

## BOOK REVIEW

**An Illustrated Book on Annual Festivals and Customs** (*nenjū gyōji zuzetsu* 年中行事圖説). Under the direction of Yanagita Kunio edited by the Folklore Research Institute. Iwasaki Shoten (Bookstore), Tōkyō, 1953, 269 pages in 4°, with numerous photos and drawings.

This is a book that really fascinates by the wealth both of information and illustration. The authors had in mind as readers of it the general educated public, in particular junior and senior High School students. Only customs still practiced in our days are described. The names of the places where the described customs exist are added and many regional variations are recorded. All lovers of Japanese folkways, so full of meaning and colour, will be gratified to find that even in our supertechnic age so many native customs have withstood the powerful trend of internationalisation of life.

The contributors of the numerous articles are all well known folklore specialists of the Yanagita school. Each article is given a full page, the opposite page being used for illustrative sketches and drawings. At the end of the book we find a collection of photos pertinent to all kinds of regional customs. The book is undoubtedly useful for those Japanese students who are living in the big cities with almost no contact with rural life, but also to those interested foreigners who are able to read Japanese. For them the book is a real treasure house of information.

**Niiname no Kenkyū** (新嘗の研究), Vol. 1. Edited by *Niiname Kenkyūkai*, Sōgensha (創元社), Tōkyō, Shōwa 28 (1953), 256 pp.

The book under review is the first fruit of the research work done by the *Niiname Kenkyūkai*, a group of scholars devoting themselves to the study of the official harvest festival in which the Emperor himself officiates, offering new rice to the gods and partaking himself of it. The name the society has given itself is to be taken only as *pars pro toto* and as a symbol of the programme that lies ahead of a mixed group of distinguished scholars representing archaeology, physical and cultural anthropology, linguistics, folklore science and science of religion. They all want to join hands in a common effort to elucidate the dawn of Japanese history by aiming at the fundamental staple food, the cultivation of which is intimately related with the growing of the Japanese race and its civilisation. His Imperial Highness, the learned Prince Mikasa, is one of the sponsors of the society, a fact that is also symbolic of the breadth of its programme that covers both the agricultural rites of the Imperial house and the manifold ceremonies and festivals of the farmers in the countryside.

The present first volume of the society's publications contains twelve papers, each dealing with agriculture and connected beliefs, rites and customs of Japan, Korea, Southeast Asia and Micronesia. We present here a list of these studies, for the sake of the foreign reader first giving the English translation of the title

and adding in brackets the characters of the authors' names and the original Japanese title:

- Yanagita Kunio:** The Birth-house of Rice (柳田國男: 稻の産屋), p. 11-60.
- Ogasawara Rokuo:** The Harvest Festival in Ancient China (小笠原録雄: 古代中國の嘗祭について), p. 61-70.
- Orikuchi Shinobu:** *Niiname* and the Azuma Songs (折口信夫: 新嘗と東歌) p. 71-82.
- Kawaide Kiyohiko:** The Food Offerings of the Niiname Festival (川出清彦: 新嘗祭神膳のことに就いて), p. 83-107.
- Mabuchi Tôichi:** Agricultural Rites of the Aborigines of Formosa (馬淵東一: 高砂族の農耕儀禮), p. 108-144.
- Sugiura Kenichi:** Agricultural Rites in Micronesia (杉浦健一: ミクロネシアの農耕儀禮), p. 145-155.
- Matsumoto Nobuhiro:** Agricultural Rites of Indochina (松本信廣: インドシナの農耕儀禮), p. 156-163.
- Andô Hirotarô:** Traditions Concerning Rice (安藤廣太郎: 稻の傳統について), p. 164-175.
- Akiba Takashi:** The Corn-god of Korea (秋葉隆: 朝鮮の穀神), p. 176-179.
- Tana Tsunahiro:** The Origin of the Japanese Wet Rice Plantation and its Social Impact (田名網廣: 日本に於ける水稻耕作の起源とその社會的影響), p. 180-234.
- Ikegami Hiromasa:** Ceremonies for the Worship of the Field-god (池上廣正: 田の神行事), p. 235-242.
- Mabuchi Tôichi:** The "Mother-rice", "Father-rice" and "Child-rice" of the Bada (馬淵東一: バダ族の母稻, 父稻, 子稻), p. 243-245.

The research work, the results of which have now been put before the reader, has been undertaken with an unbiased approach, without intention to implement preconceived theories and ideas. The authors just wanted to register of what type agricultural religion, gods and ceremonies are within the area under their investigation. The agricultural rites of the peoples of East and Southeast Asia include magic for protection and fertility of the crop, ancestor-worship at the harvest festivals, and worship of corn-spirits. For the latter new fieldwork results and documentary material from written sources have been contributed for Japan (Yanagita, Ikegami), Korea (Akiba), Formosa (Mabuchi). In this connection we want to refer also to the voluminous work of the late Prof. Uno Enkû: *Religious Rites and Ceremonies Concerning Rice Planting and Eating in Malaisia* (宇野圓空: マライシヤに於ける稻米儀禮). *The Tôyô Bunko Ronsô*, Series A, Vol. XXVIII, Tôkyô, 1940, 732 pages, with an English abstract of 23 pages.

The authors have not yet made an attempt at determining cultural relationship with the help of similarities of rites and religious ideas; they simply wanted to state the facts. Another volume of *Niiname* Studies is to be expected in the near

future. Cultural anthropologists the world over are certainly much interested in the new approach to a great problem made by their Japanese colleagues, they only wish that more of the findings of Japanese scholars were available in a Western language.

**Albert Maurice and Georges Marie Proux:** *L'Ame du Riz*. Extrait du Bulletin de la Société des Etudes Indochinoises, NOUVELLE SERIE, TOME XXIX, Nos. 2-3, Saigon, 1954, 134 pages, avec 23 figures et une carte.

The two authors present here the results of their ethnographic fieldwork among the Rhadé, a tribe of Indonesian stock living on the plateau of Darlac in Annam and numbering 80,000. At first data are given on their physics, language, history, costumes, their village life and tribal code, then follow others on their life cycle and religious ideas and superstitions. On this background a picture is drawn of their dry rice cultivation, wet rice being planted only on a small scale. The last chapter deals with the religion of the Rhadé and in an appendix prayer texts with juxtalinéar translation are added.

The reader, expecting that the bulk of the book, in accordance with its title, deals with the rice-spirit or rice-soul, is first somewhat surprised to find that he has to gather information on the rice-soul here and there throughout the book, but, after all, he cannot blame the authors for elaborating on their topic in the way they did. The particular belief in the rice-soul is only part of the whole web of the cultural pattern of the tribe Rhadé. We find among these people a clear-cut matriarchal family system, in which each house is the residence of the whole female descendency, comprising the ancestress with her sisters and their daughters and granddaughters. The sons have to find their marriage partners and homes outside their mother's house. The subtle social organisation of the tribe is based on its division into two exogamic fraternities, each of them being subdivided into exogamic clans. Intermarriage among them however constitutes only a minor case of incest. Only marriage between members of the clan of the direct maternal line remains prohibited with the full rigour of the tribal code. Marriage is matrilineal.

As to the religion, which is essentially agrarian, we find a Supreme Being presiding over the agricultural rites. Its name Aê Diê means "Lord Heaven" (Seigneur Ciel). The god resides in the Heaven, meant in a physical and religious sense; there he rules over other supernatural beings, most of them good, some malignant. He is the Creator of all things in Heaven and on Earth, he is omnipotent and infinitely benevolent, and thus he is the last source from whence the tribe draws the means of its physical subsistence. In prayers, directly addressed to him, the Rhadé thank him for providing them with their cereals. The Supreme Being is however assisted by other divinities. For instance, his sister protects the rice plantations. Besides them a number of secondary gods play a role in food production. The souls of the dead are invoked as intercessors in the world of gods and spirits.

With this very brief summary of the data on society and religion before us we can put the idea of the rice-soul in its proper place. In perusing the book we

meet it in many contexts. Curved stones are incorporations of the rice-soul; before rice is sown, its soul has first to be redeemed from captivity into which it was reduced by spirits. The rice-soul is asked never to fly again, and offerings are made to it in the same way as when an attempt is made to recall a human soul. The rice-soul is begged to stay in the granary and not to get exhausted too early, and it is conducted to the granary in solemn procession. When the rice is cut in the field, a few stalks are left uncut so that they may serve as a refuge for the rice-soul. The best ears of the paddy-field are taken as the "rice-soul" and conducted to the granary. These are only a few instances of references to the rice-soul scattered throughout the book in the various sections dealing with agrarian beliefs and activities. The authors themselves conclude their book with a summarizing chapter on the rice-soul. They find that links exist between human female fecundity and that of the rice plants and affinities between the latter and other plants such as the millet, and friendship between the rice-soul and animals. The rice-soul has great power over human beings and, consequently, has to be treated with consideration and respect. It receives honours and flatteries, its friendship and fidelity being sought in many ways. We need all given information on the social, economic and religious structure of the tribe for the correct understanding of the idea of the rice-soul and, in a comparative study of the rice-soul and other souls or spirits of cereals found in the religion of other peoples, for deciding whether or not the idea of such a soul or spirit, in general or in a certain coining, goes together with a certain functional complex of all kinds of cultural elements. While the present reviewer, at least, was going through this highly interesting fieldwork report with its solid documentation, he came to think that a comparative study on agrarian animism within a larger area might be rewarded with worthy fruits.

M. E.