

JAPAN

AMINO YOSHIHIKO 網野善彦, Editor. *Chūsei o kangaeru: Shokunin to geinō* 中世を考える：職人と芸能 [Examining the Middle Ages: Craftsmen and performing arts]. Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1994. 273 pages. Plates, illustrations, bibliography. Hardcover Yen 2,266; ISBN 4-642-02705-X. (In Japanese)

The publisher advertises the *Chūsei o kangaeru* series as a “series of introductions aimed at the construction of a new image of history.” The books are more than mere introductions, however, possessing as they do a magical attraction for their display of scientific achievements. The book under review is no exception. Thus rather than critique this book as in an ordinary review, I would like to describe what I as a folklorist discovered in it.

In his article “Chūsei no imono seisan to chūzō kōjin” 中世の鑄物生産と鑄造工人 [Medieval casting and casting artisans] Isogawa Shin'ya 五十川伸矢 considers the artisans of bronze and iron casting from an archaeological perspective. In his view it is possible to categorize the casting craftsmen into the bronze-workers and the founders. The bronze artisans, following the demand for their work, settled in certain medieval urban neighborhoods, like Shichijō in Kyoto. Towards the end of the Middle Ages they were called *kazarishi* (ornamentists). The author suggests that the bronze artisans were the forerunners of the artisans that today produce ornaments according to traditional manual methods. The fact that the bronze artisans also cast counterfeit Chinese coins provides a clue as to the nature of their social existence (or of their position against that of the rulers). The founders cast in bronze or iron; temple bells, mirrors, and gongs (*waniguchi* 罌口) were cast in bronze, while cooking vessels like saucepans and kettles were cast in iron (which is why they are not often found in digs). The founders were limited in their areas of residence to places where foundry sand was available. The areas where they lived were called *kanaya* 金屋. According to tradition these places were often settled by founders from the region of Kawachi, but the author points out that in view of differences in technique and style it is quite unlikely that the founders of Hokuriku, Kantō, and Tōhoku were all direct descendants of the same line.

Ichimura Takaō 市村高男, in “Chūsei no imonoshi no shūdan to shūraku” 中世の鑄物師の集団と集落 [Groups and settlements of founders in the Middle Ages], concentrates on the founders in the eastern region of Japan (Azuma, present-day Kantō), who for the most part were not providers for the imperial court. During the casting of the Kamakura Great Buddha during the thirteenth century, founders from Kawachi (who *were* providers to the court) moved into the region in great numbers, but there were also local founders belonging to different traditions. Thus Ichimura's findings parallel those of Isogawa.

The fifteenth century was a period of social transition in the eastern regions. Within the three large groups of founders smaller groups operated independently, later reorganizing as their ties to those in power increased. They became the retainers of daimyōs and local lords and gathered in the cities. Meanwhile, founders in the villages were forced to combine their craft work with the practice of agriculture in order to survive. Nevertheless it was precisely these village founders who preserved the true eastern tradition, according to the author.

Sasamoto Shōji 笹本正治 provides still another key to the true condition and social mentality of medieval craftsmen in his article “Hakase to kinzan” 博士と金山 [*Hakase* and gold mines]. The author argues that construction (such as castle building) and gold mining — prime examples of man's interference with nature — necessitated invocations and magic rituals to propitiate the gods of the earth. This created a necessity for practitioners of magic and incantation, known as *hakase* or *innai* 院内, *onmyōshi* 陰陽師, *seifunshi* 声聞師, and *shugen* 修験. In Kai (present-day Yamanashi Prefecture), the settlements of these practitioners were located close to cities and formed a point of contact between this world and the other world. The author opines that the *haru goma* ceremonies traditionally performed in famous medieval gold mine regions like Enzan Ichinose or Aikawa on Sado Island were staged by magicians

akin to *hakase* in order to pacify the gods.

Sakurai Eiji 桜井英治, in “Sanzoku, kaizoku to seki no kigen” 山賊・海賊と関の起源 [Brigands and pirates and the origin of checkpoints], reflects on the nature of medieval society as part of his analysis of the ambiguity of brigands and pirates. During the Warring States period pirates were generally suppressed, but certain bands of pirates operating under the authority of daimyōs like Imagawa, Takeda, and Gohōjō were called *keigoshū* 警固衆 (escorts) and were commissioned to protect ships. This went so far as to become the pirates’ “duty.” The brigands and pirates thus assumed a dual role, threatening travelers on the one hand yet protecting their safety on the other. One explanation of this dual nature is the so-called *hatsuhō* 初穂 (first fruit) theory, which holds that since the pirates were in the transportation business they could collect tolls and trade taxes; anyone who refused to pay would have their cargo forcibly removed. The expropriated goods were then regarded as offerings to the gods of the sea. Sakurai throws doubt on this interpretation, saying that in fact the travelers would pay “protection” in order to avoid having their goods taken by force, and that from such payments tolls and trade taxes may have evolved. This was incorporated into medieval society in the form of economic checkpoints.

Nishioka Yoshifumi 西岡芳文 reflects on the origin and function of *dengaku* 田楽. He says that *dengaku*, which included dance, acrobatics, and a form of Noh, did not evolve from a single source nor develop in a straight line. In the beginning *dengaku* existed parallel to *taue dengaku* 田植田楽 (a form of ceremony that accompanied the transplanting of rice) and was linked with *goryōe*, ceremonies to propitiate the dead. It was later refined by residents of Kyoto and performed by professionals belonging to *dengaku* troupes. By the late Kamakura period *dengaku* Noh was central and had developed into a pure art form. This was disseminated as *watarimono dengaku* 渡物田楽 to temples and shrines, where, the author argues, it was incorporated into the local festivals and thereby returned to its roots.

In his “Chūsei geinō no rekishiteki ichi” 中世芸能の歴史的位置 [The historical position of the medieval performing arts] Fujiwara Yoshiaki 藤原良章 focuses in particular on *dengaku*. He first wonders whether theories of *dengaku* have not been too much influenced by the supposed meaning of the term itself (*dengaku* literally means “rice paddy music”). Observing that the *yasurai* 夜須礼 dances were performed to drive away the gods of pestilence and that the performances were supported by court officials, he hypothesizes that *dengaku* for the same purpose was a kind of urban performing art that came into existence through the amalgamation of several of the courtly performing arts (particularly *tamai* 田舞 dance and *gungaku* 軍楽 music). The *binzasara*, an instrument used in *dengaku*, was also utilized during court rituals. These elements were later joined by *sangaku* 散楽, which was closely linked to the *goryōe* ceremonies. This complex spread to the countryside, where, Fujiwara argues, it continues even today to form the basis of *shinji watarimono* 神事渡物 (performances held at shrine rituals).

Nishiyama Masaru 西山 克, in his “Jigoku o etoku” 地獄を絵解く [To illustrate hell], takes up the paintings known as the *Kumano kanshin jukkaizu* 熊野歎心十界図 and their connection with the *Kumano bikuni* 熊野比丘尼, nuns who traveled about the country preaching and singing. The *Kumano kanshin jukkaizu* is an adaptation of the *Kanrozu* 甘露図, a Korean Buddhist painting from the middle Li period. The focus of the narrative explaining the picture is not, as has been thought so far, the “slope of aging,” but rather the legend about Mokuren 目蓮 saving his mother. The point of the explanation is thus, according to Nishiyama, the purification of hungry spirits. There are no examples of the *Kanrozu* in Korea that predate Toyotomi Hideyoshi’s Korean invasion. Nishiyama thinks, therefore, that the *Kanrozu* was brought back for the purpose of consoling the spirits of dead Korean soldiers. The *Kumano bikuni* then used this picture to explain heaven, hell, and the rest of the six Buddhist paths, thus contributing to the creation of the *Kumano kanshin jukkaizu*, which taught that the redemption of such spirits was possible only through the ceremony for purifying hungry spirits.

A craftsman’s use of natural materials when pursuing his activities links him with the

deities, lending a divine inspiration to his work. And because his products become commodities he can be controlled by the government authorities. The status and craft of the artisan as he confronts nature and the authorities is, in the words of this volume's editor, his social history. And this gives rise to a new image of history.

The artisans' position with regard to nature makes the abilities of religious specialists like the *hakase* and the *Kumano bikuni* indispensable. The artisans' position with regard to the authorities meant, however, that from Kamakura times they became increasingly separated from the control of nature (and from their relationship with the gods) as they moved into urban areas.

To date five volumes of the "Examining the Middle Ages" series have been published, and more are to follow. Though collections of individual articles, they can be read like ordinary books. I hope that other readers will find the same pleasure that I did in discovering the "new image of history" offered by this valuable series.

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CLARK, SCOTT. *Japan: A View from the Bath*. University of Hawaii Press, 1994. vii + 154 pages. Diagrams, b/w photographs, bibliography, index. Cloth US\$36.00; ISBN 0-8248-1615-3. Paper US\$18.00; ISBN 0-8248-1657-9.

Last summer I accompanied a group of volunteer workers from Japan, the U.S.A., and Canada to the countryside of Northeast Thailand. At the end of a hard day's labor under the relentless tropical sun the American, Canadian, and Thai workers either dived into a nearby pond or staggered to the bathhouse (basically a trough filled with cool water) to splash away the heat and dirt of the day's toil. The Japanese, however, busied themselves constructing a primitive bath out of a fifty-gallon steel drum. They lit a roaring fire underneath, brought the water to a near-scalding temperature, then took turns climbing happily in. The other workers stood shaking their heads in disbelief. Why, they asked the Japanese, would you want to sit in a barrel of boiling water after a day of sweating in the scorching sun? The Japanese workers simply answered, "We can relax and feel clean." When the other workers suggested that a cool-water bath might be just as relaxing and cleansing in such a hot climate, the Japanese workers acted as though they had never heard such nonsense. The discussion continued with lots of good-natured joking well into the night over glasses of beer and whiskey. Neither side convinced the other.

A Japanese student of mine once submitted an essay entitled "My Three Favorite Things," in which he named the bath (*ofuro*) as his first choice:

When you come back home after your day's work or study, maybe you feel tired and need to take your fatigue off. The bathroom can do it. It takes off your physical dirty and your spiritual dirty. I like the bathroom. When I am in the bathroom, I wash my day's fatigue off, and think of the events that happened that day, reflect on my conduct simultaneously. It's one of my precious times. (Nanzan University student, 1994)

Bathing in Japan has less to do with the physical cleansing of dirt than with the processes of spiritual and emotional purification, cultural identity, and — in the case of public baths and hot springs — socialization. In *Japan: A View from the Bath*, Scott Clark explains the history, culture, and technological development of just about every form of bathing that has ever existed in Japan. It is, indeed, a daunting task.

Mr. Clark has done his library research well — the bibliography contains over three pages of works consulted. Consequently the book works best as a historical presentation of