

baskets, bamboo works, engravings of gods and goddesses on wooden planks, ivory combs, knives, designs, and silk products.

Chapter 17: In this chapter the author discusses village community life. He finds that, though villages differ in food habits, dress, customs, and manners, common traits do exist. Intervillage festivals provide opportunities for exchange.

Chapter 18: Here the author discusses various Assamese dialects.

Lastly, in his concluding chapter, he stresses the great need for continued folklore collecting in Assam.

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A Study of the Korean Puppet Play. By Choe Sang-su.
(Seoul: The Korean Books Publishing Company, Ltd., 1961.
Pp. II + 124, preface, sixty-six plates, two charts, index, Price not mentioned.)

The Korean puppet play is preserved today by a handful of old players and folklorists. Mr. Choe has been one of the most active among them. Besides organizing some performances of the puppet play, he has also written a number of articles on the subject. The first half of this book consists of such articles retouched to form a book.

He has two topics to discuss, the origin and development of the Korean puppet play, and a study of the Ggogdu Gagsi Play, the one traditional puppet play of Korea that has play books.

In the Orient, the earliest record about puppets is found in a document written by Lieh-tzu. According to this record, as early as in the 11th century B.C., "Yen-shin had human images made by carving wood and had them sing and play." However, there is a good reason to suspect that these puppets were not dramatic characters at all, but were mere dolls.

In Korea, the oldest record on the subject is a letter presented by Choe Seung-ro to the king in 982 A.D. In this letter he suggests that the king prohibit the use of puppets in the national ritual ceremonies, because the labor and the expense involved have now become a serious burden to the people. When puppetry was practised on such a large scale, we are inclined to surmise it must have enjoyed a long tradition, and Mr. Choe has sufficient quotations on hand to support his supposition that there must have been puppet plays already in the period of the Three Dynasties, roughly from the 1st century B.C. to the 6th century A.D.

On the basis of etymological as well as theatrical evidence, Mr. Choe sees a close connection among the puppet plays of China, Japan, and Korea. In Korean, a puppet is called "ggogdu gagsi". Ggagsi means a bride or a young woman, the most common model of dolls. However, what "ggogdu" means in this combination is not immediately

clear. Two early Chinese books, *Yen-shih-chia-hsun* and *Feng-su-t'ung-i*, shed some light on this point. In both books a puppet is called "kok-touk". Now, in Mandarin Chinese "kok-touk" is pronounced "kou-tu". Significantly enough, the old Japanese word for puppet is "kugu-tsu".

The Sung Dynasty in China witnessed a great vogue of the puppet play. In one of the most popular puppet plays, the player manipulated the puppet characters by holding the feet of the puppets from beneath. Now, in both Korean and old Japanese puppet plays the players had railings on all sides, put a curtain around them, and stayed inside the curtain unseen from the audience while manipulating the puppets over their heads, by holding the feet of the puppets.

For these and other reasons, Mr. Choe concludes that Korea, and Japan by way of Korea, learned the art of puppetry from China.

The puppet plays of Korea are summarized under the following five groups:

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| 1. Ggogdu Gagsi Play | 4. Bride Play |
| 2. Man-seog jung Play | 5. Shadow Play |
| 3. Toy Doll Play | |

Among these five, it is only the Ggogdu Gagsi Play that can properly be called a play since it alone has play-books.

The play is composed of eight scenes, and though Bag Cheomji, a country gentleman, appears in every one, each of the eight scenes has a fairly independent story. It is true that Bag Cheomji is by far the most important character; the play is sometimes called Bag Cheomji Play. But then he does not carry through any definite action. His role rather lies in stringing a number of themes together by his presence. We might call the play a series of dramatic sketches of the various aspects of the feudal society, as seen from the commoners' standpoint. The haughty aristocrats and depraved monks are savagely attacked, domestic troubles caused by concubinage are shown, rural scenes are sketched, Yeongno, an imaginary monster, threatens the villagers, and a temple is built in memory of the dead.

There is no doubt that the satire on the ruling class considerably outweighs other themes. In fact, it seems to be the undercurrent of the whole play. For example, in the funeral scene of the Pyeong-an Governor's mother, all the bier carriers get sore feet, so that the funeral procession is obliged to stop. Hong Dongji, a nephew of Bag Cheomji's, is sent for. He is a very strong man who always walks around stark naked. The Governor accepts him with understandable reluctance. Now, the sight of a naked man in the funeral procession of a most noble family is itself a sheer travesty on the dignity of the nobility.

Clearly, Hong Dongji represents the undisguised feelings of the people against the aristocrats. He asks, "Is this a she-bier or a he-bier?" referring to the bier which carries the body of the Governor's mother. "Well, I can't carry this bier on my shoulder, but on my arse," he says with a swagger, and in fact carries it on his erect genital organ to the bitter outrage of the effeminate aristocrats. His banter vents the com-

moners' secret resentment against their rulers so well and thus pleases them so much that, in some versions, the play is called Hong Dongji Play, even though he makes his appearance in only three or four scenes out of eight.

The writer of this note, in the capacity of the adviser to the Yonsei Drama Society at Yonsei University, Seoul, had the pleasure of first hand experience with Ggogdu Gagsi, when the Society decided to present this play in the fall of 1961. The whole summer passed in consulting old documents, and in cutting, pasting, and painting pieces of wood, gourds, and cloth. Performances on the campus were so successful that the Society took the play to other universities and to nearby military bases. Everywhere we went the play met with extraordinary enthusiasm, more than a conventional play would have aroused.

The referential materials in the second half of the book consist of two versions of the play texts, with synoptic charts, plus some seventy plates which show the puppet characters, stage scenes, and some recent efforts made in the field of the Korean puppet play.

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Richard M. Dorson: *Buying the Wind. Regional Folklore in the United States.* Chicago, The University of Chicago Press, 1964. With Indices 574 pages.

This reviewer is in no position to do full justice to Prof. Dorson's new book on American folklore. Not knowing much about the United States and still less about the folklore there, he has read the book only as a learner. This learning he found rewarding. To summarize the dominating impressions received, he would say the United States has a rich folkloristic life. This life is different from that of other nations in so far as its sources are as manifold as the ethnic components involved. Folklore does not only consist of relics of the past, it is a continuous process of evolution and new productions, growing also among the inhabitants of modern cities. This last fact is perhaps best illustrated by the folkloristic life of the United States where the process of urbanization of man has gone farthest. The mixture of old and new contributes to the wealth and variety of American folklore. Interest in and activities of folklore research are lively and wide-spread. The reviewer bases this statement on the bibliography of works cited and on the biographical notes the author makes concerning the respective folklore researchers and collectors.

In his Introduction (p. 1-20) the author writes about "Collecting Oral Folklore in the United States." From it we learn how he approached his field of research. The book is a volume of texts. From thousands of oral texts, deposited in archives or printed in journals and monographs and scholarly collections, the author selected samples representative of regional folk traditions within the United States. These samples are grouped into seven main chapters, namely, (I) Main