more productively. (Incidentally, such matters as calendar-making and portent-observation as functions of the Chinese government in the seventh century—when the Japanese "Yin-Yang Bureau" was established—have now been elucidated in Wechsler 1985.)

The sections of the Engi-shiki which are translated in this volume comprise little more than lists of the materials which the functionaries in the respective government offices were expected to gather for the conduct of their duties. If such austere texts are to permit significant insights into the adaptation of Chinese cultural traditions in early Japan, they would seem to require greater interpretive amplification than Bock undertakes in this volume. The present work appears to present itself as something more than a simple annotated translation, yet the author does not develop the material into a satisfying topical study.

In sum, this work is a disappointment. The title and opening chapter raise hopes for a significant contribution to our understanding of Chinese intellectual influences in early Japan. But the remainder of the volume constitutes a rudimentary explication of two chapters of the Engi-shiki with perfunctory interpretive analysis. One cannot but feel that the translated texts are, in the final analysis, too skeletal to anchor a meaningful scholarly monograph. As it is, Bock's work will benefit a regrettably small circle of readers.

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The earliest collection of Buddhist tales extant in Japan is Nihon Ryōiki compiled in 822. Hokekyōkenki, commonly known as Hokegenki, was written in the 1040s, apparently adopting half a dozen tales from Ryōiki. In turn, Hokegenki influenced later collections, notably the all important Konjaku monogatari (ca. 1120), which contains no less than eighty stories related to those in Hokegenki. The famous tale about a love-crazed woman turning into a snake, for example, first appeared in Hokegenki (no. 129), was inherited by Konjaku, dramatized by the Noh theater in the fourteenth century, and bloomed into the popular Kabuki play Dōjōji in the seventeenth century. Some tales are important in tracing origins of motifs.

The 129 tales in Hokegenki are characterized by their predilection for the supernatural and fantasy in comparison with the realistic depiction of contemporary life as exemplified in Ryōiki. Accordingly, Hokegenki offers a wealth of folklore motifs in its Buddhist pseudo-biographies. To cite a prominent example, tale no. 1 is a mythic
biography of the historical Prince Šotoku (574–622), narrated in a series of folklore motifs and incidents: the imperial consort dreams that a gilded priest leapt into her mouth and awakens to find herself pregnant; the Prince speaks from her womb; he sends his soul to China to fetch the Lotus Sutra; he predicts and prepares for his own death.

Having written her dissertation on Ryoiki at the University of California-Los Angeles, the translator Dykstra makes full use of her knowledge of setsuwa literature. In her extensive Introduction, she provides not only the background, general characteristics of tales, and the setsuwa tradition before and after Hokegenki, but also a most illuminating analysis of avadāna (parable) and Japanese Buddhist tales. Dykstra classifies avadāna into five categories in terms of narrative time: 1) past avadāna (revealing the past); 2) Jataka avadāna (the Buddha's recollection of his own past); 3) present avadāna (a present action and its immediate effect); 4) future avadāna (a present action resulting from the past and causing a future action); and 5) compositive avadāna (action as a prophecy). Being a collection of legends about devotees of the Lotus Sutra (Hokke-kyō 法華經), Hokegenki naturally lacks the Jataka avadāna and concentrates mostly on the present avadāna, which is the most popular setsuwa type in Japan. This book, however, most frequently deals with the effect of an action on the future existence, as opposed to the preceding Ryoiki, in which all effects occur within the present time.

Tales of transmigration show a rare use of folklore motifs. In Buddhist lore, humans are routinely reborn as animals in retribution for their evil deeds; hence, it is no surprise to meet a poisonous serpent (29) or the feuding rat and snake (125), each of whom confesses his sin committed in a past human existence and gains deliverance by virtue of the Lotus teaching in the present time. But Hokegenki also abounds in examples of the reverse process, in which animals and insects have been reborn as humans through contact with the Lotus teaching in their last lifetimes. Several tales explain a priest’s inability to memorize a certain section of the Lotus Sutra by an incident from his former non-human existence: he missed hearing or reading the particular section because as a cow, he had been led away by his master (77); as a bookworm, he had eaten the pages (88); or even as a grasshopper, he had been accidentally crushed to death by a sutra-reciting priest (89).

Although generally more future-oriented than Ryoiki, Hokegenki employs some familiar folklore motifs to enumerate immediate and practical rewards for faith in the Sutra in the form of rice-yielding cornucopia gourds (48), celestial medicine (68), a bleeding Kannon statue (85), or even a wild fire extinguished (54). The magical power of the Sutra is depicted in a typically Japanese manner reflecting belief in the sanctity of the written word or paper itself: the first character myō 妙 (‘miraculous’) in the full title of the Sutra, Myōhōrengekyō 妙法蓮華經, surviving from a decayed scroll, saves a priest from a demon (110); and the eighth roll of the Sutra transforms itself into a snake to carry a devout hawker to safety (113). And the hijiri (ascetic) in Hokegenki often develops an occult power of his own to send a water jar flying through the air to indicate the correct direction (11). The same tale also shows a Lotus scroll serving one by folding, tying itself, and jumping back to the original place on the desk, an early example of a ‘‘locomoting inanimate object.’’

Dykstra calls attention to the significance of this book in foreshadowing some major developments in Japanese Buddhism that occurred after its composition. The exclusive worship of the Lotus Sutra was to culminate in the fanatic faith in it advocated by Nichiren (1222-1282) and continued on by today’s Sōka gakkai of the Nichiren sect. One tale about a married priest (90) predates by more than a century Shinran
(1172–1262), who abolished clerical celibacy in the True Pure Land sect that sprang from his teachings. And the syncretic trend detectable in generous references to such non-Buddhist deities as Shinto gods, local clan deities, and animal deities (fox Inari, etc.) in Hokegenki was eventually to become schematized into the honji snijahu 本地乘迹 theory. This volume serves as an important source in the study of evolutionary stages in Japanese Buddhism.

The annotations in this complete translation are apt and precise in providing citations of related tales in earlier and later setsuwa collections, explanations of Buddhist iconography and doctrinal concepts, and historical references. To be even more useful, a cross-reference of currently available English translations for each cited source would have been an invaluable addition to the otherwise thorough Selected Bibliography. The two-page Index leaves room for a comprehensive listing of prominent folklore motifs which, to be fair, is commonly missing from most translations of setsuwa literature and Buddhist lore. Konjaku at least offers long and descriptive titles such as "How the Hunters’ Mother Became an Oni and Tried to Devour Her Children" (22), but tale headings in Hokegenki tend to give proper personal / place names and little else. Folklorists, nonetheless, would find themselves drawn to part III. An obvious clue to motif categories is the frequent use of generic terms (fox, monkey), profession (miner, lieutenant governor), and gender (old woman, good man) in the titles of the last thirty or so tales. It is in this section that the richest vein of folklore material lies.

Nearly ten centuries old, Hokegenki is still far from being "dead literature" in today’s Japan. An unprecedented demand for Buddhist study has been sparked or revealed by a recent television program on NHK Educational Channel. The texts for the cultural lecture series titled Buddhist Literature, consisting of sutras from the remote Primary Scripture to the erudite Flower Garland Sutra to the popular Lotus Sutra, sold out more than 120,000 copies since April 1985 and climbed close to tripling the normal sales volume (about 50,000) for other lecture series. In the wake of revived interest in Buddhist source material, Dysktra’s contribution has been duly acknowledged by the award of the Japan Translation Prize to this volume in 1984. Hokegenki is also a welcome addition to the body of primary sources in Japanese folklore in English, which is at the present none too large for the needs of researchers abroad.

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This handsomely produced small booklet is a truly charming little treasure. The fifteen stories Mayer has selected and introduced are not all exactly most typical for Japanese folk tales. A few are not even found in her recent collection, Ancient Tales in Modern Japan, while others offer significant variations to stories found there. But I do not think that Mayer intended to give a representative collection in nucleo of Japanese folk tales. The special value of this tiny volume lies rather in what it reveals about the telling and collecting of the stories, about their Sitz im Leben. All the stories