

providing AT numbers as well as Thompson motif numbers, this perhaps is a requisite for any specialist who must recognize the achievements of his or her predecessors. What seems lacking is a clear sense of regional distribution as depicted in maps, a feature important in Yanagita's work as well as in the Ikeda *Index*. In addition, if this work was really meant to aid comparative studies, Inada might have provided even one more index—a Japanese-English one—in the same way that Ikeda supplied a Japanese romanized index in an otherwise English text. Clearly, Inada's text is excellent for specialists of Japanese folklore, but for nonspecialists it is a formidable tome. As for more subtle points, an ideal index would be as bias-free as possible regarding both race and gender. This point I leave to those who use the book to determine: long experience in working with the text will alone reveal how well it stands that most difficult test of selective semantics.

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IWAO SUMIKO. *The Japanese Woman: Traditional Image and Changing Reality*. New York: The Free Press, a division of Macmillan Inc., 1993. xii + 304 pages. Appendix, notes, index. Cloth US\$24.95; ISBN 0-02-932315-0.

Western studies on the "Japanese woman" have become more specialized and objective in recent years, but the stereotyped image of the docile, obedient female, lagging behind in emancipation and self-awareness, has still not disappeared, particularly in the mass media. It is therefore not astonishing that Japanese women have become increasingly sensitive to this image, often reacting in critical silence to the lack of understanding on the part of their Western partners. They rightly expect more respect for their particular life-style and life-setting.

Iwao Sumiko has now broken this silence, and, with *The Japanese Woman*, attempts to replace the myth of "the Japanese woman" with a more up-to-date and well-balanced description of the situation of Japanese women in postwar Japan. Her description, based on her own research and that of others, is not intended for scholarly consumption but for a general readership. Iwao often draws on comparisons with the American woman, whom she is quite familiar with from many extended stays in the United States as a scholar. In addition to this synchronic comparison, the study provides some historical depth, examining the first generation born after the war (i.e., between 1946 and 1955) and comparing it with the generations that precede and follow it. By so doing it lends the image of this generation of Japanese women a further dimension of continuous change that is largely lacking in other studies on the same theme.

Iwao defines the great change that has taken place recently for the Japanese woman as a kind of "silent revolution," in contrast to the vehement fight for emancipation that has taken place in the United States. That is why she is not content with mere description but always provides analytical insight into her data. Iwao, a psychologist at Keiō University in Tokyo, deserves credit for avoiding facile psychological explanations and always maintaining the broad perspective of the social scientist, thereby succeeding in depicting something of the "culture" of the postwar Japanese woman. In spite of a few lapses—her historical introduction (5-6) does not reflect recent scientific knowledge, and her utilization of religious tradition for a final explanation (281-82) seems to me rather superficial—she succeeds superbly in her overall attempt to make the situation

of the Japanese woman comprehensible within the context of postwar Japanese development, in the social as well as the political sphere.

In the first chapter Iwao clarifies some fundamental differences in the identity of the Japanese woman and that of the American woman, for example, their differing notions of equality between the sexes and their differing conceptions of time (much longer and more flexible for the Japanese woman). The second chapter is also introductory, tracing the great changes that have occurred for the older, middle, and younger postwar generations through a depiction of the life-cycle of one woman, named Akiko, born in the first postwar generation. Akiko clearly personifies the Japanese woman of the immediate postwar era, who with her strong sense of family responsibility is still tied to traditional norms, but who in her dealings with her husband as a partner in marriage already belongs to a new age of greater freedom and equality. The following five chapters deal with themes like marriage, married life, motherhood, work as an option or as a career, women in politics, and women in volunteer activities. Some repetition naturally occurs, since these various spheres cannot be separated neatly. In addition, many of the facts that Iwao provides will already be known to readers even slightly familiar with today's Japan (e.g., the high rate of married women, the rising percentage of love-marriages, and the rather low expectations of a blissful relationship with one's spouse).

Iwao shows that the Japanese women of today have gained recognition and autonomy in the workplace as well as in private life; in some respects their recognition and autonomy is greater than that of Japanese men. Many women, indeed, are well aware of their advantageous position in life, and weigh their choices carefully before deciding on a course in life. Women who aim at careers are now able to fulfill that desire, and those who are less ambitious can use their free time for pleasure or self-fulfillment. The Japanese woman is no longer caught in the web of economic dependence, and is no longer under social pressure to seek happiness through marriage and children. Divorce is no longer taboo and single women are not unusual.

This is the picture Iwao provides of the successful and independent Japanese woman of today. She does not neglect to point out some negative attitudes on the part of women that hinder solidarity and engagement in political questions. Japanese women, Iwao says, do not so much *act* as *react*, being safety-oriented and not principle-oriented like American women. This explains their lack of fighting spirit and enthusiasm for certain ideas.

These and many other of Iwao's interpretations are, I think, worthy of discussion and thought, though one need not always agree with her conclusions. On the whole, her image of the Japanese woman seems to me too influenced by a euphoria over the silent successes that Japanese women have achieved. There is too little attention given to the ever-present social and economic constraints, e.g., the fact that recession is again threatening the position of Japanese women and that social programs are not sufficiently developed to allow them a profession *as well as* a family life.

Still, this study is certainly one of the most comprehensive and well-balanced on the theme to come out in recent years. I would like to recommend it especially to male readers, since one of the topics it deals with is the low level of awareness among Japanese men in comparison with their female partners. Some companies are so alarmed by this fact that they have arranged special lectures on the roles of husband and father. And in bookstores one can find books teaching men how to handle their emancipated wives. One can never accuse the Japanese of being slow to react.

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