

Takeie Sugiyama LEBRA. *Japanese patterns of behavior*. Honolulu: The University Press of Hawaii, 1976. 297 pp. including 11-page appendix, 17-page bibliography, and 7-page index. Paper. \$5.95.

Professor Lebra's book can perhaps best be classified as an anthropologist's attempt to make Japanese culture and behavior understandable to Westerners. As such, it is an exercise in intercultural communication.

The author is uniquely qualified for this task. She was raised and educated in Japan, taking her B.A. at Gakushūin University, and did her graduate work in the United States, receiving her M.A. and Ph.D. from the University of Pittsburgh. She is currently an associate professor of anthropology at the University of Hawaii.

Lebra begins by positing "social relativism" (as over against individual autonomy or transcendental absolutism) as the chief characteristic of the Japanese ethos and proposes to interpret Japanese behavior in the light of this overarching motif. She then introduces, as generally normative patterns of social interaction, the five subthemes of belongingness, empathy, dependency, occupying the proper place, and reciprocity. More specific applications of the normative patterns are discussed in a chapter devoted to what she calls the "three domains" of situational interaction, namely, the intimate, ritual, and

anomic situations. Concern with normative values, beliefs, and ways of acting next leads the author to a consideration of how such patterns are communicated to the young. But to offset the misleading impression that follows from the logic of this approach, namely, that all Japanese are duplicates of one another, she also presents a brief discussion on the meaning of Japanese individuality.

Having thus treated the normative patterns, Lebra turns to deviant or pathological behavior and its treatment. Outer-directed deviancy is considered in relation to delinquent and criminal behavior, inner-directed deviancy in relation to suicide. The treatment of such behavior is dealt with through reference to two forms of therapy. The Naikan method is presented as a matter of intense, guided introspection oriented to reconceptualizing one's relations with significant others with the effect of changing resentment and self-pity to gratitude and a desire to reciprocate, moral deviance to moral uprightness. Morita therapy deals with the mentally disturbed and seeks to bring about an inner sense of balance and wholeness through liberating the patient from excessive self-constraint. Both deviancy and its treatment are examined not for their intrinsic values but for the clues they provide to the understanding of Japanese culture.

Finally, Japanese religion comes into view. Here Lebra restricts herself to the phenomenon of spirit possession, whether pathological or therapeutic, so as to see what Japanese cultural values it reinforces. She finds that those subject to spirit possession tend to come from the ranks of the socially deprived and that the experience of possession gives them temporary relief from culturally imposed inhibitions by legitimizing behavior that would normally be considered taboo.

In her conclusion Lebra takes up the question of whether the Japanese are changing. She does not go so far as to say that fundamental changes are in fact taking place, but she does admit the possibility. She further surmises that if Japanese culture does change, it will probably do so by moving away from collectivism, interdependence, empathy, introspection, and self-denial in the direction of "the Western model" that combines individuality, autonomy, equality, rationality, and self-assertion. But the traditional structures, she avers, will continue to exercise a guiding and restraining influence.

In the light of the purpose of intercultural communication, this book can be rated as excellent. Westerners new to Japanese culture

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will receive a top-notch general orientation, and even those with comparatively long experience in Japan, if they are like me, will find themselves instructed at many points.

Yet there is something about this book that leaves one oddly dissatisfied. The reason is hard to pin down, but I believe it has to do with the author's apparently total reliance on functional theory. Given this approach, it stands to reason that all patterns of behavior will be seen as components of an essentially static overall structure. Tension and conflict come into view not so much as evidences of dislocation that may lead to sociocultural change but as extreme expressions of dominant values, thus underlining, rather than undermining, normative patterns. It is no accident, therefore, that the subject of social change comes up only in a postscript and is there treated merely as an outside possibility rather than a present fact. In short, one misses a sense of the dynamic.

This demurrer notwithstanding, the author has done well what she set out to do. All who read her fine study will doubtless share with me a sense of gratitude.

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