humanities

MDPI

Article

Institutionalizing Folk Literature: Anthologies, Journals, and Disciplinary Boundaries in Mainland China

Mario De Grandis

Department of Asian and North African Studies, Ca' Foscari University of Venice, 30123 Venice, Italy; mario.degrandis@unive.it

Abstract

A prominent study of the founding journals of Chinese folkloristics after 1949 argued that Zhong Jingwen's definition of folk literature as the "oral creation of the laboring people" served both to establish political legitimacy and to exclude traditional Chinese opera (*xiqu* 戏曲) and professional storytelling (*shuochang* 说唱) from the discipline. Because that argument rested primarily on inaugural editorials, prefaces, and debates published in journals, it leaves open whether the same boundary-making operated through other forms of disciplinary production. This article addresses that question by shifting the corpus from journals to anthologies and adding a brief comparison with Taiwan, where the mainland's political context did not directly apply. Examining the mainland's *Three Collections* (*Santao jicheng* 三套集成) of folk stories, folk songs, and proverbs (1984–2009), the *Ten Collections of Ethnic and Folk Literature and Arts* (*Shi tao minzu minjian wenyi jicheng zhishu* 十套民族民间文艺集成志书; hereafter *Ten Collections*) project of which they formed a part, and, more briefly, Taiwan's traditions of folklore anthologies alongside the *Journal of Chinese Ritual, Theatre and Folklore* (*Minsu quyi* 民俗曲艺, founded in 1980), this article argues that anthologies preserved disciplinary boundaries more durably than journals, while different components of the same national projects relaxed those boundaries at different rates. These findings situate Chinese folkloristics within a broader historical pattern of drawing and redrawing disciplinary boundaries, in which expansive inquiry gives way to consolidation and exclusion, followed by renewed negotiation of the field's scope, with the pace and durability of these shifts shaped by the institutional forms through which knowledge is organized and transmitted.

Keywords: Chinese folk literature; disciplinary boundary-making; Chinese folk anthologies; Chinese folk periodicals

Check for updates

Received: 3 August 2026
Revised: 29 October 2026
Accepted: 2 November 2026
Published: 10 November 2026

Copyright: © 2026 by the author. Licensee MDPI, Basel, Switzerland. This article is an open access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license.

1. Introduction

Examining the two earliest and most influential national journals of Chinese folk-literature studies—*Folk Literature and Art Series* (*Minjian wenyi congkan* 民间文艺丛刊 1950–1951) and *Folk Literature* (*Minjian wenxue* 民间文学, 1955 onward)—Shi (2019) persuasively argued that their editorial choices did not merely record an already settled consensus about what counted as "folk literature" (*minjian wenxue*) but de facto produced one. As noted by Shi (2019), Zhong Jingwen's 1955 "Inaugural Address" in Folk Literature (Zhong 1955, p. 5), together with his seminal article in the *Folk Literature and Art Series* (Zhong 1951), defined folk literature as the "oral creation of the laboring people". This definition served a dual purpose: it secured the field's political legitimacy at a time when unrevolutionary intellectual pursuits were politically suspect while establishing a disciplinary boundary

that excluded "desk literature", traditional Chinese opera (*xiqu* 戏曲), and professional storytelling (*shuochang* 说唱).[1] This exclusion had lasting institutional consequences: practitioners and scholars of traditional opera and storytelling arts eventually organized outside the associations Zhong Jingwen led, founding separate institutional homes.[2] Together with Shi's earlier institutional history of Chinese folkloristics, this indicates that disciplinary boundaries were actively constructed through editorial discourse rather than simply inherited from existing scholarly practice. Yet this evidence rests overwhelmingly on one kind of source: journals. Whether the same process of disciplinary boundary-making can be observed in anthologies remains an open question.

More specifically, Shi's argument rests on a distinctive evidentiary base: editorials, prefaces, inaugural addresses, and the journal debate over how much a fieldworker could revise a transcribed oral text before it ceased to qualify as an authentic expression of "the people"—the so-called "collection and collation" controversy.[3] These are all forms of editorial discourse. They articulate, justify, negotiate, and occasionally revise the boundaries of the discipline, but they do not themselves constitute its enduring intellectual products. Editorial front matter therefore represents a distinctive kind of evidence: declarative, occasional, inexpensive to produce, and readily superseded by subsequent issues.

A disciplinary boundary reconstructed from such sources may look quite different from one reconstructed through another institutional artifact: the multi-volume anthology, a national compilation of oral texts assembled over years or decades by an extensive fieldwork apparatus and fixed in print as a monumental record. If journals are where a discipline debates its boundaries, anthologies are where those boundaries are enacted and preserved in practice. Shifting the analysis from one to the other therefore makes it possible to distinguish between the rhetoric of disciplinary formation and the classificatory practices through which that rhetoric became institutionalized.

This choice of evidence requires justification: a disciplinary boundary could equally be traced through fieldwork practice, funding and patronage, or the membership and activities of scholarly associations, and each of these would show things that the present approach cannot. Anthologies are chosen here for a narrower reason: they are an institutional artifact in which a discipline's classificatory commitments are fixed in a durable and comparable form, since every volume must apply a genre taxonomy, which makes them well suited to testing how long a boundary persists once it has been built into infrastructure. The approach is therefore meant to complement, not replace, studies of journals and associations.

This shift in source base also reorients the present inquiry. Rather than asking how folklore studies defined itself in editorial discourse, this article examines how those definitions were translated into classificatory practice. It does so through two analytical moves. First, it shifts attention from journals to the major state-sponsored folk-literature anthologies of the reform era, asking whether the exclusionary boundary identified by Shi reappears in anthology form and, if so, whether it evolves at the same pace as its journal counterpart. Second, it adds a brief comparative reference point from Taiwan, where scholars working in the same language and drawing largely on the same pre-1949 intellectual tradition pursued folklore studies without the mainland's particular need to legitimate the discipline through the vocabulary of "laboring people" and "oral creation" associated with Zhong Jingwen. The Taiwanese case therefore offers a point of comparison for considering whether the exclusion of traditional Chinese opera and professional storytelling was a historically specific outcome of disciplinary formation in the PRC or an inherent feature of Chinese folkloristics.

Examining disciplinary boundary formation requires distinguishing between the scholarly field and the category of texts it takes as its object. Here, *folkloristics*, used interchangeably with *folklore studies*, refers to the broader field of folklore research in the Chinese-language world, pursued in the Republican period under the name *minsuxue* 民俗学, the

study of folk customs and traditions. Folk literature (*minjian wenxue* 民间文学), by contrast, denotes the narrower category of oral and orally derived texts that became central to mainland scholarship in the 1950s. This distinction is integral to the argument: defining folk literature also helped establish what counted as a legitimate object of mainland folkloristic inquiry. By turning from journals to anthologies, this article examines how the selection and arrangement of texts reinforced, modified, or challenged the boundaries articulated in editorial discourse.

The argument unfolds in four stages. Section 2 builds on the concept of *boundary-work* (Gieryn 1983) by asking whether disciplinary boundaries behave differently when embedded in large, resource-intensive infrastructures rather than merely articulated in rhetoric. It distinguishes three institutional registers: journal editorials, methodological debates that unfold within journals, and anthologies, arguing that they differ according to the cost of revising their classificatory schemes and proposing that anthology-building constitutes a potentially more durable form of boundary-work. Section 3 reconstructs the Republican-era baseline, demonstrating that folklore anthology-building remained largely a small-scale, often individual endeavor, organized around the broad ethnographic category of *minsu* 民俗 rather than a narrowly defined conception of "folk literature". Zhong Jingwen's 1955 exclusionary taxonomy thus represented a break with, rather than a continuation of, this earlier tradition, made possible by the emergence of state-sponsored collection on an unprecedented scale. Section 4 tests the framework through the *Three Collections* (1984–2009), showing that the tripartite taxonomy established in the 1950s remained largely unquestioned across twenty-five years of nationwide collecting, compilation, and editorial work. It then complicates this picture by situating the project within the larger *Ten Collections*, where a single coordinating committee had already begun administratively integrating folk literature, opera, and professional storytelling even as the operational division among professional associations remained intact. Boundary durability, the section argues, varied across institutional registers rather than characterizing the project as a whole. Section 5 turns briefly to Taiwan as a point of comparison, asking whether the mainland's exclusionary boundary between folk literature and performance traditions (particularly opera and professional storytelling) was a necessary feature of folkloristics or a historically contingent product of post-1949 politics. By contrasting the interrupted institutional trajectory of the wartime China Folklore Society with the Republican folkloristics tradition preserved in Taiwan by Lou Zikuang, and by examining the *Journal of Chinese Ritual*, *Theatre and Folklore*, it suggests that Taiwanese folkloristics did not institutionalize the same separation between folklore and performance traditions. The comparison points to the mainland's post-1949 search for revolutionary legitimacy as a possible contributing factor behind the emergence of this disciplinary boundary, without claiming to establish it conclusively.

For orientation, the object of the field is defined differently in each of the periods this article covers. In the Republican period (Section 3), it was defined broadly as *minsu*, including customs, ritual, performance, and oral literature. From the 1950s (Sections 3 and 4), it was defined narrowly as *minjian wenxue*, the "oral creation of the laboring people", excluding opera and professional storytelling. In the *Three Collections* and the *Ten Collections* of 1984–2009 (Section 4), this narrow definition was retained in the operational structure of the projects, while their coordinating committee brought the excluded genres under a single national undertaking.

2. Declared, Argued, Built: Three Registers of Disciplinary Boundary-Work

Sociologists of science have long argued that a discipline's boundary with its neighbors is not discovered in the intrinsic nature of its object but built, through the "attribution of

selected characteristics" to an intellectual activity "for purposes of constructing a social boundary" against its neighbor fields (Gieryn 1983, p. 782). Gieryn's own cases were drawn from scientists' public rhetoric—addresses, popular writing, testimony before legislatures—a register not far from what editorial front matter provides for a humanities discipline. But Gieryn's framework leaves open a question his cases were not designed to test: whether boundary-work looks the same when it is not merely spoken or written about, but built into large, resource-intensive artifacts such as multi-volume folk-literature anthologies that seek to represent an entire field of study.

Folk Literature and Art Series was an occasional publication, appearing only three times between November 1950 and September 1951 before ceasing altogether. *Folk Literature*, by comparison, was a regular periodical, appearing monthly from April 1955 to 1962 and bimonthly from 1963 to 1966; it was suspended during the Cultural Revolution and resumed monthly publication in 1979. Publication at relatively short intervals gives editors repeated opportunities to reconsider what to solicit, what to reject, and how to define a journal's scope. Such changes depend on editorial deliberation and institutional support, but they can be implemented in subsequent issues without necessarily reorganizing a large, ongoing programme of collection and compilation.

This is exactly what happened on the mainland when *Cultural Heritage* (*Wenhua yichan* 文化遗产) brought traditional Chinese opera scholarship, folkloristics, and folk-literature studies under a single editorial roof roughly half a century after the two fields had been separated. Reflecting the institutional integration of Sun Yat-sen University's China Research Center for Intangible Cultural Heritage, the inaugural issue (November 2007) contained twenty-one articles: six on traditional opera, ten on folk literature and folkloristics, and five on intangible cultural heritage protection (Shi 2019, p. 386). A reversal that would have required enormous institutional effort in an anthology project was accomplished, in editorial terms, by redefining the scope of a journal. This does not mean that a journal floats free of institutions: it depends on editorial boards, host universities, and funded research groups, as well as—as Culp (2019) has cogently shown for many Republican-era journals—readers who contribute material and financial support. The difference lies elsewhere: a journal's disciplinary boundaries can be reaffirmed or revised issue by issue. Because its scope is not tied to a fixed body of completed work or a predetermined set of deliverables, it allows greater flexibility than an anthology's classificatory scheme.

From this perspective, an anthology is a different kind of cultural object. To compile a national anthology of oral texts is to commit, in advance, to a genre taxonomy—which kinds of texts count and which do not—and then to operationalize that taxonomy through a set of instructions distributed to a fieldwork apparatus spread across an entire country, sustained over years, and funded through state cultural budgets tied to a fixed set of deliverables. Once that workforce is mobilized, the categories embedded in its instructions may require reconsidering completed work and coordinating changes among institutional stakeholders—provincial cultural bureaus, allied professional associations, funding bodies—to revise their own commitments in step. Revising an anthology's classificatory scheme may therefore require coordination across more stages of scholarly production than revising the scope of subsequent journal issues, particularly where collecting instructions, completed work, and publication commitments already depend on that scheme. This suggests a hypothesis for the cases examined here: boundaries embedded in large-scale anthology projects are likely to persist longer than those articulated in journal editorials because their revision potentially affects a wider network of interdependent activities and commitments.[4]

Between these two poles—periodicals and anthologies—lies a third, intermediate register, exemplified by the mid-1950s "collection and collation" controversy. Rather than debating the boundaries of folklore as a genre or implementing those boundaries through

large-scale compilation, scholars disputed the proper procedures for transforming oral texts into publishable texts. The controversy, conducted largely in the pages of *Folk Literature*, revolved around questions such as how far a fieldworker could rework a transcribed tale like "The Cowherd and the Weaver Girl" (*Niulang zhinü* 牛郎织女) before it ceased to count as an authentic, unmediated expression of "the people" and instead became the collector's own literary composition (X. Liu 2006, p. 624; Shi 2019, p. 367). The dispute therefore took the form not of a single editorial declaration or a national fieldwork apparatus, but of a sustained methodological debate among scholars over the production of the individual textual units from which anthologies would eventually be assembled. Its outcome mattered because it established the procedures through which anthology-building would later operate. Methodological controversies of this kind occupy a distinct analytical position. Unlike editorial declarations, they require sustained argument rather than a single act of declaration; unlike anthology construction, they concern how to prepare texts already accepted as folklore rather than whether an entire category of material belongs within the discipline. The three registers—declared in journal editorials, argued through methodological controversies, and built into anthologies—thus form a continuum of increasing institutional durability, and this article tests the relationship between the first and the last.

3. Republican-Era Antecedents

The exclusionary definition of folk literature that Zhong Jingwen articulated in 1955 marked a departure from, rather than a continuation of, the pre-1949 anthological tradition. The folklore studies pioneered around Beijing University's Folksong Research Society and, later, the folklore societies associated with Sun Yat-sen University and Peking University in the late 1920s and 1930s—a movement in which Zhong Jingwen himself participated—did not organize their fieldwork around a single ideologically freighted criterion such as "the laboring people's oral creation".[5] Instead, as Table 1 shows, the principal journals of Republican-era folklore studies embraced an expansive range of objects of inquiry, extending from folksongs (*geyao* 歌谣) to the broader category of *minsu*, which encompassed customs, beliefs, rituals, festivals, material culture, performance, and oral studies. Although not exhaustive, the table illustrates a breadth of inquiry consistent with scholarly accounts of Republican-era folklore studies.[6]

Table 1. Key journals and objects of inquiry in Republican-era Chinese folklore studies, 1922–1937.

Period	Journal	Objects of Inquiry	Place of Publication
1922–1925	*Geyao zhoukan* 歌谣周刊 (*Folksong Weekly*)	Folksongs (*geyao* 歌谣), later expanding to folktales, proverbs, customs, and beliefs	Beijing
1928–1937	*Minsu* 民俗 (*Folklore*)	*Minsu* (民俗): customs, beliefs, rituals, festivals, material culture, oral literature, performance	Guangzhou
1930s	*Minsuxue jikan* 民俗学集刊 (*Folklore Studies*)	*Minsu* (民俗) and folklore methodology	Guangzhou

Anthology-building during this period was correspondingly modest in scale and improvisational in method: individual scholars or small collectives assembled regional collections of songs and stories largely on their own initiative, often at their own expense, without a state apparatus to fund, coordinate, or standardize the effort.

Zhong Jingwen himself, for instance, published several collections during the Republican period, such as *Folk Curiosities* (*Minjian qushi* 民间趣事 Zhong 1926), *Hakka Love Songs*

Collection (*Keyin qingge ji* 客音情歌集 Zhong 1927b), and Tanka Songs (*Dan ge* 蜑歌 Zhong 1927a), which largely resulted from his individual effort. These volumes were based on his personal fieldwork and collection activities, documenting genres ranging from humorous oral narratives to regional folk songs of the Hakka and Tanka communities.[7] Rather than emerging from institutional or coordinated research projects, they exemplify the early Republican model of folklore collection, in which individual scholars undertook the work of recording and preserving oral traditions through their own initiative.

Beyond the efforts of individual collectors, academic societies also began sponsoring standalone book-length collections as part of broader publication series. Under the editorial leadership of Gu Jiegang 顾颉刚, the Peking University Folksong Research Society published *Collection of Wu Songs, Part One* (*Wu ge jia ji* 吴歌甲集, F. Liu 1926), a landmark anthology of folksongs from the Wu region. Its significance was underscored by prefatory essays from leading May Fourth intellectuals including Hu (1926, pp. i–vii) and F. Liu (1926, pp. i–iii).[8] After joining Sun Yat-sen University, Gu likewise played a leading role in shaping the Folklore Society's ambitious publishing program, which produced, in addition to anthologies, major monographs including his own *Research Collection on the Story of Meng Jiangnü* (*Meng Jiang nü gushi yanjiu ji* 孟姜女故事研究集 Gu 1928a), tracing the historical evolution of one of China's best-known legends, and *Miaofeng Mountain* (*Miaofeng shan* 妙峰山 Gu 1928b), a pioneering field study of the pilgrimage and temple fair held at the mountain. These works were typically published within dedicated series—notably Peking University's *Folksong Series* (*Geyao congshu* 歌谣丛书) and Sun Yat-sen University's *Folklore Studies Series* (*Minsuxuehui congshu* 民俗学会丛书). Together, they reflected the growing institutionalization of folklore studies in Republican China and the May Fourth conviction that folk culture constituted an essential foundation for both scholarly inquiry and national renewal. Yet, despite their scholarly importance, these publication series remained relatively modest in scale and were conceived not as continuous, long-term publishing enterprises, but rather finite collections of standalone volumes.

There was no equivalent, in this period, of a fieldworking bureaucracy numbering in the hundreds of thousands, and correspondingly no mechanism through which genre boundaries could be standardized beyond the working definitions adopted by individual scholars for particular collections and publication series whose scope and direction remained under continuous development. This is the baseline against which the 1949 rupture should be measured: not a discipline correcting a prior confusion about its object, but a discipline whose object was narrowed, under new and specific political circumstances, from a genuinely open ethnographic category to a much more restrictive literary-political one—and whose anthological practice correspondingly changed in kind, not merely in degree, once the state began funding collection at a scale the Republican-era societies had never attempted.

4. The Ten Collections: Institutionalizing Folk Literature in the Post-Mao Era

The ambition to map China's literary traditions, including its folk literature, emerged in the early years of the PRC, when the China Writers Association and other cultural institutions sought to produce comprehensive surveys of the nation's literary heritage (Lao 1956). In the field of folk literature, Jia Zhi 贾芝 and Sun Jianbing 孙剑冰 pursued a comparable, albeit more modest, enterprise through the publication of *Selected Chinese Folktales* (*Zhongguo minjian gushi xuan* 中国民间故事选 Jia and Sun 1958), a pilot anthology intended to serve as the model for a projected series of representative collections and, ultimately, for a comprehensive corpus of China's folk traditions. However, the political upheavals of the Cultural Revolution interrupted these ambitious projects before they could

be fully realized. Only in the early post-Mao period was this unrealized vision revived through a series of nationwide collection projects, the first and most influential of which was the *Three Collections*.

The project generally known as the *Three Collections* comprised the *Comprehensive Collection of Chinese Folk Stories* (*Zhongguo minjian gushi jicheng* 中国民间故事集成), the *Comprehensive Collection of Chinese Folk Songs* (*Zhongguo geyao jicheng* 中国歌谣集成), and the *Comprehensive Collection of Chinese Proverbs* (*Zhongguo yanyu jicheng* 中国谚语集成) (X. Liu 2006, p. xiii). The proposal was first put forward at an enlarged meeting of the Standing Council of the China Folk Literature and Art Research Association held between 29 December 1981 and 2 January 1982. Although initially conceived by folklorists themselves, the project was transformed into a nationwide state-sponsored undertaking only after Liu Xicheng, according to his own recollection, joined the Association as Executive Secretary in September 1983 and worked to secure the support of the Ministry of Culture and the State Ethnic Affairs Commission (X. Liu 2021). These efforts culminated on 28 May 1984, when the three institutions jointly issued the *Notice on Editing and Publishing the Comprehensive Collection of Chinese Folk Stories, the Comprehensive Collection of Chinese Folk Songs, and the Comprehensive Collection of Chinese Proverbs* ("Guanyu bianji chuban *Zhongguo minjian gushi jicheng*, *Zhongguo geyao jicheng*, *Zhongguo yanyu jicheng* de Tongzhi" 关于编辑出版《中国民间故事集成》《中国歌谣集成》《中国谚语集成》的通知), formally launching what would become the largest folklore documentation enterprise in the history of the People's Republic.

The scale of the *Three Collections* dwarfs anything that a journal's editorial apparatus could mobilize. Between 1984 and 1990 alone, hundreds of thousands of participants took part in what amounted to the first nationwide survey of oral literature in the People's Republic, covering all fifty-six officially recognized ethnic groups and collecting approximately 1.84 million folktales, 3.02 million folk songs, and 7.48 million proverbs (Zhongguo zuojia xiehui 2019). The completed project comprises ninety provincial volumes—approximately 120 million Chinese characters—resting upon more than 4000 county- and prefecture-level volumes, published for internal circulation and totaling over four billion characters; the provincial series was completed in 2009, twenty-five years after the project's launch. Subsequent retrospective accounts hailed the undertaking as a "Great Wall of national culture" (*minzu wenhua changcheng* 民族文化长城) (S. Liu 2009) and a "century classic" (*shiji jingdian* 世纪经典) (X. Liu 2021), while the editorial guidelines repeatedly emphasized the principles of comprehensiveness, scientificity, and representativeness (*quanmianxing*, *kexuexing*, *daibiaoxing* 全面性, 科学性, 代表性) (e.g., Zhong 2003, p. i). Behind this language of technical neutrality, however, lay a classificatory framework whose generic boundaries remained largely inherited from the folklore projects of the 1950s.

The taxonomy itself is revealing. A nationwide documentation project intended to recover China's folk heritage after the Cultural Revolution could equally have prompted a reconsideration of what counted as "folk literature" in the first place. Instead, the *Three Collections* reproduced the same tripartite taxonomy—stories, folk songs, and proverbs—that *Folk Literature* had de facto institutionalized three decades earlier, while continuing to treat traditional Chinese opera and professional storytelling as distinct objects belonging to a separate institutional lineage.

Zhong Jingwen himself served as chief editor of the *Comprehensive Collection of Chinese Folk Stories*, the same scholar whose 1955 inaugural address in *Folk Literature* had first, most explicitly articulated the boundary excluding traditional Chinese opera and professional storytelling. Yet the continuity should not be attributed simply to Zhong's intellectual consistency. He was only one of three chief editors, alongside Jia Zhi, who headed the *Comprehensive Collection of Chinese Folk Songs*, and Ma Xueliang 马学良, who oversaw the

Comprehensive Collection of Chinese Proverbs. By that stage, the taxonomy had become embedded in the architecture of the project itself. Once a project of this scale adopted an existing taxonomy as its organizational framework, revisiting its underlying categories would have required redesigning the project as a whole. Large-scale anthological projects tend to be structurally conservative: they inherit whatever classificatory consensus exists at the moment of their conception because the practical demands of collection, cataloguing, and publication leave little room for rethinking first principles.[9] In this sense, the *Three Collections* did not redraw the boundaries of folk literature so much as set in concrete those that had already been established.

Yet the boundary did not hold with equal rigidity across every level of the state's cultural-salvage apparatus, and it is here that the anthology case becomes more interesting than a simple story of institutional fossilization. The *Three Collections* were ultimately incorporated into a much larger state-sponsored undertaking known as the *Ten Collections*. Alongside the "folk" genres comprising the *Three Collections*, the larger *Ten Collections* also included the seven additional series summarized in Table 2.[10] For the purposes of this article, it is particularly significant that these included compendia devoted to *xiqu* and *quyi*, the very genres that Folk Literature had excluded from the category of "folk literature" proper in the 1950s. The difference, however, was institutional rather than conceptual. Responsibility for these genres remained with the musicians', dramatists', dancers', and *quyi* performers' associations, whereas the *Three Collections* continued to be administered by the China Folk Literature and Art Research Association. Thus, although the *Three Collections* preserved the inherited taxonomy of folk literature, the broader ten-part enterprise simultaneously recognized the cultural significance of the excluded genres without dismantling the institutional division of labor established in the 1950s.

Table 2. Editorial responsibilities for the Ten Collections.

Series	Responsible Association	Chief Editor
Comprehensive Collection of Chinese Folk Stories *中国民间故事集成* *Zhongguo minjian gushi jicheng*	China Folk Literature and Art Research Association 中国民间文艺研究会 *Zhongguo minjian wenyi yanjiuhui*	Zhong Jingwen 钟敬文 *Zhong Jingwen*
Comprehensive Collection of Chinese Folk Songs *中国歌谣集成* *Zhongguo geyao jicheng*	China Folk Literature and Art Research Association 中国民间文艺研究会 *Zhongguo minjian wenyi yanjiuhui*	Jia Zhi 贾芝 *Jia Zhi*
Comprehensive Collection of Chinese Proverbs *中国谚语集成* *Zhongguo yanyu jicheng*	China Folk Literature and Art Research Association 中国民间文艺研究会 *Zhongguo minjian wenyi yanjiuhui*	Ma Xueliang 马学良 *Ma Xueliang*
Comprehensive Collection of Chinese of Chinese Folk Songs *中国民间歌曲集成* *Zhongguo minjian gequ jicheng*	Chinese Musicians Association 中国音乐家协会 *Zhongguo yinyuejia xiehui*	Lü Ji 吕骥 *Lü Ji*
Comprehensive Collection of Chinese of Chinese Opera Music *中国戏曲音乐集成* *Zhongguo xiqu yinyue jicheng*	Chinese Musicians Association 中国音乐家协会 *Zhongguo yinyuejia xiehui*	Zhou Weizhi 周巍峙 *Zhou Weizhi*

Table 2. *Cont.*

Series	Responsible Association	Chief Editor
Comprehensive Collection of Chinese of Chinese Ethnic and Folk Instrumental Music *中国民族民间器乐曲集成* *Zhongguo minzu minjian qiyuequ jicheng*	Chinese Musicians Association 中国音乐家协会 *Zhongguo yinyuejia xiehui*	Li Ling 李凌 *Li Ling*
Comprehensive Collection of Chinese of Chinese Professional Storytelling (quyi) Music *中国曲艺音乐集成* *Zhongguo quyi yinyue jicheng*	Chinese Musicians Association 中国音乐家协会 *Zhongguo yinyuejia xiehui*	Sun Shen 孙慎 *Sun Shen*
Comprehensive Collection of Chinese Ethnic and Folk Dance *中国民族民间舞蹈集成* *Zhongguo minzu minjian wudao jicheng*	China Dancers Association 中国舞蹈家协会 *Zhongguo wudaojia xiehui*	Wu Xiaobang 吴晓邦 *Wu Xiaobang*
Gazetteer of Chinese Opera *中国戏曲志* *Zhongguo xiqu zhi*	China Theatre Association 中国戏剧家协会 *Zhongguo xijujia xiehui*	Zhang Geng 张庚 *Zhang Geng*
Comprehensive Collection of Chinese of Chinese Professional Storytelling Arts *中国曲艺志* *Zhongguo quyi zhi*	China *Quyi* Artists Association 中国曲艺家协会 *Zhongguo quyijia xiehui*	Luo Yang 罗扬 *Luo Yang*

Administratively, however, the project was already more integrated than its institutional organization suggests. Although responsibility for individual series remained with their respective professional associations, the entire ten-part enterprise was coordinated through a single national editorial structure. Initially headed by Zhou Yang 周扬 as General Editor, and subsequently overseen in practice by Executive Deputy General Editor Zhou Weizhi 周巍峙 (Jiao 2010; X. Liu 2021), this coordinating committee supervised the chief editors of all ten series. By the time the project was completed in 2009, the *Ten Collections* had been realized as a single national undertaking that treated the folk-literary genres defined in the 1950s alongside music, dance, opera, and professional storytelling within a common documentary framework. This adds an institutional dimension to the editorial integration described by Shi (2019): bringing these fields within a common framework did not necessarily dissolve the organizational divisions between them. In other words, the state's anthology-building bureaucracy coordinated these domains as a single cultural project even while its operational organization continued to divide them among separate professional associations and disciplinary categories. Boundary-work, on this evidence, did not proceed at a single pace even within the same institutional apparatus: an administrative register partially dissolved boundaries that the operational register continued, for decades, to reproduce.[11]

5. A Brief Comparison: Chinese Folkloristics in Taiwan

If the mainland case reveals a shifting boundary over what counted as "folk literature", reproduced at different speeds across different institutional registers (journals and anthologies), the Taiwanese case offers a point of comparison for asking whether the mainland's exclusionary boundary was a historically contingent outcome of disciplinary formation rather than an inherent feature of Chinese folkloristics. The Taiwanese institutions examined here do not appear to have reproduced the same separation between folklore and performance traditions. This contrast is consistent with the possibility that the mainland's post-1949 imperative to legitimate folk literature through the revolutionary vocabulary of

"oral creation" and "laboring people" contributed to that separation. The limited comparison offered here cannot, however, establish the relative importance of this pressure among the different political and institutional circumstances shaping the two contexts. While this section does not offer a full account of the political and cultural contexts of Taiwanese folklore studies or of debates within the movement, it suggests how broadly comparable bodies of material could be classified and interpreted differently within two traditions of Chinese-language folklore scholarship.

The clearest illustration is a matter of institutional naming. On 31 January 1944, Gu Jiegang 顾颉刚, Lou Zikuang 娄子匡, and other scholars inaugurated a wartime China Folklore Society (*Zhongguo minsu xuehui* 中国民俗学会) in Chongqing (W. Wang 2005, p. 94). Although short-lived, this society represented the first attempt to organize folklorists on a national basis after the Republican-era initiatives of the late 1920s. Nearly four decades later, on 21 May 1983, another society also named China Folklore Society was formally established in Beijing, with Zhong Jingwen elected its president (W. Wang 2005, p. 96). Its creation followed a preparatory effort initiated in 1978, when Zhong Jingwen drafted the "Proposal for Establishing Folklore Studies and Related Research Institutions" (建立民俗学及有关研究机构的倡议书) together with Gu Jiegang and other scholars; the proposal was publicly circulated in November 1979 and culminated in the establishment of a preparatory committee in June 1982 (W. Wang 2005; Yang 2018, p. 7).

The two organizations shared a name and, through Gu Jiegang, a degree of personal lineage, but they were institutionally unconnected: the 1944 society's afterlife ran through Lou Zikuang, who relocated to Taiwan and there increasingly devoted himself to preserving the documentary legacy of Republican Chinese folkloristics through extensive editorial and facsimile reprint projects—notably the photographic republication of the Peking University and Sun Yat-sen University folklore series—earning him the sobriquet "the guardian of Chinese folklore scholarship" (*Zhongguo minsu yanjiu lunzhu de shouhushen* 中国民俗研究论著的守护神) (Guo 2005, p. 100). Although he continued to publish original research, particularly on Taiwanese folklore, his most enduring contribution lay in safeguarding and disseminating the textual corpus of earlier Chinese folkloristics.[12] The two institutions bearing the identical name, on opposite sides of the Taiwan Strait, thus came to embody two different trajectories for Chinese folkloristics. On the mainland, anthology-building reinforced a post-1949 boundary around "folk literature", even as that boundary loosened unevenly across different administrative levels. In Taiwan, Lou Zikuang's editorial projects kept in circulation the broader documentary universe of Republican folkloristics, in which folklore, ethnography, local customs, popular literature, and related materials continued to coexist without being reconfigured according to the mainland's narrower taxonomy of "folk literature".

A second illustration comes from the *Journal of Chinese Ritual, Theatre and Folklore* (*Minsu quyi* 民俗曲藝), a journal founded in Taipei in November 1980. The title itself is significant: rather than separating folklore from performance genres, it brought together *minsu* and *quyi* within the same editorial framework. Its initial purpose was to document and introduce folk theatrical and performance traditions associated with Taiwan's community temple festivals—including amateur troupe theatre (*zidi xi* 子弟戲), glove puppetry (*budaixi* 布袋戲), and temple procession troupes (*zhentou* 陣頭)—forms of performance that mainland folklorists had largely excluded from the category of "folk literature" during the debates of 1954–1955.[13] Without explicitly challenging the mainland taxonomy of "folk literature", the journal nevertheless embodied a broader editorial conception of the field, one in which folklore, ritual, traditional Chinese opera, and performance traditions remained contiguous rather than being distributed across separate disciplinary domains.

None of this means Taiwan's folklore scholarship in this period was apolitical, or that it faced no institutional pressures of its own—only that the specific pressure driving the mainland's 1955 definition, the need to secure "academic legitimacy" for folk literature within a revolutionary discourse of class and labor, appears to have had no equivalent on the Taiwan side. Absent that pressure, the genre boundary the mainland spent half a century building, reproducing, and eventually partially dismantling may simply never have had occasion to be drawn.

6. Conclusions

Taken together, the mainland cases and the brief Taiwanese comparison suggest that disciplinary boundaries are not singular institutional facts but historically contingent arrangements, reproduced unevenly across the journals, anthologies, societies, and other organizational forms through which a discipline constitutes its object of study.

The trajectory traced here, from the expansive definitions of the Republican era to the narrower doctrines of the early People's Republic and then to broader formulations again, is not peculiar to Chinese folklore studies. It belongs to a recurring pattern in the history of knowledge and of human institutions generally: periods of expansive and loosely bounded inquiry give way to consolidation and exclusion, which in turn give way to renewed expansion as circumstances change. Whether a boundary is drawn deliberately, inherited through institutional inertia, or dissolved by new pressures, the process is a historically contingent one. The contribution of this article is therefore not to identify the cycle but to specify its mechanisms: which organizational forms carried each phase, how quickly they changed, and why some boundaries proved far harder to revise than others.

The same concern with packaging and transmission runs through the folklorist's own material. Every anthology is a form of packaging, and the old question of how many transcriptions a storyteller's tale can undergo before the departure from its source becomes a new fact in its own right applies equally to the categories that frame it. Each editorial and institutional layer adds its own transformations, and what we inherit as "folk literature" is the cumulative result.

Three further specific conclusions follow from this analysis. First, the cases examined here suggest that different institutional forms reproduce disciplinary boundaries with different degrees of durability. The *Three Collections* retained their tripartite taxonomy throughout twenty-five years of collection and compilation, while *Cultural Heritage*, founded in 2007, brought previously separated fields within a common editorial framework. This contrast is consistent with the hypothesis that classifications become harder to revise when collecting routines, organizational responsibilities, and publication commitments depend on them. The evidence documents the persistence of the anthology's taxonomy; the extent to which revision costs explain that persistence remains an inference from the project's organization. Within the *Ten Collections*, however, administrative coordination coexisted with continued institutional separation: the overarching coordinating committee brought folk literature and performance traditions within a common national undertaking, while responsibility for individual series remained divided among separate professional associations.

Second, disciplinary boundaries should not be mistaken for intellectual necessities. The brief Taiwan comparison is suggestive here. The exclusion of *quyi*, ritual, and related performance traditions from "folk literature" can be explained from within the mainland's own institutional and political history. Nonetheless, Taiwan offers a Chinese-language tradition drawing on much of the same Republican intellectual heritage but developing without the mainland's need to secure revolutionary legitimacy, and it did not institutionalize the same separation in the institutions examined here. What appears, from within the PRC tradition, to be the natural taxonomy of "folk literature" may thus look, when viewed

from across the Taiwan Strait, like a historically contingent response to a particular political problem: how to legitimate folklore scholarship under conditions of revolutionary ideology and suspicion toward inherited academic categories.

Third, the comparison points to a broader methodological lesson for the history of disciplines. The scale and apparent comprehensiveness of a national anthology can lend its classificatory scheme an air of settled, self-evident authority that a journal's editorial prefaces rarely acquire. A project such as the *Three Collections*, mobilizing hundreds of thousands of participants over twenty-five years, appears less like a series of editorial decisions than a straightforward inventory of what objectively exists to be collected. The evidence assembled here suggests the opposite. The categories embedded in the *Three Collections* were no less historically constructed than the journal definitions that preceded them; they were simply reproduced through an institutional apparatus that made their contingent origins less visible and their revision potentially more costly.

Historians of science and the humanities have often treated manifestos, inaugural lectures, and editorial prefaces as the privileged sites where disciplines define themselves, on the reasonable assumption that these are the moments when boundary-work is most explicit.[14] Yet such sources capture only the point at which disciplinary categories are articulated, not the longer institutional processes through which they are reproduced, stabilized, or revised. Any discipline that has built large-scale infrastructures of collection, cataloguing, or standardization around its founding classifications (a national archive, a taxonomic database, a survey instrument reused across decades of fieldwork) may display a similar divergence between editorial scope and operational classifications.

Funding: This research received no external funding.

Data Availability Statement: No new data were created or analyzed in this study. Data sharing is not applicable.

Conflicts of Interest: The author declares no conflict of interest.

Notes

1 Zhong Jingwen's "Inaugural Address" (Zhong 1955) was published anonymously in Folk Literature but has since been attributed to him in the scholarly literature, including by Shi (2019, p. 366 fn 3).

2 Whereas folk literature became institutionally centered on the China Folk Literature and Art Research Association (*Zhongguo minjian wenyi yanjiuhui* 中国民间文艺研究会, founded in 1950) (Wang et al. 2020, p. 5), traditional opera was organized under the China Theatre Association (*Zhongguo xijujia xiehui* 中国戏剧家协会, renamed in 1953 though it had existed in a different form since 1949) (Zhongguo xijujia xiehui n.d.), while professional storytelling (*quyi* 曲艺) was organized through the China Ballad Singers Association (*Zhongguo quyi gongzuozhe xiehui* 中国曲艺工作者协会, founded 1958) (Li and Ma 1991, p. 856).

3 The relationship between collection (*shouji* 搜集) and collation (*zhengli* 整理) has been one of the central methodological debates in modern Chinese folklore studies at least since the early 1950s. At issue is the extent to which oral materials should be documented as performed or editorially revised before publication. The controversy became particularly prominent during the compilation of the *Three Collections*, when questions of textual fidelity, standardization, and the compiler's role assumed both scholarly and political significance. See, for example, S. Liu (1956) and Jian Gao (2021).

4 The selection, ordering, and preservation of texts through anthologies and catalogues have a long history in Chinese scholarship. On the scholarly and political organization of the *Siku quanshu*, see Guy (1987); on the intellectual and institutional development of Qing evidential scholarship, see Elman (1984). For literary anthologies as sites of social affiliation and political accommodation, see Meyer-Fong (2004); for the relationship between academy scholarship, compilation, and regional cultural identity, see Miles (2006), especially chapter 4. Against this broader historical background, the present article addresses a more specific question: how classifications acquire institutional durability through their incorporation into the organization, funding, and implementation of collective scholarly work.

5 For detailed studies of the May Fourth folklore movement centered on the Beijing University Folksong Research Society and the subsequent institutionalization of folklore studies at Sun Yat-sen University and Peking University during the late 1920s and 1930s, see Jie Gao (2021) and Hung (1985).

[6] On the emergence of modern folklore studies in China and its diverse intellectual traditions, see X. Liu (2006, especially chapters 1–3), L. H. Liu (2012), and Jie Gao (2021). For Gu Jiegang's engagement with folklore and his search for alternative cultural traditions, see Schneider (1971). McConaghy (2020) examines how the collection and study of folksongs in *Folksong Weekly* revealed the cultural heterogeneity of Chinese popular traditions.

[7] For other examples of folklorists collecting and publishing oral traditions largely through their own initiative, see for instance Y. Wang (1928), Lou (1928), and Bai (1929).

[8] The prefatory essays in the volume are paginated separately, with the numbering restarting at page 1 for each preface. This unusual practice explains the apparent overlap between the page numbers of Hu Shi's and Liu Fu's essays.

[9] Although Bowker and Star do not discuss folklore anthologies specifically, their analysis of classification systems suggests a more general tendency: once classificatory schemes become embedded in large-scale infrastructures requiring coordinated routines, standards, and institutional cooperation, they become progressively more difficult to revise. See Bowker and Star (1999).

[10] Table 2 is compiled by the author from the official overview of the project published by the Center for the Development of Ethnic and Folk Literature and Art (文化和旅游部民族民间文艺发展中心), Ministry of Culture and Tourism of the PRC (Wenhua he lüyoubu minzu minjian wenyi fazhan zhongxin 2017).

[11] This account has a limit that should be stated plainly. The article treats the associations responsible for the performance-related series in Table 2 (the Musicians', Theatre, Dancers', and Quyi Artists' associations) as institutional categories. It says little about how those associations organized themselves, represented their own fields, or pursued activities beyond compilation, or about how those activities bore on their eventual role in the project. Such questions bear directly on how the excluded genres came to be incorporated, and answering them would require evidence from the associations' own records and histories, which lies outside the anthology-centered evidence used here. The claim made here is therefore limited to what the anthologies themselves, and the project's coordinating structure, show.

[12] After relocating to Taiwan, Lou Zikuang devoted considerable effort to preserving the documentary legacy of Republican Chinese folkloristics through the large-scale facsimile reprint project titled *National Peking University China Folklore Society Folklore Series* (*Guoli Beijing daxue Zhongguo minsuxuehui minsu congshu* 國立北京大學中國民俗學會民俗叢書), published by Taipei's Oriental Culture Book Company (*Dongfang wenhua shuju* 東方文化書局). For a detailed account of Lou's reprint projects and their significance for the preservation of Republican-era folklore scholarship, see Guo (2009).

[13] The information was verified from Airiti Library (*Huayi xianshang tushuguan* 华艺线上图书馆, Taiwan's largest academic publishing and indexing platform).

[14] See, for example, Gieryn (1983), on scientists' addresses and public rhetoric as sites where disciplinary boundaries are actively built rather than discovered. Regarding sociology, Barberis (2021) claims the Année Sociologique was a discipline-building enterprise that organized the intellectual division of labor across sub-fields and effectively defined the discipline of sociology through its editorial choices of authors and books to review. For modern Chinese literature, Hockx's (2003) research shows that Republican-era literary factions such as the Literary Research Association and the Creation Society drew their boundaries against one another chiefly through founding manifestos and the journals built around them.

References

Bai, Shouyi 白寿彝. 1929. *Kaifeng geyao ji* 开封歌谣集 [Collection of Kaifeng Folksongs]. Guangzhou: Guoli Zhongshan daxue yuyan lishi yanjiusuo.

Barberis, Daniela S. 2021. The Année Sociologique as Training Ground for Sociology: Durkheim, Mauss, and the Art of Book Reviewing in Fin de Siècle France. In *History of Universities. Volume XXXIV/1: A Global History of Research Education: Disciplines, Institutions, and Nations, 1840–1950.*. Edited by Ku-ming Kevin Chang and Alan J. Rocke. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 108–29.

Bowker, Geoffrey C., and Susan Leigh Star. 1999. *Sorting Things Out: Classification and Its Consequences*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Culp, Robert. 2019. *The Power of Print in Modern China*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Elman, Benjamin A. 1984. *From Philosophy to Philology: Intellectual and Social Aspects of Change in Late Imperial China*. Cambridge, MA: Council on East Asian Studies, Harvard University.

Gao, Jian 高健. 2021. Zhongguo Minjian Wenyijia Xiehui Minjian Wenxue Souji Zhengli Qishi Nian 中国民间文艺家协会民间文学搜集整理七十年 [Seventy Years of Folk Literature Collection and Collation in the China Folk Literature and Art Association]. *Minjian Wenhua Luntan* 3: 39–44.

Gao, Jie. 2021. *Saving the Nation Through Culture: The Folklore Movement in Republican China*. Copenhagen: NIAS Press.

Gieryn, Thomas F. 1983. Boundary-Work and the Demarcation of Science From Non-Science: Strains and Interests in Professional Ideologies of Scientists. *American Sociological Review* 48: 781–95. [CrossRef]

Gu, Jiegang 顾颉刚. 1928a. *Meng Jiang nü gushi yanjiu ji* 孟姜女故事研究集 [Research Collection on the Story of Meng Jiangnü]. Guangzhou: 国立中山大学语言历史学研究所.

Gu, Jiegang 顾颉刚, ed. 1928b. *Miaofeng shan* 妙峰山 [Miaofeng Mountain]. Guangzhou: Guoli Zhongshan daxue yuyan lishi yanjiusuo.

Guo, Yingsan 郭英三. 2005. Lou Zikuang Dui Minsu Xueshu de Zhongshen Jingying 娄子匡对民俗学术的终身经营 [Lou Zikuang's Lifelong Dedication to Folklore Scholarship]. *Minsu Wenhua Luntan* 1: 96–102.

Guo, Yingsan 郭英三. 2009. *Lou Zikuang Xiansheng Ji Qi Minsuxue Lunzhu Zhi Yanjiu* 婁子匡先生及其民俗學論著之研究 [A Study of Mr. Lou Zikuang and His Folklore Scholarship]. Jiayi: Guoli Zhongzheng daxue.

Guy, R. Kent. 1987. *The Emperor's Four Treasuries: Scholars and the State in the Late Ch'ien-Lung Era*. Cambridge, MA: Council on East Asian Studies, Harvard University.

Hockx, Michel. 2003. *Questions of Style: Literary Societies and Literary Journals in Modern China, 1911–1937*. Boston: Brill.

Hu, Shi 胡适. 1926. Hu xu 胡序 [Hu's Preface]. In *Wu ge jia ji* 吴歌甲集 [Collection of Wu Songs, Part One]. Edited by Jiegang Gu 顾颉刚. Beijing: Daxue geyao yanjiuhui, pp. i–vii.

Hung, Chang-tai. 1985. *Going to the People: Chinese Intellectuals and Folk Literature, 1918–1937*. Cambridge, MA: Council on East Asian Studies, Harvard University Press.

Jia, Zhi 賈芝, and Jianbing Sun 孙剑冰, eds. 1958. *Zhongguo minjian gushi xuan* 中国民间故事选 [Selection of Chinese Folk Tales]. Beijing: Renmin wenxue chubanshe.

Jiao, Wen 焦雯. 2010. *'Shibu Wenyi Jicheng Zhishu' Jianjie* '十部文艺集成志书'简介 [Introduction to the Ten Collections of Ethnic and Folk Literature and Arts]. Available online: https://www.chinesefolklore.org.cn/web/index.php?Page=1&NewsID=6979 (accessed on 3 August 2026).

Lao, She 老舍. 1956. Guanyu Xiongdi Minzu Wenxue Gongzuo de Bao 关于兄弟民族文学工作的报 [Report on the Literary Work of Fraternal Nationalities]. In *Zhongguo zuojia xiehui dier ci lishihui huiyi kuoda baogao fayan ji* 中国作家协会第二次理事会会议扩大报告发言集 [Collected Reports and Speeches from the Expanded Second Council Meeting of the China Writers Association]. Edited by Zhongguo zuojia xiehui 中国作家协会. Beijing: Renmin wenxue chubanshe, pp. 53–71.

Li, Futian 李福田, and Liangchun Ma 马良春, eds. 1991. *Zhongguo Wenxue Dacidian* 中国文学大辞典 [Encyclopedic Dictionary of Chinese Literature]. Tianjin: Tianjin renmin chubanshe, vol. 2.

Liu, Fu 刘复 [Liu Bannong 刘半农]. 1926. Xu wu 序五 [Fifth preface]. In *Wu ge jia ji* 吴歌甲集 [Collection of Wu Songs, Part One]. Edited by Jiegang Gu 顾颉刚. Beijing: Daxue geyao yanjiuhui, pp. i–iii.

Liu, Lydia H. 2012. Translingual Folklore and Folklorics in China. In *A Companion to Folklore*. Edited by Regina F. Bendix and Galit Hasan-Rokem. Hoboken: Wiley-Blackwell.

Liu, Shouhua 刘守华. 1956. Shenzhong Di Duidai Minjian Gushi de Zhengli Bianxie Gongzuo 慎重地对待民间故事的整理编写工作 [Treat the Collation and Editing of Folktales with Caution]. *Minjian Wenxue* 11: 49–52.

Liu, Shouhua 刘守华. 2009. *Minjian Wenxue Baozang de Kaijue Yu Jicheng—Xi Zhongguo Minjian Wenxue Santao Jicheng de Jiazhi Yu Yingxiang* 民间文学宝藏的开掘与继承——析中国民间文学三套集成的价值与影响 [Excavating and Inheriting the Treasures of Folk Literature: On the Value and Influence of the Three Collections of Chinese Folk Literature]. *Zhongguo yishu bao*, November 3.

Liu, Xicheng 刘锡诚. 2006. *20 shiji Zhongguo minjian wenxue xueshu shi* 20世纪中国民间文学学术史 [Academic History of Chinese Folk Literature in the Twentieth Century]. Kaifeng: Henan daxue chubanshe, vol. 1.

Liu, Xicheng 刘锡诚. 2021. *Wo Yu 'Zhongguo Minjian Wenxue Santao Jicheng'* 我与'中国民间文学三套集成' [My Involvement with the Three Collections of Chinese Folk Literature]. Available online: https://www.chinawriter.com.cn/n1/2021/0913/c404063-32225390.html (accessed on 29 October 2026).

Lou, Zikuang 婁子匡. 1928. *Shaoxing geyao* 绍兴歌谣 [Folksongs of Shaoxing]. Guangzhou: Guoli Zhongshan daxue yuyan lishi yanjiusuo.

McConaghy, Mark. 2020. Printing the Voice of the People: *Folksong Weekly* and the Heterogeneity of Chinese Folk Culture. *Modern Chinese Literature and Culture* 32: 138–93. [CrossRef]

Meyer-Fong, Tobie. 2004. Packaging the Men of Our Times: Literary Anthologies, Friendship Networks, and Political Accommodation in the Early Qing. *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 64: 5–56. [CrossRef]

Miles, Steven B. 2006. *The Sea of Learning: Mobility and Identity in Nineteenth-Century Guangzhou*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center.

Schneider, Laurence A. 1971. *Ku Chieh-kang and China's New History: Nationalism and the Quest for Alternative Traditions*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Shi, Aidong 施爱东. 2019. Xueshu Qikan Yu Xueke Jianshe 学术期刊与学科建设 [Academic Journals and Discipline Building]. In *Xin Zhongguo minsuxue yanjiu 70 nian* 新中国民俗学研究70年 [Seventy Years of Folklore Studies in the People's Republic of China]. Edited by Tao Ye 叶涛. Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe, pp. 362–87.

Wang, Pingfan 王平凡, Suzhen Wang 王素珍, and Surong Wang 王素蓉. 2020. Minyanhui: Huihuang 70 nian 民研会：辉煌70年 [The Folk Literature and Art Research Association: Seventy Glorious Years]. *Minjian Wenhua Luntan* 1: 5–9.

Wang, Wenbao 王文宝. 2005. *Guanyu Chuangjian Quanguoxing Minsuxue Zuzhi de Qingkuang* 关于创建全国性民俗学组织的情况 [On the Establishment of a National Folklore Organization]. *Xibei Minzu Yanjiu* 3: 92–98.

Wang, Yizhi 王翼之. 1928. *Wuge yiji* 吴歌乙集 [Second Collection of Wu Songs]. Shanghai: Shangwu yinshuguan.

Wenhua he lüyoubu minzu minjian wenyi fazhan zhongxin 文化和旅游部民族民间文艺发展中心. 2017. '十部文艺集成志书'简介. Available online: https://www.cefla.org.cn/plan/detail?id=162 (accessed on 1 August 2026).

Yang, Ting 杨婷. 2018. Gaige Kaifang 40 Nian Zhongguo Minsuxue Fazhan Licheng Yu Zhanwang 改革开放40年中国民俗学发展历程与展望 [Forty Years of Reform and Opening Up: The Development and Prospects of Chinese Folklore Studies]. *Shehui Zhili* 10: 5–10.

Zhong, Jingwen 钟敬文, ed. 1926. *Minjian Qushi* 民间趣事 [Folk Curiosities]. Beijing: Beijing shuju.

Zhong, Jingwen 钟敬文, ed. 1927a. *Dan Ge* 蜑歌 [Tanka Songs]. Shanghai: Kaiming shudian.

Zhong, Jingwen 钟敬文. 1927b. *Keyin qingge ji* 客音情歌集 [Hakka Love Songs]. Shanghai: Beixin shuju.

Zhong, Jingwen 钟敬文. 1951. Koutou Wenxue: Yi Zong Zhongda de Minzu Wenhua Yichan 口头文学：一宗重大的民族文化遗产 [Oral Literature: A Major Heritage of National Culture]. *Minjian Wenyi Jikan* 1: 11–22.

Zhong, Jingwen 钟敬文. 1955. Fakan Ci 发刊词 [Inaugural Statement]. *Minjian Wenxue* 1: 4–8.

Zhong, Jingwen 钟敬文. 2003. Zongxu 总序 [General Preface]. In *Zhongguo minjian gushi jicheng. Guizhou juan* 中国民间故事集成. 贵州卷 [Chinese Folk Story Collection. Guizhou Volume]. Edited by Zhongguo minjian gushi jicheng quanguo bianji weiyuanhui 中国民间故事集成全国编辑委员会 and Zhongguo minjian gushi jicheng guizhou juan bianji weiyuanhui 中国民间故事集成贵州卷编辑委员会. Beijing: Zhongguo ISBN zhongxin, pp. i–xvi.

Zhongguo xijujia xiehui 中国戏剧家协会. n.d.Guanyu Juxie 关于剧协 [On the China Theatre Association]. Available online: https://www.chinatheatre.org.cn/gyjx/ (accessed on 29 July 2026).

Zhongguo zuojia xiehui 中国作家协会. 2019. *Minjian Wenyi 70 Nian: Chengjiu, Gongxian Yu Baogui Jingyan* 民间文艺70年：成就、贡献与宝贵经验 [Seventy Years of Folk Literature and Art: Achievements, Contributions, and Valuable Experience]. Available online: https://www.chinawriter.com.cn/n1/2019/1003/c403994-31383828.html (accessed on 31 July 2026).

Disclaimer/Publisher's Note: The statements, opinions and data contained in all publications are solely those of the individual author(s) and contributor(s) and not of MDPI and/or the editor(s). MDPI and/or the editor(s) disclaim responsibility for any injury to people or property resulting from any ideas, methods, instructions or products referred to in the content.