

are pearls from the very rich collection of Mizusawa Kenichi, a true lover and gifted collector of folk tales. He has devoted most of his time and energy collecting tales in the remote villages of Niigata Prefecture.

In her introduction Mayer describes her experiences and observations during a field trip in 1957 with Mizusawa. She introduces him as her guide and road companion in a double sense, as one who took her along on a field trip to some of the storytellers he knew, but also as one who led her to understand the stories and their circumstances better. Her text is very straightforward, but it is not a commentary on the stories. She talks about the circumstances in which stories were told at the time of her visit and she lets us have a glimpse at Japanese rural life. It is the whole world of the storytellers that comes to life in small facets. Striking insights about the nature of storytelling and the meaning of tradition are naturally linked up with observations about this or that pertinent aspect of Japanese culture. Her statements are often made in a casual way and may be quite blunt and sudden, but they can have considerable weight. She would report, e.g. a discussion which had erupted among several women about the form of a certain story. They all knew the story, but each had learnt it in a somewhat different form. Mayer stresses that the women referred to the story as they had personally heard it and were not prepared to change any detail in it, and so she concludes dryly: "That took care of the theory by some folklorists that stories are always modified after hearing them" (12). Pointed remarks of this kind, combined with a sense of humor and irony make the short piece truly enjoyable. After this introduction the stories are left to speak for themselves.

There is only one point where I wonder if the author did not misread her notes. Speaking about the arrangement of seats around the open hearth Mayer says that "at the left was the *yoko-za* where guests were seated" (3). As far as my knowledge goes guests would as a rule indeed be seated by the side of the hearth. However, whether this seat is called *yoko-za* is quite a different matter. This term is usually reserved for the seat of the master of the house, which is the seat at the top with the inner rooms of the house at its back. If Mayer is correct in her observation it would be a quite noteworthy deviation from a very common feature.

The volume is finally rounded out with an impressive list of Mizusawa's publications and scholarly addresses as well as of the honors he has received. Both attest to the dedication of this remarkable man. The book whets the appetite for more of his treasures.

REFERENCE CITED:

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1984 *Ancient tales in modern Japan. An anthology of Japanese folk tales.* Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

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MOERAN, BRIAN. *Lost Innocence: Folk Craft Potters of Onta, Japan.* Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984. xvi+252 pages. Maps, black and white plates, bibliography, index. Cloth, US\$30.00. ISBN 0-520-94692-7.

Facing the table of contents of *Lost Innocence*, Brian Moeran quotes the lyrics of an unidentified popular ballad:

The white snow on Mt. Fuji
 Melts in the morning sun,
 Melts and flows down,
 Flows down to Mishima.
 And in Mishima
 The prostitutes use it
 In their makeup.

If any readers expect merely another pretty book on Japanese pots, this lyric should prepare them for Moeran's somewhat cynical analysis of the social world surrounding Japanese folk craft pottery.

Lost Innocence is an ethnography of a pottery hamlet called Sarayama, part of the larger community of Onta in Kyushu where a type of pottery now called Ontayaki is produced. Until the 1920s, Sarayama's potters and their pottery were totally unknown. Sarayama's utilitarian pots were marketed to local farmers and townspeople, and when the ware was named at all it was called Hitamono, after the nearby market town of Hita. In 1927 Yanagi Soetsu (1889–1961)—also known as Yanagi Mune-yoshi—a major figure in the Japanese folk craft movement, discovered Hitamono when he purchased a teapot in a shop fifty kilometers from Sarayama. He vowed to visit the community that produced such beautiful pots, and in 1931 he arrived, quickly putting Sarayama and its pottery on the folk craft map.

Yanagi praised Hitamono (since rechristened Ontayaki) as the quintessence of Japanese folk pottery, produced by unknown craftsmen working in harmony with nature within the communal solidarity of village life. To Yanagi and his followers the selfless harmony surrounding the production of the pottery was inextricably linked to its beauty. As Yanagi's evaluation of Ontayaki gained currency, and especially during the postwar folk craft boom, the urban world of folk craft aficionados beat a path to Onta's workshops. Fame was accompanied by forces of commerce and mass communication that would undermine the pastoral life that in the folk craft movement's view is the essential condition for the production of beauty. Having discovered Onta and made it famous, the ideologues of the folk craft movement now criticize contemporary Onta potters for succumbing to modernity; with pottery production now shaped by economic incentives and new technologies, Onta pots are said to be no longer as beautiful.

Enter Moeran: an anthropologist with a keen taste for the irony of Onta's plight and a sympathetic ear for the potters' side of the story. For several years, Moeran lived (and threw pots) in Onta. *Lost Innocence* is the product of his field work, and it is a tightly argued—and entertainingly written—analysis that convincingly interrelates: a) the social organization of pottery production and of the community's life; b) the ecological and technological constraints on the production of pottery; and, c) the ideologies of tradition, communal solidarity, and aesthetics that are propounded in several variants by the "experts" as well as by the producers and the consumers of folk pottery in contemporary Japan. Moeran's book includes nine chapters: seven present his ethnographic analysis of Sarayama, one is a detailed historical analysis of the folk craft movement and its ideology, and one examines the interaction of Sarayama's potters with the contemporary folk craft world of critics, dealers, and collectors.

In particular, his argument focuses on the decline of communal solidarity that resulted from new economic incentives for greater production and the introduction of new technologies of pottery production that did not require cooperative labor. The irony of the situation, of course, stems from the fact that the folk craft movement has both created the demand for more production and encouraged recognition of in-

dividual craftspeople, at the same time deriding the community for its failure to live up to communal ideals.

His is a convincing analysis that fills several important and previously unoccupied niches in the ethnography of Japanese society. However, not all readers are likely to agree with Moeran's work. Potters and others interested in Japanese folk crafts may disagree rather violently with his characterization of the folk craft movement, but I will leave them to speak for themselves.

As an anthropologist, I have two quibbles, one rather technical and the other quite broad. My minor point is that Moeran tends to dismiss the work of other scholars who have examined Japanese rural social structure and thereby fails to bring out potentially interesting contrasts between patterns of community structure and kinship organization found in Sarayama and in other types of villages (or in other regions). His data includes potentially fascinating material on systems of house names, which he passes over so lightly as to almost elude notice.

My second anthropological concern is more serious. In the nature of Moeran's data, the usual anthropological practice of protecting confidentiality by maintaining the anonymity of the research site and of the individual informants probably was impossible. After all, the pottery and the community in which it is made became famous because Yanagi identified both pottery and community as special; it is now precisely this fame that both restricts and impels changes in the production of pottery and in the organization of the community. The tension between the folk craft ideologies that bestowed fame and the pragmatic social, economic, and ecological constraints of production is the mainspring of Moeran's analysis. To conceal the identity of the community would therefore strip his argument of much its force. Nevertheless, Moeran reveals surprisingly sensitive information about such things as incomes, systematic tax evasion, and personal conflicts within the community, with little apparent attempt to shield his informants from possible consequences of their candor, at least in print.¹

This is an attractively produced volume. It is not an illustrated art book, but it contains almost four dozen excellent black and white photographs of potters at work and of their products (most of the photography is credited to Masao Imai). The inclusion of such high quality illustrations may explain the book's high price tag. The publishers should be chided, however, for the inordinate number of proofreading glitches—including the reversal of titles on maps—that were not caught during production.

Nevertheless, Moeran has produced an outstanding book, which deserves wide readership. His audience will necessarily be diverse, and the book will undoubtedly outrage some readers and fascinate others. I suspect that potters may fall into the former camp, while anthropologists will appreciate the detailed, persuasive analysis of Japanese folk crafts as a social phenomena and will find that Moeran has provided an extremely readable account of contemporary rural life as well.

NOTE

1. Moeran has just published a second volume (which this reviewer has not yet had the opportunity to read). *Okubo Diary: Portrait of a Japanese Valley* (Stanford University Press, 1985) is billed as a "fictionalized" diary of his fieldwork experiences in a community whose identity he has disguised to protect local anonymity.

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