

BOOK REVIEW NOTES

Tsukiji: The Fish Market at the Center of the World.
By Theodore C. Bestor. The University of California Press, Berkeley, 2004. ISBN 978-0-520-22024-9 (paper). 439 pp. \$25.95.

The sign "Direct import from Tsukiji" guarantees that fish is worth paying for. This holds true not only in Japan but also in Japanese societies abroad. For example, a Japanese restaurant in Manila sold very expensive tuna, even though the same fish may have been caught in nearby waters. However, if there is a sign saying "from Tsukiji", then nobody doubts its origin and customers are prepared to purchase this fish. "Tsukiji" in Japanese society represents a type of blind faith. This image is created by repeated special gourmet features on TV and in magazines. However, few people know Tsukiji in depth. This book by Harvard University anthropologist Theodore Bestor explains the history of Tsukiji and its present dynamism as "one organism". I personally was thrilled with Chapter 4, which is titled "The Raw and the Cooked", evoking Lévi-Strauss. In this chapter, Bestor enlarges the discussion on Japanese foodways. For example, he describes the important relationship between fish dealers and fish. The dealers hold a memorial service for the dead fish. There is a tower erected for the repose of dead animals in Tsukiji. This Buddhist ritual is often practiced by fishermen, too, most famously by the whalers who Bestor once investigated. Aside from social networking descriptions, I think this chapter makes the book most insightful into Japanese culture. If I was allowed to wish for more, it would be good to have at least one section on the global situation that surrounds the Tsukiji today, i.e. the tuna conservation issue and how Tsukiji and Japanese foodways affect the coastal societies abroad. A Japanese translation of this book was published in 2007.

Jun Akamine

Department of Intercultural Studies, School of Humanities and Social Sciences, Nagoya City University, 1 Yamanohata, Mizuhoku, Nagoya 467-8501, Japan.

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Calendrical Calculations. Third edition.
By Nachum Dershowitz and Edward M. Reingold.
Cambridge University Press, New York, 2008. ISBN 978-0-521-88540-9 (cloth), 978-0-521-70238-6 (paper). 479 pp. \$90 (cloth) or \$29.99 (paper).

This is the third edition of a major reference work on world calendars. An introductory chapter reviews the importance of calendars and calendrical calculations for human beings. The main body of the book then describes both arithmetical and astronomical calendars from around the world. As well as the widely used Julian, Islamic, and Hebrew calendars, chapters are also assigned to historical calendars such as the Mayan and French Revolutionary. The authors provide computer algorithms to aid in the calculation of dates using these various calendars. This book will be of considerable interest to historians who need a reference source for calendars and chronology. Though short, the section on the Japanese calendar, for example, provides a useful overview of the roots and modern usage of this calendar.

Mark J. Hudson

Division of Occupational Therapy, Nishi Kyushu University (University of West Kyushu), 4490-9 Osaki, Kanzaki, Saga 842-8585, Japan.

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