

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,

at home, during wrestling competitions, and even in hunting. Song is used extensively to shape domestic celebrations, sport and play, and herding and hunting.

The CD in the book contains over thirty-eight recordings made *in situ* and focuses on the well-known genres that Mongol musicians have so successfully exported during the past ten years or so. Most tracks concern long songs (*urtyn duu*), pieces for the horse-head fiddle (*morin khuur*), and throat singing (*khöömii*). Further examples include Mongolian pop music, a dialogue song, two fragments of heroic epics, several praise songs, dance melodies, and instrumental pieces. A lama calling rain, an excerpt from a shamaness' call to the spirits, a praise recitation, and a song to encourage animals to give milk are examples of the idiosyncratic Mongol world of sound and communication. Unfortunately some pieces are faded in and out within one track number.

The scope and detail of Pegg's research is admirable. The book offers many new insights and links in Mongolian performance that, to my knowledge, have not previously been analyzed from a single, comparative approach. In *Performances* the author writes that "[through] participation of performers and audiences, individuals (re)create connections and relations with other individuals, as well as different kinds of ethnic, religious, social, and political groupings, terrestrial and cosmic landscapes, spirits, and gods" (6). Her main argument is that in the expressions of music, dance, and oral narrative, individuals perform "a part of the self" and thus perform "levels of identity" that "link with other domains of existence while sustaining the individuality of each level and domain" (5). Based on the work of Marilyn Strathern and others, Pegg argues that there are explicit purposes and goals in performing that go beyond the artistic level and suggests that Mongols to some extent acknowledge and use this power (5). The emphasis on these issues resonates in the subtitle of the book, *Performing Diverse Identities* (which does not appear on the cover), and in the titles of the four Parts, like *Performing Ethnicity, History, and Place* (I) and *Creating Sociality, Time and Space* (III).

Perhaps the most unifying indigenous concept of performance in Old Mongolia was that of a "spiritual culture (*utga soyol*), embracing traditional Mongolian performance practices, as well as symbols and beliefs" (272). This concept was not "in structural opposition" to nature (98). However, it was replaced by the European concept of intellectual culture in the course of the past century (Part Four). Throughout the book, many of the older traditions are entirely discussed in the past tense, which implies that that particular custom or belief is discontinued. When the recent revival of older beliefs and traditions are discussed, including many that seem to fit well into the older concept of "spiritual culture," one starts to wonder what happened to this overarching concept.

The question of how people perceive their own performances on a deeper level seems particularly relevant in the light of Pegg's idea of "performing diverse identities" as a more or less self-conscious act. The immense scope of her work seems to have prevented the author from establishing deep and long-term relationships with informants to find out how their identity as a whole relates to identity conveyed in performance. And within the performance mode of analysis, she pays little attention to aesthetical considerations, or questions of emotion and expression, and tends to reduce performance to an act that fulfils a specific agenda. The book cover informs us that Pegg, who has formerly pursued a successful professional career as a folk musician in Great Britain, performed with Mongolian musicians both in- and outside Mongolia. But her own presence is hard to find among the facts, let alone her *shadow in the field*. Her intriguing reports of meetings with two Darhat shamanesses (131–37) are the only accounts that give some insights in Pegg's personal motivations and perceptions. In one shamanic séance she found herself "being drawn into the proceedings in an active sense,"

as a performer rather than an observer (131). In another she experienced the same, but remained behind the camera all the time, much to the distress of onlookers (136).

These—admittedly honest—reports illustrate Pegg's wish not to intrude in her informers' lives. But this focus on collecting factual details from her informers and (co-)performers causes the text to convey a very theoretical, constructed sense of identity of her subjects. The reader is continuously aware of the metalevel of the author's theory, but searches in vain for examples on the experiential level. How are these *parts of the self, levels of identity, and domains of existence* united in the daily lives of individual Mongols? Does the former unity of "spiritual culture" return in some way? It seems that a broader approach is necessary to give a satisfactory answer to these questions, one that also includes, for example, the relation between culture and economy. For such a deep and complete analysis the radical changes of the past decade and their far-reaching influence on Mongolia's extensive cultural landscape may be too recent.

This criticism, I should conclude, also marks the strength of Pegg's *tour de force*. *Mongolian Music, Dance and Oral Narrative* is an invaluable reference document for scholars of Mongolian studies. It is a rich collection of ethnographic data and a key work for those who want to understand the complexities of cultural life in states of former communist countries, both before, during, and after that period.

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## SOUTHEAST ASIA

MEDINA, CARLOS K., Compiler, Annotator, and Editor. *106 Ifugao Abu'Wab Tales Documented by Frans Lambrecht, C.I.C.M. From 1932 to 1957*. Baguio City: Saint Louis University, Cordillera Research and Development Foundation Inc., 2001. 564 pages. Map, photographs, bibliography. Paper, n.p.

According to Barton, the Ifugao belief system has extreme complexity and has produced the most extensive and pervasive religion that has yet been reported, outside of India at least, in ethnographic literature. For example, the Kiangnan Ifugao distinguish and have names for as many as 1,240 types of deities, and yet BARTON noted that his list was incomplete (1946, 14). Therefore, 106 Ifugao *abu'wab* texts listed in this book also show only a small part of the Ifugao belief system. Lambrecht identifies five species of Mayoyao oral rites, that is, invocations, prayers, magical tales, ritual songs, and other less frequently performed oral rites. The present study covers only the magical tales or *abu'wab* (2). Yet, Lambrecht had to spend eight years to collect these materials and translate them into English. We should be aware of the difficulties in collecting these materials and their incalculable value. Medina had collected all of Lambrecht's *abu'wab* tales that were separately recorded in various journals and papers.

These *abu'wab* have been recited during the ritual cycles of agriculture, marriage ceremony, pregnancy and birth, and funerals, as well as property transaction rituals, and hunting and curing rituals. Together with the original text and the translation by Lambrecht, Medina adds his own translation. As he notes, one needs to repeatedly read Lambrecht's English translation if only to determine the subject and object of each sentence. Lambrecht's English translations of the *abu'wab* tales are replete with such examples. Therefore, Medina's great contribution is that the translations of original texts have become much more "natural" and