

must have widened geographically narrow horizons to include for the first time the entire island; and so too for those with whom they came into contact in each locality. Another third came from provinces across from Shikoku along the Inland Sea, but the rest were from all over Japan, even northern Honshu. Kouamé suggests that even as these visitors still further enlarged the outlook of the local people, their experience gave the otherwise economically backward and “peripheral” Shikoku a distinct, Japan-wide identity as the new, nation-building era of Meiji approached.

For a reader more accustomed to English writing on Japan, it is striking to find that Kouamé routinely refers to the Tokugawa era as Japan’s “modern” period and to post-Tokugawa times as “post-modern.” Such are the vagaries of convention.

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## CHINA

BØRDHAL, VIBEKE and JETTE ROSS. *Chinese Storytellers: Life and Art in the Yangzhou Tradition*. Boston: Cheng and Tsui Company, 2002. 432 pages, b/w illustrations and photographs, VCD set. Paper US\$45.00; ISBN 0-88727-356-4.

*Chinese Storytellers* is a multi-media look at lives and stories of several older storytellers in the Yangzi 揚子 delta city of Yangzhou 揚州, China. A cultural and economic hub in the late imperial period, known especially for its role in the salt industry, Yangzhou is today a modernizing city that maintains in some aspects a charm of eras past. In their book about the traditions of professional storytelling in that city, the authors have innovatively combined personal narratives of several aged storytellers, excerpts from the tellers’ signature stories, and context-rich images of them in action on the storytelling platform, carefully integrated into the text. The accompanying CD-ROM presents viewers with additional rich images of each storyteller in action.

The work begins with an introduction to storytelling in China, retracing (as is necessary to the project at hand) some of the ground that Vibeke BØRDHAL covered in her more scholarly study *The Oral Tradition of Yangzhou Storytelling* (1996). The introductory chapters outline trends and themes in the history of Chinese storytelling traditions and offers speculation on its relation to vernacular fiction of the late imperial era. Along the way Børdahl defines and explores an array of useful terms related to storytelling and performance in China, presented with English equivalents and Chinese graphs. The book then turns to a contextual portrait of historical and modern Yangzhou, which gradually shifts to intimate descriptions of life that include demure gardens, quiet side streets, and private homes. The sensitive photographs by Jette Ross that accompany this section perfectly complement Vibeke Børdahl’s narrative and reveal a great deal about a number of traditional crafts, customs, and cuisines. With these introductory frames in place, the authors move on to descriptions and photographs of the storytelling houses where storytellers regularly appear to tell their tales. Customs and activities that make up the fabric of life in these houses are again presented in knowing detail, and many references to the local jargon (which often differs from usages in the nearby storytelling center of Suzhou 蘇州) are used to describe things related to storytelling.

Other sections detail the mode of transmission of stories and include several genealo-

gies of master storytellers and their protégés, as well as differences in repertoire and style between several lineages or schools of storytelling. A very useful chapter is that on the “Telling of the Tale,” which includes precise descriptions of the traditional “eight treasures” of storytelling (stage, chair, table and tablecloth, teapot, “waking board” to keep audience in touch with the narration by occasional rapping it on the table top, handkerchief and fan, big bowl for collecting money [no longer used], and three-stringed banjo [once used in a related style of chantefable known as *Yangzhou xianci* 揚州弦詞]). Again, clear photos record the proper techniques for holding and manipulating the various requisite items. This chapter also describes various gestures, speech styles, and insider concepts of the story and storytelling aesthetics.

A fascinating portion of the book is that of the life stories of several of the older Yangzhou storytellers, a number of whom visited Denmark in 1996 to perform at a conference that became the basis for BØRDAHL’s groundbreaking edited work entitled, *The Eternal Storyteller: Oral Literature in Modern China* (1999). An especially detailed portrait of Gao Zaihua 高再華 (who I believe did not attend the Copenhagen conference), is supported by a panoply of photographs of his home, family, and friends that strengthen and extend the glimpses into his life that the narrator of his own story provides. This chapter is especially useful, as it helps convey a sense of the performers as individual artists and provides difficult to imagine information and images on the cultural milieu from which they sprang.

In the final section of the written text, portions of three stories in the Yangzhou repertoire are included in English translation along with text in Chinese graphs. The featured artists include the patriarch of the Wu Song 武松 hero tale in the Yangzhou tradition, the late Wang Shaotang 王少堂, his disciple (who graces the book cover) the late Wang Xiaotang 王筱堂, and the active or retired storytellers Ren Jitang 任繼堂, Hui Zhaolong 惠兆龍, Fei Zhengliang 費正良, Gao Zaihua, and Dai Buzhang 戴步章. Rounding out the written portion of the work is a useful and inclusive bibliography of Western and Chinese sources on Chinese storytelling and related works of vernacular fiction.

The CD-ROM accompanying the written text consists of a series of excerpts from video-taped performances of the storytellers introduced in the text. The video clips are obviously not of professional quality, but instead are actual fieldwork tapes that usefully reflect a number of different storytelling situations. Some were special performances given solely for the camera in the storytellers’ homes; some were taped in one of the larger storytelling houses in Yangzhou; and several are footage shot during the 1996 conference in Copenhagen. Chinese and English subtitles are provided. Adding the video dimension to the text (which can also be accomplished by placing clips on a website) allows readers to actually see and hear the dynamics of performance that include the sound of the voice registers, the use of stylized and personal gestures, and the pervasive phenomenon of constantly shifting between the means of communication in the storytelling performances (BENDER 1999).

General readers and scholars alike will find *Chinese Storytellers* a rich, accessible, and fascinating look at the world of Yangzhou storytelling, organized with sensitivity and care, as is typical of the books that Vibeke Børdahl and the late Jette Ross have collaborated on. One can only hope their work will encourage other scholars and interested parties to present aspects of their research in such an engaging and instructive format. As a teaching tool, the multi-media *Chinese Storytellers* will find a valuable place in undergraduate syllabi dedicated to the performing arts in China, the inclusion of the CD-ROM materials providing a format for easy use in the multi-media classroom.

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CAMPANY, ROBERT F. *To Live As Long As Heaven and Earth: A Translation and Study of Ge Hong's Traditions of Divine Transcendents*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002. 607 pages. Cloth US\$85.00. ISBN 0-5200-23034-5.

This monumental work contains a detailed and fully annotated translation of the *Shenxian zhuan*, commonly translated as “Biographies of Spirit Immortals,” by Ge Hong (284–364), the famous fourth-century would-be alchemist and collector of Daoist materials, best known for his alchemical work *Baopuzi* or “Book of the Master Who Embraces Simplicity.” The original text of his *Shenxian zhuan* was lost early on and collected again only in the Song dynasty, but numerous parts of its altogether 106 hagiographies were cited and referred to in various texts and encyclopedias of the Six Dynasties and Tang. It is a complex task to establish which part was known when and how far certain items in the collection are likely to go back.

The book by Robert Campany successfully completes this task. The work consists for the most part of the translation proper, contained in the second part of the book (129–371). It is followed by a third part containing textual notes that give detailed information of where and which part of which item is cited or referred to in medieval and later Chinese literature (373–552). The biographies are arranged not in the order of the transmitted edition, but according to chronology: those attested earliest (i.e., those fully contained in works until the end of the Tang) are listed first, followed by those only mentioned in these sources, and finally those ascribed to the *Shenxian zhuan* only since the Song. The translation is of high quality and the textual information collected is enormous, opening the way for a new appreciation of medieval hagiography and Daoist collections.

The first part of the book (3–128) contains an introduction to the text, discussing the life and work of Ge Hong, the worldview contained in the hagiographies, as well as questions of textual transmission and the reliability of the legends for understanding medieval Chinese religion. The book has Chinese characters in the text and footnotes at the bottom of the page, which make it rather easy to use. It also provides a lengthy bibliography (although not all items listed are actually used in the work) and a detailed index. It is a thorough presentation and study of an important hagiographic document that had previously been translated only in to German and Japanese.

Overall, little issue can be taken with the basic translation, its annotation, and the detailed textual references and supplementary materials. There are a few problems, however, with the terminology chosen and the translation of proper names and titles.

In terms of terminology, the author opts in several cases for terms that contravene common usage and are highly questionable. For example, he uses the word “traditions” for *zhuan*, based on the fact that the most elementary meaning of the character is “to transmit.” Yet by