

A Reply to Professor Eberhard

Nai-tung Ting

Macomb, Illinois

Professor Eberhard's review of my book *A Type Index of Chinese Folktales* in your distinguished journal (no. 127/128 [1980], pp. 137–40) ends with and centers around a prediction that „few of them [folklorists] will be able to use it [my book] critically“ (p. 140), a prediction which has not and will most likely not become true. My book has already aroused considerable interest, especially in the Far East. A Chinese translation will soon come out, and a Japanese translation has been published in installments in a periodical. In areas where most of the sources I used are available and scholars using my book undoubtedly know the language, his prediction is entirely irrelevant. I am sure that my book would not mislead any serious Western reader either, for I have been receiving frank and detailed comments from both European and Chinese colleagues and I have used and re-checked it constantly since its publication. I am now certain that although it has its share of errors, it is nevertheless a useful and reliable tool for research. His review, however, touches on some issues which are basic to our discipline and thus compels me to ask for space to reply as follows:

1. Why did I not discuss his book in the introduction to my book (p. 138)? Answer: I did not wish to appear unfriendly. Professor Eberhard's system is not entirely his, as he has always claimed, but derived partially from the works of some Chinese folklorists, especially Chung Ching-wen. Take for instance his type 28, which is analyzed in an article by Professor Chung as follows (faithful English translation mine):

- (1) Two brothers (or friends), the old malignantly drove out the younger.
- (2) The younger in a temple or on a tree heard the talk of animals.
- (3) He acted accordingly and acquired many rewards.
- (4) The older admired and imitated him, finally was eaten by the animals.¹

Except for „admired“ and „finally,“ I cannot see any difference between the German analysis of Professor Eberhard's and the Chinese which came out some years before the appearance of *Typen chinesischer Volksmärchen* (henceforth referred to as his book). Besides the above, 13 other types are also almost identical in wording and the division of story elements,² and 24 others so closely similar to Mr. Chung's that the genetic relationship between Professor Eberhard's book and Professor Chung's article is unmistakable.³ Professor Chung told me last year in Peking that two copies of every article or book on Chinese folklore by himself and his associates had been sent to Professor

Eberhard when Professor Eberhard was collecting materials in China in the early 1930's. Among the jokes, those on clever and stupid women (SCHWANKE 28, 1–XI, and 7, 1–III) are based on LOU Tze-k'uang's *Ch'iao-nü ho tai-niang ti ku-shih* (first published in Shanghai, 1933; rpt. Taipei, 1970, pp. 131–35).

The style used by Chinese folklorists of the Republican period in describing the types is on the whole vague and abstract, apparently drawn from memory rather than data laid before them. Professor Chung admitted as much since he acknowledged that his types were but casual products, designed to fill blank spaces in a periodical.⁴ The ultimate model for this style could be „Some Types of Indo-European Folktales,“ written by Baring-Gould and revised by Joseph Jacobs, the only Western attempt at classification ever translated into Chinese and known in the Republican period.⁵ Professor Eberhard, of course, greatly remedied the shortcomings with his notes on the individual versions – a lavish way of using space which few other folklorists can expect to enjoy. He also added many new tale types, though mostly in legends, myths, and jokes. I embrace the generally accepted view that myths and legends do not belong with a tale index – a view Professor Eberhard has partly accepted (p.137).⁶ To my knowledge, no Chinese scholar has as yet tried to classify Chinese myths and legends.⁷ Although his book treated a mere fraction of Han legends and contained few references to the rich treasure of Chinese minority myths, it is the only organized account of these genres, and for this reason is useful to Western readers.

Other less important factors that deterred me from adopting Professor Eberhard's method – types with one version only, premature conclusions on history and distribution, identical texts counted as different versions, etc. – will not be discussed here.

2. Why did I use the AT system, or identify Chinese types with international types? Answer: I was just following the examples set by Chung Ching-wen, Chao Ching-shen,⁸ Walter Anderson, and Stith Thompson⁹ – scholars I respect the most in China and the West. In fact, Professor Eberhard did a little of this too in calling his type 32 „Aschenbrödel,“ subtitled his type 14 „Hühnchen-Hähnchen,“ etc. In agreeing that India was the greatest foreign influence on Chinese folktales, he also made it impossible to deny AT titles and numbers to indubitably Indian types discovered in China. What I did was first to reorganize the heritage left to me by my eminent predecessors, throwing out faulty identifications.¹⁰ Then I pointed out the peculiar features of the Chinese redactions. I do not believe Professor Eberhard himself would have disapproved my principle – namely, stories that agree essentially in plot and structure with an established type are versions of the same type despite minor differences – since none of the heroines in his „Aschenbrödel“ is ever covered with ashes or marries a prince in the versions he listed. To be sure, I registered far more international types because of covering not only more Han tales, but also those of the minorities, which are closer to the international tradition. Most of the AT types I have added, especially in the Märchen and novella sections, possess features distinc-

tive of and peculiar to such types and are thus unmistakable.¹¹ Some others agreeing only partially with complex AT types were included because I did not plan to systematize the motifs, the Motif Index being so incomplete. Professor Eberhard's suspicion that I may have distorted data to fit the AT system because of a statement on p. 16 of my book – namely, in treating complex Chinese tales I placed them „sometimes under four or five types“ – is unwarranted. I did so only „sometimes“. When those parts always cohere to suggest peculiarly Chinese types, I did list them as Chinese types (such as 433D and 400C in my book). Those that do not always cohere in the same way may be still in the process of turning into regional types; some of their versions may appear as such on account of the childish practice of Chinese collectors to string tales together for artistic effect.¹² I regret that Professor Eberhard misunderstood me. But I believe that readers who examine my book carefully would feel differently.

This is not to say that the AT system may not be construed as a „strait-jacket,“ as Professor Eberhard called it on p. 139. The section on animal tales in the *Types* is especially vulnerable. Of the tales on the fox and the bear, for instance, the fox may sometimes be the dupe even in Europe. But the *Types* contains no such suggestion. In view of the fact that fauna and flora of the same species often become different varieties in different parts of the world, rigid identification would doom a system to regional application. Only most experts in the AT system, I believe, did not interpret it so rigidly. My section on the animal tales, for which I drew most fire from Professor Eberhard, had been shown to two of the greatest in a draft with much more detailed notes. One of them (Archer Taylor) had given me very useful comments, but showed no objection to the classification as it now stands. Most scholars in our discipline, I think, admire and share Propp's observation that, while the function generally remains stable, the agent does not. I have hinted the same in my section on the Chinese oicotype (p. 17 of my book). Since there is still confusion, I suggest that the titles and definitions of many types be made to appear more flexible in a revised edition of the *Types*, should there be one some day. The title of type 155, for instance, might be rewritten as „The Ungrateful Serpent (Wolf, etc.) Returned to Captivity.“ Type 329 might be entitled „Hiding from the Devil (Ogre, Magician, etc.)“ to be more accurate. In this way, the language will remain concrete, but become also more comprehensive. Out of respect for my predecessors, I dared not make any such proposal until in my article on type 681, after I had read all the available versions.¹³ No classification system is always fool-proof.¹⁴ For a field dealing with kaleidoscopic changes such as folk narrative research, asking for slight changes in wording in the principal system is, I believe, not asking for too much.

3. Why did I treat also tales of the minorities in China? This issue is more ethnological than folkloric, but Professor Eberhard's view on minority cultures in China, to my knowledge, is not shared by any Chinese authority. Professor Kwang-chih Chang of the Academia Sinica in Taipei, for instance, has stated that he does not „share“ Professor Eberhard's „assumption“ in regard to the

ethnohistory of South China, where most of the minorities dwell.¹⁵ I am no ethnologist, but in my contacts with minority folklorists in China, I have discovered a great deal of linguistic and historical evidence which has convinced even an ignoramus like me that their peoples are as „Chinese“ as the Han. As for Sinkiang and Tibet, which Professor Eberhard labeled as different „countries“ (p. 139), I can only say that I know of no country called Sinkiang in history. Tibet has been a part of China for centuries, and the essay on Chinese-Tibetan literary relations which I mentioned in my Introduction is based on examples from classical Chinese literature.¹⁶ More collections of the folktales in these areas have appeared in Chinese than in any other language, and by China I mean a geographical area rather than a racial group, as it has been clearly indicated in my Introduction. Since Professor Eberhard never berated the Americans for studying American Indian folklore or the Japanese for studying the Ainu, his favorite theme that the Chinese alone should not study their own minorities may never convince us Chinese. The folk tradition in which he claims to be the authority, one may add, is not his own either. Besides, he also included Chinese minority narratives in his book under types such as 47, 48, etc.

4. Why did I omit places of distribution and was so laconic in my notes on individual types and versions? Answer: The all-mighty dollar. My first draft contained many more references to nationalities and places of distribution, and notes on variant details. They were all omitted voluntarily primarily for economic reasons. I realized also that most FFC indexes on the tales of other lands are in a similar style. An index is only a tool for showing what is where, and all serious researchers acquainted with the FFC series will use my book alongside of the *Types*,¹⁷ check the bibliography for areas of distribution, and examine the originals. The generous space which Professor Eberhard's book enjoyed and which enabled him to treat one-fourth as much material in almost 50 percent more pages than mine was a luxury for which I dared not aspire. I am content that my book is also a member of a prestigious series, some of which contain even more data in less space than mine.

In short, in reply to Professor Eberhard, I can only say that I am grateful that he took so much pain to write the review, thereby giving me the opportunity to air my opinions. He would have understood my little (as compared with his in page numbers) contribution better if he had cared to read it more carefully and compared it with the *Types* and the other FFC indexes besides his own. His apprehension is irrelevant and his prediction, displaying distrust or contempt for possible users of my book, is very unlikely to become true.

Notes

- 1 CHUNG Ching-wen, „Chung-kuo min-chien ku-shih hsing-shih,“ in: *Min-su hsüeh chi-chien*, p.357.
- 2 E = type number in *Typen chinesischer Volksmärchen*; Es = Schwanke in the same book; C = page number in Chung's article: E 14, C 362-63; E 24, C 359; E

- 30, C 362; E 31, C 358; E 35, C 363; E 39, C 356-57; E 40, C 369-70; E 42, C 365; E 119, C 367; E 122, C 356; E 125, C 364; E 156, C 358; E 194, C 361.
- 3 E 3, C 368; E 10, C 366; E 18, C 355; E 19, C 370-71; E 26, C 366; E 43, C 364-65; E 61, C 360-61; E 107, C 361; E 121, C 360; E 155, C 359; E 157, C 370; E 190, C 372; E 191, C 367; E 192, C 374; E 193, C 360; E 200, C 369; E 208, C 359; ES 3, C 371; ES 61 grat. 1, C 372; ES 61 grat. 2, C 373 (No. 2); ES 61 grat. 3, C 373 (No. 3); ES 61 grat. 4, C 373 (No. 4); ES 61 grat. 5, C 373 (No. 5); ES 25, C 366-67.
- 4 CHUNG, p. 354.
- 5 Charlotte Sophia BURNE (ed.), *The Handbook of Folklore* (London, 1914), pp.344–55, appendix C, „Some Types of Indo-European Folktales.“ For the type just cited, see p.354, type 63. Translated into Chinese by CHUNG Ching-wen and YANG Ch'eng-chih as „Yin-tu Ou-lo-pa min-t'an hsing-shih,“ and compared as a standard with Chinese tales by CHAO Ching-shen in his „Chung-kuo min-chien ku-shih hsing-shih fa-tuan“ (*Min-su*, no.8 [1928], pp.1–10), and by CHUNG Ching-wen in his „Chung-kuo Yin Ou min-chien ku-shih chih hsiang-ssu“ (*Wen-hsüeh chou-pao*, 6 [1928]: 181–88).
- 6 Professor Eberhard's interpretation of the term „legend“ is evidently different from mine. I have adopted the general concept that stories concerned with popular superstitions are legends, a concept which accounts for the exclusion of British fairy lore as well as stories of other supernatural beings from the *Types*, and the inclusion of a considerable number of them in CHRISTSEN's *Migratory Legends*. That I have no objection to the study of superstitions my publications on folk narratives supply ample evidence. If in excluding stories the folk believed to be true from a tale type index I did „follow“ the „party line,“ as he charged on page 137, then so did all folklorists who observed traditional genre distinction. (I am not a member of any political party).
- 7 CHUNG Ching-wen's articles on Chinese legends, such as „Chung-kuo ti-fang ti ch'uan-shuo“ (*Min-su hsüeh chi-chien*, pp.53–96), *Chung-kuo ti shui-chai ch'uan-shuo chi ch'i-t'a*, and *Ch'ung-tsu ch'i-yuan shen-hua* remain to be the best and most thorough explorations of these subjects. Unfortunately, he has never made any systematic attempt beyond these subjects.
- 8 See the last two articles listed in note 5.
- 9 More than 70 types in the *Types* are listed as having Chinese versions.
- 10 I did not include such types as 125, 130, and 1694, for instance, as Anderson and Thompson had done.
- 11 Besides many types in which no notes on peculiar features are attached to either the type or the individual versions, see types such as 302, 518, 567, 653A, 782, 821B, 875B, 896, 916, 967, 976A, 980*, 1004.
- 12 See Nai-tung TING, „The Collection and Study of the Folktale in Twentieth-Century China,“ in: Venetia NEWALL (ed.), *Folklore Studies in the Twentieth Century: Proceedings of the Centenary Conference of the Folklore Society* (Suffolk, England, 1980), p.407.
- 13 Nai-tung TING, „Years of Experience in a Moment: A Study of a Tale Type in Asian and European Literature,“ *Fabula* 22.3/4 (1981): 210.
- 14 Even in a field like geology, I have heard experts argue about the classification of rocks.

- 15 Kwang-chih CHANG, „The Proto-Malayo-Polynesian Culture and the Sino-Tibetan /Malayo-Polynesian Relationship.“ *Bulletin of the Institute of Ethnology, Spring 1959*, p.97. A summary of the Chinese theory as expounded in a most influential work may be found in my *The Cinderella Cycle in China and Indo-China* (FFC 213), pp.8–9.
- 16 T'EN Hai-yen (ed.), *Chin yü feng-huang* (Shanghai, 1961), pp.vi–ix. Professor Kwang-chih Chang also treated China and Tibet as one ethnological unit in the above-mentioned article.
- 17 Professor Eberhard could have found answers to his questions on my types 8* and 1620 (pp. 139–40) if he had bothered to read the *Types* alongside my book.

-
- 1 CHUNG Ching-wen, „Chung-kuo min-chien ku-shih hsing-shih,“ in: *Min-su hsüeh chi-chien*, p. 357.
 - 2 E = type number in *Typen chinesischer Volksmärchen*; Es = Schwanke in the same book; C = page number in Chung's article: E 14, C 362-63; E 24, C 359; E 30, C 362; E 31, C 358; E 35, C 363; E 39, C 356-57; E 40, C 369-70; E 42, C 365; E 119, C 367; E 122, C 356; E 125, C 364; E 156, C 358; E 194, C 361.
 - 3 E 3, C 368; E 10, C 366; E 18, C 355; E 19, C 370-71; E 26, C 366; E 43, C 364-65; E 61, C 360-61; E 107, C 361; E 121, C 360; E 155, C 359; E 157, C 370; E 190, C 372; E 191, C 367; E 192, C 374; E 193, C 360; E 200, C 369; E 208, C 359; ES 3, C 371 ; ES 61 grat. 1, C 372; ES 61 grat. 2, C 373 (No. 2); ES 61 grat. 3, C 373 (No. 3); ES 61 grat. 4, C 373 (No. 4); ES 61 grat. 5, C 373 (No. 5); ES 25, C 366-67.
 - 4 CHUNG, p. 354.
 - 5 Charlotte Sophia BURNE (ed.), *The Handbook of Folklore* (London, 1914), pp.344–55, appendix C, „Some Types of Indo-European Folktales.“ For the type just cited, see p.354, type 63. Translated into Chinese by CHUNG Ching-wen and YANG Ch'eng-chih as „Yin-tu Ou-lo-pa min-t'an hsing-shih,“ and compared as a standard with Chinese tales by CHAO Ching-shen in his „Chung-kuo min-chien ku-shih hsing-shih fa-tuan“ (*Min-su*, no.8 [1928], pp.1–10), and by CHUNG Ching-wen in his „Chung-kuo Yin Ou min-chien ku-shih chih hsiang-ssu“ (*Wen-hsüeh chou-pao*, 6 [1928]: 181–88).
 - 6 Professor Eberhard's interpretation of the term „legend“ is evidently different from mine. I have adopted the general concept that stories concerned with popular superstitions are legends, a concept which accounts for the exclusion of British fairy lore as well as stories of other supernatural beings from the *Types*, and the inclusion of a considerable number of them in CHRISTSEN's *Migratory Legends*. That I have no objection to the study of superstitions my publications on folk narratives supply ample evidence. If in excluding stories the folk believed to be true from a tale type index I did „follow“ the „party line,“ as he charged on page 137, then so did all folklorists who observed traditional genre distinction. (I am not a member of any political party).
 - 7 CHUNG Ching-wen's articles on Chinese legends, such as „Chung-kuo ti-fang ti ch'uan-shuo“ (*Min-su hsüeh chi-chien*, pp.53–96), *Chung-kuo ti shui-chai ch'uan-shuo chi ch'i-t'a*, and *Ch'ung-tsu ch'i-yuan shen-hua* remain to be the best and most thorough explorations of these subjects. Unfortunately, he has never made any systematic attempt beyond these subjects.
 - 8 See the last two articles listed in note 5.
 - 9 More than 70 types in the *Types* are listed as having Chinese versions.
 - 10 I did not include such types as 125, 130, and 1694, for instance, as Anderson and Thompson had done.
 - 11 Besides many types in which no notes on peculiar features are attached to either the type or the individual versions, see types such as 302, 518, 567, 653A, 782, 821B, 875B., 896, 916, 967, 976A, 980*, 1004.

- 12 See Nai-tung TING, „The Collection and Study of the Folktale in Twentieth-Century China,“ in: Venetia NEWALL (ed.), *Folklore Studies in the Twentieth Century: Proceedings of the Centenary Conference of the Folklore Society* (Suffolk, England, 1980), p.407.
- 13 Nai-tung TING, „Years of Experience in a Moment: A Study of a Tale Type in Asian and European Literature,“ *Fabula* 22.3/4 (1981): 210.
- 14 Even in a field like geology, I have heard experts argue about the classification of rocks.
- 15 Kwang-chih CHANG, „The Proto-Malayo-Polynesian Culture and the Sino-Tibetan /Malayo-Polynesian Relationship.“ *Bulletin of the Institute of Ethnology, Spring* 1959, p.97. A summary of the Chinese theory as expounded in a most influential work may be found in my *The Cinderella Cycle in China and Indo-China* (FFC 213), pp.8–9.
- 16 T' IEN Hai-yen (ed.), *Chin yü feng-huang* (Shanghai, 1961), pp.vi–ix. Professor Kwang-chih Chang also treated China and Tibet as one ethnological unit in the above-mentioned article.
- 17 Professor Eberhard could have found answers to his questions on my types 8* and 1620 (pp. 139–40) if he had bothered to read the *Types* alongside my book.