

Blowing out the strange, unusual smell;  
 Now the temperature is not so high,  
 So cool and comfortable inside. (52)

These publications of ritual texts and commentary are only a portion of the many books published in recent years in China on the Yi nationality. Immediately relevant to the ritual texts discussed here, is the appearance in the year 2000 of two substantial introductions to local Yi cultures. The first is a book edited by YUNNAN YIXUE XUEHUI that covers various topics on the Yi of Yunnan. The other is a volume edited by HE and ANG on the recent social and scholarly developments in the Shilin area. Both of these works will be further contextualized by the work of BAMO (2000), which is on traditional Yi poetry, especially the oral and oral-related aspects of the Yi poetic tradition.

Both volumes of the ritual texts reviewed here will aid readers in grasping the range of traditional ritual activity practiced by various communities in the Lunan region, and will be valuable for comparison with other Yi groups and minority societies of southwest China and Southeast Asia. As ethnopoetic representations of Sani culture, they will allow a greater understanding of traditional poetic aesthetics, expressive styles, and human experience.

#### NOTE

1. The “*ge*” in “that called *ge*” is different from the *ge* in *pange*; it is an obscure term referring to a legend on the origin of dew.

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HE Yaohua 何耀華 and ANG Zhiling 昂智靈, eds.

2000 *Shilin Yizu chuantong wenhua yu shehui jingji bianqian* 石林彝族傳統文化與社會經濟變遷 [Changes in the traditional society and economy of the Yi of Shilin]. Kunming: Yunnan Jiaoyu Chubanshe.

YUNNAN YIXUE XUEHUI 雲南彝學學會, ed.

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#### SIBERIA

EMELJANOV, NIKOLAJ V. *Sjuzhety olongkho o zashchitnikah plemeni* [Plots of *olongkho* about guardians of the tribe]. Novosibirsk: Nauka, 2000. 190 pages. No price.

N. V. Emeljanov took upon himself the preparation of a classification of Sakha (Yakut) oral

epic poetry, which resulted in four books (EMELJANOV 1980, 1983, 1990 and the presently reviewed book). In all, since the eighteenth century, 150 complete works have been recorded, along with 28 summaries, and 17 fragments; the complete works range from five to forty thousand or more lines (see page 6). As this is a rather small corpus of complete works (never mind how long they are!), the author decided to discuss and analyze each work separately, but grouped them roughly according to themes. The division is based on the assumption that the works correspond to various stages of development and disintegration of the clan and tribal organization, and thus the classification scheme is chronological. Every text is considered to be a whole unit and is handled as a specific plot type. In his four books, Emeljanov distinguished the following main groups or themes. (The reader should note the following: *ajyy* = positive divinities; *Ajyy ajmaga* = the Ajyy tribe [read *ayee* and *ajmaga*]; *abaasy* = negative divinities, demons; *Abaasy ajmaga* = the Abaasy tribe; *Uraangkħaj Sakħa* = epic name for the Yakut people; *toyon* = chief; Middle World = human world.) The themes dealt with by EMELJANOV in 1980 are as follows:

I. Settling of the Middle World.

I. (1) Settling of the Middle World by descendants of Ürüg Ajyy Toyon.

I. (2) Settling of the Middle World by cast-out descendants of the Ajyy (see below, 1983, I).

I. (3) Female warrior champions (i.e., Amazon figures) as first humans in the Middle World.

II. Tribal ancestors of the Uraangkħaj Sakħa tribe.

II. (4) Lonely men (i.e., bachelors) as tribal ancestors of the Uraangkħaj Sakħa tribe.

II. (5) Tribal ancestors of the Uraangkħaj Sakħa tribe.

II. (6) Tribal ancestors and their sons.

III. Guardians of the tribes of Ajyy and Uraangkħaj Sakħa.

III. (8) Warrior-champions of the Middle World are guardians of the tribes of Ajyy and Uraangkħaj Sakħa.

III. (9) Guardians of the tribes of Ajyy Ajmaga and Uraangkħaj Sakħa have moved from the Upper World to the Middle World.

III. (10) Female warrior-champions as guardians of the tribes of Ajyy Ajmaga and Uraangkħaj Sakħa.

EMELJANOV in 1983 gives details on two of the above themes:

I. Settling of the Middle World by cast-out descendants of the Ajyy (see above, 1980, I. [2]).

The plot includes the following themes: the heroic exploit; heroic wooing of a bride, who is demonic; abduction of wife and search for her.

II. *Olongħo* about female champions.

II. (A) Female warrior-champions are first inhabitants of the Middle World (see above, 1980, I. [3]).

II. (A.1) Female champion defeats male champion and enslaves him.

II. (A.2) Complex work: (a) maiden warrior-champion with her champion slave; and (b) search for lost horse.

II. (A.3) Female warrior-champion from the Upper World who was settled in the Middle World, her champion-slave, and the search for a lost brother.

II. (A.4) Search for missing child.

II. (A.5) Supernatural abduction of men by a woman and [her] abaasy slave.

II. (A.6) Fight of a woman for her right to chastity.

- II. (B) Female warrior-champions and the defence of the Ajyy Ajmaga tribe (see above, 1980, III. [10]).
- II. (B.7) Overcoming and pacifying of the female warrior-champion by her own son who is guardian of the Ajyy tribe.
- II. (B.8) Female warrior-champion who has been cast out by divinities is guardian of the Ajyy tribe (see above, 1980, I. [2] and III. [10])
- II. (B.9) Female warrior-champion, who is the tribe's guardian, receives a second name (see above, 1980, III. [10])
- II. (B.10) The younger sister warrior-champion is guardian of the tribe (see above, 1980, III. [10])
- II. (B. 11) Organizing the family and guarding the Ajyy tribe.

In his 1990 book, Emeljanov discussed in detail the theme of the champion-bachelor gaining a wife after fighting duels with rivals who are *abuusy* and defeating them; in some versions a conflict with the bride's parents also takes place. In the discussions, several texts containing versions of the same story are mechanically compared. The gaining of a wife means setting up a household and becoming head of it, and producing children is creating "our" tribe. In the book under review here, three texts of this theme are discussed in great detail. Finally, the reader can see for himself two whole *olongkho* texts in EMELJANOV et al. 1993 and 1996: one about a female warrior-champion defending male champions and another about a bachelor winning a wife. The text is given in the original Sakha (Yakut) and Russian translation on facing pages, with ample commentary.

This impressive opus makes the late N. V. Emeljanov († 2000), himself a Sakha (Yakut), one of the important epic scholars whose works are basic for the understanding of a most interesting ethnic tradition. *Olongkho* songs are clearly of the subgenre of oral mythic epic (see JASON 1977 and n. d., vol. 1, Part A). The number of texts collected (178) is too small to undertake a systematic classification of incidents, and larger classified corpora will have to be used as "background" for the classification of the Sakha (Yakut) texts. This problem besets Emeljanov's work. He loses himself in detailed descriptions of single texts, even though the preliminary stage of classification has yet to be completed. He uses two criteria for his classifications: the first is themes found in the biographies of the protagonist; the second is history, particularly the supposed stages of social development from a clan-and-tribe organization to another kind of organization (which the Sakha [Yakut] did not go through, but which Marxist theory supposes that they would have if left alone). The combination of these two criteria does not yield a smooth classification scheme, as a glance at the list above shows. An additional problem is that most texts are composed of several themes and therefore cannot be put as a unit into a single classifying "pigeon hole." Let us hope that future scholarship will overcome these problems. A classification by the themes of which whole works are composed may be the direction in which to go (see JASON, n.d., vol. 2); HEISSIG (1979) proposed a classification that seems to fit Sakha [Yakut] epics well.

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## PHILIPPINES

- REVEL, NICOLE, Editor, and MÄSINU INTARÄY, Performer. *La quête en épouse. Mämiminbin, une épopée palawan chantée par Mäsinu* [The Quest for a Wife. Mämiminbin, a Palawan Epic Sung by Mäsinu]. Collection UNESCO d'oeuvres représentatives. Littératures de la voix. Trilingue palawan-français-anglais. French translation by N. Revel; English translation by N. Senné, P. Railing and N. Revel. Paris: Éditions UNESCO, Langues et Mondes/L'Asiathèque, 2000. 428 pages. Photographs, musical notation, graphs, bibliography, CD of the first 45 minutes of the story's performance. Paper FF 295.00; ISBN UNESCO: 92-3-003722-X; ISBN: 2911053-575.

Nicole Revel presents us with a book that is a pleasure to read. It is as warm and friendly as the author herself. The fruit of thirty years of field work and of cooperation with the Palawan highlanders (who live on one of the southern islands of the Philippines), the work is a valuable addition to world literature. The book gives the reader a unique experience, and is not simply clever and insightful. Thorough knowledge of the language and the fine poetical and musical feeling of Revel, herself a linguist and ethnologist, enabled her to understand and to transmit to the reader the artistic world of the "others" (i.e., those of another, completely foreign culture). The book includes a sound recorded version of a Palawan story in verse that was performed to a specific melody by a singer named Mäsinu. French and English translations are given on facing pages. Following the discussion, the author provides relevant ethnographic data, musical notations of the performance, a description of its literary qualities, and information on the recording and editing of the text in both French and English. The singer and his art are also described, and the story is compared to more versions of the same story