

DIETER EIKEMEIER/MICHAEL GÖÖCK, *Getanzte Karikaturen. Traditionelle Maskenspiele in Korea*. Stuttgart/Zürich: Belser Verlag, 1988. 120 pages, 66 coloured and 40 b/w plates, DM 58,-

This is a delightful book and the first in a Western language that presents the traditional Korean mask dance drama in all its colorful facets. The informative text written by Germany's foremost specialist of Korean folklore and folk religion, Dieter Eikemeier, is illustrated by wonderfully expressive black-and-white and color plates photographed by the young photographer Michael Gööck. This book successfully introduces the Western reader to one of Korea's oldest art forms.

Korean mask dance drama may have originated in the late seventeenth century and, after a period of decline and neglect in the first half of this century, has again become one of the most popular entertainments in Korea. To be sure, the circumstances of its modern performance are no longer traditional: the play is now often moved from its original small-scale local setting to a large modern stage, and the former audience which took an active part in the proceedings is replaced by onlookers who watch passively from a distance. This is indeed a regrettable, though unavoidable development, because, under the impact of rapid industrialization and urbanization, Korea has ceased to be a traditional, rural society.

The book concentrates on one play, the *Yangju pyôl sandae nori* (Special open-air play of Yangju). This play is still quite regularly performed by local residents in Yuyangni, a village some twenty-five kilometers north of Seoul. The performance schedule is naturally no longer determined by festive dates in the old lunar calendar, for example Buddha's birthday, and the physical surroundings and performance practices have undergone great change. Nevertheless, the play is considered an important part of the country's cultural heritage and was in 1964 designated by the Korean government as an "intangible cultural asset" – a measure that itself has led to standardization, thus endangering the vitality of this art form.

The *Yangju pyôl sandae nori* is performed by non-professional players who are apprenticed by older performers. Although an established script exists today, in traditional times text, dancing, and music were transmitted orally. Dancing and music are indeed an important part of the performance, but the viewer is most attracted by the colorful masks – objects predestined for the lens of the skillful photographer. Today twenty-five masks are still in use. They are grotesque caricatures of human faces which belong to monks, female shamans, concubines, members of the social elite, traders, drunkards, and good-for-nothings. The players are a strange assortment of characters, all

moved to action by base motives of greed, ambition, and sexual desire. They do not tell a coherent, logical story. Rather, they show climactic scenes of conflict and reconciliation. The spoken word is relatively unimportant; dance and music are the mainstay of action. Action is often crude and through its unbridled sexuality even offensive. It provokes the audience to participate with cries of approval or dismay. It demands close interaction between viewer and player.

For the Western spectator, the play is not immediately understandable. Dieter Eikemeier's analysis of the action, the performance techniques, and the historical and intellectual environment of the mask dance drama of Yangju is therefore most welcome. In the appendix he has also provided a useful sketch of the sequence of the various acts, an identification chart of masks, a chronological table of Korean history, and a map that indicates the places where mask plays used to be and still are performed. The book ends with some thirty pages of magnificent color plates, providing superb illustration of the variety and multiformity of the Yangju mask play.

Dieter Eikemeier and Michael Gööck have produced a most readable and visually pleasing work on a traditional art form that is largely unknown in the West. The Belser publishing company must be congratulated on having the courage to publish this book which, despite its many qualities, may only gradually attract the Western reader's attention.

Martina Deuchler

JÜRGEN M.H. MORHARD, *Wirtschaftliche Sicherheit und Politik in Japan. Ein Faktor in der Konzeption der japanischen Außen- und Sicherheitspolitik.* (Mitteilungen des Instituts für Asienkunde, 177). Hamburg: Institut für Asienkunde, 1989. 204 pages, DM 28.-

The subject of this book is the great Japanese dependence on economic factors (e.g. raw materials, energy, the monetary system, absence of protectionism, technology, sea-lines) and the Japanese answer to this dependence during the last twenty years. The author describes the changes in the Japanese attempt to handle this problem, the scope for solving this dependence on economic factors and its influence on Japanese foreign and security policy.

Jürgen M.H. Morhard has done his research carefully. He describes his subject in detail, using a lot of background material, statistics, empirical data, but unfortunately only limited material in Japanese.