

Filipino epics. The Philippines is a folklore treasure-house. Only a fraction of existing indigeous materials have been collected—and even less expertly analyzed. In addition, folklore materials of this country reflect Southeast Asian (including Chinese) contacts and adopted and adapted themes and form of the two colonizers of the nation, Spain and the United States. Folklore is told today among the primitive (cultural minorities) of Luzon and Mindanao, Muslim Filipinos of the Sulu archipelago, and lowland Catholic peasants. Since folklorists have found oral literature “alive and well” in American cities, this probably also is true for the Philippines. However, little research has been done on urban folklore.

The number of active (and adequately financed for research purposes) professional Filipino folklorists is limited. Much folklore today is collected by college students, often for their M. A. theses. Unfortunately, most of these students (outside of Manila) are enrolled in universities that do not offer a single introductory course in folklore. Their advisors are not trained folklorists and local library resources on folklore are meager and dated. Many of the resulting folklore collections are of limited value.

This criticism does not apply to the epics published in *Kinaadman*. In Volume II a Suban-on epic was published called *Guman of Dumalinao*. The Suban-on are a tribal people living in Mindanao. In the current volume another Suban-on epic is published entitled *Ag Tobig nog Keboklagan* or “The Kingdom of Keboklagan.” This lengthy epic (7,590 lines) takes up about one-third of Volume III. The text has an introduction by the collector, Ms. F. C. Ochotorena (nee Gaudiosa Martinez), that describes the collection process and her informants. The epic, published in both Suba-on and an English translation, is expertly and liberally annotated. In the editor’s foreword, Miguel Bernad summarizes the epic.

The action is basically a tale of adventure in which a brave young Suban-on chieftain from ‘Sirangan’ goes across the sea to ‘Keboklagan’ where he and his followers are despised by the local residents who consider themselves superior to the Suban-on. The Suban-on establish their superiority in arms and thus win the right to marry Keboklagan princesses. They then go elsewhere where they again demonstrate their martial superiority. Eventually they return to Sirangan and hold the week-long festival called *buklog* at which, amid the merriment, the god Asog grants to every chieftain his partner in marriage (p. 345).

We are delighted to learn that the next volume of *Kinaadman* will publish another epic collected in northwestern Mindanao.

Donn V. Hart
Northern Illinois University, DeKalb

DAVIS, WINSTON, *Dojo, Magic and Exorcism in Modern Japan*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1980. xvi+332 pp., tables, figures and index. \$18.50. ISBN 0-8047-1053-8.

The term *dōjō* has become a household word for many even outside of Japan, but only very few among them would probably suspect that this word includes such things as Davis unfolds here before our eyes. He introduces us into the daily life and the world of Sūkyō Mahikari, the True-Light Supra-Religious Organization, one of Japan’s New Religions. This group claims that every member can become a miracle worker,

a little Buddha or a little Jesus, and heal not only every kind of physical sickness, but material disorder as well, such as the breakdown of an automobile engine, just by raising one's hand over the affected locus. Since other religious groups make use of the same technique, this in itself is quite known, but Sūkyō Mahikari, as a religious organization, even in Japan is not generally known. There exist only very few reports in Japanese about this group. Davis' is therefore the first in depth study of this group, certainly in English and probably the first at all. Given the circumstances of the group one might wonder if another foreign scholar has hit on some tiny exotic group in order to make himself a name in the academic world. However, although the group is exotic in some sense, the way Davis goes about with his analysis unravels facts and consequences that are relevant to the study of Japanese religion and especially folk religion in general, and gives the study a weight independent of the studied group's relative importance.

Davis encountered members of a certain dōjō in 1976, two years after the group's founder and Messiah, Okada Kōtama, had passed away. He himself joined this dōjō in "Nakayama City" and went through two of the training courses by which members believe they can achieve two goals: first to be free from the evil spirits that cause all their suffering and second to acquire themselves the power to give *okiyome* to others, i.e. to purify and cleanse others from their defilements. *Dōjō* is then an ethnographic report and at the same time an attempt to assess and understand the special atmosphere of this group. It is not a book about Mahikari as a doctrine or as a form of religion, it is about the people who frequented a particular dōjō of this organization and their motives and expectations. One finds therefore little about doctrine, mainly because there is not much of it besides the theory of spiritually induced illness and their messianic world view. And even here the author restricts his discussion to just what is necessary to understand the people's behavior at the dōjō. Yet the manner in which he presents the interconnection of the members' motives and beliefs, the external circumstances conditioning their attitudes and finally their status within the religious organization is a good example of what Cl. Geertz once called "thick description." By doing so, Davis succeeds not only in documenting the internal workings of the group in its own particular frame of reference, he also succeeds in showing this group, in spite of all its magic behavior and beliefs that seem so odd in a secularized society like Japan's has in fact grown out of the main stream of Japan's folk religion and folk tradition. He also shows that this tradition is very much alive in a society that likes to think of itself as being aloof from all that. In this context it is especially illuminating to see what an important role the ancestor of a family plays. Davis reminds us that this role cannot be fully accounted for by concentrating just on mainstream Buddhist explanations, the overt treatment of ancestor tablets or on family sociology. How ancestors are thought of and treated affects every aspect of the related family and even of others at times.

For his theoretical interpretation Davis makes ample use of data he collected through a questionnaire distributed among the members of four dōjō at Nakayama City. Although he repeatedly points out the limitations of this questionnaire, the conclusions he is able to draw are indeed remarkable. Using a trifold interpretative model of Problem—Ideal—Way he confronts three main problem areas: how are new religious ideas and behavior patterns in this group established, how do people change by being members of the group, and how do magical, religious and social criteria affect their status in the group (See p. 9). We are shown how people create and confront their personal Problem as the first step of a process, then relate it to the Ideal offered through the teachings of the group, and finally can find their Way, i.e. can adjust to

the situation through the practices and interpretations undergone at the *dōjō*. Evil spirits play the most eminent role as a rationale of this process. From the standpoint of folklore it is extremely interesting to follow Davis when he demonstrates with concrete cases how spirit stories actually come into existence and develop gradually in concordance with the religious progress a person makes, and how these stories provide a base for the individual by which he can get hold of certain phenomena in order to make them understandable.

From a sociological point of view the discussion of status within the group shows quite clearly the tendency of the leading members of the group to perpetuate their status among themselves, and how this attitude is supported by political, sexual and financial factors rather than by religious ones. Discussing then the alleged authoritarian attitude of leaders of New Religions and the attempt to explain the impact of these religions with the help of deprivation theories, two positions that are prominent in many other studies of Japanese New Religions Davis criticizes both stands. He insists that in spite of a marked negative attitude of the leadership towards democratic institutions the leaders are not authoritarian although they are authoritative. And deprivation theories do not really explain the attraction of such a religion because they tend to mix motives and consequences which should be held clearly apart. Like Geertz, Davis tends toward an understanding of religion as something which provides a powerful and lasting means to understand and live out one's problems by relating them to a larger context. Whether such an attitude of the believer is not triggered also by some feeling of deprivation might be open to discussion.

This book should be read by everybody who is interested in the spiritual life of Japan. It conveys much of the intricateness and complexity, and at times astonishing simplicity, of this life, something that is often lost in analytical studies of a particular problem. As a whole it is a sociological study, but it will be very helpful to folklorists, because it shows how an oral tradition, in the case of the spirit stories, emerges and also what importance and vigour folk tradition can have in a complex society.

Peter Knecht

ISAKU, PATIA R. *Mountain Storm, Pine Breeze: Folk Song in Japan*. Tucson, Arizona: University of Arizona Press. xi+126 pp., bibliography and bibliography, index. Clothbound \$12.95, paperback \$6.50.

This book is the product of a person with a true appreciation and feeling for Japanese folksong who unfortunately lacks the ability to clearly transmit her own understanding of the subject to others. Its nuggets of interesting information and sensitive discussions of Japanese poetry are all but buried in a torrid flow of prose, and only the most patient prospector will pan them all out. The book reminds me of nothing more than the excited blurtings of someone caught up in the enthusiasm of her subject: here is the heat of passion, but little order or coherence. Enthusiasm, however laudable, is in need of a *few* restraints.

Isaku begins her discussion of Japanese folksong by refusing to define her terms. An exact definition of a folksong, she tells us, would be "misleading," so we are simply told that "it is necessary to accept as folk song whatever the Japanese people themselves consider as such" (p. 1). Now this is very fine, but what happens if two Japanese