

the three detailed lists of objects from Europe and the United States, statistical data is provided on the distribution of artifacts in European countries, and the distribution of different groups of artifacts according to their region of origin.

Since the Ryūkyū Kingdom was incorporated into the Japanese state as Okinawa Prefecture more than one hundred years ago, the traditional culture of the region has steadily declined. The Pacific War and the Occupation following the war both inflicted irreparable damage on the traditional culture. Therefore, the collections presented here acquire special importance as they provide some rare illustrative material for the study of traditional culture, which is no longer to be found in the original sites. Thus, although this volume is not so much about Ryūkyūan folklore per se, it offers important information on where to find certain artifacts in Europe and the United States, and introduces less well-known literature in French. The records of the Russian pioneer Nikolai Nevsky, and the detailed documentation of library resources such as the records of Ryūkyūan music in Britain, are probably for folklorists the most interesting parts of this book, which otherwise consists largely of quite theoretical papers.

REFERENCES

KABANOFF, Alexander

- 1993 Unpublished Materials by Nikolai Nevsky on the Ethnology of the Ryūkyū Islands. *Nachrichten der Gesellschaft für Natur- und Völkerkunde Ostasiens* 156: 25–43.

WACKER, Monika

- 1998 Book review: Josef Kreiner (ed.): Sources of Ryūkyūan History and Culture in European Collections. *Nachrichten der Gesellschaft für Natur- und Völkerkunde Ostasiens* 163-164: 234–36.

Monika WACKER
Munich

CHINA

BÄCKER, JÖRG, Editor. *Mandschurische Göttinnen und iranische Teufel. Die Mandschu-Weltentstehungsmythen als Kultursynthesen*. Shamanica Manchurica Collecta 4. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 1997. 157 pages. Illustrations, bibliography, index. Paper, n. p.; ISBN 3-447-03934-5. (In German)

Barely anything was known about the literature of the Manchu until about twenty years ago. Only the tale of the Nišan Shamaness, and the legend of the birth and feats of Bukōri Ōngson, the ancestor of the imperial Aisin-Gioro clan, were known. We were also aware of the epic Teptalin that once existed but is now missing. At the beginning of the 1980s this situation changed as a result of a reappraisal of the Qing dynasty by the People's Republic of China that, consequently, opened new possibilities of access to the rich Manchurian materials. Since then, Manchu studies has developed in such a way that the earlier opinion that Manchu studies is a shadowy field has to be revised.

Today the field is now so large that it is difficult even to assess the varieties of international research in Manchu studies. The sudden increase in the number of specialized publications makes it difficult even for the specialist scholar to keep abreast of all the developments. The fact that the Manchu alphabet is sometimes used in scientific articles suggests

how highly valued Manchu studies has become also in the People's Republic of China. The opinion, finally, that the practical use of the Manchu language is a thing of the past has been disproved by the discovery of some settlements in northeast China (Manchuria) whose inhabitants almost exclusively speak Manchu.

Jörg Bäcker is to be counted among those scholars who have made the renaissance of Manchu literature accessible to Western researchers who are not strictly Manchu or China specialists. By 1988 he had already introduced eighteen Manchurian folktales and related documentation on those tales for the German speaking public in his *Märchen aus der Mandchurei*. Since Bäcker is not only familiar with Manchu and Chinese, but also with Russian, he has access to the specialized literature in these languages. This enables him in the analysis of the materials he presents in the volume under review to offer thought provoking hints concerning the earlier culture of the Manchu, and to attempt to demonstrate Iranian influences on that culture and the routes these influences might have taken.

During the more than one thousand years of the history of their development as a nation, the Manchu have created a rich immaterial culture. In addition to old written literary works, this culture possesses an abundant stock of oral popular traditions. The Manchurian myth of the origin of the world that Bäcker analyzes in this work is just one of these traditions. It is a text that originally carried the title "The Battle in the Heavenly Palace," and was recorded in writing only very recently. This myth belongs to an originally oral tradition of the category *Wecequn Ulhibun* ("Announcements at the site of a sacrifice") that formerly used to be recited by a shaman in remote areas, particularly in Heilongjiang Province. These "announcements" were the sacred property of each clan, but they varied considerably in their content from clan to clan. They were handed down through many generations, and a small number of them has been recorded in writing only since the beginning of the twentieth century. The myth introduced in this book originates from the Fuca-hala (Fuca clan) in the Aihui (Aigun) district.

The myth analyzed here is possibly the most complete version of such a myth known today. The Chinese manuscript was written in 1936 at the time of the Manchukuo, the puppet state of Japan. The myth was recorded directly as it was sung by a shaman. The text was able to survive the second world war, the extreme Anti-Rightist-Campaign of 1957, and the catastrophe of the Cultural Revolution (1966–1976) because it was hidden away. Unfortunately, due to the effects of the weather and of combat activities in the Heihe area, parts of the text became illegible, and some of the chapters were dispersed.

In an extensive introduction Bäcker discusses the history of the creation myth and makes illuminating comparisons with similar folk literature that has existed among other peoples of Eurasia. He divides the nine sections of the text into nine chapters and then provides each chapter with a detailed commentary that provides background knowledge. In the analysis of the myth he discusses its structure and type. He also addresses the question of Iranian influences and investigates possible means and routes for the transmission of Iranian ideas to northeast Manchuria. For his investigation of possible transmission routes, he compares the Manchurian material with Altai-Turkic parallels. In relation to the entire complex of Manchu cosmology, he discusses the heavenly constellations that appear in the myth together with ideas about the heavenly bodies that are of north Manchurian origin and which belong to the shamanistic worldview of the Manchu. He also addresses problems the myth raises in relation to shamanistic rituals and to the possibility of a matrilineal structure in the Manchu clans.

The myth begins with a short narrative about the shamaness Bo'e-deyinmu, who arrives from the east riding on a divine deer, and who's spirit tells the myth through the mouth of the shaman narrating it. Bäcker believes that the deer was a red deer, but I rather

think that it was a reindeer. Many stories are told among the local Manchu population about the magnificent abilities of this shamaness who is said to have lived from 1662 to 1735 as healer, diviner, storyteller, and singer. She is also believed to be a deity of song and dance.

This Manchu creation myth describes the origin of the world, including that of the heavenly bodies and that of a triad of goddesses: Abka Hehe (Woman of Heaven), Banamu Hehe (Woman Mother Earth), and Ulden Hehe (Woman Light). These goddesses in turn then create humans (both men and women), all the other living beings, and more goddesses.

The goddess Aoqin, who has nine heads and eight arms, is a particularly wild and aggressive goddess. She becomes the androgynous demon Yeluri who then attempts to destroy the good goddesses in order to rule the world. This being is, therefore, some sort of Manchurian Satan. In the myth Yeluri personifies evil, destruction, deceit, coldness, and darkness. He is the foe of all that is good. The myth also tells of the continuous fight with the demon Yeluri who is capable of generating new demons. With the help of several theriomorphic goddesses such as the hedgehog goddess, the rat goddess, and the eagle goddess, to mention only the most important ones, the good goddesses finally succeed in beating back the attacks of the demon Yeluri and ban him to live under the surface of the earth.

Abka Hehe in the end becomes an immortal and invincible goddess of the universe who protects heaven and earth for future generations. She dispatches the divine eagle woman with the mission to raise on earth a small girl to become the first great shamaness. The first shaman (shamaness) being raised by an eagle (female eagle) is a motif widespread in northern Asia.

All of these events happen during the time before the flood, which in the Manchu myth is caused by the demon Yeluri and not by human misbehavior. However, the great flood constitutes a break in time that has universal consequences that affect the Manchu. It is noteworthy that shamanism originates in the time before the flood, a fact that is said to be proof of its being close to the divine. Abka Hehe continues to be active also after the flood but later she is replaced by Abka Enduri, the male god of heaven. Although today Abka Enduri and other male gods are prevalent, the myth is apparently meant to point out that until recently Abka Hehe existed and was of great importance. In any case, this tradition offers an example in which matriarchy had been replaced by patriarchy in the Manchu pantheon of deities. It is also quite likely that the tradition reflects two historical realities in the ethnic group: (1) that the vocation of a shaman was transmitted matrilineally among the early Manchu; and (2) that even matrilineal clans might have existed. Later on, the system of descent of the shamans in particular as well as the one within the clans in general may have changed in favor of patrilineal filiation.

Jörg Bäcker has to be commended for his achievement in translating this cosmogonic Manchu myth, and in providing it with an outstanding commentary. No doubt, the book will be most useful to all those concerned with the ancient cultures of East Asia and of the Manchu-Tungus populations. We are all much indebted to him for this work.

REFERENCE CITED:

BÄCKER, Jörg

1988 *Märchen aus der Mandschurei*. München: Eugen Diederichs Verlag.

F. Georg HEYNE
Bielefeld, Germany

CHAO GEJIN 朝戈金. *Kochuan shishi xue: Ranpile "Jiangge'er" chengshi jufa yanjiu* 口傳史詩學：冉皮勒馬《講格爾》程式句法研究。 [Oral Poetics: