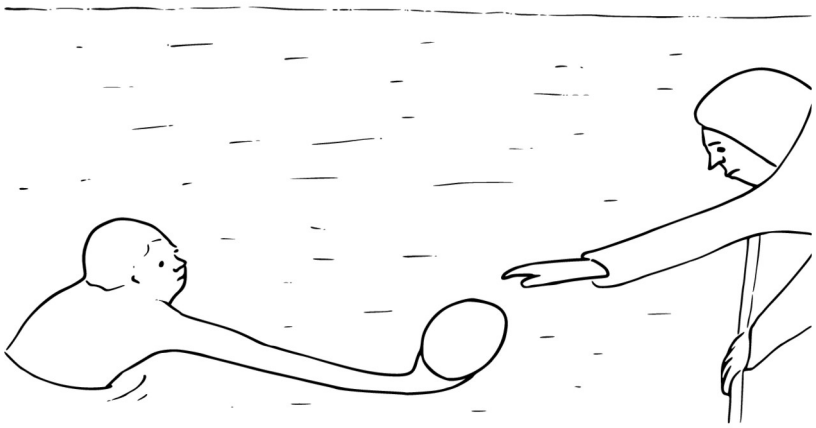


Fig.090 Illustration showing a native receiving a coconut from a contact mission. For natives the exchange of gifts is very natural. When meeting another tribe exchange ensures a balance of distribution of resources that would be otherwise unobtainable. The gifts of colonizers instead have the purpose of turning natives dependent to them.

Generosity Among the Natives of Lower Asia

Groups of natives meet embracing each other in silence and "holding cheek to cheek for some minutes" before "dancing and feasting" with the hosts supplying "ample delicacies such as pork, turtle, or honey". Some of the men even "compose new songs and train the choir" and the local groups "exchange presents" (Mukerjee 2003). While visitors are "hospitably entertained, being given the best of the food" and join their hosts in their "hunting and fishing expeditions", they also bring with them various objects, such as "bows, arrows, adzes, baskets, nets, red paint, white clay, and so on". Although the natives regard the objects thus given as "being presents" they expect to receive "something of equal value in return" going as far as mentioning when giving the present that they would like "some particular object in exchange". This undoubtedly serves a "useful economic purpose"; if a local group had "no red ochre or white clay in their own country" they can obtain them "by exchange with others who had". In the case of a meeting between forest and coast dwellers, the former can obtain such things as "shells, red paint made with turtle fat, and other objects" with which they could not provide themselves in any other way. In this way "the iron obtained from a wreck on one part of the coast" is spread over a large area (Radcliffe-Brown 1922).