

the authors continue their research by coming to Japan to conduct fieldwork from deep within the culture, fully utilizing the vast amount of available research by Japanese and foreign scholars. Research relationships will become even more necessary, and the cooperation needed for this will be happily provided. I for one look forward to the authors' next publication.

REFERENCE CITED

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NAUMANN, NELLY, Translator and Annotator. *Die Mythen des alten Japan*. München: Verlag C. H. Beck, 1996. viii + 231 pages. Map, illustrations, bibliography, glossary of Chinese and Japanese terms, index. Cloth DM 48—: ISBN 3-406-41147-9. (In German)

Nelly Naumann, a German Japanologist well known to readers of *Asian Folklore Studies* through her contributions on Japanese folklore and other topics, has published an introduction to ancient Japanese mythology. After an introductory chapter in which the author presents her understanding of the concept of "myth," describes the ancient Japanese mythology and the history of its research, and explains the aims of her book, three chapters present translations by the author from the first parts of the *Kojiki* and the *Nihonshoki*, two historical works compiled in the early eighth century. The texts are followed by the comments of the author.

The author divides the mythological sequence into three chapters: 1) "Theogony, Cosmogony, Cosmology," covering the period from the beginning of the world to Izanagi's visit to his dead wife Izanami in the afterworld and the birth of their three illustrious children (the Sun Goddess Amaterasu, the Moon God Tsukuyomi, and the Storm God Susano-o); 2) "The Mythical World Order," covering the period from the installation of the three children in their respective domains to the myths of Ohokuninushi; 3) "The Political Myth," covering the period from the subjugation of the Central Land of Reed Plains to the founding of the Yamato kingdom by the first emperor Jinmu. The author is inclined to prefer the *Kojiki* texts to those of the *Nihonshoki*; for example, she places the birth of the three illustrious children after Izanagi's visit to the afterworld, and she gives much weight to the myths of Ohokuninushi.

The present book is not a handbook, surveying major results of research by many scholars, but rather a summary of the author's own research. Works by Japanese scholars referred to are in the main only those published up to the 1960s. Recent works by French Japanologists, e.g., François MACÉ (1989), are ignored.

The translation is well done, accurate, and written in a readable style. In the comments Naumann presents some interesting observations, e.g., that the names of deities in the cosmogony have a *kami*-ending in the *Kojiki* and a *mikoto*-ending in the *Nihonshoki* (30). She pays due attention to the structure of mythic sequence. She gives, for example, a schematic description at the opening of the chapter "The Mythical World Order":

- a Susano-o receives the Land of Root as his domain to rule.
- b Susano-o goes up to the heaven. Procreation of children.

- c Misdeeds of Susano-o.
- d Hiding of the Sun Goddess.
- d Reappearance of the Sun Goddess.
- c A *harahe* (punishment/exorcism) is imposed on Susano-o.
- b Susano-o comes down from heaven. Victory over the serpent. Procreation of children.
- a Susano-o goes into the Land of Root.

The acts can be united in the pairs a - a, b - b, c - c, d - d. The act of each second link (*Glied*) of the pair seems to be the result or consequence of the first (57). It is Naumann's contribution to have disclosed a reversal structure in the Susano-o myths, although the discovery of such reversal structures is not new, having been discussed by Japanese scholars for other parts of Japanese mythology (e.g., ŌBAYASHI 1984, 145–69).

Some of her other observations are rather hard to accept. One example is her interpretation of the weeping Susano-o. For comparison she cites some weeping faces of Jōmon figurines from eastern Japan and Neolithic painted pottery from Panshan, Kansu. In accordance with the theory of Carl Hentze, she proposes that “the weeping face” belongs to a moon deity who possesses the water of life and as such is a general life-giver. She places the weeping Susano-o in this context (91–96).

This interpretation is highly hypothetical in nature. First of all, it is not certain that the Jōmon faces represent weeping faces—the lines below the left eyes may be tears or just tattoo marks. Secondly, one needs more convincing evidence than Jōmon figures from eastern Japan, because there are fundamental cultural differences between the Jōmon tradition in eastern Japan and the early court culture of the Yamato dynasty. There are no clear traces of the Jōmon tradition of eastern Japan in the Japanese mythology compiled in the early eighth century in Yamato. Thirdly, the lunar interpretation of Hentze is, in my estimate, by no means certain enough to be relied on as a theoretical foundation.

We hope this markedly individual introduction will stimulate other scholars to further research in ancient Japanese mythology.

REFERENCES CITED:

MACÉ, François

1989 *Kojiki shinwa no kōzō*. Tokyo: Chūō Kōronsha.

ŌBAYASHI Taryō

1984 *Higashi-Ajia no ōken-shinwa*. Tokyo: Kōbundō.

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WHELAN, CHRISTAL, Translator. *The Beginning of Heaven and Earth: The Sacred Book of Japan's Hidden Christians*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1996. xii + 135 pages. Bibliography, index. Cloth US\$34.00; ISBN 0-8248-1806-7. Paper US\$16.95; ISBN 0-8248-1824-5.

The story of Japan's “underground” or “hidden” (*Kakure*) Christians has been told often, but rarely well. In its most common form, the story describes how Christianity spread rapidly in Japan during the second half of the sixteenth century, when it was warmly embraced by those who were in various ways and for various reasons drawn by the Jesuits' message, and they tell how Christianity also suffered under the increasingly intense persecution of the seventeenth-century Tokugawa Bakufu; Christianity was then all but eradicated during the 1630s, when,