



Miyamoto Tsuneichi, The Forgotten Japanese: Encounters with Rural Life and Folklore

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The Forgotten Japanese: Encounters with Rural Life and Folklore is the most important work of folklore scholar Miyamoto Tsuneichi, also known as “the traveling giant.” Included in this series of work are thirteen volumes tracing the author’s journey throughout Japan, such as “Village Meetings,” which depicts the characteristics of villages in Western Japan. Ordinary scenes from everyday life of a certain point in history vividly come to life through the accounts of elders conversing in the local dialect and accompanying photographs. Resisting the standard study of folklore, Miyamoto delves into the “real life” of the times and compiles a “life magazine” of the common people. He thereby succeeds in establishing a unique folk material with this timeless masterpiece.

The people that Miyamoto depicted in this work certainly reflect the image of the “forgotten Japanese” to the contemporary reader. Miyamoto’s eye of observing the life of the common people by way of experiencing it, however, still vividly lives on. When we travel to countries of Asia, we see shopkeepers pushing their food stalls on the streets and women gossiping away as they engage in handwork. It is in these observations that we are able to recall the scenes of Japanese life in the distant past.

Asian countries are developing ever so rapidly. Will these people, living their usual lives today, also become “forgotten people” in the days to come?



Source:

- Miyamoto Tsuneichi, *The Forgotten Japanese: Encounters with Rural Life and Folklore* (Berkeley: Jeffrey S. Irish(translation), Stone Bridge Press, 2010)

Related Links

- The Miyamoto Tsuneichi Database (compiled by Suo Oshima Town of Yamaguchi prefecture, Miyamoto's birthplace, includes information on Miyamoto, visual images, list of publications and collection of books.)
<http://www.towatown.baobab.or.jp/database/index.asp>
- The Miyamoto Tsuneichi Channel (official YouTube channel by the Miyamoto Tsuneichi Memorial Museum and the Suo Oshima Culture Exchange Center, which introduces materials on Miyamoto and the folklore culture of Suo Oshima and the Seto Inland Sea.)
<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCu9UpK3TXxVvokTMmbDhafA>