

he/she wishes. The notes then might be limited to bibliographical references.

Such minor quibbles aside, this is a valuable book for anyone interested in Buddhism or in pre-modern Japanese history. It is a welcome addition to the growing collection of Buddhist tales and homilies in English translation.

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KATSU KOKICHI. *Musui's Story: The Autobiography of a Tokugawa Samurai*. Translated, with an Introduction and Notes, by Teruko Craig. Tucson: The University of Arizona Press, 1988. xxi+178 pages. Color plates, illustrations, bibliography. Cloth US\$19.95; ISBN 0-8165-1035-0.

Unusual among samurai books, this autobiography presents an interesting and informative contrast. The samurai ("warriors"), who constituted the regime of the military aristocracy of feudal Japan which lasted until 1868, usually appear to have been dignified (if somewhat inscrutable), savage figures epitomizing the Japanese spirit in recent times, when Japan forced her way into modernity. The way of the samurai (*bushidō* 武士道) has been exalted as a spirituality the Japanese could be proud of vis-à-vis the Western spirit in, for example, *Bushido, the Soul of Japan* written by an American-educated intellectual NITOBE Inazō (1862-1933). This conception of how the samurai should be is, to a certain extent, corroborated by the highly intellectual and sincere samurai-minister ARAI Hakuseki (1657-1725) and his father as depicted in the former's autobiography (1979). Similarly, the heroic, ever-ready-to-die ethos of the samurai was advocated in the textbook for samurai, *Hagakure: The Book of the Samurai* (1979), attributed to YAMAMOTO Tsunetomo (1659-1719). By contrast, the present work by KATSU Kokichi (1802-1850) is quite different, depicting the hard lot a large number of samurai had to suffer in reality.

Toward the end of the Tokugawa period, a large percentage of samurai were jobless (already in 1705, almost a quarter of the samurai were in this category) and destitute. There were many more of them than governmental offices and fiefs to provide for them. Life was particularly hard for lower-ranking samurai as the townsfolk's standard of living edged up; and merchants, who were ranked fourth after samurai, peasants, and craftsmen in the hierarchical scheme of the regime, could wield considerably more clout than the low-ranking samurai. Although social classes were maintained by heredity, if one had great wealth one could buy samurai status by becoming an adopted heir of a samurai family and with the help of money and ingenuity, could climb up the ladder.

Katsu Kokichi was born the third son of the Otani family (which had originally purchased samurai status) in downtown Edo (today's Tokyo), and was given away at the age of six into a samurai family of good lineage, named Katsu, to succeed to its family name. The Katsu household was impoverished, and until Kokichi was married at seventeen and started his own household, the Otani family seems to have supported him financially and otherwise. Still, this meant a life of financial hardship and in the humiliating status of the unemployed, ill-matching the samurai pride in being the élite of society (samurai were six percent of the total population).

The constant frustration of not having any chance to exercise his own capability

as a samurai, of having no exits, led him twice to take flight toward the west, the other commercial and cultural center of Japan. Once, when he was merely thirteen years old, he availed himself of the charity people would show toward pilgrims to the Ise Grand Shrine, and a second time at twenty, he left his wife behind. Both times his absence brought the Katsu family lineage to the brink of official discontinuation. Moreover, he was ready to risk his life for any excuse he could find. After the second escape, his natural father put him in a cage at his own house for three years, urging him to cool his head.

Katsu's life could be termed that of a rogue or a typical local bigshot in downtown Edo. Not well educated (he was illiterate into his twenties), he was often engaged in fighting, bossing it over many roughnecks, resorting to brothels, and so on. But he was also quite ingenious in eking out his living to keep up his appearance as a samurai: he appraised and traded swords at street fairs, provided protection for the red-light district, taught *kenjutsu* 剣術 (Japanese fencing), and even played the shaman for pay. He was not a modern, secular man, however, and he dutifully prayed to his guardian deities and on occasion performed ascetic practices known to the common people of his day. His behavior and dealings with downtown folks make this book an interesting and important source of information for social history and folklore. The ethos of the townfolk in Edo is very well exemplified in this candid and unusual autobiography.

Admitting that he was a failure, Katsu was obliged to retire at the age of thirty-six, passing on the family headship to his fifteen-year-old son, Rintarō. Ostensibly retiring from the profane, he assumed a literary title *musui* 夢酔 ("dreamy and befuddled"). He wrote about his life at forty-one, after long illnesses and a domiciliary confinement, supposedly so that his posterity might learn from his bad example and not follow his path, although the claim sounds a bit conceited considering the pleasure he expresses in writing about his exploits.

Katsu's own son, Katsu Rintarō (Kaishū, 1823-1899), after his father's death and far beyond what his father could possibly have hoped for, proved to be one of the greatest of statesmen of a most difficult transition period in Japanese history, from the last days of the Tokugawa rule to the Meiji Restoration. Kaishū played the role of a mediator and caretaker between the old regime and the new. He remains a hero for people of old Tokyo, which he succeeded in saving from potential ruin by encroaching military forces who were against the shogunate. Our author was clearly outshone by his son. Yet a quality in the former, an unflinching and enterprising spirit which was not given a proper chance in the father's case, seems to have effloresced in the son. Katsu Kaishū became a representative of the samurai, especially those of Edo, in liberal spirit and self-discipline, although he proved to be among the last of them.

Kokichi's preeminent son aside, his autobiography stands by itself as most fascinating reading about the life of a man and his society trapped in an *ancien régime*, which had become corrupt and oppressive toward its end. The book also conveys the atmosphere of good old downtown Edo and has even lent itself to novelists' fiction in Japan.

The translator deserves applause for putting into readable English a book, written in colloquial Edo language, which is very obscure in many passages (not to mention the use of many technical terms). The book is also beautifully illustrated with woodblock prints. One could wish only for more annotation that would be helpful to elucidate the religious and social practices of the time.

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KYBURZ, JOSEF A. *Cultes et croyances au Japon. Kaida, une commune dans les montagnes du Japon central* [Cults and beliefs in Japan. Kaida, a community in the mountains of central Japan]. Paris: Editions Maisonneuve & Larose, 1987. xxv+293 pages. Maps, figures, plates, bibliography. Paperback FF 152.—; ISBN 2-7068-0911-6. (In French)

Kyburz's work is based on fieldwork carried out during a series of visits in 1970-1971, and again in 1973-1975 to Kaida, a community of 600 households in the area of Kiso, in Nagano Prefecture. Kaida formerly belonged to one of the physically and culturally more isolated regions of Japan. It was not until the 1950s that it was thoroughly incorporated into the mainstream of Japanese society. Because of this relative isolation that was maintained until recently, Kyburz sees in Kaida a privileged opportunity to reconstruct "the past" with the abundant aid of historical records and, most of all, with the help of the living memory of informants that experienced life as it used to be in the old age, before modern age came bursting in (viii).

The nature of J. A. Kyburz's work seems to defy easy categorizations. As far as it is a detailed description of a given community based upon firsthand fieldwork and participant observations it is anthropological, as far as it is a meticulous reconstruction of past records concerning a local community it is historical, and then, as far as it is dedicated to "the urgent task of documenting traditional ways of life faced with modernization, the harbinger of the most profound changes" (as suggested by the publisher on the rear-side of the cover) it is primarily folkloristic in orientation.

The totality of the book under review is meant to give a comprehensive picture of all the different forms of collective worship found within Kaida, the community singled out for a study. A later publication, announced in the introduction, will then treat the more particular worship of the individual, the family or other restricted cult groups.

"Cults and beliefs in Japan" is divided into three major parts. First there is a long and detailed introduction to the environment, the geography, and the history of the community in Kaida. It makes for highly interesting reading, being as it is a "thick description" of living conditions in the region.

This is followed by Part One, describing the two major forms of officially recognized religious practices of the highlanders, centered around the Shinto shrines and the Buddhist temples within their community. Here the reader is presented with much descriptive material, reporting the exact lay-out, forms, and size of various edifices used for the religious practices, reinforced with the details of their past histories. This first part of the book also contains an overview of the seasonal cycles of religious life