

*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".

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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 feudalistic 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

prospective successor one generation later). There is no place for dissidents, bohemians, other-worldly scholars or spoilt brats.

All clan members implicitly acknowledge that for *ie* survival at a socially elevated status, discipline must remain iron.

Hamabata reports a few incidents of ruthless collective *ie* discipline vis à vis dissidents and individualists within the family: quickly they learn either to adjust (including their choice of marriage partners) or be cast aside permanently (which means to run a small subsidiary company with no prospects of taking over the helm of the family and its main business).

For proper succession in any good feudal system legitimacy is needed apart from abilities and proper conformity. Hamabata describes in great detail the intricate struggles for symbols of legitimacy in the case of the crisis situation of an open succession struggle - succession having been left undecided by the deceased previous family head - in the family he encountered. Once decided, the new head of family enforced his authority ruthlessly over the reticent households and businesses of his brothers, sisters and other relatives.

It is interesting to note that while men in the family deal mostly with business, it is the women who have to maintain the social status, take care of family symbols, maintain a lavish and cultured life style, who are responsible for the groomed successor's education, proper marriage making (*keibatsu*) and for close social links to other peer elite families. To be accepted in this upper crust obviously money is essential but clearly not sufficient: the spouses of upstart land- or stock- speculating *nouveaux riches* were not welcome in Kaidanren's "Women's National Auxiliary", to which the female members of Hamabata's family, together with the wives of other leading company presidents, LDP members of parliament and members of the Imperial Household, belonged. Apparently it took three generations of proper business success, of adherence to the right norms and of marrying upwardly to achieve this status. The women were acutely aware that this achievement could not be taken for granted, but had to be actively maintained.

Professor Hamabata has written a book on an interesting subject although his circumlocutious and jargon-laden style do not always make for interesting reading. It also appears that he is sometimes more interested in himself than in his subjects (which could explain some of the research difficulties he encountered).