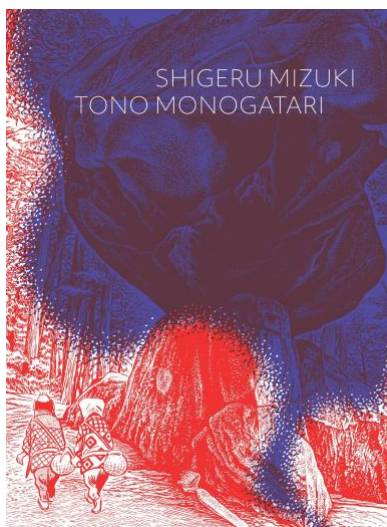


## Review: Tono Monogatari

by Shigeru Mizuki. Drawn and Quarterly, March 2021. 256 p. ill. ISBN 978-1770464360 (pbk), \$24.95.

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Jerrold Shiroma, University Archivist, University of California, Merced



The *Tōno Monogatari* is a collection of tales, legends, and traditions from, generally, the Iwate Prefecture, and, more specifically, the town of Tōno, which gives the book its name. Collected by Kunio Yanagita, widely considered the father of folklore studies in Japan, and Kizen Sasaki, a folklorist and native of Tōno, the book was largely ignored at the time of publication (largely due to the fervent wave of modernization sweeping Japan). It is now, quite possibly, the most famous collection of folklore in Japan, and has even led Tōno to be known as "The City of Folklore."

Shigeru Mizuki's *Tōno Monogatari* is a retelling of these classic stories. Mizuki, the king of Yōkai comics, began serializing his versions of these tales in 2008 and 2009. They were finally collected in 2010 with the 100th anniversary of the publication

of the original *Tōno Monogatari*. Mizuki's work is confident, with drawings that combine the joyfully cartoonish with highly detailed backgrounds that ground the stories in the landscapes of the region. There are occasional panels in full color which add a further richness to the tales. In addition to all this, as with Mizuki's other works, the autobiographical is always present. Mizuki acts as both tour guide and sometime protagonist of these tales, providing explication and a sense of amazement as he walks with you through a world that few, if any, in Japanese comics knew better.

If there was an overarching theme of this book, it might be found in the closing of one of the stories. A song is being sung, and the final words read: "Let those who know sorrow come forth so that we may fill them with joy."

This book would be well placed in both public (best suited for young adult and above readers) and academic libraries. Collections featuring titles on folklore, Japanese history, Japanese literature, and comic books and graphic novels will also be well-served by this title's inclusion.