

BOOK REVIEWS

KENICHI MIZUSAWA 水沢謙一 *Obaba no mukashibanashi* おばあさんの昔ばなし. Sanjo, Niigata: Nojima Shuppan, 1966, pp. 516.

Kenichi Mizusawa's books concerning Japanese folklore and collections of folk tales have been reviewed as they appeared. The reviewer is impressed with the skill he has acquired in discovering aged narrators and giving readers a faithful rendition of their tales. *Obaba no mukashibanashi* has impressed his fellow folklorists with its fine quality, resulting in their presenting him one of the two Yanagita Awards at the 19th Annual Meeting of the Folklore Society of Japan, held in Seijo University, October 14-15, 1967.

The book contains an Introduction by Dr. Tokutarô Sakurai, assistant professor of Tokyo Education University, a recommendation by Dr. Tatsuji Itô, president of Niigata University, and Seiichirô Ogawa, chairman of Nagaoka City Board of Education. Besides a brief Introduction by Mr. Mizusawa, he has written ten pages about Chise Ikeda, the narrator of the 140 tales. At the close of the volume is a reprint of Mizusawa's report to the Folklore Society of Japan in 1963. The final page lists his publication, reports, talks, and awards since 1955.

In Chise Ikeda we find an example of living tradition, an intelligent, modest, sincere lady who is an unusually skillful narrator. The tales she heard from the age of seven from her fifteen year old sister-in-law as she spun in the evenings. One wonders if the tales were as the young bride heard them formerly or whether she told them with special care to the little orphaned girl for whom she and her husband provided a home. There is even a delicate feminine touch in her handling of humor, which can be rather coarse in folk tales. In the version of "The three charms," at the place where the little novice is frantically trying to get into the temple to escape the she-demon, the old bonze stops first to wash his face and then to wipe it before opening the door. A similar tale as told by Tsuru Nagashima, aged ninety, in *Tonto mukashi ga atta gedo*, has the old man first put on his loin cloth, then his belly-band, then his straw sandals before opening the door. This is not to infer Tsuru was no lady, but as a child she had heard many tales in her home from traveling story tellers, whose salty humor was enjoyed by adult patrons. There are many other instances in Chise's tellings that show charm.

Of all the collections Mizusawa has published so far, this has the most substantial content, both in the quality of the tales and in the additional information included.

JUN'ICHI NOMURA, Ed. 野村純一編 *Fukudani Matsubei mukashibanashi shû* (Matsubei tales from Fukudani, Niigata) 吹谷松兵衛昔話集. Tokyo: Kokugakuin Daigaku Minzoku Bunka Kenkyûkai, 1967.

In Vol. XXIV-1 (1967) three previous collections made by students of Kokugakuin University were reviewed. The young teacher in that group has now published a collection of his own, tales gathered in the mountainous district far back from Tochio City. In fact, it was Kenichi Mizusawa's *Tochio-go mukashibanashi shû* that called his attention to the area and that is how he set out to investigate it for himself.

In the Introduction by Prof. Jingorô Usuda of Kokugakuin University there is a comprehensive discussion of the seating arrangement around the open hearth in rural homes. That there was a set place for the story-teller shows that folktales were not regarded casually. These matters are important to country folk and I suspect that Nomura found other rather rigid attitudes in his contact with these folk. One is the loyalty to one's own family group, so he had to separate tales of Matsubei *maki* (family group) of Fukudani from those he gathered at Kuriyamazawa. Another matter is that the tale is preserved to the letter as it was heard and while everybody in the *maki* knew the same tales, there was variation which could not be overlooked. Hence the narrator's name in the Table of Contents.

One example of this is in what he discovered to be an introductory story which always preceded the session of story-telling. An old man found a stalk of ripe rice while sweeping his yard, and his old woman found a single red bean while she swept her house. As they were discussing how to prepare them, a bee flew along and stung them. In the Matsubei version the bee stung them on the cheek, but in Kuriyamazawa the bee stung each on the anus.. There is not much point to the tale, but it provides lively dialogue and shrieks, a good appetizer for what follows.

Mr. Nomura stated that he followed the order of tales in Keigo Seki, *Nippon mukashibanashi shûsei*, apparently the order in the index and not the order within the text, but chopping up the sequence and starting again with each narrator makes a jerky list. Usually the tales are arranged in a single sequence with the name of the narrator placed either after the title in the text or at the end of the tale. Perhaps it was a bit of local rivalry which prompted him to treat all alike.

Four of the six narrators of Kuriyamazawa were men, but all three from Fukudani were women. The tales are longer than usually recorded. This may be due to selection on the part of the collection. He uses a tape recorder in the field and transcribes later. He expects to do further research in the area, trying to trace the line of the tale, going back into the past as far as possible to see what are family tales and how they were continued.

KOJI INADA 稲田浩二 and TOSHIHIKO KAWABATA, Eds. 川端豊彦編, *Hirusen bonchi no mukashibanashi* 蒜山盆地昔話. Tokyo: Miyai Shoten 三弥書店.

This is not a review but an announcement of the first volume in an all-Japan series of folk tale collections, twelve and an additional special volume, which is on its way to publication. All of the collections are postwar and a number of new areas and collectors are represented. Dr. Tatehiko Oshima has headed this work. He is an active young folklorist with considerable experience in editing. He has on his editorial committee the two editors mentioned above and Akira Fukuda. The earlier all-Japan series, *Zenkoku Mukashibanashi Kiroku*, came out in 1942-44 under the editorship of Kunio Yanagita, but it has long been out of print. The new series will be known as *Mukashibanashi Kenkyū Shiryō Sōsho Kanko*. Advance subscriptions to the series carry a discount. The address of the publisher is Miyai Shoten, 6-2-3 Mita, Minatoku, Tokyo, Japan.

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NAKATO EIJŌ: *Bushū Koma-gun Nakayamamura kiroku* 中藤栄祥・武州高麗郡中山村記録 Official documents concerning Nakayama Village in the province of Musashi). 427 pages, 8 pages appendix (*atogaki*), 16 plates, 1 map. Tokyo, 1966 (Shōwa 41).

One of the characteristic features of the spiritual world of post-war Japan is an increasing interest taken in the historical past of the nation. This interest is also manifested by a lively activity in the field of research work on small territorial units such as towns and villages. The many centers for the study of local histories have been organized into an organization of their own which tries to see the local histories in the context of the entire national history. At present much local documentary source material is published with which a more truthful national history can be expected to be written. At Tokyo University a center for the collection of historical sources exists, *Dai Nihon kobunsho*, which proceeds family-wise, that is by histories of families of historical significance.

It is in collaboration with this center that the author of the book on Nakayama Village has traced down and collected documents in his area. He is himself a descendant of one of the three influential families who, together with the temple Chikanji, were in feudal times invested with official positions and functions. The temple Chikanji, in which Nakato resides, belonged to the family Nakayama, an old vassal of the Mito branch of the house of the Tokugawa.

What Nakato presents in his book could best be termed with the German word "Heimatkunde" for which no adequate English equivalent is at hand, we can only circumscribe it. By *Heimatkunde* is meant a description of one's own native place, its geography, history, living