

Pokorny, Lukas

**[Kim, Jong-dae. Dokkaebi - Koreas Kobilde]**

*Religio*. 2009, vol. 17, iss. 1, pp. 100-101

ISSN 1210-3640 (print); ISSN 2336-4475 (online)

Stable URL (handle): <https://hdl.handle.net/11222.digilib/125280>

Access Date: 02. 12. 2024

Version: 20220831

Terms of use: Digital Library of the Faculty of Arts, Masaryk University provides access to digitized documents strictly for personal use, unless otherwise specified.

Inspiraci v ní navíc najdou i historici či filosofové.

DAVID VÁCLAVÍK

## Jong-dae Kim, *Dokkaebi* – *Koreas Koblolde*,

Wien: LIT Verlag 2007, 175 s.,  
ISBN 978-3-03735-189-5.

The author Jong-dae Kim, born in 1958, is director of the Exhibition Division at the National Folk Museum of Korea in Seoul, and lecturer for folklore at Chungang University, Korea University and Kyeonggi University. He holds a PhD in Korean Linguistics and Korean Literature from Chungang University. The Korean source text was translated into German by Cornelia Roth.

The so called *tokkaebi* is a mythical creature in numerous Korean folk tales and myths. In its looks similar to the well-known Japanese *Oni*, the *tokkaebi* is particularly noted for its sleeky and mischievous but also helpful demeanor. Due to its ambivalent traits and lively interest in human affairs this gremlin easily and sustainably found its way into Korean folk literature and folk belief. To this day the *tokkaebi* regularly appears in comics, fantasy literature and children's stories, what makes it a vivid protagonist of modern fiction.

In his study Kim tries to overview the multifarious features of the *tokkaebi*, thereby also referring to a few still existing sacrificial rituals and exorcisms in rural Korea. Despite several highly stimulating publications on the phenomenon of *tokkaebi* in Korea, the academic discourse couldn't yet rely on works written in languages other than Korean. The multilingual (Korean/English/German) book edited by Sang-soo Ahn (*Dokkaebi: Korean motifs – Koreanische Motive*, Tübingen: Wasmuth 2005), which is the only monograph available on that topic in a Western language is eventually a mere coffee-table book on *tokkaebi*-motifs on roof tiles and so forth, that doesn't deal suffi-

ciently with the significance of *tokkaebi* in areas apart from art history (e.g. religious studies). Therefore Kim's little study could meet a long-lasting demand: giving a brief outline of the *status quo* of research conducted by leading Korean scholars. To say it in other words, *Dokkaebi – Koreas Koblolde* could set the benchmark for other Non-Korean academic publications to come. However after an in-depth reading of the short treatise one has to admit that it actually doesn't.

First and foremost, the level of scientific quality is given through the correct implementation of academic formal rules (e.g. quoting, style of language, footnotes, references, methodology, etc.). Unfortunately the text lacks most of these. The whole work doesn't contain a single footnote for further reading or references, even worse the few quotations Kim uses throughout the study either have no correct or simply no indication of source at all. The bibliography includes six titles whereas the most recent is an MA-thesis from 1990. I don't think that research grinded to a halt from 1990 to the year of publication of this monograph. In Romanization the Revised Romanization of Korean, Hepburn without macrons for Japanese, and Hànyū Pīnyīn without tones for Chinese is applied; almost error free. Adequate picture credits are missing.

The style of language is simple and straightforward, however some assertions may be labeled as unscientific, tautological or even abusive: "Betrachtet man die große Nase und die tief liegenden Augen, so kann man an einen Araber denken, doch das ist nicht sicher." (p. 10). "Da es tatsächlich Leute gibt, die solche Erfahrungen gemacht haben, kann man die Erscheinung von Dokkaebi-Besessenheit nur schwerlich als übernatürlichen Vorfall abtun." (p. 47). "In den Geschichten vom 'Reich werden durch Begegnung mit einem Dokkaebi' verhalten die Dokkaebi einem Menschen, der ihnen gefällt, zu Reichtum." (p. 67). The remarks above clearly suggest that Kim mainly addresses his study to a nonacademic audience.

The work is composed of nine sections including a short preface (pp. 1-2), a prolo-

gue (pp. 5-25), five main chapters (pp. 29-165), a table of figures (pp. 169-170) and a rudimentary bibliography (p. 171). The prologue introduces the image of *tokkaebi* in folk belief, and the divergence and similarity with its Japanese and Chinese counterparts. Chapter 1 then provides insights into basic features such as the *tokkaebi*'s preferred dwellings, its nature and its varied relations to the world of man (pp. 29-50). Chapter 2 goes more into detail dealing with the role of the *tokkaebi pang-mang'i*, i. e. a kind of magic club, the *tokkaebi*'s fondness for *ssirm*, i. e. Korean wrestling, reasons for gaining wealth through a *tokkaebi*, and the phenomenon of *tokkaebi*-possession (pp. 53-75). The following chapter examines the phantasmal *tokkaebi*-will-o'-wisp, the *tokkaebi*'s relation to outstanding figures of history, and its deep knowledge of geomancy (pp. 79-93). Chapter 4 tries to reveal the meaning and goals of *tokkaebi*-tales (pp. 97-107), whereas chapter 5 briefly discusses selected sacrificial rituals for and exorcisms of *tokkaebi* (pp. 111-165), thereby underlining today's remaining relevance of *tokkaebi*.

The whole text is generously interspersed with illustrating quotations from *tokkaebi*-tales yet auxiliary addenda to the respective source texts are missing. In respect of content Kim emphasizes central aspects of the *tokkaebi*-issue however in the majority of cases he deals with them far too superficially. He works descriptive but omits a number of pertinent questions such as the role of *tokkaebi* in the context of Korean religious history. Kim presents a mere listing of literary *topoi* and examples of shamanistic rituals without fusing them into a whole. He fails to develop an overarching issue thus the different chapters seem to be lost devoid of any interconnection.

To sum it up Jong-dae Kim's *Dokkaebi – Koreas Kobolde* is definitely not written for a specialized audience, instead the author produced a plain text that gives scholars, unfamiliar with the topic a first clipped overview at the best. The general reader who doesn't care about scientific profundity finds a nice little synopsis about a folkloristic phenomenon mostly unknown outside of

Korea. Ultimately it is my sincere hope that more academically written studies on that topic will be published in a Western language soon.

LUKAS POKORNY

## **Petr Fiala, Laboratoř sekularizace. Náboženství a politika v ne-náboženské společnosti: český případ**

**Brno: Centrum pro studium  
demokracie a kultury, 2007,  
183 s.,  
ISBN 978-80-7325-141-3.**

Česká republika se dle nejrůznějších průzkumů řadí k nejsekularizovanějším zemím Evropy. Přesto (či spíše právě proto) téma sekularizace a „ateismu“ české společnosti stále přitahuje pozornost a je předmětem nejen odborných debat, ale i nejrůznějších monografií, článků a analýz. Dalším příspěvkem do této diskuse je i studie brněnského politologa a historika Petra Fialy *Laboratoř sekularizace. Náboženství a politika v ne-náboženské společnosti: český případ*, která byla vydána v roce 2007 v brněnském Centru pro studium demokracie a kultury. Je nutno poznamenat, že kniha není k danému tématu autorovou prvotinou a z knihy je zřejmě dlouhodobé promyšlení problémů a předkládaných otázek. Sám autor poukazuje ke své dřívější rozsáhlé publikaci *Katolicismus a politika: O politické dimenzi katolicismu v postmoderní době* (Brno: Centrum pro demokracii a kulturu 1995), kterou má *Laboratoř sekularizace* „v některých směrech rozvinout, doplnit a částečně taky korigovat.“ (s. 6).

Petr Fiala si ve své studii klade zcela zásadní otázky, týkající se religiozity v České republice a společenského vlivu katolické církve po roce 1989. Není totiž pochyb o tom, že po roce 1989 se katolická církev