

penetrating and perceptive studies on South Korean agriculture published in German.

Jae-Hyeon Choe

DIETER EIKEMEIER: Documents from Changjwa-ri. A Further Approach to the Analysis of Korean Villages. (Veröffentlichungen des Ost-asien-Instituts der Ruhr-Universität Bochum, Vol.25). Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1981. IX, 261 pages. DM 92.-

Various studies on Korean villages have been published recently, most of them based on field research over various lengths of time and employing different socio-economic methods. Dieter Eikemeier has approached the study of one particular Korean village from a new angle, led to do so by the need of the university teacher to limit his field research to several shorter visits, and by his sound philological background.

His study centers around normative sets of rules in which the village population agrees to certain organizational and behavioral standards in connection with questions pertaining to the village as a whole. The outstanding single event is the village festival, the most important other issue is the regulation of land and woods not privately owned, and other common possessions. The village code agreed upon is the written expression of what autonomy there is on the village level, an excellent point of departure for questions relating to local vs. central government.

The village chosen is a small island village off the south coast and, until recently, quite remote. The documents cover the time between 1933 and 1964, when drastic changes in the political arena began incorporating the village into the reorganization of Korean society in the course of development.

It is important to read the subtitle carefully in order to avoid disappointment. The study centers around documents, not the reality of everyday life. Several times the author himself points out that the documents under study are no good source for the latter because they are proclamations, quite often fictitious, and sometimes even repetitions of provisions from government law. Dieter Eikemeier's "Further approach ..." does not attempt a description of village life as such. It is the contents of these regulations which are confronted with actual life, so in this respect aspects of Korean village life are being discussed and explained in *extenso*, but naturally a study focussing on the totality of real village life would be different in scope and stress.

All documents are given in translation (pp.144-189), the original text has been added (pp.192-229), and author and publisher must be given special complements for this.

Background explanations given are mainly in two areas. One is the theoretic-

cal framework of commune vs. community, of the village organization as it presents itself in reaction to central governmental influence vs. inward-orientated and more cooperative organization among the peasants. The other area of background information is ethnological and historical. In both areas concepts and facts are discussed in great detail and with minute methodological considerations.

Summing up, one can only recommend this book to anyone trying to understand Korean village life, and it makes interesting reading for historians who are quite often left with only what has been written down, without being able to check against reality directly. The contents are interesting, and as a scholarly work the methodology sets a new standard.

(One minor point may be added, not really a criticism, but rather a question and a warning. The author sees little chance of development of organizations free from government influence, and presents the documents as examples of submission to commands from the central government. The reviewer wonders how much he fell into the trap the villagers set for the authorities. Saying "Yes, yes", and acting quite differently can be observed elsewhere, and is part of Korean cultural behaviour. This surface submission - quite often mistaken for an outright lie by foreigners - is one way in which a Korean maintains his dignity in conflicts and creates a measure of freedom under pressure.)

Werner Sasse

JUNG YOUNG LEE: *Korean Shamanistic Rituals*. (Religion and Society, Vol.12).
The Hague, Paris, New York: Mouton Publishers, 1981. XVI,
249 pages. DM 75.-

The author closes his preface with the words "Finally I am most grateful to my people, the descendants of the great shaman Dan Gun, who deserve whatever the contribution that this book can make in the world". The reviewer must insist they don't. The only contribution this book can possibly make is additional confusion in an area of research which has only recently started to be treated by scholars. The Korean people and their almost two thousand years of traceable cultural history certainly do not deserve such a presentation.

Most of the contents have already been published in various periodicals and putting them together without consistent editing has not improved what, originally, had been bad enough. There is no systematic transcription method employed for the frequent mention of names or concepts from Korean shamanism, and even the same Korean word or name appears in different written forms, leaving the reader at a loss. It also seems to have escaped the author that a word written in Chinese characters is quite often a Korean concept transformed into an approximating loan word, or even only a transcription without reference to the