

ter 5, titled “Reflections,” the *holehole bushi* reveal *issei* thoughts on their lived experiences, ranging from regret to gratitude.

Chapters 6 and 7 focus on the process of recovering this particular folk tradition. Chapter 6, “A Last Hurrah,” examines the collective and constructed identity of the *issei* decades after their last days on the plantation. The *holehole bushi* examined in this chapter were submitted in response to a contest sponsored by a Japanese language newspaper in 1960. “Renaissance of *Holehole Bushi*,” chapter 7, charts the recuperation of this folk tradition by Harry Minoru Urata and traces its usage in popular media and academia.

Odo writes in style that will entertain and engage a general audience. While there is some repetition in each of the chapters, they could easily be used as stand-alone pieces. Finally, having raised a number of issues for further study, including the mobility of the *issei* generation, “rurality,” and the fluidity of the plantation world, Odo leaves the reader with a collection of over 200 translated *holehole bushi* for their own reading and analysis. This project is clearly a labor of love for Odo, one that makes *holehole bushi* accessible to a new generation of Japanese Americans in Hawai‘i, as well as scholars and practitioners around the world.

Christen Sasaki

*Assistant Professor, Department of Asian American Studies
San Francisco State University*

Sovereign Sugar: Industry and Environment in Hawai‘i. By Carol MacLennan. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2014. x + 378 pp. Appendices. Maps. Notes. Illustrated. Bibliography. Index. \$39.00 cloth

Much has been written about the sugar barons of Hawai‘i and the vast sugar empire that they created from the late 1800s onward, shaping large areas of the islands’ landscapes and the politics that made the transformation possible. The story is central to the islands’ position as the crossroads of the Pacific world. It includes the incursions of haoles from mainland North America, the import of the Asian majority of today’s population, and the collapse of the native Hawaiian population with its finely tuned integration with land and sea.

But no previous publication has unified all these dimensions of modern Hawai‘i’s history into as lucid a synthesis as *Sovereign Sugar*. This impressive book is the result of historical anthropologist Carol MacLennan’s long years

of immersion in the lives of the islands' peoples and their ecological settings. She writes that this is not just another history of the sugar industry, but "what is historically important is the complex tapestry of social and natural forces that shaped sugar's history, often altering its direction and dictating its dynamic" (p. 7). She asserts persuasively that the sugar-dominated transformation of the islands' life in the modern era was not inevitable, as previous writers on King Sugar have often used as their plot line, but was the result of interactions among all the ethnic and economic groups on the islands. Nature herself has also been a player, since natural systems have their own processes, whether untouched by humans and their associated (introduced, invasive) species of plants and animals, or severely distorted by the wide range of invading species.

Professor MacLennan sets the scene with a clear and vivid description of Hawaiian culture and its adaptation to land and water resources before interactions with Europeans began in the 1770s. She places this cultural story within the exceptionally rich literature of Hawai'i's island biogeography, archaeology and human ecology.

The chapters that follow trace the fundamental ecological implications of the transformative power of haole civilization, with its radically different concept of land ownership. The author introduces four founding missionary families (the Cookes, Castles, Alexanders, and Baldwins), who brought a "civilizing mission" to both non-Protestant peoples and the natural world. Together they created a "powerhouse network" nicknamed the "Big Five" companies (p. 52), integrating the islands into the international capitalist consumer economy. Their controlling political influence, first under the independent Hawaiian kingdom, and then after U.S. annexation in 1892, centered in the remarkable Hawaiian Sugar Planters' Association (HSPA), which became an internationally leading organization for scientific management of land, forest cover, and water. MacLennan shows convincingly that from today's sustainability criteria, HSPA preserved forest watersheds, in contrast to forestry management on the U.S. mainland, which lay far greater emphasis on timber production. But in this HSPA worked in close conjunction with the sugar interests, rather than small farmers and non-white populations, to implement advances in agro-industrial science. This collaboration necessitated political power, controlling laws and their implementation for environmental policy and management, which was critically important for the distribution of the islands' forest and water resources.

The industry evolved in two broad phases; first the nineteenth century commercial plantations, and then more modern industrial operations, which were far more efficient. The era after 1900 saw major advances in public

health for the workers, as well as sugar production as efficient as any plantations around the world, for markets primarily in the western U.S. But the sugar mono-crop continued to divert vast amounts of water to irrigation, as well as struggling to maintain soil fertility.

This account integrates all the islands, as the narrative moves from one plantation to another, one watershed to another, from O'ahu to Kaua'i to Maui and Hawai'i Island. MacLennan describes four plantation centers, each with its central coastal town, and the workers' villages that spread out from the towns to the great estates. An ingenious chapter takes readers on a tour of the sugar islands in the 1930s. In describing the social history of the plantation workers, immigrants from China, Japan, the Philippines and elsewhere, MacLennan demonstrates the insights gained from long personal experience with their families. Her depiction of their communities is perceptive and nuanced. It achieves unusual analytical weight by stipulating the ways their lives and work became the key link between capital and the natural world.

This narrative concludes with a poignant description of the rapid decline of the industry beginning in the 1960s, when the Hawaiian companies became integrated with multinational corporations that were chasing competitive profits in many locations. Finally, as the author notes, after 1942, military operations and the tourist industry that followed in the wake of wartime ultimately surpassed the sugar plantations as the driving force of the Hawaiian economy and its precarious, over-stressed base in the limited water and land of the islands.

The book is enriched by many archival photos, as well as maps of ecological zones. It also has eleven valuable appendices, which summarize vegetation zones, land use and land law, acreage under sugar, and irrigation development projects. All of this is artfully integrated—*Sovereign Sugar* will stand as the finest and best integrated study of Hawai'i's transformations over the past two centuries. Beyond this, it is also an important contribution to the environmental history of impacts of market capitalism on fragile, bounded ecosystems.

Richard P. Tucker
Professor of Global Environmental History
University of Michigan