after providing useful summary accounts of the pre-British and colonial periods in the first half of this book. Like some other works in the excellent American Foreign Policy Library, the title is misleading since it is not an account of relations between Burma and the United States. This book does, however, provide some key information of U.S.-Burma relations in the post World War II period including brief account of the little known small-scale US military aid agreement of 1961 which continued under Ne Win until 1971.

This book aims to provide the general reader with insights into Burma's history and culture and to help overcome what Professor Cady calls "the scanty American awareness" of this little known country with its proud history and culture. Yet this work also fills a gap in the limited library of scholarly contemporary works on Burma by projecting the recent developments in Burma against the backdrop of Burma's history as an independent kingdom and British colony. Thus Professor Cady underscores the problem of the fledgling governments of independent Burma in the postwar period which lacked the traditional symbols of power the Burmese monarchy yet needed to exercise full governmental powers if they were to achieve the major economic changes advocated. Also, Professor Cady's careful explanation of the abortive efforts to improve the lot of peasant cultivators and tenants during the British period sets the stage for a better understanding of some of the more radical efforts to deal with the problems after independence.

This book is a solid, straightforward historical account blended with an informative analysis of major developments, concentrating on the post World War II period. For example, the book gives a vivid descriptions of, and helpful insights into, the economic and administrative problems of the U Nu governments. This book has no footnotes, since it is designed for the general reader, so that certain statements may cause Burma specialists to scurry among their source materials in an effort to check a few of Professor Cady's statements, but his analysis of events is persuasive and would be difficult to challenge. Key personalities are highlighted, and Professor Cady does not hesitate in making forthright assessments of their performances in public life.

This book contains a thoughtful ten page bibliographic essay and a glossary of Burmese terms which appear in the text. As Professor Reischauer concludes in his foreword, "This (book) is a good starting point to learn more about this much too neglected portion of our world".

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This book is a welcome addition to our knowledge of 16 peoples of the western Indian Ocean whose history and ethnography are vital to an understanding of the relationships between the peoples of Africa and Asia. It is primarily concerned with the cognatic system of social relationships of the Swahili speaking peoples of a town on the island of Mafia off the coast of Tanzania.

The first two chapters introduce the village and the concepts of descent group and jamaa (personal network). These are followed by chapters focusing on residence, land

tenure, the socio-religious hierarchy and village politics. These chapters are mainly
devoted to analysis and presentation of patterns of decision-making and the influences
involved. The theoretical chapter at the end is brief. Its major point is that a decision
model should be added to mechanical and statistical models in order to adequately
understand the choices people make in cognatic descent group societies.

One of the strongest points of the book is its emphasis on the flexibility of choices
that people may make when, through inter-marriage of descent groups, they may
belong to more than one descent group. In having to (or being able to) make a variety
of decisions concerning group affiliation in a variety of circumstances a person may
choose to stress his or her membership in whichever group seems appropriate to
the situation. Some of the decisions Caplan explores deal with residence, farming,
religious affiliation, marriage, and political alliances.

A number of actual decisions have been tabulated and an attempt is made to
analyze the factors involved and the patterns that emerge in the making of those deci-
sions by the people involved.

The patterns which are presented are highly complex. The decision a person
makes about where to farm and live, for example, is mediated not only by descent
group membership but also by socio-religious and political considerations. Descent
groups hold land as corporate units and some have considerably more land than others.
Certain types of land are watched over by land spirits and persons farming those types
of land inevitably come into contact with and must propitiate the land spirits. People
who become involved with spirit-possession cults, however, are accorded lower socio-
religious status than people who follow more orthodox Islamic forms of worship. This
status, of course, is ultimately related to power in the community, even though the
land spirits can convey some power to the leaders of the lower status spirit possession
cults. The decisions, thus, are never simple, and are often flexible. People appear to
associate themselves with different descent groups for different purposes.

Although the point about flexibility of choice is important and is well taken
Caplan's presentation of data is markedly disorganized. The reader has to do a con-
siderable amount of re-reading and cross-checking in order to follow most points.
Residence patterns will provide just one example of what we mean. In the chapter on
residence the statement is made that a "minority of men in Minazini (10 percent) have
more than one wife and all of these wives live in separate households" (48). Could this
be the pattern that we encountered in the Comoros? There the separate households of
the wives may even be in different villages or islands and are normally matrilocally ex-
tended. Caplan neither expands nor clarifies the statement nor does she explain how
this form of polygyny affects a man's farming choices. Hunting through the book for
other statements dealing with residence we were able to find that, on the one hand, "a
woman's closest ties are with her mother and/or brothers," (31) that "children often
grow up among their maternal rather than paternal kin," (31) and that "partrilocality
is not the statistical norm. Almost as many men live in the wards of their mothers' des-
cent groups as in those of their fathers" (47). On the other hand, however, "only a
'handful' of men live uxorilocally," (56) "women are not significant in... residence
choices" (152) and "Marriage (sic) is normally virilocally" (54). Some of these
statements are clearly contradictory yet Caplan does not seem to make any attempt to
resolve the contradictions. Her conclusion with regard to residence appears to be that
"three descent groups have a majority of their male members residing in their wards.
The remaining three descent groups attract a much smaller proportion of members to
their wards." (58) We are left with no clear explanation of how men decide where to
live and farm and why women are unimportant.