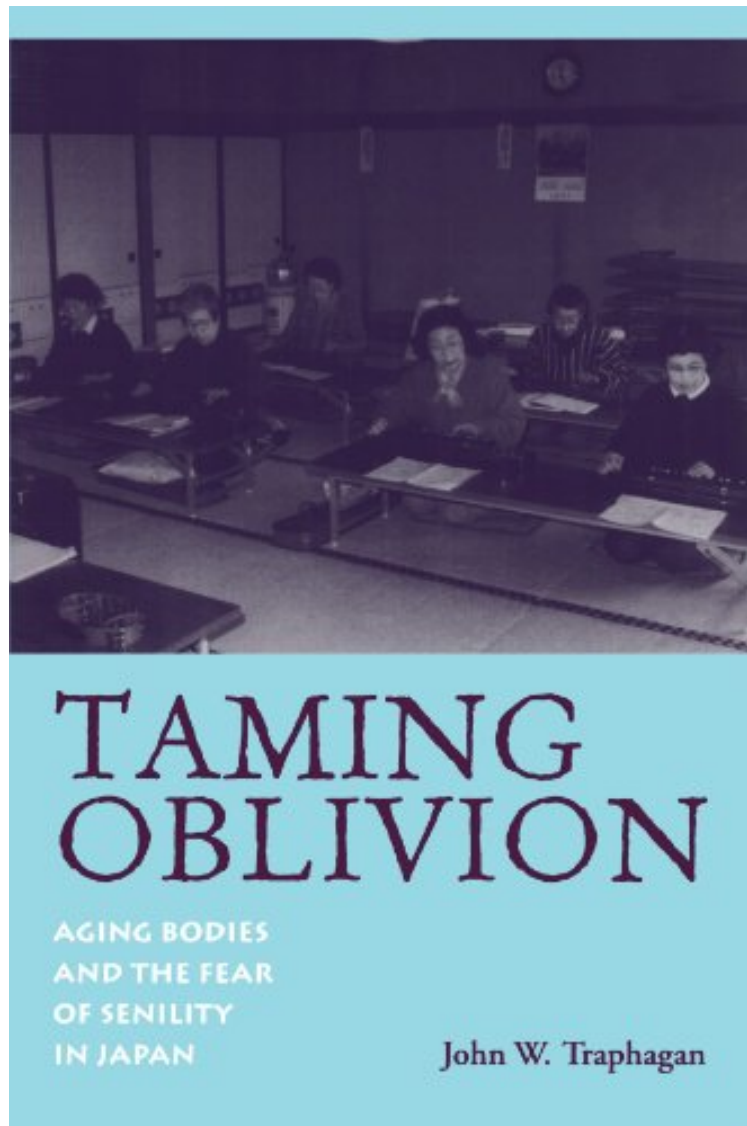


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Taming Oblivion: Aging Bodies and the Fear of Senility in Japan (Suny Series in Japan in Transition) (Suny Series in Japan in Transition (Paperback))

John W. Traphagan

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John W. Traphagan : Taming Oblivion: Aging Bodies and the Fear of Senility in Japan (Suny Series in Japan in Transition) (Suny Series in Japan in Transition (Paperback)) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Taming Oblivion: Aging Bodies and the Fear of Senility in Japan (Suny

Series in Japan in Transition) (Sunny Series in Japan in Transition (Paperback)):

Examines the cultural construction of senility in Japan and the moral implications of dependent behavior for older Japanese. *Taming Oblivion* examines the cultural construction of senility in Japan and the moral implications of dependent behavior for older Japanese. While the biomedical construction of senility-as-pathology has become increasingly the norm in North America, in Japan a folk category of senility exists known as *boke*. Although symptomatically and conceptually overlapping with Alzheimer's disease and other forms of senile dementia, *boke* is distinguished from unambiguously pathological conditions. Rather than being viewed as a disease, *boke* is seen as an illness over which people have some degree of control. John Traphagan's ethnographic study of older Japanese explores their experiences as they contemplate and attempt to prevent or delay the *boke* condition.

With a focus on how old age is viewed and experienced in a rural setting in Japan, the author's work provides a powerful example of how aging-related concepts are socially constructed and culturally circumscribed. He provides an insightful review of some of the facets of Japanese society that contribute to people's concerns related to aging and illness, including culture-specific fears (e.g., concerns about the inability to maintain social interdependencies), patterns of age segregation ('age grading' practices), and demographic and social changes that threaten traditional norms for caring for the elderly. Within his multifaceted focus of the meaning of aging in Japan, the author presents a balanced view of rural life. Matthew Kaplan, coauthor of *Intergenerational Programs: Support for Children, Youth, and Elders in Japan* "In an era of lengthening lifespan, declining familism, and a changing concept of aging, this book is timely. It brings together a number of streams of scholarship--Japan ethnology, gerontology, and critical anthropology." -- Christie W. Kiefer, coauthor of *Refuge of the Honored: Social Organization in a Japanese Retirement Community* "With a focus on how old age is viewed and experienced in a rural setting in Japan, the author's work provides a powerful example of how aging-related concepts are socially constructed and culturally circumscribed. He provides an insightful review of some of the facets of Japanese society that contribute to people's concerns related to aging and illness, including culture-specific fears (e.g., concerns about the inability to maintain social interdependencies), patterns of 'age segregation' ('age grading' practices), and demographic and social changes that threaten traditional norms for caring for the elderly. Within his multifaceted focus of the meaning of aging in Japan, the author presents a balanced view of rural life." -- Matthew Kaplan, coauthor of *Intergenerational Programs: Support for Children, Youth, and Elders in Japan* "In an era of lengthening lifespan, declining familism, and a changing concept of aging, this book is timely. It brings together a number of streams of scholarship--Japan ethnology, gerontology, and critical anthropology." -- Christie W. Kiefer, coauthor of *Refuge of the Honored: Social Organization in a Japanese Retirement Community* About the Author John W. Traphagan is Assistant Professor of Anthropology and Director of the Center for Gerontological Anthropology at California State University, Fullerton.