

I see that Bestor now resides in an old neighborhood of upper Manhattan called Inwood. I wonder what he is up to. Another book, I hope.

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GUTHRIE, STEWART ELLIOTT. *A Japanese New Religion. Risshō Kōsei-kai in a Mountain Hamlet.* Michigan Monograph Series in Japanese Studies, Number 1. Ann Arbor: Center for Japanese Studies, The University of Michigan, 1988. xiv+245 pages. Figures, photographs, bibliography, index. Cloth US\$21.95; ISBN 0-939512-33-5.

Risshō Kōsei-kai is one of the most impressive groups in the religious arena of postwar Japan. It is a lay Buddhist movement which exhibits particular Japanese features in that it takes its doctrinal inspirations from Nichiren and the Lotus Sutra, and centers its religious attention mainly in care for the ancestors. On an international level it has made itself a name also in the World Conference on Religion and Peace (WCRP) through the activities of its cofounder and president Niwano Nikkyō.

Guthrie's intent is not to study Risshō Kōsei-kai as such: his interests lie with how and for what reasons this religion was accepted in a small Japanese mountain hamlet. He sides therefore with the believers, eliciting and interpreting their motives for joining. In order to put the book's main part into perspective, Guthrie first describes the traditional religious institutions and activities of the hamlet and the social relations involved. For the main part, and in his analysis of the believers' attitudes, he focusses on six life histories as core material. With this he demonstrates that the believers, in making their decisions, had done so after rational and practical considerations. They accepted the new religion because it offered them not only a better way to understand their experiences than through traditional village religion, but also a way to control them more efficiently. But notwithstanding such new aspects, Guthrie finds that the believers made use of a model which is fundamental to Japanese social relationships, namely the parent-child (*oya-ko* 親子) relationship, and which they applied to establish a new social network based on criteria of their new belief. In conclusion he finds that the decisions of the villagers to accept this new religion cannot be seen as a mere strategy to escape from a trying situation, but that they are based on an evaluation of advantages and disadvantages of the new religious, and by extension of the new social, situation. With this the author offers concrete material for the rationality of religious decisions, an idea he has earlier discussed in relation to its wider background in the history of anthropological thought (1980). The particular attraction of the book is the fact that it describes how a religion is accepted and operates in the living environment of a village.

Guthrie's approach to the study of a New Religion in Japan from the point of view of the concrete situation of the believers is new and his conclusions, as far as they concern the situation of Risshō Kōsei-kai members in Yamanaka, are sensitive and as such convincing. Nevertheless, his conclusions or statements concerning the hamlet's and Japan's traditional religion in general are at least open to discussion. Here it shows that Guthrie "relied heavily on English-language sources" and only the "most relevant primary" Japanese documents (18). I fully agree with the author in seeing the *oya-ko* relation as a fundamental structural feature in social and religious

thinking. However, it is quite a different thing to interpret this without further comment as including everything from the villager right up to the emperor and the sun goddess. A look at the Japanese sources the author relies on to back up such statements reveals that they originate from the time of *kokutai* 国体 (National Polity) and *kazoku seido* 家族制度 (family system) ideology. However, we should be rather careful in taking this sort of state ideology for the thinking of the people. The two may (have) overlap (ped), but there is good material available which shows that this certainly was not the case universally. It would therefore have been advisable for the author to have paid more attention to historical development and therefore to Japanese sources. The work of Japanese scholars has also made it increasingly clear that, in spite of certain common features, traditional culture or religion are not as monofarm in Japan as e.g. modern Shinto scholars, to mention just one group, like to present it. It may be quite difficult if not impossible to trace such historical developments in a hamlet like Yamanaka for the lack of pertinent documents, but related material from elsewhere should at least make us more careful in drawing general conclusions.

To mention just two points. Concern for the household (*ie*) is important for many aspects of Japanese life, but this is not identical with *kazoku seido* as a political institution. Or, if the author concludes from the vanishing position of the hamlet's *yamabushi* 山伏 (mountain ascetic) that his institution "has virtually disappeared throughout Japan" (107), he is plainly mistaken. In this case there are enough English-language sources to illustrate the contrary (see e.g. BLACKER 1975, EARHART 1970).

Other questions may be of minor importance but they are nevertheless disturbing. From my own experience I have learned that Japanese, although they would tend to use the term *senzo* 先祖 for all their dead, often add a qualification saying that in the strict sense they refer only to those who were responsible for the household. In fact, the author mentions this point too. Accordingly, at least one interpretation of *muen-botoke* 無縁仏 "wandering spirits," includes those who did not achieve definite status in the household. This does not mean, however, that they are not important. If they indeed were not, why should they invariably be mentioned in the regular memorial services (69-70)? Guthrie characterizes Shinto as the religion of the community as distinguished from Buddhism as that of the household (96). In a certain respect this is correct, but I wonder why there is no mention made of the tutelary deity of a homestead, the *yashiki kami* 屋敷神. This is a deity of the individual household and different from those enshrined in the godshelf. Do they not exist in Yamanaka?

If Guthrie is correct, Yamanaka may be different from much if not most of Japan in another case, the celebration of *obon* お盆 (the All Souls' Festival), because he says that it is celebrated "September 3-5" (69 and 209, n. 15). This is quite unusual, since ordinarily it is celebrated from the 13th to the 16th of July or August. Since he does not mention the discrepancy we are left to wonder whether these dates are indeed accurate.

In spite of the very commendable approach the author takes, I think that the decision to disregard Japanese scholarship to such an extent was not prudent. Considering these sources would probably not have changed his general conclusions, but it would have made him more careful with general statements. This book is the first in a new series produced by the Center for Japanese Studies at the University of Michigan. It is well produced with most informative plates, but the addition of Japanese characters in the index, at least, would have helped to identify terms and names.

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HAROOTUNIAN, H. D. *Things Seen and Unseen. Discourse and Ideology in Tokugawa Nativism.* Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1988. xiv+494 pages. Index. Paper US\$14.95; ISBN 0-226-31707-2. Cloth US\$40.00; ISBN 0-226-31706-4.

Although it had a humanistic side, such as the liberation of human emotions that were repressed under the feudal regime, *kokugaku* 国学 (national learning) has usually been defined as an ideology supporting the declining Tokugawa regime from the standpoint of the ruled. Some consider *kokugaku* to be lacking in modernity, a fact reflected in the incomplete character of Japan's modernization.

In his recent book, H. D. Harootunian defines *kokugaku* (which he translates "nativism") as a discourse and intends to change the concept of ideology itself. He criticizes the definition of *kokugaku* as being the ideological support for the Tokugawa polity on the part of the ruled. Such a definition implicitly or explicitly presupposes that ideology is a reflection of infrastructure and does not have an autonomous meaning. Harootunian, however, emphasizes that ideology has a semi-autonomous function and produces reality rather than reflects it. Based on the theory of textual productivity, he traces the transformation of *kokugaku* texts that were of critical importance to the Tokugawa polity and the process which formed an epistemology that included ideology as a discourse.

According to Harootunian, work in Tokugawa Japan was divided into mental and manual labor. The space where people lived and worked was relegated to marginal areas and lost its meaning. Ordinary life was segmented. Production became reproduction and lost its original meaning. Immediate experience was forfeited. Anxiety appeared among the ordinary people, caused mainly by Neo-Confucianism as the official discourse. By its strategy of dichotomy, Neo-Confucianism introduced the division of subject/object, ruler/ruled, and whole/part. As a consequence the ruled were excluded from the sphere of subject and signification. They were bound into a social constitution as mere objects of governance and prevented from giving their existence a tangible meaning by themselves. *Kokugaku* intended to give a new immediacy and wholeness to the ruled, who (in the first place) had been alienated from a wholeness which was the source of their meaningful human experience, and to their immediate life in the native environment ("habitus"). In other words, *kokugaku* "made an 'unnamed' experience into public commonsense as a means to authorize the constitution of groups that had not hitherto gained access to signifying practices" (33-34) by a metonymic strategy that emphasized the contingent relationship of the part to whole.