

of China who is often not even familiar with high-quality scholarship done and published outside his narrow field.

After the introductory part, the book deals on about a hundred pages with the state of eighteenth century China and the international political arena of this era. The third part of the book with the title "China and Free Trade Imperialism" is concerned with the nineteenth century and deals particularly with British policy towards East Asia, the Opium War and development of industry and commerce in China. This is followed by a very differentiated treatment of the first half of the twentieth century, "China between Submission and Resistance", which deals with the colonial policy of the Big Powers towards China. In the fifth part Osterhammel combines a survey of the People's Republic of China's domestic policy with a description of international politics in East Asia and the Pacific.

That the "Chronological Table of Events" (p. 563-590) has some gaps is not astonishing; but it is regrettable that the index is not more detailed. This does, however, in no way diminish the merit of this impressive work which is in my view a milestone in German historical literature. Thanks to its intellectual clarity and accuracy this book, which treats China and the international community in multiperspective, will set up a standard in the field and it will remain for long the book to be recommended to all interested in China's recent history and the international context.

*Helwig Schmidt-Glintzer*

EYAL BEN-ARI, BRIAN MOERAN, JAMES VALENTINE (eds.), *Unwrapping Japan. Society and culture in anthropological perspective*. Manchester: Manchester University Press 1990, 237 pages, £ 29.95

It is not only social anthropologists who have been persistently engaged in rethinking the art of explaining Japan. Yet the image of Japan as it has come to be seen not only outside the country, can be related to British and American anthropological studies, e.g. Benedict's *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword* (1946), Nakane's *Japanese Society* (1970) and Vogel's *Japan As No. 1* (1979). As most of us who deal with Japan feel that none of the three offers the ultimate interpretation of the phenomenon that is Japan, it may come as a relief that even anthropologists are not happy with it. However, the outcome of the Japan Anthropology Workshop held at Jerusalem in 1987, presented under the title of *Unwrapping Japan*, does not in the least try to offer any new interpretations. From its very beginnings anthropology has been a highly self-

reflecting discipline, and this - I suppose - mainly because its methods necessarily lead to a much greater degree of personal involvement than, let us say, history or economics.

Preoccupation with personal experiences in and attitudes towards Japan thus form a substantial part of this book. Joy HENDRY discovered the "wrapping of goods" as an "ordering principle" of Japanese society while she took part in cooking courses and housewives' meetings and applies it to customary and communicative levels of varying importance. She makes an interesting point, though not quite sufficiently elaborated. I am not sure whether she discovered an underlying principle or just a new metaphor. - Brian MOREAN describes how he, after years of doing research on Japanese traditional arts, was persuaded to try to hold his own exhibition of Japanese ceramics and pottery - and how he, by means of this unprecedented "field-work", was able to get valuable insights into "the intricate web of relationships that existed between potter, dealer, department store, media, patrons and general public". And he holds that similar relationships, and thus similar constraints, govern the art and business of any science, as well. - By comparing three recent studies of anthropologists on Japan, including Liza Dalby's *Geisha*, Brian Moeran's *Ookubo Diary*, and Oliver Statler's *Japanese Pilgrimage*, Eyal BEN-ARI deals, in a key essay of the book, with "some conventions and innovations" in the anthropological-ethnological depiction of Japan. He pleads for "textual experimentation" which means that reports of field-work may consist of a blend of records of personal experiences, reflections on topics related to the subject, and use of native sources and literary forms in a new context - in the case of Japan, this could be *zuihitsu*-style essays, *nikki*-style diaries, and *haiku*-style poems, etc. Ben-Ari explicitly states that "ethnographies may be termed fictions", and they serve the purpose of deepening the understanding of any foreign culture by using its own ways of expression, of avoiding one-way interpretations which are responsible for ethnological misinterpretations and distortions, of giving space to the notion of hitherto "irrelevant" emotional experiences of the researcher, and of leaving it to the reader to compare the author's findings with other descriptions and then draw his own conclusions. - I am fully aware of all the problems experimental ethnography is concerned with. But none of the problems can be said to be new or restricted to that discipline. German historicism à la Ranke has devoted much time and effort to similar concerns. Its major contribution to modern historical science was the rediscovery of authentic sources and the art of reading them in their proper context. Insofar there is no disagreement. But historicism also produced those bulky historical novels (which are, by the way, still very popular in Japan), which did (except for Mark Twain's *Yankee at*

*King Arthur's Court*) virtually nothing to promote any image closer to historical truth than, say, Marco Polo's description of his journey. We know, and any reader will know, that truth and reality are fictions tied to conventional, social constructions. For the ethnographer, reality in Japan is the reality of his interpretation of Japan, and he need not resort to aestheticism and literary transformation as long as he explains to the reader that any statement and conclusion will have to be checked against other constructions of reality. Roger GOODMAN managed to do so in his outstanding essay on "returnee school children" (*kikokushijo*) in Japan. His initial remark that "fieldwork is a very subjective experience" sums up his own experience while doing research on the growing number of Japanese children who, after being abroad for a long time with their family, receive special care to enable their smooth "re-socialization", i.e., language and behavioural training in special schools etc. At first, Goodman considered their case as similar to that of other minorities such as Koreans or *burakumin*, because for many Japanese these children who allegedly lack basic communicative abilities must be "re-educated", reshaped into "real Japanese". Then he discovered that the special schools and treatment of returnee children has in fact many elitist traits; their pupils are spared difficult entrance examinations at a number of prestigious universities, fees are very high, and about one third of the pupils are not real "returnee children, but just children whose parents want them to get a share of the returnee childrens' special care. Goodman concluded therefore that the returnee children were indeed a new kind of elite contrary to traditional educational egalitarianism. Finally, he discovered that neither of these explanations proves really satisfying. There is no clearly defined attitude of Japanese society as a whole towards returnee children, but "a variety of role models and positions" which directly reflects the ongoing "internal culture debate" between traditionalism ("*nihonjinron*" and "*yamatoism*") and "modernization" or "internationalization". This debate he rightly calls "one of the most important underlying dynamics of contemporary Japan". - James VALENTINE deals with the problems of marginal groups (as opposed to outsiders) in Japan and points out that ambiguity of social or ethnic standing are responsible for marginality, due to "the Japanese ideology of social and cultural homogeneity, and the emphasis on unambiguous belonging". - Teigo YOSHIDA shows that women are likewise victims of ambiguity, as far as their role in rites and religious activities is concerned: they can be considered as "polluted" (*kegare*) and "cleared" (*hare*) at the same time. But in attributing this ambiguity to cosmologic structures, Yoshida fails to understand what has been said of the social construction of reality and ideology. - Keiko TANAKA's contribution on the use of some foreign concepts in Japanese advertisements is another failure.

Any discussion of "intelligence", "feminism" and "individualism" in any European language would have led to a very similar conclusion. - D.P. MARTINEZ succeeds in proving that the inhabitants of sight-seeing spots like the pearl-divers' paradise of Kuzaki are not only victims of tourism, but "are as capable of practising 'touristic imperialism' as are the visitors to their village". What keeps their village together in the face of tourism seems to be devotion to traditional and exclusive religious activities. It would have been desirable to hear more about this seemingly important point. Michael ASHKENAZI does treat it, but only to introduce his method of "corporate analysis" of Japanese society. It is an important finding that though Japan may be labeled as a group-oriented society, the concrete meaning of "group" varies from case to case. Ashkenazi calls them "interconnected corporate units, each one exhibiting its own autonomy". Finally, Arne KALLAND presents a short history of the Japanese concept of the "closed sea" as opposed to the Western "open sea" concept and its consequences for fishing rights and coastal management. This form of maritime politics secured the livelihood of (a restricted number of) fishermen and prevented them from overfishing and overcapitalization. Further research into the global history of sea tenure could indeed offer valuable alternatives to the "narrow Western conception of the sea".

Reinhard Zöllner

SEIZABURO SATO, KENICHI KOYAMA AND SHUMPEI KUMON, *Postwar Politician. The Life of Former Prime Minister Masayoshi Ohira*. Tokyo/New York: Kodansha, 1990. 640 pages, US\$ 39.95

As Masayoshi Ito rightly points out in his postscript, this is only the second biography ever published in a Western language on a leading Japanese post-war politician (the first being John D. Dower's biography of Shigeru Yoshida (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1979).

From 1960 until his death in 1980 Masayoshi Ohira was a key actor in Japan's political scene. He was Japan's last Prime Minister who originated from Yoshida's school of elite bureaucrats to join the LDP parliamentary faction.

Ohira - in contrast to today's "second generation" LDP leaders - had an eventful, varied life and developed a complex, introverted and intellectually oriented personality, thus providing fascinating material for any biographer attempting to chart the man's developments, his values, motives and achievements.