

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

Chinese meaning, in this case the characters being used for the sound value only. The erratic way in which the author handles names and concepts from Korean is well matched by his unbelievable English which is sometimes eccentric, quite often misleading, or simply not comprehensible.

Other scholars' research - sometimes acknowledged and sometimes not - is reproduced in a distorted way, and most of the time their arguments are oversimplified and thus made to look ridiculous.

The 40-page translation of a twelve-part ritual cannot be evaluated, because there is no indication of where the text is taken from. Should the author have recorded it himself, he should have documented reasons for the session, actors, date and place. But to his simple mind (judging also from the explanations in his footnotes) the circumstances must have been of no significance. Throughout the book elements of Korean culture seem to be introduced mainly for their exotic appearance, presenting chaos rather than complexity. Outstanding feature of all explanations (full of folk etymology) is a superficial argumentation displaying an outsider's inability to take traditional culture seriously. As with the text, the bibliography attached is virtually useless because of poor editing and lack of proof-reading.

One aspect basic to the author's argumentation is even worse than anything mentioned so far, and again is evidence of the simplistic way the author misinterprets his own culture. It is deplorable to see the manner in which the "most fundamental and influential religion of the Korean people" is reduced to the female shaman's attempt to overcome sexual repression. Poor psychologists, poor Korean shamans, poor Korean people, poor historians of religions mentioned as having encouraged the author (they should have discouraged him).

This book must be warned against.

Werner Sasse

DOROTHEA SICH: *Mutterschaft und Geburt im Kulturwandel. Ein Beitrag zur transkulturellen Gesundheitsforschung aus Korea. (Medizin in Entwicklungsländern, Vol. 13).* Frankfurt am Main/Bern: Peter Lang, 1982. 313 pages, SFr. 39.-

This study deals with a community basic care project in South Korea. Dr. Sich describes and analyzes the results of twelve years' work in a provincial town hospital and in a rural district, where a modern obstetrical basic care system was built. Chapters on the medical and ethnographic background illuminate the public health, economical, social and cultural situation in rural Korea. The author describes the historical roots of traditional Korean medicine and the