but data from Japan should provide insight into some of the specific environmental and genetic factors involved in the commoner malformations and chronic diseases.

Unfortunately, this book fulfils these hopes only to a limited extent. It is the published version of a symposium and lacks the cohesion of a monograph or deliberate review. In addition, prominence is given to the contributions of a number of invited European and American speakers, which for the most part cover familiar ground and provide little new information that justifies their publication here. An exception should be made of the forceful contribution by Newton Morton on genetic epidemiology, which provides a valuable theoretical basis and a corrective to the view that empirical risks are all that matter in multifactorial inheritance. The Japanese contributions, by contrast, have frequently been condensed into brief summaries, in which the conclusions cannot be backed up by details of ascertainment and analysis.

Despite these limitations, there are some valuable reports. A discussion by Yasuda of the embryogenesis of human limb malformations, based on the abundance of human fetal material, shows that the different types of polydactyly can be recognised at a stage well before development of the actual digits. It is a pity that no data on neural tube defects based on this material were presented. An extensive study of congenital heart disease by Ando *et al.* indicates clear differences in the frequency of the individual types of defect in Japan, as compared with Europe and America, together with some surprising deviations in the risks to sibs from those expected on grounds of multifactorial inheritance. This again might lead one to suppose different environmental factors to be involved, but the adequacy of methods of collecting genetic data has to be questioned, since in this paper no mention is made of how the information was collected, while a similar study of cleft palate relied on questionnaires. In both studies, a recurrence risk lower than expected was found, and one suspects that inadequate design of study may have been responsible.

In addition to the epidemiological surveys, the book contains a number of contributions on theoretical population genetics, notably a paper by Maruyama on genetic load, as well as some interesting experimental animal studies on central nervous system malformations and hypertensive cerebral disease. The impression left by the book as a whole is that the Japanese contributions to theoretical genetics and experimental pathology have not yet been fully applied to the field of clinical genetics, neither has the full potential of Japan for epidemiological and genetic studies yet been recognised.

Finally one has to ask why the publishers have priced this book of 234 pages at £21.25? It is to be

hoped that this deterrent from purchasing the book does not prevent medical geneticists in Europe and America from reading at least some of the more interesting chapters.

PETER S. HARPER

Medical Genetics. Proceedings of the Symposium at Debrecen-Hajdúszoboszló, Hungary, 27-29 April, 1976.

Edited by G. Szabó and Z. Papp. (Pp. 911; Figures + Tables. US \$114.35, Dfl 280.) Amsterdam and Oxford: Excerpta Medica. 1977.

This splendidly produced volume of the Proceedings of the Symposium on Medical Genetics, held at Debrecen-Hajdúszoboszló, Hungary, in April 1976, which well over 200 geneticists from all over the world attended, contains some 112 papers grouped into 5 subjects. The section on chromosome mapping and clinical cytogenetics contains a valuable review of some of the current research in Down's syndrome, some valuable papers on sex chromosome abnormalities and sex determination, and one or two hitherto poorly described syndromes associated with aneuploidy or structural rearrangements, among many other aspects of cytogenetic research. The papers dealing with population genetics and congenital malformations are varied and interesting, especially one on 'Relation between population genetics and population teratology', and some on the genetic aspects of psychiatric problems. Prenatal diagnosis is well covered with reports from Switzerland, Hungary, Holland, and Belgium. A number of papers are devoted to biochemical aspects of amniotic fluid, and several papers deal with various facets of genetic counselling, including one on the relation between epidemiology and genetic counselling, and another dealing specifically with the problems posed by adoption. The final section contains a number of interesting and valuable papers on the haemoglobinopathies, including one from Hungary appropriately on haemoglobin J-Buda and G-Pest tests.

This is an unusually well-produced Proceedings issue containing many papers from Eastern European countries, but especially from Hungary. The editors must be congratulated.

K. M. LAURENCE

Clinics in Rheumatic Diseases, Vol. 3, No. 2. Immunogenetics and Rheumatic Disease

Edited by Derrick Brewerton. (Pp. vii + 309; Figures + Tables. £8.25.) London, Philadelphia, and Toronto: Saunders. 1977.

The major advances in clinical genetics in recent decades have largely concerned traits and diseases