

have proved that true academic proficiency also includes the capability of explaining complex problems in terms understandable to a non-specialized public. The value of this publication lies precisely in this point. It can serve as a kind of introductory reading material for those who are somehow interested in East Asian civilization but do not know where to start. Yet, specialists also will certainly benefit from it. Indeed, in our age of extreme specialization it is good to look back once in a while to what has been achieved and to "summarize." Admittedly, generalizations can easily distort the complex nature of reality. When they are made, however, as in this little volume, they are enlightening. This reviewer, who can only claim some competency in a few of the themes dealt with in this book, has certainly benefited from reading *all* of the papers contained in it. Some of them constituted a welcome refreshment; some of them were an equally welcome stimulus for broadening one's own interests.

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DUMÉZIL, GEORGES. *The Destiny of a King*. Translated by Alf Hiltebeitel. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1988. 155 pages. Paper US\$11.95; ISBN 0-226-16976-6. (Cloth published 1973; ISBN 0-226-16975-8)

Georges Dumézil, the distinguished French scholar, believes that Proto-Indo-European society was characterized by a unique tripartite ideology of three hierarchically integrated functional domains: the sacred (sovereignty); the martial (physical force); and the economic (fertility, prosperity, etc.). These functions in their various manifestations are associated with specific and ordered triads of social groups, divinities and even with cosmic and somatic divisions (LYLE 1982). *The Destiny of a King* examines how such tripartite functions combine in the figures of several "first kings": Yayāti and Vasu Uparicara of India and Yima of Iran; and sets forth the basic themes of ("first") kingship: heritage; duties ("... the organization of the earth into its ethnic divisions, and the organization of society into its functional division." 47); the consequences of sin; and salvation or restoration through sacrifices rendered by royal descendants.

Dumézil begins with a problematic comparison of Yama, the Indian god of the dead, with the Iranian Yima. Yama is the half brother of Manu, the first human, and the co-ruler of the cardinal points. The son of one of the Ādityas, Yama himself is a god but chooses to die in order to prepare a "realm" for the dead. Yima, on the other hand, is a terrestrial king whose career ends tragically. Unlike Yama who rules the dead, Yima is ordered by god to build a subterranean shelter for the living so that they can survive a coming cataclysm. Like Yama, Yima has a twin sister but he becomes involved with her in an incestuous relationship. What remains common, however, is the nature of the heritage of these two first kings: Yama is the son of Vivasvat, the first sacrificer, and Yima is the son of Vivañhat, the Iranian inventor of sacrifices.

The story of how Yayāti organizes the earth's divisions and partitions them for his five sons is related to his rejuvenation through the exchange of his curse-induced instant senescence for the youth of one of his sons. Similarly, when aging and death are temporarily arrested, Yima, with the help of two divine instruments, enlarges the

earth on several occasions to accommodate the surplus population.

The second duty of the first king, that of establishing the tripartite social divisions, is illustrated by the legend of Yayāti in which he is expelled from heaven owing to a prideful remark. His status is quickly restored thanks to his four grandsons who embody the tripartite functions. In Iran, the establishment of tripartite social groups is linked to the specialization of Zoroaster's three sons or inversely to the story of the fall of Yima whose tripartite functionality is lost to three different individuals.

For Dumézil, the sins of pride and prevarication are synonymous. And it is the latter which dooms Vasu Uparicara whose kinship with the Pāṇḍavas is derived from a fantastic fable. His fall from a celestial chariot is caused by his telling a lie. Eventually, he is saved by the kindness of Viṣṇu but no such redemption is available to Yima, who too falls from his chariot due to pride.

The last two major stories in *The Destiny of a King* involve Yayāti's descendants (his daughter Mādhavī and her four sons) who are compared with the daughters (Medb and Clothru) and grandson (Lugaid) of the Celtic king Eochaid. Mādhavī's four sons by different fathers represent the three functions that save their grandfather. Mādhavī regains her virginity after each birth but for Medb, who too takes a succession of four husbands, the motto is: "I have been without one man near me in the shadow of another." A tri-functional figure, Medb will consort with only those who are, "... without jealousy, without fear, and without avarice," the negative representations of tri-functionality. Clothru is also linked to the tripartite notion by her incestuous relationships with her three rebel brothers which cause them to be defeated by their father. Her son Lugaid is covered with red circles that divide his body into three parts resembling the division of primordial man from whence arose the Indian castes. Dumézil claims that the salvation of Yayāti is a function of Mādhavī's virginity. As to why this is not so for Medb is a problem that he leaves to the Celticists.

The Destiny of a King is only a small part of the trilogy, *Mythe et Épopée*, which in turn is a fragment of Dumézil's scholarship that spans five decades. It will neither add to nor subtract from the controversy surrounding Dumézil's theory of the tripartite system (see LITTLETON 1973). A more recent critic of Dumézil is Colin RENFREW (1987) who argues that Proto-Indo-European culture is much older than previously thought and, therefore, parallel developments and coincidences in myths and literature are not to be ruled out. Renfrew also believes that the spread of Indo-European languages was not due to military conquest but is associated with the gradual expansion of agriculture in a "wave-advance" model and further claims that the categories of Proto-Indo-European society are not comparable to later state level societies of India, Iran, Rome, Ireland, etc.

One interesting aspect of *The Destiny of a King* is how the original Indo-European literary themes are modified by later theological divergences. Thus, the Iranian Muslim version of the story of Noah hardly mentions his nudity or intoxication, two elements incompatible with Muslim theology. Dumézil suggests that something similar happened to Yima although in a Zoroastrian context. Still there remain other similarities that cannot be attributed to an Indo-European origin. Is not the fall of Adam related to the fall of the first king? Is Onanism relevant to the story of Vasu Uparicara? Is Yima's subterranean enclosure another version of Noah's Ark? Is the tripartite system applicable to Japanese origin myths (YOSHIDA 1977)? These and other questions suggest that Dumézil is selective and overstates his case, that the tripartite system may not be unique to Indo-European society and that the tripartite system is perhaps a bit too fluid or Procrustean. What is unquestionable, however, is the brilliance of Dumézil in ferreting out the concordances of the various manifestations of

the tripartite system in the legends and myths of cultures that are heirs to Indo-European tradition. *The Destiny of a King*, like most of Dumézil's scholarship, weaves a fascinating pattern of the tripartite ideology but loose threads remain. This paperback is a welcome addition to Dumézil's works in English translation which deserve a much wider audience.

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BESTOR, THEODORE C. *Neighborhood Tokyo*. Studies of the East Asian Institute, Columbia University. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1989. xviii+347 pages. Tables, maps, appendices, bibliography, index. Cloth US\$35.00; ISBN 0-8047-1439-8.

In Theodore Bestor's view, a Tokyo neighborhood is not a fragment of rural countryside, oddly surviving in the midst of a great city—any more than that city, as some have said, is no city at all, but just a loose agglomeration of small towns. There is surely a traditionalism at the heart of this form of neighborhood life; but the need is to understand it on its own terms, and not as some fancied detritus of agrarianism or pre-urbanism. The small shopkeepers who are the backbone of these neighborhoods in effect maintain "an alternative social world" to the larger one outside its borders. But that alternative world is not static; it merely has its own dynamic, which emerges in part from the interplay between neighborhood structure and ward structure, city government and the nation at large. The task Bestor has set himself is to study that dynamic in action. "I argue," he says, "that traditionalism—as an active agent creating and re-creating images and meanings that attach to the social forms around which people organize their lives—is an index not of *isolation from* but of *interaction with* the broader society" (262).

And so, as one might expect, he is very good at describing change—especially change that occurs within the mists of the allegedly unchanging. *Omikujī*, those fortunes printed on thin bits of white paper, are still obtainable from the neighborhood shrine, but now they are dispensed from a vending machine. In the evening processions of the autumn festival, one *mikoshi* (sacred ark) is equipped with four floodlights, powered by two car batteries installed within the *mikoshi*. Every evening be-