

intended the vehicle to be a drum, belly-float or boat. He analyzes oral traditions found in the Himalayas and in northern Asia concerning the drum, and then he suggests that in the case of the Naxi, the drum might have been changed to a belly-float or a boat in the process of writing down the rituals.

Although the traditional cultures of the Naxi and Moso have recently been threatened by the large number of tourists visiting the beautiful Naxi city of Lijiang, the papers collected in this volume indicate that progress in the study of Naxi and Moso culture is still possible.

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SCHIMMELPENNINCK, ANTOINET. *Chinese Folk Songs and Folk Singers: Shan'ge Traditions in Southern Jiangsu*. Leiden: CHIME Foundation, 1997. xvi + 442 pages. Illustrations, musical notations, appendices, bibliography, glossary, index, CD. Paper, n.p.; ISBN 90-803615-1-8.

The present volume, based on the author's Ph.D. thesis presented at Leiden University, is a study on the state of *shan'ge* 山歌 singing in Jiangnan 江南, southern Jiangsu 江蘇 Province. The author, a sinologist and musicologist, presents here the rich material she collected with her husband Frank Kouwenhoven in the villages of Jiangnan during her frequent visits from 1986 to 1992. Under the impact of China's sweeping process of modernization, all the folk traditions of this region are in rapid decay, so this work can be seen as an abundant last-minute harvest.

The author interlaces her vivid descriptions of *shan'ge* singing and singers with personal experiences and adventures encountered during her fieldwork. The *shan'ge* of Jiangnan are famous all over China for their lyrical and romantic touch. However, when mentioning them one might also meet with some resentment and aversion among Chinese. Some *shan'ge* are in fact disliked by many Chinese (not only Communist purists) as being rude and vulgar because of their openly sexual allusions. Any foreigner who wants to study *shan'ge* of Jiangnan will therefore meet with a lot of embarrassment on the side of the Chinese who feel ashamed that China still preserves such primitive and crude things. Much of the difficulties and obstacles the author encountered during her fieldwork seem to have been caused by the clash of a liberal, unprejudiced, "objective" Western scholar's mind with the uneasiness (*bu hao yisi* 不好意思) of the Chinese who had to deal with a curious intruder doing fieldwork on sensitive matters.

Nevertheless, nowadays there are studies on sexual symbolism and allusions in folklore also in China. Compared with the situation in Germany, for example, where purified editions of the Grimm Brothers' *Hausmärchen* have dominated the folkloristic scene for more than a century, China's situation is not so bad at all. According to Chinese aesthetic standards, folklore should be cleansed of crude elements and the improved product presented to the public for enjoyment and as a moral model. Yet such standards are not a peculiarity of China, they are also found in other Asian and Western countries.

It should also be mentioned that since the end of the "Cultural Revolution" there has been a significant amount of folklore materials collected and researched in China that is difficult to imagine for Western specialists and remains widely unknown.

*Shan'ge* are usually classified as one category of Chinese folk songs besides *haozi* 號子 and *xiaodiao* 小調. A more learned expression of the *shan'ge* of Jiangnan is *Wuge* 吳歌,

“songs of Wu.” The origin of the term *shan’ge* is still not clear, but the term is widespread and can be found as early as the time of Bo Juyi 白居易 (772–846), the famous Tang poet. We think that it should not be taken too literally as “mountain songs.” What matters here is the Chinese connotation of mountains as places of wildness and rudeness. It should not be forgotten that Han Chinese settlers in southern China preferred to occupy the plains, thus resulting in the indigenous population having to continue their traditional life in mountainous areas.

The author briefly introduces Jiangnan’s geography, history, and population (25–27). One may, perhaps, add that during the last two decades Chinese folklorists and cultural anthropologists have eagerly been clarifying the contours of a so-called Wu-Yue 吳越 local culture from antiquity to modern times. A stimulus for such research has been the discovery of several archeological sites in the region (i.e., in Jiangsu and Zhejiang 浙江). These sites have allowed us to trace rice cultivation back to more than 7000 years ago, and, as a result, the region is now considered to be the second hearth of the origin of Chinese culture beside the one in the Huanghe Valley.

The author asserts that the term *shan’ge* is not known among the minorities of southern China (21). We are not so confident. A famous Miao 苗 song in Guizhou 貴州, for instance, is named after its last line as *shan’ge wu ben ju ju zhen* 山歌無本句句真, “*shan’ge* are without booklet, each sentence is true.” This song is also known among minorities of Yunnan 雲南. It is possible, of course, that in each of these cases the term was borrowed from the Han Chinese.

The bulk of *shan’ge* are love songs. They are treated in detail by the author (144–78). As a rule they reflect the *siqing* 私情, the “private, secret love,” of a girl that is not in accordance with the prescribed marriage arrangements made by her parents. Some Chinese folklorists of the 1920s found these love songs to be of much interest as an expression of rebellion against Confucian norms. The author finds that such “private love relationships must lead to distress or even total ruin” (174).

In an even broader cultural setting, we find the same theme also in long narrative songs that are dealt with only occasionally and in a few lines in this book. The author puts them in a separate category as “historical and narrative songs” though the historical songs are, in fact, also narrative songs. Some tell of historical or pseudo-historical figures, others are myths or *Märchen*.

The author mentions also other categories of *shan’ge* and Wu songs: namely, work songs, cursing songs/vulgar songs, wedding and funeral songs, cradle songs, festival songs, peddler’s songs, songs about singing, riddle songs and nonsense rhymes, songs listing historical or legendary names, songs about social problems, songs about local products or local scenery, and political propaganda songs (178–86). Unlike the love songs, all of these groups are treated very briefly. At least the *sukuge* 訴苦歌, “songs of complaints about hardships,” as they are called in the famous anthology *Wuge* (Wu Songs) (Beijing, 1984), tell us a lot about the life of peasants and fishermen, and thus deserve more room than just one and a quarter pages (182–83).

In the section on style, the author briefly mentions puns and homonyms (205). One would expect a few words more on this topic. Puns are often called *shuangguanyu* 雙關語, “ambiguous words.” They are frequent in Wu songs and are often found in Chinese editions. As the songs are sung in Wu dialects, they are hardly intelligible without the help of a native speaker. In the author’s collection of songs we find only one single song (334, no. 61) where the author points out the *shuangguanyu* (cf. also 205).

Besides the *shuangguanyu*, the *xiehouyu* 歇後語 (expressions with omissible ends) and *yanyu* 諺語 (proverbs), particularly the *nongyang* 農諺 (peasants’ proverbs), should be mentioned. All these forms are not only rich in sexual allusions, they are also, we believe, often

the reason for comical and humorous effects. With the help of stylistic devices of this kind, experienced singers like Qian Afu let off a true fireworks of wit and humor. That is why singers of *shan'ge*, with their unlimited resourcefulness in regards to using allusions and words with more than one meaning, appear to us to be a bit like clowns and tricksters.

The author applies the Lord-Parry theory of formulaic speech to the short Wu songs (206–22). This may be surprising because this theory has been developed in connection with very long epic songs. Whether or not set expressions or fixed phrases in Wu songs have a mnemonic function may be worthy of further discussion; they do, however, provide a traditional framework into which all sorts of improvised elements can be inserted.

Whole chapters are devoted to the singers (chapter 3) and to the music (chapter 5), especially to the puzzling question of monothematism (i.e., the phenomenon that in a certain region only one tune is used for all songs although variants can be found in different villages or with individual singers). The author offers several theories and plausible solutions but refrains from making a final decision. We believe that this phenomenon can be found in many parts of the world and that a solution to the problem it poses can be found only in a large context. For example, in the case of the Ewenki and Nanai of Siberia, the phenomenon is usually explained as being related to clans or clan groups.

This book is first of all a study of songs, but their language, the Wu dialects, is also a problem to be considered. The author introduces numerous songs in dialect form (229–323 and elsewhere). She says that she used “pinyin transcription (with some slight adaptations in order to represent dialect pronunciations)” (228). The phonemic systems of the Wu dialects, however, differ widely from that of the standard language (*putonghua* 普通話). One wonders, therefore, whether the problem can be solved simply by some “slight adaptations.” In Appendix Seven the author provides a list of corresponding sounds for the dialect transcriptions, but her descriptions are rather vague. Here are some examples from the list: “*eh* as in English hell, ... *-eei* as in Chinese [!] *hei*, ... *-u* as in Chinese *bu*, *-ou* as in Chinese *bu*, *-iu* as in Chinese *bu*, *o* as in Chinese *bo*” (397). Other examples are found in the transcription, such as *e* and *-ei*, but their pronunciation is not described. Neither are we told what the underlining of *-u*, *-ou*, *-iu* and *o* means. There are a few more examples in the list we did not mention, but the question remains whether the list suffices to cover the peculiarities of the Wu dialects.

Rendering of the frequent glottal stop is another problem. Does the author solve it by using *-h* or *-k* as, for instance, in *zok* (340, song 70b, last line)? Since *-p*, *-t*, and *-k* do not occur in Wu dialects, the use of such letters must have another function, but we are not told what this might be. Or does the glottal stop go mostly unmarked? Nasalization, frequent in Wu dialects, also seems to remain unmarked by the author. And how does she differentiate between *e*, *ə*, and *u*, or account for syllabic *m*, *n* and *ng*? As there is no phonemic vowel length, one wonders what the difference between *tsi* and *tsii*, or *kei* and *keei* could possibly mean. Although there are three series of three stops in each of these dialects as in Middle Chinese (e.g., *b*, *p*, *ph*; *d*, *t*, *th*) the author only gives two transcriptions as in *putonghua* (e.g., *b* and *p*, *d* and *t*). All these features are not without significance since they are phonemic and, therefore, cause different meanings. The same can be said about tones whose number varies between five and eight in Wu dialects. The author investigates the correlation between tones and melodic contour in Wu *shan'ge* applying detailed measurements (Appendix 10, 404–10).

In a list of frequently used dialect words in Wu songs (Appendix 8, 398), the word 搭 *ta* is mentioned as a “particle” but no meaning is given. A frequent meaning, though, of this word (*tə*) is “together with”; when it comes after a word, it may mean “at” or “in”; depending on the context it may have a total of twelve meanings. Furthermore, 勒 *le* is said to mean “from, in, on (sometimes functions as Mandarin 了 *le*),” but the demonstrative “this” is

another frequent meaning of this word (*le*). Another particle that appears very frequently, especially in the long, narrative texts, should be added to this list: 末 *mə*. It is comparable with the *a* of *putonghua* that often suggests a slight pause but sometimes means “if.”

A few important titles could be added to the bibliography. TIAN Ying (1985) is a collection of articles on Wu songs and Chinese folk songs in general by Jiang Bin 姜彬 (Tian Ying) who is probably the most prolific writer on Wu songs and traditional Wu culture. *Wuge*, the well-known first comprehensive anthology of Wu songs appearing after the “Cultural Revolution” in the series “Collection of works on China’s songs” (*Zhongguo geyao congshu* 中國歌謠叢書, 1984), seems to have been forgotten in the bibliography, although, strangely enough, two articles from this book are mentioned. This work is not only highly noteworthy for its collection of songs and excellent articles, such as those of Jiang Bin and Li Ning 李寧, but also because it contains a complete bibliography of Wu song collections and related research up to 1984. It is further regrettable that, with a single exception, Jiang Bin’s articles written after 1985 are missing. All of the studies by (Qian) Shunjuan 錢舜娟, the famous collector, enthusiast and researcher of Wu songs, are also missing, as are some of the articles published by Wang Fang 王傲 (Wang Wenhua 王文華).

The points mentioned above do not, however, diminish the high quality of this study in general, although it may be improved in a second edition. Anyone interested in Chinese folk songs will find here a wealth of material together with extensive as well as very thoughtful and highly empirical research that has opened our eyes to a little-known and neglected section of Chinese culture.

#### REFERENCE CITED

TIAN Ying 天鷹

1985 *Lun Wuge ji qita* 論吳歌及其他 (On Wu songs and other related subjects). Shanghai.

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#### SIBERIA

BEFFA, MARIE-LISE and LAURENCE DELABY. *Festins d’âmes et robes d’esprits.*

*Les objets chamaniques sibériens du Musée de l’Homme.* Mémoires du Muséum National d’Histoire Naturelle, Tome 181, Ethnologie. Paris: Publications Scientifiques du Muséum, 1999. 242 pages. Illustrations, map, lists of ethnic groups and languages, bibliography. Hardcover 350 FF; ISBN 2-85653-513-5; ISSN 1234-4442. (In French with an extensive English summary)

With this publication, the authors make accessible to the public 177 objects related to Siberian shamanism in the Musée de l’Homme. All the objects were collected in the second half of the nineteenth or the first half of the twentieth centuries. Each item is reproduced—mostly by a photograph, sometimes by a line drawing—and provided with the information that would be found on a catalogue card such as place of origin, collector, description, and some bibliographical information. Although the pictures and descriptive information make the book very useful and, especially due to the well reproduced photographs, attractive, readers will most probably be enticed by the introductory texts the authors have provided for each