

ledge is the most comprehensive survey of Korea ever published, except perhaps for some similar books which appeared in Korea.

Although strict limitation in space and careful classification by topic have largely prevented the authors from glossing along the lines suggested by the "view through the inverted field-glass", one finds exceptions to the rule. An interesting one is the attempt to attribute certain characteristics of present-day political life to Neo-Confucianism. It seems to have escaped the authors' attention that what Neo-Confucianism mostly did, was either to justify and solidify pre-existent modes of politics or sometimes even to criticize them. Therefore, in any ordinary sense of the word, Neo-Confucianism can hardly be said to have been the cause of what followed it.

Dieter Eikemeier

MICHAEL MARTISCHNIG, *Tätowierung ostasiatischer Art*. (Mitteilungen des Instituts für Gegenwartskunde, 19). Wien: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1987. 76 pages, ÖS 140.-/DM 20.-

Martischnig's booklet deals with the Japanese tradition of tattooing. He traces it back to early Japanese history, when it was not yet clear whether tattooing was considered as ornament (*bunshin*) or punishment (*geishin*), for both of which he quotes early evidence. As for the latter, complex rules developed by the mid-18th century according to which criminals were marked. On the other hand, tattooing of body ornaments gradually became fashionable, until at the beginning of the 19th century whole-body tattooing developed. Martischnig suggests it originally expressed a sort of criticism of the political situation during the Tokugawa régime and aimed at mocking the public authorities. In any case, ornamental tatoos became characteristic attributes of professions like artisans, firemen, carpenters, and *yakuza* (gangsters). *Horimono*, or *irezumi*, as the art of tattooing is called in Japanese, was frequently banned and prosecuted by Tokugawa and Meiji authorities, but after Japan's opening to the West in 1854, foreign seamen made it popular all over the world. While many of the artistic themes and techniques were imitated by Western tattooers, whole-body tattooing has not become as popular abroad as in Japan.

Martischnig's narrative is not always easy to follow, because of his somewhat inconsistent style. One wonders why he quotes, e.g., the Japanese writer Tanizaki Jun'ichirô in an English translation, and why many of the Japanese terms he uses are spelled incorrectly (e.g., *Kioto* or *Kyoto* instead of *Kyôto*,

*koshaku ichidai otoko* instead of *kôshoku ichidai otoko*, etc.). Some pages dealing with general and art history would have been better omitted. Nevertheless, the book is an interesting contribution to the study of human "body art".

Reinhard Zöllner

MATTHEWS MASAYUKI HAMABATA, *Crested Kimono. Power and Love in the Japanese Business Family*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990. 191 pages, US\$ 19.75

In 1979 Professor Hamabata undertook anthropological fieldwork with the Japanese upper classes. His focus of study were the mindset, the social norms and the family life of the established Japanese business elite. After considerable difficulties to overcome cultural, class and gender barriers, he was finally able to obtain the confidence of some - mostly female - members of one of Japan's gilded business families and came to learn the intricacies of inter-household (*ie*) relations, the complexities of battles to succeed as head of the household and of the family enterprise, of strategic marriage arrangements (*omiai*), and of the importance of upper class status symbols and adherence to the appropriate way of life.

The feudalist rigidities of the norms and behaviour which Hamabata observes among his upper crust associates may come as a surprise. One might have surmised that Japan's cosmopolitan moneyed elite should have been most emancipated from feudal *ie* concepts. Yet they appear more *ie* obsessed than even the most conservative (ex-)landowners in the Tohoku countryside.

Upon reflection, however, this apparently out-dated behaviour becomes plausible: these people own their social status and wealth essentially to their birth and family. It is hence a feudal, not a bourgeois, individual performance-oriented elite (the latter applies to Japan's salarymen - managers or elite bureaucrats). It is hence their duty to preserve and enhance their family's wealth and status, to continue the family lineage and to appoint an able successor. Succession is not automatic: in the absence of or in the case of incompetent sons, the successor may be an adopted son-in-law or a more distant relative. In order to preserve the family's status, the rules are strict: premia are placed on good education, appropriate behaviour, business acumen, the right social contacts and way of life, including the proper choice of the right marriage partner (which is essential for breeding a proper