

embrace the Ainu from within.

The Ainu are usually regarded as a vanishing people and their material culture as a closed chapter. Kayano's work points to the contrary, emphasizing the inherent dynamism of Ainu life. This is evidenced in the continued existence of the Ainu life-style and outlook not only in the memory of the Ainu people as a whole but also in the activities of individuals like the author, who are expressing their concern for their cultural heritage through a large-scale revitalization of Ainu beliefs and customs. A defining feature of this activity has been the establishment of Ainu knowledge centers, where lessons on the Ainu language, history, material culture, and crafts (such as weaving and wood carving) are offered. This initiative, undertaken by the author himself, has shown that there is a practical synthesis between tradition and change, contrary to the assumption often held by modernization theorists that tradition and change stand in a dualistic relationship.

Our Land Was a Forest is an autobiography situated in Hokkaido, the native land of the Ainu people. The book centers on the life experiences of the author and his family — their voices are heard throughout the volume, bringing the reader and the Ainu together and creating a closeness between the two. By focusing on his own family, Kayano provides an inside view of how the Ainu think and allows the reader to identify with his people. Using an approach that emphasizes the Ainu point of view, the author puts Wajin (Japanese) historical and ethnographic accounts of the Ainu to the test. In the Wajin view, the Ainu belong to a nation firmly grounded in a territorial and social space inherited from the Wajin's own ancestors; it is a view of reality in which the Wajin — the dominant ethnic group — and the Ainu occupy the same national territory on equal terms. According to Kayano, this view does not correspond to the reality in which the Ainu live and operate. The fact that the Ainu and the Wajin jointly occupy the same national territory has not resulted in equality, given the discrimination against the Ainu evident in the common Wajin reluctance to marry and employ members of this group.

Overall this book portrays a people which has suffered tremendous hardship under Wajin law and authority. In the words of the author, "If by writing this little book, which I liken to baring my body, I have made readers understand even one segment of the hardship the Ainu have been forced to bear and the road that will continue to be rough and full of grief, then nothing could make me happier" (157). However, the book is above all an account of a proud and strong people determined to resist the assimilation policy pursued by Wajin authorities. In *Our Land Was a Forest*, Kayano makes a forceful statement that for the Ainu integration into the larger society means a general decline in their own life-style. He gives numerous examples of the unfair treatment accorded the Ainu: they were forbidden to speak their own language, their material culture was condemned as inferior to that of the Wajin, and they were called an inferior race. As a result many Ainu tried to hide their identity. However, Kayano's book — and his earnest activities on behalf of Ainu culture — testify to the fact that the Ainu never gave in to the pressure from Wajin authorities. The strength of the book lies, above all, in its demonstration that "culture" does not die. It transforms. Reading Kayano's work is an adventure, and I recommend it strongly.

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KIM, YUNG-HEE. *Songs to Make the Dust Dance: The Ryōjin hishō of Twelfth-Century Japan*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994. xviii + 222 pages. Bibliography, indices of first lines and subjects. Cloth US\$37.50; ISBN 0-520-08066-1.

Retired Emperor Go-Shirakawa (1127–1192), the compiler of the *Ryōjin hishō* 梁塵秘抄, was the crabby political figure depicted so prominently in *The Tale of the Heike*. In private life he was devoted to *imayō* songs, a poetic form comprised of five- and seven-syllable lines, as short as the stanzas of twentieth-century songs. Originating among the common people, these songs were disseminated by professional entertainers such as religious courtesans and dancers.

The first third of *Songs to Make the Dust Dance* is devoted to the background of the *Ryōjin hishō*, locating Go Shirakawa in the milieu of Heian aristocratic and common culture. Go-Shirakawa's twenty-volume compilation, completed about 1179, included the texts themselves, performance notes for the songs, and essays. The anthology circulated until the fourteenth century, after which it was lost until the early twentieth century, when the autobiographical essay and portions of the song text resurfaced.

The remaining portion of the book deals with the songs themselves, presenting translations of 222 out of the *Ryōjin hishō*'s 566 songs. The dust jacket advertises the book as “a picture of a country in transition, filled with a wide variety of common people responding to very ordinary situations,” and the songs as expressions of “their concerns about religion, love, aging, and even current affairs.” Actually, songs related to religion far outnumber all others in the *Ryōjin hishō*, comprising more than seventy percent of the anthology's verses. A selection of these are presented in the first portion of the song translations; the renderings in this section are accurate, and are accompanied by an explanation of Buddhism and Shinto that does not get excessively doctrinal.

The 130 songs in the “Zō” [Miscellaneous] section of the original *Ryōjin hishō* may be said to reflect the life and thought of the common people. Seventy of these are introduced in the final chapter. Only 39 out of the 158 pages of the original text are included due to the omission of the commentaries, and there are no cross-references or detailed cultural notes. Precision in grammatical and honorific usage was not of primary concern, nor was the reproduction of poetic lyricism. Instead the author presents creative interpretations, based on the theory that the songs were created by the disseminators (the courtesans and dancers) themselves:

No. 439:

izare komatsuburi
toba no jōnanji no matsuri mini
ware wa makaraji osoroshi ya
korihatenu
tsukurimichi ya yotsuzuka ni
aseru agari uma no ōkaru ni

Lets go, my spinning top,
 to see the fair in Toba, at Jōnanji!
 Oh no I won't, for I'm afraid,
 I've learned my lesson:
 too many restless horses rearing up
 on the Tsukurimichi and Yotsuzuka
 roads.

(154)

The street names and the references to the festival at Jonanji Shrine hint at a more multivalent meaning. Most likely, *komatsuburi* (literally, a spinning top) is the name of a courtesan, and the song represents her coy refusal of an invitation to go to the outskirts of the capital with a customer, presumably for a tryst. The “horses” may well allude to men around the Toba Palace area (possibly warriors) with whom the woman had an unpleasant experience she does not want to repeat. (154)

One wonders about this interpretation. The area where Tsukurimichi Road reached Yotsuzuka Road in southern Kyoto is where crowds flocked for festivals and parades, as depicted in *The Tale of the Heike*: “In countless thousands of myriads, they formed a solid mass lining the entire route from the south gate at Toba, [via Tsukurimichi], to Yotsuzuka. A man could not look behind him; a carriage could not turn its wheels” (McCULLOUGH 1988, 386).¹ It is easy to imagine a horse rearing up in such a crowd, as happened at this

year's Jidai Matsuri Procession outside the Kyoto Imperial Palace.

The above song is, furthermore, quite similar to a number of rural children's songs, such as this one from Nagano Prefecture:²

Tsubu tsubu yama e gozare

iyade sōrō kori sōrō

kyonen no haru mo ittareba

karasu to mōsu kurotori ga

acchi e muicha tsukimawashi

kocchi e muicha tsukimawashi

ame sae fureba sono kizu ga

uzuki sōrō yame sōrō

Spinning top, spinning top, won't you
come to the mountain?

No, sir, I've had enough, sir.

I went last year in spring,
and *karasu* the black crows

poked at me that way,

poked at me this way.

The sores from the pokes
still hurt on a rainy day, sir.³

Such evidence indicates that song 439 was a children's song, possibly about self-questioning on the part of the child, aroused by the way in which a spinning top turns: smooth as though listening, and shaking sideways as though saying no. Projecting his thought onto the movement of the top, the child wondered whether to go to the gathering or stay at home (cf. SHIDA 1960, 202).⁴

Yung-Hee Kim's book is recommended as an enjoyable work of creative literary analysis, with the *Ryōjin hishō* songs providing the material for Kim's imaginative interpretations. Reference to other partial translations of the *Ryōjin hishō* songs, such as MORIGUCHI and JENKINS 1990,⁵ may be advisable for those who wish to know the verses as they really are.

NOTES.

1. From SHIDA's classic commentary on the *Ryōjin hishō* (1960, 200–202). McCullough omits the name “Tsukurimichi,” not regarding it as a proper noun.

2. Cited by SHIDA (1965, 534).

3. Translated by the reviewer.

4. A 1993 survey by Iwanami Shoten of the latest research on the *Ryōjin hishō* (in KOBAYASHI 1993) suggests that Shida's interpretation has not been surpassed.

5. MORIGUCHI and JENKINS translate song 439 as: “Come, my little spinning top, let's go to see the fair at Jonanji, in Toba. Oh, no, I'm too afraid to go. I won't go there any more, for on that new road, at the crossing of the way, there are so many bad-tempered, stamping horses” (1990, 100).

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