

REVIEW OF REVIEWS

Nippon minzokugaku (Japanese Folklore Science), No. 17, April 1961.

Nagaoka Hiroo: Regionalism in Folk Customs as Seen in Kaga and Noto (Ishikawa Prefecture).

From Noto the two customs of *genzo-môde* and *yoboshigo* are known. The first is an obligation of a new wife. Within her first year in her new home she must accompany the palanquin of her shrine-god in his procession to other shrines and Buddhist temples. With *yoboshigo* is meant the ceremonial exchange of the so-called *oyako-chigiri-hai*, that is 'rice-wine cup of parent-and-child-promising', between men and women on one side and influential kinsmen and other persons on the other side. By going through this ceremony the latter take over a kind of parental duties towards the men and women involved, becoming their advisors. Between both parties the bonds of a new and true kinship are established. The men are henceforth called *yoboshigo*, the women *ohagurogo* or *kanetsukego*. No such customs are known in neighboring Kaga. In Kaga the word for 'T' (*ego*) is *ura*, in Noto, *ora*. Also, the form of the lion dance is different in Noto and Kaga. The boundary line between the two regions is the Oomi River (Oomigawa). In matters of customs this river is a very clear-cut natural boundary line, whereas the mountains between Noto and Etchû do not prevent contacts between the customs of the two regions. In cultural matters rivers make much better boundaries than mountains do.

Hotta Yoshio: Dissimilarities in Folk Customs as Seen in Shima and Ise.

A comparison of the New Year Customs in Shima and Ise show striking differences, but the festival of the mountain-god is about the same in both places. The differences in the New Year customs result from the preservation of old customs in one region and their disappearance in the other. Though Shima is a region separated from Ise, both once formed one and the same cultural circle, which, in spite of superficial differences in customs, can still be established. The hamlet Kichiya displays some customs of a peculiar nature. Instead of pine-trees (*kadomatsu*) they plant other trees at the house-door at New Year to welcome the New Year God, and instead of *zôni*, that is rice-cakes boiled with vegetables, they eat a dish prepared with taro to celebrate New Year.

Ono Shigeo: On the Drum Dance in Kagoshima Prefecture.

The drum dance practised widely in Kagoshima Prefecture is either of the ancestor souls festival type or of the water-god festival. The dance of the first type is performed in the basin of Kawachi River in Satsuma. The drum dance there is a worship offered to the souls of the first pioneers of the district. The latter type of the drum dance has its center of distribution in the plain of Kimotsuki of Ōsumi. The drum dance for the ancestors in Satsuma is performed on the 7th day of New Year of the lunar calendar, while that for the water-god in Ōsumi is performed twice a year, in the 5th or 6th month of the lunar calendar after the rice planting to welcome the water-god and again in the 8th or 9th month just before the harvest to send the water-god off. If we analyze the distribution chart of the drum dance, we find that the festival in honor of the water-god is older than that in honor of the ancestor souls. For the drum dance of the water-god festival primitive costumes are worn and the movements of the dancers are more quiet, whereas for the dance of the ancestor festival the costumes are more gaudy and the dancing movements more lively and joyous. Besides, the water-god festival is a prayer to the water-god, the ancestor souls' festival is intended to console the souls and to make their power effective in eliminating harmful insects.

Takagi Hiroo: Tanabata Customs and Traditions in Tosa, Kōchi Prefecture.

Tanabata is a star festival commonly celebrated on the 7th of July. There are local variations. In Tosa, on the first of July people clean the graves, the road to the graveyard and the Buddhist house-altar (*Butsudān*). On the way home from the graveyard they pick some flowers and twigs to decorate the house-altar. In other places from the 5th day to the morning of the 7th they cut the grass from the graves and the path leading to them and clean the house-altar. Another custom of the season is the 'changing of the well' (*idogae*), though nowadays, as most houses have running water, it is only rarely practised. People say, if it rains in the whole district Tanabata-Gionsama will not be encountered. On the 6th day people plant before their houses bamboo branches which they throw into the river or the sea on the next day. It is common to plant these bamboo branches at the entrance to the garden, but some families have them outside the room containing the Buddhist house-altar or in the garden just outside the room with the alcove (*tokonoma*). In many places paper lanterns are hung up. In the morning of the 7th day the bamboo branches are thrown into the river or the sea together with the small paper strips hanging on the branches while some words are uttered such as "take epidemics along with you" or "it is getting time for you to go home" or "come again to look at the increased harvest of us farmers".

Nippon minzokugaku, No. 18, June 1961.**Ono Jurô:** Bon Fire Festival in Kagoshima Prefecture.

Some customs are practised there which are not common in the rest of Japan and which shed new light on the old meaning of the Bon festival. Several practises with fire, though now only existing as amusements for the children, have been observed. When the Bon fire is kindled, children swing torches around and youths jump over the fire, then torches and burning fire-wood are thrown into a river. In the courtyard a small cooking range is built on which children cook rice and vegetables which they eat. A sweet drink prepared with hydrangea (*amacha*) is enjoyed. The various performances with and around the Bon fire serve no practical purposes. It seems light is the first concern and the rites must have been a community affair for each hamlet as a unit, in which perhaps age classes existed of which the performance of children and youth are perhaps a survival. The place where the Bon fire is kindled, frequently in a river-bed, may not be without special significance as it may point to a worship of the water-god. This assumption is also made likely by the fact that the performances take place only where there are paddy-fields. This writer comes to the conclusion that the children and youths formerly represented the water-god and souls as actors and that they were ceremoniously welcomed and sent off by the community.

Nippon minzokugaku, No. 19, August 1961**Kokubu Naoichi:** Transition from the Dual System to the Quaternary System. In regard to the cult organizations on Futaoi Island in Yamaguchi Prefecture.

On Futaoi Island there are four sacred mountains, all having connection with agriculture. Their names are Hachiman no mori (*mori* forest is here identical with *yama* mountain), Kôjin no mori (Kôjin is the god of the fire-place in the house), Ôgura no mori (*ôgura* means treasury, store-house, granary), Jinushi no mori (*jinushi* is the earth-god who owns the place where man builds a house, fells a tree, tills the ground). Trees sacred to the mountain-god are the *pausania* (*Pausania cuspidata*, Japanese *shii*) and the pine-tree. Both are used at New Year as decoration at the house entrance. When a tree is felled, the mountain-god is first asked for his permission. A dead and fallen tree is never left behind on the mountain. Its wood is used to make *himorogi*, a fence around a sacred object. Though dead and fallen trees are approached without fear, a fence made of wood therefrom is very awe inspiring. The same is the case with a forest in which such a sacred fence is found. The mountain-god is also the god of the year (*toshi-*

gami) and at the same time the soul of cereals. The same offerings are given to the mountain-god and the year-god. Still more conspicuous is the mountain-god's capacity as ancestor soul. The village is divided into four sectors. Now this is only for practical considerations without connection with the four sacred mountains, but long ago such connections may well have existed. The word *yama* mountain means here a group of people with a common connection with one of the four sacred mountains. Elsewhere in Japan a group with a common connection with a certain god is called *ujiko*, but on Futaoi Island instead of *ujiko* the expression *yama no mono* 'people of the mountain' was also earlier current. At that time such peoples of the same mountain displayed at their mountain festivals a strong community consciousness, even nurturing the spirit of rivalry against other groups with their different mountains. The writer thinks that in the beginning the community was divided only in two groups.

Shimono Toshimi: A Study on Village Organisation on Tanegashima. Concerning old wells, sacred hills, and stone monuments.

Kinship and territorial groups can be associated by common beliefs such as by common religious ties established by marriage relationship (married couples visiting their respective parents on certain festivals), by festivals uniting the members of the same lineage, by festivals in which the same stone monument is worshipped, by festivals of the same clan-god (*ujigami*), by the *garô*-festival (explained below), by festivals at which family gods are worshipped. From the point of view of production the group formations can occur by common pasture, by mutual assistance in planting the paddy-fields, or by common fishing expeditions. In the following a typical case of common worship of a well is described. The hamlet Hirota has perhaps preserved more ancient customs than any other place on Tanegashima. There are wells, called *kumikawa*. Nowadays all houses have their own wells so that the common wells are no longer used. Nevertheless for each of these old community wells a supervisor is still responsible. In former times the common wells in Hirota were centers of kinship groups in which the supervisors of the wells had an official function. In Hirota, furthermore, they have about hundred woods of which the gods, called *garô*, are worshipped in common by groups. The god worshipped may be the fire-place god (*Kôjin*), the field-god, the guardian-god of the spot where people get their water supply or the guardian-god of the wood which protects the houses against stormwind, or also the snake-god or the earth-god. More than anything else the god seems to be a mountain-god. In addition there is a group, called *kena*, which is brought together by the common worship of a stone monument on the 15th of the 8th month, souls being the object of worship.

Hakoyama Kitarô: Changes in the Village Community.
Koida Village in Nagano Prefecture.

Koida consists of 45 households, all of which, except one, live on farming with about the same volume of crops. People are very conservative and have developed a strong sense of equality among themselves. The foundation of the village self-government was the neighborhood associations (*tonarigumi*), whose basic duty was mutual assistance at funerals. When the ward-chief had to send another organized group to a family in need of help, this help was offered to the neighborhood association to which the family to be helped belonged. Recently, however, the advances in modernization of the traffic system and in agricultural techniques are affecting the old social set-up. Its kinship and neighborhood organizations are beginning to fade out. Still at the beginning of the Shôwa era, from 1925 on, families invited each other to a bath, so that fuel could be saved. Only after the Pacific war this practice was dropped, as were also other customs, such as mutually helping out with labor, making presents of rice-cakes at the Boys' Festival on the 5th of May (*gogatsu no sekku*), and of travel souvenirs (*omiage*) after returning from a longer trip. People in general no longer know each other as intimately as before because many are working now away from home and common work is getting rarer.

Komagata Satoshi: The System of Lineage Groups and Stratification in Uonuma District in Niigata Prefecture.

In Uonuma a kinship group is called either *yagomori* or *maki*. The stem-family (*honke*) from which other families (*bunke*) have branched off, is called *oyake* or *omee* or *honke*. The family that has branched off first is called *seiemochi* (probably 'the first house-owner') or *tonari* 'neighbor'. The other families are, as the case may be, called *niban-iemochi* 'the second house-owner' or *mago-bunke* 'grandson's branch-family'. The ranks in this combination of families are strictly observed and its bonds are strong. Such family ties regulate the whole community life. They go in action mainly on the following six occasions. First on New Year's Eve all branch-families gather at the stem-family. Second, a childbirth is a great event for the whole kinship group. Third, the initiation ceremony for boys (called *ibushigo*, lit. 'a black hat, donned by the boy'), now rarely seen, which took place between the 15th to 20th year of his age. The boys were given an *ibushi-oya*, a 'black-hat-father,' an elder member of the community who was charged with special responsibility to make the young men useful members of the community. Fourth, at a marriage, the whole kinship group took part. After the wedding ceremony the young couple, accompanied by both their parents, called on each family of the group. Fifth, before and after a pilgrimage to Ise the pilgrims visited the members of the kinship group. Sixth, before work for a new building was started, the kinship group was called together for a meeting at which plans on how to co-

operate are discussed. The help was then rendered in the following way—the kinship members helped in the work together with the whole village community—the kinship provided food needed for the entertainment of the carpenters, and they helped to prepare the usual banquets during the construction process—for instance, when the frame-work of the house was set up or the roof put on (*muneage*). People took pride in the great number of relatives who took part in the construction ceremonies and even unrelated villagers were invited to them.

Other occasions for cooperation offered themselves in field work and at funerals. In fact, the relationship between the stem and the branch families formed the basis of village life. This relationship was supplemented by another one which involved all the families of the village, though to different degrees, as follows. At the head of the hierarchy was the stem-family (*honke*) of the lineage (*yagomori*) to which one belonged. Then came the various ramifications of the stem-family, the elder ones first. Economic power, wealth, the amount of work contributed to the community created further ranks. In general, social standing of a villager also came with vocational position and individual ability.