

RÖHRICH, Lutz

1964 *Märchen und Wirklichkeit* [*Märchen and reality*]. Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag.

Peter Knecht

#### THAILAND

YOUNG, LINDA WAI LING. *Shan Chrestomathy. An Introduction to Tai Mau Language and Literature*. Monograph Series No. 28. Berkeley: Center for South and Southeast Asian Studies, 1985. Viii+316 pages. Map, glossaries. Paper US\$14.75, ISBN 0-8191-4808-3; Hardcover US\$ 28.50, ISBN 0-8191-4808-3.

Tai Mau (Chinese Shan) is one of the less accessible of the Southwestern Tai languages. In this modest work, Linda Young provides students of Tai dialects a corpus of eleven texts in the form of five folktales, three myths and three short expressive pieces, one of which is a lullaby. The texts were collected in Chiangmai, Thailand in 1976. Each text is transcribed phonemically, with an interlinear word-by-word translation into English, which, in turn, is followed by a continuous free translation. Introductory notes include a phonological sketch, grammar notes, and a description of the new (1940) Tai Mau writing system. The last third of the book is devoted to glossaries, one of which is the 1000 comparative word list developed by William J. Gedney and utilized by Jimmy Harris and others subsequently.

Those who have attempted to translate the literatures of the minority Tai languages can appreciate the difficulties encountered by Young. Untrained in Shan (but knowing Standard Thai), unable to translate *in situ* or with the assistance of a dictionary of the language, her work was mainly one of field translation. Her principal informant, a Tai Mau speaker from Nam Kham, a border town in the Lashio Shan State of Burma, "not only supplied all eight texts as well as the two tables, but, much to my delight and with a zeal which was a perennial source of mystery to me, proceeded to privately write out each text entirely in phonemic script before we embarked on a morpheme-by-morpheme translation."

In the Foreword, James A. Matisoff cautions that "this work is primarily a contribution to cultural anthropology, and only incidentally to linguistics." Linda Young herself also points out differences between some of her citations and those of William Gedney, who went over her data and noted internal inconsistencies and the possibility of notational errors as well. While her grasp of the central meaning of the texts is sufficiently good, one is troubled by the many details of the language that she is unable to deal with or has treated in an almost casual manner. For instance, she displays the glottal stop as a consonant phoneme in a chart on page 11, but in a footnote on the same page declares that it is subphonemic. Later, on page 30, the Tai Mau letter for the glottal stop appears in the list of consonants drawn up neatly by her principal informant but is transcribed by her as (a)—a vowel. On page 32 she attempts to show how the same symbol is used to designate a short glottalized—a? with the illustration s?abaay (wrong) instead of sa?baay (correct). One could go on to point out numerous mis-translation of individual glosses and confusion in matters of syntax as well.

Although she introduces her material as "oral literature," it is evident that she has worked with at least eight written texts transcribed by her main assistant and not from live recordings of truly oral performances. One Mr. Pi apparently "sang" a

song which she and Zin were unable to decipher later. Clearly, Linda Young had the aim of translating some Shan texts into English as her main goal, using Chinese and Standard Thai as a bridge to that end. The work she has done will prove to be a useful record and reference point for future scholarship on Shan dialects, albeit a limited one.

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*MALAYSIA / SINGAPORE*

TAN CHEE-BENG. *The Development and Distribution of Dejiao Associations in Malaysia and Singapore. A Study on a Religious Organization.* Institute of Southeast Asian Studies Occasional Paper No. 79. Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1985. Xi+87 pages. Two maps, black and white plates, appendices on distribution of the groups. Paper US\$8.50, S\$15.00, ISBN 9971-998-14-3.

Religion and ritual provide very fruitful fields for anthropologists to study complex modern societies. It is especially so in the case of multiethnic societies like Malaysia where religion plays an important function in generating ethnic identities. We can easily associate Malays with Islam and Indians with Hinduism and partially with Islam. But how about the Chinese Malaysians? This is a book which lucidly illuminates contemporary Chinese religious life in Malaysia.

Although Tan concentrates his focus on particular religious organizations, namely *Dejiao* 德教 associations, he tries to understand them in the larger context of Chinese religion. By "Chinese religion" he means the folk religion in which "Taoist and Buddhist deities, as well as the belief in heavens and hells, eventually became part and parcel" (1). He classifies *Dejiao* organizations as a syncretic sect which includes Islamic and Christian elements besides the traditional *san jiao* 三教 (namely Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism) within Chinese religion. Tan traces the origin of *Dejiao* organizations in the regions of Chaozhou and Shandou in China in the twentieth century. He mentions that the first *Dejiao* temple was like the various charity temples which had emerged in China. "This temple provided certain traditions for the present-day *Dejiao* organization, namely the importance of planchette divination ['a kind of intellectual divination through the use of a Y-shaped willow stick' (6)], the important roles of the Taoist deities, and the emphasis on doing charity" (15).

In chapter 4 through chapter 8 Tan classifies all the *Dejiao* associations in Malaysia and Singapore into five categories, namely the Zi group (*Zi Xi* 紫系), Ji group (*Ji Xi* 濟系), Zan Hua group (*Zan Hua* 贊化), Zhen group (*Zhen Xi* 振系), and others, and shows clearly the similarity and the differences among these five groups. This is the first attempt to completely cover the *Dejiao* associations in Malaysia and Singapore. Through painstaking fieldwork he visited all of these associations interviewed the leaders and followers, and collected documents, from 1980 to 1983. He took full advantage of his situation as a local/insider fieldworker in language and accessibility to informants. In a footnote he confesses that he only once experienced a language barrier, with informants who spoke only Cantonese.

It is interesting that, as Tan points out, "*Dejiao* leaders often stress that the association aims to get rid of the 'superstitious' elements in Chinese religious practices" (6), but that planchette divination still figures as the central ritual in most of the *Dejiao* associations. Tan stresses the institutional aspects of *Dejiao* associations. I also