

## A Comparative Study of Japanese and Indonesian Folklores

James DANANDJAJA \*

### The History of Folklore Research in Japan and Indonesia

As in Indonesia, folklore has long been collected and studied by Japanese scholars, especially those in the humanities. The difference is that, in Japan, folklore was from the outset collected by the Japanese themselves, while in Indonesia it was mostly collected by European scholars, especially Dutch, in the initial stage.

While, beginning in 1910, and particularly since 1930, Japanese folklore materials were collected by Japanese folklorists, in Indonesia such was not the case, since folklore materials were collected by scholars in other disciplines, such as philologists, musicologists, cultural anthropologists, theologians (Catholics as well as Protestant), Dutch civil servants etc. [Danandjaja 1994b: 9-10].

According to Ronald A. Morse, folklore in Japan began to be recorded in 1910 by folklorists or folklore lovers, and by 1930 folklore had become a discipline in its own right, since when it has grown into an independent and mature discipline [Morse 1990: xv]. Officially the first folklore in Japan was collected in 1910, in which year Yanagita Kunio collected and published the first book of folklore, entitled *Tono Monogatari* (The Legend of Tono), a literal work that is now considered to be a classic [*loc. cit.*]. The year 1930 was also important, because it was then that folklore in Japan became a separate discipline, and folklore study was intensified. In that period there were three groups of folklorists in Japan. The first group led by Yanagita Kunio, emphasized the expressive aspect of folklore and tried to reconstruct the history of folk ideas. This group was the most active. The second group, led by Origuchi Shinobu of Kokugakuin University, had its own folklore journal published by its own folklore institution. Although Origuchi was a former student of Yanagita and the best one, he continued to practice the traditional method developed by the philologists from the Tokugawa period. The third group was led

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\* Department of Anthropology, Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, University of Indonesia, Jakarta, Indonesia  
(Visiting Research Scholar, Center for Southeast Asian Studies, Kyoto University, from October 1994 to April 1995)

by Yanagi Muneyoshi and Shibusawa Keizo, who were more interested in collecting nonverbal folklore, such as the shape of traditional houses, furniture, house utensils, farm utensils, and children's toys. This group was very active in collecting and preserving cultural materials. These three groups with their different research objectives and methods, had a great influence on Japanese folklore research [*ibid.*: 103].

The situation in Indonesia was different. Although folklore materials had long been collected, studied and published, the researchers were from different disciplines and not themselves folklorists. This was understandable, for in that period Indonesia was still part of the Dutch Empire. In the Netherlands, folklore meant the traditional culture of the peasants in Europe, while the cultures (including folklore) outside Euro-America were primitive cultures that were studied by anthropologists. The Dutch term for anthropology is *volkenkunde*, while folklore is *volkskunde* [Danandjaja 1994b: 2].

Thus although the folklore material of Indonesia had long been studied, the researchers were not folklorists, but scholars from other disciplines, such as H. Kern, a Dutch philologist who had studied the old Javanese book on the mouse-deer (*Sang Kancil*) [1889]. Since the animal tale studied by Kern was already in the form of a Javanese book, the *Serat Kancil*, the folktale must have been recorded long before that by Javanese court scholars.

The other difference from Japanese folklore is that Indonesian folklore as a separate discipline was established in 1972, by the introduction of a new course called *Folklore Indonesia* by the writer of this article, in the Department of Anthropology, Faculty of Arts, University of Indonesia. Fortunately, at that time, in the Department of Anthropology at UI, there were many anthropology B.A. students who had been sent from universities all over Indonesia, so that in a relatively short time folklore could be disseminated throughout Indonesia. When they returned to their respective universities, these students were hired as anthropology lecturers. Many of them are now professors at the University of Padjadjaran (Bandung, West Java), University of Gadjah Mada (Yogyakarta, Central Java), University of Airlangga (Surabaya, East Java), University of Udayana (Denpasar, Bali), University of Sam Ratulangi (Manado, North Sulawesi), University of Cendrawasih (Abepura, Irian Jaya), University of Sumatera Utara (Medan, North Sumatra), and University of Andalas (Padang, West Sumatra) and so on.

The writer of this article is fortunate to have had the opportunity to introduce folklore as a new discipline in Indonesia, having gained his M.A. degree under the tutorship of Prof. Dr. Alan Dundes and the late Prof. William Bascom, at the Folklore Program of the Department of Anthropology, University of California at Berkeley in 1971. Although folklore in the University of Indonesia has not yet become a program, it is taught as a course for B.A., M.A. and Ph.D. students, and the university has already produced three Ph.D.s in folklore: Dr. Ninuk Probonegoro-Kleden (LIPI); Prof. Dr. Suripan Sadi Hutomo (IKIP Surabaya); and Dr. Parwati Wahjono (UI). Ninuk Probonegoro-Kleden's Ph.D. thesis was on the Betawinese's *lenong* folk performance; Suripan Sadi Hutomo's was

on the *Kenprung* folk balad singer of East Java; and Parwatri Wahjono's was on the *Nini Towok* mystical doll play of East Java.

### **The Motivation for Folklore Studies in Japan and Indonesia**

The motivation for folklore studies in Japan and Indonesia is basically the same, that is, the search for national identity. But the main reasons behind the motivation are different. In Japan it was to rediscover a lost identity due to acculturation to mainland Asia; but in Indonesia it is to look for a new national identity, based on the old regional *Nusantara* identities.

The main reason for the study of Japanese folklore was to rediscover the Japanese traditional national identity and distinctiveness that had been lost due to acculturation to mainland Asia. Between 1930 and 1940, during the early Showa period, there was a need to recover that traditional identity before Japan was engulfed by the more technologically and economically advanced Western culture. This situation caused Japanese scholars such as Yanagita to seek this lost identity, which they thought would provide an important weapon against the encroachment of foreign cultures, so that Japanese culture would not be overwhelmed. In anthropology the movement could be categorized as *nativistic*, a logical reaction on the part of a group whose culture is changing rapidly. And this is the main reason why scholars such as Yanagita took action to rediscover the Japanese character through folklore studies.

The atmosphere of this nativistic and revitalization movement, to return to the past, was the reactionary mood of the Showa period. Not only did it afflict Japanese academicians, but also the government bureaucrats of that period. They were strongly opposed to foreign-derived culture, such as Buddhism, which they attempted to expunge from Shintoism, the native religion of Japan. Initially the movement tried to form a government that was Shintoist-centrist, but later they realized that Japanese traditional teaching could not be integrated with the Western political pattern, which they were in the process of adopting to modernize their country. In this process the government had allocated money for the restoration of old Shinto shrines, and the building of new ones, such as the grand and beautiful Meiji Shrine in Tokyo, which was dedicated to the first modern emperor of Japan (Meiji). The other newly built shrine was Yasukuni Shrine, which was dedicated to the Japanese who had given their lives in war for their country. Viewed from the religious freedom professed by the Japanese today, Shintoism, which once was the state religion, is now considered only to be the manifestation of patriotism [Reischauer 1990: 209]. Against this background it is no wonder that after World War II, when for the first time a Japanese Prime Minister visited Yasukuni Shrine, his visit raised protests from Japanese Christians and members of the leftist movement. According to them, this shrine was the place to pay homage to the Class A World War II war criminals who had been prosecuted by the Allied forces. But for ordinary Japanese, Yasukuni Shrine could be

compared to the Tomb of the Unknown Soldiers in Washington, USA; and Meiji Shrine could be compared to the Lincoln Memorial in Washington [*ibid.*: 210].

The reason behind the motivation to study folklore in Indonesia differs from that in Japan. In contrast to the homogeneity of Japanese culture, Indonesian culture consists of two cultures: the national one (*kebudayaan Nasional Indonesia*), and the ethnic cultures (*kebudayaan Nusantara*).

The Indonesian national culture is the culture of the whole Indonesian nation, while the Indonesian ethnic cultures belong to the different ethnic groups in Indonesia, which existed long before the establishment of the Indonesian nation. These cultures include Javanese, Sundanese, Balinese, Minangkabau, Minahasa, Batak, Buginese, Makasarese, Ambonese, and Irian, among others. The ethnic cultures are already established, while the Indonesian national culture is still in the formative stage. Nevertheless the Indonesian national culture does exist. Indonesia already has one of the most important cultural elements, in the form of the Indonesian language; and, more importantly, she already has a cultural orientation, in the form of the Five Principles (*Panca Sila*). Yet we have to admit that there are still many national cultural elements that are still in the formative stage, such as art, economy, and technology. This, of course, could be adopted from the West or even Japan; but in order to have our own Indonesian identity and distinctiveness, it is more logical if we adopt them from the rich *Nusantara* cultures, especially in the form of their folklores. To a certain degree this has already been done. For instance, the Indonesian national language which is basically Malay from the Riau islands, is now enriched with Javanese and other *Nusantara* languages, and even with the Betawinese *prokem* language, which originally is the language of criminals and was later adopted by Indonesian urban teenagers (including university students). Indonesian pop song has adopted many *Nusantara* folksongs, for example, from Java, Makasar, Sunda, Batak, Ambon, Minangkabau, Minahasa and Irian Jaya.

### **Folklore Concepts, Theories, and Research Methods**

Since the development of folklore study in Indonesia is still in the initial stage compared with Japan, it is natural that most of Indonesian folklore concepts, theories, and research methods are adopted from the US and Europe. The Japanese did not do this in the initial stage, for they had developed their own. In Indonesia, folklore is defined as: "those materials in culture that circulate traditionally among members of any group in different versions, whether in oral form, or by means of customary example" [Brunvand 1968: 5]. Thus *folk* in Indonesia means: "any group, native or immigrant, as long as they have lived in Indonesia for generations; urban as well as rural; literate or illiterate; noble or commoner." And *lore*: "is the part of Indonesian cultures that is disseminated through oral tradition." Indonesian lores have three modes of existence: verbal, partly verbal, and nonverbal [adapted from *ibid.*: 1-3].

Folklorists in general are differentiated into three categories: (1) humanistic folklorists, who have a background of philology or literary studies; (2) anthropologist folklorists, who have an anthropological background; and (3) modern folklorists who have an interdisciplinary background.

Basically the humanistic folklorists consist of philologists and literary scholars who later become interested in folklore studies. Most of them are still faithful followers of William John Thoms's definition of folklore. Thoms is the British antiquarian who coined the term *folklore*. The humanistic folklorists are more concerned with the *lore* than the *folk*. For them, folklore includes all genres of folklore, namely verbal, partly verbal, and nonverbal.

On the other hand, the anthropological folklorists consist of anthropologists who specialize in folklore studies, and they usually study only the verbal folklore, such as prose narratives (myths, legend, and folktales), riddles, folk speech, proverbs, and poetry etc. and most of them are not interested in the other forms of folklore that belong to the partly verbal and nonverbal. This group of folklorists are more concerned with the *folk* rather than the *lore*. Standing in the middle are the modern folklorists, who consist of interdisciplinary scholars and are interested in all genres of folklore, being concerned both with the *folk* and the *lore*.

The Indonesian folklorists can also be differentiated into the three groups, and at present there is a tendency for the third group to dominate.

Although the Japanese folklorists can also be categorized into three groups, it seems that the first group is still the dominant one. As a nation that has long developed folklore studies as a separate discipline and in the initial stage was not so much influenced by folklorists from the West, it is no wonder that the Japanese folklorists had developed folklore concepts, theories, and especially classification methods, that are slightly different from those of the West.

The most famous Japanese folklorist, who is considered to be the founder of Japanese folklore is Yanagita Kunio (1875-1962). He was a prolific writer and very influential not only in politics but also in the mass media. He was an editor of the famous newspaper *Asahi Shimbun* and was a liberal, but at the same time also a conservative. He left the government because he was dissatisfied. His decision to leave the government and become an editor of the *Asahi Shimbun*, was a fortunate one not only for himself but also for Japanese folklore. Without this, the history of Japanese folklore would not be what it is.

As the cultural editor of *Asahi Shimbun*, Yanagita had the opportunity to do many intensive fieldworks in the interior of Japan; and his findings were published in the form of articles on the folklore of the farmers and fishermen. When he left *Asahi Shimbun*, he had published 380 articles, an excellent record for his six years of work for the newspaper. His first book on folklore is *Tono Monogatari* (1910). Although the title of the book is The Legend of Tono, its content also encompasses folktales. And the legends he collected can be narrowed down into the category of local legends, especially what Wilhelm von Sydow

categorized as *memorat*, because they are based on people's experiences with the supernatural world. Yanagita called the materials he collected *densetsu* ("legends"), which he differentiated from *mukashibanashi* ("folktales"). Folktales always begin with a stereotyped opening expression: "Once upon a time there lived . . ." (cf. folktales nos. 115, 116, 117, and 118 [Yanagita 1975: 80-84]).

In writing *Tono Monogatari*, Yanagita had interviewed Sasaki Kyoseki, a literate farmer from Tono, and the tales he told Yanagita were based on his own experiences of supernatural phenomena and those of his friends and close kin. These legends suggest the possibility that the demons with long noses, red faces, and tall stature, who loved to kidnap young village girls, were members of the Caucasian race. And their descendants are now the Japanese people who live in the north and look like Eurasians. In some *memorat* legends, the informants had seen demons with white skin who loved to kiss each other as Europeans do. The villagers believed that they were the spirits of the European Christians who had been executed by Japanese warlords (legend no.84). In Tono there was once an albino baby born to an ordinary Japanese woman (legend no.85). At that time, the Caucasian race was believed by the villagers to be demons of the supernatural world. This belief was also common among villagers in East Java in the 1930s. When I was a boy in the East Java town of Malang, my little boy servant always hid under the bed when my piano teacher, Mevrouw van Dijken, came to my house to give me my piano lesson. The reason of this behavior was that he thought the Dutch woman was a demon. According to him only demons had blue eyes and red hair.

Based on the Tono legends, Yanagita tried to reconstruct the ethnogenesis of the Japanese population, which according to him was based on two traditions. One was Jomon (7000-300 BC), whose economy was based on hunting and gathering. This people originated from Siberia and lived in the isolated regions of Japan. The second belonged to the Yayoi (300 BC-100 AD), who came from China through the island of Okinawa. They were the ones who brought the technique of rice farming and religio-magic beliefs to Japan. With the coming of the Yayoi people, the Jomon people were forced to assimilate to them. For those who refused were forced to live apart in the isolated mountain areas of Japan [Morse 1990: 130-131]. If Yanagita is right, then the descendants of the Jomon people are the long-nosed, red-faced, tall demons that roamed the mountains, as told in the Tono legends. According to Richard Dorson, *Tono Monogatari* is of comparable importance to the Grimm brothers' *Kinder und Hausmärchen*, because both can be considered as the beginning of folklore recording in their respective countries [Dorson 1975: x].

As initiators, Yanagita and the Grimm brothers could not avoid of making the mistake on the quality of oral literature. For them to judge the quality of oral literature, they must use written literature as the yardstick. Based on this principle, the folklorists "corrected" the way folklore was presented: because the narratives were considered crude, they were refined, for publication. Yanagita, for instance, thought that his informant, Sasaki, was not a good narrator; but according to Dorson, if we look at the rich repertory he could narrate,

it proved that he was a good story teller. At present, modern folklorists, consider that the style of oral literature is different from that of written literature, so that esthetically it must be evaluated in its own right, especially based on its faithful reproduction from the oral texts [*ibid.*: xi].

Although Yanagita was from the humanities, to a certain extent he was open to the influence of other disciplines, such as anthropology, so that for his studies he used the fieldwork method and the approach was multi disciplinary. His love to read history, and his great interest in the *kokugaku* nativistic teaching, led him to study folk beliefs (*minkan shinko*) [Morse 1990: xvii]. As the result of these studies, he created a method to look for the Japanese national character, by applying the historical method to reconstruct the Japanese folk belief. This method is the "applied historical approach." To be able to do that, one has to cleanse all the foreign elements that have stuck to the Japanese folk belief, and the result, is the real Japanese character [Dorson 1975: x].

The objective of the folklore study done by Yanagita and his followers was to look for the Japanese national character, which according to Morse is the root, the identity and coherency of the Japanese culture, and which between 1930 and 1940 was on the edge of vanishing. In the book *Tono Monogatari* there is a legend (No.10, p.18) that tells the tale of a mother who is killed by her son after a quarrel with her daughter-in-law. Before she dies she requests that the policeman who has arrested her son, not punish him. Her reason is: "I want to die devoid of hatred, so please forgive my son Maghoshiro!" This attitude could of course be attributed to her great maternal love; but it also be traced to the folk belief that the spirit of a person who dies with hatred will continue to haunt his or her enemy and must be placated by the erection of a shrine, which must be regularly attended, and by the provision of offerings to the spirit. This method of analysis by relating one folklore *genre* with another *genre* provided the means to reconstruct the national character of Japan. At the basis of this is the fact that national character is directed by the value orientation of the people. By using this approach Yanagita was in fact applying the holistic approach to Japanese folklore. The importance of Yanagita's book is that the legends were collected from their cultural context. To do that he went to Tono familiarized himself with the geography of the legends. And the book was the first in Japan to record legends collected from the same informant, who was a native of the area where the legends originated. Yanagita's approach could be said to be a modern folklorist one, for his method is also applied by the psychological anthropologist to find the cultural values of a folk in their folklore.

According to Yanagita, folklore was the science of the future, being a discipline that could help the Japanese to gain an insight into themselves and their history. It would take time for the researcher in folklore to reach maturity, and they would have to prove their worthiness, so that they would be valued by researchers in other disciplines.

Although at the initial stage, Yanagita had to work alone in developing Japanese folklore, according to Morse, in reality he was also influenced by European scholars such

as W.H.R. Rivers, Wilhelm Wundt, Andrew Lang, J.G. Frazer, and E.B. Tylor, and especially by George Laurence Gomme. Morse arrives at this conclusion because he had found the works by these scholars in Yanagita's private library. Gomme's historical-reconstruction is very similar to the method applied by Yanagita and his followers. Gomme's influence was verified by Oto Tokihiko, a close friend of Yanagita. According to him Yanagita bought Gomme's book entitled *Folklore as a Historical Science* (1908) in 1914 and read it in 1915. Gomme's idea that was adopted by Yanagita was to give importance to the historical materials which could sustain the materials surviving in the oral traditions [Morse 1990: 141-149].

According to Yanagita three problems that confronted the Japanese folklorists: (1) selecting, handling, and transcribing important data; (2) controlling the selected data; and (3) classification of data into material folklore, oral folklore, and customary folklore. Yanagita called customary folklore "the mental phenomena of the emotions" [*ibid.*: 163].

The folklore genres that belong to *material folklore* are: housing, clothing, food, fishing, forestry, hunting, farming, trading, transportation, giving presents, social relations, labor, village structure, marriage, childbirth, funerals, folkfeasts, folkdance, folkgames, and naming. The folklore genres that belong to *oral folklore* are: words, riddles, proverbs, folksongs, folktales and legends. The folklore genres that belong to *customary folklore* are: spirits, signs, chants, taboos, fetishes, and folk medicines that are religio-magic in nature [*ibid.*: 168].

Japanese folklore became an established discipline in 1910, when Yanagita had formed a folklore association to do field research. The association was named *Kyodokai* (Association for local region studies). Besides *Tono Monogatari*, Yanagita also published a book entitled *Ishi-gami Mondo*, a collection of his correspondence with a friend on sculptures of deities, the folk beliefs on stone as the symbols of the deities. In 1913 he published the journal entitled *Kyodo Kenkyu* (Studies on Local Places); in 1925 the journal *Minzoku* (Ethnos); in 1928 the journal *Tabi to Densetsu* (Travelogues and Legends); and in 1935 the journal *Minkan Densho* (Popular Tradition).

Later, Yanagita had changed again the name of his folklore association from *Minkan Densho no Kai* into *Minzoku Gakkai*. The use of the term *minzoku* indicates that Yanagita's interest had shifted from literature and scientific concepts related to material culture at the beginning of his carrier, to a stage where his folklore research was more systematic and analytic. In 1948, Yanagita formed *Minzokugaku Kenkyusho* or the Institute of Folklore Research, and he donated to the institute his library building including his entire folklore book collection [Dorson 1980: 7]. But unfortunately, due to lack of funding, the institute was forced to be closed in the Spring of 1957 [*ibid.*: ix]. This proved that the Japanese government and people at that time had ceased to be interested in the study of Japanese folklore. This is understandable, for during that period, the Japanese were more interested in American culture and, in the wake of World War II, folklore studies were seen to be related to the national chauvinism of the military regime.



Compared with Japanese folklore, Indonesian folklore study is still in the initial stage. Indonesia still lacks a folklore journal, and most folklore articles published appear either in the humanistic journals or anthropological journals. But the Indonesian government, through the Ministry of Education and Culture has recognized the importance of folklore studies, and many projects are underway to collect the folklore of Indonesian ethnic groups.

### Comparative Studies of Japanese and Indonesian Folklore

Study reveals many similarities in the folklore of Japanese and Indonesia. Concerning folk beliefs, for instance, the Japanese folk beliefs are basically similar to the Javanese *abangan* and Balinese folk beliefs, especially in the idea of supernatural beings, such as those described by van Hien [1896], and the folk concept of the polluted state of women during menstruation and childbirth because of the flowing out of blood [see Befu 1981: 104-105], which in Bali is called the *sebel* state [see Danandjaja 1980: 174].

Concerning prose narratives, especially on the folktales of both countries, it is interesting to note that there are many tale types and tale motifs that are similar in both countries, and thus worth comparing. In Japan there is a folktale entitled "Amafuri Otome," which means "The woman who came from the Sky." The story concerns a man named Mikeran, who lived by working on his land and collecting firewood in the forest. One day, after working on his land, he went to a rather isolated lake to wash himself. By the bank of the lake he found a beautiful woman's kimono hanging on the branch of a pine tree. When he reached for the dress, a beautiful woman suddenly appeared from the water, begging him to return her kimono, because without it, she could not fly back to heaven. Although he realized that she was not a mortal, his love for her was so great that he decided not to return her kimono but to hide it, so that she would have to stay to be his wife. His supernatural wife bore him three sons. One day when she returned to her house she heard her seven-year-old boy singing a lullaby to his baby brother. In his song he told his brother that their father would give him a beautiful kimono, which he had hidden in the rice barn, if would stop crying. After hearing this she started looking for her dress, and having found it hidden behind some rice sacks, she carried away all of her three sons to heaven. Before leaving she left a note telling her husband to collect one thousand wooden clogs and one thousand straw sandals, which he should bury in the earth and on top of them plant a bamboo. In three years, the bamboo would grow so tall that he could climb it to heaven. And Mikeran could follow his family to heaven. In heaven his mother-in-law liked him, but his father-in-law hated him so much that he tried to find a way to get rid of him. At first he asked him to clear one thousand *chou* (2,500 are) wood land for farming, and the task must be done in one day. With the help of his wife, Mikeran completed this impossible task in a miraculous way. The father-in-law seemed to be satisfied, and as a final task he asked Mikeran to cut in one day all the thousand water melons that he had

harvested the day before. Of course, Mikeran could not hope do this. But this time his father-in-law offered to teach him a magic way: Mikeran just had to pick three of the melons and use them as a pillow to sleep on; and on awaking he should cut each of three fruits lengthwise, and the other thousand would be cut by themselves. Although his wife forbade Mikeran to follow this advice, which was only a trick, Mikeran did not heed her; and as soon after he cut the three fruits, the other thousand cracked simultaneously and created a great flood that swept Mikeran away from heaven. According to the Japanese folk belief, we can still see the river originating from the flood as the Milky Ways in the autumn sky; and Mikeran was turned into the star Altair, and his wife into the star Vega. The unfortunate couple can meet each other only once a year, on the seventh day of the seventh lunar month [Tosu 1985: 146-154].

The above folktale has two tale types: "The Swan Maiden" (AaTh. No.400), and the other "The Cowherd and the Weaver." And it happens that we have both of them in Indonesia. The first one is universal, having also been found in India, Spain, Germany, France, Arabia, Persia, Polinesia, Micronesia, and Eskimo [Thompson 1966: 34].

In Indonesia this type of folktale is also widespread, especially among the ethnic groups that were influenced by Hindu-Buddhist and Han (Chinese) cultures, such as West Java, East and Central Java and Bali. From West Java, there is "The Legend of Pasir Kujang"; from East and Central Java, "The Legend of Joko Tarub"; and from Bali, "The Raja Pala." The East and Central Javanese "Swan Maiden" (i.e., "The Legend of Joko Tarub" from Tuban, East Java) is a legend, because people can still show the river where Joko Tarub met his future immortal wife while bathing. The stories told in East and Central Java and Bali are similar to that from Japan, because the wives are nymphs from heaven, but in West Java the woman is a were-tiger [Danandjaja 1994: 105-108].

The folktale with the tale type of "The Cowherd and the Weaver" which is a continuation of the Japanese "Swan Maiden," is a separate folktale belonging to the Betawinese of Chinese origin in Jakarta. For them this tale is not a folktale but a myth, and on the night of the seventh day of the seventh month of the Chinese lunar year, they will put out a bottle of water to be exposed to the shower that will fall during the night, which is believed to be the tears shed by the couple during their yearly reunion.

The other folktale worth comparing is the "The Dream of Akinosuke" which was published by Lafcadio Hearn [1904]. It concerns a yeoman named Akinosuke, who, after drinking sake one sultry day with two friends under a big old tree in his garden, suddenly he saw a *daimyo* followed by his retinue entering his house to summon him to see the king. Upon reaching the royal court, he found that he had been chosen by the King of Kokoyo to be married to his only daughter. After the marriage, he was appointed governor of the island of Raishiu in the southwestern part of the kingdom of Kokoyo. For 24 years he governed the island successfully and led a happy peaceful life, until one day his wife, the Royal Princess, died. His wife had borne him nine children, seven sons and two daughters.

After the death of his wife, he was discharged by the King of Kokoyo and sent back to

his home village. And as soon as this happened, he awoke to find himself still lying on the roots of the big tree in his own garden. He told his two friends of wonderful dream, and they began to look at a big ants' nest that was located under the big old tree. They found that the kingdom of Kokoyo was nothing but a big ants' nest, and in the nest they found a big ant with a big yellow head, as if wearing a gold crown. In the southwestern part of the big nest, he found a smaller nest and in it there was a small mound of earth marked by a tiny grave stone, under which he found the body of a female ant. According to his friends, while he was asleep a yellow butterfly had appeared that flew around his head and later sat on the entrance to the nest, where it was caught by a big ant and dragged into the hole. Before Akinosuke woke up, his friend saw the same butterfly appear again from the hole and disappear near his sleeping body.

From Central Java, a student of mine collected a folktale about a village chief by the name of Singo Prono, who one day while hunting wild pig, had wounded a sow. He pursued her through the jungle, and into the garden of a grand house that he had never known about before. In that house he was greeted by an elderly man in splendid attire. He was invited to enter his house and was served with delicious food. While eating he heard the wailing of a woman who was in great pain. On inquiring, he was told that his host's daughter had been badly hurt. The village chief offered his help, for he happened to have with him a special wound ointment. Thus the girl was healed and was given to him as his bride. This beautiful girl bore him two handsome sons. One day while sleeping with his family, he was awakened by a loud noise. When he woke up he found to his surprise that he was sleeping in the forest, and at his side were a wild sow and two piglets. From that day on he forbade his villagers to hunt the wild pigs that roamed the nearby forest. Today, the descendants of those villagers continue to observe this taboo [Danandjaja 1992]. The village name is Walen. It is located in the regency of Boyolali, Central Java.

According to Lafcadio Hearn, the Japanese folktale originated from China [1904: iii]. But it is difficult to say about the origin of the Javanese version. If it is a folktale then it originated from China; but if it is a legend, then it is native Javanese, having been created at the time when the Javanese were still Hindu. My publisher was in trouble when he published this legend in my children book entitled *Cerita Rakyat dari Jawa Tengah* (Prose Narratives from Central Java) [1992]. The Directorate Jendral of the Indonesian Ministry of Education requested that this particular legend be dropped from the second edition, since the pig is a taboo animal among Indonesian Moslems.

Another prose narrative that has the nature of a *memorat* is the Japanese legend of the *Rokuro-Kubi*, which according to Japanese folk belief is a kind of demon that has human form but can detach its head at night [Hearn 1904: 83-97]. This kind of demon is also found in Indonesia. In Jakarta it is called the *setan polong*, in Central Kalimantan the *hantuén*; in Sulawesi the *popokan*; in Bali the *leyak*; and in Maluku the *suangi*.

Among versions in Indonesia that are similar to the Japanese *Rokuro-Kubi*, is one from Jakarta among the Betawinese of Chinese descent, and another one from Central

Kalimantan among the Ngaju and Ot Danum Dayaks: their demons can also detach their heads. The difference is that while the Japanese demon loves to eat insects and human flesh, the Inonesian ones (Betawinese, and Central Kalimantan) love to suck the newborn baby's blood and blood from its mother's womb [Danandjaja 1971].

Lastly, there is a similarity in the Japanese belief in the impurity of women during menstruation and childbirth [see Befu 1981: 105-107] and the prohibition of Balinese menstruated women from entering the Balinese Hindu temple [see Danandjaja 1980: 174]. These are based on a similar concept of pollution in their folk beliefs.

### Conclusion

We may conclude that basically there are more similarities than differences in the studies of Japanese and Indonesian folklore. Scientific folklore studies in Japan were started in 1930 by a Japanese folklorist, while Indonesia they began in 1972. As a result, Japanese folklorists have now developed their own theories and methods, while their counterparts in Indonesia still depend on those developed in the US and Europe. From the start the Japanese folklorists were much influenced by literature and philology and thus can be categorized as humanistic folklorists; while in Indonesia the folklorists are dominated by the interdisciplinary modern folklorist tradition from the US.

The most interesting feature of the folklores of both countries is that they were initiated by the motivation to look for their respective national character. Only the reasons behind the motivations differ. The Japanese reason was to search for that which had been "lost" through acculturation, while the Indonesians' reason for studying folklore was to create a new national character that could be used to unite the country's different ethnic groups. And it is interesting to note that there are many genres or forms of folklore, including prose narratives and folk beliefs, that are similar in both countries. This could partly be explained by the fact that before they were influenced by foreign cultures, both countries were based on the so called Southeast Asian megalithic culture.

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