

OUWEHAND, C., *Hateruma. Socio-Religious Aspects of a South Ryukyuan Island Culture*. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1985. Xiv+324 pages. 140 plates, 32 figures, 7 maps, tables, bibliography, index of Hateruma vernacular terms. Cloth Gld. 164.—or US \$64.25; ISBN 90 04 07710 3.

The book under review is an ethnographic study which examines from a socio-religious perspective the folk culture of the island of Hateruma (Pachirā), located at the southern tip of Okinawa prefecture (Ryukyu) of Japan. The author spent eight months on this island in 1965, revisiting it for further study in 1975 and 1982. This interpretive description is thus based on a sufficient collection of folk materials.

The book consists of three parts. Part One, in the Introduction, outlines the life style and climate of the island, the origins of the villages, and their myths, legends, and history. Particular attention is given to the "brother-sister" (*bigiri-bunari*) relationships, which play an important role in society and religion. They are presented diachronically, starting with the myths and moving through history to the present time.

Part Two concerns the socio-religious organization, and is divided into sections on the social context and the religious context. The first section is discussed in terms of the house and household, main and branch families, bilateral relationships, brother-sister relationships, marriage, and labor organization. The second section examines the shrine system, priestesses, cult groups, concepts of deities (*uyān*), the relationship between the living and the dead, and so forth. The intimate relationship between society and religion is clarified through careful and minute investigation. Formerly it was thought that the cult group of the island, *pusuku*, which was organized on the household level with a place of worship, was patrilineal. The author offers new interpretations, such as pointing out that this group originates in a much deeper structure founded on bilateral relationships, and discussing the relationship between religion and society on the village level, he emphasizes that the *pananufua* group, too, has bonds with a place of worship.

Part Three examines agricultural rituals and the ritual cycle. This is the richest and most vivid part in the book. Almost all of the island's many annual rituals were observed and recorded. The text of the invocations chanted at these rituals are recorded, giving a depth to this work not found in former studies of Okinawa. These songs include prayers for a bountiful harvest, pleas for mild weather, prayers for rain, for the successful growth in the fields. This vividly reflects the life of the islanders as they face a formidable environment.

One of the appealing aspects of this book is that it does not stop with merely recording interpretations, but seeks to provide explanations to clarify the basic principles of life among the islanders. The first of these principles is a dichotomy based on the folk directions of east and west. The myth of their first ancestors and the oral tradition of the sacred wells exist in both east and west. The islands as a whole is divided with the west identified with sisters, and the east with brothers. This is also related to the fact that the western side is connected with rice cultivation, while the eastern side is connected with millet cultivation. However, these beliefs also reflect the religious superiority of the sisters with regard to the brothers, and the concomitant belief that the west is superior to the east. Second, on a sociological level, the brother-sister relation is very much emphasized in daily life. It is pointed out that the sisters act to maintain contact with the ancestors of their original house and then make connections with the brothers who socially and religiously become disjoined; that bilateral relationships are built marriage with the brother-sister relationship as their core, and that these relationships function to form a network of cooperation on the island. Third, in its religious

aspect, the brother-sister relationship reveals many levels where sisters have a spiritual predominance over brothers. Sisters are not only individually the religious guardians for their brothers, but also perform the rituals in their house, and further, as members of the island's cult group, they support the spiritual order of the entire society. Fourth, with regard to agricultural rituals, the ritual cycle of the island related to its productive activities and climate corresponds to nine months out of the year, to the agricultural season, and during the other three months is devoted to ancestor rituals. The island is symbolically closed at the seasonal celebration of September (*sīsīm*) and opened at the harvest festival (*pūrīm*) in June of the next year. This period is a time of prayer. The cult group, centered around the priestesses, goes around to the holy places and wells in the east and the west to pray and perform regular ritual exchanges. These are carried out by people specified through myth and legend, and the east and west play mutually complementary roles based on their dichotomy. Fifth, in relation to agriculture, the myths of origin for both rice and millet are told, and with the houses related to them as the center for the rituals, they are correlated to the east / west dichotomy. Originally millet was the major crop, but rice was more valued by the ruling class as tax payment, and so it is suggested that the traditional world view was changed through contact with the officials who came to the island.

This book is solidly based on long years of detailed research and careful linguistic work. It should be highly rated as an ethnography of a high degree of completeness. It is most suited as the author's life work. In addition, the entire work is held together by a coherent theme, that is, to show the complementary dualism as a structure in the social and religious aspects of the island. It is the dualism of east / west, brothers / sisters, and rice / millet which pervades myths and rituals and the society supporting them, and which was firmly established in the midst of the daynics of climate, environment, history, and politics. With the help of a synchronic and a diachronic examination of these structural principles, hidden behind the experienced and observed facts, the book brings the totality of this island society clearly into view. This is an important accomplishment, and proves the value of the Leiden school's methodology. In this sense this book is not merely another ethnographic study, but is a significant structuralist monograph which can be used for comparative studies.

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TYLER, ROYALL, *Japanese Tales*. Pantheon Fairy Tale and Folklore Library. New York: Pantheon Books, 1987. lvi+341 pages. Lists of sources, tales classified by sources, bibliography, index. Hardcover US \$19.95. ISBN 0-394-52190-0.

"Delightful" is the word which immediately springs to mind to describe this wonderful translation and collection of Japanese tales by Royall Tyler. It is the first book I have brought home from my office, and probably the last, given the kind of dull, academic works I usually carry, which my wife eagerly read in bed at night, keeping me awake with intermittent bursts of delighted laughter (see, for example, the risqué stories in the section on "The Sexes," pp. 76-81). My wife, a Japanese, had a provocative question. Were these stories embellished by Tyler, or were the versions she had read as a high school student been "watered down?" I suspect the later. Tyler has chosen