

made it possible for him to succeed in putting forth useful and elaborate notes. These explanatory notes should give even non-Indian readers a feel for the words and songs in the book in addition to providing a broad idea of various aspects of Hinduism.

It should be observed that these songs are translated into English for their meaning and not for their musical qualities. In this respect the author says:

If one were to maintain their style in translation, it might be a gain in preserving the music of the original, but the meaning would be almost entirely lost, and that is a great disadvantage. Therefore, the translations have been made in the modern verse form (p. viii).

Further, he notes that "to convey somewhat the liveliness that distinguishes the rural songs of India" is the purpose of the book (p. viii). One wishes, however, that the book had included some discussion of the rhythm and metre of the songs.

In the songs themselves we notice some particularities of the entire Hindu society, not only of the rural areas but also of the city. All the songs stem from religious and mythological traditions, as, for example, a child-marriage and the pity of a barren woman in "The Barren Woman" (pp. 30-33), the Hindu calendar in "Auspicious Māgh" (pp. 42-44), the co-wife in "The Jealous Wife" (pp. 48-49), the Indian marriage system in the marriage songs (pp. 67 ff.), the dowry system in "The Bitter Dower" (pp. 78-79), married life in "Thief of Love" (pp. 174 ff.) and so on. The elites of Hindu society, i.e., the brahmins, mostly dwelling in the cities, have always observed the traditional Hindu code. Peasants and farmers (i.e., the non-brahmin caste) have also followed this code to a certain extent. It would be useful for any further study of rural songs to classify rural songs into groups such as those sung only in rural areas and those sung also by the religious elites in the cities, etc.

All the songs collected here are originally Hindu songs. Many of them are commonly known in all Indian rural areas, but some of them are peculiar to North India, where the vernacular language is Hindi. Some examples of these are "Rajlo and the Mughal" (pp. 171 ff.), "A Valiant Woman" (pp. 123-124), "Fight with the Mughal" (p. 193), whose theme is Krishna, who is especially popular in North India. More songs from areas of India whose vernacular languages and historical background are different from those of North India would give readers a more comprehensive understanding of the rural songs of India. I hope that the author will take this up in his subsequent research.

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BLÜMMEL, MARIA-VERENA. *Hofzeremonien im japanischen Mittelalter*. Eine Untersuchung zu den Jahresbräuchen des Kaisers Go-Daigo (*Kemmu-nenjūgyōji*). Veröffentlichungen des Ostasiatischen Seminars der Johann-Wolfgang-Goethe-Universität, Frankfurt/Main, Reihe B: Ostasienkunde Band 7. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz 1979. Paper, xi+191 pp. ISBN 3-447-01981-1, ISSN 0340-6652.

For most of its pages this volume gives us a translation of a ceremonial text written by Emperor Go-Daigo, the *Kemmu-nenjūgyōji*. Blümmel then completes the translation with a commentary, where she tries to establish the relative position of

the ceremonies within the medieval Imperial Court tradition and their relation with other ceremonies be they folk traditions or introduced, e.g., from China. In a third and last part she then adds her own conclusions concerning, in the first place, the purpose of this text and the conditions of its composition.

The author, at present at the University of Bonn/Germany, argues in a very subdued manner and in a low key, but she has a number of things to say, that are very much worth thinking about.

I agree with her pointing out the importance of this sort of ceremonial text for the study of Japanese history as well as folklore. Such texts may seem to yield very little because they tend to be dry enumerations of ritual prescriptions but the author makes it quite clear in her discussion and comments that there is a wealth of information buried here. With a carefully documented argument of her own she then challenges a number of seemingly established positions.

She argues convincingly that the text, in spite of its title, was not written in the Kemmu Period, but rather before it, namely already in 1327 (p. 13). The pillar of this argument is at the same time part of her main argument, viz., the contention that the text was not composed for the purpose of restoring the imperial ceremonies but rather as a source showing the situation at the time of its composition, or eventually as a model for the future. It cannot, therefore, be considered a document underlining the restoration efforts of Emperor Go-Daigo as it is held to be since the time after the Ōnin War.

She also shows how the development of the ceremonies is connected with the political importance of the Emperor and how this development closely mirrors his increasing alienation from the larger political scene and his progressive isolation.

It is refreshing to notice how the author carefully interprets the text in its own right, using similar documents in order to establish its position. Among other things, she shows in her commentary to the ceremony of "Tasting of the New Rice" that, although the Emperor's divine ancestors are included among the deities addressed, the festival in its older intention was not meant in the first place to be one for these ancestors. It is only since Heian times that this aspect comes more and more to the fore (p. 143). She also cautions against interpreting certain ceremonies at court as being taken over from the folk tradition just because they happen to be found there too, e.g., the tasting of seven kinds of gruel on the fifteenth day of the first month (pp. 121-122). This is a reminder that coincidence in form does not automatically mean that one has been taken over from the other, at least it cannot be assumed to be like that without further thorough arguments.

This book is challenging in many ways and I hope that it will bring scholars in the field to rethink ideas that seem to be beyond doubt. I regret, however, that there might be some factors which make this hope rather dim. The first may be the German language in which the book is written, although one reads it with pleasure and ease. The second could be the author's method of translating the official titles into German. I really doubt, whether this makes it more easily understandable for specialists in Japanese Studies. There is a list at the end, where one can find the Japanese terms, but it may have been a better service to use the Japanese terms in the text and add a list of translations. However, these factors do not detract from the basic importance of the book.

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