decidedly influenced Western discourse on märchen) would have been worthwhile in comparison with socialist and realist conceptions of the märchen in the East, where he hardly drew people's attention. The author suggests in her afterword that it would be worthwhile to trace Lüthi's characteristics of style, such as unidimensionality and *Flächenhaftigkeit,* to features of medieval thinking in order to prove the medieval origin of the märchen (240). However, that would be an exercise in the history of thought for which Lüthi's esthetics provided only the starting point, and would lead away from his esthetics.

It needs to be mentioned that everyday scientific work in the GDR, some of which went against the imposed ideology, was able to follow its own ways. Although Woeller's work was duly quoted in the practice of GDR researchers of märchen, it played a very modest role. Borderlines between a strict Marxist interpretation and those studies that only gave somewhat more prominence to the social content of the narratives were flexible, as were the editions of märchen collected in Mecklenburg and edited by S. Neumann. In order to write a history of science that considers the everyday world, one cannot get away from interrogating those who are witnesses of the times.

In spite of some criticisms, the value of the present work cannot be diminished. First, it is based on a thorough knowledge of written sources that are exactly documented. The author was willing to go to great trouble to consult material that is hard to reach. Second, the book gives the reader many biographies of researchers that provide details about their academic careers, the subjects they taught, their disciples, and their contacts with other scholars. Third, the condensed summary of the discourse offered by this book is not only useful it also presents the reader with stimulating points of view. Last, but not least, the young, until recently still unknown, author, who since the publication of this book has made herself well known as an author for the *Enzyklopädie des Märchens,* develops in her first work wide-ranging arguments on an impressively high level of abstraction. Therefore, I recommend this book.

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JAPAN

HIRAIZUMI KIYOSHI 半泉 澄. *The Story of Japan, Vol. 1: History from the Founding of the Nation to the Height of Fujiwara Prosperity.* Trans. by Sey Nishimura and committee. Ise City, Japan: Seisei Kikaku, 1997; viii + 219 + xi pages. Introduction by the translation committee, contents of all three volumes, name index, map, tables, brush illustrations. Paper ¥2,857; ISBN 4–916079–04–3. (Distributed by Sekai Shuppan, Tokyo)

I have always advocated that the best way of finding out what happened in history is to go to the original documents of the day, listen to what the historical actors themselves had to say, unfiltered by a modern pundit's mind—to try to see the world as they perceived it—and proceed from there. Unfortunately, twentieth-century Japanese nationalistic points of view rarely become available for study in the English language. The three-volume translation of Hiraizumi's *The Story of Japan* seeks to address this deficiency.

The stated purpose of the translators in making Hiraizumi's work available in English is at variance with the author's original purpose in creating it. While the translators wanted to show the English-reading world a sample of conservative Japanese thinking at the time the

work was written (1970), the author himself aimed at teaching Japanese youth—his major intended audience—the virtues of conservative morality through perusal of an engaging survey of their national history. One of the reasons *The Story of Japan* is a good choice for translation, in fact, is that the author, in order to reach his young audience, writes simply and lucidly about Japanese history. Another good reason is that it has been influential in Japan: more than 100,000 copies have been sold and in 1979 it was incorporated into the canon of the prestigious Kodansha Academic Paperback Series.

The first time I picked up the first volume of *The Story of Japan*—and the first volume is all I review here because it is the only one translated to date—I was dismayed at the transparently poor translation, the profusion of typos, the errors of fact I found here and there, and the author's incessant and unabashed nationalistic moralizing.[1] I was afraid I might have to write an unfavorable review.

But I quickly got used to the quaint moralizing, and the extolling of historical figures who exercise honesty, courage, elegance, and justice in their pursuits. Then a funny thing happened. I began to find the book harder and harder to put down.

What was going on here? Thinking on this, I soon realized that the author is simply delivering on the promise of his title. He is presenting a story, with all the emotional appeal and coherence the word "story" implies. In order to bring his story to life, the author presents details—fortunately including genealogies and etymologies—that often get elided in English-language surveys of Japanese history. These details help the reader to understand personalities and events in history better, and they help the reader to grasp the connectedness of Japanese history as seen through a pair of Japanese eyes. Some of these details are unavailable elsewhere in English.

Readers of this journal will be interested in the first volume of Hiraizumi's work because in the first seven or eight chapters, and in Chapter 17, it deals with Japanese myths and legends, the textual sources of the myths, and the historical context in which the myths were put in writing. These are the matters I deal with below.

Nowhere are the author's nationalist feelings more obvious than in his unquestioning assumption that Emperor Jinmu (the first ruler of earth who was not a demigod) was a true historical figure who, through moral rectitude and unswerving effort, unified the archipelago into a single empire: "If Emperor Jinmu did not unify the Japanese people, guide them, and found the Japanese nation for them, we would have been dispersed, never lifted above ancient primitive life" (6).

By no means are historians agreed that Jinmu is a historical figure. Some think he was fabricated by epigone editors; others think he might have been a man who really lived, but who became so mythicized that he has come to be like a figure in Arthurian legend. The famous saga of his eastward expedition (known as the Jinmu Tōsei) does contain settings and images that are credible for the end of the Yayoi period (which ended with the empire's foundation), but it also contains much that is fabulous.[2]

Moreover, the Chinese dynastic histories place constraints on the time an emperor who unified the archipelago could have lived. The *Nihon Shoki*'s suggestion that Jinmu's ascension to the imperial throne occurred in 660 B.C. clearly is preposterous. That would fling Jinmu into the late Jōmon period! The author acknowledges that the *Kojiki* fails to date many events in Jinmu's era, and that the *Nihon Shoki* offers grossly faulty dates for events of the era. He also observes that these chronicles contradict each other's chronology. But he just brushes it all off with the excuse that the written word was unknown in the archipelago during Jinmu's reign! Thus the "arbitrary placement of events" (13) he thinks originated in days when the imprecise chronology of oral literature had to be relied on. And the matter became sorely complicated, he thinks, by the Japanese editors allegedly coming along later and adopting

an already obsolete Chinese system of cyclical determinism to establish a chronology for the *Nihon Shoki:*

> [Empress Suiko's "revolutionary" reign (554–628)] must have been regarded as the beginning of a new era [i.e., cycle], which must begin in kanoto-bird year. Therefore, the 9th year of the reign of Empress Suiko, which was kanoto-bird year, must have been considered the beginning of the new era.... Retrospectively, the beginning of the first period [i.e., cycle] had to be the time of founding the nation, by Emperor Jimmu.... But facts did not fit this chronology. The interval of time between Emperor Jimmu and Empress Suiko was not so long. As the result of artificially lengthening the interval, the lifespans of the emperors and the political actors had to be lengthened, to bring credibility to the chronology. (16–17, *sic*)

We have here what I call "Bartusiak's syndrome," which is described as follows: "It's easy to talk yourself into believing that you've proved what you expect to find" (BARTUSIAK 1998, 44). In fact, there are too many *must have been*s and *had to be*s here, and the author requires eighth-century editors to have wantonly—and foolishly!—fudged the dates of their national history. I submit that this scenario is unlikely. The incredibly stretched-out lifespans given in the *Nihon Shoki* are difficult to explain, but the critical historian nevertheless demands to see some compelling evidence in support of such a claim.

Another indicator of the author's nationalist sentiment is his uncritical acceptance of the suggestion in the universal chronicles that Japanese emperors descend in an unbroken line from Jinmu onward. Nowadays, most Japanese historians believe several so-called "dynasties" arose between the time of the empire's actual founding and the reign of emperor Keitai (r. 507–531). Although I, too, subscribe to this belief, I should like here to offer some support for the author:

An established aristocratic house in the protohistorical Kinai region might have commanded the skills, experience, power, and popular respect to field a pretender to the throne. Yet the aristocracy was so interbred with the imperial house (nearly every aristocrat had an emperor somewhere in his background) that, had a member of an aristocratic house actually usurped the throne, continuity of the line might still be claimed. Thus, we should be safer speaking of new directions in court culture than proclaiming new "dynasties" (METEVELIS 1998). Thus the author's assumption of genealogical continuity plausibly could be compatible with the notion of "dynasties," and he need not be castigated for his assumption.

Now on to myths. The author views the Japanese myth system not as sacred history—rather, he views the myths as respect-worthy windows onto the past:

> If myths are rationally analyzed with [present-day] knowledge, they are wildly illogical and incredible, and of little value. But the religion, philosophy, history, morals, lifestyles, and customs of antiquity are projected into them. The perspectives of this world and of life, of intelligence, and the moral character of a people can be understood through their myths. In this sense, myth is a precious historical source. (19)

He claims that two traits of Japanese culture in particular derive from myths. The first is a kind of natural affirmation that allegedly helped early Japanese feel close to nature: "The familiarity they felt towards the mountains, rivers, natural phenomena, animals and plants had much influence in cultivating the Japanese natural temperament, which is gentle and warm" (30). The second trait is an upbeat worldview: "[In foreign myth systems] man developed from monsters, were born out of sin, and so on. Some of their episodes are immoral,

involving massacre and adultery. But in the Japanese myths very few are gloomy" (30, *sic*). And then he returns to his fond theme of how the moral rectitude of historical figures forms a national legacy:

> The integration of the people and the attainment of harmony of all classes was made possible by the founding of the nation. It must have required much toil and suffering on the part of Emperor Jinmu, the founder. But his ultimate success shows that he possessed an irrepressable will, and moral influence that commanded and won the hearts of the people. The same character must have been present in the Gods, beginning with [the sun-goddess] Amaterasu Ōmikami from whom he descended. Myth is by no means historical truth; but when reflected in this manner, it has profound meaning. (31, *sic*)

I recommend this book to English speakers who wish to gain a "feel" for one form of Japanese nationalist thinking, and to those already familiar with Japanese history who want to glean a few details or to see how Japanese history looks through Japanese eyes. I should warn away those who simply want an introductory survey of Japanese history. However, the author's summary of the Japanese myth on pp. 19–30 I recommend to anyone wanting a shortcut to familiarity with the Japanese myth system, without having to trudge through the translations of the *Kojiki* (PHILIPPI 1968; CHAMBERLAIN 1973) and *Nihon Shoki* (ASTON 1956). The book also offers a good account of how these universal chronicles came to be written.

NOTES

1. The errors of fact are likely to have originated in the process of translation.
2. In my opinion, the Jinmu Tōsei saga was a Yayoi period foundation document (possibly relating frontier expansion by the eastern Wa) that became associated with genealogical texts of post-imperial times.

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