

each group reinforce one other. The general introduction prepares the reader by giving an overall view of Shen's work and influence. The one- to two-page introductions to the stories then explain topical matters and offer several possible literary interpretations. The interpretations are more like suggestions as to where to look than argued positions, but they are effective in assisting a reader new to Shen and to modern Chinese literature.

The translations themselves read easily. (Chinese language experts may find fault, and even others might wonder at using "dollar" as the unit of currency, but the translations serve their purpose by providing delightful reading.) Those in literature studies will be interested by the echoes of Western writers. Though the stories may have some similarities, I feel Shen has improved or enriched the spark. Thus Shen's stories of social reform have a deeper human dimension than much of the socially concerned literature of the American 1930s. And if there are intimations of Freud and D. H. Lawrence in Shen's stories of lovers, Shen's language is less solemn, more naturally lyrical, and the characters' actions flow with the course of the seasons.

This collection is particularly valuable for readers of Chinese-American fiction, backing up Maxine Hong Kingston's (*The Woman Warrior*, 1976) and Amy Tan's (*The Joy Luck Club*, 1989) claims of village vindictiveness and female subjugation in rural China during the 1920s and 30s. Folklorists will be attracted to this collection because Shen took pride in his home area and wanted to preserve the memory of folk songs and traditions. However, he himself admitted that for the sake of his stories he sometimes fashioned a tradition. He was, after all, a novelist.

I enjoyed these stories very much. Sometimes I wished that the introductions were a little longer or at least that they refrained from making generalizations such as "to embrace a truly transcendental morality that finds more beauty in a spiritually examined Life than in the rationally examined life prized by the West." There is a point to be made here, but it needs to be explained more in the context of Shen's original contributions, or readers may take this as the usual East-West mental division.

A final small matter, but one that had me confused for a while. The description on the back cover lists Shen Congwen as having lived from 1902 to 1988, but on the copyright page we find "Shen, Ts'ung-wen, 1902-".

The editors and translators, as well as the University of Hawai'i Press, are to be praised for making the stories of this great writer available in such an accessible and attractive format. Highly recommended.

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SHEPHERD, JOHN ROBERT. *Marriage and Mandatory Abortion among the 17th-century Siraya*. American Ethnological Society Monograph Series 5. Arlington, VA: American Anthropological Association, 1995. iv + 99 pages. Map, table, figure, bibliography. Paper US\$12.50 (AAA members), US\$15.00 (nonmembers); ISBN 0-913167-71-1. (Order from: The American Anthropological Association, 4350 North Fairfax Drive, Suite 640, Arlington, VA 22203-1621, USA.)

This is an excellent piece of historical ethnography. Shepherd, an American anthropologist known for his remarkable book *Statecraft and Political Economy on the Taiwan Frontier, 1600-1800* (1993), discusses here the interesting problem of mandatory abortion among the

Siraya, a group of Sinicized plain-dwelling aborigines (*Pingpu-tsu*). The most thorough study to date of this extinct custom, this work is an epoch-making achievement that adds a new page to the study of the Taiwan aborigines.

According to a report by G. Candidius (CAMPBELL 1903), a Protestant missionary who engaged in mission work among the aboriginal peoples of southwestern Taiwan in the 1620s, Sirayan women in those days were not allowed to bear children until reaching their mid-thirties, despite the fact that they usually married at puberty (men married at age twenty or twenty-one). If a woman became pregnant before reaching this age her pregnancy was ended by a priestess or shamaness using a massage technique.

This custom of mandatory abortion has embarrassed some scholars and evoked various attempts at explanation from others. In his own attempt to solve this "ethnographic puzzle" and construct a coherent interpretation of its meaning, Shepherd first presents concrete evidence to refute certain conventional speculations dating back to Montesquieu and Malthus that regarded this form of mandatory abortion as a means of population control. His refutation is based on his view of Sirayan society before Dutch rule as the "Original Affluent Society," a view that will find acceptance among many contemporary anthropologists. In place of the usual demographic interpretations Shepherd proposes two frames of analysis: institutional and symbolic.

Shepherd's institutional analysis is perhaps best understood in terms of his two-stage process model of the Sirayan marriage (31). In the first stage a man had to live apart from his wife (duolocal residence) in order to fulfil his male age-grade duties, such as group hunting, headhunting, and warfare. In the second stage, after he reached the age of forty and retired from age-grade service, he moved into his wife's house (uxorilocal residence). His wife was allowed to bear children after that.

Shepherd argues that mandatory abortion provided the means to maintain this long period of separate residence. He sees it, that is, as an attempt to resolve the tension between the demands of the male's age group and the desire to create a uxorilocal conjugal family.

Despite this well-ordered interpretation, I have a simple question. Why weren't Sirayan wives allowed to bear children at their natal homes while living apart from their husbands? Candidius's record does not address this question directly, but it does tell us a few interesting facts, such as that frequent adultery and divorce created a weak marital bond in the society. In such a situation could the mandatory abortion of the Siraya not be interpreted as an act of confirming the legitimacy of a child or of establishing a formal father/child bond?

Shepherd himself seems conscious of a certain insufficiency in his social structural argument. In his symbolic analysis he puts forward another interpretation that focuses on the problem of pregnancy taboos. Since Candidius recorded very little of the Siraya's own explanation for their acts of mandatory abortion, and since it is, of course, quite impossible to obtain from present-day Siraya any information on a custom that disappeared in the early seventeenth century, the only way to further explore the issue is to draw upon various modern ethnographies of the other Taiwan aboriginal groups and apply them to the Sirayan case through controlled comparisons. Shepherd enumerates cases of pregnancy taboos found in the cultures of the Ami, Puyuma, Paiwan and other groups, and derives a common logic that emphasizes the contrast between two gender-linked spheres of activity: female pregnancy and procreation on the one hand and male hunting, headhunting, and warfare on the other. In these other aboriginal peoples the pregnancy taboo is used as a device to keep men out of danger. On the basis of this fact Shepherd infers analogous notions that led to the practice of mandatory abortions among the Siraya: "For the Siraya, mandatory abortions for headhunters' wives would have minimized the danger a wife's pregnancy posed for an active headhunter" (44).

It makes little sense to challenge this interpretation, based on analogy, with empirical questions. It is unlikely that Shepherd or anyone else can give decisive answers to such questions as, "What were the social and cultural circumstances that caused the Siraya to hold such 'extreme' notions?" As he states, what led to this extremity is a historical problem "buried in a past that lies beyond our reach" (66). The above-mentioned approach of comparing customs on abortion among other Taiwanese aboriginal groups with those of the ancient Siraya is limited, since materials on abortion are, as far as I know, exceedingly scarce in the ethnographies on Taiwanese aborigines. Records from the Japanese colonial period mention abortions performed on women who have conceived illegitimate children (OKAMATSU 1918–21, IDE 1932), but such data are too fragmentary to base firm conclusions upon. Is the answer to this problem, too, "buried in a past that lies beyond our reach"?

Comparing Shepherd's two books, I find *Statecraft and Political Economy* more substantial in many respects than *Marriage and Mandatory Abortion*, which is an anthropological study. But I find the latter more intriguing.

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ZHU LIANGWEN (assisted by FU QIN and SUN RUYAN). *The Dai or the Tai and Their Architecture and Customs in South China*. Bangkok: DD Books and Kunming: The Science Technology Press of Yunnan, 1992. xi + 140 pages. Map, line drawings, mono- and polychrome photographic plates, references, index. Soft cover n.p.; ISBN 974-88747-8-8.

This sensitively written and lavishly illustrated volume is a most welcome addition to the English-language literature on the Tai-speaking peoples of Southwest China; it is likely to prove especially useful to scholars of traditional Southeast Asian architecture, as well as to socio-cultural anthropologists who specialize in the Tai peoples and their immediate neighbors.

The principal author is dean of architecture in the Yunnan Institute of Technology, and the work was published first in Chinese. Its appearance in an English-language edition (translated by Zhang Hongwei and meticulously edited by Geoffrey Walton) is the consequence of a happy cooperation between the Kunming publishers and DD Books of Bangkok. We can only hope that this collaboration will lead to further English-language publications from the huge corpus of National Minority research that is now being produced by Chinese scholars.

There are still too few English-language works that deal not only with the architecture