

This, in turn, is also a Buddhist concern. In a way, the book is therefore also one on Buddhism, although the author almost certainly did not so intend it. It has become such less by the recording of matter-of-fact knowledge on Buddhism than by the author allowing himself to become "entangled" in a particular Buddhist environment and its manifold ramifications. The reader, too, may like to become involved in the matter and thereby, though unintentionally, learn a lot about Buddhism, among other things. This is more praise than one can bestow on many a scholarly book on the topic.

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DAVID E. KAPLAN, ALEC DUBRO, *Yakuza. The Explosive Account of Japan's Criminal Underworld*. London: Macdonald & Co. (Futura Publications), 1987. 414 pages, £ 3,50.

Few textbooks on Japan's political economy bother to mention the role which organized crime plays in her political and social system. Kaplan and Dubro have synthesized the current state of public knowledge on the gangs' structure and mode of operation and added the results of research of their own.

The book begins with an account of the historical origins of the *yakuza* (which help to explain some of the - wholly unwarranted - *yakuza* mystique of latter day Robin Hoods) as gamblers (*bakuto*) or peddlers (*tekiya*).

More interesting, however, is a lengthy section on their postwar development: starting in black marketeering, in ethnic or subcultural gangs, linking up with rightwing extremists and dubious 'Kuromaku' (unseen wirepullers like Yoshio Kodama, Kenji Osano and Ryoichi Sasagawa), as well as LDP power brokers (most notably the former side-stream faction bosses Ichiro Kono, Bamboku Ono, and PM Nobusuke Kishi), most of whom are dead by now. The book moves on to describe the LDP/mob connections unearthed by the Lockheed scandal investigations. It also provides fairly impressive descriptions of the *yakuza* organizations' internal structure, with their feudalistic *oyabun-kobun* (boss-follower) ties; and finally focusses on the *yakuza's* emerging international role - basically around the Pacific Rim (Korea, Taiwan, Philippines, Hawaii, the US West Coast), searching for amphetamines, hand guns, prostitutes and money laundering opportunities.

Kaplan and Dubro describe the current 'modernizing' transition of this venerable Japanese social institution (where uniform black-striped dress codes, tattoos, and cut little fingers still abound) from its traditional extortion, prostitution, blackmail, strike-breaking and casual labour exploitation (at

docks and construction sites) activities to more modern service-oriented lines of racketeering: loan sharking, control of entertainment facilities (from snack bars to coffee shops), real estate operations, control of trucking companies, drug smuggling and political activities - usually fundraising, campaigning and occasional dirty business on behalf of selected LDP luminaries.

The authors convincingly demonstrate that the links between gangsters and rightwing politicians are based on rigid social structures (appealing to both), a shared mystical world view that worships power and a joint resentment of foreigners and foreign ideas (socialism or liberalism in particular).

The gangs' primary motivation, however, is clearly derived from straight profit motives: the defense of their rackets and the opening of new business ventures, facilitated by political protection. While the Kuromaku of old may be a dying breed, the prominence of LDP dietman Koichi Yamada (Takeshita faction, also of Inagawa-Gumi) *et alii*, as well as the omnipresence of black trucks with loudspeakers, manned by right-wing thugs, in all major Japanese cities, suggest continued gangland/politics links.

Japan's police tolerates the 110,000 men strong gangs not only for their political clout: the gangs discipline their own members and do not tolerate petty 'independent' street crime in their turf, and hence keep Japan's waste entertainment districts 'safe' on their terms. Yet, recent flare-ups of inter-gang wars and the decline of the Yamaguchi-Gumi - Japan's largest crime syndicate - suggest that younger gangsters (mostly originating from the *boso-zoku* motorcycle gangs) are more difficult to control and less loyal to their bosses, indicating social change also in one of the most conservative institutions of modern Japan.

Kaplan and Dubro have done thorough research work (though most of their sources are in English), and interviewed even a few gang leaders. Though aimed at a larger public and 'easy reading' (it is slightly repetitive at times), the book is well footnoted and a useful reference source for anyone interested in the shadier sides of Japan's political economy.

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THOMAS HEBERER (ed.), *Ethnic Minorities in China: Tradition and Transform.* Papers of the 2nd Interdisciplinary Congress Sinology/Ethnology, St. Augustin. (Forum 10). Aachen: Alano, 1987. 126 pp., DM 32.- .

This book has seven chapters discussing contemporary trends among China's minorities. Three chapters are written by the editor, Th. Heberer; the others