

Yet, there remains the important question: Why did people come to fear the fetus ghosts? Moskowitz considers Chinese traditional thinking about sexuality to be the reason for such a fear. In chapter 9 he discusses classic texts to back up his interpretation, and as a result he appears to be less empirical in this section than in the earlier chapters. It seems to me that it would have been more fruitful to pay attention to the change that occurred in the image people harbor about the spirits of the dead.

In traditional Taiwanese society people arrange for a special kind of marriage ritual, a so-called "ghost marriage," to be performed for a child, particularly for a girl, who died before having reached adulthood. Premature death was believed to cause an ambiguous and dangerous situation for these girls, because according to the society's patrilineal ideology all women are obliged to marry a man of another descent group and give birth to descendants of their husband's descent group. After her death, a woman's descendants will worship her as their ancestor. If she dies unmarried, she has no status in genealogy and nobody will worship her, causing her to remain in an ambiguous state. In order to remedy this situation, a "ghost marriage" is performed for her. It would appear, therefore, that the intention to guarantee the woman a well defined place according to patrilineal ideology is more important than the fear of spirits.

The Fetus-Ghost Appeasement discussed in this book shows a quite different kind of approach to spirits. The fetus ghosts, it seems to me, are closer to the ghosts that appear in Western and Japanese horror movies. In recent years there has been a tendency in Taiwanese TV programs to take up mysterious phenomena allegedly caused by spirits of the dead. This tendency is quite new. Under the strong influence of such programs, it is not surprising that a traditional society like Taiwan's came to adhere to hitherto unknown images of the spirits of the dead. This demonstrates how important it is to consider the influence exerted by the mass media when analyzing contemporary culture.

The author's discussion of the Fetus-Ghost Appeasement brings to light two important aspects of modern Taiwanese culture: commercialization and the influence of the mass media. *The Haunting Fetus* is, therefore, a study rich in suggestions for the analysis of modern Taiwanese society.

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SCHNELL, RENÉ. *Briefe aus Shanghai 1946–1952. Dokumente eines Kulturschocks*. Das volkscundliche Taschenbuch 23. Zürich: Limmat Verlag, 2000. 268 pages. Maps, photos, index. Paper n. p.; ISBN 3-85791-310-X. (In German)

Life histories and their study have become an important branch of folklore and anthropological research, and a precious source of insider information about a particular culture. Often, however, these histories are reported by the researcher and are, therefore, presented in a somewhat "purified" or edited "presentable" form, so to speak. The series *Das volkscundliche Taschenbuch*, published by the Swiss Society of Folklore (Schweizerische Gesellschaft für Volkskunde), that includes *Briefe aus Shanghai* makes it a point to retain as much as possible an author's idiosyncrasies. Due to this procedure the reader can savor the world and the thinking of the author. At times it may even happen to an almost embarrassing degree; in some cases the reader may be inclined to think that certain expressions should not have passed the copy editor's desk without being reshaped. However, it is just this kind of imme-

diacy, and the editor's sense for a text's *Sitz im Leben*, that make for one of the attractive features of the series as well as of *Briefe aus Shanghai*.

The volume is a collection of letters that have been selected from the more than 400 letters that René Schnell wrote to his parents when he was living in Shanghai as a young employee of a Swiss pharmaceutical firm. It is, therefore, not a study of Chinese society, but primarily a personal document about the experiences and feelings of a foreign firm's young employee who had to struggle to find his way in an environment he was not prepared for. It also offers bits of observations of Chinese society at a time it was undergoing far-reaching changes.

The letters were written during the last years of the civil war, Shanghai's fall to the revolutionary army, and the beginning of the Communist regime. It is interesting to learn how these events affect the life of the author and other members of the foreign (Swiss) community, but the reports remain largely silent about what they may have meant for the Chinese population. It is true that Schnell describes to his parents instances of the people's life and the general situation, but the reports remain detached like newspaper reports, to which he in fact often refers to in order to back up his statements. This state of affairs is interesting in itself in that it throws some light on the situation of someone who has to function in an unusual environment without knowing much about it and without having a real chance to learn more about it.

Early in his stay the writer mentions that he wants to learn Chinese in order to have direct access to the people he was living with. Unfortunately, his efforts did not bear the expected fruits, which was at least partly, I believe, because he did not have the time he would have needed to learn enough of the language in order to feel comfortable with it. As a consequence, the language did not really become a bridge to the people for him. This becomes apparent in situations of stress where he has to deal with a tricky problem such as the dismissal of his servants as a result of his moving to a new apartment. Although he admits to having made mistakes because he lacked proper understanding of their behavior, he uses harsh words for the Chinese servants, words that smack of a colonialist attitude. Since he himself is angered by reports of racist reactions back home, it must be acknowledged that he is aware of the problem; but when he finds that the Chinese do not meet with his expectations, he gets emotionally carried away and uses disparaging expressions for them that make the reader question whether his own attitude is really so much different. However, nothing of this sort is noticeable when he writes of the highly educated woman who became his girl friend and later his wife, or when he tells of her well-situated family. Could it be that he felt them to be closer to him because they were apparently somewhat familiar with European ways? It turns out that, on the whole, this woman is practically the only Chinese with whom he has more than a formal relationship. Except for her, people appear only in the margins of his letters. His interactions with Chinese people seem to have been quite limited, despite his initial declaration to make an effort to learn the language so as to have better contact with them. In this context it is telling that we are told much about the wonders of Chinese meals but only little, if anything, about people. With the military occupation of Shanghai by the Communist troops, the writer's attention focuses almost exclusively on two points: his concern for his future wife and his return to Switzerland. This is quite different from his initial attitude at the time of his arrival in Shanghai. Clearly, the political events of those days were instrumental in producing such a result, but they were not the only reason for it. They rather seem to have galvanized a lingering problem resulting from the fact that, notwithstanding his living in China, he was not really able to get into contact with that society. Therefore, I think, the subtitle of this book, "Documents of a culture shock," is quite accurately chosen.

The above is not meant to criticize the author for his very personal experiences. It is

meant to point to certain characteristics of such experiences because I believe they are quite representative for many who live in a foreign culture and who make an effort to establish good contact, but are prevented from really succeeding by the limited environment they have created for themselves in the foreign country. One would not go to this book for a historical account about a time of significant changes in China, but for a personal document about a foreigner's "island life" within the sea of an unfamiliar society. That the society in question is that of China in this book may, from that point of view, be only incidental.

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STERCKX, ROEL. *The Animal and the Daemon in Early China*. SUNY Series in Chinese Philosophy and Culture. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2002. ix + 375 pages. Bibliography, index. Cloth US\$92.50; ISBN 0-7914-5269-7. Paper US\$34.95; ISBN 0-7914-5270-0.

Roel Sterckx's *The Animal and the Daemon in Early China* explores the perception of animals in Warring States (475–222 BCE) and Han (202 BCE–220 CE) dynasty thought. Sterckx examines how cultural perceptions of the animal world influenced the way Chinese viewed their place among the living species and within the world itself. Rather than offering a natural history of animals in China, this book instead describes how the Chinese view of animals shaped *and* was shaped by intellectual, political, and religious thought and notions of sagehood and rulership.

Chapter 1 opens with a systematic introduction to animal theory in surviving Warring States and Han dynasty texts. In addition to discussing philosophical, calendrical, and legal texts, Sterckx also analyzes title references in the Han bibliographic catalog. The surviving literature, however, is not zoological in nature. The Chinese did not define animals in terms of an "ology"—anthropology, biology, zoology—but, instead, emphasized the naming and classification of animals based on lexicography. This naming and ordering of names, Sterckx argues, enabled Chinese rulers and scholars to maintain symbolic and intellectual control over animal species.

Chapter 2 examines the classification of animals based on their ritual and social uses. Using evidence from the *Zhouli*, Sterckx provides numerous examples of human bureaucratic positions responsible for animals. These officials were responsible for raising and breeding animals, the sacrificial preparation of animals, the management of animal tributes and parks, hunting, fishing, and expelling venomous or prodigious animals. For example, the commander of the stables classified royal horses into six categories—horses suited for breeding, warfare, ceremonial display, travel, the hunt, and labor. They were not classified by their biological characteristics, but rather by their use within human society. Sterckx argues that "the author(s) of the *Zhouli* integrate the animal world into a social zoography in which every single aspect of an animal's behavior was classified within the province of human office" (49).

Chinese classified animals based on their role in social and religious ritual. Animals were ordered based on the system of gift exchange. Specific animals were appropriate as a gift to superiors and friends. Animal species were also ordered in a sacrificial hierarchy based on their use in ancestral sacrifices and state sacrifices. For example, while rulers and nobility sacrificed oxen, commoners sacrificed fish. Calendrical texts provide another source of information regarding animal taxonomy by linking animal behavior to the cycle of human activity, particularly the agricultural cycle.

Sterckx next discusses three models of classification in Chapter 3: a physical model based on the concept of blood, "blood and *qi*," a functional model based on *yin* and *yang* and