

CHAPTER 10

TRANSLINGUAL  
FOLKLORE AND  
FOLKLORICS IN  
CHINA

*Lydia H. Liu*

Folklore can mean different things to different people and even become different things as it travels from place to place across the various technological media of transmission: writing, print, gramophone, radio, film, television, and so on. This ontological instability – which troubles the study of folklore, past and present – may confront the analyst with some sobering truths about her own sense of time, place, history, tradition, and the social imaginary. If we agree that modern political structures and national institutions of learning have inaugurated themselves by staking a claim on the voice of the people and its authenticity, it should not be difficult to identify a shared idiom of folk, ethnicity, community and society across the living languages of the world and situate it in the emergence of nationalism, capitalism, and colonial modernity. The problem is how to interpret that idiom. Is folklore always in translation? We may begin by acknowledging that the study of folklore – which is the coming to self-consciousness of that historical movement – is as much about the folk and their voices as about the story of political authority and historical forces that struggle to make the people legible as such.

This struggle over the legibility of the people and their cultural productions is what will concern us as we turn to the situation of folklore and modern folklore studies in China. The focus on legibility indicates that we will be attentive to the traces and nuances of discursive struggles and grant all reiterated acts of statement or translation a degree of openness to contingency, appropriation, and contestation. This approach also raises an interesting question: Does the idea of legibility – commonly associated with writing and literacy – imply a paradox whenever folklore is taken to be orally

produced? If there is indeed a paradox here – though “historical tension” is the preferred term here to that of “paradox” in logic – the paradox would then be intrinsic to the history and historiography of folklore itself. Oral literature and folklore need not be opposed to writing and literacy and have never been insofar as the collecting and transcription processes are concerned.<sup>1</sup> As we take a longer historical view – for instance, the collecting of folksong in ancient imperial China – we may discover a strong, reiterated pattern of dialectical entanglement between writing and oral literature which spans more than 2,000 years. And as we begin to articulate this temporality to modern folklore, the old debate on orality and literacy in folklore studies and elsewhere would seem less interesting and productive than if we were to focus our attention on the entanglement itself.

In imperial China, it was the political authority associated with the power of writing that made folklore legible to the imperial eye and available to posterity; and likewise, members of the literati would time after time draw on folksong and folk legends from the diverse languages and dialects of that vast land to contest the imperial authority using their own writing. This millennia-long struggle over the voice of the common folk was still operative when modern folklore studies arrived in China from Europe and Japan; but the manner of its operation began to show some distinctly new features. And how could it have been otherwise? As discussed below, Chinese folklorists had no choice but plunge themselves into the politics of colonial mimicry, social reform, nationalism, class struggle, or the world revolution in the fast-changing moments of social transformation in the twentieth century. This chapter is devoted to analyzing such moments and will demonstrate how the work of Chinese folklorists participated in a collective struggle to restage themselves and their country in the modern world.

## THE BIRTH OF MODERN FOLKLORE STUDIES IN CHINA

In the early twentieth century, a number of Chinese intellectuals and scholars began to adopt the neologism *minsuxue* 民俗學 – *min* as “folk,” *su* as “popular customs,” *xue* as “studies” – to launch a new discipline and to create a modern national literature in the vernacular language. By coining this term in 1922, they were essentially borrowing back the same Kanji characters – read *minzokugaku* in Japanese – that Japanese folklorists had earlier borrowed from the repertoire of existing Chinese characters to translate “folklore studies” into Japanese. This is what I have elsewhere termed as “roundtrip” translingual practice in modern China (Liu 1995). Some of the Chinese enthusiasts of folklore studied in Japan and were well acquainted with the work of influential Japanese folklorists. It was the halcyon days of Japanese folklore gathering, imperial expansion, and ethnological fieldwork. Japanese folklorists and ethnologists conducted systematic fieldwork in rural Japanese villages as well as in the newly colonized societies including Okinawa (1874), Taiwan (1895), and Korea (1910) and would soon extend this work to Micronesia (1919), Manchuria (1931), and elsewhere (Nakao 2005: 19–35).

Zhou Zuoren (1885–1967) became fascinated by the work of Yanagita Kunio (1875–1962), Kobayashi Issa (1763–1827), and Takano Tatsuyuki (1876–1947) when he was a student in Japan in 1905–1911. His attention was drawn primarily toward the literary value of these authors’ published writing rather than their

ethnography or method. Upon his return to China in 1911, Zhou began to collect and publish folksongs and children's songs from his native Chaoxing in Zhejiang province (Hung 1985: 44–45). Within one year of joining the literature faculty of Peking University in 1917, he began to champion the cause of folklore studies and created a center to begin folksong collection and research. His colleague Liu Bannong started a new column in the *Peking University Daily* (Beida rikan) in 1918 called “Folksong Selection” where one ballad or folksong was printed each day for a total of 148 folksongs. Along with Liu and a scholar named Shen Yinmo, Zhou initiated an institution-building effort that would lead to the formation of the discipline of folklore studies at the Sun Yat-Sen University several years later. By 1920, Zhou, Gu Jiegang, Shen Jianshi, and others founded the Society for Folk Customs Survey and successfully extended their folksong collecting and research activities to as many as 22 provinces in China (Rong 1928: 15–16: 1).

The *Folksong Weekly* – the official publication of the Society for Folk Customs Survey – was launched by Zhou Zuoren and his colleagues in December 1922. This journal issued guidelines for folksong research and made a concerted effort to attract the attention of writers and scholars. The editors’ “Foreword” to the inaugural number of *Folksong Weekly* identified the collecting and study of folksongs as part of *minsuxue* or “folklore studies” and treated it as a central task in the rebuilding of Chinese national culture.<sup>2</sup> When the exodus of left-leaning intellectuals to the south occurred under the pressures of warlord tyranny in 1926–1927, some of them, including historian and folklorist Gu Jiegang, were recruited by the Sun Yat-Sen University in the city of Guangzhou where they established a new Society for Folklore Studies, founded a seminal journal in Chinese folklore studies called *Folklore* (Minsu 1927–1943), and started an influential monograph series in folklore studies.

*Folklore* became the regular publication of the Society for Folklore Studies and made a significant contribution to the consolidation of folklore studies as a discipline in China. The journal published a total of 123 weekly and quarterly numbers and even persisted through the difficult wartime years until 1943. Gu Jiegang (1893–1980), a co-editor of *Folklore*, brought out some of his most influential studies in *Folklore*. Zhong Jingwen (1903–2002), another central figure in early folklore studies and co-founder of *Folklore*, published his first research there. Besides publishing the journal, the Society for Folklore Studies at the Sun Yat-Sen University organized numerous pedagogical and fieldwork activities, including setting up an exhibition hall for ethnological artifacts, organizing regular lecture series in folklore studies, and so on. These academic programs trained the first generation of Chinese folklorists and were responsible for disseminating the theories and practices of folklore studies in the mainstream discourse of urban society (Zhong 1982, 1: 174–175). And what were the theories and practices they helped disseminate to Chinese society at large?

Zhong Jingwen’s *Collected Lectures on Folk Arts* was among the first systematic treatments of folklore in what one might call the professionalization of Chinese folklore studies. Published in 1928 by the Society for Folklore Studies, this slim volume provides a comparative study of documented folk legends gathered from selected ethnic minority groups in China. His approach focuses on the formulaic patterns and variations of individual folksongs to establish them as the oral productions of ethnic minorities, such as the Zhuang, whom he describes as simple-minded primitives who love singing and embellishments (Zhong 1928: 95). For example, the

story of Liu Sanjie – an immortal female singer from the lore of the Zhuang of Guangxi and Guangdong provinces – is given detailed attention by the author.<sup>3</sup> In his view, the question of whether Liu Sanjie actually existed or not is irrelevant, for the task of the folklorist is to figure out why those simple-minded people invented the stories they did and how they invented them.

Notwithstanding their professional commitment to oral literature and fieldwork, Zhong Jingwen and his fellow folklorists did not shun the use of extant *printed sources* from the past, and there were vast amounts of them stretching from centuries of imperial historiographies to local gazetteers and literary compositions of every single dynasty from the Han (206 BCE–220 CE) through the Qing (1644–1911). Hardly is there a subject of ethnographical interest in China that is not lodged somewhere in the vast bureaucratic print/manuscript machine of the past dynasties. In fact, this has long been a point of contention between Chinese and Euro-American scholars in folklore studies (as well as in archaeology) since the early twentieth century to this very day. Can traditional textual exegesis be credited as evidence to verify ethnographic fieldwork? What is the basis of truth in folklore studies? At stake, of course, has been the scientific standing of the discipline, which requires a professional consensus on what amounts to good and reliable fieldwork and what counts as rigorous analytical methods, and so on.

It is not as if the Chinese folklorists in the early decades of the twentieth century disregarded the centrality of fieldwork in ethnographic research. Their difficulty was of a different sort; namely, what to do with the pervasive impact of writing, literacy, and imperial bureaucracy on peoples and communities and their oral traditions, and what to do with the recorded histories of the past dynasties which have documented this impact continuously over the past 2,000-odd years.<sup>4</sup> To exacerbate the difficulty, the “simple-minded people” in the far south whom the folklorist studied and who practiced so-called oral literature also exhibited a tendency to succumb to writing and literacy. Almost in spite of himself, Zhong’s appropriation of textual records demonstrates a profound entanglement of oral and written sources within the ethnographic work itself. In *Collected Lectures on Folk Arts*, for instance, he cites the following passage from a printed work titled *New Stories from Guangdong* (Guangdong xinyu) composed by a well-known seventeenth-century author Qu Dajun (1630–1696):

The people of Yue [the *Zhuang* ethnic minority] are customarily skilled in singing and, whenever there is an auspicious occasion, they sing in celebration. In ancient times, they used songs to compete for status; the most skilled would be rewarded and be named *gebo* [the song elder]. When seeking a bride and visiting the woman’s family, the son-in-law would find a number of men of age and appearance similar to his own and of equal talent and intelligence to serve as his “groom companions.” The woman’s family would block the gate with verses and songs; the son-in-law would *take up a brush and write* or have the groom-companions make drafts for him. Some of these songs were refined and some unrefined and, in the end, they would improvise, valuing the refined and elegant; [they continued] until the woman’s family could not match them any longer, and finally the bride would come forth. (Zhong 1928: 96–98; emphasis added)

Overlooking the presence of writing in the above account, Zhong observes that the exchange of love songs has been an established courtship ritual among the Zhuang

people for many centuries (as evidenced from the written record) and that this ritual is rarely found in “civilized” regions across the vast territories inhabited by the Han people. He explains that Guangxi and Guangdong provinces lie to the far south, away from the center of dynastic power, and that the folk customs of the local people necessarily retain elements of primitive society. He speculates further that the psychologists and educators in the West might attribute these people’s behavior to their natural desire for knowledge, not unlike that of children and savages. He comments: “the savages exhibit extremely naïve behaviors – all kinds of preposterous myths appear to derive from this natural desire for knowledge – especially the myth of genesis.” Zhong concludes that the Zhuang people are “unrefined and uncivilized” and that “the experiences and objects that inform their reasoning are infantile and crude, and they have made up fantastic tales based on their familiar customs and they are steeped in this kind of irrationality” (Zhong 1928: 98).

Zhong’s portrayal of Zhuang people as “oral” and “uncivilized” is contradicted by the evidence of literacy within the courtship ritual he cites. Clearly, the men employ the writing brush in the poetry competition and they sing as well as write (using the writing brush of the Han) and seem to prefer “the refined.” But how did Zhong manage to overlook this crucial detail even as he drew on the written record to establish the case? Another piece of the puzzle is that Zhong wrote his study in the aftermath of the New Culture movement and the May Fourth movement when many young men and women had rejected arranged marriages to pursue romantic love. The romantic courtship rituals of Zhuang people would have enjoyed affinity with this broad new trend rather than with the traditional arranged marriage practiced predominantly by the Han. Why does Zhong eschew an obvious reading and choose to see “primitive” elements in the cultural practices of the Zhuang? Could it be attributed to his Han chauvinism?

The term Han – named after the Han dynasty – currently designates the largest ethnic group alongside the 55 officially recognized ethnic minority groups in the People’s Republic of China. The enunciation of the term Han, however, goes back much further and its meanings fluctuated and transformed through centuries of dynastic cycles of conquest, subjugation, and resistance. That is one of the reasons why we should be careful not to read anachronistically the PRC policies on ethnic minorities back into the dynastic histories of the past and keep in mind that the total or partial subjugation of the Han population by foreigners and ethnic minorities from the north through dynastic regimes – Khitans, Jurchens, Mongols, Manchus – had a long and convoluted history in China.<sup>5</sup> In the seventeenth century, for example, the Manchus – a tribal ethnic society from the north – conquered and subjugated the Han population and established the Qing dynasty following the overthrow of the Ming dynasty. The Manchu minority ruled the Han majority for more than 250 years (1644–1911) (Elliott 2001). Within their own lifetime, not only did the first generation of Chinese folklorists witness the overthrow of the Manchus and the Qing dynasty by Han revolutionaries but they also experienced the birth pangs of the modern nation-state in China in 1912. Memories of the Han submission to the Manchus were still fresh in their minds when they began folksong collecting and ethnographic fieldwork; and the effect, if not the motivation, of their work contributed to a massive structural transformation of Han and minority relations along the directions charted out by Sun Yat-Sen and the other revolutionaries at the dawn of the

Republican Revolution. And as we try to make sense of the place and role of folklore studies in China, this picture of a major dynastic transition may explain some of the fraught issues relating to political rule, civilization, and ethnic identity in the fledgling nation-state. It can also help us understand how the newly gained Han sovereignty over minority groups was consolidated through discursive as well as institutional inventions. However, the consolidation did not happen overnight because the sovereignty of the young nation-state in the Republican era (1912–1949) was fragile and compromised by the presence of European and Japanese colonialism and imperialism.

### POLITICAL RULE AND THE VOICE OF THE OTHER

Addressing the fraught relations between the Han and ethnic minorities in China, Stevan Harrell (1995) points to a number of structural similarities exhibited by what he calls the successive civilizing projects of the past and present. He calls them the Confucian project, the Christian project, and the Communist project and argues that each of these projects is conceived of “as emanating from a particular center, as defining civilization (or the desired state) according to a certain set of philosophical principles, as separating groups according to some sort of criterion of ‘ethnic identification,’ and then giving these groups equal or unequal legal status, while scaling them according to one or another variable” (1995: 17) Although we should not rule out these elements from consideration, the logic of center and periphery is too vague and leaves out too much history to tell us much about the one project or the other. Does the structural similarity exist in the eyes of the beholder? If not, does it suggest a historical linkage, tradition, or internal logic? Let us consider where Confucius and Confucian authority stand with respect to folklore collecting in China.

Confucius’s name (552 BCE–479 BCE) is associated with one of the earliest surviving classics known as the *Book of Songs* – an anthology of 300 poems – which he had allegedly selected and compiled. Apparently, a certain portion of these poems belongs to the category of folksong. Although these songs or poems were collected from the eleventh century BCE through the sixth century BCE, we do not know who collected them or how many more works were made available to Confucius in manuscript form or some other form.<sup>6</sup> According to recorded history, the institutionalized collecting of folksong did not begin until the reign of Emperor Wu (141 BCE–86 BCE) of the Han dynasty, though some scholars try to push that date to the reign of the first emperor Qinshihuang (259 BCE–210 BCE) (Allen 1992: 37–43). In any case, Emperor Wu’s fame has come down to us as someone who valued creative expressions – poetry, literature, and philosophy flourished in his reign – and he is credited with the establishment (or revival) of the imperial Music Bureau, known as *yuefu*. In a detailed description of how official messengers were sent around collecting folksongs among the people, the *Book of Han* (Han shu, completed in 111 CE) reveals a political motive on the part of Emperor Wu:

In the early month of spring, those who had huddled together in the winter months were about to venture out. Then came official messengers who stood on the side of the road striking their wooden bells to collect songs. The officials then submitted the songs they

had collected to the Grand Master of Music in the court who regulated them in accordance with the correct notes and tunes before presenting them to the Son of Heaven. It is said that even though the sovereign never looks beyond the window or leaves the door [of his palace], he knows the world very well. (Ban Gu 1964: 1123)<sup>7</sup>

In the above documented instance of imperial folksong collecting, folksong functioned as a kind of intelligence or window that informed the ruler about the sentiments of his subjects. The power of public opinion derived from the anonymous source of folksong, the assumption being that “when the ruler is tyrannical and the subjects are too frightened to air their grievances, then popular songs and ballads will appear to portend evil, and these are called ‘poetic omens’” (Liu 1975: 65). Without having to decide how much of that effort was literally driven by a Confucian agenda, there is no doubt that early folksong collecting concerned, first and foremost, political rule and the stability of the state. It was about inventing a set of communication mechanisms whereby the sovereign would get to know his people in order to rule them more effectively. As a result, a good number of transcribed folksongs from the Han dynasty known as *yuefu* poetry have survived the millennia-long cycles of dynastic transitions and evolved into an essential component of the Chinese literary canon. Here, one might observe some interesting resonances and parallels with modern ethnographic work, such as the ways in which German folklorists associated folklore with the *Völkergedanken*, but exactly how does the Han-dynasty Music Bureau compare with the institutions of modern folklore studies in Germany, England, China or elsewhere? What is the ground, if any, for conducting comparisons across the historical divide or across the cultural/linguistic divide?

In her comparative survey of modern German, British, and Chinese folklore studies, Uli Linke (1990) has drawn some interesting conclusions about each tradition. She points out that the German folklorist became “the great advisor and expert in the art of governing, in correcting and improving the social ‘body,’ as well as maintaining it in a permanent state of order, health, and productivity” (1990: 135). If the institution of German folklore studies reminds us of the Han Music Bureau and their official messengers, the similarity ends about here, because a great deal more is involved in the practices of German *Volkskunde* – the statistical approach to the population, the anxiety about the health of the social body, the national education program, and so on – than does the opening of communication channels between the ruler and the ruled. Linke shows that the German folklorists were directly charged with the task of educating the population and that they also served as counselors to the representatives of power in academies and learned societies.

The linkage between British folklore studies and German *Volkskunde* is suggested through the coinage of the term “folk-lore” by William John Thoms in 1846. Hermann Bausinger has speculated that the English term probably derived from a translation of the older German term *Volks-kunde* (Linke 1990: 136; Bausinger 1969: 50). British folklore studies – in particular, the work of Scottish folklorists – also enjoyed deep ties with popular antiquities and with the desire to advance the cause of romantic nationalism. In contrast to the German statistical accumulation of social information about local populations through comprehensive ethnographic surveys, British folklore research, according to Linke, focused on the reinvention of the national ancient heritage through the study of magic, superstitions, proverbs, legends,

and songs. By the nineteenth century, Sir Edward Tylor's work on the development of religion, language, and art began to mark a transition from romantic folklore studies to social anthropology in England. The role that folklore research played in the administration of British colonies abroad – the censuses, surveys, and narratives – seems mitigated in Linke's study, if not made to disappear, whereas it has been shown that the rule of colonized people lay at the heart of the development of British folklore studies and social anthropology.

And how do these developments compare with modern folklore studies in China? Linke suggests that, unlike the German and British schools, the new forms of social knowledge introduced by folklore research in modern China were not initially “an administrative tool of the state; rather, folklore research furnished a means for inciting movements of popular resistance” (1990: 141). This statement captures some aspect of the distinctiveness of early twentieth-century Chinese folklore studies – its political orientation – but overlooks a good number of important developments that the method of “parallel comparison” such as Linke's – German, British, Chinese, and so on – cannot but elide. For instance, what do we make of the interactions, networks, and traveling theories in the making of Chinese folklore studies? Can we ignore the systematic introduction and translation of Herder, Tylor, and other European and British theorists published through the pages of the Chinese journal *Folklore*? How and from where did Zhong Jingwen and his fellow folklorists acquire their evolutionary idea of “primitive culture”? Confucianism could not have been the right answer and, in fact, Confucianism was under attack by radical intellectuals who turned to the voice of the folk and began to promote democracy in modern China. Nor is Han chauvinism a good explanation for the historical reason stated in the above. What ought to concern us, therefore, is not the folklorist's personal biases but a set of discursive developments and social programs that emerged out of the consolidation of modern folklore studies as a discipline in China. To these we now turn.

## TRANSLATION AND TRANSLINGUAL PRACTICES

We have learned that Japanese folklore research contributed a new Kanji concept *minzokugaku* or *minsuxue* to the Chinese language by linguistically marking the new discipline as simultaneously foreign and Chinese. Moreover, there is ample research to suggest that the Japanese had turned to German and British folklore studies, anthropology, or primitive law as their primary model. Katsumi Nakao's research has suggested that Okamatsu Sanarō, who was put in charge of ethnological investigations in Taiwan by Japanese colonial authorities in 1901, had studied Civil Code and primitive law in Germany under Josef Kohler. Upon the completion of his studies, he became a law professor at Kyoto Imperial University and was appointed to study the native legal situations in colonized Taiwan. In his investigations, Okamatsu adopted the ethnographic methods he had learned in Germany and published his report on land and kinship in English. According to Nakao (2005), Okamatsu relied on three major sources in his colonial research on Taiwan: “German methodologies developed for the study of primitive law; British methodology employed for the study of colonized indigenous peoples; and the Chinese classics, the intensive and comparative study of which had been greatly developed in the Edo period” (2005: 22). The



interconnections among these sources have brought the role of traveling theory and traveling theorists into focus – in this case, colonial anthropology – in the repeated reiteration of the techniques of colonial rule under different circumstances.

Harry Harootunian has linked Japanese folklore studies to the rise of fascism in modern Japan. He argues that Yanagita Kunio and other Japanese folklorists looked to the figure of the folk and the unity of the archaic community it embodied to pursue the colonial space of the East Asia Co-Prosperty Sphere (*Daitōa Kyōeiken*) to be governed by imperial Japan. “Their privileging of the folk,” Harootunian (2000) writes, “could not help but supply fascism with its most powerful trope, an object of fantasy and political desire, and thus could not, itself, avoid complicity with the ‘gathering’ of fascism as it was increasingly articulated in promises to remove both unevenness and conflict and eliminate cultural abstraction in programs proclaiming the establishment of folkism” (2000: 400).

What then was the situation of translingual folklore studies in China, a country that was victimized by Japanese fascism rather than served by it? If the Japanese neologism *minzokugaku* was a Kanji rendering of the German *Volkskunde* and the English “folklore” before completing its roundtrip back in China as *minsuxue*, this interesting trajectory ought to suggest a translingual method or conceptual framework that allows us to put greater emphasis on interaction and mutual entanglement than isolated comparisons or case studies. For how can we continue to make parallel comparisons or observe similar and different practices in folklore studies in different nations when these same theories and practices of folklore studies have been interlinked globally through colonial modernity and capitalism? In other words, we need to pay attention to the traces of translingual, intellectual linkages, and genealogies, as well as their long-distance movement within a relatively short period of time.

How did modern folklore studies metamorphose as it moved from Europe through Japanese imperial expansionism to China? In what ways did a situated understanding of orality, ethnicity, and folk legacies fashion the mainstream cultural imaginary of modern China? One pivotal moment of self-consciousness in the scientific endeavors of Chinese folklore studies can be dated to March 1928 when the editor made the decision to adopt Gu Jiegang’s proposal that the journal’s name be changed from *Folk Literature and Art* to *Folklore* (also known as *Folklore Weekly*). This change was indicative of a set of broader conceptual shifts from folksong collecting to folklore studies with emphasis on objectivity and social science approaches. The goal was to distinguish professional ethnographic studies as a separate field from the folk arts or “applied folklore” (even if the actual division of labor was difficult to sustain). The fledgling academic discipline accomplished its goal in part by emphasizing field work and, no less important, by producing a wide range of theoretical and technical idioms to justify that work.

Translation became a central task in that endeavor. From the very start, the journal *Folklore* followed the proceedings of international folklore societies closely and began to translate and publish systematically influential theoretical works in folklore studies from Europe, Japan, and United States in almost every issue. Bronislaw Malinowski, Andrew Lang, Lucien Lévy-Bruhl, Franz Boas, and J.G. Frazer were among the first to be introduced to Chinese academia, but an obscure work that seemed to enjoy particular favor amongst Chinese folklorists was *The Handbook of Folklore* written by British folklorist Charlotte Sophia Burne, onetime president of the Folklore Society in

London. In the first number of *Folklore*, a leading folklorist Yang Chengzhi translated and serialized the “Questionary” and “Terminology” sections of Burne’s book in twelve continuous installments.

The theoretical positioning of *Folklore* is delineated by He Sijing in an article called “Questions in Folklore Studies” in which he singles England out for praise and emulation, for “just as France is the home of sociology, so is England the home of folklore studies” (1: 1928, 4). What inspiration did English folklore studies offer to its aspiring Chinese counterpart? Drawing on Burne’s main line of argument, He Sijing argues that from the time of the Industrial Revolution, the emergence of large-scale industries has led to both the expansion of the metropolis and the enlargement of colonial territories. The extraordinarily rapid developments in these two areas have produced discords of all kinds – relating to morality, belief, thought, emotion, and so on – between urbanites and rural folks in the mother country, and between the rulers and ruled in colonies. Religions such as Christianity can no longer help resolve the contradictions of city and country, of old life and new, or control the thoughts of colonized natives and tame their hostile feelings. Folklore studies has arisen in response to such crises, because the need to know the thoughts and psychology of the natives and the uncivilized through their song and legends is a “deeply felt administrative necessity” for the purpose of achieving political peace and stability. He Sijing continues: “The author of *The Handbook of Folklore* (1894), Madam C.S. Burne, has said that folklore studies cannot overestimate its contribution to the sum of human knowledge and one extremely useful outcome will emerge from studies of this sort; namely, the governing nation will obtain more effective ways of ruling the subject peoples” (1: 1928, 4–5). In the original text of *The Handbook of Folklore*, Charlotte Sophia Burne (1914) has stated the following:

The conception of man’s past history which has resulted from, and now directs, the study of folklore, has already made its impress on modern philosophical thought, and it would be difficult to over-estimate the additions to the sum of human knowledge which may be made in course of years by a continuance of the study on these lines. Meanwhile one very practical result should follow from it, namely, the improved treatment by governing nations of the subject-races under their sway. In the words of Sir Richard Temple, “We cannot understand the latter rightly unless we deeply study them, and it must be remembered that close acquaintance and a right understanding beget sympathy, and sympathy begets good government. (1914: 3–4)

This argument would have made perfect sense to a Chinese folklorist who was acquainted with the imperial tradition of folksong collecting of the past. But the question is where China stood on this map of governing nations and subject-races. What was the position of the Chinese folklorist vis-à-vis their British or Japanese counterparts, and who might the subject-races be as far as the Chinese folklorist was concerned?

Let us consider the larger picture of the social science research of the time and, in particular, how a certain criterion of objectivity was interjected into the requirements of scientific folklore collecting at the turn of the century. In her study of the American Folklore Society (founded in 1888) and the *Journal of American Folklore*, Regina Bendix examines the work of folklorist Otis Mason who did not hesitate to draw parallels

between folklore specimens with the minerals or chemicals that the natural scientist studied. After comparing the folk “specimen” with the archaeologist’s finds, the paleontologist’s fossil, and the anatomist’s rare animal, Mason concludes that the folk-cabinet has a distinct advantage, namely, it is like the piles of enumerators’ atlases in the Census Office and the material is ever at hand to be considered (Bendix 1997: 127).

To what end? Mason’s reference to the Census Office reminds us of Burne’s concern with colonial rule and governmentality as quoted in the above. The folklorist’s aspirations to objectivity need not contradict the logic of governmentality in this historical framework, because objectivity and colonial governmentality together defined the scientific agendas of the modern empirical social science that came to maturity in the first decades of the twentieth century. The most successful and influential of the new schools of thought was what has come to be called the “functionalist school” of anthropology in Britain whose intellectual progenitor was the Polish émigré Malinowski.<sup>8</sup> Believing that African societies were too fragile, too fragmented, to adapt to rapid change, Malinowski saw the role of anthropology as one that could instruct the government on how to make the best of these delicate social worlds, and coax them into the European-dominated future, without destroying them in the process. This he believed could be achieved through understanding how their worlds operated, and by working through native rules (Cell 2001: 4, 246).

The notion of time became central to this process of modernization. Cultural anthropologist Johannes Fabian (1983) argues that anthropology and folklore studies were erected upon an ethnographic imagining of temporality that pre-establishes the “other” at the primitive end of the long march of history as opposed to the cultural superiority of the modern “us.” In effecting temporal distancing from the other, anthropology has produced a “spatialization of time” that physically manifests itself in the trips that anthropologists and folklorists undertake to engage in professional fieldwork outside their own society or community (1983: 30–31). Since the objective situation of the other derives its meaning solely from its translatability or temporal convertibility, the rationale of doing the fieldwork to study them as the past of one’s own evolution to humanity attenuates the scholar’s responsibility to care about the actual social condition of the other’s material existence. That may explain why, after centuries of colonial experience and contact with the non-Western world and the global consequences of that contact, some still believe that the social structures of non-Western societies remain strangely unchanging as if the colonial encounter had never taken place.<sup>9</sup> The evolutionary spatialization of time helps establish the cognitive basis of scholarly objectivity and gives cultural anthropology and folklore studies the authority they assume in the eyes of the lay public. The collecting of the black spirituals, to cite an example from Ronald Radano’s study, “enabled white Americans to extract the anonymous sounds of human transcendence from their real-life circumstances, thereby erasing blackness in the name of preservation” (Radano 1996: 530). The possibility of what Fabian calls “co-evalness,” or the likelihood of allowing the other to inhabit the same time and space as does the anthropologist and enter into a real-life dialogue or disputation with their work, seems rather remote. It would contradict the logic of ethnographic research and threaten to abolish both the subjectivity and objectivity of the observer.

What happened when the ethnographic gaze turned inward? Elizabeth Mary Wright’s book *Rustic Speech and Folk-Lore* (1913) – another well-known source in

China – may shed some light on the question. Wright’s work attracted the Chinese folklorists because it demonstrated that British folklorists studied the folk customs of their own society, and not just the subject-races of colonized countries. He Sijing translated Wright’s words to say that the key to understanding the seemingly incomprehensible mentality of rural people was to become thoroughly acquainted with their local dialect, because “The country folk’s inner secrets are all connected with their traditional speech and rhythms. One has only to master the form of their speech; then the strings of their hearts will be in the palm of your hand” (He 1928: 5).<sup>10</sup> British folklorists regarded both the folk speech of their own society and the folkways of the colonies as raw materials for understanding folk psychology.<sup>11</sup> They were especially interested in the myths, legends, ballads, proverbs, and riddles of the uncivilized, semi-civilized, or uneducated peoples as well as nursery rhymes, children’s songs, and so on. Bausinger (1990) has suggested that the rise of comparative and supranational scholarship in folklore studies after its contact and confrontation with ethnology has introduced a generalized concept of *vulgus in populo* but that the “idea of the nation” remained very much alive in the word *Volk* (1990: 2). Did this idea of *Volk* seamlessly translate into minority peoples and dialect groups among the Han population in the work of early Chinese folklorists?<sup>12</sup>

While English and Japanese folklorists were engaged in colonial enterprise abroad, Chinese folklorists directed their attention exclusively to the “primitive cultures” of rural villages and ethnic minorities in their own society. And what other option did they have when both the Han Chinese and all of China’s ethnic groups occupied the position of subject-race in the colonial hierarchy dominated by governing imperial nations? While translating European theories of race and ethnicity, the Chinese folklorists took the next step of trying to make China’s minority groups *resemble* primitive tribes from other parts of the world. The relation of domination in the classic colonial situation was converted into a structure of domination between the Han majority and minority peoples. By turning the ethnographic gaze upon the ethnic minorities within their own society, the Chinese folklorists could then claim to be the subject of anthropology rather than its object. If this carries the echoes of ethnic tension between the Han, the Manchus, and other ethnic groups from the past, there is something else going on as well, and we need only leaf through the reproduced images of ethnographic photographs in the pages of *Folklore* to get the basic idea (see Figures 10.1 and 10.2).

The reproductions of the photographs, whose sources are not disclosed or acknowledged, provide the incontestable evidence that the Chinese folklorists had a global picture rather than the narrowly defined Han/minority relations in mind. For instead of focusing on the Han and the minorities, they sought to emulate the British folklorists in the representational practices by recasting themselves as the unmarked (white) observer of the ethnographic field. Reproduced on the inside covers of numbers 5 through 15/16 of *Folklore*, for example, are pictures of naked people and savages of the uncivilized races. These photographs were culled from European and American publications, and the images uniformly represent the people of color: ethnic groups from India, Burma, Australia, New Zealand, the Philippines, the South Pacific Melanesian Islands, Northern Africa, Southern Africa, Vietnam, Japan (tattooed figures), and Tibet. Interestingly, these photos were printed side by side with the transcribed versions of mountain songs that the Chinese folklorists had



### 土人的哀悼

(緬甸安達曼島)

哀悼的裝飾法是以黃土及青橄欖色泥塗遍了身體，父母們則畫以垂紋，死者的頭蓋及其他的骨帶着做紀念物的。圖中一個婦人背後負着的東西即是頭蓋，坐在中間的一個帶着的頸珠即手足骨製成的。至衣服的形式看圖中便知道了。(志識)

Figure 10.1 Tribal rituals of mourning on a Burmese island, a photographic reproduction in *Folklore Weekly* no. 7, 1928.

collected from Guangxi and Guangdong, or ballads from Taiwanese aborigines, or folksongs from Chaozhou and so forth.

Reflecting on his fieldwork in contemporary China, Dru Gladney has made an observation about similar visual juxtapositions in PRC representations of the Muslim population. He saw a poster featuring men in Turkic and Hui Islamic hats, a veiled woman, and an African or black man with the following caption “I Love the Great Wall.” Gladney points out that the black man is on the wall together with the Chinese minorities to demonstrate their ethnic solidarity and “to emphasize their

這是表明與窩刺馬加部族，烏爾居圖騰有關係的最後儀式。演技者把跪坐人們的裝飾脫去。畫圖是代表一種飄流圖騰的祖先（神怪蛇）的。以這種慣俗圖案的痕跡來觀察，可知其代表赤足步行的人了。

(志誠)



### 地上畫圖騰的儀式

(中澳洲的北部部族)

Figure 10.2 Aborigines from northern Australia and their totem figures in *Folklore Weekly* no. 7, 1928.

corporate ‘primitivity’ (i.e., promoting the idea that China’s minorities are like ‘primitive’ Africans), which is key to understanding the position of the minorities in the Marxist-Maoist evolutionary scheme” (1994: 97). The figuring of minorities in this manner is not so much about the minorities than it is about the subjectivity of the Han majority. Gladney (1994) writes, “the objectified portrayal of minorities as exoticized, and even eroticized, is essential to the construction of the Han Chinese majority, the very formulation of the Chinese “nation” itself. In other words, the representation of the minorities in such colorful, romanticized fashion has more to do with constructing a majority discourse, than it does with the minorities themselves” (1994: 97). Of course, as we have seen, such pictorial representations of ethnic and primitive solidarity go further back than the Marxist-Mao regime, and it would be accurate to say that the mimicking of colonial visuality that marked the inauguration of Chinese folklore studies in the early twentieth century has been perpetuated to a degree by the PRC policies on ethnic minorities.<sup>13</sup>

From the standpoint of Chinese anthropology, the natives are usually not the Han people – certainly, not the educated Han – but the primitive other of civilization. Inasmuch as the Han and white people are virtually absent as the “object” of visual representation in the pages of *Folklore*, they become equivalent, unmarked ethnicities. The cosmopolitan ambitions of *Folklore* were bent on asserting this unmarkedness and equating the (educated) Han with white folklorists – equally unmarked – whom they seek to emulate. But I must hasten to add that colonial mimicry was only part of the story, for the Chinese folklorists had other goals in mind as well, one of which was to

bring about a national identity and solidarity through the invention of a new national literature. Many of them participated in the revolutionary struggle to fight imperialism on behalf of the oppressed. This need not, of course, contradict the discursive relation of domination between the Han and ethnic minorities we have just observed but will certainly complicate our understanding of the politics of folklore studies in modern China.

When the architects of folksong studies at Peking University first imagined folklore research in 1922, they stated in the inaugural issue of *Folksong Weekly* that their goal was twofold, one being academic and the other artistic. As folksongs were a major component of folklore, they intended to collect them for disciplined folklore research. The other goal was to accelerate the development of a national poetry to achieve Hu Shi's vision of vernacular literature in the New Culture movement of 1917. Ironically, the inspiration for a new Chinese national poetry with folksong as its foundation came, however, not so much from Hu Shi as from an Italian amateur folklorist in Beijing, Baron Guido Amadeo Vitale (1872–1918).

Vitale lived in Beijing for many years and served as a translator for the Italian embassy. During this time, he collected and published two anthologies of Beijing folksongs and children's songs: *Pekingese Rhymes* (1896), and *Chinese Merry Tales* (1901). Other studies of Chinese folklore by Westerners like Isaac Taylor Headland's (1859–1942) *Chinese Mother Goose Rhymes* (1900) and *The Chinese Boy and Girl* (1901) also came out around this time. Chinese scholars found that the foreigners were well ahead of the game and scrambled to catch up (Hung 1985: 21). The editors of *Folksong Weekly* cite Vitale approvingly: "A new national poetry could perhaps spring up based on these rhythms and on the true feelings of the people" (Hung 1985: 50). Thus, from the very start, the invention of a new national poetry and that of a new academic discipline went hand in hand, sometimes intersecting and sometimes diverging, with each constructing for itself a considerable set of mechanisms – mechanisms inextricably intertwined with the history of China's nation building. We have seen how the modern academic institution responsible for initiating folklore studies helped redefine the relationship between the Han majority and minority cultures. As we turn toward the entanglement of folklore research and social movements as noted by Uli Linke, we enter a rich and vast field of significations where the "masses" and "folk" have become the rallying points of revolutionary struggle and social reform on the left as well as on the right. Here, we may examine further the changing relationships of the state, party politics, the masses and the intelligentsia in modern China.<sup>14</sup>

In *Going to the People*, Chang-tai Hung attempts to identify a discursive tradition in Chinese folklore studies and track down the historical relationship, if any, between what he calls "folk populism" and Maoist populism of the 1940s and after. He argues that "the work initiated by folklorists and the momentum they generated no doubt made the Communist task much easier," but then a "direct link between the minority-culture study initiated by the folk-literature movement in the late 1920s and subsequent Communist interest in minorities is difficult to establish" (Hung 1985: 175). In the next section, we are going to identify a direct linkage between the early folklore studies to Mao's political movement and, specifically, we will see how the folksongs of the Zhuang people we encountered briefly in Zhong Jingwen's earlier work reemerged and metamorphosed in the 1950s. These metamorphoses raise some

fascinating issues about the role of broadcast media and mass audiences in the institution of an official popular culture in mainland China after 1949.

### FOLKSONG IN OFFICIAL POPULAR CULTURE

The rise of modern folklore studies coincided with the rapid spread of the technologies of gramophone, lithography, photography, film, and news media around the world. In *Yellow Music*, Andrew Jones (2001) has examined the birth of the cultural industry in colonial Shanghai and the ways in which the hybrid musical forms, be it “yellow (pornographic) music” or left-wing mass music, emerged in Chinese popular music. Jones draws our attention to the fact that these hybrid forms were “forged of the discursive, operational, and commercial interaction of new media technologies such as wireless broadcasting, sound cinema, and mass-circulation magazines in urban China.” After jazzy “yellow music” was banned in mainland China in the 1950s, “the producers and sing-song girls who had dominated the field (including Pathé-EMI Records and its stable of starlets) were banished to Taiwan and the British Crown Colony of Hong Kong. Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, Hong Kong became a sort of Shanghai manqué – the epicenter of modern song and the Mandarin musical cinema” (2001: 17–18). In China after 1949, state-owned technologies of wireless broadcasting, sound cinema, and mass-circulation magazines began to produce a very different species of mass entertainment which I call “official popular culture.”

It is well known that the Communist Party exalted the forms of *minjian wenyi* (folk literature and art) over and above all other forms of popular entertainment (Holm 1990; Gamble 1970). Particularly worth noting is the fact that the work of Chinese folklorists exerted a direct impact on CCP policies and on Mao Zedong’s own views on popular art and literature. In spring 1958, Mao launched his own folksong movement and instructed folklore fieldworkers to emulate the ancient practice of *caifeng* (gathering folksongs) and to make the condition of the people known through collected songs. In the Guangxi Autonomous Region of the Zhuang ethnicity, tens of thousands of folksongs and folktales were transcribed, hundreds of folk singers interviewed, several dozen musical tune patterns and a good number of legends and stories about the legendary female singer Liu Sanjie recorded (Zheng 1964: 144). This shows a striking parallel with the ancient Music Bureau I discussed earlier, but with a notable difference: the majority of the fieldworkers hailed from the Zhuang ethnicity rather than from the Han. On the basis of that fieldwork, the Guangxi Folk Musical Drama Troupe created a highly successful musical called *Liu Sanjie* by incorporating some of the folklore and collected folksongs into the play and they were invited to Beijing to give performances in 1960.<sup>15</sup> Mao Zedong watched their performance and praised it highly because “*Liu Sanjie* fights class oppression and is a revolutionary play” whereas drama critics in China viewed it as a milestone in the development of Chinese musical drama (Zhou Zuoqiu *et al.* 1979: 28).

When the Changchun Film Studio adapted *Liu Sanjie* to the screen in 1960, they incorporated as many as 110 Zhuang folksongs into the film, 78 of them taken directly from the musical drama, and subjected them to further modification. Take the riddle



verse in the opening scene where Liu Sanjie matches the song with some young men of her village. The fieldworker transcribed the original folksong as follows:

Who has a mouth but cannot speak?  
 Who has no mouth but makes a din?  
 Who has feet but cannot walk?  
 Who travels far and wide with no feet?  
 Bodhisattva has a mouth but cannot speak;  
 A copper gong has none but makes a din;  
 A stool has feet but cannot walk;  
 A boat has no feet but travels far and wide. (*Liu Sanjie* 1961: 11)

The last four lines are modified in the film version thus:

Bodhisattva has a mouth but cannot speak;  
 A copper gong has none but makes a din;  
 A rich man has feet but won't walk.  
 His money has no feet but travels far. (Loh 1984: 170 with slightly modified translation)

This revision shows the degree of ideological pressure on the use and study of folklore in the early 1960s. Film critics could not, however, agree on the artistic merit or ideological position of the film *Liu Sanjie*, and the judges of the second official Hundred Flowers Film Awards ranked it the fourth place in the Best Feature Film contest. But the film was extremely popular among the Chinese audience. An overwhelming majority of subscribers to the magazine *Popular Cinema*, for instance, voted to give the film three top prizes: best cinematography, best original composition, and best artistic design. When the film *Liu Sanjie* was shown in Hong Kong in the early 1960s, the audience response was no less enthusiastic, and the soundtracks could be heard on the streets of Hong Kong for months. Wai-Fong Loh (1984) informs us that the right-wing film producers of Hong Kong and Taiwan also “imitated the music and songs of *Liu Sanjie* to produce a rightist version called *Shan’ge lian* (folksong love story). This movie was also a financial success and won a prize in Taipei”(1984: 174). The degree of enthusiasm for the film *Liu Sanjie* and its soundtracks across the cold war divide attests to the richness, ambiguity, instability of folksong as form.<sup>16</sup>

## CODA

I remember watching *Liu Sanjie* as a child. That experience was primarily associated with the stage because my mother performed in one of the theatrical productions and was cast as Liu Sanjie. Night after night, I sat in an obscure corner backstage watching her perform. To my generation, *Liu Sanjie* – certainly not *Snow White* or *Sleeping Beauty* – was the archetypal fairytale of our girlhood. A talented singer from an ethnic minority group who wielded the magic wand of folksong to protect her people against evil and oppression was absolutely enchanting. There was something about this character and her songs that seemed to lift her above the official discourse of class

struggle. Still, I was not prepared for the surprising turn of events concerning the film *Liu Sanjie* in the 1990s.

One of the significant moments of transformation in Chinese society was marked by the introduction of copyright laws and intellectual property rights in 1991. Under the regime of copyright laws, the story of Liu Sanjie underwent further metamorphoses. In January 1996, I learned that the writers of the musical drama script *Liu Sanjie* brought a lawsuit – widely publicized in the media – against the screenplay writer Qiao Yu of the film version for infringement of their copyrights (Hu 1996 and Ren 1996). This lawsuit occurred in the midst of major legal reforms and changing government policies which allowed public properties and collectively owned properties to be transferred or expropriated into private hands.<sup>17</sup> In that spirit, the media coverage of the lawsuit strongly suggested that the musical drama *Liu Sanjie* was an act of original composition when its writers had merely appropriated something collectively owned by the Zhuang. The case was eventually settled outside court after the film director issued an open apology to the playwrights.

Huang Wanqiu – the female actress who starred in the film – came to Qiao Yu's defense and she argued in an interview:

When the film was completed and approved, Qiao Yu was credited as the screenplay writer, and nobody raised an objection at that time. No matter what, we must not dismiss someone's work if that work bears the fruit of genuine efforts. Had it not been for Qiao Yu, the film *Liu Sanjie* would not have seen the light of day. Guangxi people owe it to him and we should not obliterate his contributions because of some unfortunate circumstances. Many of Liu Sanjie's lyrics in the film are Qiao's compositions, like the tea-picking song and the lyrics in the song matching scene. Whatever one might say after so many years, Qiao's film script has brought fame to Guangxi and made Liu Sanjie known to the country and to the world. Legends of Liu Sanjie had been in existence for nearly a thousand years, but their impact was never so strongly felt as when the film was made. To me and to the people and cadres of Guangxi, it is plain wrong to make the kind of allegations they did against Qiao. Deep down, we cannot accept it. The Third Draft of the musical play and the film script are very different in terms of structure and plot. If there are similarities between them, plagiarism is not the right word because, after all, the material came from the folk to begin with. (Bo 1996)

The playwrights who initiated the lawsuit would not have found Huang's defense palatable especially when her own stardom in the 1960s was dependent on the success of the film. But their allegation of plagiarism on the ground of copyright and intellectual property becomes groundless as soon as the history of folksong collecting, folklore studies, and official popular culture enters into the picture.

Indeed, there are many angles to the picture I have tried to assemble here, and I cannot possibly exhaust all the richness within limited space. In this chapter, I have reflected on the ontological instability of folklore and tried to raise some questions about the legibility of the folk, ethnicity, race, community, and nation, for these questions are centrally related to the rise of modern folklore studies in China, the invention of an official popular culture, and their profound entanglement with the political life of the elite and the common people, home and abroad. The larger picture that emerges is not just about one nation or one people and their folklore but also about an interconnected history of translanguaging practices in modern times.

One might say that this is a shared and broadly contested history of colonial mimicry, ethnographic imagining, intellectual crosscurrents, revolutionary struggles, and postsocialism.

## NOTES

- 1 Moreover, as Regina Bendix has shown, when folksong and folktale are disembodied from their social contexts and gathered in books, they may turn into something else, such as commodities, to be consumed by bourgeois society in modern times (1997: 48).
- 2 From December 1922 to June 1925, the *Folksong Weekly* published a total of 97 issues and the Society for Folksong Research gathered about 13,000 folksongs. See *Geyao zhoukan*, nos. 69–76 (1924–1925).
- 3 The *Zhuang* ethnic minority is China’s largest minority group, whose population currently stands at 16 million. The majority of them live in southwest China or the Guangxi *Zhuang* Autonomous Region.
- 4 The entanglement of orality and writing in the production of literary texts is by no means unique to the ancient civilization of China. Galit Hasan-Rokem’s study of the aggadic Midrash in Late Antiquity shows the complex ways in which orality and folk narrative can be incorporated into rabbinic texts. See Hasan-Rokem (2000), *Web of life: Folklore and Midrash in Rabbinic Literature*. What I try to highlight with respect to the Chinese situation is the enduring interplay of literacy and the imperial bureaucratic machine and the sheer amount of millennia-long documented history which seems unique to China.
- 5 For the Manchu-Han ethnic conflict in the Qing and its long-lasting impact on modern politics, see Liu (2004: 75–90).
- 6 In his study of the *Book of Songs*, Zhi Chen (2007: 13–29) combines the paleographic-philological method with the archaeo-musicologist approach and argues that the *Book of Songs* was not a synchronically formed collection of songs and hymns in ancient China but the fruits of a long process of evolution and exchanges amongst multiple ethnic groups in China and, in particular, between those of the Shang (1723 BCE–1046 BCE) and Zhou peoples (1034 BCE–246 BCE).
- 7 Ban Gu (32 CE–92 CE) wrote the history of the Han dynasty to cover the period of 206 BCE to 25 CE. The book was completed with the assistance of his family members and is also known as the *Book of Former Han*.
- 8 Malinowski trained the first generation of Chinese social scientists, including Fei Xiaotong who is considered the father of Chinese sociology and anthropology.
- 9 Paul Rabinow (1977) was among the first to critique the field in *Reflections on Fieldwork in Morocco*. For other influential critics, see James Clifford and George Marcus (1986).
- 10 In her introduction to the original English edition, Wright (1913) merely states “If this book succeeds in pointing out a few of the many ways in which the study of our English dialects may not only contribute to the advancement of knowledge, but also give us a clearer insight into the life and character of the British peasant and artisan, it will have achieved the aim and object of its existence.”(xx).
- 11 For the British treatment of their urban poor as “many savage tribes” in the empire, see Mayhew 1985.
- 12 Hu Shi argued in 1918 that to create a new national literature, every possible dialectal source must be explored because local dialects provide an inexhaustible supply of what he calls “new blood” to national literature. The Dialect Survey Society at Peking University was founded in January 1924 (Hung 1985: 63).
- 13 Jay Dautcher’s (2000) fieldwork among the Uyghur community in contemporary China shows that the tradition of folksong is very much alive among the people there. His case

study does not tell us how much of that tradition has been appropriated by Chinese folklorics and become the mark of Uyghur otherness with respect to the Han.

- 14 In the 1920s through the 1930s, American-style social sciences as represented by Li Jinghan (Franklin Lee) and others continued to assimilate the problems of folklore studies into the general program of social reform (Chiang 2001).
- 15 An English version of the musical drama *Third Sister Liu: An Opera in Eight Scenes* was made available by Hsien-yi Yang and Gladys Yang (1962).
- 16 See Clark (1987: 61–62) for a study of box-office performance and film audiences in China from the mid-1950s through the early 1960s.
- 17 I analyzed this situation in an earlier study of popular culture and post-socialist ideology in the 1990s Culture” (Liu 1999).

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