

certainly not always a clear distinction between those two worlds as far as details are concerned, but it is clear enough that they have to be seen as two different worlds. But Stanek does not distinguish and rather tends to see the "other world" as being identical with the "world of the dead." By doing so he forgoes the possibility of a correct interpretation of a story like the one mentioned.

This is enough of details. In spite of a number of good points the book is a mixture of items varying rather heavily in value and so one comes away with the impression that the author could not decide whether to write a story book or a documentation of stories.

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John Z'graggen

Divine Word Institute

Madang, Papua New Guinea

JAPAN

KELSEY, W. MICHAEL. *Konjaku Monogatari-shū*. (Twayne's World Authors Series 621) Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1982. x+174 pp. Cloth US \$18.95, ISBN 0-8057-6463-1.

Nobody is sure who wrote *Konjaku Monogatari-shū* 今昔物語集 ("A Collection of Tales of Long Ago"), but Twayne has rightly included it in its World Authors Series on the strength of the work's importance. *Konjaku* is an enormous collection of *setsuwa* 説話, the Japanese term for a generally short narrative which recounts an intriguing incident or anecdote, and which often (as in the present work) comments briefly on the story in order to make an edifying point. *Konjaku* was compiled about 1100. It is not the earliest *setsuwa* collection, but its 1039 surviving stories (originally there must have been about 1100), and the care with which these stories are organized, make the collection outstanding both in bulk and in quality. Thus *Konjaku Monogatari-shū* may be seen as the fountainhead of a great outpouring of *setsuwa* collections which appeared in the three succeeding centuries and which continue even now to be of interest to folklorists, historians and scholars of literature.

Michael Kelsey has written a useful introduction to *Konjaku*. His book, like others in the same series, is addressed less to specialists than to interested readers outside its own field, but only another seasoned student of *Konjaku* would learn nothing new from it. Kelsey's long familiarity with Japanese scholarship on *Konjaku* comes through clearly. On the overall character of the work Kelsey writes, "*Konjaku Monogatari-shū* is made primarily for the education and salvation of its readers, but at the same time it shares many traits with those collections intended for entertainment" (p. 99). In other words, and as Kelsey's study shows, *Konjaku* has a serious purpose, but also provides amusing reading.

Kelsey has divided his exposition of *Konjaku* into five chapters. The first, "The Compiler and His Times," briefly describes the historical setting of the work and then discusses authorship. The major candidates are the courtier Minamoto Takakuni (d. 1077) and the monk Kakuju of Todaiji in Nara. No conclusive case can be made for either, however, and Kelsey himself prefers to think that *Konjaku* was compiled and written by a Tendai monk on Mt. Hiei (p. 17).

Chapter 2, "*Konjaku Monogatari-shū* in the *Setsuwa* Tradition," starts by defining and discussing the *setsuwa* genre. *Setsuwa* are not exactly folktales (the stories in *Konjaku* are precisely situated and presented as historically true), and as Kelsey notes, they are sometimes said to contain little myth. Kelsey contests this proposition by selecting stories about serpents from *Konjaku* and from earlier literature, and by showing their mythical dimensions. Many other themes present in *Konjaku* could have been used to make the point equally well: *Konjaku* is rich in the material of myth and folklore. This second chapter closes with an analytical discussion of other *setsuwa* collections particularly related to *Konjaku*.

Chapter 3, "The Compiler's Vision," treats the sources and the organization of *Konjaku*. There are four major subdivisions of the work: tales about India, tales about China, Japanese Buddhist tales and Japanese secular tales. (Thus *Konjaku* covers what the Japanese then understood conventionally to be the whole world.) Kelsey outlines each section, then translates and discusses an example from each. He also sets forth the pattern discerned in all four sections by such scholars as Kunisaki Fumimaro: an initial sequence of tales with the theme of "history," a second with the theme of "praise," and a third of a particularly didactic character. Given the size of *Konjaku* and the diverse nature of its material, this threefold division of each section is not easy to spot. In fact as one would expect, *Konjaku* is not a thoroughly coherent whole. However it is probably as highly organized as any collection of its kind could be, and that is one of its remarkable features.

Chapter 4, "*Konjaku Monogatari-shū* in Japanese Literature," discusses the position of *Konjaku* in the literature of the Heian, medieval and modern periods. It is in the last chapter, "A Critical Overview," that Kelsey deals with a further aspect of the organization of *Konjaku*: the "linking" technique by which long sequences of tales in each section are linked to each other not only by general subject matter but by specific themes and ideas. Reading *Konjaku* is a little like paddling easily down a river. While the scenery may now and again change abruptly, usually the landscape changes slowly and smoothly. One tale melts into another, as the poems in the classical Japanese poetic anthologies do too, in ways which Kelsey describes, and illustrates as well with two more translated tales. The book concludes with notes, a selected bibliography and an index.

Royall Tyler
The University of Oslo

RATHBUN, WILLIAM J. *Yō no Bi. The Beauty of Japanese Folk Art*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1983. 144 pp., 84 illustrations, 8 in color, map, bibliography, index. Paper US \$17.95 ISBN 0-295-96076-0

Yō no Bi, which means the beauty of function, is a catalogue prepared by William Rathbun, Curator of Japanese Art at the Seattle Art Museum, for an exhibition of