

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

role of women in family and society. Central part is an empirical study of all facts concerning birth, as they were observed in 30 pregnancies. Traditional practices and the requirements of modern risk reduction, normal course of events and correspondent theories are compared. Dr. Sich thus draws a clear picture of the "interacting obstetrical systems", of their mutual positive and negative influences. The carefully documented case studies are illustrated with maps, diagrams, and photographs. An introduction gives a detailed literature review, and the method used is explained. Many footnotes comment the text, and a bibliography is added.

This study is an excellent example of a rare kind: the clear method presents valuable data, and the historical and transcultural comparative analysis puts them into a well-balanced perspective. The personal involvement of the author as a gynaecologist and public health expert and her sympathetic understanding are visible throughout the book. The results are so clearly arranged that they can also serve in new contexts as basic material for different comparisons. The references given are a useful apparatus for further analyses. Medical anthropologists, historians of medicine, development aid specialists, and last but not least medical field workers can certainly profit from studying this book.

Dr. Sich has succeeded in her endeavour to promote understanding of the problems that arise from the "natural sciences orientation in 'modern' medicine in developing countries because of their differing cultures and the consequent client behaviour". She does not offer quick solutions that could easily be copied, but rather encouragement to think ahead. By doing so, she shows the importance of applied ethnomedicine.

Winfried Effelsberg

THOMAS HEBERER: Nationalitätenpolitik und Ethnologie in der VR China.

(Veröffentlichungen aus dem Übersee-Museum Bremen, Series D, Vol. 11). Bremen: Übersee-Museum 1982. 99 pages.

DM 15.80

The author lived in Peking for some years, which gave him the chance to work on Chinese material and with Chinese ethnologists. The result is this publication of which the first part deals with the policy of the Communist party towards the minorities since 1949, while the second part gives a summary of the development of Chinese ethnology, its influences, research and aims.

The first part gives an account of the minority policy according to the political movements, stating e.g. that the so called "left-wing" errors affected minorities as well as Han. While in the "democratic reforms" of 1949-1957 the right of autonomy and the nationalization (minzuhua) meant a positive start, they suffered a set-back during the "great leap forward" 1958-1960