



Images Of Japanese Society Hb

Ross Mouer, Yoshio Sugimoto

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The popular image of Japanese society is a steroetypical one - that of a people characterised by a coherent set of thought and behaviour patterns, applying to all Japanese and transcending time. Ross Mouer and Yoshio Sugimoto found this image quite incongruous during their research for this book in Japan. They ask whether this steroetype of the Japanese is not only generated by foreigners but by the Japanese themselves.

This is likely to be a controversial book as it does not contribute to the continuing mythologising of Japan and the Japanese. The book examines contemporary images of Japanese society by surveying an extensive sample of popular and academic literature on Japan. After tracing the development of "holistic" theories about the Japanese, commonly referred to as the "group model", attention is focused on the evaluation of that image. Empirical evidence contrary to this model is discussed and methodological lacunae are cited. A "sociology of Japanology" is also presented.

In pursuit of other visions of Japanese society, the authors argue that certain aspects of Japanese behaviour can be explained by considering Japanese society as the exact inverse of the portayal provided by the group model. The authors also present a multi-dimensional model of social stratification, arguing that much of the variation in Japanese behaviour can be understood within the framework as having universal equivalence.



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