

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.

Jörg BÄCKER
Bonn

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

chapter and the "Biographical Notes" that conclude the volume.

As for the method of classifying the objects, the authors felt that it was difficult to use a classification according to an item's function or its relation to certain spirits because one and the same item could be used for different purposes or be related to different spirits depending on the circumstances. Therefore, they decided to group the objects into four sections under the headings "The Shaman's Paraphernalia," "Laymen's Artifacts," "*Ongons*," and "Divining Items." A separate chapter dedicated to *ongon* may be a surprise, but, as the authors show, the making and use of these figures are not the privilege of a particular person such as a shaman; rather, they can be made and handled by anybody as circumstances demand. This is an important point because it confirms the authors' foregoing argument that shaman and lay person are not two categories of people distinct from one another "in nature." They are different from one another, we might say, only by a degree of competence. Lay people can, therefore, perform certain ritual actions for themselves without the help of the specialist, i.e., the shaman. What differentiates the shaman from them is that "the shaman is more powerful because of his paraphernalia" and because "he is acting not for his own benefit but for the benefit of the whole community" (26). The authors' intention is, therefore, not to simply classify a group of items haphazardly brought together by happenstance circumstances by applying merely external standards but to show that despite the incompleteness of the collection it still represents instances of a coherent world of thoughts and ritual behavior. To underline this further, they provide each chapter with an ethnographic introduction that situates the items grouped together in their cultural context. The authors are particularly concerned to have the people of Siberia speak for themselves as much as this is possible and, therefore, use original pronouncements as they have been recorded by foreign as well as indigenous observers. The conversations, legends, and myths that are cited go a long way to better situate the items represented, and also the shamans, in their cultural environment. As an added benefit for the reader not familiar with the local vernacular, this procedure introduces sizeable pieces of oral tradition otherwise difficult of access. This approach owes much to the work of Roberte N. Hamayon, to whom the volume is dedicated.

Finally, there is one other feature that helps in a different way to situate the objects in the contexts in which they are found. At the end of the volume the authors introduce the collectors with short biographical notes and so throw light on the circumstances under which these items eventually made their way to Paris. Some of the depictions in the biographical notes, such as that of George Montandon's blatant racism, are truly disturbing.

Writing from Japan, I am surprised about some statements concerning the Ainu. Although it is understandable that the statements reflect views held in Europe, as well as Japan, at the time the items were collected, they strike us today as odd if made without qualification. To mention today that the Ainu *ikubashui* (libation sticks) "bear the name of 'moustache lifters'" comes close to ethnic slander because of the circumstances in which this "name" was given by non-Ainu with a derogative view of the Ainu. It is disturbing to find such a mistaken appellation in a text that otherwise makes an effort to help correctly appreciate the objects introduced in their natural context, even though they have ended up being taken out of their natural context. For this effort the authors have to be commended. They have given us a most useful book.

Peter KNECHT