

Chekiang's northern plain and even to other provinces. It seems to have been primarily urban (like epidemics?). It never became nationwide, probably because it lacked support from the imperial state, which was little involved with this cult. In tracing its growth in Chekiang from a local to a regional cult, Paul Katz discusses the region's epidemiological conditions, economic growth, attested miracles, the hagiographical literature, and the support of merchants, scholar-officials, and Taoist clergy. He stresses the participation of all types of people from different social backgrounds in the cult and its festival. The record is evidently full of lacunae, and it is not a criticism to note that his historical account is filled with many "probably"s and "possibly"s. Still, he is able to sketch a plausible outline of the development of a popular religious cult, hardly known before now, over several centuries, and describe in some detail its festival and its rituals.

At various points in the story, he is at pains to try to clarify the murky relationship between Taoism and local cults. He discusses, often to take issue with, the views of Kristofer Schipper, Valerie Hansen, Ken Dean, and like scholars. Katz argues that, at least in the case of the Marshal Wen cult, though Taoists played an important role they never dominated it. Taoist priests helped spread the cult, but were probably less important in this regard than merchants. Taoist priests participated in the great festivals at Wenchow and Hangchow, but were far from organizing or controlling them. Most convincing on this point is a fascinating chapter comparing three separate hagiographic traditions of Marshal Wen. A Song text in the Taoist canon describes him as a martial deity protecting Taoist orthodox ritual against heterodox deities. A temple stele by a Yuan dynasty scholar official stresses Wen's scholarly aspects and service to emperor and state. And a chapter in the Ming dynasty folk novel, *Journey to the North*, recounts how a good-hearted bean curd seller snatched and swallowed poison about to be put into a village well by a divine commissioner, acting on orders of the Jade Emperor to punish villagers for evil deeds; the Jade Emperor was moved by this selfless act and enfeoffed him Marshal of Epidemics. Clearly the Taoist hagiography, though the earliest, had but limited influence.

This monograph, based on a broad range of sources from the Taoist canon through local histories to folklore, and boasting an impressive command of Chinese, English, and Japanese scholarship, makes an important contribution to our growing understanding of the history of Chinese popular religion.

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Zhongguo nüxing de xing yu ai (Women's sexuality and love in China). By LI YINHE. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996. 299 pp.

Based on excerpts of personal interviews, Li Yinhe's book draws an interesting picture of women's sexuality in mainland China. In the 1990s, sexuality is no longer a taboo on the mainland, as Li's own previous book, *Zhongguo ren de xing'ai yu hunyin* (Sexual love and marriage of the Chinese) published by Henan renmin chubanshe in 1991, has already attested. What is refreshing in her most recent book is that Li allows her interviewees to express themselves in (often forcefully) subjective voices. In fact, most women did not feel reluctant to make surprisingly frank statements about various issues concerning sexuality. Their relatively independent voices to a degree contribute to deconstructing certain stereotypical images of Chinese women.

The book is divided into thirty-three sections. The sections are almost chronologically arranged in accordance with a woman's life circle—from puberty to menopause. Each section uses excerpts of interviews with forty-seven Chinese women. The youngest among them is twenty-nine, and the oldest is fifty-five. At the same time, the book also exposes interviewees' stances toward various aspects of sexuality: intercourse, adultery, divorce, cohabitation, lesbianism, pornography, rape, as well as relationships between love and sex, between love and marriage, and between sex and marriage. Furthermore, Li Yinhe devotes the last part of her book to interviewees' statements on gender issues. According to the author's introduction, most interviewees are "well-educated"—which in Chinese means having a college degree. Like the author herself, a great number of interviewees spent their adolescence and youth in the countryside or somewhere out of school during the Cultural Revolution. Their comments on various social, gender, and sexual issues often reflect their historically-determined personal experiences. In most cases, the author exposes their points of view without imposing much interference. This approach provides a space to the interviewees and allows them to speak as subjects instead of simply as objects of investigation—despite, or rather thanks to—the anonymous nature of interviews.

However, as Li Yinhe explains in her introduction, the circle of interviewees is limited. Although she states that these women do not need to be "typically" Chinese—since any selection is by nature subjective—in her conclusion she nevertheless essentializes them as typically Chinese, while classifying them as one category against another equally abstract one, Western women. In fact, her interviewees' attitudes and behaviors are due less to a cultural determinism—as the author seems to suggest in her conclusion—than to a specific political, social, and historical context. The author herself also observes that attitudes change according to different age groups, without mentioning that these changes can largely be attributed to social upheavals in China during the second half of our century. It is not simply coincidental that almost all her interviewees actually grew up during this tumultuous period. Furthermore, even without mentioning these changes, a line of demarcation drawn between the Chinese and the Western in today's global culture is itself questionable, especially because opinions expressed by interviewees often do not necessarily justify such a division but on the contrary prove cross-cultural similarities among women groups. Differences as well as similarities between these groups do not depend on a single category, but on many aspects, such as social positions, ideological beliefs, educational and cultural backgrounds. Despite a tendency to generalization, this book offers a valuable and much needed portrait of women's life in contemporary China—often from their own perspectives.

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South of the Clouds: Tales of Yunnan. Edited by LUCIEN MILLER. Translated by GUO XU, LUCIEN MILLER, and XU KUN. Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 1994. v, 328 pp. \$40.00 (cloth); \$19.95 (paper).

This volume, the result of a collaborative project sponsored by Yunnan Normal University in Kunming and the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, includes translations of thirty-five short folktales arranged under seven thematic groupings