

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.

#### REFERENCE CITED:

WECHSLER, Howard J.

1985 *Offerings of jade and silk: Ritual and symbol in the legitimation of the T'ang dynasty*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

J. Russell Kirkland  
University of Rochester  
Rochester NY

DYKSTRA, YOSHIKO KURATA, translated and annotated. *Miraculous Tales of the Lotus Sutra from Ancient Japan. The 'Dainihonkoku hokekyō-kenki' of Priest Chingen*. Osaka/Japan: Intercultural Research Institute, The Kansai University of Foreign Studies, 1983. X+159 pages. Appendix, bibliography, index. Distributed by the University of Hawaii Press. Hardcover US\$25.00. ISBN 4-87335-002-6.

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 Shōtoku (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 *Ryōiki* at the University of California-Los Angeles, the translator Dykstra makes full use of her knowledge of *setsuwa* 説話 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 prophesy). 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 *Ryōiki*, 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 *Ryōiki*, *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 snijaku* 本地垂迹 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.

Chieko Mulhern  
University of Illinois  
Urbana, Illinois

MAYER, FANNY HAGIN, translation and introduction. *Where Folk Tales are Treasured. Fifteen Tales from the Japanese of Misusawa Kenichi*. Bronxville, NY: Laughing Buddha Press, Sarah Lawrence College, 1984. iv+63 pages. ISBN 0-910913-01-3.

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