

important. Earhart is correct in stating that the new religions deserve equal treatment with the established ones and should be seen as positive religious developments rather than, as the "crisis" theory tends to see them, deviations from the norm. It is here, however, that my second point of criticism is located. This is not a new line, for much of contemporary Japanese scholarship has already gone beyond seeing the new religions in deviant terms and has established that they should be viewed in a positive way. Earhart is obviously most concerned with what Western scholars have to say, and is making a point most clearly for a Western audience, but I think the book would have been enriched for Western readers if more attention had been paid to recent Japanese interpretations.

These are minor points, however, compared to the overall. Anyone with an interest in the new religions or, indeed, Japanese religion in general has cause to be grateful to Earhart for producing such a rich source of material on Gedatsukai. It is perhaps the most rounded and detailed picture of a Japanese new religion published in English and as such is essential reading for all involved in the study of religion in Japan.

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1983 *Dentōteki shūkyō no saisei: Gedatsukai no shisō to kōdō* 伝統的宗教の再生: 解脱会思想と行動 [The regeneration of traditional religion: Thought and action in Gedatsukai]. Tokyo: Meicho Shuppan.

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EDWARDS, WALTER. *Modern Japan through Its Weddings. Gender, Person, and Society in Ritual Portrayal*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1989. xii+173 pages. Bibliography, index. Cloth US\$27.50; ISBN 0-8047-1512-2.

The title of this study by a young American anthropologist is puzzling: not "Japan and its weddings" but "Japan through its weddings." As the author says in his introduction, he sees "weddings as a window to Japanese values" (12) and ultimately aims "to explore values that define what it means to be a person in Japanese society" (10). Yet it is wrong to expect that, with the weddings, the excessive commercialism of the weddings in Japanese society is also analyzed. The author explicitly does not intend to lend himself to social criticism. As becomes clear in the last analytical chapters, his intention is to oppose Western individualism to Japanese collectivism, since the reproach by one of the author's Japanese friends that all Americans are selfish (4) obviously had made a deep impression on him.

His method is strictly ethnographic and inductive. He first gives a detailed description of a wedding as it was performed in a wedding hall where he had been working for some time to gather background information about such ceremonies. Seeing wedding as a "performance" or a "series of poses," he meticulously describes the Shinto ceremony with the exchange of saké cups and the reading of the oath, then the wedding party with its more or less formal speeches, the symbolic cutting of the cake, the candlelight ceremony where the young couple light a candle on each of the guest

tables, the changing of clothes by the bride, and the farewell offered to the parents by the presentation of flowers.

In the second chapter the historical background is given. This concerns not so much the several symbolic acts but more the management of weddings by specialized enterprises that offer rooms, decorations, meals, and a variety of other services. The wedding hall where the author worked was originally managed by a self-help organization (*gojokai* 互助会) that collected a membership fee that would guarantee a cheap ceremony. Later on this practice was discontinued and the hall became an enterprise of its own. The third chapter deals with the persons involved, especially the role of the *nakōdo* 仲人, the go-between, who appears at a wedding regardless of whether it is an arranged marriage or a love-match. Chapter four describes the hall's management and its strategies.

On page 102 the author at last begins his analysis of the wedding as a *rite de passage*—Joy HENDRY already describes it as such in her *Marriage in Changing Japan* (1981)—in whose very performance, according to the author, the marital ideal becomes manifest. In this manner, the cutting of the cake, for example, symbolizes the first act in which bride and groom work together; further, the exchange of cups of saké symbolizes both the bond between the two and between them and their relatives, as the lighting of the candles expresses the relations between the young couple and the social groups surrounding them. The formal request of the groom that everybody might help him and his bride in starting their new life signifies, so the author asserts, that the couple is still dependent on society even though through marriage the two are at last recognized as fully grown up.

As it turns out, the author finds the image of the Japanese as group-oriented and lacking autonomy reaffirmed in the symbolic system of the wedding. This point was expounded already quite a long time ago by Ruth BÉNÉDICT (1946) and NAKANE Chie (1970), to whose works the author refers. Unique, however, is the author's interpretation of gender and personality in Japan, which he sees as a complementarity of competence and incompetence. As the person is always understood as incomplete, it needs others and society in order to fulfill its role sufficiently. Herein he sees the greatest discrepancy with the Western notion of the individual as being autonomous and independent, and complete. Still, he fails to prove that this concept of the person is ever realized in Western society. Here, I believe, the ethnocentric bias in Edwards' analysis shows, since he does not notice his cultural relativism when reaffirming old clichés: "... for the Japanese ... their moral universe, moreover, is driven not by the assertion of autonomy, but rather by the notion of incompleteness. As male and female, individuals are incomplete in their competencies and thus compelled to marry. Only then are they considered fully adult" (129). In the continuance of this marital ideal the author sees the basis for the commercialization of the wedding as carried out today. This means he takes the wedding for marital life as such and does not see that the latter has changed very much, as so many women are working now, and probably never was the kind of uniform relation between husband and wife that we (Westerners) tend to see it.

Ultimately this study falls under the category of *Nihonjinron*, or discussions of what is "Japanese" or not. Yet I do not find that the analysis presents much that is new, and that it stands in a reasonable relation to the lengthy description of a wedding covering more than two thirds of the book. To demonstrate the author's opinion concerning Japanese values it would have sufficed, I think, to concentrate on important facts and to draw on what is already known from so many ethnographic studies, not least from Joy HENDRY's work (1981), where we find additional information both on the

historical and symbolic background of Japanese weddings.

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MACÉ, FRANÇOIS. *Kojiki shinwa no kōzō* 古事記神話の構造 [The structure of Kojiki myths]. Tokyo: Chūō Kōronsha, 1989. 248 pages. Tables, diagrams, references. Hardcover, Yen 1900; ISBN 4-12-001805-9.

One cannot but be surprised when acknowledging the fact that, despite the great quality of Japanese mythological studies, rare are the specialists who deal with myths per se. This paradox is presumably linked to three factors: 1) many authors continue to be inspired by an out-dated reductionism (looking in the *Kojiki* for some clues to the existence of an ever-elusive Volksseele, for the reflection of some historical events, or for shades of some Jungian archetypes); 2) an often hasty comparativism reinforces the tendency to cut off the "motifs" from their context and to study them as independent entities; 3) finally, the idea that the narratives of the *Kojiki* are not "genuine myths" but rather represent the last stage of a long process of manipulation or decay leads too many scholars to give precedence to the prehistory of the texts over the texts themselves. True, the authors of commentaries (Kurano Kenji, Saigō Nobutsuna, Nakaniishi Susumu) follow more closely the "letter" of the narratives, but nevertheless they shy away from the problem of the systematicity of the myths.

Even though Macé considers Mishina Akihide and Ōbayashi Taryō to have been precursors in the field, one should have no qualms about stating that Macé is the first to study the *Kojiki* as a coherent narrative system. He has convincingly demonstrated the homogeneity of the narrative and established that "mythical thought" was at work even in the second and third books of the *Kojiki*.

Notwithstanding the fact that Macé differs from Lévi-Strauss by avoiding any reference to the sociological context of the myths, by limiting himself to the textual analysis of a single book, and by declining to search for a "canonic formula," his approach can still be labeled structural: he endeavours to describe a network of binary oppositions, adopts the principle of functional equivalence, and endorses Lévi-Strauss's idea that all the details of a myth are significant.

The first step taken by Macé is to define a narrative unit bigger than the mytheme: what he calls the "sequence" (*renzoku* 連続) offers the advantage of putting together episodes traditionally considered independent. Macé uses the Tenson kōrin 天孫降臨 episode as a "reference sequence" and in the process gives it a new extension, since the *Jinmu-ki* is also included. He divides this sequence into four episodes (five if we take into account the introduction): a) Kuniyuzuri, 1) Tenson kōrin, 2) KonōFana nō