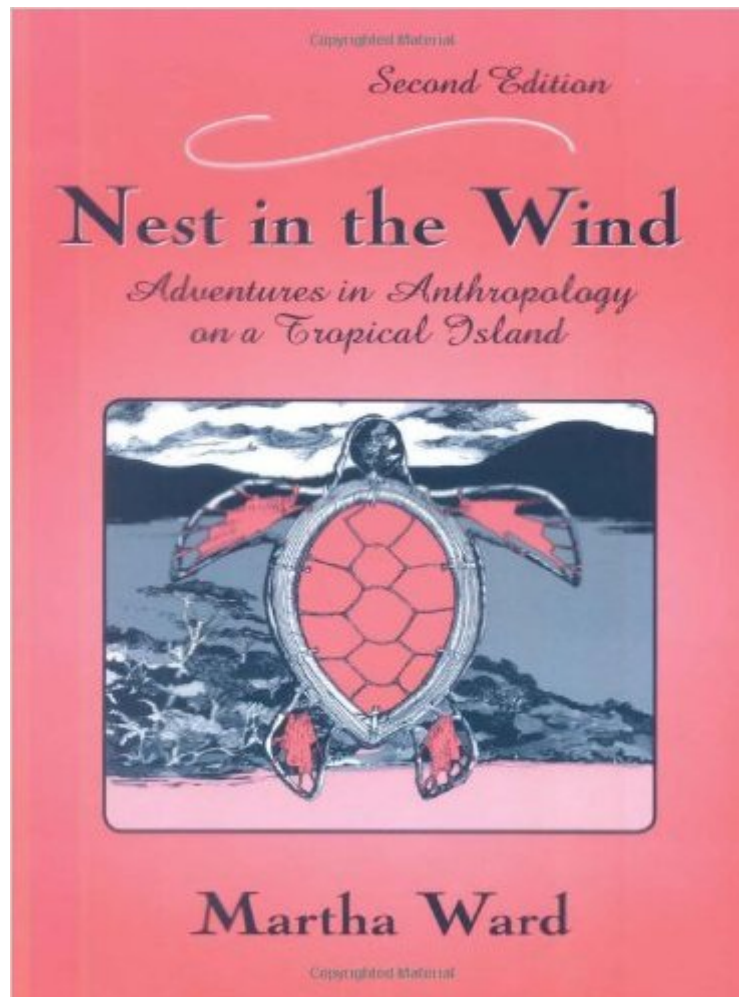


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Nest In The Wind: Adventures In Anthropology On A Tropical Island, Second Edition



Synopsis

During her first visit to the beautiful island of Pohnpei in the middle of the Pacific Ocean, anthropologist Martha Ward discovered people who grew quarter-ton yams in secret and ritually shared a powerful drink called kava. She managed a medical research project, ate dog, became pregnant, and responded to spells placed on her. Thirty years later she returned to Pohnpei to learn what had happened there since her first visit. Were islanders still relaxed and casual about sex? Were they still obsessed with titles and social rank? Was the island still lush and beautiful? Had the inhabitants remained healthy? This second edition of Ward's best-selling account is a rare, longitudinal study that tracks people, processes, and a place through decades of change. It is also an intimate record of doing fieldwork that immerses readers in the sights, smells, tastes, sounds, and the sensory richness of Pohnpei. Ward addresses the ageless ethnographic questions about family life, politics, religion, traditional medicine, magic, and death together with contemporary concerns about postcolonial survival, the discontinuities of culture, and adaptation to the demands of a global age. Her insightful discoveries illuminate the evolution of a culture possibly distant from yet important to people living in other parts of the world. (Not-for-sale instructor resource material available to college and university faculty only; contact the publisher directly.)

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Customer Reviews

This book is an ethnography of the people of Pohnpei. The author accompanied her husband to Pohnpei during the 1970s and they lived there together for several years. In the 1940s, army doctors had noted that the people of Pohnpei all had quite low blood pressure. Ward and her

husband were the anthropologist components of a team that was trying to determine whether the initial blood pressure observations were accurate, and if so, whether societal influences seemed to be playing a role. Although the blood pressure study was the impetus for going to Pohnpei, and provides much of the framework for Ward's time on Pohnpei, this book isn't about that project. Instead, the book describes how Ward gradually integrated herself into the culture to the greatest extent that she could during her limited stay. As a trained anthropologist, Ward was primed to observe the culture on Pohnpei. She notes that the society was matriarchal and that ceremonial titles were highly important. Personal names were impermanent, and many people, including study subjects, changed their names frequently. She struggles to learn the language, noting that it makes use of dual number in addition to singular and plural, and makes a distinction in personal pronouns between inclusive and exclusive "we". She discusses diet, gender roles, politics, education, courting behavior, and funeral rites. All of this is done, however, informally, almost in the manner of a travelogue. Indeed, many of the chapters close with letters that she wrote home to family or friends, many with humorous touches as she struggles with culture shock. As the time on the island passes, Ward relates to us the challenges that she faced in finding housing, a local research assistant, and conducting research related to the blood pressure project.

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