

Reviews

Tamaru Noriyoshi 田丸徳善, Muraoka Kū 村岡空, and Miyata Noboru 宮田登, eds. *Nihonjin no shūkyō* 日本人の宗教 [The religion of the Japanese people], 4 vols. Tokyo: Kōsei Shuppansha.

Vol. 1: *Jōnen no sekai* 情念の世界 [The world of sentiments]. 1972. 310 pp.+index. ¥1,200.

Rarely have I read a book on Japanese religion with greater pleasure or profit. If this publication is a sample of what is going on among younger scholars today, the prospects for religious studies in Japan are bright indeed.

This book is the first in the four-volume series bearing the general title *Nihonjin no shūkyō*. According to an editorial foreword, the plan of the series is for volumes one and two to concentrate on folk religion, particularly on ideas important for the structuring of Japanese religious consciousness and rites, after which volume three is to deal with the meaning these ideas have had in Japanese history since 1868, while volume four will present relevant source materials.

The five original studies contained in this volume focus on different facets of that world of beliefs and values taken to underlie Japanese religion generally. The title *Jōnen no sekai*, translated literally, would mean "the world of emotions," but it ought to be understood here, I believe, as referring to ideas that involve an emotional commitment and are part of a socially institutionalized world view. This reading would bring the term close to what Durkheim meant when he talked about religious "sentiments."

If there is any one figure whose shadow dominates these studies, it is unquestionably that of Yanagita Kunio. Explicitly or implicitly, each contributor carries out his inquiry in dialogue with Yanagita—not to the exclusion of other scholars but with a definite inclination toward starting with the pioneer.

Space limitations prevent more than a preliminary description of the several chapters. Chapter one, "Sorei to onryō" 祖霊と怨霊 [Ancestral spirits and malignant spirits], is by Kojima Yoshiyuki 小島瓊禮, a lecturer at Nishō Gakusha Daigaku. Kojima presents a wide-ranging inquiry into the cultural phenomenon of spirit-belief, particularly as related to the household, *dōzoku*, and village, to seasonal rites for

ancestors and dead people without living relatives, to the difference between *hotoke* and *kami* as terms applied to the dead, to locally distinctive customs regarding the treatment accorded (and expected from) the spirit of an unidentified corpse, to ideas and fears associated with malignant spirits and their appeasement through summertime festival rites. A noteworthy feature of this chapter is Kojima's reasoned insistence that the *ta no kami* ("kami of the rice fields") are not to be identified completely with ancestral spirits—the prevailing tendency since Yanagita.

In chapter two, "Shi to sei to kyōdōtai" 死と生と共同体 [Death, life, and community], Yamaori Tetsuo 山折哲雄, a lecturer at Tokyo Kyōiku Daigaku, takes as his point of departure the discernment of a parallel between the disposal of dead bodies (funeral rites) and the disposal of living bodies (asceticism). Both have symbolic significance for the community in that both seek the elimination of pollution and the achievement of pure sacredness, the former through rituals conducted within the community, the latter through withdrawing from the community and introducing spiritual power from without. Focusing on the question of the kind of world view implied by different Japanese Buddhist ascetic orientations, Yamaori analyzes and characterizes the distinctive ascetic goals and methods in the Shingon, Lotus Sutra, Pure Land, and Zen traditions—a masterful section. The world view that results is then contrasted with the world view dominant in Japan prior to the advent of Buddhism, and it is suggested (unconvincingly) that Buddhism has made a significant contribution to the emergence of persons sufficiently aware of their existence as individuals to be able to resist the claims of community and state.

Komatsu Kazuhiko 小松和彦, a lecturer at Shiraume Gakuen Tanki Daigaku, is the author of chapter three, "Tsukimono" つきもの [Possession]. In accordance with Japanese cultural traditions (but in contrast to Japanese folklorists generally who tend to speak only of possession by an animal spirit), Komatsu redefines *tsukimono* to mean the attachment to individuals, lineage groups, and even limited communities not only of identifiable spirit-beings but also of impersonal "energies." He avers that the term *mono*, referring to that which attaches itself, is really an "empty" concept meaning nothing more than "outside the normal." Thus it is that magico-religious specialists are needed to inform people precisely what has attached itself

to them (a fox spirit, dog kami, dead spirit, etc.) and to recommend ritual techniques for exorcism or appeasement. Concentrating on the problem of lineage-group possession, particularly when members of the groups are marked off by certain physical signs which he calls "stigma" (boils, birthmarks, split skin, etc.), Komatsu goes on to ask why it is that families and lineages believed to be associated with *tsukimono* are disliked. Here complementing folklore study with sociology, he introduces the argument that, at least in pre-Meiji Japan, families believed to harbor *tsukimono* were families that had become suddenly wealthy, that in a situation where community wealth was fixed, gain by one meant loss for another (an imbalance attributed to a spiritual influence), and that the *tsukimono* phenomenon therefore functioned as a social-psychological mechanism tending to produce conformity, thrift, and inconspicuous consumption.

The infrequently studied theme "Sei to shinkō" 性と信仰 [Sex and belief], the title of chapter four, is taken up by Sawamura Mitsuhiro 澤村光博, a poet and staff member of the research institute known as the Tōkai Kyōiku Kenkyūsho. Sawamura's starting point is the cultural belief in a relation between sexual potency and agricultural fertility. With regard to the veneration of sexual organs consequent upon this belief, he observes that the magical power associated with the vagina has been thought of as greater than that of the phallus, but that the phallic symbol, being more readily applicable to tools, weapons, and other socially approved areas, has seen wider use. Within Japanese Buddhism, Sawamura distinguishes two opposed orientations toward sex. According to the first, sex is to be denied in the interest of faith, while according to the second, it is affirmed as the wellspring of faith. The former is associated with self-restraint, the latter with license, but both aim to focus desire on a religious object. The orientation that makes explicit use of sexual relations, however, has generally been associated by Japanese governments with anarchistic tendencies and has for the most part been driven underground.

The fifth study, by Kojima Shin'ichi 小島信一, an author and critic, is entitled "Yūtopia, yo naoshi" ユートピア・世直し [Utopia and world betterment]. Cautioning against treating religious phenomena of this kind under such categories as "revolution," "anti-establishmentarianism," etc., Kojima proposes to get at what is characteristically Japanese in "world betterment" by focusing on the leaders and groups in the forefront of such movements in modern times. The

groups selected are Tenrikyō and Ōmoto, the leaders being Nakayama Miki in the former and Deguchi Nao and Onisaburō in the latter. The detailed analysis concludes that the utopian visions of the Japanese, unlike those of the West, are born not of hope but of desperation at times when the social system is in imminent danger of collapse. Turning to the present, the author candidly admits to the fear that if Japan's trade lifelines to other countries should ever be cut, she might again seek a utopia in some "Manchoukuo."

It is risky, I know, to strip these studies down to skeletal propositions. I have done so in the hope of making available to readers of various interests what each inquiry is about. The richness and scope of the data, the freshness and originality of the theoretical perspectives that shape the authors' reflections, the appreciative, critical, sometimes caustic comments on the work of other scholars—these are features each reader will have to discover for himself.

As I frequently find when reading Japanese folklore studies, it is practically impossible to determine: (1) the period and social circumstances in which a given world view arose, (2) the course of its subsequent career, or (3) the extent to which it is still operative among Japanese people today. The first two difficulties may never be resolved, but the third is resolvable in principle and can become so in fact. This too is one area in which present-day scholars should, in my view, move beyond Yanagita.

A book of independently written studies lends itself to certain criticisms that have almost become standard in the repertoire of reviewers. One could easily take some commonly used term such as "religion" or "sentiment" and complain that it is employed in varying senses. Perhaps there is something to be said, however, for collections of studies that not only force us to recognize where ambiguities remain but also enable us to perceive that much can be done despite, if not because of, differing stances and modes of comprehension. Thus while I must confess to a few lingering doubts and methodological anxieties, I have no hesitation about expressing the opinion that, given the present state of development in religious studies, this book is to be highly evaluated.

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