in the same section (183–85) mention Hu characters but not Hui (Hu are barbarians from western regions, such as Sogdians, Persians, etc.). When a Hui is mentioned in a Ming short story (182) it does not necessarily mean that he is a local Hui because Hui is a general name for Muslims. Even more problematic is the inclusion of a tradition about Du Wenxiu, a leader in a nineteenth-century uprising in Yunnan (259–63). Local groups other than Hui participated in that uprising, and as is evident from comments included in the first Chinese edition of this story, the text was collected by a Bai scholar from a Bai narrator (not a Hui!).

Space does not allow me to critically mention other points where I feel the authors did not live up to the expectations readers would have about a book that claims to make a significant folklore tradition of China accessible to a Western public. I wish to mention, however, that the English translation appears to be generally accurate. Yet the translator takes certain rather disturbing liberties. He sometimes omits, for example, toponyms that might appear to be insignificant for a foreigner, though they are in fact quite important in, say, historical traditions and narratives. Or in some cases he changes parts of the original text for no apparent reason: the phrase "He could carry weight as heavy as one thousand eight hundred pounds" is translated rather flatly as "he could do the work of several men" (337), or the simple "Allah named her Haierma" in the Chinese original is rendered as "And no one knew why Allah named her Haierma" (81). There are also numerous mistakes in the transcription of Chinese names. (Translated from Russian by Boris Parnickel)

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WU ZONGXI, editor. *Suzhou pingtan wenxuan, disan ce* [Selected Writings on Suzhou Pingtan Storytelling, Volume Three]. Suzhou: Suzhou University Press, 1997. 244 pages. (In Chinese)

This work appears in a series of selected essays of various authors on the subject of *Suzhou pingtan,* a local style of Chinese professional narrative that combines instrumental music with speaking and singing roles of the narrator and characters in stories concerning "talented scholars and beautiful ladies." (See the review by Bender in *Asian Folklore Studies* 56: 188–90.) Wu Zongxi is one of the most prolific and influential commentators on Suzhou storytelling in the post revolutionary period. This collection of his shorter writings spans most of the era of the People's Republic of China, including essays printed as early as 1952 and as late as 1994. Wu was given duties in the Shanghai cultural bureau while still in his twenties and

has been intimately involved in the traditional performing arts circles in that city ever since. He has acted as a commentator and theorist throughout decades of roller-coaster change in Suzhou storytelling, since the early 1950s, an era when private performers and guilds were absorbed into state-sponsored *pingtan* troupes. Traditional stories were recast or invented for the new era, and the length of performances was shortened from months to weeks in length to accommodate new work schedules. Other modifications and innovations were also undertaken, including the creation of short and middle-length stories, which were often selections from longer works, chosen for their positive content. "Unhealthy" stories were either banned or revised (*zhengli*). Musical innovation hit a high point in the mid-1950s with the emergence of over a dozen new singing styles which would leave a permanent mark on the art of Suzhou *chantefable*. During the chaotic Cultural Revolution, storytelling (to the extent it was even permitted) was solely a vehicle for radical political messages. Many performers were not allowed to perform, and in some cases were imprisoned. Many texts of stories were burned. Innovations included large group performances of shorter ballads (*kaipian*) associated with *pingtan* performances (usually sung as warm-up pieces), the use of non-traditional instruments, and highly politicized subject matter. In the wake of the Cultural Revolution, there was a rebirth and reintegration of professional storytelling that was well underway by the early 1980s and which continued into the economic expansion of the 1990s. In recent years, although the income for some performers has increased, questions about who will carry on the tradition are very real, despite the existence of the Pingtan School in Suzhou. Wu Zongxi's articles parallel these movements in *pingtan* history and are a valuable resource for the study of the post-1949 era. The articles originally appeared in a number of publications, some of them already difficult to find. (Possibly the best resource for *pingtan* articles is *Pingtan yishu* which has appeared regularly since the early 1980s.) Aside from the *pingtan* historian Zhou Liang (one of the editors in this series), few others approach Wu's contributions to storytelling theory. His books *Pingtan yishu qiantan* (Preliminary Remarks on the Art of Pingtan), and *Pingtan sanlun* (Various Writings on Pingtan) practically stand alone as introductions to basic aspects of the Suzhou storytelling arts from the perspective of literary criticism and aesthetics.

Among the most historically valuable articles are a number of essays dating from the 1950s that detail the motivations and processes of revising traditional stories and creating new ones. Most of the older stories were deemed to carry too much "feudal" baggage and were therefore unhealthy influences on the human spirit as conceived in Maoist thought. These stories, many dating from the nineteenth century or earlier, include *San xiao yinyuan* (Three smiles) *Zhenzu ta* (Pearl pagoda) *Miaojin feng* (Etched-gold phoenix) *Baishe zhuan* (The White Snake), *Yu qingting* (Jade Dragonfly), *Luo jin shan* (Fallen gold fan), and *Shi mei tu* (Portraits of Ten Beauties). These narratives were among the most famous *tanci* stories in the pre-1949 era. However, as they deal with love affairs between "gifted scholars and talented beauties" and are rife with "feudal" Confucian values, imperialist influences, and sexual innuendoes, they were thought unsuitable for audiences in the "new society." In one essay concerning the revising of traditional stories (33), Wu states that although the number of *tanci chantefable* stories were far greater than the *pinghua* tales, very few of them had "healthy" content. Although the entire project of censoring traditional materials can be questioned by those outside the particular historical context, the essay is a fascinating and matter-of-fact look at the motivations and actual practice of content revision at this unique moment in Chinese history. Two essays in the volume deal with the *tanci* story "Lin Chong" about a hero from the traditional vernacular novel, *Shuihu zhuan* (The Water Margin). Long a popular *pinghua* story, *Shuihu zhuan* was never considered a story suitable for adaptation into the musical *tanci* format until the creation of "Lin Chong." Moreover, the story expands on a tiny

incident in the vernacular novel, creating several subplots which do not appear in earlier printed versions and only marginally to a scene in a Beijing opera version. This attitude towards "violating" texts, however, is so typical of Chinese narrative in general, that it can be considered a traditional attitude towards vernacular texts which were historically devalued in comparison to poetry. Although the *tanci* story version was officially promoted and performed by the greatest performers, it never gained the popularity of the more traditional pieces, having nothing to do with love stories, though exhibiting values such as patriotism and loyalty to the proper cause and comrades in arms. (A complete version of the story, however, was released on tape-cassette in the early 1990s.) Other articles deal with revisions of classic *pingtan* stories and discuss problematic themes such as polygamy and cross-dressing which appeared in so many of the narratives.

Two early articles, published in 1952, concern the participation of the newly formed Shanghai Pingtan Troupe in the repairing of the dikes of the Huai River during the Korean War. Eighty-six young and old performers and troupe officials along with other performers and actors, spent over three months working among thousands of people toiling to contain the river. Their primary job was performing *pingtan* numbers to aid in "thought reform" (*sixiang gaizao*) which was promoted to lift the spirits and mold the thoughts of the masses in order to bring about a new culture in China. The opportunity was also an excellent means for the storytellers to "reform" their own thoughts (especially the seemingly pervasive "petit bourgeois" attitudes some members held before participating) and gain creative ideas in order to be in step with the new age. One article (6–12) is a detailed account of the success of the "thought reform" activities on the troupe members (no names, however, are mentioned in the article). The most popular of the new *pingtan* pieces created during this time was a "middle-length *tanci*" entitled *Yiding yau ba Huai He xiuhao* (We Must Certainly Repair the Huai River), discussed in an article sharing its name (1–5). The story, in *tanci* form, was performed at over 250 different venues within a short time of its production for over 300,000 people in the greater Shanghai area and around the nation. Some of the story's success was attributed to its innovative shorter form, which allowed the very busy audiences of the 1950s a chance to partake of the whole story at one lengthy sitting. The namesake ballad of the story is still a popular set piece at official *pingtan* competitions.

Another article (written in 1994) details the revision of a famous *tanci* ballad about the woman warrior, Hua Mulan. Recalling events in 1958, Wu details the entire process of its revision, including his meetings with the famous female *tanci* performer Xu Lixian and the results of a meeting with Chen Yun, a Politburo member who for many years was the most influential government patron of *pingtan*. At the crux of the need to revise the ballad, which was adapted from a classical poem, was the sentiment of "filial piety" that caused Hua Mulan to join the army in her father's stead. In the lyrics, there was actually only one offending line, the last one: "There has never been a hero so filial as Mulan." Wu changed this final line to "Who says a woman could not be so strong!" After getting agreement from all levels of officialdom, the lyrics were changed, a new title added ("New 'Hua Mulan'" and the piece became a "good" example of a suitably revised work. Xu Lixian's "Li Tune" (*Li diao*) would become one of the major music styles in *tanci* performance and the ballad is often performed today. Such an account gives readers a rare glimpse into the workings of individual officials in the performing arts in the early era of the PRC and insights into the processes by which decisions on content and ideology were enacted in real life situations.

Between 1964, when an article discussing revolutionary *tanci* ballads concerning Chairman Mao was published, and 1977, the volume is silent due to the Cultural Revolution. In the introduction of his *Pingtan sanlun* (reprinted in this volume), Wu mentions how he was asked to write self-criticisms of his own attitudes and works, an experience common to virtually

all intellectuals and officials during the period. A 1977 article discusses the harm done to the *pingtan* world by the Cultural Revolution and the "gang of four," and contains suggestions for redirecting the path of Suzhou storytelling performance. These observations, of course, are in line with the prevailing directives of the day. Later articles from the 1980s and 1990s delve into such topics as the nature of the traditional arts as mediums of entertainment and education, the necessity of fostering young talent, aesthetics, and reminiscences about older performers. One article from 1986, suggests that the storytelling troupes be dissolved and remain organized only in *pingtan* societies (like writers or artists). If this were to occur, performers would have to give up their "iron rice-bowls" and would operate more efficiently in pairs, as they did traditionally. (Although the wage structure was changed in the early 1990s, the troupes remain.)

It should be noted that a majority of the articles were written under pen names, the most common being "Zuo Xian," which Wu adopted when working as an underground activist before 1949. Originally meaning "Left Lyre," inspired by the idea of left-leaning ideology (a common stance among Chinese intellectuals by the mid-1930s) and the Greek god of poetry, who carries a lyre. Later, however, the "lyre" was interpreted as a Chinese *sanxian* banjo used in *tanci* performances. Another pen name is Xia Shi, which he used in co-authoring several *tanci* works with performers such as Chen Lingxi.

In all, the selected works of Wu Zongxi brings together valuable articles by one of the most influential officials in the local administration of the Shanghai storytelling troupes and presents a chronology of the political history of *pingtan* storytelling in the post-1949 era.

This collection, though issued in a very limited press run, will be of great value to any researcher on Suzhou storytelling in the PRC period.

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ZHANG HENSHUI. *Shanghai Express: A Thirties Novel.* Fiction from Modern China. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1997. 259 pages. Map. Cloth US$28.00; ISBN 0-8248-1825-3. Paper US$12.95; ISBN 0-8248-1830-X.

This is a novel that is certain to please a wide-ranging reading audience. As a prime example of the so-called "Mandarin Duck and Butterfly" genre of Chinese literature that began its assent in popularity in 1910 and peaked in the late 1930s, it offers the standard love pairing between a clumsy duck (the male lead Hu Ziyun) and his captivating but dangerous butterfly (the female lead Liu Xichun). Readers acquainted with this school of now somewhat dated entertainment fiction will not be disappointed in the author's mastery of the essentials of mystery, trickery, and seduction. In his pursuit of Miss Liu, the would be philanderer Mr. Hu has just the right air of a sophisticated but bumbling Don Juan. He is socially perceptive, conceited, manipulative, eloquent, and yet ultimately naive in the hands of the lovely professional swindler, Miss Liu.

The two meet in the first minutes of a more than 900 mile journey from old Peiping to Shanghai on the train that bears the novel's title. Readers are immediately ushered into the romantic flow of the story; but there are more interesting aspects in *Shanghai Express* than sentimental play alone. I was particularly taken by the author's sardonic sense of social criticism, which runs throughout the work, and by his use of stream of consciousness narratorial devices more or less common to Western writers in the first part of the twentieth century, but