

Trubner & Co. in 1896.)

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1983 *Nō, kyōgen no gei* 能・狂言の芸 (The art of Nō and Kyōgen). Tokyo: Tokyo Shoseki.

ERNST, Earle

1956 *The Kabuki Theatre*. New York: Grove Press.

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LEBRA, TAKIE SUGIYAMA. *Japanese Women. Constraint and Fulfillment*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1984. Xi+345 pp. Bibliography, glossary and index. Hardcover US\$18.95 ISBN 0-8248-0868-1.

Publications in western languages about "Japanese Women" were hitherto based mainly on the supposition that, compared with the Western woman, the Japanese was old-fashioned and less emancipated. The reason for this was sought mainly in the consciousness of the women themselves rather than in the socio-political circumstances to which they have to submit. Indeed some studies by Western women about Japanese women seem to have often served as self-confirmation for the authors.

Born in Japan, Takie Sugiyama Lebra is professor of anthropology at the University of Hawaii. As she states in her preface the common image of Japanese women today is contradictory. On the one hand the Japanese woman impersonates the self-denying and dedicated wife and mother, while on the other she is said to hold dictatorial power over husband and household. Lebra decided to check into the truth of such statements and presents here a detailed ethnographic study based on repeated interviews and observations of fifty-seven women of various social provenance and profession coming from a city at Japan's Pacific coast. The age of the women ranges from twenty-eight to eighty years, but I have the impression that the majority of them was born before or during the war. After an introductory chapter concerning the geographical and historical development of the setting, a city with the fictitious name 'Shizumi,' the author arranges the main chapters according to the stages of a woman's life cycle: 1. Premarital Constraints and Options; 2. Marital Transition; 3. Postmarital Involvement; 4. Motherhood; 5. Occupational Careers; 6. Later Years.

One might be surprised that even today the "Japanese Woman" could still be discovered by "participant observation," the classic method of ethnography, and may ask if such a method is not now obsolete in view of the available statistical material and monographs. Lebra shows convincingly that this is not the case. Her procedure is strictly inductive. First she describes with great precision whatever she heard or observed and then, at the end of each chapter, she summarizes her observations by following a set of analytic principles. Besides intercultural comparisons between Japan and the United States, the principles she uses are the degree of polarity between the sexes, changes occurring in a woman's self-understanding in the course of her life cycle, the increasing need for self-fulfillment, and finally a comparison of what the author calls the "structural" (i.e. social) with the "personal" level. Although she does not claim to have written a representative monograph, she draws some generalizing conclusions.

It is impossible to take up the whole gamut of her detailed observations in a review.

Being more than a monograph about a group of Japanese women, the book is at the same time an introduction into Japanese society that can be recommended to whoever is interested in Japan. For those who know Japan it contains a lot of known facts and corroborates some of the existing opinions concerning Japanese women.

Lebra extensively describes the Japanese school system and marriage customs and confirms for the socialization process the strict separation between boys and girls imposed once children reach school age. At the same time she makes clear how much a child's scholarly career determines the life of the mother and to what degree activities required from the parents force her into a public role. Lebra illustrates the relation between the structural and the personal level, i.e. between social expectations and personal demands through case studies of marriages. The majority of the women she interviewed see marriage as the natural thing and motherhood as the appropriate destiny of a woman. In spite of such a high value placed on marriage, autonomy in the choice of the partner is, according to Lebra, surprisingly small. The wedding ceremony itself is a public affair, since it is performed in the presence of a go-between. Inasmuch as at marriage the woman becomes part of the family of her husband, she is re-socialized into a new family community, and again Lebra's examples give a good picture of the difficulties involved in such a change. In Chapter Seven about the later years she stresses that such an integration into the family is more and more positively appreciated with age, because it means continuity and security, especially in the years before death. Last but not least it provides protection against maltreatment by the husband or even against the break-up of marriage.

In those incidents where Lebra touches psychic areas as e.g. the mother-daughter-relationship (Chapter 1), I feel that at times she does not carry her analysis deep enough. But I find her discussion of the relationship among married partners most appropriate and convincing. Most probably, because she herself is Japanese, she succeeds in interpreting the discrepancies between the informants' statements and their behavior with great delicacy. Among other things she points out that at times the denial of feelings may lead one rather to assume the opposite. Concerning the power structures within the family she states that patriarchal and matriarchal elements exist side by side (156); a remark, it seems to me, which should prove to be most fruitful in further discussions of the Japanese family.

When discussing the women's occupational activities Lebra takes up the problem of the division of labor and of specific roles, in other words the polarity of the sexes. As she concludes in the final chapter, the Japanese example shows that the men's role monopoly in public is countered by the women's monopoly in the domestic domain. It is one of the fundamental expectations of Japanese society that a man's professional and specialized work is supplemented by the woman's non-specialized domestic work. The problem lies in the fact that the domestic and pedagogic effort of the woman is not equally appreciated as that of the man. This differs, however, where the woman takes part in family business. Even if she performs only secondary chores, she has a fixed position in the whole work-team and is therefore acknowledged. Finally, there are areas of work as e.g. that of a nurse, which are greatly monopolized by women and offer them specific careers. Yet, it is still difficult to secure a position in the administrative sector. But it may happen in those rare cases where a woman is a graduate from one of the prestigious universities. It is however a typically Japanese phenomenon that in a career in the bureaucracy the principle of seniority may at times override the other of the distinction of the sexes. As is also the case in other countries, a woman pursuing a career in Japan has to carry the double load of her family and of her extra-family work. Notwithstanding this, none of the women, according to Lebra's findings, was prepared

to trade her professional activities with those of a housewife-only.

A few exceptions aside, Lebra describes the later years as being mainly positive because it is the time when the women can harvest the fruits of their efforts of many years. Responsibility for domestic affairs is passed on to the daughter-in-law or the daughter and the woman can dedicate herself to her own interests and hobbies. Her experience and knowledge are sought after and may find application in honorary positions. Approaching death means reunion with the ancestors and the possibility for the woman herself to live on in the memory of the living as an ancestor. From my personal experience I cannot completely agree with this positive description of old age or of growing old. I rather think that the isolation of old people can be considerable, even within a family. However, when compared with the United States, the Japanese situation might still appear to be rather positive to Lebra's eyes.

In her concluding chapter Lebra makes the intercultural comparison more explicit. As was to be expected she remarks that when the Japanese woman tells her life history, she derives her identity from her participation in her family community rather than from her position or recognition as an individual. So Lebra concludes: "Indeed, living in Japanese society, compared with the American counterpart, has generally meant an accumulation of social capital . . . . The American individual, particularly a non-working woman, seems to remain a relatively isolated individual no matter how long she has lived" (299-300). On the other hand Lebra finds that the Japanese woman in comparison with the American woman is more restricted by the norm of sex asymmetry and as a consequence has less of an opportunity to give expression to her personal capabilities in interaction with a man.

I could touch only upon a few points of Lebra's analysis in this review. While one may have wished for a more scholarly discussion of some of the problems raised in the more empirically conceived first part of this book, Lebra, in the concluding chapter, leaves no doubt about the high theoretical and analytical level of her generally well argued monograph. Once more Lebra has shown how complex the topic of the "Japanese Woman" is and, in spite of this how fruitful intercultural comparison can be. I am in complete agreement with Ronald Dore when he says that to date this is the best book written about the Japanese woman. It does not mean, however, that there does not still remain a lot to be done in this field. Lebra's study will be the foundation for future research.

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Kara monogatari: *Tales of China*. Translated from the Japanese, with an introduction, by Ward Geddes. Occasional Paper No. 16, Center for Asian Studies, Arizona State University, 1984. vii+192 pp.

*Kara monogatari* was probably written in the late Heian period by the court official and poet Fujiwara no Narinori (1135-1187), although this attribution is not undisputed. It is a graceful rendering, in pure Japanese, of twenty-seven Chinese tales which were known to cultivated people then, and most of which lived on simply as a part of the Japanese cultural tradition. The first tale, for example, tells the familiar story of how Wang Ziyou 王子猷 went to visit a friend but turned back from the friend's gate without even knocking because, the mood of the moment having changed, he no longer felt like conversation; while tale eighteen treats the tragic love of Emperor Xuanzong