

listed). (I have once encountered the same mistake in a Japanese book citing a medieval source. When I looked at the manuscript, it turned out that the author had misread the handwriting.) It also seems that the entries according to first, second etc. *kanji* are not always congruent. E.g., one finds Shindô (*atarashii plus fuji*) only under *shin* and the obsolete *kanji* form of *fuji* (vol. 1, p. 964), which has considerably more strokes than the abridged new form. Obviously due to this peculiar decision (the abridged form is official standard today), it has not been listed under *fuji* (vol. 1, pp. 630-634). I suppose that Hadamitzky gathered some of his names from prewar lexica printed in old *kanji* and did not convert all of them. Users should bear this in mind.

The only major flaw is that in his second volume (*From Readings to Characters*) Hadamitzky (unlike O'Neill), has no references to the *kanji* which he lists for each entry. This would have greatly eased cross-checking which, in spite of the editor's admirable diligence, is still necessary in many cases. But it is beyond doubt that all dealing with Japanese materials will greatly benefit from Hadamitzky's new dictionary, which is sure to remain for a long time to come the most comprehensive and most user-friendly solution to the tricky problem of Japanese names.

Reinhard Zöllner

HARALD DOLLES, *Keiretsu. Emergenz, Struktur, Wettbewerbsstärke und Dynamik japanischer Verbundgruppen. Ein Plädoyer für eine interpretative Erweiterung ökonomischer Analysen in der interkulturellen Managementforschung.* (Europäische Hochschulschriften: Reihe 5, Volks- und Betriebswirtschaft, Bd. 2165). Frankfurt/M. et al.: Peter Lang, 1997. 316 pages, 23 figures, 15 tables, DM 89,-. ISBN 3-631-30543-5

Originally prepared as a doctoral thesis, the book under review focusses on the research framework most appropriate for analysing the Japanese *keiretsu* phenomenon. Why might it be important to struggle with the explanation of *keiretsu* or industrial groups in Japan? On the one hand, they became a main target of criticism by foreign (mostly Western) governments and business associations, who complained that they were a major barrier to entering the Japanese market. On the other hand, the structure of these industrial groups has been regarded as a Japanese competitive advantage and as therefore worth being adopted by Western countries. For these reasons, interest in the *keiretsu* phenomenon has grown rapidly, resulting in several studies on this subject.

Harald Dolles' book provides a general overview of the different forms of industrial groups, including their historical roots. Numerous tables and figures facilitate access to the subject. The main part of the work, however, is devoted to the methodological approach on which a scientific analysis of industrial groups in Japan should be based in order to contribute to proper understanding of the phenomenon. The author argues that a purely economic analysis, applying elements of competitive strategy and neo-institutional approaches, is not adequate to explaining *keiretsu*. He argues that a so-called intercultural-interpretative perspective (called *Binnenperspektive*) has to be added to the narrow economic analysis (pp. 276-277). Only if the

meaning of the (not always rational) behaviour of the actors in the Japanese context can be interpreted correctly can the structure of the Japanese industrial groups be appropriately understood. By proposing a widened economic approach, the author makes a valuable contribution, independent in spirit and intention, to studies of both Japan and intercultural management.

The book is divided into eight parts: Importance of *keiretsu* and overview of research on *keiretsu*; deficiencies in theory and practice: starting-points for further research work; *keiretsu*: a reconstruction from a historical, semantic and structural perspective; the competitive edge of *keiretsu*: an analysis from the perspective of competitive strategy; the neo-classical model extended by neo-institutional thoughts: a wider approach to the analysis of *keiretsu*?; the analysis of *keiretsu* between economy and culture in the field of intercultural management research; structure, meaning and continuance of relations in Japan: a tentative explanation of rationality of behaviour by applying an intercultural-interpretative approach; implications of the research results for theory and practice: a look into the past and the future.

The general structure of the book is meant to enable the reader to follow the various steps which led to the interdisciplinary research framework summarized on page 278. This "onion"-like construction, however, has the disadvantage of disintegrating the analysis of the main subject, the *keiretsu*. The first chapter starts with the relevance of *keiretsu* for Western economies. The author introduces four common approaches to analysing Japan's industrial groups: The historical approach (e.g. Norbert Voak, Erich Pauer, Dieter Schneidewind, Max Eli), the neo-institutional approach (e.g. Hans G. Hilpert, Martin Hemmert), the network theory approach (e.g. Jörg Sydow) and the competitive strategy perspective (e.g. Martin Hemmert). Similar research methods from the US and Japan are also discussed. Chapter two deals with the general objective of research (p. 72) and sets out the different disciplines focussing on *keiretsu* research. The existing diversity of approaches and perspectives calls for a comprehensive research framework which is the objective of Dolles' work. Chapter three examines the historical background of the *keiretsu* which date back to the prewar so-called *zaibatsu* (giant business combine), groups of companies partly owned and entirely controlled by a family holding company. The biggest *zaibatsu* were Mitsui, Mitsubishi, Sumitomo and Yasuda. After World War II the Supreme Commander of the Allied Powers (SCAP) decreed the dissolution of those giant business combines and prohibited holding companies. In spite of these measures similar structures with another name, *keiretsu*, reemerged. Three different types can be distinguished: distribution *keiretsu* (*ryûtsû keiretsu*) (p. 110, 112), production *keiretsu* (*seisan keiretsu*) (p. 117) and the bank group *keiretsu* (*kin'yû keiretsu*), exemplified by Mitsui (pp. 125-133). Chapter four gives an analysis of *keiretsu* from a competitive strategy view (major results on pp. 160, 167, 177, 182, 189), clearly pointing out the structural characteristics of each *keiretsu* form and the resulting competitive strategies. Chapter five adds an analysis from a neo-institutional point of view, stressing that the *keiretsu* structure minimizes risk and transaction costs. These results are summarized on p. 233. In chapter six the already-mentioned intercultural-interpretative concept is introduced and further explained in chapter seven that pays attention to the often neglected cultural dimensions and their impact on the structure and characteristics of *keiretsu*. Thus, the so-called *Binnenperspek-*

tive is incorporated into the overall research framework. Generally speaking, the author stresses the importance of reciprocal relationships in determining the structure of Japanese society as a whole. Dolles also points out the important role of hierarchies and of the commitment of each individual to his/her environment (the company, the family etc.). These cultural characteristics strongly influence the structure of industrial groups in Japan and therefore have to be included in an explanation of the *keiretsu*. The last chapter concludes with thoughts on the transferability of the *keiretsu* structures to Western countries and on possible lessons for European and US corporations.

In spite of conducting research on a Japanese phenomenon the author makes only a few references to material and books written in the Japanese language, i.e. first hand information on the subject. However, in comparison to numerous English and German books on the Japanese economy not bothering with Japanese material at all, the inclusion of some Japanese language sources must be considered an improvement. Another critical remark concerns the readability of the book. The reader sometimes stumbles over theoretical analysis unnecessarily expressed in a roundabout way, probably in order to enhance the "scientific character" of the book, which is a tendency in German scientific literature. This apart, Dolles' *Keiretsu. Emergenz, Struktur, Wettbewerbsstärke und Dynamik japanischer Verbundgruppen* is a work which can be highly recommended as essential reading to all concerned with methodological problems in the analysis of the Japanese economy as well as to those interested in the industrial groups (*keiretsu*) of Japan.

Kathrin Köster

GÜNTHER DISTELRATH, *Die japanische Produktionsweise. Zur wissenschaftlichen Genese einer stereotypen Sicht der japanischen Wirtschaft*. (Monographien aus dem Deutschen Institut für Japanstudien der Philipp-Franz-von-Siebold-Stiftung, 18). München: Iudicium Verlag, 1996. 253 Seiten, DM 55,-. ISBN 3-89129-498-0

Das Deutsche Institut für Japanstudien in Tokyo war unter Leitung von Josef Kreiner ausgezogen, unangemessene Japan-Klischees in ihren historischen Ursprüngen aufzuspüren und ihnen intellektuell tunlichst den Garaus zu machen. Günther Distelrath nimmt sich in der vorliegenden Arbeit unserer Stereotypen zur japanischen Wirtschaft („Japan AG“) an. Jung-Siegfried gleich reduziert er die Ursprünge unserer Klischees schnurstracks auf drei intellektuelle Traditionsstränge: die These Max Webers von der konfuzianisch beeinflussten Wirtschaftsverfassung Japans, die marxistische Annahme einer zurückgebliebenen orientalischen Despotie und die von der systemtheoretischen Soziologie Talcott Parsons maßgeblich beeinflussten amerikanischen Modernisierungstheorien. Unerschrocken und ohne allzuviel Selbstzweifel erlegt er dieses dreiköpfige Monster, läßt aber den Leser ob der ungelösten Problematik nach einem adäquaten Abbild der Komplexität des japanischen Wirtschaftsgeschehens (ver-)zweifelnd zurück.

Distelrath selbst geht davon aus, daß die japanische Wirtschaft im wesentlichen eine übliche Variante westlich-universeller Marktwirtschaften darstellt und lehnt