THE MOSLEMS AND THE NORTH-WESTERN BARBARIANS IN CHINESE DRAMA

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This investigation deals with the motif of the 'stranger', that appeared very early in the history of Chinese drama and continued to be used, though with less frequency, up to the present day. I came across this topic while analyzing various libretti and dance songs of the Nuo 儺, a local opera style of Southern Anhui. The Nuo opera had been considered extinct, and was only recently rediscovered in remote mountain villages. The 'barbarian' is one of the central motifs in the Nuo tradition. It is not only used in drama, but it also contains its own cycle of dances and songs, which deals exclusively with the Hui barbarian. These arias and songs show amazing parallels to literary traditions of the Tang (618–907) and Song dynasties (960–1280). Even more amazing is the fact that one text from a Yuan dynasty (1280–1368) Nanxi opera 南戲, that has survived only as a fragmentary manuscript to this day, finds a nearly word-for-word counterpart in a Nuo opera aria performed today.[1]

Throughout operatic literature the Barbarians and Moslems are often depicted as stupid and cruel. Especially in the drama of the Yuan period, the Yuan Zaju 元雜劇 , his appearance stands in sharp contrast to that of the Chinese: ugly, smelly and uncivilized he probably fulfills the worst prejudices that one people can have with regard to another. But comparing the literary sources on this subject I had the impression that there are still certain differences in description, depending on the nationality of the foreigner. It occurred to me then that the picture of the Barbarian (or rather of the Non-Han) in literature, though at first glance uniform, is not as clear as secondary literature would have us believe.

It is textbook knowledge to say that the role of the barbarian appeared in drama during the Yuan dynasty, in order to criticize and ridicule the Mongol oppressor. But is this true? Did there not already exist carefully fostered xenophobic sentiments in literature? And did the Barbarian on the Yuan stage really hint at the Mongols? To find an answer to these questions I will in what follows analyze the way the foreigner is depicted in Chinese opera. But first the question as to which different ethnic group the 'barbarians' in question belong to.

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1 Ma Zhiyuan 馬致遠 (1260–1325), *Su Wu muyangji* 蘇武牧羊記 (1954: 5).

HISTORY OF THE NORTHERN BARBARIANS IN DANCE AND OPERA

From the creation of Nanxi (the Southern Opera) in the Song dynasty and of Yuan Zaju onwards numerous libretti have been written in which members of a people called the Hu 胡 appear as adversaries of the emperor and as rebels against the dynasties of Han, Tang and Song. In the very same texts they are also frequently labelled as Huihui 回回. This method has been very common indeed. As one example of the free juggling of terms in Operatic literature I chose the drama *Liu Wenlong gan kao* 劉文龍趕耳, 'Liu Wenlong goes to the palace examinations', of the Nuo opera. This text can be dated back to the Ming dynasty (1368–1644).[2] In one libretto the main hero, Liu Wenlong, is sent out by the emperor with the order to subdue and pacify the *Xiongnu* 匈奴.[3] Throughout the course of action, however, these *Xiongnu* are referred to and announced as *Huihui*. Though the presence of *Xiongnu* and *Huihui* at the same time is hardly credible, as the *Huihui* appeared hundreds of years after the *Xiongnu*, it did not hinder the anonymous author from suddenly appearing in the tenth scene with still another label, *Hu* 胡. In the libretto of a Nuo troupe from a neighbouring village, just three miles down the valley, these *Hu* are more precisely defined as 'Northern-Huihui' 北回回. Still more confusingly the original Nanxi libretto *Liu Xibi jinchaiji* 劉希必金釵記 from the year 1431, which the 'Liu Wenlong' of Nuo comes from, calls them *Xihu* 西胡, placing them to the far West (Liu Nianci 劉念茲 1985). But this is no contradiction, as according to the popular Chinese concept the character *Hu* 胡 stands for Northern and Western Barbarians alike. But what, then, is a Western North-Western barbarian? In addition to these six (!) titles we find still more in other plays on similar topics: In *Su Wu muyangji*, one of the most popular dramas concerning Chinese 'foreign relations', the term *Beifan* 北番, 'Northern Barbarian' appears. It was frequently used by Guan Hanqing 關韓卿 (1240–1320), one of the most outstanding playwrights, who refers to the *Beifan* especially when he actually writes about the Xiongnu-Han conflicts. To make the chaos perfect, we find a Tartar dance in many Song sources, but also in contemporary Nuo dance songs.

Though many of these plays were written as Yuan Zaju or Nanxi, one fact is amazing: In none of the Pre-Mid-Ming librettos is even a single Mongol mentioned. The obvious question is simply: Which tribe or ethnic group is meant by the seven terms and is there a system behind their undifferentiated usage?

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2 Kuzay 1995: 254 ff. All texts of the Nuo operas and dances exist only as unpublished manuscripts and are translated by the author.

3 The term Xiongnu 匈奴 is often found translated as 'huns'. But up to the present day it is anything but clear in which relation the Xiongnu stood to the Western Huns; see Janhunen 1996: 183.

THE HUI BARBARIAN

Starting with the *Huihui* we find two definitions: The first refers to the Hui people, historically and at the present day. Secondly, the *Huihui* seem, at least in Jiangnan, to serve as a synonym for all 'strangers' from the North-West.

Chinese history has seen two 'Hui' kingdoms. There was first 'Huiheguo'回紇國, in the Sui period (581–619), and further 'Huihuguo' 回鶻國, in Tang times (618–904). Both lay west of the Chinese heartland (GJDM: 297). By analogy the population, non-Chinese with central Asian ancestors, was called Hui. The national Minority of the Hui, as it exists today in the territory of the PR of China, goes back to the 7th cent. AD. At this time Arab and Persian traders, artisans and craftsmen, increasingly settled in China. A second line of descent relates them to those Turkmenian and Mongol tribes that migrated into Chinese territory and assimilated with the native population. During the following centuries the Huihui assimilated to a great extent with the Han. At the same time they migrated to nearly all the Chinese provinces. The largest group of Hui today lives in the provinces of Ningxia, Gansu, Qinghai, Henan, Hebei, Shandong, Yunnan and Xinjiang. According to Zhou Enlai, the Hui live in two-thirds of the approx. 2,000 Chinese counties (Weggel 1985: 175). The last census of 1983 counted 7,219,352 million members of the Huizu. This means 0.72% of the total population (Bai Shouyi 1985: 1). Due to assimilation the Hui do not separate themselve from the Han by ethnic differences or language. The original character of the Hui culture is today mainly expressed in their religious beliefs (Mackerras, 1991: 214). They are followers of the Sunnite branch of Islam. Thus they are the only national minority that defines itself by religion.[4] The Hui are also one of the very few minorities to settle in their own 'autonomous' province, Ningxia.

The dynastic chronicles of the Yuan (1260–1368) use the term *Huihui*.[5] By that time they had not yet been assimilated to the Han Chinese. Gradually the name *Huihui* developed into a joint name for all members of people that settled North-west of Han China – similar to the term *Hu*. But as the Hui in the majority believed in Islam, it also became common to use the term Huihui for Moslems in general. *Huihui* thus stood in colloquial language for North-western foreigners *and* for followers of Islam. Its old connotation for the Hui people has been lost. But the main meaning of *Hui* in opera and dance songs does not lie in its religious content. What is meant is rather a person of distinct ethnic differences, which is underlined in gestures, language and texts. Thus I will not in what follows refer to the Hui as Muslims, though this is often done in literature, but I will use the term Huihui 回回 or Huizi 回子 as such.

4 Weggel describes the legal foundation of the co-existence of the 'Chinese' peoples: 'In allen vier Verfassungen wird die VR China als ein 'einheitlicher Nationalitätenstaat' definiert. In Artikel 4 der Verfassung von 1982 heißt es: 'Alle Nationalitäten... sind gleichberechtigt. ... In Gebieten, in denen nationale Minderheiten in geschlossenen Gemeinschaften leben, wird regionale Autonomie praktiziert'; see Weggel 1985: 171; but these autonomous rights are limited by Article 118, which says that all autonomous rights are to be subordinated to the plans of the Chinese state. *The Constitution of the PR of China* (Beijing, 1986: 48).

5 Benson 1988: 28; Benson lists the most important events of Hui history.

THE INDISCRIMINATE USAGE OF XIONGNU, HU, DADA AND OTHER TERMS FOR BARBARIANS

The mutual usage of the terms Xiongnu and *Hu* for the very same people is very common in Chinese literature. The *Shiji* 史記 of Sima Qian 司馬遷 (145–85 BC), contains an example:

> Then he sent Meng Tian to the North, to build the Great Wall and to guard Fanli. And though the Xiongnu were still over 700 miles away, the Hu Barbarians did not dare to come down South to graze their horses there, and their warriors did not dare to draw their bows and to let any hostilities arise.[6]

> At least since the sixth century the term *Hu* was not used for Northern foreigners alone: The *Luoyang Qielanji* 洛陽伽藍記, the 'Buddhist Temples of Luoyang', tell of a 'Hu-King' of a neighbouring country still further to the West: 'As concerns the lion, it was brought by a Hu King from the kingdom of Persia as a gift.'[7]

> But even Indians were labelled as *Hu*: Gan Bao 干寶 (?~336) reports on the journey of a *Hu* from India to Jiangnan 江南: 'In the year Yongjia of the Jin Dynasty there was a *Hu* from India who crossed the river to Jiangnan'.[8]

From the few examples quoted here it is already evident that the real ethnic affiliation of persons called *Xiongnu*, *Hu*, *Dada(Tartar)*, *Beifan*, *Beilu* 北虜 or *Hui* was obviously in literature of minor importance. Common to them was nothing more but the relation to a North-Western, non-Chinese nation. All the terms are used as alternatives in Chinese popular literature and not infrequently in classic literature, too.

THE BARBARIAN IN CHINESE LITERATURE

The 'Barbarian' has a long tradition in Chinese (and also in Western) theatre. For over 1400 years he has been present on Chinese stages and in market squares, be it in person, as a travelling entertainer and lion-dancer, or impersonated, as a character in a play.

During the Liang dynasty (502–557) our sources tell for the first time of dances in which a Hu barbarian plays the main role. He distinguishes himself by singing and dancing, he is a very sturdy drinker, and occasionally he is seen in the company of lions. These dances are often part of New Year performances, but they are also performed throughout the rest of the year.

The oldest source known to me referring to a barbarian on the stage comes from the Liang period (502–555), one of the Southern Dynasties: 'The old Barbarian Lao Hu Wen Kang' 老胡文康is the name of an old dance song, the text of which was handed down to

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6 *Shiji* 史記秦史盈本記, Juan 48: 280.

7 Yang Xuanzhi 楊炫之, *Luoyang Qielanji* 洛陽伽藍記 (comp. ~547): 獅子者,波斯國胡王拌獻也 section 'The Southern Part of the City'; see also Fan Xiangyong 范祥雍 1958.

8 Ganbao 干保 (? - ~336): *Soushenji* 搜神: 普永嘉,中有天籃胡人,佰渡江南.

us by the poet Zhou She 周舍 (personal dates unknown), in 'Verses from the old Barbarian Wen Kang'. It tells of an old Hu barbarian who lived in the West:

> He has blue eyes, white hair, beautiful brows and a long nose. He is [no human, but] one of the immortals of heaven. Often he meets with the Jade emperor and the Queen Mother of the West. The lion and the phoenix are dog and cock to him. He has many followers... When they are assembled, they make music, sing and dance, and in the end they wish a long life for the emperor.[9]

In the Liang period there was also a dance called *Yunshangle* 雲上樂, 'Music above the clouds'. It was performed mainly at New Year, and presumably it used the same topic.[10]

Furthermore the annals of the Sui dynasty (589–618) contain an entry called 'Texts about Music', under the heading 'The Seven Music Departments 七部樂'. Headed by Chinese music, *guoji* 國伎, they comprise music of those states that paid tribute to China.[11] The seventh department, *Libi* 禮畢, is entitled 'The Art of Wen Kang' and it contains music and dance elements of those areas that border on China to the West.[12]

It is open to speculation what kind of barbarian Wen Kang was, but in any case he is described very differently from the stupid, cruel and ugly foreigner of later dynasties. Though he looks strange with his blue eyes, white hair and long nose, he is not described as ugly. It is also stressed that he is immortal, a close friend of Xiwangmu and the Jade Emperor. There is no hint of any evil. On the contrary, together with his followers he dances, sings, and at the end of the festivities they express their loyalty to the emperor.

All in all he gives a rather positive picture of a suzerain. Anyone determined to be malevolent could interpret the way he dances and sings for the emperor as a little childish.

Equally positive are the first reports about Barbarian dances in connection with New Year exorcisms. Liang Songlin 梁宋懍 reports in his *Jingchu suishiji*°荊楚歲時記:

> The eighth day of the twelfth month is called the day of the *La-[feast]*.
> In the chronicles it says:
> When the drums of the La-[feast] sound,
> the spring grass begins to sprout.
> The villagers beat solemnly the Yao-[hourglass]-drums,
> put on the 'Head of the Barbarian Duke (Hugongtou) 胡公頭',
> and perform Jingang-warriors, to drive away all pests.[13]

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9 The authorship of the poem 老胡文康辭 is unclear. Another possible author is Fan Yun 范雲 (~451-~501); see XQQY: 8. To Wen Kang on Kunlun mountain, the abode of the 'Queen-mother', see *Xin Tangshu*新唐書, 禮樂忱, Juan 22: 478; to Xiwangmu 西王母 see *Huitu sanjiao yuanliu Soushenji daquan*: 36.

10 This can be assumed, as the *Quan Tangshu* contains a poem under the same title, with as its main topic the same Lao Hu Wen Kang, as he is described in the poem of Zhou She; see QTS (Beijing) 1985, Juan 21: 282.

11 *Suishu* 隋書, 音樂忱, 15: 342, 376.

12 Ibid. 15: 377, 380; *Libi* 禮畢文康伎. The subdivision of the court music was continued during the Tang dynasty and later expanded to ten divisions; see 新唐書, 禮樂忱, 21: 471.

13 *Jingchu suishiji* 荊楚歲時記: 27. For a translation of the *Jingchu suishiji* see Turban 1971. *Jingang* 金鋼, 'Golden beam', Sanskrit *Vajradhara*, are Buddhist Guardian deities; see Turban

Still in these New Year rituals the Hu-barbarian has no negative connotation. He helps to drive away pestilence from the villages. But we can assume as much as that this *Hugongtou* 胡公頭 must have also had frightening features, in order to prove effective against demons. The friendly features of Laohu Wen Kang have turned into something slightly dangerous. Obviously between the authorship of the *Laohu Wenkang* and the *Jingchu Suishiji* a change of perspective can be observed: from a patronizing attitude towards a childlike savage, to a strong guardian who has to be kept under control.

From the time of the middle of the Tang dynasty up to the Song dynasty (960–1280) the date of performance of the 'Barbarian dances' focuses more and more around the time of the turn of the year. They have to be counted as an indispensable part of the Song dynasty folk dances. And these dances seem to form the turning-point in the reception of the Barbarian. Two Barbarian dances have been performed at New Year: One was called the Tartar dance 韃靼舞, and nothing is known about it today.[14] The second one has a more dramatic title: 'Beating the Nightly Barbarian 打夜胡. This title described a sort of popular entertainment that presumably looked like this: One or several actors wore Barbarian masks and walked from door to door. By beating (one hopes only ritually) and driving them away it was assured that no pestilence would threaten the household. From this habit it is obvious that the Barbarian must has been transformed from a friendly dancer and helpful exorcist of pestilence to a transmitter of the plague itself.[15]

Reasons for this lie in the common presence of foreigners in Tang China, who did not yet pose a threat to the realm, but were rather seen as welcome entertainers and foreign workers. At least the capital Changan must have been a multicultural centre where merchants and artists from all corners of Asia Minor and Major met. But with the increasing conflicts between the Song and their Northern enemies, the later Liang and Jin dynasties, the picture of the dancing barbarian mutated into that of a threatening savage.

With the appearance of Chinese theatre in the Jin (1115–1235), Song and Yuan periods also the Barbarian too enters the stage. While in Jin Yuanben theatre 金院本his role was still hardly noticeable, he appears very frequently in both Nanxi and Yuan Zaju.

To evaluate the position of the Hu/Xiongnu/Huihui etc. during this period the scholar of early Chinese drama has to deal with the following questions:

1. Date: If, as is mentioned in practically every Chinese reference book, the clearly xenophobic depiction of the foreigner is a result of the Mongol occupation, it should be clear as to whether a play was written before, during or after the Yuan dynasty.

1971: 148. 'The Jingang terrifyingly roll their eyes, to keep the four demons under control', TPGJ 孔平廣記 (925–996, Juan 174: 1285.

14 *Xihu laoren fanshenglu* 西湖老人繁博錄, Southern Song (1127-1178), quoted from Wang 1983: 69.

15 A description of the game 'Beating of the nightly Hu' is contained in the *Dongjing menghualu* 東妡X華錄, 'Chronicle of the Flowery Dream of the Eastern Capital', chap.10; Meng Yuanlao, chap. 2.2: p. 31. Eberhard (1942: 188) writes about the same activity: 'The driving away of the plague at New Year was called 'Beating of the nightly Hu'. The Nuo-masks too were called *Hutou*, Heads of the Hu'.

2. The absence of Mongols in the drama: If the Mongols are the ones to be ridiculed and criticized, how are they addressed? Where do they appear in the libretti? Is there anything that would justify this assumption?
3. Characterization: Is it possible to recognize ethnic differences between 'barbarians', by the way they appear on stage?

1. Date

The problems in dating libretti derive from the general absence of any given date in the libretti. If the author is unknown, the year of publication can only be judged by the name of institutions, official titles, historical events or by the language. The great majority of extant Yuan dramas have survived in Ming dynasty editions.[16] The only original edition from the Yuan period contains 30 dramas (*Yuankan zaju sanshi zhong* 元刊雜劇三十種 It is very difficult to say whether a play was written in i.e. the middle/late Yuan dynasty or during the Ming period. One approach is that of Yan Dunyi: From the grade of sublimity and care with which the Barbarians are criticized, one could judge whether it is a Yuan contemporary or not (Yan Dunyi 嚴敦易 1960). Still it seems rather daring to date a play to Ming times just because it contains open criticism or satire directed against foreigners.

There is only one relatively certain method, and that is to compare the extant titles with those on Yuan drama catalogues.[17] Still one has to take into consideration the fact, that the Ming compilers and editors frequently changed the titles and 'purified' the language. If several editions of a play exist, one might be able to locate the earliest of them, but one still cannot be sure about the time it was written. Only very few plays of anonymous authorship has it been possible to date exactly, as they mention certain historical events.

2. The absence of Mongols in the drama

As mentioned above, the Mongols hardly ever appear in Chinese drama. This is the more amazing, as the names of the Jurcen, Koreans, Khitan, Xiongmnu, Shatuo and Fan-, Beilu- (northern slaves) and Hu-Barbarians are frequently mentioned. Only two plays refer to the Mongols. But there too they are not mentioned as such, but as *Dada*, which often, though not always, can stand for Mongols (Kersting 1986: 6). Apart from these two exceptions the Mongol as a dramatic figure is non-existent on the Yuan stage. But also none of the Yuan dramas take place in their own day, but they play in Han, Tang or Song times. The majority actually do not define the time frame at all. The amazing fact is now that, strangely enough, in most of the cases where a foreign barbarian speaks his mother tongue, he uses the Mongolian language.[18] To my understanding, there are only

16 I.e. the *Yuanqu xuan* 元曲選.

17 *Luguibu xubian* 錄鬼簿續編 1982; Tao Zongyi 陶宗儀, *Chuogenglu* 輟耕錄.

18 The only, though rare exceptions to this rule, are the Jurcen and Koreans (Kersting 1986: 59).

two plausible explanations for this: Either the authors (all the authors!) did not care for the authenticity of the plot, as long as it was coherent and thrilling. They merely used a number of Mongolianisms, as they could not possibly know how the Xiongnu language really did once sound. We have to keep in mind that a certain stock of Mongol phrases was certainly commonplace at this time, and even the average Chinese person must have known them. The second explanation is that the playwrights were well aware of possible Mongols in the audience, but bold enough to use the Mongolian language when the plot was set far enough in the remote past. The 'barbarians' in those plays were not infrequently other Northern tribes, that might once have even been enemies of the Mongols too. Thus it seemed not that dangerous to use some Mongol expressions and phrases. But what could be a more obvious hint at the Mongol oppressor than a complete physical absence, but audible presence – though speaking through the mouth of a Khitan or 'Hun'?

3. Is it possible to recognize ethnic differences between 'barbarians', by the way they appear on stage?

One way to see how a character in a Chinese drama is designed by the author, is to see which role type it represents. 'The barbarian' as such does not exist in drama. Most often he is shown as stupid, but there also exists the intelligent educated Barbarian. Only the educated foreigner is designed to play the honourable role type of the Fumo 副末, the second male hero. It has to be admitted, however, that in these rare cases he has generally gone through a Chinese education and is such half-Chinese himself. In all other cases the barbarian plays the *Jing-* 淨 or the *Chou* clown 丑. As such he is not only supposed to be funny and stupid, but also has a tendency to be mischievous and naughty. The mixture of character traits, to be equally stupid, brutal, lewd and cowardly, seems to bring out the humoristic element. But there were also positive traits of 'barbarian' character, that even the Han generals had to admit: even though the uncivilized warrior is often described as wild and cruel, honesty, fairness and justice are much higher valued virtues for him than for the over-developed Chinese.

But first to the more obvious external features. The barbarian appeared in dozens of plays. A certain serialized and stereotyped costume and face painting can be expected. The libretti do not tell us much about the outward appearance of the actors. Still a first impression can be gained by the few paintings on the subject of the theatre, that have survived the centuries. The most famous, a mural of a Shanxi temple, shows clearly some Northern strangers with round hats and bushy eyebrows. The hats, as we shall soon see, play a major role in identifying the strangers. Other drawings, sculptures and stone reliefs also stress the foreign costume and round hats.[19] One has to state here that the foreigners are shown in all paintings in a neutral and 'objective' way, – not as a caricature.

19 See i.e. in *Song Jin Yuan xiqu wenwu tuhua* 宋金元戲曲文物圖論, Taiyuan 1987: 54 f, 121.

The most useful tool for defining 'barbarian fashion' are the lists of costumes that are attached to the plays in the Maiwangguan collection (*Maiwang guan chaojiao ben gujin zaju* 脈望館鈔校本古今雜劇 1954). Though they are from the Ming dynasty, their use in Yuan drama can be verified. A very popular head dress among male Hu barbarians must have been the 'tiger-helmet', *huke naokui* 虎磕腦盔 , that usually went best with a 'tigerskin-dress', *hupipao* 虎皮袍.[20] In various dramas Northern Barbarians wear them proudly, accompanied by a range of weapons with awe-inspiring names, so it seems fairly safe to count them in the wardrobe of the fashion-conscious foreigner.

One slight drawback might be the appearance of a similar outfit for a young Chinese hero in the files of the *Shuihuzhuan* 水滸傳 outlaws. But if one takes into consideration the way these 'heroes' treated their enemies or how they took pleasure in a cannibalistic diet, one might well substract them from the list of the civilized Confucian gentlemen and define them as barbarous. Even the roughest 'barbarian' hotshot looked pale by comparison.

The tiger dress can still be seen today on the opera stage. It is the pride of barbarian generals and soldiers, and it is no doubt a signal for the audience to respect this role for its strategic and martial skills. The tiger helmet can also be found on the Anhui Nuo stages, here as part of a mask for the Hui (Moslem/foreigner). There are two kinds: One shows a pale friendly face with round eyes, wearing a cap like many Uighurs do today. The other one is a wild grimace, with red hair, red beard and two fangs like that of a wild boar. He is further adorned by a tiger head dress: the skin of the tiger´s head and face worn as a cap. The masks themselves might be sometimes neutral, sometimes frightening, but the song texts that accompany them are rather impolite: The Huihui is called stupid, ugly and dishonest.

Correspondingly, the Huihui in Yuan Zaju has special humoristic features: The lists contain Huihui noses, *huihuibi* 回回鼻, and Huihui caps, *Huihuimao* 回回帽. Both are worn by Huihui soldiers and Huihuiofficials, *Huihuibing* 回回兵, and *Huihuiguan* 回回官. To conclude the list, occasionally a Huihui beard 回回髯 is listed (*Yuanqu xuan waibian* 元曲選外編 1959: 55). The Huihui cap was doubtless fashioned like the Uighur cap of the Nuo masks. The noses remind us of similar requisites of the *comedia dell arte* and the carnival of Venice. Especially in China they must have been a source of unlimited laughter, and nobody that has been called 'long nose' in public in a Chinese market-square will ever forget the roaring laughter of the bystanders. Around the year 1720 the nose was still in fashion: Xi Zhousheng 西周生 reports on a sword-dance, performed by an actor with a Huihui mask that was called 'Nose of the Huihui'.[21] The Huihui used their olphactory organs on stage at least up to the late Qing dynasty (1644–1911). An inventory list of the court stage from the Daoguang period (1821–1850) contained 'Huihui noses, 39 items (!), Huihui caps, 92.' [22]

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20 From the list attached to *Ku Cunxiao* 哭存孝 by Guan Hanqing 關韓卿.

21 This description relates to chap. 33 of the Qing dynasty novel 'A marriage that awakens the world' *Xingshi yinyuanzhuan* 醒世姻緣傳, written before 1721. The pseudonym '西周生´ might refer to Pu Songling 蒲松齡 , see DBKWX: 1109c.

22 See Feng Yuanjun 1956: 360.

Barbarian noses did obviously made a deep impression, and not only in Yuan times: though the Anhui Nuo opera does not contain the famous Huihui noses, its libretti nevertheless describe them quite dramatically. One Huihui song 回回歌 mentions the 'high bridge of the nose 高鼻梁' of the Huihui. In another version it says:

> How can you be sure that he's a Huihui?
> Because his nose is as long as a drumstick!

And in the last line the face itself is described:

> the whole face covered with hair, as sharp as an awl!

But not only the face of the Huihui is made the target of jokes. His back and chest are stuffed with pillows, creating a 'chicken breast and back of a duck'. He stalks on stage like someone that has spent all his life on horseback, swinging from left to right. Depending on the spontaneous sense of humour of the actors such elements can turn into hilarious slapstick scenes.

The dance songs of the Nuo drama have their roots in Tang dynasty entertainment: Many Tang poems use the topic of the itinerant Hu dancer and musician, far away from home in the Middle Kingdom, grieving with homesickness for the vast grasslands. Some of them make their living by performing sword- and lion-dances.[23] A poem by Bai Juyi 白居易 (772–846) describes two such dancers:

> The Xiliang dancers:
> with Hu masks and lion-dress, ...,
> with red beards and deep set eyes,
> two Hu are dancing to the sound of the drum...[24]

Here the Hu does not wear a tiger-skin but a lion dress. Also, the red beard that the Nuo masks still show, are mentioned.

But the Huihui noses too have predecessors in Tang poems: The Hangzhou poet Liu Yanshi 劉言史 (?–~812) described the appearance of the Hu barbarian quite vividly, giving a parallel to the needle-sharp noses of the Nuo barbarians:

> Their skin seems as [pale] as Jade, and their noses are [as sharp] as an awl[25]

Li Bai (701–762) 李白 wrote a poem with the title 'Music above the clouds' 上雲樂 , in which the Old Barbarian Wen Kang 老胡文康 again plays the main role (QTS (Beijing), Juan 21: 282). Again his magic tricks are described, as are his

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23 Numerous entries to Barbarians 胡 in Tang poems can be found in the registers of the QTS and the *Tangshi baihua* 唐詩妠. Rather unusual is 'Master Dong', 唐詩百話, 董孔子 (1988): 179ff. It tells about two homesick men: One is a Hu barbarian in China, the other a Han envoy in the Northern steppe.

24 Bai Juyi 白居易, 樂府詩, 西涼伎; see QTS (Taibei) 1978: VII, 4701. See also 隋書, 音樂忱, 西涼舞 , Juan 14: 331 & 15: 378; 西涼 : name of one of the states of the '16 Kingdoms'. During the Tang period the term *Hu* should be more precisely translated as *Sogdian*, 'rather than in its general sense of 'foreign'; see Picken, Wolpert, & Marret 1987: 1, 88-91.

25 Liu Yanshi 劉言史, 王中丞宅夜觀舞胡騰, see QTS (Taibei): VII, 5323f.

superhuman skills in singing, dancing and most of all in drinking. It reminds one of two further Tang poems on this topic: 'The Hu barbarian drinks wine' 胡飲酒 and 'The drunken Hu barbarian' 醉胡子. [26] The frequency with which we meet the intoxicated North-Westerner makes the reader wonder about the causal relationship between the intensity of their homesickness and the attraction of the Changan wine-houses.

Finally, the *Gigaku*, that up to the end of the Nara period was performed at the Japanese court, had a dance called *'Sukoshi'* or *'Suikoshi'*. The mask of the Suiko-ô seems to have borne a strong resemblance to the Huihui masks of the Yuan head dress and the contemporary Nuo, as they all wear a Tiger-helmet, a *huke naokui* 虎磕腦盔 . And as the masks of the Bugako also have very protruded noses we might be well justified in assuming that the 'Huihui dance' of the Nuo opera has its origins in Chinese courtly dances or the predecessors of the Japanese court dances.[27] Obviously the outward appearance of the Huihui on stage did not undergo any substantial metamorphosis between the Tang dynasty Hu dancers, the inventory lists of the Yuan drama and the Anhui opera of the nineties of this century.

One last remark on the size of the noses: As in the West a big nose is associated in China with certain sexual talents and great sexual desire. Already Marco Polo had reported on the sexual activities of Moslems at the Yuan court. And indeed the Nuo texts hint unmistakably in this direction:

> The Huizi is born ugly...
> The Huanghe he has successfully crossed, but that alone wouldn't be dramatic,
> if not all of a sudden the newly-wed wife was missing from the family!

In another verse it says:

> The Huizi has grown short, his mind is obsessed by robbing people [women, of course]
> and betrayal.

The abduction of young women by the Hui seems to be an old motif: In the drama *Yuhuchun* (95) we hear a mother threatening her disobedient daughter:

> I'll sell you to a Huihui, a Tatar or any other Northern barbarian![28]

According to the texts, the Huihui kidnaps or lures young women from their homes. But he seems to be also associated with the buying and selling of young women. It is interesting to note that this special and criminal feature is only applied to the Hui, but not to any of the other 'barbarians'. We have heard already of the high sense of fairness and honesty of the North-Western barbarians. The Hu barbarian is different. Being all but indifferent to Chinese women, he acts rather with a kind of raw and rustic chivalry. In the

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26 Cui Lingqin 崔令欽 , *Jiaofangji* 教坊記, 醉胡 1982:16. See also Eckardt 1956: 165-170.

27 Picken, Wolpert & Marret 1987: 88–91; Blau 1966: 96. Concerning *Bugaku* see also Gabbert 1972: 229ff. For a description of the Suiko-ô-mask see Blau 1966: 95. An additional number of 'barbarian songs' are found in the *Gogen-fu* of the year 842. See Wolpert 1981: 107–135. I am deeply indebted to Prof. Wolpert for his valuable references to the Japanese sources.

28 *Yue Fei jingzhong* 岳飛精忠, in: *Guben Yuan Ming zaju* 孤本元明雜劇: 102, scene 1.

play 'Liu Xingma', 'The Comet horse', a friendly Hu commander receives notice of the arrival of a Chinese woman in the camp. He assumes that she is the sister of his Chinese brother-in-law, and for reasons foreign to the reader he is convinced that she came to marry him. The libretto gives clear acting directions:

> He greets the Chinese woman, embraces her and says: 'Tiebieli'
> (Mong.: teberil 'to embrace')

This in Chinese eyes rather unorthodox behaviour results in a short but tumultuous scene. Her 'brother' bursts out:

> 'This filthy animal has no manners at all! She is my younger sister! What behaviour to just grab and embrace her!'[29]

It needs the intervention of a Hu princess to calm the waves:

> 'These are our Tartar ways of greeting one another in the family. We cannot compare ourselves with the manners in Chinese families!'

In another text, this time from the *Mudanting*, a half-drunken *Hu* at a feast tries to get not so much familiar as rather passionate with a Chinese woman. Without many preliminaries he embraces her and whispers into her ear:

> 'Hasa wugai maokela?'

The young woman reacts indifferently, as she does not understand a word. I could not find a satisfactory translation, but in his drunkenness the bold galant had 'whispered' loud enough for her husband, an interpreter, as well as the entire audience, still to comprehend it. After the interpreter refuses blushfully to translate, the outraged husband finally gives the explanation:

> 'He indeed wishes you to let him get to your private parts!'[30]

The differences in dramatic description between the Hu and the Hui are obvious: While the cunning Hui clearly acts mischievously, the hearty Dada or Hu country bumpkin with either the very best of intentions or naïve passion, tramples unknowingly across the porcelain of Chinese over-civilized etiquette. Again, as iin the case of the Old Barbarian Wen Kang, we observe that the Hu is described as somewhat childish, but friendly. He seems to be a jolly fellow, always ready to drink and feast.

As is known from various operas and poems, he also dances at such occasions. His favourite were doubtless the 'Dance of the Barbarian Whirl', the *Huxuanwu* 胡旋舞 and the 'Dance of the performing *Hu*', the *Hushiwu* 胡施舞, which was already mentioned by Duan Anjie 段安節 (Tang Dynasty).[31] A very colourful description of the 'Barbarian

29 Ibid.: 24.

30 *Mudanting* 牡丹亭, in: *Guben Yuan Ming zaju* 孤本元明雜劇, scene 47; see Kersting 1986: 51.

31 Duan Anjie 段安節, *Yuefu zalu* 樂府雜錄, 俳优 (between AD 888 and 894): 49. Li Bai describes this dance, performed by a female *Hu*: 胡旋舞 and the 'Dance of the performing Hu', the *Hushiwu* 胡旋≈Æ, see QTS (Taibei): VII, 4692.

Whirl' is found in the biography of An Lushan in the *Jiu Tangshu* 舊唐書: An Lushan, a rebel of presumably Turkish descent, dances for Emperor Xuanzong: An Lushan had become enormously fat in his old age, and his stomach hung down far below his knees. Whenever he wished to walk he had to be supported on the left and right by his servants, but he could do the 'Dance of the Barbarian Whirl' as swiftly as the wind. [32]

At these feasts but also on most other occasions, he often gets himself into trouble because of his good appetite and unrestricted consumption of alcohol. Practically all Yuan dramas that have Chinese border conflicts as their subject, give much room to the drinking habits of the enemy. In fact the main activity of the Hu seems to be much less fighting than drinking. One author (Chinese, of course) makes a barbarian soldier introduce himself on stage:

> ...I am Nian Han. This general is Tie Han. We both have no idea of the Classics of Military Science and we can't even use a bow and arrow. In the retinue of our commander-in-chief we do nothing else but fool around and talk nonsense. If there is any booze, then we down our cups in no time. But if we hear that we are about to enter battle, then we are so afraid that the farts bang into our trousers.[33]

When the barbarian enters the stage, he calls for a drink. Here an example from the 'Peony Pavilion' (text and directing): The old envoy of the Northern barbarians 老胡 impatiently shakes his hands and feet and says:

> 'Wu gaidala?' 兀試打剌

And the interpreter says:

> 'He wants wine made from horse's milk/kumys.' 叫馬乳酒

After he received wine and mutton he amply displays his 'barbarian' manners: (He noisily slurps the wine, carves up the mutton with his sword, eats, laughs and rubs his hands, that are dripping with mutton grease, on his breast.)[34]

The delight with which the Chinese audience must have watched this scene is easy to imagine. The *Liji* and the *Shanhaijing* report on the uncivilized eating habits of the Yi, Man, Yong and Di barbarians. The climax is usually reached with the statement that some of them would feed themselves on raw food. The laughing gourmand of the *Mudanting* might be one step ahead of the Di in civilized manners, but he is still far from the imperial cuisine of the Han Court. But again the Huihui of the Nuo opera is far less developed even then the Hu barbarian of the Yuan Zaju:

> The Huihui eat uncooked food, but drink hot wine with it. The old Huihui downs a whole *tan* jug, the young Huihui can drink only eight *dou* bushels.[35]

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32 The same dance is mentioned in various Yuan Zaju plays.

33 *Yue Fei jingzhong* 岳飛精忠, in: *Guben Yuan Ming zaju* 孤本元明雜劇: 102, 1. scene; see Kersting 1986: 69.

34 *Mudanting* 牡丹亭, scene 47, in: *Guben Yuan Ming zaju*; see Kersting 1986: 21.

35 *Dan* 石 and *Dou* 斗 are measures: 1 Hektoliter & 1 Dekaliter. 1石 = 10斗.

> The Huihui are born stupid, they live on remote mountain ranges. They don't eat any cooked meals, but tasteless dry flat Shaobing bread.

But when they are drunk, all barbarians are the same:

> Li Keyong (a Northern barbarian) makes gestures of being drunk and says:
> 'I am completely pissed!'[36]

A little more detailed is the description we find in the 'Peony Pavilion':

> The (drunken) Hu-barbarian tumbles around, ...laughs and falls to the ground. The interpreter helps him back to his feet. The barbarian, making helpless gestures with his hands, drops down again.[37]

In Nuo drama too the barbarians did their best to live up to their reputation. In Taihe, Guichi, a special dance is performed: two Huihui enter the stage, each carrying a jug of wine and a cup, which they refill incessantly. Not only do they drink themselves, they also mix with the audience and pursue the young women, whom they try to make drunk as well. The wine is no requisite, but is real Baijiu. By and by the Huihui are overwhelmed by the gigantic amounts they drink. They fall about the stage, trying to support each other, but finally they lie snoring on the ground.

Later in Yuan times the drinking-habits of the Barbarians had become so proverbial that a Qupai melody with the title *Huihui-Qupai* 回回曲牌 was composed. The exact date of composition is not known. Up to now it is said to have first appeared in the Kun Opera 昆曲, which developed from about the end of the Yuan dynasty, until the beginning of the Ming dynasty. Nevertheless I am convinced that this melody was already used before that: We find a Huihui song, *Huihuiqu*, in the Nanxi play *Su Wu muyangji* 蘇武牧羊記 of Ma Zhiyuan 馬致遠 (1260–1325), which was written in the early/middle Yuan period. Su Wu was sent out in the year 100 BC by Emperor Han Wudi as envoy to the Xiongnu.The Xiongnu chieftain detained him and tried to persuade him to change sides, but in vain. Su Wu remained loyal to his people and preferred to go to the Northern steppe to herd sheep. Only after 20 years was he allowed to return home.

The Huihui-Qupai of the Kun Opera was used at banquets or other drinking scenes, i.e. when the Tang Emperor Ming Huang drinks wine with his favourite concubine, Yang Guifei.[38]

The original Huihui melody, however, has another topic. It treats the defence of the Han Empire against the approaching Beifan barbarians (Northern barbarians):

> Who planted the Suobo tree in heaven? [39]

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36 Ku Cunxiao 哭存孝, *Yuanqu xuan waibian* 元曲選外編: 4, scene 2.

37 *Mudanting* 牡丹亭, in: *Guben Yuan Ming zaju*, scene 47; see Kersting 1986: 23.

38 Later it was also adopted in the Peking Opera, for scenes such as 'Concubine Gui gets drunk'貴妃醉酒 , etc.

39 The original text of the *Su Wu muyangji* has only survived in manuscript fragments, which explains the following mistakes. The Suobo tree 娑婆 of this song is doubtless mistaken for Suolo 婆羅, which in Chinese mythology is one name for the Cassia tree of the moon, Suoluo 婆羅樹, also

Who created the nine bows of the Yellow River? [40]
Who is it that defends the three mountain passes?
Who is it that pacifies the approaching Northern barbarians?

The Suobo in heaven Li Taibo has planted.
The nine bows of the Yellow River, the old Dragon King has created.
It is Yang Liu that defends the three mountain passes.
It is Wang Zhaojun that pacifies the approaching Northern barbarians.

This song does not refer to the drinking-habits of barbarians. Instead it quotes in each line a legend of Chinese mythology or a figure from Chinese literature. In the first two lines the famous poet Li Taibo is mentioned, along with the magic cassia tree, *the* symbol for scholarship.The Nine Bows refer to the cradle of Chinese culture. These two lines seem to stand for Chinese civilization, and it takes the Yang Luiji and Wang Zhaojun 王昭君 from the next two lines to defend it. Wang Zhaojun was a concubine of Emperor Yuan (r. 48–33 BC). She was chosen to marry a Hu chieftain, to guarantee peace at the Northern frontier. In the play *Hangongqiu* 漢宮囚, again by Ma Zhiyuan, she commits suicide by jumping into a river upon leaving China. In real life, however, she remained true to her new husband and bore him a son. When the chieftain died she was forced to marry his son, with whom she bore two daughters. Throughout the centuries Wang Zhaojun is seen as the symbol of the chaste Chinese woman and the national spirit of resistance. She does not play any role in the *Su Wu muyangji*, but only in the *Hangongqiu*. It seems that Ma Zhiyuan has introduced this song, which belongs by topic to the *Hangongqiu*, into this libretto for the simple reason that both plots deal with the subject of pacifying the Xiongnu.

It is difficult to understand why two Beifan barbarians should sing this appraisal of Chinese culture. If a member of the barbarians expresses his respect for the 'superior nation', which of course happens rarely enough, then he is the role-type Fumo 副末, the second male hero, which choice underlines his intelligence. But here they belong to the role-types of the *Jing*-淨 and the *Chou* clown 丑.

An unexpected find might offer an explanation: This song of the early years of the 14th century appears nearly identical in the play 'Liu Wenlong goes to the palace examination' 劉文龍趕耳 of the Anhui Nuo Opera. Since I have never heard of any other contemporary example of this song, it most probably survived, and is still sung nowadays only in the repertoire of the Nuo Opera. The title of the scene is 'battle and capitulation' 交戰報降, and it is sung here by one young and one old Huihui barbarian. As in the *Su Wu muyangji* by Ma Zhiyuan the style is that of a folk-song. They sing in alternation – one asking, one responding. Here only the responces:

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called Yuegui 月桂; see also *Huai Nanzi* 淮南子証聞, Chap.6, (1985: 44). The Cassia tree grows in the Cold Palace on the moon, where the Toad of the Moon resides. To break a twig from it means to pass the palace examinations.

40 The poem 'The Nine Bows' 九曲詞 by Gao Shi 高適 (Tang Dynasty) tells about the Yellow River and wild Barbarians, who even after excessive drinking are still able to ride their horses. see QTS (Taibei): III, 2189; 'The nine bows' 九曲 is also a place name in the present-day autonomous county of Huajiang of the Hui Nationality in Qinghai. See GJDM.

The Suo tree in the moon was planted by Xiwangmu, the Queen Mother of the West! [41]
The nine bows of the Yellow River, the old Dragon King has created.
It is a Han general that defends the three mountain passes,
It is Liu Wenlong that so cruelly slays the Western barbarians (Xihu)!

The main difference in that text concerns Liu Wenlong. His is the main role of this opera, like Wang Zhaojun in countless other plays.

The integration of folk-tunes into opera was a common technique. Nanxi 南戲, the Southern opera, was created under the strong influence of Zhejiang folk-songs. *Su Wu muyangji* is a play of the Nanxi, while the origins of the Nuo play *Liu Wenlong gankao* can be traced back to the Nanxi, too. And though the authorship of *Liu Wenlong* is unclear, one theory even claims, that Ma Zhiyuan was also the author of this play. This theory would be strongly supported by the mutual existence of the Huihui song in both texts. It forms a solid link between all these three plays supposedly by Ma Zhiyuan.

I presume that this Huihui song was originally a folk-song or dance tune, that might also have been used to accompany Huihui and Barbarian dances. Historical sources prove that such dances, as described above, were indeed common at the New Year feast between the Song and the Ming dynasties. [42] In these dances barbarians were beaten and ridiculed by the Chinese, – no doubt balsam for the souls of the Song and Yuan contemporaries, who had witnessed again and again the defeat of the Chinese troops. It would thus explain very well why two barbarians are made to sing such a text. The content of the song is only indirectly related to the two operas, but by inserting Liu Wenlong and Wang Zhaojun into the last line, the author/s attached it ingeniously to the plot.

CONCLUSION

The literary sources I have analysed here are far from complete. Poetry and drama still provide ample material concerning the motif of the 'barbarian' in China. Nevertheless the corpus of texts investigated provides first results. From the Liang dynasty onwards up to the Song period poetry deals with foreigners from the North-West. Initially rather sympathetic and patronizing, the attitude of the literati changed markedly about the middle of the Song period. With the appearance of early Chinese drama, with Nanxi and Zaju, a rather negative picture of the barbarian is created on stage. The reasons for this change are most probably the constant border conflicts and the occupation of North China by the Jin and the Liao. These political catastrophes initiated a trend that was doubtless further

41 Xiangmu 西王母, see Houhanshu 後漢書,張衡傳,恩玄賦, Juan 59: 1920. According to the commentary she wears a mythological figure with the body of a human, a panther's tail, a tiger's fangs and dishevelled hair: She wears a head dress of feathers and roars frightfully. see also Shiji 史記秦本記, 司馬相如傳,大人賦, Juan 117: 3060. From the time of the 'Six dynasties' onwards it is said that she was in possession of the 'pill of immortality' (see Ma Shutian: 40: 'Wangmu niangniang' 王母娘娘 . According to the *Shiji* and the TPGJ 孔平廣記, Xi Wangmu was also a tribe that lived in the area of present-day Gansu and Qinghai; see TPGJ, Juan 203; *Shiji*°史記, 秦本記, Juan 5: 175f.

42 Eberhard quotes from the *Xihu laoren fanshenglu* 西湖老人繁博錄, 'Chronicle of unlimited pleasures by the Old Man of the Westlake ' (~1250); Eberhard 1942: 188.

fuelled by the Mongol invasion and the founding of the Yuan dynasty. Whether the role of the barbarian in the Nanxi and Zaju plays was used consciously to critizise the Mongol Government cannot be answered here for certain. As most playwrights carefully avoided even naming Mongols in their plays, and also the overwhelming majority chose their topics from remote antiquity, it is impossible to obtain a clear answer on this question. Still – the complete taboo of any topic concerned with the Yuan dynasty should count as a silent but clear statement. Also the use of the Mongolian language, or rather phrases and single words as a substitute for all other foreign languages can be interpreted as a sign of cautious, but at the same time bold opposition.

At this point a certain differentiation between two types of barbarians can be observed. Of the eight terms used, it is in fact the Huihui/Moslem that is drawn in the most negative light. His features are often outright evil, compared to those of the Hu or the Beifan. The latter are described as uncivilized, in the sense of people that lacked the opportunity to develop, while the Huihui both in drama and dance songs acts cunningly and mischievously. Consequently, it is also he who suffers the hardest ridicule.and contempt. Why it is he, that is depicted in such an unfavourable way is hard to fathom. One reason might have been the function of many foreigners, especially from the Arab world and Asia Minor, to act as tax-collectors for the Yuan administration. But perhaps it was simply the fact that the Hui population not only believed in Islam, but also bore distinct different external features, compared also with the Mongols. Certainly it was the combination of these unlucky coincidences that made them for several hundred years the laughing-stock of the acting world.

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