

Sepp Linhart, Arbeit, Freizeit und Familie in Japan. Eine Untersuchung der Lebensweisen von Arbeitern und Angestellten in Großbetrieben. (Schriften des Instituts für Asienkunde, Bd. 43) Wiesbaden, Otto Harrassowitz, 1976, 418 pages, DM 80.-.

This study on work, leisure and the family in Japan, undertaken by a Japanologist from the University of Vienna, is based on a survey of 865 male blue- and white-collar employees of large companies in the Tokyo area, conducted in 1972 and 1973. The aim of the study is to describe the life style of employees and the work-related factors that influence it.

In explaining the working conditions, the attitude of employees toward work, leisure behavior, the family structure, and the employees' attitude toward their families, the author cites extensively the results of related surveys and also takes into account a fair amount of pertinent sociological theory.

The reader will find the book rather heavy going, as the author has failed to open his study with a detailed exposition of his approach. Moreover, he has omitted his questionnaire. Only through careful reading can one determine whether L. is discussing his own or other surveys. The description of working conditions, time budget, etc., tends to be wordy and it is not as a rule clear whether the author is making an original interpretation of familiar material or whether he is putting new material up for discussion. This tends to detract from his otherwise very praiseworthy intention of presenting an uncommonly detailed explanation of his research findings in the context of other recent work on the subject.

In explaining the working conditions, L. convincingly shows how the principles of life-time employment and seniority, rather than guaranteeing a career, tend in fact to allow considerable latitude for competition and exert great pressure on those who can expect a career to work hard and demonstrate a loyal attitude. The study's particular value lies in the way it demonstrates how the differing commitment of white- and blue-collar workers together with differences in the opportunities for self-realization and advancement affect their attitudes toward work, leisure activities and their families. According to L., Japanese white-collar workers tend to be more work- and less family-oriented than blue-collar workers. Furthermore, they are more likely to do without vacations and are more inclined to spend their leisure time with colleagues and in activities that relate to their occupational role. Their relation to their wives - in contrast to that of blue-collar workers - is characterized by more rigidly separated roles and little communication between the partners.

All in all, the study shows that although blue-collar workers' financial position has improved over the years, this apparently does not lead to any approximation in life styles.

On the contrary, differences in opportunities for self-realization in the realm of work appear to have a strong effect on other areas of life. The English summary does not do justice to the author's differentiated interpretation of the data, which - particularly in Sections II.2, III.2, IV.2 and Chapter V - justifies ranking this study as an important contribution to social research on contemporary Japanese society.

Ulrich Teichler

Ulrich Lins, Die Omoto-Bewegung und der radikale Nationalismus in Japan. Studien zur Geschichte des neunzehnten Jahrhunderts, Bd.8 (Abhandlungen der Forschungsabteilung des Historischen Seminars der Universität Köln). München, R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 1976, 300 pages, DM 39.-.

In his dissertation the author describes the historical development of the Shintoist Omoto sect from its beginnings in the last decade of the 19th century to its political suppression in 1936. Critical of the dominant tendency in historical interpretation, which is to concentrate on the strong influence Japan's political elite has had on the broad masses since modernization set in, Lins focusses here on a movement that was periodically quite influential and had its social and ideological origins in the lower classes. This movement was, in Lins' words, "a reaction against the inroads made by Western technology into the Japan of the Meiji era, which effected enormous changes in people's habits and ways and created severe psychological adjustment problems for large sectors of the population" (p. 250). Impoverished peasants in particular, along with increasing numbers of people from other walks of life, saw in traditional community relations a hope of maintaining social harmony in the face of growing competition in society as a whole. Their justification, which was that they had to defend what they took to be the Emperor's true will against the political authorities, provoked political persecution in 1921 and again in 1935-36. The author describes the sect's development from its founding up to 1921 primarily from a sociology-of-religion point of view, as an almost inevitable sort of harmonistic wishful thinking, culminating in chiliarism. In the second part of his study the author concentrates mainly on the connection between the sect's religious development and its leaders' cooperation with right-wing radical political groups.

The author's frequent change of approach in presenting his material and conclusions lays him open to criticism. Furthermore, the reader has the impression that with all his details the author occasionally loses the thread. All in all, however, this study gives a very lively picture of a certain mentality and political mood as revealed in one segment of Japanese life in the first three decades of this century, and its author has succeeded in casting light on far more than the narrow subject of the Omoto movement. It