

for his valor. The fair maiden is a lady warrior fit for a warrior's bride—no hint of a gentle anima to his overbearing animus—and the monster is just another bandit in nonhuman form.

Likewise, much of the folk beliefs of folklore are barely visible in this secular tale. This is also a story of warriors told, not by one who saw the real tragedy of wars like the Greek bards, but by a literatus who made a living by selling such escapist tales of harmless violence. Contrary to appearance, the tale is rather bloodless. The hero usually fights the various bandit leaders one against one. He wins. The leader is converted. His band of hundreds, who act more like spectators than like real men-in-arms, join Hua Guan Suo's army en masse. A great feast always follows; a common meal, Chinese style, seals the new brotherhood of fighters. The Viking also killed and then dined heartily, but at least there would be more gore. (The ones who usually get killed in the story here are the monsters; there is no place in the human company for them to be converted to Hua's cause.) The tale does tell of physical action, male camaraderie, and a more open romance between man and woman, everything denied the men and women living in an uptight Neo-Confucian society. But ironically, though the tale is not true to life, life sometimes does imitate even bad fiction. Young minds have been seduced from their stuffy studios to go looking for some Taoist master from whom to learn *hung-fu*, and among the brotherhood of the Chinese martial arts, the ethos of loyalty has been patterned around such heroic tales, and oaths of sworn brotherhood are still made before Guan Yu.

So folklorists coming across this book might have to make an adjustment to see how myths were routinely historicized in China. The history of this fictional hero is itself the history of Chinese politics (16–18): namely, that the Ming rulers' attempt to pacify the Yunan area where rebels associated themselves with a vague figure called Guan Suo apparently had the government turning his cult into a cult of a loyal subject, which led to his being made a legendary "third" son of Guan Yu, then being canonized as the God of War defending the state. Hua Guan Suo then ended up pacifying the same southwest area "back then" with Zhuge Liang, a compatriot of Guan Yu, in a tale not set in "once upon a time" but squarely in time. Created by history for political ends, Hua Guan Suo enjoyed a summer of popularity as a fictional hero and then also faded from history—until this recent find helps recall him, quite literally, from the grave.

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ZHAO ZONGFU 趙宗福. *Huaer tonglun* 花兒通論 [On *huaer*]. Xining 西寧: Qinghai Renmin Chubanshe 青海人民出版社, 1989.

ZHOU JUANGU and ZHANG GENGYOU 周娟姑, 張更有. *Qinghai chuantong minjian gegu jingxuan* 青海傳統民間歌曲精選 [Selections of traditional Qinghai folk songs]. Xining: Qinghai Renmin Chubanshe, 1988.

On Huaer and *Selections of Traditional Qinghai Folk Songs* are two recently published books that those interested in Asian folklore will find valuable. The first is probably the best study to date on a widely distributed type of folk song that may be translated

as "flower songs." The study traces *huaer* origins and development, as well as including much original material.

Divided into two parts, the book first deals with the definition, origins, rhyme schemes, and characteristics of the music. The second part treats methods of transcribing *huaer*, and the collection, collating, and study of *huaer*.

Zhao argues for the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644) as the time of *huaer* origin and supports this by describing *huaer* in various cultures and geographical regions and as related to various immigration patterns. He argues that the ethnic groups who sing *huaer*: Tibetans, Tu 土 (Monguor), Dongxiang 東鄉, Baoan 保安 (Bonan), Sala 撒拉 (Salar), Yugu 裕固, Hui 回, and Han 漢, with the exception of the Tibetans, migrated to the Qinghai-Gansu-Ningxia region primarily during the Yuan and Ming dynasties, creating a pattern of settlement that still exists today. Thus for Zhao, *huaer* took its primary language from the Han (though there are *huaer* songs today in the Tibetan and Tu languages, the most common language for *huaer* is the Han language), but drew on the various minority cultures for musical style, particularly that of Tibetans and Hui. This adds a historical dimension to previous definitions, which have generally referred to *huaer* as songs sung in Gansu 甘肅, Qinghai, and Ningxia 寧夏 and characterized by protracted high pitches, often sung in mountainous areas, and also characterized primarily by lyric but sometimes by narrative stanzas sung either solo or antiphonally (ZHANG 1940; ANONYMOUS 1979, 555).

A major defect of the book is the absence of music scores and of any discussion of various varieties of *huaer*. Zhao does make good use of his knowledge of the Qinghai Han dialect, which is virtually incomprehensible to those knowing only the national language. This is particularly true in the case of *huaer*, where many local colloquialisms are used.

The collection by Zhou and Zhang represents some thirty years of work and includes folk songs from many Qinghai areas. Although the work can be faulted for ignoring minority-language folk songs (there is no discussion of anything but Han-language folk songs, which means the very abundant materials in Tibetan, Mongolian, Tu, and Sala minority folk songs in Qinghai are overlooked), it is still a very significant collection.

Some of these folk songs can be traced back 2,000 years, with origins among ancient ethnic groups in the Qinghai-Tibet-Gansu region. In time, many songs mixed with local minority languages, but now most are sung in the local Qinghai Han dialect.

The authors classify songs into six categories: *huaer*, *yangger* 秧歌, banquet and wedding songs, drinking songs, working songs, and "others." Musical scores are presented for each song (more than 160 in total), and the area(s) in which the songs are sung and the singers are also noted.

The *huaer* presented in the collection are often melancholy lyrics centered on lovers parting. For example:

Some stones are black, some blue,
 Among the black is a peony;
 Oh, *huaer*, come back soon, I miss you. (refrain)
 I look back every three steps,
 And what a lonely girl I left!
 Oh, *huaer*, come back soon, I miss you.

In contrast, banquet and wedding songs usually express pleasure and happiness with an upbeat tune, and at times may contain humor. Thus we find, for example:

Our lady's voice is like
 A cuckoo's cooing.

While you who come for the bride,
Sing as uglily as a pig's grunting.

Other banquet songs recount stories or legends of the past.

Yangger are often sung during festivals with the purpose of delighting the gods. Such songs include stories and legends, and sentiments associated with the hope of a good future harvest. An example follows:

We are met by a new festival,
With paper lanterns on posts;
Turning round and round in the wind,
Foretelling the next harvest.

Many drinking songs are also games; when people drink, such songs are a basic form of entertainment in north China. Several Qinghai nationalities regard it as both an obligation and a pleasure to get their guests drunk, so such songs have a strong place in local culture. The following is an example of a drinking song, sung when a group of (generally) men sit around a table and drink. One person starts singing and then the next person in the circle takes up the song. Each new singer must double all the numbers. If he makes a mistake, he loses and must drink as "punishment."

One sparrow has one head,
And its two eyes brightly shine,
With two feet on the wall top,
And one tail wagging behind.

The second time it is sung it would be as follows:

Two sparrows have two heads,
And their four eyes brightly shine,
With four feet on the wall top,
And two tails wagging behind.

Working songs may well be the oldest ones, functioning to measure the pace of work—some fast and some slow. The words themselves today have little meaning.

Some children's songs and religious songs are also included.

A point the authors omit to make is that Qinghai's Islamic minorities (i.e., Hui and Sala) neither sing at weddings nor drink—both activities are presently forbidden by Islamic doctrine—so some songs are very much nationality-specific. Additionally, in some Tibetan and Mongolian areas (representing much of the land area of Qinghai), Han songs are never heard.

Nevertheless, this is one of the best collections of Qinghai Han folk songs to date, including 164 specimens of the general types mentioned above.

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