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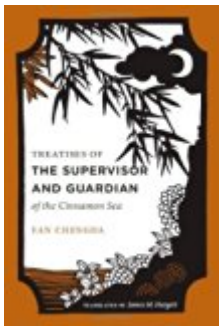
**Fan Chengda.** *Treatises of the Supervisor and Guardian of the Cinnamon Sea: The Natural World and Material Culture of Twelfth-Century China.* Translated by James M. Hargett. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2010. lxvi + 349 pp. $40.00, paper, ISBN 978-0-295-99079-8.

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Writing a review of a work of translation is not an easy task, especially when the translation under review deals with lots of seemingly trivial information about insects, stones, and fruits. In this review, I will briefly introduce the book's contents and provide some suggestions about translation. *Treatises of the Supervisor and Guardian of the Cinnamon Sea* (hereafter *Treatises*) is an annotated, complete translation of Fan Chengda's (1126-93) *Guihai yuheng zhi*, a remarkable first-hand account of the environment and society of non-Chinese peoples in modern-day Guangxi Province during the twelfth century. As is well known among Song scholars, Fan was one of the most renowned poets during the Southern Song period (1127-1279). He was also an experienced traveler and avid record keeper of his travels. For a sociocultural historian like myself, however, he is chiefly remembered as a person who played a decisive role in disseminating the voluntary labor service (*yiyi*) across the empire and also as the author of the *Gazetteer of Suzhou Prefecture* (*Wu jun zhi*), one of the fine gazetteers from the Southern Song, which is credited with its extensive references and simple and pointed accounts.

*Treatises* is organized into thirteen categories: "Precipice-grottoes," "Metals and Stones," "Aromatics," "Wines," "Implements," "Birds," "Quadrupeds," "Insects and Fishes," "Flowers; "Fruits," "Herbaceous Plants and Trees," "Miscellaneous Items," and "the Man Peoples." It provides a host of interesting, if not always important, information about the area. A reader will hear colorful stories about the finest wine called Auspicious Dew and various weapons used by local people. They will read about how they tamed elephants, caught Burmese pythons, executed decapitation using a bent bamboo pole to stretch the criminal's head before actual beheading, and used chickens for divination. Probably most important for historians, they will learn about the history of the changing relationship between the Song government and non-Chinese peoples. Throughout the text, Fan's meticulous attention and vivid ac-

counts make these otherwise dry and tedious descriptions interesting and even enjoyable to read.

The original text is not voluminous at all and, as the translator, James M. Hargett, notes, is written in straightforward language. But it is to be stressed that it would be a tremendously daunting task to translate this work into a readable modern language not least because of the sheer nature of the topics it covers. As a scholar who has studied Fan's literary works for a long time and has published a series of complete translations of them, the last of which is ***Treatise on Mei-flowers*** (***Meipu***) published recently in ***Monumenta Serica***, Hargett is probably the best person in the English-speaking world to accomplish this feat.[1] Indeed, in providing standardized translations and extensive annotations for often highly technical and descriptive terms, Hargett does a truly admirable job. As many as 409 footnotes drawing on an impressive array of primary and secondary sources firmly buttress Hargett's literal translation. Moreover, carefully chosen illustrations and photos help readers visualize what they read. In addition, the forty-eight-page introduction provides a comprehensive historical and textual background against which the translation is to be read.

Like any other works of translation, however, Hargett's translation is not entirely free of mistakes. Most are minor, but some may distort the meaning of a given sentence. Below I list a few of them and try to suggest alternative readings. There are mistakes that could have been corrected by an institutional or social historian of the Song period.

First, "In recent years, many settlement chieftains have transferred their [domicile] registration to internal [or Chinese controlled] areas. They receive corn [su] allowances and office appointments but only at the rank of senior and junior envoy [daxiao shichen]" (p. 163). This is the translation of "近歲洞酋, 多寄籍內地, 納粟補授, 無非大小使臣" (p. 254). The latter part is misleading. ***Nasu bushou***, which is translated as "receive corn allowances and office appointments" means that they ***donated*** grain (***nasu***) to purchase official ranks (***bushou***) from the Song government. In addition, ***daxiao shichen*** are not "senior and junior envoy" but generic terms for the ten military ranks from 9b through 8a. Thus, what the sentence is saying is that recently many local chieftains purchased the government ranks from the Song and there are so many of them bearing a military rank ranging from 9b through 8a.

Second, "The Noble and Aspiring [Xionglüe] and the Brave and Agile [Yongjie] are also included among nine such military units, which are supplied with [military] commissioners like the wing regiments [xiangjun]" (p. 199). This is the translation of "又有雄略勇捷等九軍, 充給使, 如廂軍" (p. 260). ***Geishi***, which is translated as "supplied with [military] commissioner" means "to provide labor power [for public service]," which was the main duty of ***xiangjun***. Thus, the sentence actually describes that the nine additional military units, such as the Noble and Aspiring and the Brave and Agile, were assigned (***chong***) with the duty of "providing labor power [for public service]" just like "wing regiments" (***xiangjun***).

Third, those who escort the horses designate them "certified by the administrator of Wu County, order and rule commissioner, and chief of the Southwest Xie tribe [Xi'nan Xiefan zhi Wuzhou jiedu shi duda zhaohui], which is written in the script of the state of Luodian" (p. 188). The original text reads "押馬者, 稱西南謝蕃知武州節度使都大照會羅殿國文字" (p. 258). Apparently puzzled by the abrupt mention of the script of the state of Luodian, Hargett provides a speculative footnote on it (pp. 188-189n202). There are three things worth further consideration here. First, in the absence of other corroborating evidence, we simply do not know whether there ever existed the script of the Luodian kingdom. Second, the original text reads quite odd if we are to take "Luodianguo wenzi" to mean "***written in*** the script of the state of Luodian." Third, it would be worth noting that there are

quite a few official titles during the Song that end with "wenzi," such as Guanggou jinglűesi wenzi 管句經略司文字, Zhuanyuanshi guangou wenzi 轉運使管句文字, Xuanfushisi zhuguan jiyi wenzi 宣撫使司主管機宜文字, and Shumiyuan jianxiang wenzi 樞密院檢詳文字. Thus, I would suspect that "Loudianguo wenzi" here is simply a part of the official title that the people who escort the horses bear.

There are also a few other mistakes stemming probably from the author's oversight. For example, "After a short time, the snake loses consciousness [but still] turns and thrashes about. From the flank small wooden spears are all drawn [by the troops]. With great thrusts of force, the python is thereupon killed" (pp. 83-84). The original text is "有頃, 蛇省覺, 奮迅騰擲, 傍小木盡拔, 力竭乃斃" (p. 244). This passage describes how local people catch Burmese pythons. Here the subject of the entire sentence is the python whose head has been chopped off by people. ***Xiaomu*** literally means small woods or bushes, not "small wooden spears." And ***pang xiaomu jin ba*** means that because of the snake's forceful tossing and turning (from pain) all the small woods (***xiaomu***) around it (***pang***) are uprooted. ***Lijie nai bi*** means that the snake dies because its strength becomes exhausted (after forceful tossing and turning).

"Next I ordered that we have closer relations with the Yao. When I also saw that government subjects were united [in their support of me] and incapable of doing anything illegal, I then opened up their trade routes" (p. 177). The original wording is "次告諭近傜, 亦視省民相團結, 毋得犯法, 則通其博易之路" (p. 257). ***Jin*** is not a verb here that means "have closer relations." It simply means "the closer," a fact that is borne out by the later appearance on the next page of "yuan Yao," that is, "the distant Yao." "Fan announced and explained [his policies] to ***the closer Yao***, that is, the Yao people who live closer to the Chinese territory and also supervised [shi] that government subjects be organized [into militia units] so that they would be unable to commit crimes. Only then do I open up their trade routes (p. 178)."

Finally, "Merchants from Min place great value on geomancy [fengshui]. After losing all their goods, many go into Li territory to till the land, never to return home" (p. 219). Original text reads: "閩商值風水, 蕩去其貲, 多入黎地耕種不歸" (p. 264). Apparently, there is no connection between Fujian merchant's obsession with geomancy and their ending up in Li territory. So, the author surmises that the original text may be corrupt. In this sentence, however, ***fengshui*** has nothing to do with "the ***fengshui***," that is, geomancy. It should rather be read literally as "windy water," which means sea storm. This is clear because the first meaning of the verb ***zhi*** is "to encounter something." Thus, the sentence means that Fujian (maritime) merchants (often) encounter sea storms. After losing their goods, they go into Li territory and become farmers never to return home. Zhao Rukuo's text, which the author cites in the footnote, points exactly to this situation (p. 219n328).

As a reviewer, I feel compelled to make some suggestions about the translation. But I would like to stress that my minor corrections do not undermine the overall quality of Hargett's translation and its significant contribution to the field. ***Treatises of The Supervisor and Guardian of the Cinnamon Sea*** is a fine and meticulous translation which represents the culmination of a labor of love that has lasted many years.

Note

[1]. James M. Hargett, "Fan Chengda's (1126–1193) Meipu: A Twelfth Century Treatise on Mei-Flowers," ***Monumenta Serica: Journal of Oriental Studie***s
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