

literary traditions. Furthermore, the interpretation of the Confucian virtue *ren* as “a kind of magical power” (217) might be correct in the case of the one or the other Neo-Confucian philosopher, but it is certainly not the mainstream understanding of the concept. The author seems occasionally to fall into traps which are set by his own theoretical approach: He attempts to develop a holistic view of the structure of Chinese culture, neglecting historical differences and changes. The ahistorical view of structuralism induces him to illustrate his interpretations with examples from antiquity to the present day. But Chinese thought has changed during the past two thousand years, and to try to detect an underlying structure which is constant, cannot lead to more convincing results than to analyse the structure of “European thought” since Aristotle. This does not affect Sangren’s interpretation of Taiwanese religion, but it renders doubtful his claim to analyse “Chinese thought.”

One of the most stimulating passages of the book deals with the integration of local religion and state religion. The author shows that both refer to the same symbols, i.e. the hierarchy of territorial deities, in legitimating social structure. The meaning, however, which is given to those symbols, differs, depending on the perspective. From the view of the state religion the local and regional gods unite hierarchically the whole empire and convert it into one single household, while from the view of the local religion the gods serve as symbols of communal identity and divide society into a segmentary hierarchy of competing communities (221). One may ask, however, if this very convincing interpretation supports the author’s rejection of the great tradition / little traditions dichotomy. It is true that the common reliance on the very same symbols is an important factor of cultural integration in China, but it is, after all, an ideological integration. Ideological it is, because it disguises the fundamental differences which exist between local and national cosmologies. If from the structuralist point of view both are presented as identical, this approach obviously has to be supplemented by more conventional methods of analysis.

Sangren’s book is an important contribution to the interpretation of Chinese popular religion, bringing together ethnographical and sinological studies with up-to-date anthropological theory. It remains to be wished that he and other scholars will widen the path of theoretical understanding which he has cut into the jungle of Chinese popular religion.

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CENTRAL ASIA

REICHL, KARL, translator. *Rawšan. Ein usbekisches mündliches Epos* [Rawšan. Au Uzbek oral epic]. Asiatische Forschungen, Band 93. Wiesbaden / Germany: Otto Harrassowitz, 1985. ix+229 Paper DM 114.—; ISBN 3-447-02506-9; ISSN 0571-320X. (In German)

The book under review is a study and translation of *Rawšan*, an ‘Uzbek oral epic.’ For many centuries marvelous tales and songs sprouted up around the figure of Koroğlu outside modern Turkey, to a lesser extent in the Caucasus than in Central Asia. As late as in the 20th century they were and still are recorded mainly by folklorists in various idioms, as dictated by rhapsodists. However, it is not clear how these compositions, which were sung or recited, were interdependent with one another in their origin.

At times these stories merely mention the name Kōroğlu (Gör-Oglu, etc.) or his court at Čambil, relating somehow all their actors to him and having also other topoi in common. To date, no scientifically satisfactory survey of the oriental genre *dastan* has been produced, e.g., in the form of a monograph where the different plots are compared and their sources reliably identified, and taking into consideration all the available documents (no matter in what language or form—verse and/or prose—and up to date), including the repertoire of the *märchen* (i.e. the source of their contents) and literary sources. In fact, such a survey cannot be made as long as, for seemingly methodological yet apparently quite pragmatic culture-political reasons, Soviet folklorists do not competently make use of an exact critique of the texts and a comparative *Stoffgeschichte* (history of the plots). Foreign help would therefore be quite appropriate. This procedure would be expected by experts, but they will no doubt be disappointed upon carefully reading the volume under review.

The interest in poetry concerning Kōroğlu or in similar orally transmitted (or at least orally performed) works arose among Soviet folklorists only during the second third of the 20th century, when, after a period of leftist plebeian disregard for what they saw as the heritage of the elite, they suddenly began to search for “heroic epics,” possibly in all languages of the Soviet Union. At that time they discovered among the Turkic peoples songs about the raids and love of famous princely adventurers, promoted such creations of the rhapsodists as genuine popular literature, subjected them to an ideological exegesis, and edited them accordingly.

These works were first of all used to prove two points. First, they were to demonstrate that in all these epics and marches the protagonist was not a nationalistic or gentilic figure, but a socially minded representative of the suppressed masses fighting against their internal and external enemies. Second, they were to show that an ideal future was already poetically anticipated in them. No less a person than the Germanistic scholar and expert in western literature Viktor Schirmunski (alias Žirmunskij), lent his authority to demonstrate such theses (sometimes made definite by a word from Stalin) by deduction. Although he was not yet familiar at that time with the oriental and in particular the Turkic material, he was nevertheless convinced that with the help of Hadi Zarif(ov), a natural expert in Uzbek language and poetry, and by using analogies (i.e. European categories), he could arrive at a better understanding of the *dastan* phenomenon, namely at a marxist and historico-materialist interpretation (Žirmunskij and Zarifov 1947; Chadwick and Zhirmunsky 1969).

A number of Central Asian epigones, in their writings about indigenous folklore and especially about *dastan* and *märchen*, followed these established tenets *bona fide* in the fashion of “minimal art” avoiding all problems of literary history. Such dogmatic opinions have lately been uncritically taken over in Germany as solid scientific achievements in connection with a popularized brand of sociology. This automatically and considerably upgraded entopic authors who were quoted by name. Reichl, a foreigner, regrettably could not avoid falling prey to the illusion that such tenets were supported by demonstrable facts. Therefore, this book offers no original conceptions and no solution to problems of literary history with consequences for folklore.

Within the framework of an interregional and comparative inquiry based on comparable documents, which still needs to be established and which was to include all the intensively and therefore also selectively collected folklore of Central Asia, it would perhaps be possible to filter our representative characteristic traits for the manner in which identical sources—e.g. concerning the Kōroğlu plot—have been received in relation to their plot as well as to their form. It is wrong to designate performances recorded from *one* rhapsodist without further ado as the national *version* and treat them as such.

The book's subtitle is therefore only conditionally acceptable concerning all three of the aspects mentioned. It is not correct to unrestrictedly call the work translated here an "epic," in particular in "Uzbek" epic, and even less an "oral" one. In Central Asia folklorists used to befriend themselves with rhapsodists. Such "creative" relationships produced compositions which on the one hand promoted their authors to become members of the Writers' Union and on the other hand were made to pass as age-old folk epics. Such artificial constructions and even clumsy falsifications abound in Uzbek folkloristics (See e.g. Laude-Cirtautas 1984).

Fortunately there are older documents about Kōroğlu, among them Central Asian works, which antedate 1930 and are reliable as texts. They may—if no popular, oral distribution can be established—be treated at least as individual arrangements of commonly owned, mostly märchen-like, plots. Such a source is the manuscript recorded in Samarkand in 1927 by a collector named Hadi Zarif(ov) and taken from Ergaš (1868–1937), a man with a family history of singing and writing. Ergaš as his father was able to recite and sing skillfully, accompanied by a string instrument, long poems about several famous heroes such as Alpamiš or Gōroqli (it can be assumed that he also made use of plots he had heard).

Several compositions have been recorded as dictated by Ergaš. Here it can be studied how the Soviet mind is reflected in its creations. The early recording presented here in translation is clearly part of a mediocre set. The triviality of this work in content and poetic skill is barely useful for someone attempting his first steps into this sunken genre. If it was precisely its *triviality* which prompted the future turcologist Karl Reichl to translate this text into German and consecrate it thereby for the scientific world, this would be perfectly acceptable. One misses the unadulterated original source (short passages are given, though), because all further publications based directly on this manuscript differ considerably from one another, as Reichl observed. Apparently the edition of 1971 was used for this translation, wherein arbitrary "changes" of the 1956 edition had been undone. Such interference with the printed text were probably made personally by Zarifov, reflecting more the tide of the times than the conjectures of the author who in the meantime had advanced to the position of an authoritarian scholar under Schirmunski's tutorship. He was perfectly aware of what he was doing with his manuscript and whom this revision was to serve. Now the time has come to systematically trace such interventions with field-recordings and their problematic interpretations, to classify and to qualify them in order to explain them culture-historically, and then eradicate them definitely from the text as well as from scientific usage. This is a job for a German scholar.

Regrettably, Reichl did not make use of the only manuscript in Arabic script for this translation, but relied on an uncritical and adapted printed edition in a modernized script. This should have been avoided since the Russian translation also is in no way suited for scientific purposes. Consequently, the basis for the translation is not a critically established text; it is a single version from a single poet who dictates his composition and does not perform for an audience as usually would be the case. It is, however, to Reichl's credit to have translated a work from the Uzbek and to have directed the attention of readers familiar with German to similar, still unstudied, manuscripts.

The book seems to be conceived as a scholarly translation, but it is for scholars of epic poetry not familiar with the original language, like folklorists, rather than for the expert turcologist. Given this readership, much could have been left out completely while other things are missing. In a short introduction the author comments briefly on Koroğlu poetry, on some "schools of singers," on the origin of rhapsodists and of the *Rawšan* manuscript. A substantive part of this introduction is given to "content

and structure" of the text. This would be most important for the scholar of narrative had it been written with more circumspection.

Reichl divides the content into 39 narrative pieces which comprise the sixty songs. He gives short résumés of these pieces but does not refer to where they may be found in the translation. In this loosely organized composition interspersed with "blind motifs," Reichl succeeds in recognizing only a few motifs of *marchen*, and identifies even less types, but he cites highly fortuitous parallels which reveal no meaningful or convincing connections. His further observations reveal that the author is not an expert in narrative research (however, he has since published a volume on tales from Sinkiang. See Reichl 1986). It is beyond my comprehension how such confused remarks, as those on pp. 23-32, could appear in an established series as the *Asiatische Forschungen*. "Motif research" based on associative thinking would have had no place in a scholarly work already at the turn of the century, but unfortunately such procedure still reflects the level of Uzbek folkloristics.

A non-folklorist planning to publish a volume for folklorists should have approached an expert in narrative research to have him make an orderly type-analysis (as the author certainly did for the *Märchen aus Sinkiang*, 1986). Stith Thompson's name turns up three times in the bibliography (curiously enough even as the "author" of the Aarne index), and some references are made to his Motif-Index, but there can be no doubt that Reichl and not yet learned to handle plot analysis professionally or did not see the need to establish a critical apparatus. His observations on style are somewhat better focused, but it is generally unclear what kind of readership he had in mind. This part of the introduction has little to offer non-turcologists, and even for the specialist less would have been better.

In concluding the introduction Reichl adds some observations concerning the translation. However, except for the statement that he does not want to produce an interlinear German translation, there is practically no information concerning the principles applied to his procedure. Instead, there is a long explanation about transcription which could have been sufficiently dealt with in a table.

The translation constitutes the bulk of the book. It is fluent and in a pleasantly unlitrary style. The songs are numbered, but otherwise there is no visible organization of either the text or the content. Too little attention is paid to the conveniences of quotations and scholarly documentation. The numerous, but mostly philological, footnotes may have some importance for turcologists, but they are of no use for scholars in literature and folklore who will use only the German translation and the factual information from the footnotes. An overloaded and disparate bibliography covering more than a hundred titles (some obscure, some not made use of), and explanation of terms, concludes the well printed and handsomely produced volume. From a publisher highly valued by orientalists and from the series' well known editors, W. Heissig, with H. Franke and N. Poppe, the last mentioned certainly familiar with the state of affairs in his homeland, we would have expected a truly exemplary edition, which should stimulate more precise scholarship in Uzbekistan.

Since in recent years the interest in translations of Uzbek literature into European languages has been growing in Tashkent (See Otažanov 1985) it should be expected that turcologists, translators, and experienced editors would be welcome to help foster local development. Unfortunately, the way foreigners seek information in the academic world of Central Asia leaves much to be desired. These scholars uncritically accept—recently with an increasing rate—unreliable texts and sometimes unfounded statements put forth by writers of Uzbekistan. The unconditional acceptance of a variety of texts which has become fashionable according to the principle "ex oriente lux" does

not contribute to improving the poor scholarly niveau of Central Asian folkloristics. Quite to the contrary, such credit unduly given in foreign countries often works to the detriment of scholarship in the home country.

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CAMBODIA

THIERRY, SOLANGE. *Le Cambodge des contes* [Cambodia of the märchen].

Recherches Asiatiques. Paris: L'Harmattan, 1985. 295 pages. Bibliography. Paper fFr 140,00; ISBN 2-85802-575-1. (in French)

This book is a revised edition of the author's thesis submitted in 1976 for her Doctorat d'État under the title *Étude d'un corpus de contes cambodgiens traditionnels. Essai d'analyse thématique et morphologique*. As can be gathered from the thesis' title the author undertakes to analyse the most well-known Cambodian märchen in terms of their themes and narrative technique. In doing so she describes the plot of each story step by step and points out the themes contained in it.

It is remarkable and surprising at the same time how much and how often books have been published concerning Khmer märchen, be it as translations or as commentaries. In more recent times (since 1970) many voluminous works on the tales have been published in rapid succession or almost contemporaneously starting with C. Velder's *Liebesgeschichten aus Kambodscha* (1971). Then R. Sacher published *Märchen der Khmer* (1979) with a long foreword (5-33) and commentary (361-426). Shortly after the present volume's publication appeared R. Gaudes' *Kambodschanische Volksmärchen* (1987), together with an afterword and notes (431-514). 1988 R. Sacher again published a new collection, *Sagen und Legenden der Khmer*, accompanied by an afterword, notes and commentary (137-233).

Contrary to these German publications Thierry' volume is not a translation. It is—as mentioned above—an attempt to describe the word of the Cambodian märchen in both their literature-historical and their socio-cultural context by the means of a descriptive analysis of *only* twenty märchen. For this work the author relies on earlier French translations (see her bibliography 283-291).

All these publications, no doubt, demonstrate the popularity märchen enjoy in works concerning Khmer literature in general. With the exception of some archaic