

one example of the subjective Japanese scholarly rumination that so often is mistakenly published as a work that meets international academic standards. Foreign readers who have no image of Japan beyond the stereotype industrial monolith may be interested by this book's stories of individualistic Japanese, but those who accept its concepts or conclusions would be dreaming.

Japanese Social Organization

Takeie Sugiyama Lebra, ed.
Honolulu: The University of Hawaii Press,
1992. Paper. n.p.

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JAPANESE SOCIAL ORGANIZATION is a collection of seven chapters by seven scholars whose academic credentials in anthropology or sociology are impressive. I picked up this volume for review with a sense of anticipation.

In the first chapter Theodore C. Bestor reports on his observation of a Tokyo neighborhood, showing how people in this community invent "tradition" and then use that tradition as an authority to bolster their own positions. The concrete example with which he deals is the autumn festival of the local Shinto shrine. "Thus by accentuating the traditional—most dramatically but not exclusively through the festival—local events serve to imbue Miyamoto-cho and those vying for standing and control with the legitimacy that tradition so amply bestows" (p. 44).

Takeie Sugiyama Lebra, editor of this collection, contributed the second chapter. After a lengthy opening section in which she shows that the former nobility (*kuge kazoku*) tended to cluster in certain Tokyo neighborhoods and associated mostly with

each other, she goes on to show that the spatial layout of their homes was directly related to hierarchical relationships among household members. That is, members were limited to certain areas according to their status. She further relates this to what she calls the "dyad," the fact that the holder of symbolic prestige (formal status) and the person who had decision-making power were two different people. Since a correlation between the arrangement of living space and status relationships of household members is common in a great many societies, I could not help wondering why Lebra saw this as an interesting or significant topic for further research.

In chapter three, Mary C. Brinton uses published statistics from Japan and the U.S. to compare the life courses of women in these two countries. She focuses on education, employment and marriage and finds that Japanese women have less room for independent, individual decision-making than do women in the United States. Specifically, Japanese women leave school, enter and leave employment, and marry at more nearly the same age than do American women. Her thesis is "that contrasts between the structure of the life course in Japan and the United States reflect differences in the structure of basic social institutions in the two cultural settings" (p. 80). She concludes, "Japanese women's life course transitions are characterized by irreversibility, age-incongruity, and low variance in timing across individuals" (p. 100). One might have thought this self-evident.

In chapter four, Diana Bethel reports on a study of a home for the elderly in Hokkaido. At any given time it has 75–80 residents who live 3 to 4 to a room if they are single. Couples are given smaller private rooms. She finds that residents, who could feel themselves victimized in a society where children are traditionally supposed to care for their elderly parents, form a new society within the institution, which then gives

them a base for a new sense of personal esteem and security. "Roles relinquished as part of the aging process in the main-stream age-integrated society are replaced with new roles and sources of self-affirmation" (p. 131). Again, hardly surprising. Tomoko Hamada's essay deals with the ways in which Japanese corporations handle the transfer of Japanese personnel between corporate headquarters in Japan and overseas subsidiaries (US). Not surprisingly she finds that "the Japanese firms' approach to multi-nationalization derives from and is an extension of the relational dynamics of the interorganizational alliance between the parent firm and its subsidiaries in Japan" (p. 139).

The sixth chapter, authored by Jennifer Robertson, is nominally a study of the Takarazuka Revue, but becomes an attack on what most people in Japan probably see as the appropriate role for women in Japanese society, "good wife, wise mother." Takarazuka provides a sort of fantasy alternative to, and thus undermines this conventional female role which society, as a giant malevolent conspiracy, tries to force on all women in Japan. The final chapter, by Patricia Steinhoff, deals with the Rengō Sekigun purge in 1972, in which twelve members were tortured, beaten, and killed by their fellow members. Steinhoff insists that this "resulted from very ordinary social processes enacted by quite normal individuals" (p. 195). And concludes, "The processes of scapegoating, deviant labeling, and becoming a victim are the same, whether the event is the holocaust, the My Lai massacre, the mistreatment of racial minorities, or the tiny Rengo Sekigun purge."

To that extent, the purge could have happened anywhere, and it could have been committed by anybody" (p. 222). It would have been helpful if Steinhoff had told us how she defines "ordinary" and "normal." Steinhoff is a good story teller and as a good

story teller she is extremely selective in the data which she chooses to include. She says that her story is based on autobiographies, trial records, prison interviews, and correspondence. Nevertheless there is too much in this chapter which belongs to historical fiction rather than to reliable scholarly writing, as, for example, when she tells us what people were thinking, what their motives were, etc. She does not say that this is what they said or wrote later, or that other participants said that they thought, at the time, that this is what someone else was thinking; rather she informs the reader that this is what such and such a person felt or intended at the time, even the leader of the group who committed suicide in prison in 1973, presumably without being interviewed by Steinhoff.

I laid this volume down with a sense of frustration and disappointment. Surely these scholars could have done far better than this. Most of these chapters seem to be tidbits, leftovers from research published elsewhere. But why publish so much that is trivial or self-evident? True, one can often find a few valuable pieces when sifting through a collection of discarded materials and that is true of this volume as well. If you are willing to take the time and effort you will find something helpful here, not much, but something.

The Christian Tradition: Beyond its European Captivity

Joseph Mitsuo Kitagawa
Philadelphia: Trinity Press International,
1992. xii + 307pp.

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JOSEPH KITAGAWA COMPILED this collection of essays shortly before his death. The book