

BOOK REVIEWS

Cultural Affairs Bureau: Handbook for Research and Collection of Folk Material. Tokyo, Dai-ichi Hôki Shuppan, 1970, 15th printing, 133 pp.
文化庁編集・民俗資料調査収集の手びき

Moriguchi Tari: Iwate. Japanese Folklore, Vol. 3. Tokyo, Dai-ichi Hôki Shuppan, 1971, 290 pp. ¥800.
森口多里・岩手「日本の民俗 3」

Takeda Akira: Kagawa. Japanese Folklore, Vol. 37. Tokyo, Dai-ichi Hôki Shuppan, 1971, 268 pp. ¥800.
武田明・香川「日本の民俗 37」

There are so many "booms" in Japan today. Just the mention of that word causes you to smile, I'm sure. A boom is often the answer to an unconscious vacuum created more or less by chance by a certain merchandise. But it can also be triggered by a sudden awareness among a rather large part of the population that they "need" something for their very existence. They feel that they must have this article if they wish to remain healthy or if they feel they may lose something which up to very recently had been an integral part of their everyday life.

Looking through the new publications in Japan, one cannot help but notice the increasing number of reprints and new works in the field of folklore. This seems to be the sign of an increasing awareness, not only among scholars but also among the general public, of traditional values and that these values should be preserved. In recent years "city civilization" has intruded into even the remote villages of Japan via the mass-media and through seasonal employment in the big cities. These factors foster accelerated cultural changes in so-far very traditional worlds. In order to save and preserve what is worthwhile, the Cultural Affairs Bureau of the Government has started an urgent program of research in 1962. This was the first time such a centrally planned research was launched in Japan. In every prefecture about 30 places of interest were selected and then systematically researched, following a basic scheme published by the Agency. This program was finished in 1964. From the next year on, the Government Bureau provided subsidies for further and more precise research in the same direction.

In the same year, 1965, the "Handbook for the Collection and Research of Folk Material" was published under the authority of the Cultural Affairs Bureau. In 1970 this small volume appeared in its 15th printing. The first chapter defines what can be considered as folk material and why this material should be preserved. Chapter two consists of eleven lists in total, each taking up a thematic unit and each divided into two columns, one listing non-material objects (*mukei no minzoku shiryô* 無形の民俗資料), the other material objects (*yûkei no minzoku shiryô* 有形の民俗資料). These eleven thematic units are as follows: 1) clothing, food, dwelling. 2) Products and ways of making them.

3) Traffic, transportation, transmission of news. 4) Markets, trade. 5) Social life. 6) Beliefs. 7) Folk wisdom and knowledge. 8) Arts, entertainment, games. 9) Life cycle. 10) Annual events. 11) Oral traditions. The first chapter gives a short introduction into research methods and some useful hints on how to select an appropriate area, how to take notes and how to arrange and evaluate these notes. Then it gives detailed advice as to what to pay special attention to, following again the eleven thematic units. The next paragraph takes up the problem of how to register and preserve the objects found. As an illustration, several samples of registration cards and systems are explained. Furthermore, a long list of main research objects in each prefecture is added. And finally one finds the law of 1950 concerning the preservation of cultural material. A short annotated bibliography with the most important serial publications and other works useful for further research and reference is appended at the end.

Why so many words about such a small booklet? The reason is because a new series is following exactly the same system. The general title of this series of 47 volumes is *Japanese Folklore*. Each volume takes up one prefecture, including Okinawa, and uses the name of the respective prefecture as its title. The new series has just started, with two volumes already published. It is planned for publication over a period of something more than two years. Its main purpose is not so much the presentation of scholarly research as it is to answer the interests of a wide public concerned about the rapid vanishing of old traditions. That's why one does not find much detailed discussion, although the authors of the first two volumes published are experts in their respective prefectures. With this general purpose in mind, it is somehow tiresome to read through a quite detailed discussion of the *Oshirasama* and their appearance in Iwate Prefecture, although most other topics in the same volume are treated in a rather general way. It is in this same volume that one would rather appreciate some more information about culture influences and exchanges with neighboring prefectures. This would have been an introduction as illuminating as the one for the volume on Kagawa Prefecture.

The two volumes are interesting and informative accounts of folk traditions in their respective prefectures. But in spite of this the prefectures, as they are now, do not seem to be a working unit of classification for this kind of material. To overcome that handicap to some degree, more cross references to other prefectures or maps showing the expansion of an important phenomenon might have been useful. Coordination beyond a mere basic outline would have been an advantage and produced a more promising series. A particular problem seems to be presented in the last chapter on oral traditions. Just the description of how and when stories are told and a list of their most frequent subjects is a far cry from the vivid impression just one single good example would make. The volume on Kagawa Prefecture combines both factors in a pleasant manner.

Besides the nine pages of photographs at the beginning of each volume, the text is very well illustrated with photographs or sketches. There is a glossary of terms in each volume but one might have difficulties finding what one is looking for if he does not know the local expression listed there. The reader will find a bibliography of related publications. He will also find lists of articles designated as folk material either by the State Government or the Prefectural Government, as well as very brief descriptions of so-called non-material cultural treasures (*mukei bunkazai* 無形文化財) and important collections.

All the books mentioned above are written in Japanese, but probably with the exception of local expressions they are not too difficult to understand. Remaining difficulties are easily overcome with the help of the illustrations.

Peter Knecht

Cheou-Kang Sié: *A Butterfly's Dream and Other Chinese Tales*. Paintings by Chi Kang. Charles E. Tuttle Company, Rutland, Vermont & Tokyo, Japan, 1970. 92 pp. ¥1,350, \$3.75.

This selection contains twelve tales, each one illustrated with a painting in the classic Chinese style. The author is a well known man of letters. From the time honored treasure-house of Chinese tales he picks out a handful and re-tells them, the selection being such that all main and characteristic social strata and walks of life are featured with their typical life values and wisdom. The illustrator is an outstanding classicist of our times. As cultivated Chinese both the story-teller and the illustrator speak to us on Chinese civilization from inside as only co-owners of that civilization can do. The author and the publisher do not address themselves to the scholarly folklorists, instead they want to expose readers in general to the charm of Chinese narrative art. They are thus provoking sympathy for the Chinese people at a time when forces are at work which want to separate peoples with political and ideological barricades. The world of folktales belongs to all of us, we need only keys to open the doors through the language barriers. The present book is one of such keys given us by a competent interpreter.

M.E.

On Food Culture Research. Ethnographia Scandinavica. A Journal for Nordic Ethnology. (A successor to *Folk-Liv*, published by Nordiska Museet, Lund, Sweden. Started by Sigurd Erixon (†1968) in 1937.)

"All the articles in this volume concentrate on the theme ethnogastronomy and comprise the lectures at the First International Symposium for Ethnological Food Research in Lund, 1970. In future, however, it is intended that the journal will not be bound to particular themes" (Editorial). The editor of the new journal is Nils-Arvid Bringéus, Lund.

In folklife research in western countries, customs concerning food have always been given some attention. We may refer for instance to the standard work by Richard Weiss, *Volkskunde der Schweiz*; in current journals too, we occasionally find papers on this sector of folklife. However, as the papers read at the Lund symposium also suggest, ethnological food-customs-research in Europe and in the United States has still to improve its theoretical orientation and systematisation. Prof. Günter Wiegelmann of Mainz wrote the first paper on the topic "Was ist der spezielle Aspekt der ethnologischen Nahrungsforschung?" (What is the specific aspect of ethnological food research?) (pp. 6-16). He finds that the ethnologist considers food as a "Kulturgut" (a good or achievement of culture). Culture always works on material objects and