

guages are supposed to be purely “accidental.” One of the essays focuses on issues related to Ainu language revitalization, and emphasizes the fact that although the Ainu language has been considered a dying language since the time it was first studied by linguists, the Ainu language is alive and well.

The authors of the essays throughout the book approach the Ainu as having a “living culture” that has exhibited much creativity. This is a fresh and highly welcomed approach, considering the fact that research on the Ainu has persistently viewed them as extinct, or almost extinct, groups of people. Although the majority of the articles in this volume deal with some aspects of Ainu “living culture,” *Ainu: Spirit of a Northern People* stands as a testimony to previous researchers’ preoccupation with the preservation of the customs of “a dying people,” and to their analyses of the Ainu—particularly their ways and belief system(s)—as primitive, retarded, marginalized and peripheral, characterizations which were legitimized by the use of the term “traditional.” Ethnocentric views, preoccupation with whatever theory was on the agenda, intellectual and political attempts to try to control the direction of research, and the dismissal of the knowledge and arguments of the Ainu if they differed from theories cherished by the scientists are all factors that resulted in innumerable lost opportunities to gain insight into the former ways and lives of the Ainu. Yet, *Ainu: Spirit of a Northern People* stands also as a testimony to the fact that scientists change their perspectives, reconsider their views, and embrace alternative perceptions and interpretations of the material and the people they are working with. In this volume, different from many earlier studies of the Ainu, the Ainu voices are loud and clear, and the ethnocentrism of previous historical and ethnographic presentations is clearly pointed out. It is satisfying to know that the pioneering thoughts that I introduced some fifteen years ago, shared then by only a handful of researchers, have now become mainstream.

Ainu: Spirit of a Northern People is a book I wish I had had access to in the middle of the 1980s when I was working with the Hokkaido Ainu. I find the book a valuable asset to the body of scholarly literature on the Ainu, and I strongly recommend it.

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JOSEF KREINER, Editor. *Sources of Ryūkyūan History and Culture in European Collections*. Monographien aus dem Deutschen Institut für Japanstudien der Philipp-Franz-von-Siebold-Stiftung, Band 13. Munich: iudicium verlag, 1996. 396 pages. Cloth DM 108. ISBN 3-89129-493-X.

This anthology contains the papers given at the international symposium “Sources of Ryūkyūan History and Culture in Europe,” which took place in October 1994 at a meeting of the European Association of Japanese Resource Specialists (EAJRS) in Bonn. The papers published in this book can be classified into four groups:

1. History of the Ryūkyūs
2. Studies on the European reception of Ryūkyūan material and immaterial culture
3. Studies on the technology and history of material culture
4. Data about the existing collections in Europe, America, and Japan, including bibliographic data of publications about individual objects and the culture of the Ryūkyūs in general

In the first part the editor delineates the important role the Ryūkyūs played as a merchant state in the worldwide trading network of the southern silk road between the sixteenth and the nineteenth centuries. It was through this trading network that the first information about the Ryūkyū Kingdom reached Europe. The prominent Ryūkyūan historian Takara Kurayoshi clarifies the role of the kingdom as a trading state, which made extensive use of the vast network of the Chinese exiled all over Southeast Asia during and after the Ming period.

The largest part of the book is made up of individual studies on various aspects of certain collections in European countries: Ken Vos (the Netherlands), Peter Pantzer (Germany and Austria), Patrick Beillevaire (France), Yu-Ying Brown (Great Britain), Alexander Kabanoff (Russia), and Arne Røkkum (Norway) analyze the various collections, and tell the stories of the different ways knowledge on the Ryūkyūs and their material culture reached Europe. Clearly, before the end of the nineteenth century, information on the Ryūkyūs was based mainly on translations from Chinese and Japanese sources, such as those produced by von Siebold during his stay in Nagasaki or by missionaries of the Societas Jesu in Peking (for more on this, see the chapters by Pantzer, Beillevaire, and Kabanoff). One of the earliest Western visitors to the islands was Basil Hall, who reached the Ryūkyūs at the beginning of the nineteenth century, but Vos reminds us of the difficulties Western visitors had in contacting the native population. Ryūkyūan artifacts, however, first reached Europe in the 1850s. And what is more, not all of them were acquired in the place of their origin due to the fact that Ryūkyūan textiles and lacquer goods were available also on the main Japanese islands, especially after 1873 when the Ryūkyū Kingdom was incorporated into the Japanese empire.

Yu-Ying Brown's chapter describes, on the basis of the collections in British museums, different groups of material culture (textiles, lacquer goods, pottery, written sources, and painting). In contrast, Kabanoff's paper is all about a rather unique collection in Russia of immaterial culture: namely, phonetic recordings of myths of the Miyako Islands made during the 1920s. The only systematic collection of Ryūkyūan artifacts is that of the Museum für Völkerkunde in Berlin, which was compiled by the State of Prussia towards the end of the nineteenth century. The collections of ethnologists, such as Cornelius Ouwehand, Arne Røkkum, and Josef Kreiner are also taken into account. It is impossible, however, to assess just how many items remain hidden in Chinese and Japanese collections of artifacts, which still need to be identified as Ryūkyūan.

Yokoyama Manabu in his paper proposes to reclassify historical documents. He claims that they should no longer be treated as artifacts classified according to their tangible properties, but instead should be classified according to their content by author and target group. By doing so, folklorists and ethnologists may gain access to a vast amount of historical material both from within and without Ryūkyūan culture.

Arne Røkkum, of the Museum for Ethnology in Oslo, reflects on methods of exhibition. He argues that the artifacts should be arranged, as much as possible, to illustrate their functions in their society of origin. This would open up ethnology as a theoretical basis for folklore studies, which is usually more concerned with the practical aspects of a certain culture.

The two papers belonging to the third group mentioned above deal with two different groups of artifacts. As a Japanese specialist on lacquerware, Arakawa Hirokazu tries to create a cultural history of Ryūkyūan lacquerware based on a comparison between the different techniques used at various periods of time. The Okinawan scholar Shukumine Kyōko describes the textile collection of the Museum für Völkerkunde in Berlin.

The last third of the volume is a collection of data. In addition to Patrick Beillevaire's bibliography of books and articles in French on the archipelago, we find a report by Josef Kreiner on the results of three large-scale projects to document the current collections of Ryūkyūan artifacts in 150 museums all over Europe, the United States, and Japan. Besides

the three detailed lists of objects from Europe and the United States, statistical data is provided on the distribution of artifacts in European countries, and the distribution of different groups of artifacts according to their region of origin.

Since the Ryūkyū Kingdom was incorporated into the Japanese state as Okinawa Prefecture more than one hundred years ago, the traditional culture of the region has steadily declined. The Pacific War and the Occupation following the war both inflicted irreparable damage on the traditional culture. Therefore, the collections presented here acquire special importance as they provide some rare illustrative material for the study of traditional culture, which is no longer to be found in the original sites. Thus, although this volume is not so much about Ryūkyūan folklore per se, it offers important information on where to find certain artifacts in Europe and the United States, and introduces less well-known literature in French. The records of the Russian pioneer Nikolai Nevsky, and the detailed documentation of library resources such as the records of Ryūkyūan music in Britain, are probably for folklorists the most interesting parts of this book, which otherwise consists largely of quite theoretical papers.

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BÄCKER, JÖRG, Editor. *Mandschurische Göttinnen und iranische Teufel. Die Mandschu-Weltentstehungsmythen als Kultursynthesen*. Shamanica Manchurica Collecta 4. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 1997. 157 pages. Illustrations, bibliography, index. Paper, n. p.; ISBN 3-447-03934-5. (In German)

Barely anything was known about the literature of the Manchu until about twenty years ago. Only the tale of the Nišan Shamaness, and the legend of the birth and feats of Bukōri Ōngson, the ancestor of the imperial Aisin-Gioro clan, were known. We were also aware of the epic Teptalin that once existed but is now missing. At the beginning of the 1980s this situation changed as a result of a reappraisal of the Qing dynasty by the People's Republic of China that, consequently, opened new possibilities of access to the rich Manchurian materials. Since then, Manchu studies has developed in such a way that the earlier opinion that Manchu studies is a shadowy field has to be revised.

Today the field is now so large that it is difficult even to assess the varieties of international research in Manchu studies. The sudden increase in the number of specialized publications makes it difficult even for the specialist scholar to keep abreast of all the developments. The fact that the Manchu alphabet is sometimes used in scientific articles suggests