

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

to supplement farming. It is safe to say that the "adaptation to rapid industrialization" as put in the subtitle does not go beyond the stage of an adaptation that maintains farming without any industrialization of rural society itself. Therefore it would seem necessary to consider the adaptability of the Korean peasant household from a slightly different angle.

In the seventies and eighties more than a few Korean peasant households sent this or that member of the family to the big city as a migrant, relying on relatives already in the city. Most of the farming families that remained in the villages did so because they had missed a chance to move to the city, having no relatives in the city to assist them, and the aging of the rural population is increasing rapidly. Even in those cases where the aged parents have remained in the rural village by themselves, it is usual for the eldest son to plan to bring the parents to live with him once his own situation is settled in the city. It is a fact of life that most farm households have no prospects of a successor to the aged parents. For such reasons, although in the short run the peasant households seem to make adaptive choices as corporate units, in the long run it remains problematic how much adaptability or continuity as farming households they really command. In times of such rapid changes, if the adaptability of farmers is to be evaluated on the basis of a brief survey, it would seem to demand more careful consideration.

Sorensen sees the family as based on a patrilineal structural principle as the corporate unit, but though the patrilineal principle determines parent-child and sibling relationships, is it not true to say that this by itself does not contribute to the adaptability or stability of the household as life community or management organization? Patrilineal relationship is considered to be something that should be supported regardless of domicile or profession, and therefore it continues to provide a primary network in the choice-making for individual purposes. For these reasons it is difficult for a Korean household to remain a stable unit of management to go on through several generations, the way the Japanese *ie* does. With the exception of the main line of the prestigious *Yanban*, great changes in domicile and production are characteristic. In the Japanese farm villages, where the household is the most important organization to belong to, one that guarantees one's sustenance, the farming household achieves trans-generational continuity, on the basis of which it supports the living of its members; to be able to do that, the farming household comes to actively introduce a variety of marketable cash crops and secondary occupations. Among Korean farmers, on the contrary, there seems to be a tendency to rely on connections with relatives in order to move without any hesitation to the more promising city. The adaptive behavior of peasant farms in Korean villages also ought to be considered in the light of the more general choices and patterns of behavior of the people in Korean society.

Sorensen's book, notwithstanding the fact that it will evoke a great deal of discussion, is a fundamental case study if one is to think about social change in Korea. It is an important achievement that cannot be bypassed by anyone studying East Asian society.

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