

because of the government's slogan for Westernization, *bunmei kaika* 文明開化 ("Civilization and Enlightenment").

Yonemura's interpretation, while deficient in some areas, does offer insights into the way the Japanese adapted to new situations, in this case by adapting their artistic conventions. For example, she points out that "a popular subject with an established audience, such as portraits of beautiful courtesans (*bijinga*), would thus be 'translated' into a foreign theme by the simple substitution of foreign women" (32). She also shows that Japanese artists' lack of familiarity with Western culture appears in the form of various odd, misunderstood details in the prints.

Concerning this point, the significance of Yokohama prints might have more appeal to the reader if Yonemura had referred to other, lesser-known Japanese attempts to depict foreigners during the Edo period. Each attempt shows different interpretations of foreigners. For example, there are Nagasaki prints that depict the Dutch and Chinese in Nagasaki as well as folk and popular art that depicts foreign embassies in procession to Edo (now Tokyo). When Commodore Perry's expedition arrived at a small fishing village in 1854, the locals and professionals created what are called the Black Ship Scrolls. In the Scrolls, Perry appears like *tengu* 天狗, a fearful genie with magical power over human beings (see STATLER 1963, 66–67). Therefore, a comparison with other attempts to depict foreigners would most probably better characterize Yokohama prints. The author mentions that the prints "portray the foreign community in an exuberant and festive spirit that reveals no trace of the complex and ambivalent attitude that some Japanese officials held toward the newcomers" (129).

Although not entirely satisfied with Yonemura's approach to Yokohama prints, I believe that the catalogue provides an important contribution to the study of Japanese folk and popular art. We can consider these prints rare historical representations of foreigners from the Japanese point of view. Hopefully they will be studied as texts in the future.

REFERENCES CITED:

MEECH-PEKARIK, Julia

1986 *The world of the Meiji print: Impressions of a new civilization*. New York: Weatherhill.

STATLER, Oliver

1963 *The Black Ship Scroll*. Tokyo: Weatherhill.

YOKOTA Yōichi 横田洋一

1989 *Yokohama ukiyo-e* 横浜浮世絵. Yokohama: Yūrindō.

Keiko SUZUKI

The University Museum of Archaeology/Anthropology
Philadelphia

CHINA

ROHSENOW, JOHN S. *A Chinese-English Dictionary of Enigmatic Folk Similes (Xiehouyu)*. Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1991. xvii+324 pages. Illustrations, bibliography, index. Hardcover US\$45.00; ISBN 0-8165-1031-8.

This is the first Chinese-English dictionary of enigmatic folk similes (*xiehouyu*) ever to be published and, as such, it is a welcome contribution to the study of Chinese language.

To be sure, the study of Chinese folksay (a term suggested by Jan Harold Brunvand to refer to "the short, verbal, nonnarrative forms of folklore" [BRUNVAND 1976, 57]) is by no means a novelty. But while works on proverbs and dialect are numerous and voluminous (a notable example being Arthur Smith's 1902 pioneering work, *Proverbs and Common Sayings from the Chinese* [SMITH 1902]), *xiehouyu*—a two-part allegorical saying, of which the first part is stated and easily understood and the second part is often left unsaid or, if stated, is usually expressed in a punning, humorous, or satirical mode—has received curiously little attention by folklorists or linguists. This dictionary therefore fills a conspicuous lacuna in this area.

The importance of folk language for understanding the lives and actions of the common people has been convincingly argued by such scholars as Peter Burke, Natalie Z. Davis, and Alan Dundes. John Rohsenow's work reaffirms such a notion and presents a valuable tool to those interested in the richness and complexity of the language of the Chinese people.

The dictionary begins with a general introduction to *xiehouyu*. It succeeds in providing a clear historical context in which the enigmatic folk simile appeared, and in explaining its numerous variants (such as *cang ci* [hidden word]) and diverse functions. But the originality of the book lies in its assembling of a total of 4,113 *xiehouyu* previously ignored by scholars. Entries are listed alphabetically according to the *pinyin* romanization system. Each one is recorded in the original Chinese and accompanied by a detailed, careful, and generally accurate explanation. The explanation is in either figurative or literal mode, and may involve a pun or a dialect reading. The inclusion of many contemporary political *xiehouyu* (such as those related to Mao Zedong and the Cultural Revolution) also gives the dictionary a sense of currency.

But while the number of entries included is abundant and the author's annotation is commendable, there are a few problems. The first is definition. Rohsenow is fully aware of the ambiguity between the terms *xiehouyu* and *chengyu* ("a traditional fixed-character phrase [usually of four characters]," xvii) and *yanyu* ("a traditional proverbial expression," xvii); but the inclusion of a large number of *chengyu* such as *buru hu xue*—*yan de hu zi* ("If one does not [dare to] enter the tiger's lair, how can one obtain tiger cubs?" 14A) and *yanyu* such as *tou ji bucheng—shi ba mi* ("Trying to steal a chicken—[literal] losing the rice [scattered as bait]; [figurative] ending badly," 231B) in this collection causes confusion and calls for a better distinction between *xiehouyu* and the other two categories. Moreover, to label *chengyu* entries such as *yi luan ji shi* ("Dashing an egg against a rock," 282A) as *yanyu* also clouds the difference between the two.

Although Rohsenow makes no claim that this collection is exhaustive, the selection criteria are not clearly explained. Scholars will certainly question some of his decisions. For example, if a popular saying *yi, er, san, wu, liu—mei shi [si]* ("One, two, three, five, six—[literal] no four; [pun/dialect] having nothing to do; it doesn't matter," 277A) is included, why not an equally popular one: *yi, er, san, si, wu, liu, qu—wang ba [wangba]* ("One, two, three, four, five, six, seven—[literal] forget eight; [pun] a tortoise; a cuckold") (SUN and WANG 1982, 1)?

Despite its richness, the book is difficult to use. Part of the problem lies in its organization. There is no table of contents. Since entries are alphabetized by the first words of each Chinese *xiehouyu*, a reader who knows no Chinese will have a hard time using the dictionary. Neither can he or she obtain much help from the index. Rohsenow states that the items listed in the index are "names, places, topics" (xvii). But since they are mostly names and places "contained within the entries" (xvii), they tell us little about the actual meaning of the saying, hence they are of minimal help as a key to the understanding of the term. The effectiveness and vividness of a *xiehouyu*

lies not in the stated first part (where names and places appear), but in the unstated second part (meaning and subject); the lack of true subject indexes (such as family, profession, literature, and art) therefore greatly diminishes the usefulness of the book.

Researchers might also wish for more information about the origins of the enigmatic folk similes. It is true that Rohsenow includes some dialect terms (such as Cantonese and Shanghainese), but the majority of entries are compiled without any indication of regional provenance. Granted that the origins of most *xiehouyu* are difficult to pinpoint, an examination of them will shed important light on the local variations, transformation, and uniqueness of the language, thus providing a larger social and cultural context within which enigmatic folk similes operate.

In a work so ambitious as Rohsenow's, there are understandably typos, misprints, and occasionally incorrect information. "Feiji weiba" is misspelled as "feiji yiba" (55B); "Guan Yun Cheng" should be rendered as "Guan Yunchang" (71A); and Tang Tai Zong (misspelled as "Tang Tai Zhong") was not the "first" but the second emperor of the Tang dynasty (242A), to name just a few.

Such critical comments, however, should not diminish the value of this dictionary. To organize this mountain of material into usable form is no mean accomplishment. It is a significant work for it contributes to our overall understanding of folklore in general, and Chinese folk language in particular. The dictionary will be of great interest to folklorists, writers, linguists, political scientists, and anthropologists.

REFERENCES CITED:

BRUNVAND, Jan Harold

1976 *Folklore: A study and research guide*. New York: St. Martin's Press.

SMITH, Arthur H.

1902 *Proverbs and common sayings from the Chinese*. Shanghai: American Presbyterian Mission Press.

SUN Zhiping 孙治平 and WANG Shijun 王士均, eds.

1982 *Xiehouyu siqian tiao* 歇后语四千条 [Four thousand enigmatic folk similes]. Shanghai: Shanghai Wenyi Chubanshe.

Chang-tai HUNG
Carleton College
Northfield, Minnesota

WALTNER, ANN. *Getting an Heir: Adoption and the Construction of Kinship in Late Imperial China*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1990. vii+226 pages. Glossary, bibliography, index. Hardcover US\$26.00; ISBN 0-8248-1280-8.

The author, using abundant historical materials including medical and ritual texts, legal codes, local gazetteers, biographies, genealogies, fiction, etc., discusses in great detail the legal, ritual, and moral aspects of adoption in the late Ming and early Ching periods.

Chapter 1 discusses general Chinese views about procreation and heredity. The author points out that "the prominence given to notions of blood affinity in early modern Europe has no Chinese counterpart" (47). The Chinese in the 15th and 16th centuries believed that the linkages of a child and his progenitors were complex and were not perceived to be strictly biological in nature. The timing of a child's conception, the behavior of a woman during pregnancy (education of the foetus in the