This is a well crafted monograph on an extremely remote village in northwest Nepal that the author calls Tarangpur. The study is primarily economic, concerning the ways in which economic choices determine cultural patterns and directions of social change. The theoretical frames derive from ecological anthropology, from a Barthian transactionalist approach, and from a Berreman-ish focus on impression management. (Fisher was trained at Chicago in the late 1960s but escaped the symbolic and structuralist approaches that were dominant there at that time. He thanks McKim Marriott and Manning Nash for intellectual guidance.)

Fisher begins by showing that the people of Tarangpur produce an agricultural surplus. He spends some time on the debate over the meaning of “surplus,” and arrives at a definition that appears to suit the case (I will not review that discussion here). He goes on to argue that the things people do with this surplus are largely optional and culturally defined. With the exception of needing salt, obtained in trade with Tibetans, the villagers are self-sufficient in subsistence terms, and do not need to do all the things they then do with their “surplus”: other trade activities, support of a ritual system, sundry social expenditures out of neighborhood and so forth. These, in other words, are arenas of “choice.” It turns out, however, that both the support of ritual, and the obligation to be generous and neighborly, are not really arenas of choice, since the people of Tarangpur view them as irreducible requirements of normal social life. That then leaves trade (other than for salt) as the major domain of options: men (and trading is a purely male activity) may choose to put more or less energy into trading; they may choose (in modern times) to do different forms of trading; and they may choose to do different things with the wealth they garner from trading. These choices interlock, however, and are arenas of “choice.” It turns out, however, that both the support of ritual, and the obligation to be generous and neighborly, are not really arenas of choice, since the people of Tarangpur view them as irreducible requirements of normal social life. That then leaves trade (other than for salt) as the major domain of options: men (and trading is a purely male activity) may choose to put more or less energy into trading; they may choose (in modern times) to do different forms of trading; and they may choose to do different things with the wealth they garner from trading. These choices interlock, however, and are arenas of “choice.” It turns out, however, that both the support of ritual, and the obligation to be generous and neighborly, are not really arenas of choice, since the people of Tarangpur view them as irreducible requirements of normal social life. That then leaves trade (other than for salt) as the major domain of options: men (and trading is a purely male activity) may choose to put more or less energy into trading; they may choose (in modern times) to do different forms of trading; and they may choose to do different things with the wealth they garner from trading. These choices interlock, however, and are arenas of “choice.” It turns out, however, that both the support of ritual, and the obligation to be generous and neighborly, are not really arenas of choice, since the people of Tarangpur view them as irreducible requirements of normal social life. That then leaves trade (other than for salt) as the major domain of options: men (and trading is a purely male activity) may choose to put more or less energy into trading; they may choose (in modern times) to do different forms of trading; and they may choose to do different things with the wealth they garner from trading. These choices interlock, however, and are arenas of “choice.”

Fisher’s case is in fact strongest on the ethnic identity question. He shows that the people of Tarangpur are situated at the interface of the Hindu Nepali culture and the Buddhist Tibetan culture, and that they have constructed and maintained an identity that is syncretic or, less charitably terms, two-faced, over a long period of time. He has an excellent discussion of the contrast between the trade, which facilitates (material) exchange between the two regions, and the ethnic-interaction style, which blocks (cultural) exchange. He goes on to make the point that, with a relatively recent shift in trade patterns in the direction of one that is more purely oriented toward Nepali locations, goods, and needs, there is a corresponding shift to a more straightforward Nepali identity.

Fisher is on weaker ground in trying to derive other changes from this shift. For example, it turns out that the men of Tarangpur, who used to avoid like the plague anything to do with the central government, have now got heavily into politicking for elective government offices. Fisher says that this change “is not comprehensible except as a consequence of the economic shifts” (p. 176, emphasis added). Yet Fisher has only shown that the shift in trade patterns has produced increased cash wealth, not that it has in any way (discussed in the book) dictated where that wealth should be put. Why Tarangpurian men are suddenly addicted to spending their wealth on political campaigning (and, it should be noted, these are not the men most heavily involved in trading) is never adequately connected with the trading shift of which it is supposed a consequence.

Similarly, Fisher chronicles a number of areas of Tarangpur social life that have not apparently changed at all, despite the changes in the trading arena. In particular, the ethic of internal egalitarianism remains very strong, and is presumably buttressed by other aspects of social and cultural life, or insulated from the external trade, or both, in ways that are not discussed in the book.

Overall, then, the explanatory claims of the book are somewhat larger than they should be. But the book is nicely constructed, well written, and has the virtue above all of actually having an argument that one can agree or disagree with. On all these grounds, then, it is a contribution to the growing body of quality anthropology being done in Nepal.

For the past four decades, Taiwan has served as a stand-in for the rest of China for purposes of field research. By rough count, at least 30 Western anthropologists and sociologists have turned their scholarly lenses on that small island-province since the 1950s, and the number of local scholars is probably double that. Professor Sangren has dealt with the problem of finding something new to say by selectively focusing on a segment of religious practice and belief and subjecting it to analysis in light of contemporaneous ethnological theory. It is an ambitious book, and a difficult one.

His starting point is an objective account of the historical development of the market town of Ta Chi and its surrounding villages, the growth of the local economy, and the marketing area’s relationship to provincial economic/political developments from the 18th century on. That segment of the book, if expanded, would have made for a highly interesting monograph in itself: Chinese expansion of empire and frontier settlement are topics on which far more work needs to be done. But perhaps that is a task for an economic historian with a passion for archival work. Sangren is an ethnologist, and he turns fairly quickly from a consideration of the “nested
than a theory-informed ethnography. Admittedly, I of this book, particularly as one to assign to stu-
dents. It is far more an exercise in theoretical debate
which deals with issues of legitimacy and power,
does a much better job of telling the reader what it
is that is being explained in theoretical terms.
Why of Taiwan pilgrimages, and those of China-
migration about the who, what, when, where, and
nificance between a cultural construction of real-
stratifieds are reproduced" which enable the
eration on religious pilgrimages for theoretical anal-
ly data is added to the earlier minimalist

ted to placement at domestic and temple altars, to
phronism of YinYang contrasts ap-
plained by Durkheim and British functionalism. His text
is outstanding within the body of scholarship on
ese folk religion, and for its critique and/or ap-
neity in practice and explanation. I suppose it is be-
cause of the author's belief that his model of reli-
gious thought is pan-Chinese that all terms are
given in Mandarin rather than a romanized Hok-

ganese folk religion, and for its attempts to offer a "logic" of Tai-
wane folk religion, and for its critique and/or ap-
lication of contemporary ethnological theory.
Both China specialists and general ethnologists
should find it of interest, even if it is not easy read-

In addition, I am uncomfortable with extrapolation
from a distanced structural analysis of local
culture to all of China, over space and time. The
search for overarching universal principles that
hold all of China together is an admirable quest but
it tends to gloss over local variation and heteroge-
nity in practice and explanation. I suppose it is be-
cause of the author's belief that his model of reli-
gious thought is pan-Chinese that all terms are
given in Mandarin rather than a romanized Hok-

Despite these reservations, I think that the book
is outstanding within the body of scholarship on
Taiwan for its attempts to offer a "logic" of Tai-
wanese folk religion, and for its critique and/or ap-
lication of contemporary ethnological theory.
Both China specialists and general ethnologists
should find it of interest, even if it is not easy read-

Home Life in Tokyo. JÜKICHI INOUYE. London,
Bost om, Sydney and Henley: KPI Limited (dis-
tributed by Routledge and Kegan Paul), 1985
(originally published 1910). xliii + 323 pp., il-
lustrations. $12.95 (paper).

THEODORE C. BESTOR
Columbia University

This work resembles late Victorian travelers' ac-
counts of "The Manners and Customs of the So-
and-So." But this one was written by a Japanese,
to give a concise account of the life we lead at
home in Tokyo. . . . [T]here are already many ex-
cellent works on Japan which may be read with
great profit; but as their authors are most of them
Europeans or Americans, and naturally look at
Japanese life and civilization from an accidental
point of view, it occurred to me that notwith-
standing the superabundance of books on Japan,
a description of Japanese life by a native of the
country might not be without interest.

The author's internationalism, his familiarity with
what was written about Japan in the West, and his
elegantly convoluted style are not accidental. Jük-
ichi Inouye (18621929) was sent as a child of
eleven to study in England; in adulthood he served as
a Japanese diplomat in Belgium and America.

Given who he was, when he wrote, and for
whom, it is not surprising that Inouye's portrayal of
life in Tokyo is a genteel one. He gives priority to
traditional customs and lifeways, and though there
are frequent comments about this or that custom or
style of dress being superseded by a Western fash-

reviews