



Myths and Legends of Japan

F. Hadland Davis , Evelyn Paul (Illustrator)

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The most popular myths and legends of Japanese culture are charmingly retold in English in this handsomely illustrated book. Here are myths of gods, heroes and warriors; legends of Buddha, and of the goddess Benten and the god Daikoku; tales of the sea and of Mount Fuji; accounts of superstitions and supernatural beings; observations on the spiritual properties of fans, flowers, dolls and butterflies and much more.

The collection begins with the early myths of Japan, which the author describes as "quaint, beautiful, quasi-humorous." These are followed by legends celebrating early heroes and warriors, and the earliest examples of the Japanese romance, "The Bamboo-Cutter and the Moon-Maiden." Many of the legends that follow reflect a poetic love of beauty and of nature. But as the author points out, "there is plenty of crude realism in Japanese legend. We are repelled by the Thunder God's favorite repast, amazed by the magical power of foxes and cats; and the story of 'H?ichi-the-Earless' and of the corpse-eating priest afford striking examples of the combination of the weird and the horrible."

Thirty-two full-page illustrations offer compelling images of Buddha and the Dragon; A Kakemono Ghost; The Jelly-Fish and the Monkey; The Firefly Battle; Tokoyo and the Sea Serpent; Sengen, the Goddess of Mount Fuji; and other subjects of these timeless myths. In addition, the author has included several invaluable appendixes that offer a helpful note on Japanese poetry, a listing of gods and goddesses, a genealogy of The Age of the Gods, and an index of poetical quotations.

Myths and Legends of Japan Details

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From Reader Review Myths and Legends of Japan for online ebook

Felicity says

While it contains many folktales, this book is a little frustrating for serious mythology research. The separation between stories is unclear, sometimes nonexistent, and the author's voice is clearly evident, with ironic touches and editorial flourishes throughout. While the organization of stories and anecdotes by theme can be useful, the other deficits of the volume more than make up for that positive.

Nicholas Bobbitt says

The author's attempts to explain stories as they happen is frustrating.

Oznasia says

A mixed bag.

Monica says

Creo que le falta profundidad al libro referente a los mitos y leyendas de Japón. El libro fue escrito en el siglo XIX, el autor se acerca al tema es a través de otros escritores quienes han investigado y escrito sobre el tema.

John Majerle says

A nice collection of myths, folk tales, and ghost stories from old Japan.

Margaret Ball says

The stilted language is a bit off-putting, but it's an interesting collection of Japanese folk tales, supernatural beings, and general beliefs. The original and somewhat quirky organization is charming if you're just reading for general interest, as I was, though it might be frustrating for someone taking a more scholarly approach.

FelurianBooks says

Para empezar diré que la edición de este libro me parece preciosa? Si te gusta la cultura japonesa lo recomiendo muchísimo, explica tanto leyendas como orígenes de tradiciones, mitos y lo mejor de todo es que tiene ilustraciones magníficas para acompañar la lectura? Es el primer libro con una temática así que me

leo y ahora tengo claro que no sera el último!??

Edgar Lorenzo Matos says

Excelente recopilación de antiguos mitos y leyendas japoneses. Hace una panorámica bastante variada y tocando numerosos puntos. No se hace pesado de leer para nada al tiempo que te acerca al variado folklore japonés. Alabo especialmente la organización de los capítulos entorno a personajes y temáticas específicas como las leyendas sobre los zorros. Para los entusiastas de la cultura japonesa es todo un regalo.

Olivaresangie says

I really enjoyed to know more about another beautiful culture

Kristen Coffin says

"All foxes possess supernatural powers to an almost limitless degree. They have the power of infinite vision; they hear everything and understand the secret thoughts of mankind generally, and in addition they possess the power of transformation and of transmutation."

An absolutely beautiful collection of Japanese mythology. Topics range from creation myths, stories of gods/goddesses, animal spirits, to tales of Mount Fuji. Each tale is unique and beautiful, and a wonderful in depth look into another culture and that culture's beliefs and history.

J.Aleksandr Wootton says

Not so much a collection of translated Japanese myths and legends as an excuse to showcase Hadland's opinions of them. No tale is allowed to stand on its own; Hadland must choke all his retellings with commentary, attempted translations of timeless folkloric culture into the pop culture of his contemporary readers (this book was originally published in England, 1913), presumptuous direct statements about what the reader feels or is about to feel in response to the stories, and pseudo-academic asides.

Caveat lector: Go elsewhere for your introduction to the myths and legends of Japan.

Sarah says

This book was alright for what i paid for it and i was kind of disappointed that it didnt have all the information that you usually find is country's mythology you expect alot more from it. I never said i didnt enjoy the story telling and thats what i was also looking for not a stagnant information where it sounded like the author just wanted to get the book out and be done with it I hate that in a book and sadly there are alot out

there that are like that but I was happy that is book wasn't like it. I surely will tell my friends to check it out.

Stephanie says

This was first published in 1913 by British authors and YOU CAN TELL. The narration really annoyed me at times. That being said, this was a pretty comprehensive volume of legends, myths, ghost stories, etc. it's a good starting point for newbies like me.

Harris says

This was an interesting collection of diverse Japanese folk tales, legends, and mythology, including a variety of topics from animal stories to legends of Mount Fuji, as well as some discussions of how these stories relate to Japanese culture. However, the presentation of the legends is couched as much in the early twentieth century English attitudes of H. Hadland Davis as in Japan. As Davis, writing in 1913, expresses in his introduction regarding the rising world power, "we have learnt that her quaintness and prettiness, her fairy-like manners and customs, were but the outer signs of a great and progressive nation," which Russia learned the hard way. Davis, then, deeply romanticizes this lost "fairyland," already nostalgic for its "disappearance," and retells the stories in very flowery English, recalling the style of western fairy tales. Also, the organization of the stories seems a bit haphazard with little consistency in chapter choice. However, it seems to be a fairly comprehensive collection of Japanese folk tales and mostly enjoyable. The works of Lafcadio Hearn, though, (some of which were included by Davis in this book) would be a better English-language source for Japanese folklore, in my opinion.

Andrew Nease says

Am I glad I read this book? Yes. Did I enjoy reading it? For the most part, yes: that's why it got four stars instead of three. But I don't know if I'd say I'd recommend it. It's pretty dated, for one thing: it was written by a British scholar sometime after the Russo-Japanese War and, though nowhere near as cringingly post-Victorian as something like that could have been (actually, I need to give this guy some credit for apparently trying to shatter some of his own day's stereotypes, and for clearly having some genuine respect for Japanese culture), there are a few wincingly patronizing moments. Essentially, my problem is that the author is writing too much a cultural survey and not enough a collection of folktales, and he breaks the character of narrator too many times, which affects the flow, and when he does so his style is too British. The stories themselves still shine through, and are worth muscling through everything else to get to, but when so many other, better, more comprehensive books of Japanese myths and legends have been written in the last few decades, I have to repeat that I don't recommend it in particular.
