

better written (although it does not completely replace the former work).

The only criticism I find worthy of mention here is that *Gendai minzokugaku nyūmon* fails to show sufficiently the distinction between the pursuits of sociology and those of folklore studies, something one might expect in an introductory book of this nature. But my overall impression is that it is well thought out, to the point, accurate, straightforward, very well-written, up to date, incredibly well-balanced, and informative. For years I wondered if there were a general introduction to Japanese folklore studies that might be worthy of translation into English. Now at last I have found one.

#### REFERENCE CITED

METEVELIS, P

1985 Review of Fukuda Ajiō and Miyata Noboru, eds., *Nihon minzokugaku gairon* (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1983). *Asian Folklore Studies* 44: 124–26.

Peter METEVELIS  
Canoga Park, CA

#### CHINA

BØRDAHL, VIBEKE. *The Oral Tradition of Yangzhou Storytelling*. Nordic Institute of Asian Studies, 73. Richmond, Surrey TW9 2QA: Curzon Press Ltd., 1996. xxxii + 497 pages. Illustrations, tables, storytellers' terms, recordings of the project, bibliography, index. Cloth £60.00; ISBN 0-7007-0436-1.

*The Oral Tradition of Yangzhou Storytelling* is the most in-depth work on traditional oral narrative in the Yangzi delta published in English to date. The object of Børdahl's study is *Yangzhou pinghua* 揚州評話, a style of storytelling traditionally performed north of the Yangzi River in the Yangzhou dialect area in story houses and the homes of wealthy patrons. The art consists of a complex weave of narration, dialogue, and gestures, and is performed by a single storyteller. Among the most famous stories in the repertoire are renditions of classic romances in the written tradition such as *Shuihu* 水滸 [Outlaws of the marshes], *San guo yanyi* 三國演義 [The three kingdoms], and *Xiyōu jī* 西遊記 [Journey to the west]. *Yangzhou pinghua* 揚州評話 is related to a number of other narrative traditions in China, particularly the art of *Suzhou pinghua* performed in the Wu dialect regions south of the Yangzi river and certain chantefable (*tanci* 彈詞/*xianci* 弦詞, or "storysinging") traditions within the delta region.

Trained as a linguist, Børdahl makes use of a wealth of written sources in Chinese, personal interviews with local researchers and storytellers in Yangzhou, and field tapes recorded in the late 1980s and mid-1990s. Part 1 of her work includes discussions of problems that have been much debated by scholars of Chinese vernacular literature over the last few decades, particularly those involving the relation between professional oral storytelling and written works that imitate certain conventions of oral style. Børdahl notes that the relation between the written and oral in Chinese professional storytelling is not simple and lends support to the idea that the two modes of communication have had a complex history of mutual influence over the centuries. They are similar in the "common framework of plot and development" (242), though oral versions of written works tend to differ greatly in detail from written correlates, thus making Børdahl "suspicious of the closeness of the connection" between the modes.

The work includes an in-depth discussion of phonology, grammar, and style, explaining in detail the major styles of delivery, which are termed “square-mouthed” (referring to a more classical style of language) and “round-mouthed” (referring to a style of Yangzhou dialect closer to the vernacular). There is also an important chapter on narration, in which Børdahl explores the relation between the storyteller and the narrator, explains the various narrative voices and registers of performance, and discusses the use of special effects and digressions. This chapter in particular is useful for comparing the Yangzhou tradition with other regional styles, particularly those of Suzhou, which make use of similar conventions, although it may differ in emic terminology.

Part 2 of the book presents sample transcripts from performances by storytellers introduced in part 1. Foremost among these is a rendition of “Wu Song Fights the Tiger” by Wang Xiaotang 王筱堂, the present grand master of Yangzhou storytelling, now seventy-nine and a former student of the great Wang Shaotang 王少堂 (1889–1968). Several other versions of the Wu Song episode by Li Xintang 李信堂 and two other storytellers in the Wang lineage are also included, providing a useful example of variation between performances/performers of the same story. Though most of the recordings were made in private homes rather than in the story house context, the texts provide a rare glimpse in English into the corpus of professional storytelling performances. It should also be noted that most of the storytellers represented are retired and seldom perform today. What we have in *The Oral Tradition of Yangzhou Storytelling* is a picture of an oral art that is very likely in its last generation of great storytellers, as few young performers are in the wings. Børdahl is to be commended for producing such a rigorous study. Her enthusiasm for and love of the art is apparent in every sentence.

Mark BENDER  
Ohio State University  
Columbus, Ohio

CHAN HOK-LAM 陳學霖. *Liu Po-wen yü No-chan Ch'eng* 劉伯溫運哪吒城 [Liu Po-wen and the No-chan City: A legend of the building of Peking]. Taipei: Dungtai, 1996. xv + 218 pages. Plates, maps, English resume. Paper 6 NT; ISBN 957-19-1877-6. (In Chinese)

Beijing is said to have been built by Liu Bo-wen after he received a blueprint of the city modeled after the body of Nata, third son of the eastern Heavenly King. Chan Hok-lam, a leading Chinese historian, has now pieced together the history of this legend, which essentially fuses together a number of facts and fictions.

A certain Liu Bing Zhong, advisor to the Mongols, helped build this capital in the north. Legend has it that Nata suppressed the Dragon King, and that the eleven gates of the city were modeled after his “three heads, six arms, and two feet.” Beijing citizens have a tradition of praying to the Dragon King and/or Nata for rain during times of drought.

Liu Bo-wen, who came later, helped the first Ming emperor (who drove out the Mongols) build the “forbidden city” at Nanjing. Beijing was not built until much later. The Mongolian remnant in Beijing circulated the rumor that Prince Yan, a son of the first Ming emperor, was actually sired by the last Mongol ruler. This prince, sent north by the Ming emperor, met a strange “figure in black” who told him to shoot four arrows in four directions and use the gold found buried under where the arrows fell to build a city. The “figure in black” is the Dark Warrior, i.e., the icon of the north, the black turtle. At the time a monk named Tao-yan aided Prince Yan, who for a while usurped rule from the rightful heir.