

on each topic is surely very useful for students. One would wish to find works like CMLC on the reference shelves of every library.

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MIEDER, WOLFGANG, and ANNA TÓTHNÉ LITOVKINA. *Twisted Wisdom: Modern Anti-Proverbs*. Supplement Series of Proverbium, Volume 4. Burlington: University of Vermont, 1999. 254 pages. Illustrations, bibliography. Paper US\$10.

In the Marx Brothers movie *Monkey Business* Groucho and Chico enter a barn to foil the crooks. As Groucho starts up the stairs, the kidnapper yells down: "You keep out of this loft." When Groucho turns and goes back down, Chico consoles him: "Well, it's better to have loft and lost than never to have loft at all." Normally, amid all the wisecracks and slapstick, I would not have noticed Chico's response, but I had just been reading *Twisted Wisdom*. Chico's saying is an example of how proverbs can be manipulated for jokes, social commentary, and advertising eye catchers. *Twisted Wisdom* is a collection of the original versions of proverbs, their meaning, and their new applications. It is more of a resource book than something one would read through, a handy reference tool for those interested in language use and in proverbs in particular.

The six-page Introduction is a gem of succinct information and analysis. The subtitle's "anti-proverbs" seems, at first, to be too severe a word for such clever examples of wordplay; the word "parodies" would seem to be a better choice. And, in fact, the Introduction begins with a discussion of how these traditional words of wisdom contradict each other, and how people also enjoy making satirical parodies of the proposed wisdom. The parodies take several forms: (1) contrary information is added: "Money talks, but not when it is a small amount"; (2) the first part of the proverb is left as it is, but the second part is changed: "If you want a thing well done, let it cook." ("If you want a thing done well, do it yourself."); (3) changing one word as "Where there's a will, there's a won't." ("Where there's a will, there is a way."); (4) a three-part joke in which the proverb is stated, a speaker is named, and then a situation is given that denies or makes a joke of the original saying: "Little boys should be seen and not heard, as the boy said when he could not recite his lesson"; and (5) the linguistic structure remains, but the significant terms in each half are changed, e.g., "One man's corn is another man's bourbon." ("One man's meat is another man's poison.")

The contradictory nature of the majority of the parodies is indicated with clear markers as "but" and "although" and other connectors such as "and," "if," a colon, or a hyphen. It is this contradictory nature of the parodies as well as the stronger social commentary in many that give rise to the authors' use of the term "anti-proverbs." To quote the authors: "In that respect even the anti-proverbs, by which we mean any intentional proverb variation in the form of puns, alterations, deletions or additions, can become moralistic if not didactic statements.... Just as well-known proverbs continue to comment about our daily life, so do new anti-proverbs by using alienating and shocking linguistic strategies" (3).

One of the values of this book is that it demonstrates the enduring strength of proverbs in daily life, not only in their original form, which is a kind of common use vocabulary, but also in their new forms as didactic jibes, verbal wit, cartoons, and advertising texts. One of the problems in reading the book at length, however, is that like retold jokes, many of these anti-proverbs limp without their spontaneous supporting context. This is especially true of the

advertising texts and cartoons. Fortunately there are, according to the blurb on the back cover, "about 75" cartoons and advertisements that provide the necessary context for appreciating the wit. For my taste, these were the most amusing.

Another value is that the many variations upon one proverb indicate that proverbs are very much in the forefront of peoples' minds, and as such, are a rich source of folklore. The book gives "3,000 anti-proverbs for 320 traditional proverbs" (4), an average of about 10 to 1. Naturally some proverbs do not have so many parodies, whereas others run into several pages worth.

Since the references to proverb collections are given, this book could serve as a class text; at the very least it is a good handbook for sending students out on quests for similar examples and writing short papers on their findings compared with those in the text. Also students could build upon the Introduction and do further analysis of the text's examples. English language teachers will find the book a good resource for knowing the meaning of common proverbs and getting a feel for the way language is used. Teachers of British and American literature may find this book and its examples an easier way to teach "allusion" than by referring to supposedly common texts as the Bible and Shakespeare. Proverbs are short enough and catchy enough that they can be learned on the spot and used to recognize the anti-proverbs.

Although most of the proverbs and their twisted versions come from sources listed in the nine-page bibliography, a large number were found in newspapers, magazines, greeting cards, and similar everyday materials. After reading *Twisted Wisdom*, you become more alert to the creative uses of language and begin to notice these anti-proverbs around you in the most unexpected places.

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JAPAN

SEN SŌSHITSU XV. *The Japanese Way of Tea: From Its Origins in China to Sen Rikyū*. Translated by V. Dixon Morris. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1998. xvii + 229 pages. Illustrations, color plates, bibliography, index. Cloth US\$45.00; ISBN 0-8248-1897-0. Paper US\$19.95; ISBN 0-8248-1990-X.

It is certainly true that one of the most well-known elements of Japanese culture in Western countries is the art of *chanoyu*. But it is doubtful that Westerners understand the quintessence of this very special Japanese art. Of course there are many Western publications even in German about this topic, but the explanations they provide are mostly insufficient. The typical Western observer sees Japanese culture, art, literature, music, ect., as exotic; this is especially true with the art of tea as it is an art form that is confined to a rigid frame of rituals. The "harmony" of the art form is of course widely known, but what is not widely known is that there is also the possibility of freedom within the art and that this freedom marks the highest degree of *chanoyu*. When the art form is described from a Western perspective, there is a strong tendency to use the word "ceremony," which implies that there is a fixed ritual in adoration or worship of something absolute or divine. Westerners seem to imagine "ceremony" as fixed in a strong religious order and rigorous ecclesiastical system from which it cannot be