

orientation. Likewise, the second chapter, "Space," deals with the material aspects, that is, the spatial concept of *jian* that is essential to the division of the living space into rooms and the distribution of space in the dwelling in general, including such architectural features as courtyards, skywells, and verandas; as well as with its relation to its designers and users, that is the *jia* 家 (family). There is, however, no discussion of the growth of an extended family and the consequent physical expansion of the dwelling; this is perhaps due to the modern emphasis on small nuclear families.

Chapter 3, "Structure," is the most technical one in the book, dealing with foundations, framework, and the roof of the dwelling, including the building materials; nevertheless, the human aspect is present here, too, with a large number of instances of folk terminology and traditions that explain the architectural features. Chapter 4, "Detail," discusses various decorative elements of Zhejiang dwellings against their art-historical background.

Finally, Chapter 5, "Tradition," focuses on folk religion and folk knowledge, which account for regulations concerning the stages and rituals of the house construction and practices that ensure the well-being of the dwelling and its inhabitants and ward off misfortune. This chapter is the most interpretative, and the author combines in it his own data with those obtained by other researchers. While many works on the Chinese architectural and spatial symbolism heavily concentrate on the *fengshui* rules, which often tend to be ideal and in reality difficult to apply, this chapter goes well beyond the *fengshui* prescriptions to interpret the non-material aspects of the dwelling broadly in a wide spectrum of the "little tradition" of Chinese folk culture.

Another feature that permeates the present book is the discussion of change in Chinese vernacular architecture. Each of the five chapters contains an overview of various transitions that have occurred in recent times, indicating the continuity and transformation of traditional aspects of Zhejiang dwellings.

The book is richly illustrated by photographs (mostly the author's own) and drawings; it may be said that roughly equal space is devoted to illustrations and to the text. All the Chinese terms are in the *pinyin* transcription, and they are listed, along with their original form in Chinese characters and the English translation, in the glossary section.

After this first step of a comprehensive region-by-region treatise of the Chinese vernacular architecture, it is hoped that studies of dwellings in other provinces of China will follow, especially in the format of this book by Knapp.

Richard ZGUSTA
Osaka University of Foreign Languages
Minoo, Japan

VIETNAM

TERADA, ALICE M. *Under the Starfruit Tree: Folktales from Vietnam*. Illustrations by Janet Larsen. Introduction and notes by Mary C. Austin. A Kolowalu Book. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1989. xv+136 pages. Cloth US\$15.95; ISBN 0-8248-1252-2.

Under the Starfruit Tree is a handsome volume of some twenty-eight folktales, printed in large type on high-quality paper. Each story averages five pages; the longest is eight. Ten full-page line drawings in black and white illustrate some of the selection, giving the reader some notion of the variety and depth of Vietnamese imagination.

The target audience is "the general reader, beginning with children in the middle grades (5-8)." The prose style is clear and informative. Most traces of the poetics of the original sources appear to have been sacrificed to the serious end of educating the reader of English largely ignorant of things Vietnamese. As plain narrative prose, supplemented by cultural endnotes that at times make for more fascinating reading than some of the tales themselves, this collection of tales succeeds admirably. As I proceeded to read, I found myself turning to the endnotes as "prior text" because they enhanced my reading and understanding of the tales. The tales originated from printed sources published in the 1970s in Hanoi and Saigon. Three Vietnamese translators worked with Alice Terada to produce this collection in English. The uniformity of style of the final project indicates that some of the significance and beauty of the Vietnamese originals must have been greatly transformed in this modern English retelling.

The tales are grouped into four categories: Foibles of Man and Quirks of Animals; Tales from the Lowlands and the Highlands; Spirit World; Food, Love, and Laughter. A four-page introduction provides background information on bits and pieces of the culture and history of Vietnam, but nothing of the geography, flora, and fauna. Because general ignorance of Vietnam is so pervasive in the West, a longer introduction would have been in order. Inclusion of a map of Vietnam showing its long coastline and the interior Annamite chain would have enhanced the situational context of many of the stories that deal with the sea-mountain contrast, including the mythic origins of Vietnam itself: Lac Ong Quan, king of the race of dragons, whose domain is the kingdom of waters, and Au Co, queen of the race of fairies, whose domain is the range of the mountains. One of my favorite selections, "The Lady of Stone" (115), actually refers to the site of the story at a mountaintop between Da Nang and Cam Ranh Bay. Some mention of the tropical location, seasons, and climate would have dramatized the reality of tigers, snakes, and lizards that are prevalent figures, and made more palpable the degree of oppressive humidity in the hot season that is at the core of the tale "They Ran to Me" (126). The starfruit itself, which is in the title of the book, is but one tropical fruit among many familiar to the native Vietnamese, but also known to "Anglo" urbanites as carambola. Such connections could have been made in order to make distant Vietnam more familiar to the unfamiliar reader. Several of the tales deal with non-Vietnamese ethnic groups, the Muong and the Dao in particular. The author's endnotes to the story "The Worm and the Snail" (59) do mention that, of the ethnic minorities, the Muong are linguistically "closest to Vietnamese" (63). But in "How the Dao People Came to Be" we do not learn who the Dao are related to at all. Certainly, part of the fascination of Vietnam is its ethnolinguistic diversity. In addition to the Viet-Muong, there are the Tai, Khmer, Austronesian (Cham, e.g.), Hmong-Mien, and Tibeto-Burman enclaves scattered throughout the uplands. Passing reference only is made to Buddhism, Confucianism, and animism, as well as spirit ritual. The truly curious reader will have to turn to other sources for a key to an understanding of the role of religions reflected in these stories.

The collaborative effort that has gone into the publication of this volume is to be lauded. Anyone who studies this collection will be richly rewarded with a greater understanding of Vietnamese culture and traditions and the desire to learn more. With the recent influx of more children of Vietnamese descent into the classroom, the timing of this publication is propitious indeed.

John F. HARTMANN
Northern Illinois University
De Kalb