

# Folklore Research in Communist China\*

By

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## INTRODUCTION

The study of Communist folklore, especially that of Russia and Communist China, has not been fully evaluated.<sup>1</sup> The present study proposes to examine the folklore research achieved in Communist China since 1949. A preliminary account will be given of the introduction of the science of folklore from Europe to China, and folklore activities during the 1920's and 1930's to enable the reader to compare the theories of the pioneer students of Chinese folklore and folklore workers in contemporary China

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1. Five articles deal in some length with the ideology of Communist folklore: Richard M. Dorson, "Folklore and the NDEA," *Journal of American Folklore*, Vol. LXXV (April-June 1962), pp. 160-164; Felix Oinas, "Folklore Activities in Russia," *Folklore Research Around the World* (ed. Richard M. Dorson), Indiana University Press, 1961, pp. 76-84; Prof. Gerhard Heilfurth's as yet unpublished article "German Volkskunde In The Field of Tension Between East and West," a lecture delivered on April 21, 1964 at Indiana University (Prof. Heilfurth is from Phillips University, Marburg, Germany); Linda Dégh, "Folklore and Related Disciplines in Eastern Europe," *Journal of The Folklore Institute* (edited at Indiana University, Bloomington, Ind.; published by Mouton & Co., The Hague, Holland), Vol. II, No. 2, 1965, pp 103-119; and Alsace C. Yen, "Red China's Use of Folklore," *Literature East & West*, VIII, Nos. 2-3 (1964); pp. 72-86.

trained by the Communist Party.<sup>2</sup>

### I. Pre-Communist China Folklore Activities (from 1918 on)

1. Folklore introduced to China as a science in the field of ethnology.

The collecting of modern Chinese materials started with the Folksong Collecting Bureau (*Ko-yao cheng-chi ch'u* 歌謠徵集處) organized in the National Peking University in 1918. Folklore as a science was not, however, generally recognized in China for almost another decade. In 1926 Ts'ai Yüan-p'ei 蔡元培 (1867-1940), then director of the Academia Sinica at Nanking, made the following remarks:

*Min tsu hsüeh* 民族学 is a branch of learning which examines the cultures of peoples so as to further the descriptive or comparative studies [of the cultures—trans.]... But in German the singular form for *Völkerkunde* is *Volkskunde* which comes from the English word Folklore. This English term was created by W. J. Thomas [sic] in 1846 to replace the term Popular antiquities...<sup>3</sup>

For the first time *min-tsu-hsüeh* in the sense of "Völkerkunde" was seriously understood in China as a disciplined science. *Min-tsu-hsüeh*, as indicated above, is a concept modeled after the European school of folklore. In defining "Vergleichende Völkerkunde" as meaning that "which samples the data on behavioral patterns of ethnological groups to compare their similarities and dissimilarities," Ts'ai referred to such works of Western scholars as Garrick Mallery's *Picture-Writing of the American Indians*, Karl Groos' *The Play of Man*, Heinrich Schurtz's *Grundriss einer Entstehungsgeschichte des Geldes*, and

2. Unless otherwise indicated the translations of citations from the writings of these students and workers are my own. Also I should like to note that since neither all Communist simplified Chinese characters nor all standard Chinese characters are available in Japan, in certain cases Japanese "kanji" 漢字 ("Chinese characters") had to be used.

3. Cf. "Shuo min-tsu-hsüeh 說民族学," Ts'ai Yüan-p'ei *min-tsu-hsüeh lun-chu* 蔡元培民族学論著 (ed. Chung-kuo min-tsu-hsüeh hui 中国民族学会), Taipei: Chung-hua shu-chü 中華書局, 1962), p. 1. The term "Volkskunde," it may be observed, seems to have been used as early as 1806. Cf. Ake Hultkrantz, *General Ethnological Concepts* (International Dictionary of Regional European Ethnology and Folklore, Vol. I), Rosenkilde and Bagger, Copenhagen, 1960, pp. 139 and 243.

Richard Andree's *Ethnographische Parallelen und Vergleiche*.<sup>4</sup> Meanwhile, Ts'ai treated folklore of Chinese origin on a par with that of European and, in most cases, referred to Chinese folklore as older. For instance, he wrote:

The ethnographic study of *min-tsu-hsüeh* [i.e., Beschreibende Völkerkunde—trans.] originated early enough. In China we have the *Shan-hai ching* 山海經 [*The Book of Mountains and Seas*], a book written in the pre-Han period. This book, though it deals with geography and abounds in materials of ancient mythology, offers a fairly rich account of *min-tsu-hsüeh*.<sup>5</sup>

He pointed out further that "although the tendency to include *min-tsu-hsüeh* in anthropology seems to be possible...now that the study between the dissimilarities and similarities of the cultures of peoples has been more accentuated...*min-tsu-hsüeh* has long since become independent of anthropology."<sup>6</sup> *Min-tsu-hsüeh*, as Ts'ai defined it, is affiliated with cultural history, sociology, psychology, linguistics, geography, fine arts, literature and, of course, anthropology, archeology, and ethnology.

From the above remarks it is evident that at the very outset *min-tsu-hsüeh* showed the influence of European scholars, particularly F. Ratzel, E. B. Tylor, F. Graebner, W. Schmidt, and G. E. Smith. No less unmistakable is that, even at this early stage, nationalism played a predominant role in the study of folklore in China; and that was inevitable, insofar as Chinese cultural background is concerned.

## 2. Folklore research in the Academia Sinica

As a result of Ts'ai's remarks on *min-tsu-hsüeh* proposals were made to establish a center for advanced studies, including folklore research. On November 20, 1927, the Academia Sinica, with its Research Institutes, was organized.<sup>7</sup> At first, speculation over the distinction between folklore and ethnology was inconclusive. *Min-tsu-hsüeh* (folklore, or, strictly speaking, ethnology)

4. Ts'ai Yüan-p'ei *min-tsu-hsüeh lun-chu*, pp. 4-5; 6-7.

5. *Ibid.*, p. 2.

6. *Ibid.*, p. 7.

7. As of November 1927 the four research units, *Li-hua shih-yeh* 理化実業, *Ti-chih* 地質, *She-hui k'o-hsüeh* 社会科学, and *Kuan-hsiang t'ai* 觀象台 were established. The *Li-shih yü-yen yen-chiu-suo* 歷史語言研究所 was established in March 1928; cf. Sun Te-chung 孫德中 (ed.), *Ts'ai Yüan-p'ei hsien-sheng i-wen lei-ch'ao* 蔡元培先生遺文類鈔, Taipei: Fu-hsing shu-chü 復興書局, 1961, p. 356

was regarded as a research branch in the Institute of Social Sciences. However, pursuant to a later decision, folklore research of an anthropological nature with an emphasis on folk narratives and customs was carried on by the Research Institute of History and Philology (*Li-shih yü-yen yen-chiu-suo* 歷史語言研究所 established in 1928); and research of an ethnological nature remained in the Social Sciences division. The Academia, with Ts'ai Yüan-p'ei as Chairman, conducted some remarkable work. In the field related to folklore research, for instance, under the direction of Ts'ai, anthropologists and experts were sent out to the Yao and Miao tribes in Kuangsi, to the aborigines in Formosa, to the Goldi people in the Northeast (Tung-pei 東北, Manchuria), to the Li's in Hai-nan tao, and to the Yi's in Yünnan to carry out fieldwork. Several reports on this fieldwork were published.<sup>8</sup>

Ts'ai also proposed to establish a folklore museum. As a result Dr. T. W. Dantzel was invited to China in 1932 to help establish a national folklore museum.<sup>9</sup> A detailed plan was drafted. Unfortunately, owing to financial and other problems, Dr. Dantzel's design had to be shelved. From 1934 on, *min-tsu-hsüeh* and anthropology (a research unit developed later) were incorporated into the Research Institute of History and

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8. For example, cf. Yen Fu-li and Shang Ch'eng-tsu, "Bericht über die Erforschung der Yao von Ling-yün in der Provinz Kuang-hsi," *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie* (61. Jahrgang, 1929), Berlin, 1930, pp. 386-391; Chungsee Hsien Liu, "Sur un instrument musical à anches libres en usage chez les Maio dans la Chine du Sud-Ouest," *L'Ethnographie*, Paris, 1934, pp. 27-34, and "The Dog-Ancestor Story of The Aboriginal Tribes of Southern China," *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland*, Vol. LXII, London, 1932, pp. 361-368; Lin Hui-hsiang 林惠祥, *T'ai-wan fan-tsu chih yüan-shih wen-hua* 台湾番族之原始文化 (Kuo-li Chung-yang-yen-chiu-yüan she-hui k'o-hsüeh yen-chiu-suo chuan-k'an ti-san-hao 国立中央研究院社会科学研究所专刊第三号), Shanghai: Kuo-li Chung-yang-yen-chiu-yüan she-hui k'o-hsüeh yen-chiu-suo 国立中央研究院社会科学研究所, 1930; Ling Ch'un-sheng 凌純声, *Sung-hua-chiang hsi-yu ti he-che tsu* 松花江下游的赫哲族 (Kuo-li Chung-yang-yen-chiu-yüan li-shih yü-yen yen-chiu-suo tan-k'an chia-chung chih shih-ssu 国立中央研究院歷史語言研究所单刊甲種之十四, in two volumes), Nanking: Kuo-li Chung-yang-yen-chiu-yüan li-shih yü-yen yen-chiu-suo 国立中央研究院歷史語言研究所, Nanking, 1934; and H[ans] Stübel, *Die Li-Stämme der Insel Hainan* (Ein Beitrag zur Volkskunde Süd-chinas), Berlin: Klinkhardt & Biermann, 1937.

9. Dr. T. W. Dantzel, according to Ts'ai, was formerly the director of the Africa section at the folklore museum at Hamburg.

Philology in Academia Sinica. It should be noted that the fieldwork undertaken during this period was strictly limited to the field of ethnology. Oral narratives remained largely an unmined source.

### 3. Early Western pioneer folklore collectors in China

Up to the Literary Revolution in 1917-1918, according to the prevailing *tao* 道 ("code of ethics"), intellectuals regarded oral narratives which circulated in the vernacular with contempt. Attempts to collect these narratives from oral tradition were out of the question. However, the *tao* did not affect the Westerners in China who saw in Chinese folksongs "the true feelings of the people," and regarded colloquial tales as belonging "undoubtedly to the folklore."<sup>10</sup> A few Westerners made what may be considered pioneer collections of oral songs, tales, and proverbs based on fieldwork. In 1888, Arthur Henderson Smith (1845-1932) published in Shanghai *Proverbs and Common Sayings from the Chinese*, a collection of Chinese proverbs with detailed English annotations. Baron G. A. Vitale published in Peking in 1896 his *Pekingese Rhymes*, a volume of one hundred and seventy songs in Chinese with notes and translations in English. The *Rhymes* was followed by his *Chinese Merry Tales* (1901), a collection of ninety-nine humorous tales written in Mandarin. Isaac Taylor Headland (1859-1942) heard most of his songs from nurse-maids, collected some one hundred and fifty, and translated and published them in Chinese and English parallel texts in his *Chinese Mother Goose* (1900).<sup>11</sup> These pioneer collections, though they suffered from being localized in the Peking areas, were first-hand folklore materials taken directly from the oral tradition. They provided landmarks which the Chinese folklore workers sought to follow some twenty years later.

### 4. Folklore activities in North China

The Literary Revolution with its claims "to create the plain, simple, and expressive literature of the people;...to create the

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10. Cr. Baron G. A. Vitale, *Pekingese Rhymes*, Peking Pei t'ang 北塘, 1896, p. x; B. G. A. Vitale, *Chinese Merry Tales*, Peking: Pei t'ang, 1901, Preface (no page number).

11. Isaac Taylor Headland (tr.), *Chinese Mother Goose Rhymes*, New York, Chicago, Fleming H. Revell Company, 1900.

fresh and sincere literature of realism; . . . and to create the plain-speaking and popular literature of society"<sup>11a</sup> were activated by the May Fourth Movement in 1919. After May Fourth, *pai hua* 白話, or the "vernacular" became the medium for mass communication; old tradition, the *tao* and its imitations were defied. Interest in a plain-speaking and expressive literature of the people was brought to public notice. As mentioned earlier, the *Ko-yao cheng-chi ch'u*, organized in 1918, began a series of "Selected Folk-songs" in the *Peking University Daily* (*Pei-ta jih-k'an* 北大日刊, from the end of May 1918 to May Fourth 1919). In 1920 a Folk-song Research Society (*Ko-yao yen-chiu-hui* 歌謠研究会) was founded. In 1922 the Society was reorganized as a research unit in the Institute of Sinology at Peking University. Professor Chou Tsou-jen 周作人 was appointed chairman of the Society to resume the work of collecting. As of June, 1925, the songs collected totaled 13,339 of which 2,226 were published in the *Folk-song Weekly* (*Ko-yao chou-k'an* 歌謠週刊). Besides folksongs, other notable contributions included proverbs, legends, folktales, and marriage customs.<sup>12</sup> The *Weekly* appeared in December, 1922; it was discontinued during 1926-1935 and re-continued in 1936.<sup>13</sup> But after only one year the Sino-Japanese War brought an abrupt end to the *Weekly*.

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11a. So proclaimed Ch'en Tu-hsiu 陳独秀, one of the Literary Revolution leaders, in his article "On the Literary Revolution" ("Wen-hsüeh-ke-ming lun 文學革命論," published February 1, 1917). Cf. Chow Tse-tzung, *The May Fourth Movement* (Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1960), pp. 276 and 440 note 23.

12. Cf. Chao Wei-pang, "Modern Chinese Folklore Investigation," *Folklore Studies*, Vol. I (Peking: The Catholic University of Peking, 1942), pp. 60-70.

13. The *Folk-song Weekly* was replaced by "*The Weekly Review of the Institute of Sinology of the Peking National University* (国立北京大学研究所国学門週刊)." *The Weekly Review* was sponsored by the Folk-song Research Society (1924), and the Archaeological Society. *The Weekly Review* was supplanted by "*The Journal of the Institute of Sinology of the Peking National University* (国立北京大学研究所国学門月刊)" And beginning 1936, with Hu Shih 胡適, Professor Chou Tso-jen 周作人, Lo Ch'ang-p'ei 羅常培, Wei Chien-kung 魏建功, Ku Chieh-kang, and Ch'ang Hui 常惠 as committee members of the Folk-song Research Society, the *Folk-song Weekly* was restored to its publication. Cf. Chao Wei-pang, *op. cit.*, pp. 60-62; 64; 71.

5. Folklore research in South China and the political conflicts between the Kuomintang and the Chinese Communist Party

Prior to the Japanese invasion of China in 1931, the National Sun Yat-sen University (*Kuo-li Chung-shan ta-hsüeh* 国立中山大学, Kuangtung University, *Kuang-tung ta-hsüeh* 廣東大学 until 1927) in Canton had gradually attracted public attention as a folklore research center in south China.

Canton, the first citadel of Western interest and politically the seat of the Kuomintang, provided for Kuang-tung University an environment characteristic of the National Revolution (*Pei-fa* 北伐, or the Second Northern Expedition) of 1926-27. New ideas were being shaped. Communism was tolerated for the campaign against the northern warlords. Active reformers such as Kuo Mo-jo 郭沫若 and Lu Hsün 魯迅 (Chou Shu-jen 周樹人) were on the faculty of the University. Literature, as proclaimed by Kuo Mo-jo, then Dean of the College of Arts (1926), must be "expressive of sympathy with the proletariat, socialistic, and realistic."<sup>14</sup> Lu Hsün succeeded Kuo as acting dean for only a few months (January-August, 1927), when the Communist-Kuomintang split of 1927 occurred. Radical reformers were removed from the Sun Yat-sen University. Professor Fu Ssu-nien 傅斯年, formerly one of the student leaders of Peking University in the May Fourth Movement, became director of the Institute of History and Philology (August, 1927) at the Sun Yat-sen University. It was in this Institute that a folklore research project, similar to that of the Research Institute of History and Philology in the Academic Sinica, was initiated.

The Institute was incorporated with several other activities such as the Folklore Society (*Min-su hsüeh-hui* 民俗学会, 1927), Show Room of Folklore Objects (*Feng-su wu-p'ien ch'en-lieh-shih* 風俗物品陳列室, 1928), and a folklore program offering general and related courses in folklore (1928). The *Folklore Weekly* (*Min-su* 民俗), edited by Chung Ching-wen 鍾敬文, was the communication organ for folklore scholars.<sup>15</sup>

14. Cf. Kuo Mo-jo 郭沫若 "Ke-ming yü wen-hsüeh 革命与文学," *Mo-jo wen-chi* 沫若文集, Vol. X, Peking: Jen-min wen-hsüeh ch'u-pan-she 人民文学出版社, 1959, p. 323.

15. Chao Wei-pang, "Modern Chinese Folklore Investigation," *Folklore Studies*, Vol. II (1943), pp. 81-83.

The folklore project in south China was characterized by a challenge in both subject matter and discipline. For one thing, the research was no longer limited to folksongs, which almost monopolized the pages of the *Folk-song Weekly* of Peking University; instead, riddles, legends, folktales, gods and deities became the focus of interest. Secondly, a desire for depth and breadth rather than mere collection for collection's sake now manifested itself.<sup>16</sup> And thirdly, by 1928, the science of folklore was clearly recognized as a necessary academic program in higher education in China.

The Kuomintang-Communist split of 1927 created great tension in south China, especially in the Sun Yat-sen University. Within two years some of the pioneer folklore workers parted with the Folklore Society. Ku Chieh-kang 顧頡剛, formerly a member of the Folk-song Research Society at Peking University and in 1928 director of the Institute of History and Philology at Sun Yat-sen University, left in 1929. Chung Ching-wen, editor of the *Folklore Weekly*, and Ch'ien Nan-yang 錢南揚, a member of the Folklore Society, found their way to Hangchow where they joined Lou Tzu-k'uang 婁子匡 and started a Chinese Folklore Society (1930). Publications by the Society included *Collections of Folklore Studies* (*Min-su-hsüeh chi chien* 民俗學集鱗), and *Folk Monthly* (*Min-chien yüeh-k'an* 民間月刊).<sup>17</sup> Meanwhile, as the Chinese Communist Party was outlawed, Mao Tze-tung and his men fought their way out from the Hunan-Kiangsi-Kuangtung border regions (1927-1934) and launched their historical "Long March" in 1934-35. The "Long March" covered eleven provinces, crossing the aboriginal zones of the Chuang's and Yi's, the land of the Lolo's, and the Kansu area of the Hui's. By October 1935, they reached their destination, the Shensi base in the Northwest.

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16. Chao Wei-pang lists a number of books which were included in a certain *Folklore Series* published by the Folklore Society of the National Sun Yat-sen University; for example, there were the translation of *List of Types of Indo-European Folk-tales* ["Some Types of Indo-European Folk-tales," based on Charlotte S. Burne, "Appendix C," *Handbook of Folklore*, London, 1914] by Yang Ch'eng-chih 楊成志, *Discussions of the Tale Meng-kiang-nü* (*Meng-chiang-nü ku-shih t'ao-lun chi* 孟姜女故事討論集) by Ku Chieh-kang, *Superstitions and Legends* (*Mi-hsin yü ch'uan-shuo* 迷信與傳說) by Jung Chao-tsu 容肇祖, *Talks on Folk-tales* by Chao Ching-shen 趙景深 and so on. All these works I have not seen personally; cf. Chao Wei-pang, *op. cit.* (1943), 84-85; 85n. 18.

17. Chao Wei-pang, *op. cit.* (1943), pp. 83 and 88.



Memories of the "Long March" are attached by the Communists to these aborigines, who "swore blood brotherhood" with the Reds,<sup>18</sup> and whose folklore is now under extensive investigation and constitutes the main subject of folklore research in contemporary China.

Again, with the Japanese encroachment in China's Northeast (Tung-pei) beginning in September 1931, security in North China was threatened. When China finally declared war with Japan in 1937, all government-owned institutions and universities had to move their posts from north, central, and south China to the Southwest. There in Chungking, the war-time capital in the Szechuan Province, the Folksong-Proverb Society (*Yao-yen hsüeh-hui* 謠諺学会) was established (1941); and also the Folksong-Proverb Collecting Bureau (*Yao-yen ts'ai-chi ch'u* 謠諺採集处) under the Board of Education (*Chiao-yü-pu* 教育部, 1941).<sup>19</sup> The Sino-Japanese war, concluded in August 15, 1945, was followed by the civil war from 1945 to 1949, resulting in the Kuomintang's withdrawal from mainland China to Taiwan (Formosa). A folklore research institute was set up in the Academia Sinica in Taiwan.<sup>20</sup>

In Communist China, folklore research has been carried on by the Research Society of Chinese Folk Literature and Arts (*Chung-kuo min-chien wen-i yen-chiu-hui* 中国民間文芸研究会), an organ established in February 1950. Folklore research, as directed by the Chinese Communist Party, has deviated from the main tendencies of folklore research in the West.

## II. The Early Period of Communist Folklore (from 1930 on)

1. Folklore used as military and educational materials in the Communist area.

The Chinese Communist use of folklore for political purposes may be traced back to the 1930's. Within their mountain hideout,

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18. Cf. Edgar Snow, *Red Star Over China*, New York: Random House, Inc., 1938, pp. 182-184; see also, *The Long March, Eyewitness Accounts* (ed. Foreign Languages Press), Peking, 1963, pp. 79-80; p. 215.

19. Cf. Chu Chieh-fan 朱介凡, *Wo-ko ch'ieh-yao* 我歌且謠, Taipei: Shih-chieh shu-chü 世界書局, 1959, p. 164.

20. Reference works on folklore activities for the period of 1935-1949 are not available to me. As a result, the study of folklore activities for this period is dealt with briefly in this paper.

the Communists sought to build up an army against their enemy, the Kuomintang. Mao's small battalion of workers and peasants, which he led from the Hunan Province, was formed from a group of five to six hundred bandits. Later, other combat units led by Chu Te 朱德 and P'eng Te-huai 彭德懷 at Ching-kang-shan 井岡山 on the Hunan and Kiangsi border, joined them. There at Ching-kang-shan Mao disciplined the masses of workers, peasants, and soldiers.<sup>21</sup> Mao's legions grew to ten thousand known as the *Hung-chün* 紅軍 or, the Red Army, since 1928. Living on limited resources with a ragged and hungry army to feed,<sup>22</sup> the Red chiefs reckoned on certain tactics to solve their problem: (1) to maraud the enemy's service corps, food supplies and rations, and (2) to confiscate the holdings and moneys of the bullies and landlords.<sup>23</sup> Thus, in January 1929, the Reds broke through the Kuomintang blockade, moved south-eastward to the Kiangsi-Fukien borders, and established their base at Jui-chin 瑞金 in Kiangsi.

In December 1929, a conference was held in Ku-t'ien 古田, Fukien, in which Mao laid down the principles and rules for "building up the Party and the Army." Also discussed were the methods for developing art and literature "to meet the necessities of rallying mass struggles, of winning the masses over from the enemy's side."<sup>24</sup> So, as demanded by the Party, revolutionary tales and folksongs were to be propagated among the soldiers; "flower-drum song singing" (*ta-hua-ku* 打花鼓), drama performances and other games were to be encouraged.<sup>25</sup> The Central

21. There were the so-called *san-ta chi-lü* 三大紀律 ("three great disciplines") and the *pa-ta chu-i* 八大注意 ("eight big attentions"); for details in English translation, cf. Edgar Snow, *op. cit.*, pp. 157-158.

22. Even in cold winter, the Red Army had only clothes of a single thickness; they slept on the straw, and they ate squash; cf. Ho Chung-jen 何重仁, "Hsiang-kan pien-ch'ü jen-min-ti ke-ming tou-cheng 湘贛邊區人民的革命斗争," *Ti-erh-tz'u kuo-nei ke-ming chan-cheng shih-ch'i shih-shih lun-ts'ung* 第二次国内革命战争時期史事論叢 (ed. Shih-hsüeh shuang-chou-k'an she 史學雙周刊社), Peking: Sheng-huo Tu-shu Hsin-chih San-lien shu-tien 生活, 讀書, 新知三聯書店, 1956, p. 72.

23. Cf. Jung Meng-yüan 榮孟源. "Ti-erh-tz'u kuo-nei ke-ming chan-cheng shih-ch'i ti Chung-kuo hung-chün 第二次国内革命战争時期的中國紅軍," *Ibid.*, p. 62.

24. Cf. Liu Shou-sung 劉綬松, *Chung-kuo hsin-wen-hsüeh-shih ch'u-kaio* 中國新文學史初稿, Vol. I, Peking: Tso-chia ch'u-pan-sh'e 作家出版社, 1956, pp. 306-307.

25. *Ibid.*, p. 307.

Blue-Shirt Ensemble (*Chung-yang lan-shan-t'uan* 中央藍衫團), whose members were "drawn from the industrious male and female farmers," poured out a series of performances reflecting such themes as "down with the local big-shots and redistribution of lands," "seeing lovers off for the Army," and so on. And whenever occasion allowed, whether it was a show or a revolutionary folksong singing, the performance was always directed in such a way as to "keep close cooperation with what was to be the Government's essential mission."<sup>26</sup> For instance, in the so-called "enlarge the Red Army to a million movement," revolutionary folksongs resounded:

Ai ya lai! Enlarge a million, iron Red Army,  
 Red Army of chivalric renown,  
 The fifth "campaign" will be ruined anon,  
 Sister comrades, Kiangsi victory will soon be won!

... ..  
 ... ..

Ai ya lai! The reactionary annihilated be he,  
 Workers, peasants we lord it,  
 Red flags rooted over all China wave,  
 Sister comrades, the final victory is on our way!

("Join the Army, Farewell Sisters")<sup>27</sup>

Outside the Red lairs, Shanghai was the center for publicizing Communist doctrines through literary movements. Lu Hsün, himself a writer critical of social and political decadence, who left Canton in the autumn of 1927 for Shanghai, became an immediate object of Communist search, as an asset to their political campaign, i.e., to "(let) the proletarian contest in a war of the compatriots—the class struggle, in order to obtain an out-and-out emancipation for mankind."<sup>28</sup> On March 2, 1930, the Chinese Left-wing Writers League (*Chung-kuo tso-i tso-chia lien-meng* 中国左翼作家聯盟) was established. The League proposed that "art must be against the feudal class, against the capitalist class"; that "... 'a Marxism-literature-theory-research-society ('*Ma-k'e-ssu-chu-i wen-i li-lun yen-chiu-hui* 馬克斯主義文芸理論研究会)' ... [and a] ... 'pan-plebeian-literature-research-society

26. *Ibid.*, p. 311. The "Government" referred to was the "Soviet Republic of China" created in 1930-1931.

27. Translated from "Ts'an-chün pieh-mei 參軍別妹," *Ibid.*, p. 316.

28. *Ibid.*, p. 214.

(“*Wen-i ta-chung-hua yen-chiu-hui* 文芸大衆化研究会”)’...” be organized.<sup>29</sup> It argued that “revolutionary plebeian-literature should give heed to the old-fashioned arts (*i shu* 藝術) which in form have two characteristics: (1) its connection with oral literature; (2) its homespun narration” and that “[the propagation of] plebeian literature should utilize story-telling (*shuo-shu* 說書) and ballad-singing (*t’an-huang* 灘簧).”<sup>30</sup>

## 2. Communist folklore after the “Long March.”

From 1930 on, the Communists were mainly engaged in war with Chiang Kai-shek. Folklore activities, other than for propaganda use, were eliminated for the time being. And by the spring of 1933, Chiang had waged four of his major “Campaigns for the Extermination of Bandits (i.e., Communists)” without success. It was Chiang’s fifth “Campaign,” however, that had forced the Communists to plan their Long March. With the termination of the Long March in northwestern China, the Communists undertook to outwit the Kuomintang strategically with the result that Chiang’s final “Campaign for the Extermination of Bandits” eventuated in an overall anti-Japanese war.<sup>31</sup>

Folklore activities in the period of the Sino-Japanese War (1937-1945) were associated with three coalitions, represented by the North China puppet regime, Nationalist China in the southwest, and the Communist base in the northwest. The northern group seated in Peiping, was the continuation of what had been previously headed by Chou Tso-jen, who became chancellor of the

29. *Ibid.*, pp. 213-214.

30. *Ibid.*, p. 226. This passage was quoted by Liu from “*Ta-chung wen-i ti wen-t’i* 大衆文芸的問題,” written by Ch’ü Ch’iu-pai 瞿秋白 who was once head of the Central Political Bureau of the Chinese Communist Party (1927). Cf. Ch’ü, “*Ta-chung wen-i ti wen-t’i*,” *Luan-t’an chi ch’i-t’a* 亂彈及其宅 (no publishing date and place), pp. 199-206.

31. Chiang’s final “Campaign for the Extermination of Bandits” (begun in October 1936) ended in the Sian Incident (The Kidnapping of Chiang, which occurred on December 12, 1936). For a detailed story of the Sian Incident, cf. Edgar Snow, *op. cit.*, pp. 395-429. The dates of the other Campaigns are approximately: (1) the first occupied the winter of 1930-31; (2) the second began four months later (Chiang’s army was defeated in May 16-30, 1931); (3) another month later the third began, lasting one month; (4) and the fourth began in April, 1933; (5) the fifth, from October 1933 to October 1934, was led, like the third, by Chiang himself; then the Long March started (October 16, 1934).

Japanese-sponsored Peking University and minister of education after 1937.<sup>32</sup> The southwestern group dominated by literature specialists had its base in Chungking, while individual research began afresh in the Southwest Union University (*Hsi-nan lien-ho ta-hsüeh* 西南聯合大學) at Kunming, notably that of professors Chu Tzu-ch'ing 朱自清 and Wen I-to 聞一多, both formerly of Ch'ing Hua University in the suburbs of Peking. The north-western group, headquartered at Yen-an, embraced the Party-directed activities and theories with which the present study is concerned.

In the Northwest, as elsewhere in North China, *Ch'in-ch'iang* 秦腔 (a kind of folk-drama peculiar to the area), story-telling, folksongs and plantation songs (*yang-ko* 秧歌, or "seedling songs") were the common forms of entertainment. The content of the narrations, especially that of *ch'in-ch'iang* and story-telling, consisted of sagas, legends, and popular fiction of old tradition, some of which, in the eyes of the Communists, "bear strong color of feudalistic consciousness," are "corrupt" and "of low taste." A gradual implantation of Communist elements was in process. Modern drama and playlets with themes of anti-Nipponism, and the people's revolution occupied the audience.<sup>33</sup> New story-telling themes praising "good things of the new society" took the place of the old.<sup>34</sup> Revolutionary and anti-Japanese folksongs went hand in hand with the traditional folksongs. Plantation songs combined with country dance struck one observer as being "an-all-talking-singing-dancing poor man's opera."<sup>35</sup> After Mao publicized his "Talks at the Yen-an Forum on Art and Literature"<sup>36</sup> (1942) with the main idea that art and literature should focus on the masses of workers, peasants, and soldiers, the Party sent experts in art and literature, or rather, the so-called *wen-kung t'uan* 文工團 ("culture [mission] working team") to the

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32. Cf. Chow Tse-tsung, *The May Fourth Movement*, p. 54, note.

33. Cf. Edgar Snow, *op. cit.*, pp. 100-108.

34. Cf. Lin Shan 林山 "Mang-i-jen Han Ch'i-hsiang 盲藝人韓起祥," *Min-chien wen-i hsün lun-chi* 民間文藝新論集 (ed. Chung Ching-wen), Peking: Pei-ching Shih-fan ta-hsüeh 北京師範大學, 1951, p. 168. 鐘敬文

35. John K. Fairbank, *The United States and China*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1961, p. 243.

36. Cf. *Mao Tse-tung Selected Works*, Vol. IV, New York: International Publishers Co., Inc., 1956, pp. 63-93.

villages to bring about the "popularization of a plebeian literature."

3. Folklore utilized in the "War for People's Liberation" (1945-49).

The "popularization" of art and literature is governed by a single dogma: the majority of the masses are illiterate, and need "culture, knowledge, art and literature...which are readily acceptable to them..."<sup>37</sup> On that account the *wen-kung t'uan* had a unique mission: to educate the masses, technically utilizing story-telling, ballad-singing, *yang-ko*, and other suitable forms. However, as it was also Mao's contention that "art and literature are subordinate to politics,"<sup>38</sup> the *wen-kung t'uan*, in addition, were sent on a political errand: to arouse class consciousness, a preparation necessary for the "people's liberation." The *wen-kung t'uan* worked to considerable effect. With the spread of the "agrarian reform movement" in and out of the Communist areas, the *wen-kung t'uan* cadres entered into the milieu of the masses, and collected *yang-ko* plays, poor man's drama, "drum lyrics" (*ku-tz'u* 鼓詞), "quick rhymes" (*k'uai-pan* 快板) recited by the peasants, workers, and soldiers, some of which were published under government auspices.<sup>39</sup> Meanwhile, the Communists lost no time in imposing upon the people the ideology with reference to Chiang Kai-shek that "the war he started is a counter-revolutionary war directed by U.S. imperialism against the independence of the Chinese nation and the liberation of the Chinese people."<sup>40</sup> There was no alternative but to "overthrow the dictatorial Chiang Kai-shek government." Chiang's fall was inevitable. With the unification of China making collecting work all over China possible for the first time, the Communist manipulation of folklore developed a new intensity.

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37. *Mao Tse-tung Selected Works*, Vol. IV, p. 78.

38. *Ibid.*, p. 82.

39. Liu Shou-sung, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 217.

40. Mao Tse-tung, "The Present Situation and Our Tasks," *Mao Tse-tung Selected Works*, Vol. V, 1961, pp. 158 and 169.

### III. Folklore Research in Communist China

Folklore studies in contemporary Communist China fall into two major fields: (1) textual research, which includes studies on the origin, history, commentary, and verification in the broad field or in a specific genre of folklore; and (2) fieldwork, i.e., collecting various oral genres from different peoples. Inspection of the works produced shows that research of the first kind, whether it be the effort of an individual or a team, presents orderly handling of documents, minute references, and unmistakable originality, while that of the second group, being primarily intended for the "propagation of new art and literature of the peoples under socialism," functions, in that sense, in building up collections which await further scientific treatment, such as motif indexing.

#### 1. Textual research

##### A. Deity belief and mythology

Textual research originated with scholars soundly trained in the Chinese classics. Generally speaking, the materials they dealt with came from classical sources. Some works that were completed before 1949 saw republication after the Communists came to power. Wen I-to (1899-1946), for instance, in his "Shen-hsien k'ao 神仙考,"<sup>41</sup> investigated the origin and conceptual process of deity belief in China. Tracing the ethnologic origin of the Ch'i 齊 people from the west part of China where cremation rituals prevailed, quoting a verse by Mo Tzu 墨子, he affirmed that cremation signified the transfer of the soul from the present life to eternity. Developing this idea Wen maintained (pp. 156 and 161) that:

...The immortality of the soul is premised on the existence of a "futurity" . . . where the soul abides and rejoices eternally. Again, because of a prejudiced conception that the [relationship between—trans.] things is antithetic, [men—trans.] regard soul and flesh as being opposed to, and interfering with, each other; therefore they

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41. Wen I-to 聞一多, "Shen-hsien k'ao 神仙考," *Shen-hua yü shih 神話與詩*, Peking: Chung-hua shu-chü 中華書局, 1959, pp. 153-180. This book first appeared as "Chia-chi Shen-hua yü-shih 甲集 神話與詩," in *Wen I-to ch'üan-chi 聞一多全集*, Vol. I, Shanghai: K'ai-ming shu-tien 開明書店 1948.

also think that, unless the flesh perishes completely, nothing can be done with the emancipation of soul; hence, the ceremonial custom of cremation takes its rise.

...If man can rise to heaven, he, like the gods, will become immortal, almighty, and joyful in all happiness. Because there are so many advantages after man's rising to heaven, to live cannot be better than to die. Therefore, the state of being alive is the means by which mortalness can be reached. The living flesh is temporal; the soul that is left after death is eternal; the temporal is a falsehood; the eternal, the truth... As viewed in this light, deity is a kind of theistic ideal... Since all men can be transformed into deities, belief in deities arises from the principles of equality.

Further, he pointed out that the character "hsien" 仙 or "immortal" was originally derived from the character 僊, also pronounced as *hsien*, of which the right-side radical 𠄎 means "going up high" and the left-side radical 亻, a "human being."<sup>42</sup>

Research on mythology has hardly begun in Communist China where there is a tendency to infuse it with ideological terminology. Men like Yüan K'o 袁珂 claim that mythology "ought to be interpreted in terms of labor." So, in his *Chung-kuo ku-tai shen-hua* 中国古代神話 (*The Mythology of Ancient China*),<sup>43</sup> Yüan contents that in the beginning of the universe, "labor creates men... and all the gods that were praised were the laboring heroes of ancient times."<sup>44</sup> In the Communist works on mythology, Western scholarship or achievements are seldom referred to. Definitions regarding myths appear to be tentative. Thus, narrations dealing with the events of the anthropomorphic beings are defined as belonging to the realm of legends (*ch'uan-shuo* 伝説), while fables of great antiquity are called mythology. The difference between legends and myths is explained by the fact that the former, following the advance of civilization, gradually rejected the savage elements of the latter; instead, legends acquired the outlook of a sophisticated and humane mind; and the deities were further personified, gods and heroes became intertwined, and history and mythology were mixed up. Hence,

42. Wen I-to, *Shen-hua yü shih*, pp. 160-161.

43. Yüan K'o 袁珂, *Chung-kuo ku-tai sheng-hua* 中国古代神話, Shanghai: Shang-wu yin-shu-kuan 商務印書館, 1954. Yüan's work has been translated into Japanese by Itô Kei-ichi 伊藤敬一, Takabatake Jô 高島稜, and Matsui Hiromitsu 松井博光, and published in 1960 by Misuzu Shobô, Tokyo, Japan, in two volumes.

44. Cf. Yüan K'o, *op. cit.*, *Hsü* 序 (Introduction), p. 3.



the study of mythology has a serious purpose: to separate myths, which primitive peoples regarded as history, from what modern men regard as true history.<sup>45</sup> A few notions on mythology expounded through psychology, dream, and language are worthy of mention. For instance, the reasons that cause the creation of myths are analyzed as follows (pp. 1-2):

In primitive man's world, there was...no separation of daytime and night-time, nor distinction of waking from dreaming. The events [he encountered] in daytime sometimes appeared in a disguised dress in his dreams, changing into all kinds of wonders. Awakening with a recollection still obscure, [he] thought these wonders were the vision he had experienced. When narrated over and over again, various kinds of myths were brought into being.

In primeval times, the immaturity and obscurity of language was also an important cause in the rise of myths. The organs of sound of human beings could not have been skilfully fashioned; furthermore, the vocabularies and idioms must have been simple and insufficient. In order to let others understand, primitive man must make his ideas a show accompanied with exaggerated gesticulation of hands and feet. Things thus exaggerated lost sight of their original truth and eventuated into myths.

## B.. Folktales and folksongs

The invention and spread of folk tales and songs have long been issues for folklorist debates. Despite decades of debates, it has never been clear whether folk tales and songs were invented independently in centers of different geographical areas or spread presumably from one single origin to various locations via borrowing and transmission. Chinese literary men such as Cheng Chen-to 鄭振鐸 (1897-1958) raised similar issues and proposed a comparative study of origins and transmissions of specific folklore genres. Cheng gave two examples as bases for comparative study: (1) the tale about King Solomon—his judgment over a lawsuit between two women, each of whom claimed to be the mother of a baby, and the tale about the wisdom of Pao Cheng (fl. 1056) over a similar lawsuit;<sup>46</sup> and (2) the tale of "Real Friendship" contained in the *Gesta Romanorum*, and

45. *Ibid.*, pp. 4 and 8-10.

46. Cheng Chen-to 鄭振鐸, "Min-chien ku-shih ti ch'iao-ho yü chuan-pien 民間故事的巧合与转变," *Chung-kuo wen-hsüeh yen-chiu* 中国文学研究, Vol. III, Peking: Tso-chia ch'u-pan-sha 作家出版社, 1957, pp. 1116-8.

the tale of "Lady Yang Who Kills a Dog to Exhort Her Husband" ("Yang-shih sha kou ch'üan fu 楊氏殺狗勸夫"), a story in the drama style of the Yüan dynasty (1277-1368).<sup>47</sup> The outlook for a comparative study of folklore might have improved further, if Cheng and his later contemporaries had been encouraged to stick to Cheng's ideals. Yet, Cheng's methods involve using European tale samples, whose contents are viewed as contradicting the Communist Party's ideology.

The *Brief History of Storytelling* (*Shuo-shu hsiao-shih* 說書小史) by Ch'en Ju-heng 陳汝衡 appeared in 1936. Twenty years later, with further materials on hand, Ch'en rewrote the book under the title *History of Storytelling* (*Shuo-shu shih-hua* 說書史話). The author gives evidence of sources showing that the earliest record of storytelling is traceable to the T'ang dynasty (A.D. 618-906). Thereupon, he took theories that the storytelling tradition had started with the Buddhist monks of the mid-T'ang dynasty who preached religious scriptures through "tell-singing" (*chiang-ch'ang* 講唱) in the vicinities of monasteries;<sup>48</sup> later on, storytelling was no longer a privilege of the monks alone; professional storytellers appeared among the townsmen; stories of a religious nature gave way to sentimental romances and laid the foundation of storytelling for generations to come.<sup>49</sup> Further, Ch'en aims at detailing different styles of storytelling from the T'ang on down to the Ch'ing dynasty, as well as the lives of great storytellers and highlights of some of the tales told.

Chu Tzu-ch'ing (1898-1948), a colleague of Wen I-to at Ch'ing Hua University and, later, at the Southern Union University in

47. *Ibid.*, pp. 1118-1120. Four other essays included in the same book are: (1) "Lo-k'ö chung chih nü-lang 螺殼中之女郎," pp. 1121-1122; (2) "Chung-shan-lang ku-shih chih pien-i 中山狼故事之變異," pp. 1123-1124; (3) "Cha-niu-nai ti nü-lang 榨牛奶的女郎," pp. 1125-1128; and (4) "Han-hsiang-tzu 韓湘子," pp. 1129-1130. Cheng also wrote commentaries on *tz'u* 詞 and *ch'ü* 曲, included in the same volume. Cheng is also well known for his epoch-making work *Chung-kuo su wen-hsüeh-shih* 中國俗文學史. It deals with the rise and development of folksongs and ballads, folk-drama, and *chiang-ch'ang wen-hsüeh* 講唱文學 ("Storytelling and ballad-singing literature"). (First print: Ch'ang-sha 長沙, Shang-wu yin-shu-kuan 商務印書館, 1938; Peking: Wen-hsüeh ku-chi k'an-hsing-she 文學古籍刊行社, 1959.)

48. Ch'en Ju-heng 陳汝衡. *Shuo-shu shih-hua* 說書史話, Peking: Tso-chia ch'u-pan-she 作家出版社, 1958, pp. 17-18.

49. *Ibid.*, pp. 30-32.

Kunming, devoted his life to the study of literature, especially in the field of poetry and songs. His *Chinese Folksongs* (*Chung-kuo ko-yao* 中国歌谣), a series of lectures on folksongs delivered for the students of Chinese literature at Ch'ing Hua University (since 1929), demonstrates his comprehensive views on the study of folksongs from different approaches. First, on terminology, he says *min-ko* 民歌 is seemingly a translation of "folksong, or people's song" from English. However, he thinks that *ko-yao* 歌谣 is a more suitable term in that it carries the connotation of "folksong, or people's song." As for "ballads," which are very rarely encountered in the realm of Chinese *ko-yao*, he suggests following Louise Pound's phrase of "romantic narrative songs."<sup>50</sup> For that reason he prefers to use *shu-ch'ing-ti hsü-shih tuan-ko* 抒情的叙事短歌 as an equivalent of "ballad." On the definition of folksongs, Chu frankly admits that "although we have had an exact comprehension of folksongs since 1918, when the Peking University started to collect folksongs, . . . yet . . . it seems that we are still in want of exact definitions about folksongs."<sup>51</sup> In his opinion, it is better to refer to materials from abroad. He cites Frank Kidson's conception of folksongs as being "song and melody born of the people and used by the people as an expression of their emotions and (as in the case of historical ballads) for lyrical narrative,"<sup>52</sup> and formulates (page 6) in his own words the definition of *min-ko*:

Folksong (*min-ko*) is that which expresses an event, a legend, or a feeling in a perceptible form through an individual; that which is generally understandable and perceivable in the midst of the folk. Yet very few people can make it a fixed model.

To further his idea that the *min-ko* rests on no "fixed model," he cites Louise Pound's *Poetic Origins and the Ballad*, p. 202:

. . . All types of songs are folksongs, for the literary historian, which fulfill two tests. The people must like them and sing them—

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50. Chu Tzu-ch'ing 朱自清, *Chung-kuo ko-yao* 中国歌谣, Peking: Tsochia ch'u-pan-she 作家出版社, 1957, pp. 7-8. (Cf. also Louise Pound, *Poetic Origins and the Ballad*, New York: The Macmillian Company, 1921, pp. 39-46.)

51. Chu Tzu-ching, *Chung-kuo ko-yao*, p. 5.

52. *Ibid.*, p. 6; Chu translated Kidson's definition from English into Chinese (the quotation here is from Frank Kidson's *English Folk-Song and Dance*, London: Cambridge University Press, 1915, p. 10).

they must have "lived in the folk-mouth"—and they must have persisted in oral currency through a fair period of years. They must have achieved an existence not dependent upon a printed original.

On the origin and development of *ko-yao*, Chu sums up the pan-Western arguments advanced by Frank Kidson and, particularly, Rose Adelaide Witham and Louise Pound. He concludes that all except Pound hold to the belief that ballad is the earliest form of folk-poetry. But insofar as the ballad itself is concerned, Chu is of the opinion of Pound that it is a late-comer.<sup>53</sup>

He mentions that it was Professor R. D. Jameson who in his "Comparative Folklore Methodological Notes" introduced the Finnish School of the Historical-geographical Method to Chinese students, saying that Kaarle Krohn's *Die Folkloristische Arbeitsmethode* (1926) could be applied to researches in tales, myths, legends, songs, games, riddles, creeds and customs.<sup>54</sup>

Chu's *Chinese Folksongs*, though not completed as he wished,<sup>55</sup> is a recommendable work. The spirit of the work lies in Chu's impartiality. He tries to present a critical view of folksongs from Chinese sources; meanwhile, he introduces as much as he can of what he knows about folksongs in Western thought.

The first Communist research that deals with folksongs of a specific period in Chinese history is the *Yüeh-fu Songs and Folksongs from the Six Dynasties* (*Liu-ch'ao yüeh-fu yü min-ko*

53. Chu Tzu-ch'ing, *op. cit.*, pp. 9-14. (The works Chu mentioned are: Rose Adelaide Witham's *Representative English and Scottish Popular Ballads*, Boston, New York... etc., Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1909; George Lyman Kittredge's (ed.) *English and Scottish Ballads*, Boston, New York, Dallas. San Francisco: Houghton Mifflin and Company, 1904; Francis Barton Gummere's *The Beginnings of Poetry* (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1901 and *The Popular Ballad* (Boston and New York: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1907), and Kidson's *English Folk-Song and Dances* and Louise Pound's *Poetic Origins and the Ballad*.)

54. *Ibid.*, pp. 30-31. Prof. R. D. Jameson's "Comparative Folklore Methodological Notes" is referred as having appeared in the *Ch'ing-hua chou-k'an* 清華週刊, Vol. 31, No. 4645 [Ch'ing-hua University, Peking; no date is given].

55. Chu's work was supposed to include ten sections in the following order: definitions of folksongs; the origin and development, the history, the classification, the structure, the rhetoric, the evaluation, the research method, the history of collecting, and the bibliography of folksongs. Unfortunately, his untimely death left the last four sections uncompleted.

六朝樂府与民歌) by Wang Yün-hsi 王運熙.<sup>56</sup> Historically attributed to the period of A.D. 220-588, the songs, 470 of them, are assigned by Wang to still more definite dates. The areas of the origin and diffusion of these songs are suggested in commentaries based on an analysis of historical documents. Unlike that of most other specialists, Wang's emphasis lies in determining the authorship of folksongs and poetry and in clarifying ambiguities.

### C. Folk drama and puppet shows

Chinese folk drama is believed to have developed more or less from religious festivals. The *Odes of Chou* (*Chou sung* 周頌), which are believed to have flourished in the early Chou dynasty between the 11th and 12th centuries B.C., are generally regarded as having the earliest reflections of religious performances in which music, singing, and dancing took place.<sup>57</sup> But records of later periods make a systematic historical study of Chinese folk drama a field still not quite free from controversies. "The Shaping and Developing of Chinese Drama" ("Chung-kuo hsi-chü ti hsing-ch'eng ho fa-chan 中国戲劇的形成和發展") by Chou I-pai 周贄白 notes that "the basic factor that determines the art of drama is the representation of stories."<sup>58</sup> The earliest story performance given in Chou's article is one of the variety shows of the Han dynasty known as *chüeh-ti* 角觥. As Chou quotes:

There was a man of the Eastern Sea [called] Huang the elderly. While young he engaged in magic; he could control snakes and tigers. Girded with a red-metal sword, with a band of red silk about his locks, when standing he was able to bring forth clouds and haze; when seated he was able to make mountains and rivers. When he was growing weak and old, [his] strength failing, and having over-indulged in wine, he was no longer capable of practising his magic. Toward the end of Ch'in, there appeared a white

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56. Wang Yün-hsi 王運熙, *Liu-ch'ao yüeh-fu yü min-ko* 六朝樂府与民歌, Shanghai: Shang-hai wen-i lien-ho ch'u-pan-she 上海文芸聯合出版社, 1955.

57. Juan Yüan 阮元, "Shih sung 積頌," *Yen-ching-shih chi* 羣經室集, Shanghai: Shang-wu yin-shu-kuan 商務印書館, 1936, Vol. I, *chüan i* 卷一, pp. 15-16.

58. Chou I-pai 周贄白, "Chung-kuo hsi-chü-ti hsing-ch'eng ho fa-chan 中国戲劇的形成和發展," *Chung-kuo hsi-ch'ü lun-chi* 中国戲曲論集, Peking: Chung-kuo hsi-chü ch'u-pan-she 中国戲劇出版社, 1960, pp. 7-8.

tiger in the Eastern Sea. Huang the elderly, then by means of his red-metal sword, went to repress it. Since his magic was of no avail, he was killed by the tiger. Tradition made a theatrical performance out of this [event]. A Han Emperor also made a *chüeh-ti* theatrical performance out of it.<sup>59</sup>

To antedate the entity of *chüeh-ti* Chou quotes *The Western Capital* (*Hsi-ching fu* 西京賦) by Chang Heng 張衡 (A.D. 78-139) in which *chüeh-ti* was mentioned.<sup>60</sup> Chou interprets, then, the performance of the "Huang of the Eastern Sea" story as one determined by a plot which requires that "Huang of the Eastern Sea" be killed by the tiger. (a person in disguise). He regards, therefore, the "Huang of the Eastern Sea" performance as a starting point in the history of the formation of Chinese drama. He concludes that the "Huang of the Eastern Sea" was a satire on the shamans; that it is certainly not the shamans who played the role of Huang. And he says that the "Huang of the Eastern Sea" was a folk-legend (*min-chien ch'uan-shuo* 民間傳說); it was first adopted as a "story representation" and afterwards as a *chüeh-ti* show by Emperor Wu of the Han dynasty. Also, Chou believes that the "Huang of the Eastern Sea" was a legend popular in the areas of the Eastern Sea; Huang was not a native of the Western Border Region (*Hsi-yü* 西域); hence the performance itself was not influenced by the plays of an alien country, such as those of India, for example.<sup>61</sup>

In regard to Chou's arguments, it will be helpful in the present study, as it would have been in Chou's article, to discuss some historical facts. We recall that folk legends about the Eastern Sea ("Tung-hai" 東海) were very popular in the Ch'in-Han period and that according to one of the most striking ones the First Emperor (Ch'in Shih-huang 秦始皇) (259-210 B.C.) sent 3,000 virgin males and the same number of virgin females, led by Hsü Fu 徐市, to the Eastern Sea to seek the *elixir vitae*.<sup>62</sup> The mere mention of "Tung-hai" in the "Huang of the Eastern Sea" episode does not necessarily lead to a solution such as Chou reached. Again, a closer examination of Chou's quotation and several original texts (*Hsi-ching tsa-chi* 西京雜記) shows indubitable proof that Chou deliberately avoided quoting the San-fu

59. *Ibid.*, p. 10.

60. *Ibid.*, p. 10.

61. *Ibid.*, pp. 12-13.

62. Cf. Ssu-ma Ch'ien 司馬遷, *Shih chi* 史記 (Po-na pen) 118. 11a.

三輔 districts which were, and are, geographically much closer to the Western Border Region (*Hsi-yü*).<sup>63</sup> Earlier records in *Shih-chi* 史記 (*Historical Records*) by Ssu-ma Ch'ien 司馬遷 (145-circa-86 B.C.) and *Han-shu* 漢書 *History of the Former Han Dynasty*<sup>64</sup> by Pan Ku 班固 (A.D. 32-92), all show *chüeh-ti* to have been popular around the western part of Shensi Province. By the above references I have attempted to show that, however Chou may argue, a historical study of Chinese drama is still a field arousing controversies.

Sun K'ai-ti 孫楷第 in *On the Origins of the Puppet Show* (*K'uei-lei-hsi k'ao-yüan* 傀儡戲攷原), first written in 1944 and revised in 1952, cleaves to the belief that the puppet show originated with ancient funeral ceremonies. In *The Rites of Chou* (*Chou li* 周禮), it says that the *fang-hsiang-shih* 方相氏, an official attendant wearing a prodigious, ugly-looking effigy, marched in front of the funeral procession to dispel the evil spirits. The performance of this *fang-hsiang* was, in Sun's opinion, a type of dancing play. Sun mentions that, in the Han dynasty, the popular funeral minstrelsy was *k'uei-lei* 魁儡 ("prodigious figures") which was a new term for *fang-hsiang*; that in Emperor Ling's (靈) time (168-189) *k'uei-lei* was even entertainment for the courtiers as a dancing play.<sup>65</sup>

At present, numerous treatises and works on general and local Chinese dramas are pouring out. A number of works shows that there seems to have been a tendency to specialize in Chinese drama as it developed from the folk tradition. But the research in general has focused on relating drama to the history of

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63. Along with "San-fu 三輔" we are referred to an episode of which *Shih chi* (123.12b) says: Emperor Wu in the year 109 B.C. sent the prisoners of the San-fu areas to K'unming to engage in a battle with the local authorities who barred the Han envoys from reaching the Great Hsia (Bactria).

64. Cf. the *Shih chi* 12.15a; *Han shu* (Po-na pen) 96B.24a. The earliest mention of *chüeh-ti* is in the *Shih chi* 87.19b, where it is noted that a *chüeh-ti* show was held in the presence of Ch'in Erh-shih 秦二世 (ruler, 209-207 B.C. and son of the First Emperor), in Kan-ch'üan 甘泉 (now Shun-hua hsien 淳化縣 of the Shensi 陝西 Province).

65. Sun K'ai-ti 孫楷第, *K'uei-lei-hsi k'ao-yüan* 傀儡戲攷原, Shanghai: Shang-tsa ch'u-pan-she 上雜出版社 (September, 1952 1st. printing; 1953, revised edition), pp. 5-9.

## Chinese literature.

## 2. Collecting folklore materials in the field

It can be seen from the first and second sections of this paper that the study of Chinese folklore, which owes its origin to the Literary Revolution, has ever since been conducted under the guise of literature. It can also be seen how the ideal of the Literary Revolution—to create a plain-speaking and expressive literature of the people—has, with the infusion of Communist ideology, come to be “expressive of sympathies with proletarian socialist-realism”; that the propagation of the proletarian literature, as proposed by Ch’ü Ch’iu-pai, is to be achieved by utilizing storytelling and ballad-singing. Then there follows the “brigandage” period of Mao and the Long March. Having this chronology in mind, we shall not find it difficult to anticipate what folklore materials are to be collected, what are the major areas of interests, where collections have been initiated, and what have been the purpose of collecting folklore materials.

## A. Collecting projects subordinated to Party control

Since all folklore activities are regulated by the Party, the initiation of a collecting project takes place through a certain process. It is usually the propaganda bureau of a provincial administrative committee which initiates the collecting program by notifying another local organization such as the sub-division of the Central Academy of Ethnological Studies (*Chung-yang min-tsu-hsüeh yüan ke-sheng fen-yüan* 中央民族学院各省分院), or a branch unit of the Chinese Writers Association (*Chung-kuo tso-chia hsieh-hui ke-sheng fen-hui* 中国作家协会各省分会). Any such local organization, on being informed of its “mission”—for instance, to collect tales or any other folklore genres of a given ethnic group—begins to mobilize whole regiments of workers to form a fieldwork team. For example, in 1958, the Yunnan Provincial Propaganda Bureau and the Branch Unit of the Chinese Writers Association initiated a project to collect folklore materials among the minority ethnic groups in Yunnan Province. The fieldwork team, consisting of 115 Party radicals, teachers and students of local advanced schools, plus one hundred and some translators, was sent to Ta-li (大理), Te-hung (德宏), and Hsi-shuang-pan-na (西双版纳) to work among the Pai (白), T'ai (傣), Na-hsi



(納西), Yi (彝), Chuang (僮), Miao, and Ha-ni (哈尼) minorities.<sup>66</sup> The target areas of the collectors could be the people's communes, the workers' places, or the Fukien frontier stations. The team members were reminded that, wherever they went, they were in no wise to be a hindrance to the workers' work but to help them in all possible ways. In other words, their mission not only aimed at collecting but also at stirring up the spirit of the people at work so that more productivity could be expected. However, individual collecting does occur; in that case it is usually the editor of a local newspaper who writes an editorial reiterating the need for a general collecting movement. But even then the Party tune is apparent. Take, for example, an editorial written in the *Ssu-ch'uan sen-lin pao* 四川森林報 (*Szechuan Forest Daily*) on January 10th, 1959:

...an exquisite piece of folktale usually circulates from generation to generation... Its characteristics lie in the fact that through the details of the story a highly concentrated reflection on the laboring people's thinking and feeling is revealed: their hatred, their likes; their opposition and their pursuit... Before the Liberation, many people...fought against three big enemies [the Japanese invaders, the Chiang Kai-shek clique of Nationalists, and the U.S. supporters of Chang—trans.] and toiled with their own labor to create a fortunate prospect for the future... Many of the touching revolutionary folktales are in urgent need of collecting, classifying, and editing. For this reason we think that the notification from the Provincial Propaganda Bureau that everybody take a part in collecting folktales is timely, necessary, and should be resolutely and thoroughly executed.

#### B.. Materials already collected—folksongs, legends, folktales

For the most part the working team collects all genres of folklore. But in cases where a special mission is designated, as, for instance, the Great Leap Forward Folksongs Collecting Movement in 1958, the collecting would be confined to a particular genre. Notwithstanding this, published sources show that the major genres of folklore collected are folksongs, folktales, and oral narrative poems (from the minorities).

In subject matter, both the songs and tales aim at wiping

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66. Lao She 老舍, "Kuan-yü shao-shu min-tsu wen-hsüeh kung-tso ti pa-kaio 關於少數民族文學工作的報告," *Wen-i-pao* 文藝報 (No. 270, August 26, 1960, Peking), p. 15.

away the feudal tradition, arousing class consciousness between the rich and the poor, and praising the Chinese Communist Party and Mao. They are, in other aspects, designed for putting into practice Communist China's economic and political campaigns such as the Great Leap Forward Program of economic development, and for fostering the resentments imposed upon the people against all "imperialists." Naturally there are endless versions of folksongs about the people's "working spirit," "mobilization for the great leap forward," "great leap forward in the people's communes," "great leap in steel foundry," "mining workers in the great leap forward," "building the water dam," "Long March," and so on. Folksongs of this kind were published in *Hung-ch'i ko-yao* (紅旗歌謠) which also has an English edition entitled *Songs of the Red Flag*.<sup>67</sup> Folksongs of the old tradition were still collected in the early issues (prior to 1958) of a monthly called *Folk-Literature* (*Min-chien wen-hsüeh* 民間文学) which has been continuing publishing collected folksongs, folktales, folk narratives, and essays on folklore since April 1955.<sup>68</sup> The folktales which permit greater flexibility of narration, cover a broader scope. There are tales about the origins of the traditional Chinese festivals, fairy legends, tales about local customs and historical remains (all in the earlier issues of *Min-chien wen-hsüeh*), allegorical fables, stories for children; tales about miners, anti-Japanese legends, the people's revolutionary legends, and legends about Chairman Mao, Liu Shao-ch'i, and Chu Teh.<sup>69</sup> A collection of folktales containing 124 stories collected from 30 ethnic groups was published in the *Selected Chinese Folktales* (*Chung-kuo min-chien ku-shih hsüan* 中国民間故事選) in 1958. The collection consists of stories about the creation of the universe; the moon and the creation of her satellites, the moon goddess and the laureate tree; tales of the Mongolian "cowboy" and the heroic adventures of his steed; the young Uighur fifer and his triumph over the landlord who suppressed the poor; the praising

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67. Kuo Mo-jo and Chou Yang 郭沫若,周揚, ed., *Hung-ch'i ko-yao* 紅旗歌謠, Peking: Hung-ch'i tsa-chih-she 紅旗雜誌社, 1959; English translation: *Songs of the Red Flag*, Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1961.

68. The complete set of *Min-chien wen-hsüeh* 民間文学 is available in the Library of Congress and the library of Stanford University.

69. Most of the references are drawn from the *Min-chien wen-hsüeh*, 1957-1963.

of Chairman Mao, and other revolutionary leaders.<sup>70</sup>

In general, there is an attempt to collect folklore from all localities in all provinces. In the field of folksongs, for instance, current references show that folksongs from the following provinces have been or are in the process of being printed: Anhui, Chekiang, Ch'ing-hai, Fukien, Ho-pei, Kan-su, Kwangsi, Kwang-tung, Kwei-chow, Liao-ning, Inner Mongolia (Autonomous Region), Shanghai (city), Shansi, Shensi, Sinkiang, Szechwan, Tibet, and Yunnan.<sup>71</sup> But there are certain areas of interest which have received particular attention. These in-

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70. Chia Chih and Sun Chien-ping 賈芝 孫劍冰, *Chung-kuo min-chien ku-shih hsüan* 中國民間故事選, Peking: Jen-min wen-hsüeh ch'u-pan-she 人民文學出版社, Vol. I, 1958; Vol. II, 1962. It should be noted that most of the stories in these two volumes were published earlier in *Min-chien wen-hsüeh*.

71. A few selected works are given below:

- (1) Chekiang: Chu Ch'iu-feng 朱秋楓, *Che-chiang min-chien ko-yao san-chi* 浙江民間歌謠散輯, Shanghai: Shan-hai wen-hua ch'u-pan-she 上海文化出版社, 1956.
- (2) Ch'ing-hai: Chi Yeh 紀業, *Ch'ing-hai min-ko hsüan* 青海民歌選, Peking: Jen-min wen-hsüeh ch'u-pan-she 人民文學出版社, 1954.
- (3) Fukien: Jo-feng pien-chi-pu" "熱風" 編輯部 ed., *Fu-chien ko-yao* 福建歌謠, Peking: Jen-min wen-hsüeh ch'u-pan-she, 1959.
- (4) Kiangsu: Chiang-su-sheng yin-yüeh kung-tso-tsu 江蘇省音樂工作組(葉林主編, editor in chief Yeh Lin) ed., *Chiang-su nan-pu min-chien hsi-ch'ü shuo-ch'ang yin-yüeh chi* 江蘇南部民間戲曲說唱音樂集, Peking: Yin-yüeh ch'u-pan-she 音樂出版社, 1955; and *Chung-kuo k'o-hsüeh-yüan Chiang-su fen-yüan wen-hsüeh yen-chiu-suo* 中國科學院江蘇分院文學研究所 ed., *Chiang-su ch'uan-t'ung ko-yao* 江蘇傳統歌謠, Nanking: Chiang-su wen-i ch'u-pan-she 江蘇文芸出版社, 1960.
- (5) Kwangsi: Hsüeh Shan 薛汕, *Miao-ko* 苗歌, Peking: Tzu-ch'iang shu-chü 自強書局, 1953.
- (6) Kweichow: Yüan Su 袁蘇, *Kuei-chou hsiung-ti min-tsu ch'ing-ko san-chi* 貴州兄弟民族情歌散輯, Shanghai: Shang-hai wen-hua ch'u-pan-she 上海文化出版社, 1956.
- (7) Shanghai: Chung-kung Shang-hai shih-wei hsüan-ch'uan-pu 中共上海市委宣傳部, *Shang-hai min-ko hsüan* 上海民歌選, Shanghai: Hsin-wen-i ch'u-pan-she—Shang-hai wen-hua ch'u-pan-she 新文芸出版社, 上海文化出版社, 1958.
- (8) Shensi: Kao Tse 高沢, *Mao-shan ko* 茅山歌, Peking: Tso-chia ch'u-pan-she 作家出版社, 1957.
- (9) Szechuan: Sha Tzu-ch'üan 沙子鎗, *Ssu-ch'uan ch'ing-yin* 四川清音, Ch'ung-ch'ing jen-min ch'u-pan-she 重慶人民出版社, 1957.

clude mainly the provinces and the remote aboriginal regions through which the Red Army had once led the Long March or where it had been active. The materials collected from these areas constitute what may be called the folklore of the minority peoples in contemporary China.

### 3. Folklore of the minority peoples in China

#### A. Introduction

Within the reaches of the border regions in China there are fifty-one ethnic minority groups whose population totals some 35,500,000. Most of these peoples dwell in the plateaus and mountainous regions covering an area of about 60 per cent of China proper.<sup>72</sup> The areas, though compartmented into five major Autonomous Regions known as the Inner-Mongolia, the Sinkiang-Uighur, the Tibet-Chamdo, the Kwangsi-Chuang, and the Ning-sia-Hui, are politically unified under the Republic. With the exception of a few, such as the Sinkiang-Uighurs, the Mongols, the Tibetans, and the Yi's (彝), most of the minority peoples have no written language. The folk-literature of the minorities has been preserved solely through oral tradition. With a view to "preserving the cultures" of these autonomous regions, ever since the Liberation, the Party has shown a keen and eager interest in folklore collecting activities, especially among the Chuang's in Kwangsi which borders North Vietnam; the Yi's and T'ai's in Yünnan which has borders with North Vietnam, Laos, and Burma; the Tibetans in Tibet adjacent to Nepal and India; the Uighurs in Sinkiang, a region rich in strategic mining materials, which borders on Russia; the Mongols in Inner Mongolia adjoining the Soviet satellite Mongolia People's Republic; and the Yen-pien Autonomous Region in Kirin which is adjacent to Korea. The first measure undertaken was to have cadres trained bi-lingually in the branch institutes of the Central Academy of Ethnological Studies in these Autonomous Regions. It was reported that in 1963 there were over 200 students who, after two years hard study of the Uighur language in Sinkiang, completed their language training at Urumchi (Wu-lu-mu-ch'i

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72. This figure is based on Yang Liang-ts'ai 楊亮才, "Feng-fu to-ts'ai ti shao-shu min-tsu min-chien wen-hsüeh 豐富多采的少数民族民間文學," *Min-chien wen-hsüeh* (September, 1959), p. 115.

烏魯木齊), K'e-shih (喀什) and Yili (伊犁) respectively. These students, before they came to Sinkiang, were high school graduates selected from T'ang-shan 唐山, Pao-ting 保定 (both in Ho-pei Province) and Peking, the areas where the standard national language, Mandarin, is spoken. Now with the language facility acquired they can freely express their thinking and feeling and read current books and newspapers with readiness.<sup>73</sup> Another report noted that in 1964 there were over 8,000 linguistics workers in the Mongolian language in the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region.<sup>74</sup> In due time, when a motion for collecting is made, the trained members are immediately available for fieldwork as translators.

The fieldwork project that has been carried on in the autonomous regions has been extensive both in scope and duration of time. The previously mentioned Yünnan working team investigated the folklore of seven minority groups. After six months, the total number of items collected ran up to more than 100,000. In the meantime, the Propaganda Bureau of the Provincial Government of Ch'ing-hai Province mobilized over 350 people from provincial literary organizations to explore the folklore resources among the *Sa-la* (撒拉) people, the T'u (土) people and the Tibetans.<sup>75</sup> The Investigation Group on the Social History of Ethnological Studies in the Chinese Academy of Sciences (*Chung-kuo k'o-hsüeh-yüan min-tsu-yen-chiu-suo Kuang-hsi-shao-shu-min-tsu she-hui li-shih tiao-ch'a-tsu* 中国科学院民族研究所广西少数民族社会历史調查組) has even carried on the sociological studies of several groups for seven years. The investigation has been described as "systematic and well planned." In the course of the investigation, the authorities concerned have published *Synopses on the Kwangsi Minority Ethnic Groups* (*Kuang-hsi shao-shu-min-tsu chien-chieh* 广西少数民族簡介). The materials collected include historical remains of cultural and material value, tablet-inscriptions, copies and originals of archives holdings, folksongs and ballads, wall engravings, and relics of the Stone Age.<sup>76</sup> With a fairly adequate grasp of the folklore materials collected from the minorities, and cooperating with each of the working teams in Yünnan, Kweichow, Szechuan,

73. *Kuang-ming jih-pao* 光明日報, Peking, August 16, 1963, p. 2.

74. *Huan-ch'iao jih-pao* 華僑日報, New York, April 1, 1964.

75. Lao She, *op. cit.*, p. 15.

76. *Kuang-ming jih-pao*, March 16, 1963, p. 2.

Kwangsi, Hunan, Ts'ing-hai, Hei-lung-chiang 黑龍江, the Central Academy of Ethnological Studies has been able to prepare the histories of folk-literatures of the minority ethnic groups.<sup>77</sup>

#### B. Folksongs and folktales of the minority peoples

In the field of folksongs and folktales, the collection has been fruitful, if not qualitatively successful. The most ostentatious work is *Folksongs of the Minority Peoples of China* (*Chung-kuo shao-shu-min-tsu ko-yao* 中国少数民族歌謠). It includes 3,511 texts of songs edited and selected by the Research Institute of the Linguistics of the Minority Peoples of the Academy of Sciences.<sup>78</sup> Other collections of favored folksongs also see publication in local and central newspapers and periodicals; a number of them is published under special collections such as *Selected Folksongs of Eastern Mongolia* (*Tung-meng min-ko hsüan* 東蒙民歌選), *Collection of Folksongs of the Pai People* (*Pai-tsu min-kou chi* 白族民歌集), *Songs of the Na-hsi People* (*Na-hsi-tsu ti ko* 納西族的歌), *Folksongs of the Tibetans* (*Tsang-tsu min-ko* 藏族民歌), *Selected Folksongs of the Chuang People* (*Chuang-tsu min-ko hsüan chi* 僮族民歌選集), *Selected Songs of the Yao People* (*Yao-ko hsüan chi* 瑤歌選集), *Selected Folksongs of the T'u-chia People* (*T'u-chia-tsu ko-yao hsüan* 土加族歌謠選).<sup>79</sup>

Folktales, like folksongs, insofar as their narrative content is concerned, can provide immediate tools for propaganda. Tales may be propagated to effect a consolidation between culturally different peoples, especially the Han majority and the various minority peoples; and to elevate the cultural level of the minorities. In consequence of these political and educational aims, the collecting of folktales is encouraged. The *Selected Chinese Folktales*, referred to earlier in this section, is a collection of 121 tales of which 45 are collected from the Han people and the rest from 29 ethnic groups such as the Mongols, the Hui's (the Mohammedans), the Uighurs 維吾爾族, the Miao's 苗, the Li's 黎, the Yi's, the Chuang's. A special edition of animal tales was published in 1962 in the *Collection of Chinese Animal Tales* (*Chung-kuo tung-wu ku-shih chi* 中国動物故事集). These 93 tales were selected from those already published in magazines and

77. Cf. Yang Liang-ts'ai, *op. cit.*, p. 116.

78. Lao She, *op. cit.*, pp. 15-16.

79. Yang Liang-ts'ai, *op. cit.*, p. 116.

newspapers. The animals speak in impersonated speech, one outwitting the other, while the tales end on moral notes. In this respect the selection as a whole is devoid of Communist propaganda.<sup>80</sup> The fieldwork team in Yünnan since 1958 has collected several times in the aboriginal areas. As a result of their collecting, they processed part of the collected folklore and contributed 101 tales in the *Selected Folktales from the Ethnic Groups of Yünnan* (*Yün-nan ko-tsu min-chien ku-shih hsüan* 云南各族民間故事選).<sup>81</sup> A few of these tales have been translated by Wolfram Eberhard and published in the *Folktales of China* (University of Chicago Press, 1965). There are several other volumes of selected tales from the minorities, such as *Folktales of the Uighurs* (*Wei-wu-erh-tsu min-chien ku-shih* 維吾爾族民間故事), *Collection of Legendary Tales of the Pai People* (*Pai-tsu ch'uan-shuo ku-shih chi* 白族傳說故事集), *Folktales of Tibet* (*Hsi-tsang min-chien ku-shi* 西藏民間故事), and *Folktales of the Tung People* (*T'ung-tsu min-chien ku-shih* 侗族民間故事).<sup>82</sup> A pre-Communist linguistic study of the Yünnan Yi tribes contains ten tales with transcription of texts from the Yi language and provides Chinese translations. This research, carried out by Kao Hua-nien 高華年, has provided a key work for linguists and folklorists for speculative studies on comparative linguistics as well as source work for the study of the Yi language.<sup>83</sup>

### C. Oral narrative poems

An area virtually ignored in the past, which has now been under wide exploration, is the field of oral narrative poems. The Minority People's Folk-literature Research Team in Yünnan

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80. Shang-hai wen-i ch'u-pan-she 上海文芸出版社, ed., *Chung-kuo tung-wu ku-shieh chi* 中國動物故事集, Shanghai: Shang-hai wen-i ch'u-pan-she 上海文芸出版社, 1962.

81. Chung-kuo tso-chia hsieh-hui K'ung-ming fen-hui 中國作家協會昆明分會 ed., *Yün-nan ko-tsu min-chien ku-shih hsüan* 云南各族民間故事選, Peking: Jen-min wen-hsüeh ch'u-pan-she 人民文學出版社, 1962.

82. Cf. Yang Liang-ts'ai, *op. cit.*, p. 116.

83. Kao Hua-nien 高華年, "I-yü ku-shih 彝語故事," in *I-yü yü-fa yen-chiu* 彝語語法研究, pp. 95-118; Chinese translations are provided in "Ku-shih Han-i 故事漢譯," pp. 119-126, Peking: K'o-hsüeh ch'u-pan-she 科學出版社, 1958.

Province (*Yün-nan sheng min-tsu min-chien wen-hsüeh tiao-chi'a-tsu* 云南省民族民間文学調查組) alone has handled some sixteen narrative poems, a number of which has been published in *Min-chien-wen-hsüeh* and in single volumes.<sup>84</sup> Collections from other peoples include oral narrative poems from the Chuang's in Kuangsi, from the Tibetans in Ch'ing-hai 青海 and Tibet, from the Uighurs in Sinkiang, from the Mongols in Inner Mongolia, and from the Kazaks near the Sinkiang border.<sup>85</sup>

84. Pai Mu 白木, "Hsi-tu Yün-nan ch'u-pan ti ssu-pu min-chien hsü-shih-shih 喜說云南出版的四部民間叙事詩," *Min-chien wen-hsüeh* (January, 1960), pp.81-83. The Harvard-Yenching Library has the following collections:

- (1) Kuang Wei-jan 光未然, *A-hsi-jen ti ko* 阿細人的歌, Peking: Jen-min wen-hsüeh ch'u-pan-she, 1953.
- (2) P'eng Su-fei 彭肅非, *Ai-tso yü Ai-sha* 愛佐与愛莎, Peking: Tsochia ch'u-pan-she, 1957.
- (3) Yün-nan jen-min kung-t'uan kung-tso-tsu 雲南人民文工團工作組, *A-shih-ma* 阿詩瑪, Peking: Jen-min wen-hsüeh ch'u-pan-she, 1955.
- (4) Yün-nan min-tsu min-chien wen-hsüeh Te-hung tiao-ch'a-tuei 云南民族民間文学德宏調查隊, *Hsien-hsiu* 綫秀, Shanghai: Shang-hai wen-i ch'u-pan-she, 1962.
- (5) Yün-nan min-tsu min-chien wen-hsüeh Li-chiang tiao-ch'a-tuei 云南民族民間文学麗江調查隊, *Hsiang-hui tiao* 相会調, Shanghai: Shang-hai wen-i ch'u-pan-she, 1962.
- (6) Yün-nan-sheng min-tsu min-chien wen-hsüeh Hsi-shuang-pan-na tiao-ch'a-tuei 云南省民族民間文学西双版纳調查隊, *Hu-lu hsin* 葫芦信, Peking: Chung-kuo ch'ing-nien ch'u-pan-she 中国青年出版社, 1959.
- (7) Yün-nan-ta-hsüeh chung-wei-hsi 1956 nien-chi hsüeh-sheng 云南大学中文系1956年級学生, *Lang ch'ing pu* 朗鯨布, Shanghai: Shang-hai wen-i ch'u-pan-she, 1962.
- (8) *Mei-ko* 梅葛, partly printed in *Min-chien wen-hsüeh* (No. 53, September 1959), pp. 105-112; published in single volume (ed. by Yün-nan min-tsu min-chien-wen-hsüeh Ch'u-hsiung tiao-ch'a-tuei 云南民族民間文学楚雄調查隊 ) by Jen-min wen-hsüeh ch'u-pan-she 人民文学出版社 (Peking?) in 1960(?). I have not personally seen this book which is not available at the Harvard-Yenching Library; the reference here given is based on the news of publication on folklore that appear on the back cover of the No. 98 issue of *Min-chien wen-hsüeh* (No. 5, October, 1964).

85. Cf. Lao She, *op. cit.*, p. 15; also Yang Liang-ts'ai, *op. cit.*, pp. 117-118; and Shan Lin 山林, "Sa li ha yü Sa man 薩里哈与薩曼," *Min-chien wen-hsüeh* (February, 1960), pp. 72-90.



Although people are inclined to relate these oral narrative poems to a prominent folklore genre known in the West as *oral epic*, with the exception of *The Romance of Gesser Khan* (*Ke-sa-erh* [chuan] 格薩爾[伝])<sup>86</sup>—the story of King Gesser and his followers' heroic deeds in the twelfth century—none of the oral narrative poems collected and processed as of 1962 is on a level comparable to the Homeric epics in story and richness of plot. The narrative, approximately around 1,000 or 2,000 lines, deals either with a love story, usually containing battles in which the hero rescues a maiden forcibly taken away by a tyrant, such as the Hsien-hsiu 絳秀 and *A-shih-ma* 阿詩瑪, the latter of which is translated into English by Gladys Yang,<sup>87</sup> or simply deals with a long series of songs centering on the history of gods and men, the creation of the universe and other things, on marriage and love affairs; *A-hsi-jen ti ko* 阿細人的歌, and *Ai-tso yü Ai-sha* 愛佐与愛莎, for instance, belong to this latter group.<sup>88</sup> People read and enjoy these long narrative poems, because, in these poems, people find simplicity, beauty of style, superb quality of romanticism, richness of imagination, and novelty of poetic diction. Besides, they are of great linguistic value; in processing the narrative poems, the fieldworkers managed, with considerable labor, to produce the word (usually five words to a line) and rhyme schemes, verbal parallelism, and pun words of the original. It is interesting to note that much vulgarity of the original is lost owing to the sophistication and refinement

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86. Cf. Lao She, *op. cit.*, p. 15; also Hsiao Ch'ung-su 蕭崇素, "Ssu-ch'uan shao-shu min-tsu min-chien wen-hsüeh man-pu 四川少数民族民間文学漫步," *Min-chien wen-hsüeh* (March, 1958), pp. 35-36. *Ke-sa-erh* [chuan] 格薩爾[伝] is in six parts, one of which, sub-titled *Ho-ling ta-chan* (shang) 霍嶺大戰(上), was translated by Ch'ing-hai-sheng min-chien wen-hsüeh yen-chiu-hui 青海省民間文学研究会 and published by Shang-hai wen-i ch'u-pan-she, 1962. For English version, see Ida Zeitlin, *Gessar Khan* (New York: George H. Doran Company, 1927). (Foreword by Ida Zeitlin: "It is upon this German translation, entitled *Die Thaten Bogda Gessar Chans* and published in 1839 that the present version is principally based....")

87. For bibliographical information see note 84 above; Gladys Yang, *Ashma*, Peking: Foreign Language Press, 1957; *Lang ch'ing pu* 朗鯨布 (see note 84 above) was translated by Rewi Alley as *Not A Dog—An Ancient Tai Ballad*, Peking: New World Press, 1962.

88. For bibliographical information see note 84 above.

of ideas in the hands of the folklore workers.<sup>89</sup>

#### 4. Chinese Communists and the rise of bandit-lore

The beginning and development of the "People's Revolution" in many aspects resembled the traditional banditary revolts in China. Facing a militarily superior Kuomintang force, the Reds had to resort to bandits as army reinforcements. Their means of feeding the army was "to take from the rich," to maraud the enemy's service corps. Swearing blood brotherhood, they safely marched through the areas of the Yi and Lolo tribes. Now it is the Communists who reign over China. They must think of some solution to justify their historical past. The solution is: "All dark forces which endanger the masses of the people must be exposed while all revolutionary struggles of the masses must be praised."<sup>90</sup>

So, for the first time in modern China, all historical records about bandits are screened for re-examination. In the first place, peasant revolts, from the late Han dynasty down to the late Ch'ing dynasty, are discussed. Critical appraisals are rendered of the failures and merits of the people's revolts. In each case the conclusion reached is usually the same: "Peasantry revolts of the Chinese people were tremendous. The revolt activities were made in the disguise of religion. But without the guidance

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89. In the *A-hsi-jen ti ko* 阿細人的歌 (see note 84 above), for instance, as a punishment of men's covetousness, the God of the Universe set atop a huge tree a yellow bird whose wings, covering up the sunlight, shadowed the earth with darkness. Later, the heat of the sun burned the bird to death. Its body became corrupt and turned into mountains; its wings fell piece by piece to the ground and changed into mud. So the sunlight shines upon the earth again. The original idea of this episode was: after the death of the bird, the flies laid eggs on it and the eggs of the flies turned into maggots which ate up the corpse of the bird (op. cit., pp. 23-24; 26-27; 27, note 1).

90. Mao Tse-tung, "Talks at the Yen-an Forum on Art and literature," *Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung*, Vol. IV, p. 87.

of an elite the revolts were doomed to failure.”<sup>91</sup> In this manner the Communists justify their responsibility for the cause of the “people’s revolution.” Secondly, all the official records about “righteous revolts (*ch’i i* 起義)” such as those of the Ming and Ch’ing dynasties are being sorted and published without reservation, insofar as the contents are concerned. The editors emphasize, however, that the ruling classes of the past “distorted” history and considered “righteous revolts” to be brigandage and ruffianism; that it is the reader who must “remain cool” and analyze from different angles the historical incidents and recognize clearly to what class viewpoint these historical records belong.<sup>92</sup>

While the Communists have attempted to adjust the urban people’s concept of “bandit,” there remained for them still the problem of how to smooth over the “ill-guided” idea of “bandit” on the part of the peasantry. The styles of the official records followed certain patterns specially designed for documentary communications between mandarins and higher court officials. The peasant folk, scarcely educated, cannot be “benefited” from these published documents. To deal properly with this problem the Communists favored a bandit-lore collecting campaign among the peasantry. The motivation can be easily understood: the rural areas are the places where bandits had been active; hence, the popularity of tales, songs, and legends about bandits among the rural folk. Therefore, beginning in April 1958, *Folk-Literature* (*Min-chien wen-hsüeh* 民間文学) began to publish

91. Cf. (1) Lai Chia-tu 賴家度, “Nan-ch’iao T’ang Yü-chih suo-ling-tao-ti nung-min ch’i-i 南朝唐虞之所領導的農民起義,” p. 22; (2) Li Kuang-pi 李光壁, “Han-tai t’ai-p’ing-tao yü huang-chin ta-ch’i-i 漢代太平道与黃巾大起義,” p. 11; (3) Teng Kuang-ming 鄧廣銘, “Shih-t’an wan-t’ang ti nung-min ch’i-i 試談晚唐的農民起義,” p. 65. All these articles and others are in *Chung-kuo nung-min ch’i-i lung-chi* 中國農民起義論集 (ed. Li-shih chiao-hsüeh yüeh-k’an she 歷史教學月刊社), Peking: Wu-shih nien-tai ch’u-pan-she 五十年代出版社, 1954.

92. Cf. (1) Cheng T’ien-t’ing and Sun Yüeh 鄭天挺, 孫銳, “Pien-che ti hua 編者的話,” in *Ming mo nung-min ch’i-i shih-liao* 明末農民起義史料, pp. 3-4; Peking—Shanghai: Chung-hua shu-ch’ü 中華書局, 1954; (2) “Fan-li 凡例,” in *Ch’ing-ch’u nung-mi nch’i-i tzu-liao chi-lu* 清初農民起義資料記錄, ed. Hsieh Kuo-chen 謝國楨, Shanghai: Shang-hai jen-min ch’u-pan-she 上海人民出版社, 1957 p. 2; and (3) Pai Shou-i 白壽彝, “Ti-chi 題記,” in *Hui-min ch’i-i* 回民起義, Vol. I, p. 2, Shanghai: Shen chow kuo kuang she 神州國光社, 1952.

stories about the *I-ho-t'uan* 義和團 (Boxers), dating from the "Boxer Rebellion" of 1899-1900 and collected by Chang Shih-chieh 張世杰. These stories, in general, emphasized how the peasant folk were oppressed by *yang-mao-tzu* 洋毛子 ("the foreign hairy ones"), *erh-mao-tzu* 二毛子 ("the running dogs of the *yang-mao-tzu*"), and the Manchu officials. Referring to Chang's tales, the editor's note (April, 1958) says: "We know that many places circulate revolutionary folksongs and stories which are concerned with anti-imperialism and anti-feudalism, such as stories about the Opium War (Sino British War), the *T'ai-p'ing t'ien-kuo* 太平天國 [1850-1864, The T'ai-p'ing Rebellion], the *Nien chün* 捻軍 [in the 1860's, The Nien Rebellion], and *Hui-min ch'i-i* 回民起義 [c. 1825, 1845, 1866, 1873, and 1878, The Revolts of the Hui People].... We hope that folk-literature workers from all places will, with a highly political enthusiasm, concern themselves with the collecting of this kind of materials."<sup>93</sup> After the publication of Chang's Boxer stories there seemed to have been no hesitation as to why bandit tales and songs should remain neglected. In the following year, folksongs about the *I-ho-t'uan* and legends and songs about *T'ai-p'ing t'ien-kuo* appeared in *Folk-Literature* alongside with tales about the *I-ho-t'uan*. Legends and songs about the *Nien* rebellion were published in *Folk-Literature* beginning in January, 1960.<sup>94</sup> Collections of bandit tales and songs in book form also circulated. In 1960, the branch Research Institute of Literature of the Academy of Sciences in Kiangsu Province published *Collection of Folksongs and Legends of T'ai-p'ing-t'ien-kuo* (*T'ai-p'ing-t'ien-kuo ko-yao ch'uan-shuo chi* 太平天國歌謠傳說集). For most of the songs in this book (38 out of 43) the names of the informants, the collectors, and the places

93. Cf. "Pien-hou chi 編後記," *Min-chien wen-hsüeh* (April 1958), p. 100.

94. For (1) tales about the *I-ho-t'uan* cf. Chang Shih-chieh 張士杰, in *Min-chien wen-hsüeh* (MCWH): April, November, December, 1958; February, March, December, 1959; (2) tales and songs about the *Nien* Army cf. [Li Tung-shan 李東山 ed.] MCWH, Sept., 1959, pp. 92-94; T'an Chi-an 譚繼安, Niu Chia-k'un 牛家琨 *et al.*, MCWH, Jan., 1960, pp. 29-55; Niu Chia-k'un, MCWH, Feb., 1960, pp. 51-68; Niu Chia-k'un, Liu Shih-kuang 劉士光 *et al.*, MCWH, Aug.-Sept., 1960, pp. 179-200; and (3) legends and songs about the *T'ai-ping t'ien-kuo* cf. "T'ai-p'ing t'ien-kuo ko-yao 太平天國歌謠," MCWH, Aug., 1959, pp. 42-47, Yüan Fei 袁飛, MCWH, March, 1959, pp. 31-32; 33; 34-35; 35; 36-37.

where these songs were collected are given, while for all the 48 legends without exception the names of the collectors are given, and for most of them more detailed information is provided, such as the informants' names, the dates, and the places where the legends were collected.<sup>95</sup> A book entitled *Folksongs of the Nien Army* (*Nien-chün ko-yao* 捻軍歌謠) and a *Collection of Nien Army Tales* (*Nien-chün ku-shih chi* 捻軍故事集) were published in 1960 and 1962.<sup>96</sup>

To the collecting of bandit tales and songs there seems to be no end in sight for the near future. Even Ku Chieh-kang, one of the organizers of the Folksong Research Society in Peking University (1922), who became director of the Institute of Philology and History in the Sun Yat-sen University (1928-29) and whom Lu Hsün criticized as a "modernistic opportunist" (1927), encourages the collecting of Boxers' stories. It is Ku Chieh-kang who proof-read the stories of the *I-ho-t'uan* collected by Chang Shih-chieh. In his letter to the editor of *Folk-Literature* (March 14, 1958) he says: "These stories are really touching. From these stories we can tell how dissatisfied were the masses of the people towards the ruling class under the emperor, the officials; how the imperialists oppressed China and stirred up the righteousness of the people, insomuch that the people had to rely on huge swords to resist arms and artillery; how the reactionary ruling clique, taking no head of the people's resistance, toadied to the imperialists and begged peace negotiations in order to ensure their survival. This is the real history of the people."<sup>97</sup> Again Ku in his article "After Reading the *I-ho-t'uan* stories" ("Tu-le I-ho-t'uan ku-shih chih-hou 讀了義和團故事之后") writes: "The areas that the *I-ho-t'uan* occupied were vast. What Comrade Chang [Shih-chieh] has collected is only a fraction of the *I-ho-t'uan* activities in two county (*hsien*) districts. . . .

95. Prof. Wolfram Eberhard notes that usually an editor's name is added after the name of the man who is supposed to have told the story; cf. *Folktales of China*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965, pp. xxxiv.

96. Li Tung-shan 李東山, *Nien-chün ko-yao* 捻軍歌謠, Shanghai: Shang-hai wen-i ch'u-pan-she 上海文芸出版社, 1960; An-hui-sheng Fuyang chuan-ch'ü wen-hsüeh i-shu kung-tso-che lien-ho-hui 安徽省阜陽專區文學藝術工作者聯合會, ed., *Nien-chün ku-shih chi* 捻軍故事集, Shanghai: Shang-hai wen-i ch'u-pan-she, 1962.

97. Ku Chieh-kang 顧頌剛, "Kuan-yü I-ho-t'uan ch'uan-shuo ku-shih 關於義和團傳說故事," *Min-chien wen-hsüeh* (April, 1958), p. 87.

They (the stories—trans.) are not plentiful enough to [permit us to] have a complete view of the history of the *I-ho-t'uan*. Therefore, I suggest that the leading authority concerned make use of its impetus in requesting the provincial government committees of Hopei and Shantung and the local government committee of Tientsin (city) [places where the *I-ho-t'uan* had had their activities—trans.] to mobilize the masses to carry out a general investigation and fieldwork project.”<sup>98</sup>

#### IV. Folklore theory and techniques in pre-Communist and Communist China

##### 1. Terminology

For the purpose of understanding the study of the development of the science of folklore in China, a closer examination of Chinese folklore terminology would seem to be necessary.

##### A. Pre-Communist China

A modern term for the science of folklore in the Chinese language is *min-su-hsüeh* 民俗学, which has been widely used since the founding of the Folk-song Research Society. *Min* means “people, folk”; *su* as a noun means “customs” and, as an adjective, “popular.” *Hsüeh* means “study, science.” Hence, *min-su-hsüeh* altogether means “the study (or the science) of the customs of the people.” There seems to have been a tendency among the members of the Society to use *min-su-hsüeh* as an equivalent of “the science of folklore” in English. But it appears that even some of them seemed to have trouble in defining properly the true meaning of the science of folklore.

For the Chinese folklore scholars who were still haunted by the ethics of the old tradition, to engage in folklore studies meant a sacrifice of their reputation. *Min-su-hsüeh* was encouraged by means of excuses such as “for the benefit of social reform,” “for bringing new ideas to modern Chinese literature.” This confusion was best exemplified by Ch'ang Hui 常惠, formerly a member of the Folk-Song Research Society of Peking and now

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98. Ku Chieh-kang, “Tu-le I-ho-t'uan ku-shih chih-hou 讀了義和團故事之后,” *Min-chien wen-hsüeh* (February, 1959), p. 53.

a member of the Society of Chinese Folk-Literature and Arts in Communist China. He said (1922): "So, in order to study folk-songs, not only is [an appreciation of] literature important, but also important is the understanding of the people's psychology. In order to investigate the people's psychology it is extremely necessary to pay attention to books concerning folk customs (*min-su*)... We should from now on study *min-su-hsüeh* 民俗学 (Fockeore) [sic] enthusiastically!"<sup>99</sup> The pioneer Chinese folklore scholars, headed by Chou Tso-jen, Shen Chien-shih 沈兼士, Ch'ien Hsüan-t'ung 錢玄同, Liu Fu 劉復, Hu Shih 胡適, Ku Chieh-kang, Ch'ang Hui, Lo Ch'ang-p'ei 羅常培, and many others, may be called the literary school of folklore of Peking University. They showed some interest in, and encouraged the study of, *min-su-hsüeh*, but none of them was of a mind to raise *min-su-hsüeh* as a science among other disciplines; nor did they develop any folklore theories. Aside from that, *min-su-hsüeh*, because of the word *su*, was easily misunderstood as a study about "popular stories and customs and beliefs." Ts'ai Yüan-p'ei made an attempt in 1926 to clarify the point that "'folklore' was created by W. J. Thomas [sic] to replace 'popular antiquities' which means *min-su-hsüeh*... Here in this article I use *min-tsu-hsüeh* as an all-embracing term... to follow that in the German language..."<sup>100</sup> But the term *min-su-hsüeh*, or the English equivalent "popular antiquities," had become so predominant that it was widely used in North and South China folklore societies from 1920 on until the founding of the People's Republic.

Nevertheless, Ts'ai's effort was a good start toward a scientific approach to folklore, and the study of folklore as an independent discipline gradually made headway in China. Beginning in 1928, the second stage of folklore studies in China can be said to have emerged, in the folklore department of Sun Yat-sen University. In general, the folklore scholars, chiefly Ku Chieh-kang, Jun Chao-tsu 容肇祖, Yang Ch'eng-chih 楊成志, Ch'ien Nan-yang 錢南揚, Chung Ching-wen, and Pai Shou-i 白壽彝 succeeded in collecting folktales and legends and gradually made their way as folklorists. The folklore activity in this stage was characterized by an effort to combine fieldwork materials and experiences with speculative

99. Cf. Ch'ang Hui 常惠, "T'an Pei-ching ti ko-yao 談北京的歌謠," *Hu-shih wen-ts'un* 胡適文存, Vol. IV, Series ii, Shanghai: Ya-tung t'u-shu kuan 亞東圖書館, 1925, pp. 350-351.

100. Ts'ai Yüan-p'ei 蔡元培, "Shuo min-tsu-hsüeh," *op. cit.*, pp. 1-2.

treatment. The public then saw the publication of works such as *The Talks on Folk-tales* by Chao Ching-shen 趙景深, *Superstitions and Legends (Mi-hsin yü ch'uan-shuo 迷信与伝説)* by Jung Chao-tsu, and many other works on different folklore genres. Unfortunately, for lack of available references, they cannot be discussed here. The folklore activities of this stage were heightened by the advent of Wolfram Eberhard, who collected fairy tales and legends in Chekiang and South China. Fortunately, some of the collections of this period became a reality to Western folklorists, owing to Eberhard's effort in having prepared a handy bibliography in his *Typen Chinesischer Volksmärchen*.<sup>101</sup>

These are the two stages of folklore activities in pre-Communist China.

## B. Communist China

The Chinese Communist folklore workers have used the term *min-chien wen-hsüeh* 民間文学, since the founding of the People's Republic. *Min-chien* means "amid the people"; *wen-hsüeh* means "literature"; hence, *min-chien wen-hsüeh* means "literature of the people," or simply "folk-literature." The folklore workers in the field are called "*min-chien wen-hsüeh kung-tso-che* 民間文学工作者," that is, the "folk-literature workers." Realizing that *min-chien wen-hsüeh* applies to oral tradition only, the "workers" also use another term, *min-chien wen-i* 民間文芸: *wen* by itself means "literature"; *i* means "arts"; hence, *min-chien wen-i* means "literature and arts of the people" or "folk arts and literature." These two terms are often interchangeable. The Communist "workers" use these terms to distinguish *min-chien wen-hsüeh*

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101. The works by Chao Ching-shen and Jung Chao-tsu referred here are based on Chao Wei-pang, "Modern Chinese Folklore Investigation (Part II)," *Folklore Studies*, Vol. II, Peking, 1943, pp. 84-85; 85, note 18. Cf. also Wolfram Eberhard, "Benutzte Literatur," *Typen Chinesischer Volksmärchen* (Folklore Fellows Communication No. 120), pp. 390-408; pp. 409-410, Helsinki, 1937; cf. also, "Bibliographischer Index," in *Volksmärchen aus Südost-China* (Folklore Fellows Communication No. 128), pp. 300-308, Helsinki, 1941. According to Prof. Eberhard, the books (published prior to 1935) mentioned in the bibliography are almost all in the Library of the University of California at Berkeley.



from the "short-lived, capitalistic *min-su-hsüeh*."<sup>102</sup> However, it must be borne in mind that *min-chien wen-hsüeh* is not a term invented by the Communist "workers". *Min-chien wen-hsüeh* first appeared in the folklore department of Sun Yat-sen University as a section of academic work of that university.<sup>103</sup> It also appeared in a 1933 edition of the *Tz'u-yüan* 辭源:

*Min-chien wen-hsüeh*, Folklore, refers to that kind of literature which circulates among the folk in oral tradition, such as mythology, tales, legends, folksongs, etc. Folk-literature has two characteristics: (1) the inventors were not individuals but a collective body of the whole people... (2) folk-literature exists in oral tradition, not in written texts. It differs from written literature in that the invention and circulation of folk-literature, for instance, a tale or a song, depend solely on oral tradition whereas ordinary literary work circulates after the work is written down on the paper.<sup>104</sup>

Perhaps, it was because the term *min-chien* had a more political appeal, meaning "coming from the people" that the Communist "workers" decided to use it.<sup>105</sup>

In Communist China, folklore research was at first conducted by the Research Institute of Literature in the Chinese Academy of Science. Later, the Research Society of the Chinese Folk-Literature and Arts (*Chung-kuo min-chien wen-i yen-chiu-hui* 中國民間文藝研究會) was organized in February 1950 in Peking. With the establishment of this Society, the collecting and publishing of folklore materials were handled by the Society itself while the Research Institute took care of folklore research of a literary or linguistic nature such as the compiling of the long folk-narratives of the minority peoples. The Society consists of both pre-Communist and Communist folklore workers, men such as

102. Chia Chih 賈芝 (1), "Tsai-lun min-chien wen-hsüeh kung-tso ti liang-t'iao tao-lu 再論民間文學工作的兩條道路," *Min-chien wen-hsüeh* (January, 1958), p. 8.

103. Cf. Chao Wei-pang, "Modern Chinese Folklore Investigation (Part II)," *op. cit.*, p. 81.

104. Translated from the *Tz'u yüan* 辭源 (*Chinese Encyclopedic Dictionary*, Supplementary Edition, Shanghai: Shang-wu yin-shu-kuan 商務印書館, 1932) revised edition, Ch'ang-sha: Shang-wu yin-shu-kuan, 1939, p. 821.

105. Terms using *min* 民 are many, such as *Jen-min kung-she* 人民公社 (The People's Communes); *Jen-min chih-yüan-chün* 人民志願軍 (The People's Volunteer Troops [sent to Korea in 1952-53]); and *Jen-min kung-ho-kuo* 人民共和國 (The People's Republic).

Jung Chao-tsu, Yang Ch'eng-chih, Ku Chieh-kang, Chung Ching-wen (vice chairman of the board of directors of the Society until 1957; all of them were formerly folklore scholars of Sun Yat-sen University), Kuo Mo-jo (head of the Academy of Sciences and chairman of the board of directors of the Society), Cheng Chen-to, Lao She, Ch'ang Hui (formerly of the Folksong Research Society of Peking University), Lin Shan 林山, Chou Yang 周揚, and Chia Chih 賈芝.

## 2. Scope of folklore studies

### A. Pre-Communist China

A review of the folklore activities in North and South China shows that folklore research in pre-Communist China intended to cover the following topics: folksongs (of the city, of the rural folk, of the far-off soldiers), children's rhymes, riddles, proverbs, fairy tales, legends about emperors and literati, legends of gods and immortals, festivals, customs, animals and plants, places and old buildings; folk-belief and superstitions, folk-religion, mythology, folklore of the Miao and Yao tribes, folk arts (mainly museum articles such as costume and festival articles, New Year's pictures, musical instruments, images of gods and sacred objects), and folk medicine.<sup>106</sup> Of these folklore genres, mythology and folk medicine were still not fully explored, while folk-drama went unnoticed.

### B. Communist China

Although all the folklore genres of the pre-Communist period are retained and, in addition, some other fields are included such as folk-drama, oral narrative poems, and folk-literatures of the minority peoples, and bandit-lore, there is a certain Communist tabu to be observed: beliefs in ghosts and superstitions should not be tolerated. The people are indoctrinated to "despise ghosts" and "thoroughly do away with superstitions".<sup>107</sup> Folktales and legends that have superstitious elements are retained to the

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106. Cf. Chao Wei-pang, *op. cit.* (Part I), pp. 59-60; 63; 68; 70-71; 75; (Part II) pp. 80-84.

107. Ho Ch'i-fang, "Preface," *Stories of Not Being Afraid of Ghosts*, Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1961, pp. 4; 5; and 15.

minimum extent. Folk-medicine that appeals to magic arts are virtually non-existent. It is no wonder why there is no publication in the field of folk-beliefs and superstitions.

### 3. Folklore theory and techniques

#### A. Pre-Communist China

If there is any folklore contribution bearing on folklore theory, belonging to the pre-Communist era, it would be the inspirational essay by Ts'ai Yüan-p'ei, entitled "Shuo min-tsu-hsüeh" 說民族学, in which he demonstrates that *min-tsu-hsüeh* (Völkerkunde) is a science which examines the cultures of different peoples and furthers the descriptive or the comparative studies of the cultures of these different peoples. Ts'ai's term *min-tsu-hsüeh* seems to be most applicable, then as now, to the situation in China: an area of multi-linguistic characteristics, an area populated by peoples of different religious faiths. In a narrow sense, *min-tsu-hsüeh* implies the studies of the cultures of the peoples in China; and, in a broad sense, the cultures of the peoples in Asia and other continents. However, Ts'ai, like many of his contemporaries, was not a folklorist. His theory on *min-tsu-hsüeh* was merely an interpretation (a translation) of European folklore ideas. But Ts'ai's ideas brought light to the folklore studies in both North and South China, especially the folklore center at Sun Yat-sen University. Ts'ai also indicated that *min-tsu-hsüeh* is affiliated with culture history, sociology, psychology, linguistics, geography, fine arts, literature, anthropology, archeology, and ethnology (see the first section of this paper).

Generally speaking, folklore theory of the pre-Communist period followed that of the Finnish school. This was true in both North and South China. Chu Tzu-ch'ing in his *Chinese Folksongs (Chung-kuo ko-yao)*, which had been Chu's lecture series since 1929, illustrated conspicuously the Finnish school of the historic-geographic method as introduced by R. D. Jameson.<sup>108</sup> In South China, Chung Ching-wen in his essay "A Glimpse at Persian Tales" ("Po-ssu ku-shih k'ui-lüeh" 波斯故事窺略) wrote: "Candidly speaking, my work mainly is to supply

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108. See note 54 above.

similar types of Chinese variants which they [the folklorists of the Finnish school—trans.] have not yet discovered, and, based on these materials, reach a comparatively exact conclusion—to determine the geographical areas where these similar variants occurred.<sup>109</sup>

Technically, the pre-Communist folklore workers preferred recording with strict fidelity, making detailed transcriptions, faithful translations, proper motif-indexing, and classifying of types of tales. Folklore research should be a “purely scholastic work”; folklore research and propaganda should be separated.<sup>110</sup>

## B. Communist China

In an all-powerful, Party-controlled land, independent folklore theory is a forbidden paradise. In Communist China, it was Chung Ching-wen who tried to lead a rebellious younger generation to challenge the Red supremacy, in an attempt to foster freedom of folklore speculation, following the pattern of the European school. The result was that Chung, together with European theory, was condemned.

In Communist China, folklore theory must follow the Party

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109. Chung Ching-wen 鍾敬文, “Po-ssu ku-shih k’ui-lüeh 波斯故事窺略,” *Min-su yüeh-k’an* 民俗月刊, Nos. 21-22, quoted in “Chung Ching-wen shih ko shen-me yang ti chuan-chia 鍾敬文是個什麼樣的專家,” by Chiang Lu 江櫓, *Min-chien wen-hsüeh* (February, 1958), p. 11, and n. 20 on p. 13.

110. A few pre-Communist folklore techniques are traceable in the “regulations concerning the collection of modern Chinese folksongs” (cf. Chao Wei-pang, *op. cit.*, Part I, p. 60):

7. The contributors are expected:
  - a. to annotate the dialect and idiomatic expressions.
  - b. to copy the songs as they are, no matter whether they are elegant or vulgar; not to polish the language and not to change the vulgar-written characters or colloquial expressions.
  - c. to note the sound of the local characters that cannot be found in dictionaries. Transcription in Roman or phonetic alphabet is preferable. . . .
  - e. to note the society and time in which the songs were or are circulating.

Most of the points in this passage were proposed by Chung Ching-wen in his pre-Communist writings which are now being attacked by Communist folklore workers; cf. Chia Chih (1), *op. cit.*, pp. 9-14.

ideology. Yet it is interesting to note how the study of folklore theory is treated in the work of Chung Ching-wen. In his essay "Some Basic Understandings About Folk Literature and Arts" ("Tui-yü min-chien wen-i ti i-hsieh chi-pen jen-shih 對於民間文藝的一些基本認識"), Chung observed that

...folk literature and arts originated and developed from the masses of the people in their long process of social life and social struggles... The masses by means of their artistic creation have genuinely and fruitfully preserved their own life history as well as the history of the spiritual world. Gorki once affirmed that, 'if we have no knowledge of the oral tradition of the people, it would not be possible to understand the real history of the laboring people...' The composition of folk literature and arts is a complicated one. Some elements are the infusion of the literature of the ruling class; some are the work of urban petty bourgeoisie who imitate the literary works of the upper strata; some are the absurd inventions of the Buddhist monks and Taoist practitioners... All these, speaking strictly from the angle of the masses, are a sort of 'additional' contents. Indeed they are really poisonous and corrupt the air.<sup>111</sup>

This article heralded Chung's career as a Communist folklore worker and the continuation of folklore in Communist China. However, Communist literature shows that Chung is a "pseudo-Communist folklore worker," and that the study of folklore in Chung's hand plays a role of intriguing complexity. It is a story of conflict between the Party and Chung and his followers over the rightful application of folklore. The Party views folklore as a device for propagandizing "socialism"; folklore is intended for "rendering services to the masses of workers, peasants, and soldiers."<sup>112</sup> Chung, on the other hand, argues that propaganda and the study of folklore should be distinguished as black is from the white; that the study of folklore should be purely scientific. He reiterates: "the comparative study of analogous and similar folktales is quite significant."<sup>113</sup> Regarding folklore techniques, Chung, as a professor in folk-literature and arts in *Fu jen ta-hsüeh* 輔仁大學 (The Catholic University of Peking)

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111. Chung Ching-wen 鐘敬文, "Tui-yü min-chien wen-i ti i-hsieh chi-pen jen-shih 對於民間文藝的一些基本認識, *Min-chien wen-i hsin-lun-chi* 民間文藝新論集, Peking: Pei-ching Shih-fan ta-hsüeh 北京師範大學, 1951, pp. 20 and 24.

112. Cf. Chia Chih (1), *op. cit.*, pp. 7; 12 and 14.

113. Cf. Chiang Lu, *op. cit.*, pp. 5 and 11. (See note 109 above.)

and chairman of the folk-literature research department of Teachers' Normal University of Peking (*Pei-ching Shih-fan ta-hsüeh* 北京師範大學), discusses with his students his plans to process and make applicable the comparative method of studying folktales based on a type index he had used in the past. He suggests that a folk-literature and folk-art worker should be aided by other disciplines, such as folklore, ethnology, and anthropology.<sup>114</sup> In the matter of recording, transcribing, and translating, he favors completely truthful and accurate work. He intends to initiate a folklore journal on the international level, and refers to the low qualities of some of the articles in *Folk-Literature*.<sup>115</sup> Moreover, he believes that folklore research should not be allowed to play into the hands of those who know nothing about folklore, such as Chou Yang and Chia Chih.<sup>116</sup> In Chung's mind, the study of folklore can be maintained by playing with words such as "the masses of the people," "the laboring folk," "Gorki said . . .," and so on. But, unlike his contemporaries, such as Ku Chieh-kang and Ch'ang Hui, Chung fails to realize that folklore exists only for the use of the Party. It is the Party that authorizes his "duty to serve the Party." Folklore is designed for what the Party expects it to be, not for what an individual likes it to be. However, Chung's challenge to the Party is evidence to show to the free world how much free will or so-called "new democracy" is being exercised in Communist China.

It is apparent that Chung's claim for a rightful application of folklore aroused wide interest among his colleagues and students, for in 1957 there was a motion to abolish the Research Society of Folk-literature and Arts.<sup>117</sup> The reason given to support this motion was that folklore should be conducted as "scientific research," not "for the service of socialist politics."<sup>118</sup> Now the Party being critically exposed, the Communists threw

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114. *Ibid.*, pp. 8 and 12.

115. Chia Chih (1) *op. cit.*, pp. 11 and 13.

116. Mao Hsing 毛星 "Chung Ching-wen yao-ti shih shen-mo ch'üan ho shen-mo-yang-ti tsung-chung 鍾敬文要的是什麼權和什麼樣的尊重," *Min-chien wen-hsüeh* (January, 1958), p. 18.

117. Chia Chih (2), "Ts'ai-feng chüeh-pao, fan-jung she-hui-chu-i min-tsu hsin-wen-hua 采風掘寶, 繁榮社會主義民族新文化," *Min-chien wen-hsüeh* (July-August, 1958), p. 25.

118. "Hsin-nien kao tu-che 新年告誡者," by the editors of *Min-chien wen-hsüeh* (January, 1958), p. 4.

off their mask: "Resolutely beat down the rightists' attacks!"<sup>119</sup>  
 "Chung Chin-wen is the salesman of capitalist folklore."<sup>120</sup>

Why did the Communists stand against the "capitalist folklore?" Because "folklore of the capitalistic strata originates in countries of capitalism to meet the demands for consolidating the reactionary sovereignty over the subject people and for expanding colonialism."<sup>121</sup> Further, to give evidence, a Communist quotes *in parte* a passage from the "Introduction" of Charlotte S. Burne's *The Handbook of Folklore* (pp. 3-4) of which the text *in toto*<sup>122</sup> reads as follows:

[The conception of man's past history which has resulted from, and now directs, the study of folklore, has already made its impress on modern philosophical thought, and] it would be difficult to overestimate the additions to the sum of human knowledge which may be made in course of years by a continuance of the study on these lines. Meanwhile one very practical result should follow from it, namely, the improved treatment by governing nations of the subject-races under their sway.

"This is a naked description," says the Communist Chiang Lu 江櫓. "It has exposed the reality of the matter of fact. Yet, is this not what Chung Ching-wen has lauded as 'the glorious anthropologists' or 'the pure scholastic movement [of folklore—trans.]'?"<sup>123</sup>

Despite the fact that the Communist folklore workers have no theory of their own, they agree that Chung has none of his; "Chung is only plagiarizing the old stuff of the capitalist strata folklore."<sup>124</sup> Criticizing the Finnish school of the historic-geographic method, Chia Chih says:

...the so-called scholastic research is merely to examine from what country a tale comes and to formulate a type-index of tales, thus, to strip the skins and sinews from many touching stories and pull out a few pieces of bones—the types of motifs, to fix them into the

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119. Chia Chih (3), "Chien-chüeh chi-t'uei yu-p'ai fen-tzu-men ti chin-kung 堅決擊退右派分子們的進攻," *Min-chien wen-hsüeh* (July, 1957), pp. 3-4.

120. Chia Chih (1), *op. cit.*, p. 8.

121. Chia Chih (2), *op. cit.*, p. 24.

122. With the part not included by the Communist author supplied in brackets.

123. Chiang Lu, *op. cit.*, p. 8.

124. Chia Chih (1), *op. cit.*, p. 8.

frame-work of seventy kinds or some kinds of types. As for the tales, their social significance, their concrete, artistic outlook and the ethnological characteristics, all are excluded.<sup>125</sup>

The comparative method of studying folktales is also attacked for a similar reason:

By means of the comparative method and the type-index Chung Ching-wen says that the motifs of tales of different countries and peoples are "similar" or "analogous" and draws some unreliable "conclusions" that such motifs occurred in such and such places. Beyond this, very often Chung neglects the differences of tale variants (even though sometimes he superficially touches a tiny bit, he tries to explain through arguments such as "transmission" or "psychologically similar occurrence"). Yet, he never searches into the fundamental reasons that there are differences and analogies between tales.<sup>126</sup>

Favoring a "faithful recording" but against a "word by word transcription" technique, the Communist folklore workers propose a "proper modification" policy.<sup>127</sup> As the Communist folklore workers admit, faithful recording is the basis of all scientific research. But what is the so-called "properly manufactured" technique? Here is an instance, the story of "The Fisher Boy" ("Yü t'ung" 漁童).

It narrates the adventures of an old fisherman who earns his living by fishing on the Dragon River, a down-at-the-heels life. In the rolling waves, at the risk of his own life he procures a white jade fish-jar. On the fish-jar is engraved a tiny fisher boy. The fisher boy can become alive and grow and, with his fishing-rod, can hook the fish which are engraved on the bottom part of the fish-globe and which also can become alive and grow. The fisher boy lifts up his fishing-rod and splashes the fish on the water. The splash of water scatters in all directions and falls in golden drops. When the fisher boy stops angling and returns, a spread of gold beans is scattered around the fish-jar. The old fisherman picks up a handful of the gold beans and heads for the market. Just as he takes out the gold beans to buy something, a foreign missionary swaggers by and questions him. The old fisherman, being too honest, tells the pastor every-

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125. Chia Chih (2), *op. cit.*, pp. 24-25.

126. Chiang Lu, *op. cit.*, p. 11.

127. Chia Chih (1), *op. cit.*, p. 13; also Chia Chih (2), pp. 28-29.



thing. Next day the old fisherman is brought to the *yamen* ("court house"). He is accused of having stolen a fish-jar which belonged to the pastor. After questioning the fisherman, the mandarin decides that the pastor should have the fish-jar. The old man is so incensed that he falls into a faint and breaks the fish-jar. The fisher boy comes back to life and hooks the pastor's upper jaw, and throws him up in the air. The mandarin is frightened to death.<sup>128</sup>

In order to see how this tale was processed it is necessary to quote in full detail the technique involved. According to Chang Shih-chieh, the collector of the story of "Yü-t'ung," his view of processing the story is as follows:

In processing this story, several junctures were handled in this way: in the beginning paragraph which describes how the old man procured the precious thing, the informant gave a comparatively simple narration. I made this paragraph a detailed description. This will present a striking picture of the old man's courage and wisdom and reveal the fact that procuring a precious thing is not an easy matter (the narrator tried to explain this point but did not make it clear). In the section in which the fisher boy was fishing and the splash of water scattered and fell into gold beans, the narrator only mentioned that the fisher boy was singing while fishing. Based on this subsidiary event, I let the fisher boy sing an eight-line song. In my opinion, the story itself is beautiful, especially in this particular section. If I allow the fisher boy to sing, will this story not bring a more successful result? So I added eight lines of song. In the section in which the old man was brought to the court to hear the judge, the informant only told that the district magistrate wanted to give the fish-jar to the pastor; that as soon as the old man testified how he had procured the precious jar, he fell in a dead faint. Immediately after that, the fisher boy became alive. I made some arrangement of the talks between the district magistrate and the old fisherman. In telling how the old man had obtained his precious thing, the informant mentioned that the fisher boy was dressed in Chinese costume, but the informant did not mention this point [in the section in which the fisherman was brought to hear the judge—trans.] in the "court house." I added this point in their talks so that the old man's defense silenced

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128. This summary is based on an article by Chang Shih-chieh (1), "Wo-tuei sou-chi cheng-li ti k'an-fa 我对搜集整理的看法," *Min-chien wen-hsüeh* (December, 1959), pp. 92-93. Part of this summary is taken from Chang Shih-chieh, "Yü-t'ung 漁童," *Min-chien wen-hsüeh* (April, 1958), pp. 81-86; for an English version cf. "The Fisherboy," (tr. Gladys Yang) *Chinese Literature*, Peking (January, 1960). pp. 108-115.

the magistrate and the pastor. It was not until the magistrate and the pastor had completely exposed their "real intention" ["simply want your fish-jar," said the pastor—trans.] that the old man fainted. I think this point not only gives a contrast between the characters but also makes the central thought striking.

I think this kind of processing does not change the theme and the main details of the story; nor does it lose the atmosphere and the color of the original. I think this may be considered to be faithful.<sup>129</sup>

That "proper reworking" is allowed is further justified by the argument that, "since folk literature has two face values—it is an artistic work and, again, it is valuable material in respect to culture and science—therefore, there should be different methods of processing them. As scientific research materials, there must be emphasis on the faithfulness of recording;...the collectors should... , according to the requirements of scientific research, record and transcribe the articles and selected materials and provide the original records for scientific workers. As literary work, although a similarly faithful recording is also emphasized, but for the purpose of providing the people with a comparatively refined work, it is our opinion that a proper arrangement and reworking should be effected."<sup>130</sup> One may ask: when will scientific folklore research make a start? The answer is in readiness: "We must under available conditions gradually develop our scientific research. Folk-literature, like any other science, will in the course of time achieve its mission of aiming at international standards. But elevation must be fulfilled on the basis of popularization. At present we should first give heed to the work of popularization."<sup>131</sup>

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129. Chang Shih-chieh (1), *op. cit.*, p. 93. Prof. Eberhard points out that it is doubtful whether the narrator did say "pastor" or "foreign missionary." As a type, this kind of story belongs to the "The Mohammedan finds treasures." The evil man is a non-Chinese. Prof. Eberhard is of the opinion that it is along the lines of party policy to replace the non-Chinese with an European and not to mention the Muslim as an evil character. I wish here to express my thanks to Prof. Eberhard for his patience in reading part of this paper in 1964 and for his valuable comments.

130. Chia Chih (1), *op. cit.*, pp. 12-13.

131. "Hsin-nien kao tu-che," *op. cit.*, p. 4.

#### 4. Changes of social background and of themes as reflected in folksongs and folktales

##### A. Changes of social background

The economic life of the people in pre-Communist China was mainly based on agriculture. There were no "people's communes." The people as individuals had leisurely moments. This could be well illustrated by the folksong quoted below. This song, like many of its contemporaries, suggests a slow tempo best suited for leisurely singing. The atmosphere is romantic; it is a picture full of folk imagination:

##### The Flute Is Sounding

The moon shimmers in its brightness,  
The sea is wide and deep.  
Maiden Ch'ung Lien hearkens to the sounding flute;  
She secretly leaves the dragon palace for Chang Lang's tryst.<sup>132</sup>

The moon shimmers in its brightness;  
The sea is wide and deep.  
The sweetie across the river hearkens to my sounding flute;  
She looks around behind the door for the oars.<sup>133</sup>

The moon shimmers in its brightness;  
The sea is wide and deep.  
The nocturnal sand-grouse listens to the sounding flute;  
My sweetie and I meet in the sea surrounding us.<sup>134</sup>

This folksong was from the Chekiang province. Now, in a song of the same province in Communist China, we detect a change in the economic life of the people. People live and work for the "people's communes." The people are deprived of their leisure moments. The people sing for "more production." The singer in the song is part of a collective body of the laboring folk. The scene, though somewhat romantic, is more realistic; it is a picture of commune life:

132. Ch'ung Lien and Chang Lang are the hero and heroine in Chekiang legends.

133. The people in Chekiang used to put their oars behind the door when they returned from fishing.

134. Yi Chao-chih 易少知 (ed.), *Chung-kuo min-chien ko-yao* 中国民间歌谣, Taipei: Hsüan-feng ch'u-pan-she 旋風出版社, 1960, p. 34.

## Digging River-Mud in the Moonlight

We dig river-mud in the moonlight, thousands and thousands of loads,  
till our yokes bend like the crescent moon  
and creak like a flock of wild geese in the sky.

The north wind whistles shrill and our faces are wet with sweat;  
every ton of mud spread on the fields this year  
means ten thousand loads of grain next year.<sup>135</sup>

Back in the 1900's, folklore collectors like Vitale and Headland turned their startled eyes to the salty-humorous, mirth-making Chinese stories and songs. The "old scraps of Chinese folklore" they picked up are abundant in Peking, where the folk are well-known for their mocking humor. These songs and little tales depict the daily life of the town folk and occasionally indulge in moral satires on the emerging "modern" generation. For instance, failure to observe filial piety may be censured in a song:

喜雀尾巴長  
娶了媳婦兒不要娘  
媽媽要吃窩兒薄脆  
沒有閒錢補篋籬  
媳婦兒要吃梨  
備上驢  
去趕集  
買了梨  
打了皮  
媳婦兒媳婦兒懶吃梨

The magpie has a long tail — after he has taken a wife he no more wants his mother — when his mother wants to eat some cheap cake — then (he says) "there is no idle money to mend willow spoons" — when his wife wants to eat pears — then he gets ready his ass — and goes to the market — when he has bought the pears — he peels them — and asks, wife, wife, will you eat pears?<sup>136</sup>

This story is about a woman who lies about her age:

His Wife's True Age<sup>137</sup>

A man took an old woman as wife. Watching her for the first

135. Kuo Mo-jo, *Songs of the Red Flag*, p. 119.

136. Baron Guido Amedeo Vitale, *Pekingese Rhymes*, (*Pei-ching ko-yao* 北京歌謠), Peking: Pei-t'ang 北塘, 1896, pp. 92-93.

137. B. G. A. Vitale, *Chinese Merry Tales*, Peking: Pei-t'ang, 1901, pp. 30-31. Many of the stories Vitale collected (including this one) were written in literary language. There is some difference between Vitale's stories of oral tradition and that of the literary tradition (this same story may be found in *Chung-kuo hsiao-hua shu* 中国笑话書 ed. Yang Chia-lo 楊家駱, Taipei: Shih-chieh shu-chü 世界書局, 1961, pp. 458-459.

time, he became aware of her wrinkle-coated face. So he asked her, "How old are you?" The woman said, "My age is still wee; only forty-five." Her husband said, "Why, then, in that horoscopic slip of yours it was written you're thirty-eight! Insofar as I can judge, your age could hardly be less than forty-five. You must tell me the truth." The woman said, "Actually I am aged fifty-four." Still her husband couldn't believe it and kept asking her, but she wouldn't yield any further. When night came, her husband had a funny idea and told the woman, "You go to bed first. I want to have a look at my salt jar. Yesterday the mice filched it and ate a good bit." As soon as the woman heard this, she couldn't but give a hearty laugh, saying, "Old dame that I am, throughout sixty-eight years of my life I haven't ever heard people say that mice filch salt to eat!"

Now these humorous-natured Pekingese folk seem occupied in the Party's campaign for national industrialization. "Idle" stories could only hinder the productivity of the working people. Collections of merry tales are few. A few songs from Peking are collected in *Songs of the Red Flag*. In these songs, the people's voice is "for work"; their humor turns on mechanization:

Change Your Abacus For A Computer<sup>138</sup>

What was right for yesterday  
 is no good for today;  
 by evening the quotas fixed in the morning  
 are overfulfilled several hundred per cent.  
 Hey, you there, Mr. Statistician!  
 You'll be needing air transport to draw that graph.  
 It's time you got rid of that abacus  
 and got an electronic computer instead.

After reading in *Songs of the Red Flag*, such songs as this:

Every Hand's As Busy As Can Be<sup>139</sup>

Every lathe is turning with a roar,  
 everyone is on the battle-field,  
 every hand's as busy as can be,  
 every crate of products flashes gold,  
 every drop of sweat is trickling down,  
 every face is alight with a ruddy glow,  
 every wall is covered with red flags,  
 every red graph shoots towards the sky,

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138. Kuo Mo-jo, *Songs of the Red Flag*, pp. 163-164.

139. *Ibid.*, p. 60.

every heart is joining in the singing,  
every song's in praise of the Communist Party.

one wonders whether this kind of singing belongs to folksong enthusiasm or to slogan-making.

## B. Changes of themes and ideas

Throughout this study an attempt has been made to describe the folklore research achieved in Communist China. A useful approach to the study of Chinese folklore is to note the fundamental differences of folk expression between the people in the Communist world and the people in the free world. In China, the folk idea of the pre-Communist period centers around gods, immortals, emperors. It describes man as a hybrid, possessing human and divine nature. (In Communist terms, the belief in a divine nature is a "superstitious tradition.") The Communists believe that the human component is a reflection of the folk peasant himself; the divine is an imaginative construe beyond reality. For instance, in a legend of the pre-Communist period, "Chao K'uang-yin," the central figure is an emperor. The legend is told as follows:

### Chao K'uang-yin (No. 1)<sup>140</sup>

In his youth Chao K'uang-yin (who later became the first Emperor of the Sung Dynasty) was good for nothing and the terror of his village. One year there was a terrible drought and all the crops were burnt up. The people beseeched the gods to send them rain, but not even a drop of dew appeared.

Chao was a passionate gambler. If he won, he went off with the money; if he lost, he never paid a cent. In this way he gained his living, but naturally during the drought no one wanted to gamble, and he was in a bad way. He became more and more quick-tempered and depressed, but one evening a new plan occurred to him, which, if successful, would enable him to live a little longer. He went to the headman of the village and said: 'If you give me one hundred strings of cash, I will beg the gods to send rain.' The headman was a little sceptical of his being able to do this, but he called together the inhabitants and consulted them as to whether he should pay the money or not. 'What do you need for the sacrifice?' he asked Chao K'uang-yin. 'Nothing really,' he replied, 'just

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140. Wolfram Eberhard, *Chinese Fairy Tales and Folk Tales*, London, 1937, pp. 288-289.

make a circle of fire, and put a table in the middle for me to stand on.' The village elders and the peasants were surprised at this request, but in view of the desperate plight that the village would be in if no rain fell, they agreed to provide the things. When the fire was burning, Chao got on to the table and called out: 'When is rain coming?' He himself never expected anything to happen, but, having a golden tongue and jade words, the Wind Count and the Rain Master, without hesitating, sent a storm of rain at once.

In a recently published legend of Communist China, the folk idea is unmistakably different:

Prince Lu<sup>141</sup> Defeated Li Hung-chang<sup>142</sup>

Prince Lu led his warriors and horsemen, five hundred thousand, strong, great and magnificent, conquering and fighting south and north from Anhui to Shantung, from Shantung turning to Honan, from Honan to Hupei. In less than half a month they ravaged several provinces.

As they marched, it was splendid! The banners and flags, waving and unrolling, covered up the skies and the moon. Man elbowed man; horse side-stepped horse, crowding and milling around. The streets were swarmed with soldiers who set themselves in a pattern five leagues broad and ten leagues long. Little hills where men and horses marched were trodden flat. The droppings of the horses filled up the rivers and creeks. When the spiral horns from each camp were blown, the heavens and earth turned dull. The beating of the battle drums could shake the mountains and the earth.

The Ch'ing ogres [the Ch'ing Government, soldiers, etc.—trans.], no sooner had they heard of the coming of Prince Lu's soldiers and horsemen, were terrified even more than did the mouse when it was met by a cat. The Ch'ing ogres used to sing:

Grand Papa of Heaven, Grand Mama of Earth  
We promise to offer swine and sheep.  
Grant that they be the banners red and white,  
May we see not the Blue Banner's face.

Prince Lu was the banner lord of the blue banners. He slew the number one old ogre of the Ch'ing Government, Seng-ko-lin-ch'ing<sup>143</sup> at Ts'ao Prefecture; he also defeated Tseng Kuo-fan, the

141. Prince Lu, or Lu Wang 魯王, was surnamed Jen 任, with given name Chu 柱 (Jen Chu), or Hua-pang 化邦 (Jen Hua-pang). He was one of the *Nien* Rebellion leaders.

142. Translated from the *Nien-chün ku-shih chi*, *op. cit.*, pp. 264-268.

143. A Ch'ing general ambushed and killed by the Nien Army in 1865.

great massacrer. When the news of Prince Lu's coming reached the Purple Forbidden Palace of Peking, the civil courtiers were afraid and were not able to rise from their beds; the military officials, putting on wind-protecting hats, pretended they had a cold. The Empress Dowager was struck with fear, and for seven days tasted no food nor beverage. Her white face turned a yellowish waxen color. Daily she stood at the pavilion in the palace yard. Clutching a thousand-league-eye [a telescope—trans.], a gift from the foreigners, she peeped through it, looking southward and looking southward; even the shadows of the clouds she took to be Prince Lu's fighting men and horses. Grasping a rosary in her hand, all she did was, not praying Amida Buddha, mutter and grumble, 'If Prince Lu comes, what shall I do? If Prince Lu comes, what shall I do? . . .'

The eunuch Li Lien-ying noticed the thousand-league-eye in the Empress Dowager's hand. An idea suddenly occurred to him. Immediately he bent on one knee in salute and said, 'Your Venerable Majesty, your humble slave that I am has a plan which might be a solution to the trouble of the nation.'

Empress Dowager, who was at her wits' end, gave an answer of her own accord, 'Mind you state it clearly without delay!'

'Your slave that I am thinks that the people across yonder sea are able men. They make striking-clocks; they make thousand-league-eyes; besides, they make foreign guns, foreign cannons, foreign ships. It may be well to invite these foreigners to smite the *Nien* rebels. And to buy their foreign guns, foreign cannons. Will this do or not?'

On the Empress Dowager's face blood suddenly flowed, 'I entertained this idea long ago! But where could we hunt a keen-minded, able, and most faithful and loyal statesman to deal with the foreigners?'

Li Lien-ying winked with that wink of a slave and said, 'Your slave that I am has heard that Li Hung-chang, Governor of Kiangsu, is skilful in foreign affairs. It is best to summon him to the court.' The Empress Dowager thought and thought. As she could think of no other person more adequate than Li, she summoned Li to the court.

From that time on Li Hung-chang became[, as the saying goes, —trans.] 'the wife who, being a daughter-in-law, suffers hardship and watches for the death of her mother-in-law; now she queens it.' Throughout the whole day he was occupied in buying foreign guns, fixing foreign cannons, enlisting irregular troops, enlarging militia. Burning with arrogance, could he behave like a mere man any longer? he even forgot who his ancestors were!

The Empress Dowager observed that he was, indeed, loyal and faithful and handed over to him more troops. But because of this he became more arrogant than ever, as though oil were poured



upon flames.

When Prince Lu heard of this he became fiercely angry. He brandished a brush and wrote on the field gun several big characters: 'Pu sha chien-tse Li Hung-chang, pu suan Chung-kuo hao erh-lang.' ('If traitor Li Hung-chang cannot be put to death, none can be called good Chinese fellows.') He divided the soldiers and horsemen into several units along different routes and adopted 'winding up tactics' [guerrilla warfare—trans.] to counterattack the Ch'ing ogres. When the troops of Li Hung-chang hastened to Ts'ao-chou Prefecture, Prince Lu's men turned their course to the Kuei-te Prefecture of Honan; when Li hastened to Hupei, Prince Lu had already wound through Anhui to Shantung, stealthily reaching after the hind quarters of Li Hung-chang! Without a great effort than 'blowing-dust-away,' he seized thirteen *hsien* in the Ts'ao-chou Prefecture of Shantung.

In this manner Prince Lu led Li Hung-chang by the nose, spinning him about for one year and eight months. The ogreish Ch'ing soldiers thus dragged around were exhausted; so were the horses. So dragged out was Li Hung-chang that he couldn't get his breath. He panted, drawing one deep breath after another. Riding on his saddled horse he wailed and called upon heaven: 'I am Li that must have been in debt to a predestined retribution, that I be confronted with Jen Hua-pang, that evil demon. O Heaven! O Heaven! Bless me! Bless me!'

Prince Lu's men and horsemen were rolling in, while the more Li Hung-chang fought, the fewer became his soldiers.

At one time, Prince Lu assembled five thousand horsemen and five thousand foot soldiers at the bank of the Yellow River. They were all set for the coming of Li Hung-chang.

One day, Prince Lu with his *Nien* brothers was twisting the grass into straw ropes and weaving straw sandals when all of a sudden a horseman mounted spy rode up and reported, 'Ogre Li, leading fifty thousand Ch'ing ogres with some foreign-gun corps, is coming at our battle array.'

Prince Lu, undisturbed, threw away the still unshaped straw sandal, bound his red turban, spat spittle, and rubbed his hands. He picked up his weapon weighing forth-eight catties and waved to the *Nien* brothers, 'Brothers! Be ready! When these old sandals are worn out, we'll be wearing new ones by the time we come back...' Before his words had fallen in the air, he had already rushed to the camp gate. His yellow steed came neighing and running to Prince Lu. As soon as it saw Prince Lu, the horse capered about, shaking its head and tail. Prince Lu leapt high and jumped on the horse's back. Like a puff of smoke he dashed out.

The soldiers Li Hung-chang led billowed like sea tides toward the garrison gate.

Prince Lu gave a tug at the bridle, and rode to the sloping hills on the left side of the garrison gate. He lifted up a banner pole some ten feet long which had been erected on the hill slope. He raised it thrice and swung it thrice from left to right. At once the Nien horsemen from all camp held fast to their spears and swords and lined up in a single column. The Prince lifted up the great banner and let his horse race forward for several hundred feet. Looking at the Ch'ing ogres, pushing on like ants, he struck the banner pole in the ground, and his soldiers, who were spread out in single file, immediately formed a double column. The soldiers on foot were followed by the horsemen. The soldiers on foot were equipped with long spears; the horsemen were ready with their steel swords. All were in solemn silence, each one waiting in his own position.

Behind the *Nien* army was the Yellow River with boisterous breakers and the noise of the rushing waves. Hearing the roaring waters behind and catching a glimpse of the Ch'ing ogres in front, Prince Lu waved to his army and shouted, 'Brothers, do you hear? Behind us is the rolling Yellow River. Do you see? In front are the Ch'ing ogres with daggers drawn. What must we do? Look here!' As soon as he had finished speaking, Prince Lu took his double-barreled gun, and aimed at the round guard on top of the pole of the big blue banner. *P'ing!* There burst out seven fire balls from the guard. In a twinkling, the *Nien* army like a volcanic eruption rushed toward the enemy position, their sword clashing in every direction.

The *Nien* foot soldiers flourished their long spears. The Ch'ing horsemen in front wielded sabres. But before they could reach the *Nien* army from a far distance, they were pierced by the long spears hurled by the *Nien* soldiers. One following another, like frogs that were pierced, they dropped from their horses. In less time than it takes to smoke a pipe, several thousands of the Ch'ing ogres were pierced and perished. Now when the foot soldiers on the Ch'ing ogres' side pushed forward for a counterattack, holding up their shields and bending their waistes like gadflies, the Ch'ing horsemen were all pierced, dead and done! At this moment, the fighting horsemen on the *Nien's* side manoeuvred. Kicking and whipping their horses, they made a detour and reached behind the Ch'ing foot soldiers. The Ch'ing ogres were like the ingredients for boiled dumplings on the verge of being chopped. The *Nien* horsemen whipped their swords, and look! the cutting! *Ka-tzu!* *Ka-tzu!* as though sharp knives were cutting the pumpkins, yet the cutting was quicker than that. In less time than one needs to finish his meal, the Ch'ing ogres were chopped dead, twenty or thirty thousand of them.

When Li Hung-chang saw that he had lost to Prince Lu's battle array consisting of cavalry and foot soldiers, and that his men were almost all lost, he hurriedly urged the foreign gun corps to go into battle.

*P'ing-p'ong! P'ing-p'ong!* the soldiers of the foreign-gun corps fired at the *Nien* army in battle array. At this moment, Prince Lu was chasing the fleeing Ch'ing ogres when he heard the clatter of gunfire. Reining in his horse, he stopped and knocked thrice on the forehead of his steed. Strangely, his yellow horse straightened its neck upward and whinnied endlessly 'whee whee...whee whee whee....' After the whinnying, each of the horses, as if enchanted, turned its tail southward and its head northward and kicked up its hind-hoofs. In a moment, the sky became gloomy, the earth dark. The sun and moon were obscured. The ogreish soldiers, their eyes blinded with the yellow sand dust, fired shots at random. Thus, the foreign gun corps of Li Hung-chang was neutralized by Prince Lu. Li Hung-chang was so frightened that he fled breaking wind and wetting himself and ran for his life.

Prince Lu, the victor, captured quantities of horses, guns and swords, gunpowder and bullets. From that time on the *Nien* army grew larger than ever.

Narrated by Jen Ch'uan-i.

Processed by Li Tung-shan.

In this legend the folk expression is different from that of the pre-Communist tradition. It celebrates the rebellion of a rural folk against the imperial ruling class. The agnostic depicted is a folk hero, an outlaw living and vivid beyond superstitious belief. But, above all, the nucleal difference in the pattern of folklore themes between pre-Communist and Communist China as reflected in the texts above is that: (1) in pre-Communist China the theme in general is to overcome human impossibilities by appealing to supernatural powers; (2) in Communist China, the theme is that all hopelessness is overcome in a seemingly sound logic of events. In the matters treated, the pre-Communists rely more upon legend as it is told by the folk than real history, while the Communists focus more on real history than mere folk invention. However, one may well raise the question whether, in the example of this tale of the *Nien* rebellion, we still have genuine folklore. Have the tales in Communist China been collected from the mouths of many narrators or are they the products of the pens of party writers? In cases such as this legend, the decision is often extremely difficult.

## V. Conclusion

Folklore research in Communist China viewed as a whole is still in the beginning stage. Aside from Party control in folklore (and other sciences), the lack of discipline among both fieldworkers and folklore research designers marks the course of folklore research in Communist China. A few works in textual research, such as those by Chu Tzu-ch'ing, Cheng Chen-to, and Wen I-to, which appear to have some good points, are survivals characteristic of Western folklore scholarship in the early twentieth century. The collecting of folklore, in the absence of proper guidance from the Party and for lack of trained folklorists in the field, results in the belittling of folklore as popular literature. After the criticism of Western folklore scholarship by the Communists in 1957-58, it is clear that Party control of folklore research will be absolute. This control would tend to reduce the scientific study of folklore to a prolonged stagnation. However, despite Party control of folklore research, the investigation of the folklore of the minority peoples cannot be overlooked. The compiling of the history of folk-literatures and the collecting and publishing of the oral narrative poems and other folklore genres of the minority peoples are tangible results achieved by the Communists in this area of research.

In contrast with pre-Communist China folklore research, which existed as a tail-wind of the New Culture movement, folklore in the hand of the Communists has been utilized as a tool for the propagation of a "plebeian literature." The Chinese Communists make no bones of admitting that folk art and literature should be subordinate to politics. Why should folklore in a Communist regime be expected to be anything but "folklorism"?

But the problem is not here. That folk art and literature should be subjected to politics is evidence of an inconsistency in the economic and political setup of a Communist state nationally and internationally. In the case of Communist China, for instance, it would seem to be economically necessary for the Communists, faced with a severe population problem, complicated by the limitation of arable land, to initiate a "wiping-away-superstition movement" in the rural areas, in order to restore more lands for agriculture by flattening the burial grounds. Traditionally regarding the choice of burial ground as crucial in the fates of their descendants, people of the upper

class used to implore the help of shamans and diviners in finding lands that possessed the most propitious *feng shui* 風水 (“winds and waters”—the Chinese term for geomancy). They would then buy as much space as desired for the burial of numerous generations. Now, “wiping-away-superstitions” is to be understood in the Communists’ purpose “to stick that Red Flag of atheism into the mind of the folk.”<sup>144</sup> In the “wiping-away-superstition movement,” which is part of the land reform project, rallies are held in rural areas, to which the shamans and diviners are summoned to perform their witchcrafts. Failing to bring forth ghosts, the diviners testify publicly that there is “no ghost, no spirit;” that what they do is to earn their living by cheating. The optimistic conclusion from the rally is that *feng-shui* is nowhere to be found: “not in the graves, but in the laboring hands of the folk.”<sup>145</sup>

Again, in a Communist state, economic development is determined by the structure and aims of a Party-designed economic system. That is to say, the Party economists lay out the economic plans projecting the diversified lines of production in enterprises, while the fulfillment of such economic plans relies upon the labor potential of the masses. The execution of a planned economy involves the problem of effective supervision. This is true whether the enterprise is built on the basis of free competition or government monopoly. But in a Communist state the problem of superintendence is extremely serious: the workers work for the state but have no definite future of their own. Working for an indefinite future only builds up discontent reflected in low production, whatever the designed economic plans. A recent case in Communist China was that of the “great leap forward” program of economic development early in 1958. In seeking effective measures to curb the workers’ demoralization, the Party leaders claimed that folksongs had a special value. As one Communist points out, new folksongs can serve as means to “guide and promote productivity. They can stir up the working energy... They are the best examples of instruments for self-amusement: no need to spend money; singing a song while working is a stimulus. Nor are they a hindrance to production.

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144. Cf. Ch'in Ch'uan 秦川, “Ts'ung i-ch'ang kuan-yü yu-shen yü wu-shen ti ta-pien-lun shuo-ch'i 從一場關於有神与无神的大弁論說起,” *Hung-ch'i* 紅旗 (August 16, 1958), p. 18.

145. *Ibid.*, p. 19.

Singing a new folksong eases the tension of the communal life."<sup>146</sup> Over and above that, the folksong also functions as an incentive to "laud those who are outstanding workers and criticize those who fall behind. . . and encourage the idlers to catch up with the outstanding ones."<sup>147</sup> Calculating these advantages, the Chinese Communists are, perhaps, among the first to realize that "the creation, collecting, processing, and publishing of the new folksongs are characteristically of the entire folk, of the masses, of the economic foundation of socialism. . . ."<sup>148</sup>

Externally, Communist China, during the recent decade has impressed the world with her restlessness—her interposition in the Korean War, her subjugation of the Tibetan Revolt, her action in the Indo-China Border conflicts. Dinko Tomasic in his chapter "The Partisan Movement" gives an excellent analysis into the political ideologies of the east European Communist states, an analysis which may bring some light to our understanding of the political situation in Communist China:

The ruling strata, on the other hand, are already resorting to the old device of reviving and stimulating the paralyzed energies of the masses, and of redirecting dissatisfaction and feuds within their own ranks by emphasizing the possibility of the external threats. They may even indulge in external aggressive adventures for the same purpose. The emphasis on military preparedness and extreme nationalism in these countries, and the news of border tensions and guerrilla warfare in the area where the Eastern and Western spheres of interest clash, indicate such a possibility.<sup>149</sup>

This analysis helps explain why research into the folklore of the minority peoples in the border regions is most strongly emphasized, in proportion to the whole folklore research program now carried on in Communist China. Through reading many of the narrative poems, these simple-hearted border peoples are already psychologically stimulated by resentments "against aggressive wars, against plundering, against the aggressions of the strong powers." When the time for action comes, these peoples simply rush against their "common foes," whether the battlefield be in Cambodia or Laos, in Vietnam or India, in Korea or Sinkiang.

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146. Cf. Lu Kung 路工, "Hsin-min-ko ti kuang-hui ch'eng-chiu 新民歌的光輝成就," *Min-chien wen-hsüeh* (November, 1959), pp. 23-24.

147. *Ibid.*, p. 23.

148. *Ibid.*, p. 24.

149. Dinko Tomasic, *Personality and Culture in Eastern European Politics*, New York: George W. Stewart Publisher, Inc., 1948, p. 220.