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978-0-521-31552-4 - Japanese Society: Tradition, Self, and the Social Order

Robert J. Smith

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*To my mother, Fern J. Smith,
and to the memory of my father, Will D. Smith,
in partial repayment of an unrepayable debt*

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Foreword

When the Lewis Henry Morgan Lectures began in 1963, none of those involved foresaw the variety of intellectual fare they would provide from year to year. (The connection of Lewis Henry Morgan with the University of Rochester and the initiation of the Morgan Lectures in 1963 are briefly discussed in the Foreword to Professor Meyer Fortes's *Kinship and the Social Order* [Aldine, 1969]). Robert Smith's lectures, presented here, are another striking example of the kinds of analysis and synthesis successive lectures have offered appreciative audiences.

Before World War II, anthropological materials on Japan in English were practically nonexistent, with Embree's *Suye Mura* a lonely precursor of the flood of research published in the postwar years. Anthropology has been accompanied by Western scholars in other disciplines, and the readily available literature on Japan in English alone is now beyond the compass of all, save an accomplished few. The variety of approaches and differing interpretations call for guidance, and this volume provides that and more.

Professor Smith's lectures constitute one of those remarkable – and rare – contributions that does not just present an array of data and conclusions (in this instance drawn from many years of research in and on Japan and Japanese society and culture). He goes beyond this, offering general principles

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of critical importance, to be seen in operation not only in Japan's past but in the modern state as well. He invites novices to explore further, and will undoubtedly provoke experts of diverse persuasions to debate with him or to rethink their own conclusions.

Those who were privileged to hear Professor Smith's lectures (on March 18, 20, 25, and 27, 1980) delivered with rare urbanity and clarity will now be able to hear him again as they read. His wider audience may hear echoes of the spoken word. And all his readers will be able to pause, reflect, and pursue the many and varied avenues of thought he suggests.

ALFRED HARRIS

*Editor**The Lewis Henry Morgan Lectures*

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Acknowledgments

The lectures on which this book is based were delivered at the University of Rochester in March 1980. Alfred Harris, who graciously introduced me to the audience that proved to be remarkably faithful in staying with me throughout the series, was the perfect host. To Grace G. Harris, chair of the Department of Anthropology, and to the members of the department who made my wife and me feel welcome for the duration of our stay, we extend our thanks.

Several people were kind enough to read the manuscript of the lectures as they were originally delivered. Harumi Befu, Bernard Bernier, James A. Boon, Walter D. Edwards, Davydd J. Greenwood, Michael Kammen, and Stephen P. Nussbaum offered valuable and perhaps oversupportive advice. William B. Hauser made extensive and incisive comments that have helped shape several passages in the final version of the manuscript. I am grateful to them all, and wish to absolve them of any blame for the shortcomings that survived their best efforts to dissuade me of a line of argument or emphasis in interpretation.

I undertook the task of revision of the manuscript while a visiting professor at the National Museum of Ethnology in Osaka, Japan, and am greatly indebted to Director General Umesao Tadao and Professor Sofue Takao, director of the

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First Research Department, for extending to me the use of the remarkably advanced facilities of that institution during the fall of 1982.

ROBERT J. SMITH

A note to the reader: Japanese names in the text are given with the surname first (Maruyama Masao) except where the individual is a longtime resident of the United States (Masao Miyoshi) or American-born (Harumi Befu). The bibliography, which is rather long for so short a book, is intended to provide guidance for those who wish to pursue topics and issues raised in the text.