

Filial Piety: Practice and Discourse in Contemporary East Asia



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How have rapid industrial development and the aging of the population affected the expression of filial piety in East Asia? Eleven experienced fieldworkers take a fresh look at an old idea, analyzing contemporary behavior, not norms, among both rural and urban families in China, Japan, Korea, and Taiwan. Each chapter presents rich ethnographic data on how filial piety shapes the decisions and daily lives of adult children and their elderly parents. The authors' ability to speak the local languages and their long-term, direct contact with the villagers and city dwellers they studied lend an immediacy and authenticity lacking in more abstract treatments of the topic.

This book is an ideal text for social science and humanities courses on East Asia because it focuses on shared cultural practices while analyzing the ways these practices vary with local circumstances of history, economics, social organization, and demography and with personal circumstances of income, gender, and family configuration.

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