

a general feel for the landscape of Chinese culture. However, if it is intended to be an in-depth discussion on Chinese culture, the work needs more structure. The topics are meant to be woven together through the notion of family, yet the Chinese concept of family (*jia*) is in fact ambiguous. The meaning of family ranges from the idea of a family unit to broader social relationships, and even to the notion of the state-family (*guojia*). Without a refined and critical framework, the perspectives in this volume remain loosely connected.

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JONES, STEPHEN. *Plucking the Winds: Lives of Village Musicians in Old and New China*. Chime Studies in East Asian Music Volume 2. Leiden: Chime European Foundation for Chinese Music Research, 2004. x + 426 pages. Maps, illustrations, genealogy, appendices, music examples, bibliography, glossary-index, CD. Paper n. p.; ISBN 90-803615-2-6

Stephen Jones is a well known and respected ethnomusicologist specializing in the ritual and folk music of Northern China. He is a founding member of the editorial board of the European Foundation for Chinese Music Research, Chime. Since 1989 he has been studying the *sheng-guan* 笙管 music of the South Gaoluo Music Association. Founded in the Ming Dynasty, Gaoluo is situated between Laishui and Dingxing south of Beijing. The author was assisted by colleagues Xue Yibing and Zhang Zhentao who apparently did “much of the interviewing and notetaking” (viii).

This anthropological study traces a vulnerable musical tradition, its threats, survival, and continuity. The title is well chosen with its Zen imagery and theme of transience. It also contains an oblique reference to *chuige* 吹歌 (“Songs for Winds”), a form of “Southern Music” popular during the Great Leap Forward (224). From the 1940s to the present day, the reader follows the ever-changing nature of this association, for as fast as the winds are “plucked,” they change direction. But the musicians are nothing if not innovative; throughout they ride the changes, and emerge as enthusiastic and resolute as ever.

The association’s primary task is to provide music for traditional funerals, the politics and process of which are described in Chapter 8. “Such music survives only in the villages,” says the author. The ensemble combines the free reed mouth organ (*sheng* 笙) and double reed pipe (*guan* 管 or *guanzi* 管子) with the transverse membrane flute (*dizi* 笛子), a set of ten pitched gongs (*yunluo* 云锣) a pair of small cymbals and a barrel drum. By the 1990s *sheng-guan* music was the main surviving traditional music in Gaoluo.

Part one, “Making History” (Chapters 1–7) traces the music association’s evolution. Episodes are often divided by lively, present-day reflections by the author and character “sketches” of various past and present musicians. Part two, “Living Music” (Chapters 8–12) describes music making. Written mainly as a narrative, it details Jones’s interactions with the musicians and various other community members, often interspersed with short historical anecdotes. Included are more pen portraits, rehearsal procedures, instruments, musical scores and repertory, learning styles, and various festivals. No attempt is made

to analyze the music in detail: "Clearly this book is more about the role of the ritual association in village society than about musical analysis," explains the author (253). Both sections are accompanied by quotations, diagrams, and photographs. But while the Gongche symbols are strategically placed in the text, the percussion mnemonics are not included. Eventually they appear in the musical examples (261, 368). This could be a source of frustration to some readers.

In the "Coda," Jones examines more recent threats to the association's survival. A new directive of 2003 has restricted burial in favor of cremation, which, if enforced deprives the music of its fundamental ritual context. But it seems unlikely that this will deter these musicians who, along with their forebears have survived so many challenges in the past.

Painstakingly footnoted and compiled with great care, this study is a welcome addition to the literature on Chinese traditional music. The sixteen page index doubles as a useful glossary. Hymns, preludes, melodies, suites, incantations and three excerpts from Catholic vespers are included in the twenty-six musical examples. These are well chosen and accompanied by descriptive notes. Transcriptions are provided for six of the tracks on the attached CD. The second *sheng-guan* transcription (No. 3) appears to have no corresponding CD track, which is somewhat disappointing. It would be helpful for the teacher if the CD were self contained, since librarians tend to store accompanying sound recordings separately to ensure their safety. Nevertheless, all additional information adds to the book's value as a very useful learning tool.

Plucking the Winds may not appeal to those "impatient" ethnomusicologists requiring rigorous musical analyses. Other readers may find this study a humorous and refreshing approach to traditional Chinese music and a valuable means of preserving a unique art form. As the author explains, "it is meant to be read primarily as a story of people's lives" (1). Probably the author's primary intent was to return the information to the musicians of Gaoluo village, to whom he dedicated the book. It should appeal to a wide reading audience.

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LIVIA KOHN, *Monastic Life in Medieval China: A Cross-Cultural Perspective*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2003. xiv + 300 pages. Illustrations, tables, appendix of sources, glossary, bibliography, index. Cloth, US\$42.00; ISBN 0-8248-2651-5.

In this book, Livia Kohn, who is known as a prolific scholar of Daoism, applies a religious studies approach in placing Daoist monasticism into a cross-cultural context. Accordingly, as the author remarks, the book has two focal points. The first is a description of Daoist monastic institutions, buildings, rules, and behavior in the Chinese middle ages up to the middle of the eighth century. The second aim is to provide a comparative and theoretical framework for interpreting medieval Daoist monasticism. Both aspects are closely interwoven in that most chapters combine information given on Daoism with more or less extensive references to monasticism in Christianity and Buddhism. The first chapter ("Understanding Monasticism") and the conclusion are exclusively devoted to theoretical and comparative considerations, while the rest centers on describing and interpreting Daoist monasticism without neglecting comparative aspects.