> when the dismemberment or mutilation of physical parts is absent from all the above tales of geographically and ethnically diverse regions, what could be a valid interpretation answerable to the two uniquely missing elements in nine tales and story-patterns? My interpretation is: The absence of the elements Mutilation and Restoration means that the Hero or Heroine has already undergone an initiation rite (not narrated in the individual pieces presented) — there is no need to stress and present the initiatory aspect(s) of the shaman profession in these tales. The contents of these tales represent the shaman or shamaness performing skills in his or her professional career.

Is Yen not aware of the fact that her valiant effort to make use of the interpretation model of Eliade brings her far away from all probability? Interpreting the Manchu tale (193) that explicitly deals with a shamaness in such a way may be acceptable, but in no other text in the book does something or somebody shaman-like appear. Folktale study of this kind reminds me of the "mythosophic" analyses of 150 years ago, that considerably deteriorated the credibility of folkloristics among other scholars.

One more example of these strange parallels. On page 209 Yen deals with the motif in which the hero in the tales of type AT 613 (as also in the type AT 461, "Three Hairs from the Devil's Beard," not at all related to AT 613) learns how to create a spring in an arid area. This Yen compares with the technique of dowsing and connects it with the fact that "shamanic practices arose when digging wells" in the areas where the three tales, containing this motif, were collected (namely, Limousin [!], South China, and Korea) because in these areas "water is scarce." Any book about dowsing could have told the author that the method is also known in countries where there is a lot of water.

It is a very welcome trend that scholars have begun to write comparative studies of folktales in East Asia and also to compare them with tales from other areas, both East and West. Here an immense field of research opens up. It is important, however, that scholars not let their imagination run riot, but rely on theorists who are proper folklorists.

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BRAZELL, KAREN, Editor. *Traditional Japanese Theater: An Anthology of Plays.* New York, Columbia University Press, 1998. xiv + 562 pages. Illustrations, glossary, bibliography. Hardcover US$57.00/£39.95; ISBN 0-231-10872-9.

Recent books in English on traditional Japanese theater—noh, kyōgen, kabuki, and puppet drama—have provided interested readers with more detailed and specific information than ever before on the history of its development, aspects of performance and, of course, translations of plays. *Traditional Japanese Theater,* as the title suggests, attempts to bring together all of these in one convenient volume that may best be described as a teaching anthology. It contains translations of twenty-nine plays (in whole or in part) by seventeen translators, and five separate essays. The book is ideal for the informed general reader and as a general textbook for undergraduate courses on Japanese theater. Even academic nonspecialists will find here much of value.

The anthology is divided into three parts, each of which begins with an explanatory

essay. Part 1, for example, begins with "An Introduction to Traditional Japanese Theater," which contains Brazell's well-written and compact history of the principal theatrical forms, followed by her discussion of various aspects of the texts and performance. This part of her "Introduction," albeit brief, also contains some useful comparisons between the forms and links to cultural contexts under the headings of "The Text Speaks Itself," "Flexibility of Time and Space," "Centrality of Form," "Theatricalization of the Mechanics of Theater," and "Intensity of Intertextuality." Part 1 then introduces plays from the four major forms represented—*Kamo* (noh), *Kaminari* (kyōgen), a scene from *Narukami Fudō Kitayama zakura* (kabuki) and two scenes from *Sugawara denjū tenarai kagami* (puppet)—all dealing with a common figure, the thunder god (*ikazuchi*).

Part 2, "The Noh and Kyogen Theaters," begins with an essay that focuses on the performance aspects of these two forms. Included here are six noh plays (*Atsumori, Izutsu, Miidera, Shunkan, Dōjōji, and Yamamba*) and seven kyōgen plays (*Futari daimyō, Busu, Kusabira, Kagyū, Kamabara, Kanaoka, and Semi*).

Part 3, "The Puppet and Kabuki Theaters," also has its own introduction on "Elements of Performance." The selection of puppet plays consists of Act 2 of *Kokusen'ya kassen* ("The Battles of Coxinga"), a slightly abridged version of *Shinjū Ten no Amijima* ("The Love Suicides at Amijima"), and scenes from *Yoshitsune Sembonzakura* and *Chūshingura.* Scenes from the kabuki plays *Heike nyōgo no shima* ("Shunkan on Devil Island"), *Ichinotani futaba gunki* ("Suma Bay"), *Tōkaidō Yotsuya kaidan* ("Yotsuya Ghost Stories"), *Benten Kozō* ("The Mamamatsu-ya Scene") and *Musume Dōjōji* ("A Maiden at Dōjōji") conclude the anthology.

If the noh/kyōgen and puppet/kabuki plays stand for the "major" traditions, one virtue of the anthology is the inclusion of material on the "minor" ones. That is, Part 2 concludes with a brief account of "Other Performance Traditions" (*Kurokawa noh, Mibu kyōgen,* and *kowaka-mai*) and James T. Araki's translation of the *kowaka* version of the Atsumori story; furthermore, Part 3 includes a short essay on "The Awaji Tradition" by Jane Marie Law and her translations of two Awaji puppet plays. Both essays remind the reader of the importance of the folk origins and formative stages of the theatrical forms represented by the "major" traditions.

The book also has a useful and comprehensive "Glossary of Theatrical Terminology" made all the more useful with its references to illustrations and photographs in the text.

One can, of course, always quibble about the selection of plays, especially if a favorite is missing. Brazell's choices here were limited in part by plays already available in translation and her own decision to emphasize "the more literary plays" (xii). It is clear, moreover, that the selections were made so that certain themes, locations, and characters would reappear for the reader in different kinds of plays written centuries apart, an important aspect of traditional Japanese theater that readers should be made aware of.

While it is instructive to show how different playwrights at different moments in Japanese history treated the same or similar subject matter, Brazell also discusses in her Preface the difficulties of translation and the different approaches and styles of the translators who contributed to the book. She argues that "the more plays by different translators one reads, the better idea one will have of what occurs on stage" (xii). This points to my only criticism. That is, with the noh plays, at least, there are available different translations of the same plays, and though the books and journals in which these and translations of other plays appear are listed in the bibliography, it would have helped readers interested in comparing translations of particular plays in the book with others to cite those other translations. Such comparisons as a classroom exercise would help students see the problems Brazell mentions. In that respect, she could have offered by way of example, say, the same passage from her translation of a passage from *Atsumori* and others done by Royall Tyler and Arthur Waley.

The emphasis on the performance dimension of Japanese theater is certainly another of the anthology's virtues, but also, in my view, a (small) vice for two reasons: the descriptions of what the actors are doing at a given moment in a play are at times not very helpful and, again at times, a distraction, interlaced as they are with the words of the text. This has become a convention in translations of Japanese plays; the problem is that no amount of description can adequately describe what happens on stage, what it looks or sounds like—so how much is too much? The inclusion of photographs along with the descriptions helps; I applaud the intent and effort, but since there is no substitute for being there, I would have preferred a little less in the way of stage directions, or perhaps a different formatting. On the whole, however, the anthology is a notable achievement and especially welcome for those who teach courses in Japanese theater.

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BROWNLEE, JOHN S. *Japanese Historians and the National Myths, 1600–1945: The Age of the Gods and Emperor Jinmu.* Tokyo: University of Tokyo Press, 1997. ix +256 pages. Bibliography, index. Cloth, ¥8,000; ISBN 4-13-027031-1.

Historians research the past wearing the spectacles of their values and hats that have labels on them such as teacher, scholar, and advocate. When they write to describe and explain the past on the basis of the data they have collected and in accordance with their perceived role, they never sit in a vacuum. They are influenced by a number of factors, some of which they are conscious of, some of which they are not.

One factor that has long been particularly influential among Japanese historians is the interpretation of the myths in the *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki,* two texts written in the early eighth century that describe *inter alia* the origins of Japan as being created by deities, and the imperial family as being founded by the Sun Goddess, Amaterasu. Brownlee, in the book under review, shows the influence of these creation myths in Japanese historiography by examining "how Japanese historians between 1600 and 1945 dealt with the ancient myths of their origins as a people and of the imperial house" (3). His purpose, he states, "is to explain not the origins of Japan but the thought of the historians who dealt with those origins" (12). Throughout the book, Brownlee introduces some of the more important events and circumstances in the lives of influential historians, and analyzes their scholarship in relation to the national myths. By the end of the book one point is overtly obvious: the political implications of the founding myths had a profound effect on how the major historians throughout the modern period up to the end of World War II wrote on the origins of Japan. The fact that Japanese historians were influenced by myths that had political implications will not shock most readers, but Brownlee's demonstration of how it influenced different historians and the extent to which many publicly supported the myths while privately doubting them may be a surprise to many.

In the first part of this two-part book, Brownlee introduces in chronological order key historians of the Tokugawa period (1600–1868), including Hayashi Razan, Arai Hakuseki, Yamagata Bantō, Date Chihiro, Motoori Norinaga, *et alii.* He identifies two mainstream approaches to history—Confucian (particularly Neo-Confucian) and National Learning (*kokugaku*)—and shows how, on the basis of their different historical methods and theories, they formulated different interpretations of the founding myths. He claims that throughout