

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.

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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.

When the later Ming emperor Yong-luo did build the capital at Beijing, these legends came together. Now Liu Bo-wen, freely glossed as a descendant of Liu Bing-zhong, is said to have received the Nata diagram from this dark figure. He upstages Tao-yan, whose copy of the diagram was amiss. The Taoist mystagogue Zhang Tie-guan is drafted into the episode also. A prophetic song that Zhang authored was later attributed to Liu Bo-wen. This song was spread by the Triad society as an anti-Manchu (Qing) prophecy calling for a return to Ming (Chinese) rule. Storytellers in the late Qing spread these legends in Beijing, and a stable of local lore evolved. Even Beijing airport now has a wall painting of Nata subduing the sea dragons.

Folklorists should thank Chan for his meticulous reconstruction of the history of this myth-making process. An English version of this book is in the works. The supplement, a collection of the Beijing lore, is extremely helpful. One delightful legend has Liu sending the general Gao Liang after the Dragon King. The King and his wife—an old couple—had trucked off all the water of Beijing in two barrows on a push cart. Gao Liang shot the barrows, released the waters, and, in some versions, imprisoned the Dragon King under a well (or at a bridge) with a long and heavy iron chain. This, to me, has less to do with history and more with cosmology. Beijing is located in the north or northeast, the inauspicious direction of death. It thus rests on the “bitter subterranean sea of the northern dark continent.” That explains not just the bad taste of Beijing’s drinking water (except for one source that yields “sweet water”) but the eternal threat of Chaos lurking underground. Prince Yan (Yan is the swallow: east) had the aid of the Dark Warrior (the turtle: north) because the exploits of this mythic pair go way, way back. General Gao Liang (“elevated and bright”: a solar figure) had to release the captured water (subterranean and dark)—the same way that the lifeblood of Chaos was ritually released in ancient times (a “blood sack” representing Hundun [Chaos]), was once hung from a tree and shot at with arrows). The use of the heavy chains to keep the monster down is found in other dragon-slaying myths in China (except with Li Bing) and the world over; and the released flood chasing the hero goes back to a similar theme in the ancient eastern flood lore involving the mother of Yiyi.

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KATZ, PAUL R. *Demon Hordes and Burning Boats: The Cult of Marshal Wen in Late Imperial Chekiang*. SUNY Series in Chinese Local Studies. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995. xviii + 261 pages. Maps, table, illustrations, appendices, bibliography, index. Paper US\$19.95; ISBN 0-7914-2662-9. Hardcover n.p.; ISBN 0-7914-2661-0.

Epidemics were a feared and constant feature of life in late imperial China; traditional medicine was often helpless against the ravages of contagious disease and so ritual countermeasures played an important role in the ongoing battle against plagues. In this regard the southeastern coastal province of Zhejiang was no exception; in this area there developed a complex of beliefs and ritual practices centered upon “Marshal Wen” (Wen Yuanshuai 溫元帥), a plague deity whose cult originated in southern Zhejiang during the Southern Song dynasty and had subsequently spread throughout the province. Marshal Wen’s cult never reached far beyond the borders of Zhejiang, an exception being certain areas of Fujian Province where Wen came to be worshiped as “Lord Chi” (Chi Wangye 池王爺).