



**Archipel**

Études interdisciplinaires sur le monde insulindien

105 | 2023

Varia

---

*Guo fan ge wenxian ziliao jizhu* 过番歌文献资料辑注  
(Annotated Documentation on Songs of the Going  
Abroad), *Fujian juan* 福建卷 (Fujian Volume), Liu  
Denghan ) deng 刘登翰等 *bianzhu* 编注 Xiamen 厦  
门, Lujiang chubanshe, 2018, 10 + 5 + 414 p.  
Illustrations. ISBN 978-7-5459-1401-6

Claudine Salmon

---



**Electronic version**

URL: <https://journals.openedition.org/archipel/3525>

DOI: 10.4000/archipel.3525

ISSN: 2104-3655

**Publisher**

Association Archipel

**Printed version**

Date of publication: 15 July 2023

Number of pages: 177-179

ISBN: 978-2-910513-91-7

ISSN: 0044-8613

**Electronic reference**

Claudine Salmon, "*Guo fan ge wenxian ziliao jizhu* 过番歌文献资料辑注 (Annotated Documentation on Songs of the Going Abroad), *Fujian juan* 福建卷 (Fujian Volume), Liu Denghan ) deng 刘登翰等 *bianzhu* 编注 Xiamen 厦门, Lujiang chubanshe, 2018, 10 + 5 + 414 p. Illustrations. ISBN 978-7-5459-1401-6", *Archipel* [Online], 105 | 2023, Online since 01 July 2023, connection on 01 August 2023. URL: <http://journals.openedition.org/archipel/3525> ; DOI: <https://doi.org/10.4000/archipel.3525>

---



Creative Commons - Attribution-NoDerivatives 4.0 International - CC BY-ND 4.0

<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nd/4.0/>

## COMPTES RENDUS

*Guo fan ge wenxian ziliao jizhu* 过番歌文献资料辑注 (Annotated Documentation on Songs of the Going Abroad), *Fujian juan* 福建卷 (Fujian Volume), Liu Denghan *deng* 刘登翰等 *bianzhu* 编注, Xiamen 厦门, Lujiang chubanshe, 2018, 10 + 5 + 414 p. Illustrations. ISBN 978-7-5459-1401-6

The *Guo fan ge* or “Songs of the Going Abroad” are poems written in Southern dialects, here mainly Minnanhua 闽南话 (with some in Fuzhouhua 福州话),<sup>1</sup> that circulated in the Chinese communities of Fujian, Taiwan and Southeast Asia in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. They constitute a minor part of the vernacular songbooks or *changben* 唱本 that were written in verse (of seven, six, five, and four feet), and eventually published in highly popular editions in Xiamen and other cities in South China. They may be divided into two subgroups according to the gender of the narrator. The long ones, *changpian shuochang* 长篇说唱, emanating from male migrants retell their fate abroad (except one play named *Fanpo nong* 番婆弄, or “The Foreign Woman” which consists of a funny dialogue between a Chinese man and a foreign woman (pp. 187-189)), while the short ones *duanpian shuochang* 短篇说唱, composed by females, deal with the points of view of the womenfolk on the harms of migration of their relatives abroad. It is a literature aimed at discouraging young men to go abroad to find a job. This explains why with the end of mass migration these songs have slowly disappeared.

---

1. Such as the one retelling the adventure of Wong Nai Siong 黄乃裳 (1849-1924), an educator and reformist leader who, with the help of missionaries, founded Xinfuzhou 新福州 or New Fuzhou by attracting about 1000 adult men and women and 300 children from the area of Fuzhou to Sibul, Sarawak. See *Archipel* 22, 1981, pp. 244-246.

In the 1960s the late Dutch Sinologist Kristopher Schipper, then posted in Taiwan, managed to obtain one such song dating from the Daoguang 道光 era (1821-1850), entitled *Xinke guo fan ge* 新刻过番歌 or “Newly Engraved Song of the Going Abroad,” compiled, *ji* 辑, by someone using the pen name of Nanan Jianghu ke 南安江湖客 or the Traveler of Nanan (South Fujian) of which he offered us a photocopy.<sup>2</sup> In 1987, we gave a copy of it to Liu Denghan specialist of Chinese literature at Fujian Academy of Social Sciences, and this was the starting point for his research on *the Guo fan ge*. Between 1991 and 2017, he published several articles related to this song and its variants. At the same time, he undertook surveys in various villages of South Fujian and, with the help of other researchers, recorded short and long songs which were still known locally. He also collected other songs recorded independently in Fujian and in Malaysia especially thanks to the help of the late So Khin Wah 苏庆华 and by Lau Tzy Cheng 刘子政.

This collection of 100 texts, plus 36 variants, allowed him to break down the whole documentation reproduced in this volume (pp. 1-332). As far as the long songs are concerned, there are 8 different stories, and 11 variants, *yiben* 异本 and *yiwen* 异文. The short songs amount to 92 poems, plus 31 variants. The main texts (excluding the variants) are provided with very detailed notes commenting on the dialectal terminology. In addition, some of the long poems are followed by a rather long explanatory commentary. This critical apparatus is of great help to the researchers who do not master these dialects.

The corpus is preceded by an introduction in four parts (pp. 1-9). The first part gives an overview of the economic reasons why the poorest villagers were forced to leave with the hope of finding work; the second deals with the difficulties encountered by the immigrants and the way in which the *Guo fan ge* reflect this alternative way of escaping poverty; the third gives a general presentation of these collective literary works, and the last sketches a comparison with the literature produced by the immigrants who went to the United States, and notably studied by Aying 阿英, and Him Mark Lay, Genny Lim, and Judy Yung.<sup>3</sup>

2. The catalogue of the songbooks collected by Schipper has been published, see “Wubai jiuben gezice mulu 五百旧本歌仔册目录,” *Taiwan fengwu* 台湾风物, 1965, 10 yue 月.

3. Aying, *Fan mei huagong jinyue wenxueji* 反美华工禁约文学集 (Anthology of literary texts opposing American prohibitory regulations against Chinese labor), Beijing, Zhonghua shuju, 1960. Him Mark Lay, Genny Lim and Judy Yung, *Island: Poetry and History of the Chinese immigrants on Angel Island 1910-1940*, Seattle, University of Washington Press, 1991 (first published in 1981). Angel Island in San Francisco Bay, was the entry, internment centre, and often closest approach to the US for Chinese immigrants in the early 20th century.

A rich appendix of five papers previously published (pp. 335-410), three by Liu Denghan, and two by researchers from Taiwan, Chen Yi-yuan 陈益源 and Ke Rongsan 柯荣三, provide an overview of what is known so far about the *guo fan ge*. Liu Denghan looks at the oldest *Guo fan ge* and its variants, the collective creation and dissemination of songs emanating from men, their contents and the message they convey. Chen Yiyuan and Ke Rongsan focus on five *Guo fan ge* found in Taiwan, while Ke alone in a final article focuses on the main message conveyed to their contemporaries, namely 千万不通行 or ‘Never go to the South Seas’.

In the epilogue (pp. 411-414), Liu Denghan reflects on the chances that condition our research, and the passion he nurtured for this literature for nearly thirty years, but also on the technical difficulties encountered in producing this volume. In particular, the use of characters specific to the Minnan dialect which had to be created with the computer.

In short, this work on Fujian *guo fan ge*, which were on the verge of being forgotten, sheds new light on the way in which, for more than fifty years, this collective literature, both oral and written, was used in the struggle against the emigration of workers. In order to have a broader view of this phenomenon of cultural resistance to the impact of colonisation in Southeast Asia, let us hope that the collection of similar songs in other parts of southern China, in particular in Guangdong and Guangxi will be undertaken by other scholars.

Claudine Salmon

Leonard Blussé, *De Chinezen Moord. De Kolonisatie van Batavia en het Bloedbad van 1740* (The Chinese Massacre. The Colonisation of Batavia and the 1740 Bloodbath), Amsterdam, Balans, 2023, 395 p., 4 Maps, 21 Plates, Index, ISBN 978 94 638 2181 0

The first accounts following the massacre of the Chinese, including Governor General Adriaan Valckenier’s report, as well as other anonymous texts arrived in Amsterdam in 1741 to be examined by the Gentlemen XVII of the Dutch East India Company (hereafter VOC) and some were published.<sup>1</sup> About hundred years later, Pastor W.R. van Hoëvell undertook a reconstruction of the events based on various archival accounts. According to him, it was not the colonial administration that had failed but one man, namely the

1. *Verzameling van verscheide echte stukken van Batavia herwaards gezonden : Concerneerende de opstand der Chineezen buiten, en de daar op gevolgde gruwelyke massacre binnen gemelde stad*, Dordrecht, Van Braal, a.o. (1741) (published anonymously).