



## **Folk Legends from Tono: Japan's Spirits, Deities, and Phantastic Creatures**

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# Folk Legends from Tono: Japan's Spirits, Deities, and Phantastic Creatures

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Boldly illustrated and superbly translated, *Folk Legends from Tono* captures the spirit of Japanese peasant culture undergoing rapid transformation into the modern era. This is the first time these 299 tales have been published in English. Morse's insightful interpretation of the tales, his rich cultural annotations, and the evocative original illustrations make this book unforgettable.

In 2008, a companion volume of 118 tales was published by Rowman & Littlefield as the *The Legends of Tono*. Taken together, these two books have the same content (417 tales) as the Japanese language book *Tono monogatari*.

Reminiscent of Japanese woodblocks, the ink illustrations commissioned for the *Folk Legends from Tono*, mirror the imagery that Japanese villagers envisioned as they listened to a storyteller recite the tales. The stories capture the extraordinary experiences of real people in a singular folk community. The tales read like fiction but touch the core of human emotion and social psychology. Thus, the reader is taken on a magical tour through the psychic landscape of the Japanese "spirit world" that was a part of its oral folk tradition for hundreds of years.

All of this is made possible by the translator's insightful interpretation of the tales, his sensitive cultural annotations, and the visual charm of the book's illustrations. The cast of characters is rich and varied, as we encounter *yokai* monsters, shape-shifting foxes, witches, grave robbers, ghosts, heavenly princesses, roaming priests, shamans, quasi-human mountain spirits, murderers, and much more.

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