

papers at the Conference, approximately two-fifths of the total number of participants. Generally the papers fall into five kinds of research: some directly theoretical, such as Roger Abrahams's article on "Play"; some aiming at an illustration of method and classification, as in David Buchan's "Social Function and Traditional Scottish Rhymes"; some presenting folklore historiography as in W.M.S. Russell's article on Plutarch. The majority of articles are either analytical studies or descriptive / interpretive studies of selected topics, ranging from the effects of regionalism to fox hunting. The culture areas covered include much of Great Britain, the United States, Israel, Africa, Latin America, China, Hungary, Poland, and comparative European areas. Topics include fairies, animals, artifacts, various genres of folklore, and worldview. If the aim of the volume is to suggest the variety of topics, approaches, and personalities representative of twentieth century folklore studies, then it surely has succeeded with that goal.

With such an extensive sampler, however, one might have wished for clearer guidance from the editor on the significance of the individual parts of this large offering. The index is helpful to some extent in indicating the range of subject matter, but lacking is any clear indication of just what the reader is expected to gain from perusing this lengthy volume. Nevertheless, as is apparent to anyone who takes the time to scan the Table of Contents with an eye for special topics or even for variety of topics itself, *Folklore Studies in the Twentieth Century* clearly does offer a very interesting collection of essays and worthwhile research. Even for those who are not familiar with the field, the articles representing the Plenary Session Papers are understood to be works by respected scholars in the discipline and can be accepted as examples of the high quality and variety of research found in current folklore studies. Readers can gain a richly varied introduction to the field through this single volume of contemporary folklore research.

Sandra Dolby-Stahl  
Indiana University  
Bloomington, Indiana, USA

#### JAPAN

ANTONI, KLAUS J. *Der weisse Hase von Inaba: Vom Mythos zum Märchen. Analyse eines japanischen "Mythos der Ewigen Wiederkehr" vor dem Hintergrund altchinesischen und zirkumpazifischen Denkens.* [The white hare of Inaba—from myth to Märchen] (Münchener Ostasiatische Studien, Band 28) Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner, 1982. ix+421 pp. 10 photos. Paper, DM 58.— ISBN 3-515-03778-0

The study of Japanese myth is something that these days claims very little attention from Western scholars on the North American side of the Atlantic Ocean, but it has been kept alive by a handful of outstanding scholars in Europe. Primary among these is Nelly Naumann, who is easily the most distinguished scholar of Japanese myth in Western academic circles. With the publication of this book, the author's doctoral dissertation from the University of Freiburg, Klaus Antoni serves notice that he is ready to enter this group. As a rite of passage in its own right, it has significance to all interested in Japanese or comparative mythology.

Antoni's topic is one story found in Japanese mythology, that of the misadventures of the white hare of Inaba (Inaba no shirousagi), who has been skinned by a crocodile

(or a *wani*, which is *perhaps* a crocodile; I tend to agree with Antoni's assertion that it is, though many scholars would dispute the point hotly) because of a deception the hare has played on the crocodile. Wishing to cross from an island to the mainland, the hare offers to count the relatives of the crocodile to see who has the largest family. He has the sea animals line up from the island to the mainland, and crosses the sea on their backs, counting them as he goes. But when he arrives at the mainland he admits that this was just a ploy to get to the other side, and the last *wani* in the line skins him alive out of anger.

The deity Ōkuninushi then comes along with his eighty brothers, on the way to try to win the hand of a princess in marriage, and the hare asks them what he can do in his misery. The brothers give the hare false advice, to bathe in salt water and allow the wind to blow on him, which causes his suffering to increase rather than abate; Ōkuninushi teaches him a more proper way of treating his wounds. For this Ōkuninushi is told that he will win the maiden and gain prominence over his brothers, a prophecy which eventually does come to pass.

As Antoni notes, this story has received very little attention from Japanese scholars, who largely view it as a sort of fairy-tale interlude in the mythical action of the *Kojiki* Izumo narratives, of which it forms a part. He is convinced, however, that the story has a deeper meaning, and the book is his attempt to unravel that meaning.

To do so he has found it necessary to make several lengthly detours, and the result of these is that of the 301 pages of text, probably less than 100 are actually concerned with Japan, or the Japanese story directly. He presents, among other things, a New Guinea ritual which features initiates being symbolically devoured by crocodiles, then spit back out as new beings once again. Most of the book's wanderings take us through the Indonesian area, which is thought by many to be the home of the "original" version of this story.

Certainly Antoni has found enough material in Indonesia, New Guinea and China (and even in ancient Mexico) to give us pause. Indeed, this information is too rich and detailed to summarize here, and I can only recommend that readers consult it for themselves; even for those with no interest in Japanese myth it is a gold mine of data. From his investigations Antoni puts together a list of elements important in the story. These include the idea of a dangerous journey on a water animal, of an island of the dead, crocodiles as embodiments of the dead, the rabbit as moon animal, and more. Of the religious significance of the story he says that the tale "proclaims that life indeed must pass through the darkness of death, but that it always rises anew from this condition" (300). Here we begin to see the relevance of the New Guinea ritual, for the crocodiles "devour" the initiates, only to spit them out again as "new" (not necessarily as "reborn") beings, and to some degree, this is what our myth is about—although it seems, to me at least, difficult to say that hare has undergone a similar experience, for he is skinned by the *wani* on his way back to the world of *life* (the island he comes from being the world of the dead), and the details of the journey are thus opposite from the way they apparently should be.

In any event, Antoni sees the story as dealing ultimately with the question of the world of death and darkness (see, for example, p. 289). The crocodile is the demon of this world of darkness (*Dunkeldämon*), the devourer of light, and the hare is his sacrifice. The "light" here is essentially that of the moon, and, following in the work of scholars such as Carl Hentze and Ad. E. Jensen, Antoni places great weight on the role of this heavenly body in the story. The rabbit, he holds, is the moon animal par excellence. This might at first seem like a nocturnal return to the days (or nights) of solar mythology, but it goes beyond the types of questions raised by

practitioners of that lost art. The interest in the moon here is not for its value as a natural phenomenon, but rather for its symbolic value as a representation of the world of dark and death and subsequent coming to life again.

Here it is, I think, that Antoni's contributions to Japanese studies are most interesting, for there is a world of darkness and death in Japanese mythology, and it is located in Izumo, which is (roughly) where the myth under investigation takes place. Japanese scholars tend to ground their studies of myth in "reality," and to overlook any "mythic" significance a given story might contain, and thus it has been that in Japan the Izumo stories have been taken largely to refer to some kind of historical "reality" (political or, more recently, religious). With this type of orientation it is not surprising that they have seen the story of the white hare of Inaba as being an unrelated fairy tale thrown in for fun. Antoni's insistence on seeing the story as *myth*, however, as something not necessarily related to the day-to-day realities of the times, is a most positive approach.

Antoni's definitions, and especially his distinction between "myth" and "Märchen," are, in my opinion, open to question. "Myth," according to Antoni, is both "true" (*wahr*) and "real" (*wirklich*); its statements have a religious meaning. The Märchen, on the other hand, is not true (*nicht wahr*), but it *is* "real." It has the same motifs as myth, though these function differently (see p. 19). His thinking about myth is defined primarily by scholars such as Eliade and Jensen. But how, one might ask, can we be so sure that a given story was both "true" and "real" to those who transmitted it? We cannot—and this leaves most of the defining up to the researcher. This might be as well, but it has an arbitrary ring to it, and if two researchers cannot agree on what is "significant" to a third party, where do we go from there? This reviewer, at least, would feel more comfortable with a definition that could be empirically tested. At least part of the difficulty is that Antoni's reconstruction of the story, brilliant as it is, relies almost entirely on sources external to the cultural sphere of *Kojiki*. His ideas seem to call for a more detailed investigation of the *Japanese* context of lunar belief and the like, but this, unfortunately, he fails to make.

One also senses the need to give a more complete definition of the Japanese Other World than Antoni has attempted. I wonder if Ne no Kuni is really equivalent to "Tokoyo no Kuni," as Antoni holds (p. 297), and while I agree that Tokoyo is considerably different from "Yomi" (p. 296), I would like to see some clarification on *how* they differ.

Treatment of the story as a "Märchen" is all but non-existent (if, that is, I am correct in my idea that Antoni sees the *Kojiki* version of the tale as myth rather than Märchen). Antoni states that today the story is known only as a Märchen, and that there is scarcely a child in Japan that does not know it, it having the popularity in Japan of the best-loved Grimm stories in Europe (p. 301). This may well be true, but there is a considerable difference between a children's story and a Märchen, and in point of fact, this tale has virtually no oral circulation. One never encounters it in folk tale collections made from oral narrators, and it can be safely said that the tale comes from a primarily literary tradition, and not an oral one.

Whatever reservations one might have about methodology aside, however (and these are largely differences in American and European scholarly methods), this is a useful and worthwhile book. It deserves a wide and careful reading, both in the United States, where interest in Japanese myth is virtually non-existent, and in Japan, where Antoni's ideas border on the heretical.

W. Michael Kelsey  
Nanzan University, Nagoya