

rary legends the supernatural origins of the sword and its association with dragon's blood is confirmed. Stories about Guan Yu's manifestations as a deity emerge at times of disturbance and civil war and were particularly prevalent in the late Qing. The most recent tales date from the resistance to Japanese occupation in the 1930s and 1940s. In one such story, transmitted in the Shanghai region, Guan Yu is credited with deflecting Japanese bombs into a river (61).

The chapter on iconographic representations of Guan Yu deals with the earlier folk depiction of Guan and his later canonization as divinity and emperor by the Chinese court in the late Ming. At this time Guan is depicted in imperial robe and insignia but with the long earlobes and halo traditionally attributed to the Buddha (107; image 12). Other incarnations of Guan include the hero as demon-queller and as a transformed God of Wealth (*cai shen*). This chapter also treats portraits of Guan Yu in Korea, Vietnam and Japan. Of these three, the Korean Guan Yu is the most sinicized. Japanese portraits depict him not as a deity but as a samurai (153). Some of the most intriguing of these iconographic portrayals are representations by European artists based on unknown Chinese models. One such portrayal is in the *Novus Atlas Sinensis* by missionary Martino Martini (1616–1641) published in Amsterdam. This curious portrait shows Guan Yu and his faithful lieutenant, Zhou Cang, together with his famed sword. Guan is depicted with long fingernails, a Chinese custom that had caught the eye of Western travellers in the Far East. Another illustration appears in a Dutch book about China published in Amsterdam in 1670. Guan and Zhou Cang appear in a room furnished in the European style but with Chinese landscape and calligraphic-like paintings on the wall. Guan is seated at a desk reading (presumably) the ancient classic, *Spring and Autumn Annals*, in one of his traditional poses in Chinese iconography (161; image 44).

There is no concluding chapter in this work and Riftin does not set out for the reader an overarching framework within which to understand the cultural significance of the hero, as one finds, for example, in the work of Prasenjit DUARA (1988). However, he has provided overwhelming evidence for the importance of Guan Yu as deity and protector for well over a millennium at both folk and elite levels throughout China, in Chinese borderlands, and in areas of sinic influence. Fine arts historians will prize the rich chapter on iconographic representations and the wealth of illustrations in this volume. Scholars of Chinese literature, history, and folklore will welcome this volume as a treasure trove of information on the historical manifestations of this crucial Chinese culture hero in textual, oral, and iconographic forms.

REFERENCE CITED

Prasenjit DUARA

- 1988 Superscribing symbols: The myth of Guandi, Chinese God of War. *Journal of Asian Studies* 47/4: 778–95.

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STRASSBERG, RICHARD E., Editor, Translator, Commentator. *A Chinese Bestiary: Strange Creatures from the Guideways through Mountains and Seas*. (A Phillip E. Lilienthal Book) Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002. xxii + 314 pages. Figures, plates, selected bibliography, glossary, index to the plates. Cloth US\$75.00/£52.00; ISBN 0–520–21844–2.

The *Guideways through Mountains and Seas* (*Shanhai jing*), compiled from the Warring States (475–221 BCE) period to the Western Han (206 BCE–8 CE) dynasty, “records more than 500 animate creatures in addition to some 500 mountains, 300 rivers, 95 foreign lands and tribes, 130 kinds of pharmaceuticals (to prevent some 70 illnesses), 435 plants, 90 metals and minerals, as well as specific forms of ritual sacrifice to various mountain gods, all organized within a geographical framework” (3). It is an encyclopedia of ancient Chinese mythology, geography, ethnography, religious beliefs, natural science, and medicine.

Strassberg devotes the first quarter of *A Chinese Bestiary* to introductory and background material. He explores the origin of the *Shanhai jing* summarizing its textual history, as well as the role of commentators, scholars, and critics throughout Chinese history. He also explores Chinese worldviews and the typology of the creatures described in the text. Strassberg’s extensive use of woodblock printed maps and illustrations along with diagrams to explain the geographical descriptions found in the original text prove invaluable in helping the reader visualize ancient Chinese cosmography. He also summarizes current scholarship on the possible correlation between the mythical and present-day geography, which is highlighted through maps and diagrams.

To clarify, Strassberg’s book does not provide a complete translation of the *Shanhai jing*.¹ The illustrations in the book are taken from the *Shanhai jing shiyi* (*Guideways through Mountains and Seas with Explanatory Comments*). Originally published without any illustrations (preface 1537), the subsequent Yaoshantang edition (1597) includes the earliest surviving illustrations associated with the *Shanhai jing*—a total of 76 plates by the artisan Jiang Yinghao (fl. late sixteenth century). Strassberg relies on an edition found in the National Library of China in Beijing. Two damaged plates in this edition have been substituted with plates found in another edition housed in the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C. Strassberg translates sections of text from the *Guideways through Mountains and Seas with Supplementary Commentaries* (*Shanhai jing jianshu*, 1809) by Hao Yixing, which correspond to the illustrations of the strange creatures.

The gem within *A Chinese Bestiary* is its illustrations! The majority of the book centers upon the seventy-six plates (totaling 345 individual illustrations/entries) along with the translation of the relevant passage from the *Shanhai jing*. The illustrations are clear and span half the page. The author devotes the final section of the introduction to discussing the history of illustrations associated with the *Guideways* and their place in the overall history of Chinese book illustration. Each entry begins with the name of the creature translated into English, romanized into Pinyin, and written in Chinese characters. The illustration is accompanied by its corresponding text and additional historical commentary expounds upon the original description of the creature.

The University of California Press, along with the author, should be commended for producing such a professional monograph. All the maps, diagrams, and illustrations are beautifully reproduced. Chinese characters, tables of Chinese dynasties and dates, measurement conversion charts, and an extensive bibliography heighten the book’s value. One *minor* omission does deserve mention. The book includes a glossary index to the plates but it does not include an index to Strassberg’s introductory discussion. Again, an index to his text would be useful, but it does not, whatsoever, detract from the overall value of his work.

Strassberg deftly balances the line between translation and transliteration. In the first pages, he rationalizes his translation method as trying to balance the needs of the scholar with those of the English-language reader. In the end, Strassberg hopes that his readers “...will experience the same degree of fascination with these strange creatures and their world that [he has] felt in the process of assembling this volume” (xv). The combination of text and lav-

ish illustrations does indeed provide both specialists and non-specialists a portal into the imaginative world of the *Shanhai jing* with its wondrous and mythical creatures.

NOTES

1. For a complete translation see Rémi Mathieu, *Étude sur la mythologie et l'ethnographie de la Chine ancienne* (Paris: Collège de France, Institut des Hautes Études Chinoises, 1983); Cheng Hsiao-Chieh, Hui-Chen Pai Cheng, and Kenneth Lawrence Thern, *Shan Hai Ching: Legendary Geography and Wonders of Ancient China* (Taipei: National Institute for Compilation and Translation, 1985); Riccardo Fracasso, *Libro dei monti e dei mari (Shanhai jing): Cosmografia e mitologia nella Cina Antica* (Venice: Marsilio, 1996); and Anne Birrell, *The Classic of Mountains and Seas* (London: Penguin, 1999).

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MONGOLIA

PEGG, CAROLE. *Mongolian Music, Dance, and Oral Narrative: Performing Diverse Identities*. Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 2001. xvii + 376 pages. Maps, line drawings, plates, glossary, list of interviews, bibliography, index, CD. Paper US\$35.00; ISBN 0-295-98112-1.

Mongolian Music, Dance, and Oral Narrative brings together for the first time a detailed account of all performance traditions in the Republic of Mongolia, from the private and domestic through the religious and public to the professional and official. Carole Pegg has compiled and compared a mass of information from a wide variety of sources. These range from her conversations, interviews, and recordings with people from many ethnic groups in Central and West Mongolia (all mentioned individually in the back of the book), to texts of legends and songs and analyses of material culture, such as instrument types.

The text begins with an introduction, *Performances*, and continues with four parts, each consisting of three chapters that elaborate on the book's central themes: performance and identity. Part One focuses on ethnic groups, historical periods and musical genres, styles, techniques. Part Two deals with religious and spiritual matters, and Part Three with performances relating to the domestic sphere and celebrations, sports and play, and herding and hunting. Part Four discusses the communist period in greater detail, as well as the complex changes that have taken place after the democratic revolution of 1992.

In the first chapters the author shows her encyclopedic knowledge by minutely unfolding the patchwork of ethnic groups and the vocal and instrumental repertoires that belong to them. The singular national Mongol (Khalkha) identity so strongly promoted under the years of communist rule (1921–1992) has clearly not eradicated the sense of tribal group identity. There are various periods, political states, and heroes of pre-communist Mongolia that appeal to the imaginations of these groups. Pegg demonstrates that the memory of the customs, traditions, and heroes of this so-called Old Mongolia is very much alive again.

The number of instances in which performance is used in modern Mongolia shows that music, dance, and oral narrative pervades everyday life, that is, at least in the countryside, where Pegg carried out most of her research. Dance is performed in the Buddhist *tsam* festival,