

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

玄宗 and Yang Guifei 楊貴妃. Each story includes one or more *tanka* poems, in the style of the Heian-period *uta-monogatari*.

Ward Geddes has translated *Kara monogatari* in full, and discusses in a well-ordered introduction the issues of authorship and dating; manuscripts and printed texts; literary quality; organization; and sources. Notes to each of the stories and to the introduction will be found at the back of the book, followed by a bibliography. The translation is more "literal" than literary, and one would not read it for disinterested pleasure.

As Geddes explains, it is hard to identify with confidence the immediate sources for the stories, but scholars have at least identified in most cases the ultimate Chinese sources. A number of the tales can be traced to such dynastic histories as the *Si ji* 史記 or the *Hou Han shu* 後漢書, not to mention the works of the poet Bo Juyi 白居易. In other words the material of *Kara monogatari* comes from literature rather than from any oral tradition. In this sense *Kara monogatari* is not exactly folklore. It is true, however, that one finds in these stories motifs (like the visit to the island of the immortals) or figures (like Yang Guifei) which certainly are common in Japan.

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HARDACRE, HELEN. *Lay Buddhism in Contemporary Japan: Reiyūkai Kyōdan*. Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984. Xviii+267 pp. Illustrations, figures, tables, appendix of questionnaire results, bibliography and index. Cloth US\$45.50, ISBN 0-691-07284-1.

Among the books in English dealing with the new religions, this one deserves special commendation. A sound approach, careful scholarship, and clear exposition make this study a significant contribution to the literature.

The author, presently an Assistant Professor in East Asian Studies at Princeton University, based her study on three years of field work in Japan. She was guided in her work by her teacher at the University of Chicago, Joseph M. Kitagawa, and by members of the Department of Religious Studies at the University of Tokyo, among others. Well grounded in the language, she combined data gathered from a survey of 2000 Reiyūkai members with insights gained from interviews of branch leaders and personal experiences during an eight month residency at the Eighth Branch headquarters in Osaka. In addition, she drew upon a broad range of resources on Japanese religion and society, as attested by a substantial bibliography, a large proportion of the works being in Japanese.

One feature of Helen Hardacre's approach which sets it off from other studies of the new religions is the serious consideration she gives to the claims made by Reiyūkai members on behalf of their religion. In conscious contrast to other studies, such as Neill McFarland's *The Rush Hour of the Gods*, and Harry Thomsen's, *The New Religions of Japan*, she accepts a functionalist standpoint that predisposes her to look for instrumental effectiveness as a factor in the success of a religious group at gaining and holding members. As she states the principle: "If those problems—precisely the ones that occasion members' joining these groups in the first place—were not meaningfully, *effectively*, addressed by membership in these groups, the groups would not continue to attract a following" (p. 226). Not surprisingly, she concludes that, in