

The Dégh article was especially disappointing, for it contains nothing that Dégh—easily one of the most brilliant folklorists in the world today—has not already said before, in more detailed form. The articles on Bulgaria offer a history of the development of folklore studies in that country, and are very vague, in contrast to the highly concrete nature of the works they cite.

So one must wonder if anyone will really be “introduced” to the “work” of various folklorists through this generalized approach. It seems to me that inclusion of more substantial, concrete studies would be a far better introduction, and that a person who read the articles here as a scholar “outside our discipline” might come to the conclusion that folklorists are a fuzzy bunch indeed, who avoid specific studies of concrete issues (excepting the articles by Wildhaber, Tucker and Milspaw, of course). It is easy enough to second guess, of course, and I do not mean to imply that the journal is not worthwhile. It is handsomely done and does offer one at least a glimpse into some unfamiliar worlds.

One of those “unfamiliar worlds” that seems to be lacking, however, is Asia. The editor does not say whether she intends to focus on a different country or part of the world in each issue, or give any indication of what future issues might look like, but it is to be hoped that she will begin to include scholars from India, China and Japan, as well as other parts of Asia. Folklore is a more thriving discipline here in Japan, for example, than it is in virtually any Western country, and a journal such as this could go a long way toward alerting the rest of the world to what is going on here.

Unfortunately, one has the feeling that “international” is defined much as it seems to be in the “International Folklore Bibliography” discussed in the journal, as dealing with America, Europe and the Slavic states. The first and second worlds, in a word, are well represented, but the third world remains out in the cold. Perhaps this is an oversight that will be corrected with subsequent issues; at least we can only hope so, for, if nothing else, such approaches rob the word “international” of any meaning at all.

It is regrettable, then, that the first issue of this new journal cannot be greeted with more enthusiasm, but it is also premature to make hasty judgments on the basis of one volume alone. Certainly the promise is there, and the effort is to be commended, and we can but await the next issue with hopes that it will provide more specific articles on a wider area of the world.

NOTE:

1. For information about subscriptions and where to order see announcement in AFS XLI, 1982, p. 122.

W. Michael Kelsey
Nanzan University, Nagoya

IWAI HIROMI 岩井宏美, Editor. *Shinsen, kami to hito to no kyōen* 神饌. 神と人との饗宴 [Offerings. Feasts for Gods and Humans]. Kyōto: Dōhōsha, 1981. 260 pp. Illustrations in color and black/white. ¥6,800. ISBN 4-8104-0240-1.

Food and its historical and cultural implications first attracted the interest of folklorists quite some time ago. Considering this fact the book under review does not open a new topic, being also about food and the way it is prepared and used. Its special

interest, though, lies in the fact that it considers food that in the first place is prepared for the gods and only then shared by those who prepared it, the human beings.

Iwai and his collaborators focus on forty-three *matsuri* or religious festivals of central Japan, or to be more precise, of an area that centers around Nara, Kyoto and Osaka. We are therefore not surprised to find a number of shrines anyone familiar at all with Japanese history, literature or folklore has come across many times. The authors, however, are not so much concerned with the festivals as such as with a very special aspect of them, namely the food offerings that are made during these festivals. Even if one notices only the photographs that illustrate this book, one cannot but be amazed and struck by the beauty and variety of forms as well as by the large variety of vegetarian and animal food that is offered to the gods. These illustrations alone make it possible to appreciate the importance of form, including the tradition that produces it again year after year, and the value that is attached to certain types of food one rarely, if ever, finds on a modern dinner table. I fully agree with Iwai that a study like this can provide new ground to rethink the thesis that Japanese culture is mainly the product of rice cultivation. No doubt rice plays an important role in all of the festivals introduced here, but it becomes quite clear that it is a single role among others. We are quite clearly reminded that we ought to think seriously about the meaning of the other things that are so carefully prepared in these offerings.

In his concluding remarks Iwai points out that these offerings give us a glimpse at what constituted an important part of life in old Japan. He stresses that people did not make an effort to assemble curious delicacies from the sea, the fields and the mountains, but rather offered what they were using as their daily food. It is almost ironical in this respect, to learn that in some cases people now have to make great efforts, at times even by importing some of the needed items, to secure all the food that is to go into an appropriate preparation of the offerings. Iwai thinks that the elaborately beautiful forms into which the offerings are assembled are not the result of an intentional effort to make the offerings into something beautiful for the occasion, but rather that these forms are those which were most appreciated by the people when preparing and assorting their own food. Even if we grant that the beauty of arrangement in the preparation of food can come close to a work of art that one is reluctant to destroy by such a profane activity as an ordinary meal, I think that the author does not prove his point in this respect. Apart from a few remarks in the main body hardly any effort is made to show that these forms were, in fact, nothing but the most liked ones. If these were merely the most commonly appreciated forms, why did former generations of villagers make special efforts to put down in writing exactly all the small steps and meticulous intricacies that have to be followed in the construction of some of these forms of such an inobtrusive beauty?

With the exception of the concluding remarks the book does not offer a documented argument concerning any of the points it raises. What it does offer, however, are detailed descriptions and suggestions based on the observation of certain facts, and I think that the sheer amount of factual material that has been gathered here should be incentive enough to consider such offerings closely and to think about what they have to tell us, not only about religious tradition, but also about traditions of everyday life. Yet we should be careful not to draw fast conclusions at this stage, because the material treated here covers mainly rituals and areas that are characterized by the existence of a *miyaza*, a tightly organized and in many cases more or less secret cult organization that does not exist equally all over Japan. Practically all the examples that are introduced in this volume show the imprint of this organization, although in several cases its vigor has been lost to a considerable degree. This, in fact, turns

out to be one of the interesting by-products of this book, already rich in suggestion. The authors try to show here and there, at least along general lines, the main changes in the cult organization and how these affect not only what is offered in what form, but also who prepares and presents the offerings. Here the increasing "intrusion" of women into a male-dominated world and the effects this creates in the celebration of any given *matsuri* are certainly of great interest.

In spite of its beautiful lay-out, this book may not be satisfactory in many respects. And yet I consider it an important book, because it turns our attention to an area where only little, if any, work has been done. Although it demands quite an amount of time to read it because of its technical terms and the many names of plants etc., I gladly recommend it to anyone interested in Japanese religion, especially folk religion and religious folklore. It is an incentive to look anew into the meaning and implications of something we easily take for granted, the preparation and forms of offerings to the gods.

Peter Knecht

EIKEMEIER, DIETER. *Documents from Changjwa-ri: A Further Approach to the Analysis of Korean Villages*. Veröffentlichungen des Ostasien-Instituts der Ruhr-Universität Bochum, Band 25. Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1980. ix+261 pp. Plates, preface, appendices, addenda, bibliography, index. Paper, DM 92, -. ISBN 3-447-02044-X.

Written records maintained by Korean villages have thus far received little scholarly attention. *Documents from Changjwa-ri* is a pioneering attempt to examine a set of these records and their usefulness for understanding a Korean village's social organization and its political relationship with the national government.

The primary data for this study are the records of Changjwa-ri, a village located on an island just off the southwestern tip of the Korean peninsula. The original texts and translations of these documents comprise one-third of the monograph. Eikemeier also examined related documents from other Korean villages, obtained information from local residents, and utilized studies of Changjwa-ri and other Korean villages conducted by rural sociologists and anthropologists. One can only admire the thoroughness and eclecticism with which the author went about his research. Unfortunately, practical circumstances precluded extended fieldwork in the community.

Of the village's various documents, the one entitled "Regulations of Changjwa-ri" received the most careful scrutiny. Because it was sworn to in 1952 and later modified substantially in 1964, Eikemeier's analysis focuses on the intervening twelve-year period. The village's other documents include an earlier list of regulations, inventories of village property, prayers recited at the annual rite for the village's tutelary deity, and a record of decisions formally approved by the village government. The village's census and landholding records were not available to the author.

Eikemeier shows that the "Regulations" do not record actually observed village law. First, they are replete with abstract ideals about neighborly cooperation and national defense. Second, the "Regulations" have no legal standing in the eyes of the national government. And finally, the village's decisions and decision-making process do not always correspond with the directives set forth in the "Regulations." To appreciate the significance of these "Regulations," argues Eikemeier, we must look elsewhere.