

Sociology and Society of Japan



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prepared for the 'fourth generation', for more sophisticated, detailed, and diverse discussions of the moving targets who are today's Japanese women.

Sociology and Society of Japan. By Nozomu Kawamura. Kegan Paul International, London & New York, 1994. xiv + 229 pages. £45.00.

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THE title of this work, by a distinguished sociologist, signals possible confusion. How can a volume be both about sociology in Japan and about the society of Japan? The table of contents adds to the reader's nervousness, because the chapter headings range widely over seemingly incommensurate topics, suggesting a loose collection of poorly integrated articles. In fact, however, the book turns out to have a fascinating and provocative coherence. Kawamura Nozomu articulates a vision of the crisis and challenge of Japanese sociology that inheres precisely in his critique of Japanese society.

Kawamura is a communitarian, who locates in local solidarities the often misunderstood key to Japan's unique modern experience. He rejects all unilinear models of societal development, especially the scientific Marxist and Parsonian functionalist theories that have been influential in Japanese sociology. For him, their common mistake is to relegate communal ties to the dustbin of premodern history, when what distinctively marks modern Japan is the continued co-existence of communal and individualistic relationships. But Kawamura is a progressive communitarian, also deeply suspicious of the efforts of the Japanese state to enlist, incorporate, even invent family and community units in its drive to aggrandize power and force industrialization from above over the twentieth century.

Not surprisingly, thus, the history of sociology in Japan has been a history of controversies, both intellectual and political. It is a history that Kawamura outlines usefully in his opening three chapters, which are grouped as the book's first section and which link disciplinary history with Japan's trajectory of modernization from Meiji through defeat in the Pacific War. He shows how from mid-Meiji on, when influential conservatives such as Katō Hiroyuki and liberal reformists such as Katayama Sen clashed radically in their interpretations of Herbert Spencer's sociology, the discipline's development has been marked by continual, if uneven, struggles between established academics and dissident, often activist scholars on the margins. Kawamura's sympathies are clearly with the latter, but even more influential to Kawamura is Yanagita Kunio, a folklorist, of course, and not a sociologist. Kawamura's own sociology draws much from Yanagita's attention to the everyday experiences of ordinary life ways and from his efforts to construct an indigenous theory of development.

The same themes are continued in the three chapters making up Part 2, which track sociology's postwar development against changing configurations of political power. Chapter 4 is a critical appraisal of the premier rural sociologist of mid- to late Shōwa, Fukutake Tadashi. Fukutake's concern with the democratization of the countryside led to careful empirical research on the internal and external structures of rural family and village types, because he initially believed that a socialist cooperation of small

farmers was the key to progressive development and to protection against the predation of large capitalist interests. By the early 1960s, however, Fukutake had come to see the small scale of family farming as the principal obstacle to rural development and supported government efforts to encourage out-migration of part-timers and concentration of support on a middle-stratum of full-time farmers. To Kawamura, this was a sellout of the communitarian alternative to state-led capitalist modernization.

Kawamura links rural sociology to urban sociology through his own studies of local political elites in two small cities (Chapter 5) and a review of the environmental protest movements against the excesses of the high-growth decades (Chapter 6). Again, he insists on the need to distinguish an official community power structure from local solidarities that are not mere survivals of traditional paternalism but the basis for enlarging the realm of self-government. At the same time, he warns that citizen movements against urban and industrial pollution (examples of such grassroots collectivism) have proved successful only when they have aimed at 'community formation' as well as environmental protest.

Finally, in a concluding trio of chapters, Kawamura elaborates on the ideological elements of Japan's modernization, especially official formulations of the emperor system and family form. Japanese capitalist interests have been successful (Kawamura is hardly the first to argue) because they claim to mobilize collective ties and not individualist imperatives. It is this that distinguishes Japan's twentieth century from industrialization elsewhere, it is this that demands a distinctive sociology, and it is this that poses a special challenge to creating a Japanese politics that is both democratic and communitarian.

The principal weakness of Kawamura's argument has nothing to do with Japan, about which he is incisive, but rather with his treatment of the West. Like many such revisionist analyses, it goes only halfway. Of course, simple-minded modernization dichotomies grossly misdescribe Japan's modern trajectory, but then they fare equally poorly with Western experiences, as most recent theorizing in and of the West has recognized. Kawamura announces that the present work is his first and last English-language book. That would be a shame, because Euro-American social scientists would much benefit if he were to apply more directly his subtle analysis of Japan to the Western pathways through modernity and to Western sociology's complex engagement of social theory and political action.

Kendō: Its Philosophy, History and Means to Personal Growth. By Minoru Kiyota. Kegan Paul, London, 1995. xii + 156 pages. £30.00 or \$51.00.

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WITHOUT doubt the *bugei* (military disciplines or, more popularly, martial arts) rank among the most prominent of Japan's cultural exports and among the most widely pursued recreational activities in Japan. *Jūdō* and *kendō* are taught as part of the physical education curriculum at most Japanese schools and colleges, and virtually all junior high schools, high schools, colleges and universities, as well as many companies, sponsor martial-arts clubs. In Europe and North America, *jūdō*, *aikidō* and, more recently,