good Baked Salmon from the River,"

[Salmon]'s best made in dryfish camp
on a beach by a fish stream
on sticks over an open fire,
or during fishing
or during cannery season
In this case we'll make it in the city,
baked in an electric oven on a black fry pan.

The book provides accounts of peoples in rapid transition from the perspective of some who are at the forefront of change. While this observation may raise questions of "representativeness," it should not be interpreted as a criticism. On the contrary, the personal longings for lost salmon, as presented in *First Fish*, raises fundamental questions and may portend the future symbolic role of salmon within these societies. The volume stands as a unique, informative, and highly readable account of the relationship between people and salmon around the north Pacific Rim. It reveals remarkable parallels, not only in the pre-colonial significance of salmon, but also in the twentieth-century transformation of lands and cultures in the wake of modernization, tribal displacement, and the consolidation of national territories. It demonstrates that, almost uniformly around the north Pacific Rim, aboriginal access to salmon has been restricted and traditional ties to these fish have been under persistent threat. All too often, the results have proven devastating. It is a telling account, sometimes humorous, sometimes haunting, and consistently entertaining. For anyone with interests in the indigenous peoples and salmon of the north Pacific it is well worth the read.

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