

bundle of fragmented identities, such as time-depth (biography) and inner depth (personality). Those of us who study selfhood cross-culturally should share Kondo's insistence on deessentializing the Western notion of self. Indeed, her argument compels us to question many of our assumptions. Yet despite her sensitivity to the danger of Orientalizing Japanese subjects, her formulation of self is unwittingly caught in the pitfall of reinforcing the prevailing notion, often contrasted with the Western "self," that the Japanese person lacks a strong sense of self.

Such criticisms aside, however, both of these books represent valuable contributions, and I have found them to be useful in classes on Japanese family, work, gender, and class. Kondo's *Crafting Selves* can also be productively incorporated into a class on ethnographic writing.

Political Life in Japan: Democracy in a Reversible World. By Takako Kishima. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1991. Pp. xvi + 142. \$27.95.

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This study aims to illuminate the worldview behind the daily activities of Japanese politicians and to demonstrate that real power in postmodern politics inheres in the liminal margins of an existing order rather than in direct confrontation with that order. It is delightful and baffling in equal measure. Takako Kishima combines ethnography with phenomenology to address a key topic in political sociology—which may account for a book by a political scientist being reviewed by an anthropologist for a sociology journal.

The phenomenology is a formulation of power that derives from a three-dimensional worldview of "mutually contrasting principles." This owes much to Peter Berger's *The Social Reality of Religion* (London: Faber and Faber, 1969) and subsequent proposals by the Japanese sociologist Chizuko Ueno. The world is conceived as a dynamic tension between nomos, the normative and institutional order of society; cosmos, the symbolic order that gives nomos meaning; and chaos, the loss of meaningfulness and structure (pp. 20–22). The key to this dynamic is at the margins of nomos-cosmos and nomos-chaos, liminal domains where "the flow of ordinary time is halted and the utilitarian, norm-governed nomos is overpowered" (p. xii). Marginal beings and liminal states have ambivalent potential for destruction and creativity; thus, when they intrude into nomos they raise inconsistencies and challenge orthodox meaning. The order of nomos must be reformulated by incorporating elements of the liminal challenge. This process stirs people's reflexivity, and their questioning of nomos opens the possibility of genuine change. The reflexivity thus activated is "the core of power of any human being" (p. xiii).

This is what leads Kishima to ethnography: one must look at people's

daily behavior to see how and when they have such liminal experiences. The surprising turn of her study is to pursue this in a political culture with a reputation for secular rationalism and, moreover, to focus on its soberest characters—the conservative politicians at the top of Japan's ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP). In this, she relies on her own fieldwork as well as interviews; she was an observer-intern in the office of one of these LDP politicians.

The core of her book (chaps. 2–4) is a series of case studies of liminality. She shows, for example, the operations of the Finance Committee of the lower house of the Diet. Much of its contentious work is orchestrated by a canny committee chair, who uses field trips, group socializing, and other shared “liminal experiences” to forge legislative compromises between the LDP and opposition party members. Another case deals with a Diet member's headquarters during the legally limited 15-day national election campaign. For the entire two weeks, the Diet member, his family, staff, and supporters stage a festive, communal live-in at a Buddhist temple in his district, out of which they operate in mobilizing various support groups. Kishima borrows from Marshall Sahlins's work on Pacific rulership to liken the politician to the “stranger-king,” who is domesticated by the community so that his potentially dangerous powers are curbed and his regenerative force is turned to community benefit. The campaign is thus a ritual reenactment of this liminal homecoming, by which local voters can exert their influence over the politician.

In chapter 3, Kishima has an extended analysis of Prime Minister Nakasone's tearful report in late 1983 of a key private meeting he had just had to attempt to persuade ex-Prime Minister Tanaka to resign his Diet seat after he had been found guilty of taking bribes in connection with the Lockheed scandal. Nakasone and Tanaka return in chapter 4 along with an extended profile of one of the Diet's most colorful members, Ichirō Nakagawa. Nakagawa is famous for cultivating and flaunting an irreverent outsider character. In 1973, for example, he joined other brash young LDP members of the Diet to form a Young Storm Society with a widely publicized blood-oath ritual. Such politicians as these, Kishima argues, are not charismatic leaders, imposing alternative visions through compelling personal leadership. Rather, their actions more unwittingly help to expose the limitations and contradictions of the existing order and so spark people's reflexivity—their awareness of the possibilities of and their desire for alternatives. They are tricksters (pp. 77–78), unable to *transform* but able to *deform* an institutional order by questioning the taken-for-granted. To Kishima, such marginal figures and liminal moments, with their consciousness-raising capacity, are the only means to effective resistance in a postmodern society such as today's Japan (p. 59).

The argument seems on target and off-the-wall at the same time. It takes the ludic seriously, penetrating the formal facade of LDP decorum to reveal moments of genuine consequence ignored in other studies. For example, given one-party LDP dominance, Diet politics is surprisingly flexible, and there is more opposition party influence than one might

expect. Kishima's account of the Finance Committee's *modus operandi* helps explain this.

Yet the book's poststructuralist phenomenology of power remains an unconvincing assertion, not a demonstration. In light of four decades of entrenched LDP control (however accommodating of coopted opposition), deeply corrupt party financing, and repeated failures to enact electoral reforms, the power of tears, laughter, and temple live-ins still pales before that of faction bosses, corporate contributions, and right-wing thugs.

Rhetoric and Ritual in Colonial India: The Shaping of a Public Culture in Surat City, 1852–1928. By Douglas E. Haynes. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1991. Pp. xi + 374. \$49.95.

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In his book, Douglas Haynes asks four defining questions: Why did India's elites, when they had viable alternative idioms (including Gandhian ones), appropriate Britain's liberal-democratic idioms? Why, at the same time, did communal (e.g., Hindu and Muslim) identities and conceptions of justice emerge when other identities and conceptions of justice had been, and continued to be, available? Why did the central arenas of political debate become confined to these two idioms (the British liberal-democratic and the communal Hindu-Muslim)? And how did the language of democracy, despite its seeming advocacy of the equality and rights of the underclasses, exclude the underclasses from full-fledged political participation?

In answer to these four questions, Haynes focuses on the city of Surat in western India between 1852 (when Surat was incorporated as a municipality) and 1928 (after Gandhi's noncooperation movement had expired). Haynes draws on two different sources: the American ethnohistorical school of Indian history that focuses on British efforts to comprehend and categorize Indian society and a Gramscian model of dominant-class (i.e., British) cultural hegemony "negotiated" with local elites.

In chapter 4, Haynes describes Surat's pre-British-raj social organizations, lifestyles, and idioms of authority related to Hindu, Jain, Muslim, and Parsi primarily endogamous descent groups. More important than these primarily endogamous descent groups in Surat, Haynes argues, were cultural and guild-like *mahajans* directed by eminent merchants (*sheths*) that generally crossed caste and sect lines and established and enforced business practices.

In chapters 5–11 Haynes traces how, during three-quarters of a century, a "public culture" (conventions and political discussion and debate revolving around originally British notions of public opinion and the public good) gradually took shape in the city of Surat. Rejecting the notion that the spread of liberal democracy is an inevitable result of