

dish which will meet the high standards established by the present volume. On various occasions they present the ambitious intention to continue collecting and eventually publish further volumes (p. X), beginning with the English translation of the proverbs included in the collection of van Manen and the maxims from mKhas-btsun bzañ-po published in Dharamsala in 1974 under the Tibetan title *gTam dpe sna tshogs darñ gžas tshig kha śas* (p. XXVI), and prepare a forthcoming publication dedicated to a detailed linguistic analysis of the language of *gtam dpe* (p. 282). All these undertakings would immensely widen our understanding of the proverbial genre in Tibetan literature.

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GRÜNFELDER, Alice: *Tashi Dawa und die neuere tibetische Literatur*. Edition Cathay, Band 41. Bochum, Projekt Verlag 1999. 145 pp.

The author of the publication under review, Alice Grünfelder, has devoted her interest to a topic, which was so far neglected not only by Western Sinologists and Tibetologists, but also by the Tibetans in the diaspora – namely modern Tibetan literature published in China (and as she is a Sinologist, her research was limited to Tibetan authors who write in Chinese, or whose works were translated into Chinese). She has already published a paper which dealt with this topic (“Tashi Dawa and Modern Tibetan literature”, in: Krasser, M., Much, M. T., Steinkellner, E., Tauscher, H. /eds./: *Tibetan Studies*, Volume 1, Wien 1997, pp. 337–346), edited and translated into German a collection of modern Tibetan short stories (*An den Lederriemen geknotete Seele*, Zürich 1997), and she had the opportunity to interview Tashi Dawa. A. Grünfelder concentrates her interest on the group of young Tibetan authors, who started to publish in the late 1970s and early 1980s with Tashi Dawa as the best-known, both at home and abroad, and representative among them (one should also mention Alai, Sebo, Jimi Pingjie). Her knowledge of their writings is certainly most intimate among Western scholars as is also shown in the present book. The scope of the publication is limited by the fact that she cannot read Tibetan and she does not discuss modern Tibetan poetry. These remarks should not diminish the value of the publication, but the reader should be aware of her understanding of modern Tibetan literature which is within the above-mentioned limits.

As stated by A. Grünfelder, her present contribution is only a preliminary study (p. 68) and many questions, often raised also by the author, remain unanswered. However, at this stage, when outside the People’s Republic of China there are almost no studies devoted to modern Tibetan literature, her work is most welcomed. In focus of her interest stands Tashi Dawa, but the first half (pp. 1–68) of the book is devoted to more general issues of contemporary Tibetan literature. She makes the reader acquainted with the context of Tibetan literature in the Chinese cultural and political arena: namely the concept of the so-called minority literature (*shaoshu minzu wenxue*) which she, with good reasons, rejected as a mere political label which does not help in understanding and evaluating it. An interesting aspect of this problem is the reception of modern Tibetan literature in the People’s Republic of China by Han-Chinese literary critics. Her quotations and comments, together with the brief introduction into the short stories and novels about Tibet written by Han-Chinese authors (e.g. Ma Jian, Ma Yuan, Liu Wei, although their approach to Tibet differs considerably) illustrate that the fascination with Tibet, recently analysed by Donald S. Lopez, Jr. (*Prisoners of Shangri-La. Tibetan Buddhism and the West*) and in the proceedings edited by Th. Dodin and H. Räther (*Mythos*

*Tibet. Wahrnehmungen, Projektionen, Phantasien*) is not restricted only to the Western hemisphere, but it has its counterpart also in contemporary China (and not only in the realm of the written word, but also in the visual arts as P. Kværne has shown in the essay “The Ideological Impact on Tibetan Art”, in: Barnett, R., Akiner Sh. /eds./: *Resistance and Reform in Tibet*, London 1994, pp. 166–185). This issue is certainly worthy of further research which would move the discourse on the Shangri-La perception of Tibet out of the domain of the “white man”.

Before starting with the analysis of Tashi Dawa’s short stories, A. Grünfelder lists (and demonstrates by quotations) the main topics of the literature published by young Tibetan writers in the 1980s and 1990s, which was an outcome of the restrained political, cultural and economic liberalization in Tibet: relations between Chinese and Tibetans (this sensitive issue is treated very cautiously), the tension between modernity and tradition, contrasts between the city and the countryside (both between the lifestyles and the environments), the issue of reincarnation and karma, the often encountered theme of dreams. All these subjects can be found, to varying degrees, also in the work of Tashi Dawa. The author presents six stories of Tashi Dawa: the description of the content of these stories and a brief analysis form the second part of the book (pp. 69–131). Due to the limited space (and the preliminary character of the present publication) the reader gets a glimpse of Tashi Dawa’s literary work. Only the short story “Souls tied to the knots on a leather cord” receives more attention. A. Grünfelder arrived at a conclusion which was also briefly mentioned by other authors (G. Barmé), that is the influence of Latin American magic realism, represented mainly by Márquez, on Tashi Dawa’s fiction, but her arguments are stronger and documented by numerous quotations (she compares Tashi Dawa also with the well-known Kyrgyz writer Aitmatov). In the final part of her work, the author places modern Tibetan literature, as exemplified by Tashi Dawa, in the context of the so-called regionalistic literature (“regionalistische Literatur”, p.128) characterized by the formulation of distinctive regional identity and by the aesthetization of one’s own otherness.

The publication under review illustrates that the issue of the so-called national minorities in the People’s Republic of China, which was in the recent years approached from the angles of anthropology, history, political science (e.g.: S. Harrell /ed./: *Cultural Encounters on China’s Ethnic Frontiers*; H. Schmidt-Glintzer: *China. Vielvölkerreich und Einheitsstaat*; C. Mackerras: *China’s Minorities. Integration and Modernization in the Twentieth Century*) should be analysed also in the framework of literary studies. The writings of Tashi Dawa which reflects the individual and collective search for identity, the attempt to find orientation in the tumultuous period of the opening of China (in Tibet accompanied by the double acculturation: Sinicization and mediated Westernization), the confrontation of the modern and traditional world and at the same time synthesis between past and present answers the question what does it mean to be a Tibetan in China. Tashi Dawa’s answers are not conclusive and they represent the feelings of educated (Chinese educated, which enabled him and other Tibetan writers access to translations of world literature) Tibetan urban youth, but his thoughtful perception of Tibetan-ness is unique. His critical attitude towards Tibetan Buddhist tradition documents his affinity with the group of exiled Tibetan intellectuals (Tsering Shakya, Dawa Norbu, Jamyang Norbu) who try to demystify Tibet.

The present publication is an important Sinological contribution to Tibetan studies and to the issue of majority-minority relations in contemporary China in general. More similar studies focused on modern Uighur or Hui literature would be an enrichment for our understanding of their self-perception.

Addendum: Among the translations of Tashi Dawa's writings into Western languages (pp. 6–7) the Slovak translation of the short story "Invitation of a century" [Pozvanie storočia] (trans. by M. Slobodník) published in the journal *Revue svetovej literatúry*, Vol. 31 (1995), No. 1, pp. 164–173 is missing.

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