

Betty Kobayashi Issenman, *Sinews of Survival: The Living Legacy of Inuit Clothing*, University of British Columbia Press in association with Etudes/Inuit/Studies in 1997, 274 pages, ISBN 0-7748-0596-x (cloth), ISBN 0-7748-0599-4 (paper).

Reviewer: *Jill Oakes*
University of Manitoba

Sinews of Survival provides a survey of prehistoric, historic, and contemporary Canadian Inuit clothing which includes examples drawn from Aboriginal peoples in Alaska, Russia and Greenland. The first chapter focusses on tools, accessories and garments found in archeological sites in Canada, Alaska and Greenland. The second chapter provides a good introduction to the main skins used in Inuit clothing, including seal, caribou and bird skins. It also introduces each type of clothing and how the clothing is layered to provide insulation. Skin preparation procedures and excellent drawings of the stitches used for different garments, including intestine parkas, are presented in chapter three.

The main portion of the book presents a survey of Canadian Inuit clothing which is well-organized with maps clearly identifying the region, photographs illustrating regional styles being used in a variety of activities, examples of garments from museum collections and drawings of garment patterns by Dorothy K. Burnham. The end of this chapter includes information on the evolution of styles and the impact trade goods had on Inuit clothing styles.

Chapter five, "Spiritual, Artistic and Social Traditions," provides a fascinating summary of the spiritual and sociocultural meaning of symbols used by seamstresses in clothing with examples drawn from throughout the circumpolar region and as far south as the Lower Amur River (Russia-China border). The final chapter explores the relationships between Inuit communities, elders, styles and symbols used in different regions and museum collections.

An appendix includes an inventory of museums with clothing collections from specific areas of the circumpolar region. The inventory, footnotes, glossary of terms, acknowledgments, references, illustration credits and sponsors provide valuable material for future reference. The index makes it easy to locate information on similar topics located in different chapters.

The archival and contemporary photographs, museum artifacts, illustrations and maps contribute to the growing body of published information in the field of Inuit clothing and culture; however, a pair of Khanty or Nenets boots from Siberia are mislabelled as Copper Inuit boots on page 53. The material on these boot soles, which is identified as polar bear skin, is actually the small pieces of skin located between the reindeer toes. Quotes from Inuit are included throughout "Sinews of Survival," providing enriched explanations, perspectives and stories. This combination of Inuit voices, illustrations, photographs, archival records and museum artifacts creates a holistic view of the meaning and importance of clothing used in the Arctic.

Marie Mauze, ed., *Present is Past: Some Uses of Tradition in Native Societies*, Lanham: University Press of America, 1997, 242 pages.

Reviewer: *L. Jane McMillan*
University of British Columbia

Marie Mauze presents a collection of essays generated from a symposium on tradition in North American societies. The essays detail a variety of definitions of the notion of tradition. Several case studies provide critical analyses of approaches and interpretations employed by anthropologists and Native peoples illuminating the complexity of issues involved in this highly contested concept.

Mauze begins by introducing the basic concepts arguing that oppositional models of societies as modern or traditional are not very useful as there is no sharp contrast between the two. Her efforts are geared toward deconstructing preconceived notions about Native people as living in traditional, static societies. The debates in anthropology surrounding the conceptualization of tradition as conservatism, primordial continuity, implied antiquity, heritability and changeless, are challenged by new analyses which do not look for the purity or co-efficient of traditionality, but rather examine the conditions which discourse and actions must fulfil in order to be considered traditional.

Mauze argues strongly that the past is definitely seen from the perspective of the present in a politicized process of present justification addressing questions of authenticity, authority and invention. Thus, the past is continually reassessed and reconstructed within the dynamism of tradition and history. This argument is particularly salient as notions of tradition are considered within the context of Native societies challenging ideas that Native societies must be changeless or non-evolving in order to be considered authentic.

The following three chapters demonstrate diverse analyses of the concept of tradition from theoretical perspectives. Jean Poullion's essay links tradition with identity construction, and supports Mauze's thesis that tradition flows from the present to the past, but does not provide any Native issues content. Pascal Boyer's essay provides a psychological theory as an alternative discourse that focusses on cognitive processes as the location of the production and transmission of tradition rather than social interaction. Boyer examines the role of memory in tradition and its transmission in the distribution of cultural representations.

Gerard Lenclud examines the relationship of history and tradition through an analysis challenging oppositional models of written versus non-written traditional transmission of histories. Lenclud argues that the idea of conceptual opposites sets up false dichotomies and fails to express the reality of cultural experiences of the past. This is a rich and complex chapter that theoretically explores Western concepts of history