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#### JAPAN

- JEREMY, MICHAEL and M. E. ROBINSON. *Ceremony and Symbolism in the Japanese Home.* Photographs by Urata Hoichi. Japanese Studies. Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 1989. xv+196 pages. Tables, figures, plates, bibliography, glossary, index. Hardcover £25.00; ISBN 0-7190-2506-0.

The rural Japanese dwelling has attracted much attention from non-Japanese scholars; consequently, numerous books on it have been published in English, German, and French. Knowledge of the Japanese house by the Western public has been further enhanced by a multitude of translated works of Japanese authors. Most of these books and articles are written by professional architecture specialists and thus focus on material aspects of dwellings; hence, the need for a treatise of non-material, especially symbolic and ceremonial, features is strongly felt.

The present volume, despite its title, does not satisfy this need. It fails in three methodological points.

First, it is not a result of structured, well-organized fieldwork; rather, it reads like an account of passive and fortuitous observations of a home-stay participant. This may have something to do with the fact that one of the authors did the bulk of observing while the other did the writing, thus much of the firsthand observation may have become lost. The authors refer to themselves in the text as "gaijin" rather than "the researchers," and when a piece of information is difficult to obtain, the authors generally give up (e.g., "our own family was unable, or perhaps unwilling, to attempt an explanation, possibly because they doubted the ability of a gaijin 'to understand what is

going on ’ ’—p. 63). The last chapter acknowledges that the book was not meant to be a scholarly work but rather a personalized account of customs and rituals in a rural household (“The intention was not to dissemble but to share in it, and so it was not a curiosity disciplined into the constraints of academic method”—p. 183. “We were there, as it were, simply to learn about living, not to probe, or dissect, or analyse. Thus we had no need to seek explanation for the things that were going on around us: it was offered naturally and in the wake of events as it might be to a growing child”—p. 184); however, the heavy reliance on data published by other authors, as well as discussion of basic concepts of wider Japanese culture and society (e.g. *amae*, *kami*) indicate that at least some effort was made to produce a social science work (see p. 183).

The second defect is that almost no Japanese-language sources were used, despite their large numbers and, in many cases, high scholarly quality. Rather, the book basically relies on a small number of English-language sources (especially those by Hendry, Lebra, Befu, Hall and Beardsley, Nakane, Hori, and Smith). Quotations do not follow any pattern and appear randomly, often making it impossible for the reader to determine whether the authors witnessed a particular custom or ritual personally or whether they learned about it from literature. In many cases, no sources are given although it seems improbable that the description is based on field observation (e.g., the description of Shinto and Buddhist housebuilding ceremonies, p. 136). In general, basic data for chapters 1 (“Tōno”), 2 (“The *Ie* and Family Life”), 3 (“Ceremonial and the *Ie*”), and 5 (“Housebuilding in Tōno”) are drawn from written sources and illustrated by observation, while chapter 4 (“Marriage in the *Ie*”) is based on personal observation.

Third, the presentation of data is in a descriptive form, with lengthy accounts of ceremonies that repeatedly include tedious details of the menu. In the rare cases where there is any interpretation at all, it is usually through folktales (e.g., p. 138). As such, the book presents nothing new in terms of both data and commentary.

Another flaw of the book is that there is little discussion of links between the physical structure of the dwelling and its inhabitants, the family. Except for the brief mention of the symbolic relationship between the household head and the central pillar of the dwelling on the last page (185), the book fails to explore the family members’ use and spatial symbolism of various rooms, or the seating arrangement at the dinner table and its significance. Instead, the book pays excessive attention to the *kasō*, which, especially in mountainous Japanese villages, tends to be an ideal rather than a general pattern.

Minor flaws of the book include the following: a) prices often are given only in pounds, leaving it to the reader to calculate the 1989 pound-yen exchange rate; b) annotations do not include the page, making verification or further research impossible; c) the bibliography is incomplete in that some quotations in the text do not appear in it (e.g. quotations on pp. 127 and 150); further, the alphabetical order is at places wrong and names are misspelled (“Abbeglen” instead of Abegglen, “Ariga” instead of Aruga, “Tuhle” instead of Tuttle, “Kaggai” instead of Gakkai); d) transcription of Japanese words into English is arbitrary (“gozaimas” vs. “itashimasu,” “dobroku,” “se’chu,” “oranjī-iro,” “fune’ko,” “i-no-shishi,” “ocha-tzuke,” “okāsan” and “otōsan” vs. “ojiisan” and “oniisan”); e) mistakes in Japanese are frequent, and, since many of them are repeated, it seems they are cases of imperfectly learned Japanese rather than misprints (“furō” instead of furo, on pp. 45, 46; “dōzuku” instead of dōzoku, on pp. 63, 187; “yūkata” instead of yukata, on pp. 66, 67; “robatta” instead of robata, twice on p. 152).

On the positive side, the book is furnished with Urata Hoichi’s 30 beautiful, art-

istic photographs of the vanishing folk life in the Tōno region of Japan.

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#### KOREA

SORENSEN, CLARK W. *Over the Mountains are Mountains: Korean Peasant Households and Their Adaptation to Rapid Industrialization*. Korean Studies of the Henry M. Jackson School of International Studies. James B. Palais, Editor. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1988. x+308 pages. Illustrations, appendix, bibliography, guide to romanization, index. Hardcover US\$25.00; ISBN 0-295-96507-X.

There have been some astonishing features in the high-level economic development of Korean society and the changes in urban centers, and these have attracted international attention. The nature of changes in rural areas, however, is comparatively unknown. What kind of changes do urban industrialization and the concentration of population because of urbanization bring about in the rural hinterland? What are the specifically Korean characteristics of these changes? Sorensen's book attempts to answer these questions.

He did fieldwork during the years 1976-1977, following it up with a supplementary survey in 1983. In contrast to the fast changes in the urban centers and their environs, there were as yet no fundamental changes observable in the operation of farms by family members in the mountain or other remote villages similar to the ones where he stayed, even though there was an observable influence from the electrical appliances and money sent by relatives working in the cities, and these areas were sending great numbers of migrants to the cities.

Sorensen first takes as a general model to assess the social changes a peasant society experiences in the process of modernization, the hypothesis put forth by Marxist anthropologists like Kautsky, which looks for the causes of social change in the force of production and the mode of production, and the proposition of Steward and the cultural ecologists that seeks the causes of social change in the effects of technology on the environment. He concludes that neither of the two is sufficient to explain the changes in Korean rural villages. As a result, he agrees that the point of view once advocated by Chayanov, of the importance of the relation between the peasant-farm and the family is applicable to Korea, and so he concentrates on the peasant household and considers its changes in the most important part of the book.

He concludes that a Korean farm village does not show any change in the fundamental structure of the family, and that, in the main, rational strategies are adopted for such things as landholdings and a scale of management geared to a labor force and consumption level determined by the size of family membership, the selection of crops and distribution of workers, and even the movement of family members to the cities. According to Sorensen, the special characteristic of a Korean peasant household is its adaptability, which enables it to preserve the basic structure of the family while supporting agricultural management in rural areas where the direct impact of industrialization is extremely limited.

However, from this book we learn little about that kind of adaptability that would actively introduce industrialization into a village by bringing in secondary industries