

work and to outgrow the strong European bias, the editors' efforts would bear good fruit.

Peter Knecht

### JAPAN

KUROSAWA FUMIKO. *Pfauendarstellungen in Kunst und Kunstgewerbe Japans. Pfauensymbolik und ihre Darstellungsformen in der ostasiatischen Kunst.* [Representations of the peacock in Japanese art and crafts. Symbolism of the peacock and its expression in Eastasian art]. Europäische Hochschulschriften Reihe XXVIII, Kunstgeschichte, Kunstgeschichte Band 71. Frankfurt a/M, Germany: Peter Lang, 1987. 300 pages, 245 illustrations. Paper sFr. 65.00; ISBN 3-8204-9743-9, ISSN 0721-3567. (In German)

On my second day in Japan years ago I was treated to a whirlwind tour of Kyoto. One of the first sights was the Nijō Castle and its gardens. Much to my surprise I found peacocks represented in various forms throughout the building. What could they mean? In the West the peacock, often gracing baptistries or shown in connection with Eucharistic symbols, was a symbol of eternal life / paradise for the early Christians. In more profane circumstances the eye-like tail feathers represented bad luck, and in general the peacock degenerated to a symbol of vainglory and pride. What was the peacock for the East, specifically for Japan? In 1974 *Asian Folklore Studies* published a long article on the peacock in India, its native territory. But other inquiries only led to the general answer that the peacock came to Japan through China and is often mixed up with China's mythological bird, the "Phoenix."

Fumiko Kurosawa takes up this question in her book and treats the reader, unfamiliar with Chinese and Japanese sources, to representations of the peacock in paintings, lacquerware, and wood and metal work. A general introduction to the peacock and its symbolization opens the book. The discussion then is divided into two large sections: the treatment of the theme in ancient Japanese art and the more "modern" tradition of the decorative bird and flower arrangements from the late 1300s to the 1800s.

In China the peacock was recognized as a special bird, sometimes serving to ornament the ruling powers, sometimes taking on religious symbolization either through its function as a vehicle for Amitābha or in relation to the Phoenix. Kurosawa's discussion of the appearance in Chinese art is important because Japanese art followed the same lines. The earlier appearances had religious associations, in particular the development of the devotion to the Peacock King (kujaku myōō) within Esoteric Buddhism. But gradually, as Flannery O'Connor described the peacock in the West, it had "come down in the world" and lost its associations with the divinity. It maintained, however, the symbol of a happy marriage or good fortune. It was also associated with ruling classes. For a time it became quite the fashion in high-society to have a "peacock room" (thus the room at Nijō Castle). Interestingly, the peacock often still remained connected with the "Phoenix." At Nijō Castle one part of a sculptured wood paneling has a pair of peafowl, the other side has a pair of Phoenixes. In later years the peacock was a favorite decoration for the bird and flower screens and scrolls, sometimes being balanced by a pair of Phoenixes.

Most of the writing in the book consists of descriptions of the art works, placing

them in their historical context. The discussion takes into account each of the two hundred and forty-five illustrations, making the work a good handbook. Or would have made it so. Unfortunately, I think the publisher did the writer a disservice by not reproducing the valuable collection of illustrations better. In some photographs you cannot decipher the details being described or even recognize anything at all. That is a shame because many of the items are held in private collections or are not always on display at the temples and museums. The book was printed from a typescript to which were added the Chinese characters for the proper names, a welcomed feature. Each of the illustrations is also properly identified.

Despite the poor reproduction of the photographs, people interested in the history of art or religion might value the book for its text and documentation. It would have been more interesting for folklorists if the study had been carried on to the present and shown the various appearances of the peacock in the culture today. Just two weeks ago, at a wedding party I received a commemorative menu card which had a pair of Phoenixes embossed on its cover. After all these years of interaction, it seems that the designs of the peacock and Phoenix borrow from each other to enhance the occasion when necessary. May we expect a further study of the nineteenth and twentieth century representations, or at least a more popular edition with better reproductions?

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#### KOREA

KENDALL, LAUREL. *The Life and Hard Times of a Korean Shaman. Of Tales and the Telling of Tales*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1988. ix+157 pages. Paperback US\$9.95; ISBN 0-8248-1145-3. Library binding US\$23.00; ISBN 0-8248-1136-4.

This book discloses the *mudang*'s<sup>1</sup> tales of poverty, war, forced marriage, and divine possession. It is also the life history of a woman who spent an unhappy childhood during the politically, economically, and socially chaotic periods of the 1940s and 1950s, and of how she finally became a *mudang*.

Kendall attempts to record and convey both narrative events and narrated events of a woman called "Yongsu's mother" in an ethnographical description. Her field work was conducted over a sufficient period of time.

The *mudangs* usually prefer to keep their private lives intact, and are hesitant to respond to the approach of scholars. Under these circumstances, there are several Korean scholars such as KIM T'aegon (1981), CH'OE Kilsong (1981), and HYUN Yongjoon (1985), who have made a great contribution in this field.

Kim T'aegon was adopted as a *mudang*'s son to conduct his investigation. Ch'oe Kilsong has been greatly influenced by his mother's folk religion and has become very familiar with the world of the *mudang* since his childhood. In an attempt to aid his studies, he became acquainted with a certain *mudang*. He got so close to her that she even started to consider him as her adopted son. This motivated him to develop his knowledge and experience as a discipline.

Hyun Yongjoon was born and grew up in the district of Korea called Cheju Island. With this regional relation, he was able to acquire, through his field work, a complete