Study on Myth of the Dying and Weaving in Yangtze River Delta Area

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ABSTRACT

The Legend of textile material in the Yangtze River Delta is very rich, almost every place. Through the collection, collation, analysis of these myths and legends about dyeing and weaving, it can roughly be divided into three categories: The Legend of the origin of the dyeing industry, the legend of karma in the textile industry, the love stories of legend in dyeing and weaving industry. These myths and legends are important materials for the researchers of the Yangtze River Delta region culture of traditional weaving, through the analysis and study, we think, myths and legends, on the one hand reflected the dyeing and weaving craftsmen’ own social area was low, on the other hand reflected the people’s yearning for a better life and the reality of the helpless.

INTRODUCTION

The Yangtze River Delta region has gradually become one of the most developed dyeing industry area since the Song Dynasty in ancient China, and created the brilliant dyeing and weaving technology, such as Nanjing Yun brocade, Suzhou Song brocade and K’o-ssu, Hangzhou Leno, Nantong blue calico, Ukrainian Jing Cotton. In the inheritance process of traditional dyeing techniques, it not only inherited the skills, and also inherited the myths and legends passed down from the industries. In the author’s opinion, the myths and legends of Yangtze River Delta textile industry can be divided into three categories, they respectively are legends about the origin of dyeing industry, the myths and legends of karma in the textile industry, the love stories of myths and legends of dyeing and weaving industry. According to myths and legends of the content, the myths and legends of origin of industry can be divided into original myths and legends, the transplantation of myths and legends of adaptation myths.

DISCUSSIONS AND ANALYSES

Legends about the origin of dyeing industry

The origin of all industries in ancient China is more or less the color of the myth, dyeing industry is no exception. Leizu, The Horse-head Damsel and Chanhuawusheng
stories are about myth of the origin of the silk industry; in the printing and dyeing industry, Meige Erxian (Mei and Ge immortal) story also has the color of myth; only Xianmian (Huang Daopo) legend in cotton textile industry, there is no mythical. Instead, it is a legend about struggle and the selfless dedication. The legend of origin about dyeing and weaving industry in The Yangtze River Delta region is divided to three categories that it is the original legend, the transplant legend and the adaptation legend.

(1) Original legend
The legend of Huang Daopo is derived from the local Shanghai, these legends are mainly in Yuan Dynasty *Nan Cun Chou Geng Lu*, Wu Xi Set and *Song Jiang FuZhi* Huang Daopo stories in the Ming Dynasty based on the creation of records, and with the era of color. For example, there not exists this argument that Huang Daopo is child bride in the preliberation days, but after there appears this version in criticizing the feudalism system. In addition, about legends of Meige Erxian (Mei and Ge immortal), there are two versions of origin of the Yangtze River Delta region. The one is the legend of Ge Hong in Wuzhen “Hong Yuantai dye house”; the other is the legend of Ge Hong in the Yangtze River Delta area. The two legends have a most characteristic, this characteristic is that the founders are kind and the hard-working people in the dyeing and weaving industry, a chance event inspired them which invented the blue calico printing and dyeing process.[1] The author believes that the Yangtze River Delta textile industry of the origin of the original legend more embodies the diligence and wisdom of the people of this region, is said to highly praise of ruling class that a dyeing and weaving industry origin of reactionary, but also reflects the local townspeople thought self consciousness awakening.

(2) Transplant legend
The legends of textile industry in the Yangtze River Delta region were basically officially recognized the so-called orthodox legend, this kind of legend with ancestor worship and the cult of celebrity characteristics. Such as the legend that Huang Di, Leizu invented the silk industry, it had obvious color of ancestors and celebrities worship. As was known to all, the generation of an industry was absolutely impossible to be one, the two ancestors and the famous genius of the discovery could be completed, it was necessary to go through a long experience accumulated in order to create a complete set of processes. In addition, this type of legend also had the legitimacy of the characteristics. Such as Leizu as the founder of the silk industry, since after Late Zhou Dynasty was sacrificed and worshiped of the royal family and government. Again, there was a version of the most popular of the dyeing and printing industry about the founder of Meige Erxian (Mei and Ge immortal). "Meige Erxian" refers to the Han Dynasty Mei Fu and the Jin Dynasty Ge Hong. In fact, the two men were in ancient celebrities. They were not only famous alchemy and cultivate immortality hermits, more important were they had been canonized the feudal dynasty. Ge Hong had been called the "Fubo generals", because of the repression rebel in Taian two years of the Western Jin Dynasty (AD303) to the Eastern Jin Dynasty founding (AD316), and gave the marquis title. People reverenced Mei Fu, because he had high integrity, in Shaoxing two years of the Southern Song Dynasty (AD1132), Mei Fu was conferred titles of nobility on “Liyan immortal” by Emperor Gaozong of Song. Thus it may be known, Meifu and Gehong had been recognized by the feudal ruling class, for they invented the deeds of printing and dyeing technology were also been officially recognized. Therefore, this kind of transplantation of the legend was widely spread, there was almost no change in content.
(3) Adaptation legend

Origin folklore of the silk industry in Yangtze River Delta region basically belongs to this category. The original version of the legend was introduced into the area of proper localization. Such as The Horse-head Damsel of the myths and legends originated from in the Yellow River Basin. After the introduction of the Yangtze River Delta area was adapted into the myths and legends of *Silkworm Flower Princess* and *White Horse Chance Silkworm*. Of course, the myth of the story was not too much change, they were telling a filial girl misses her father, the girl made a wish to the white horse if it could bring the father home, she was willing to marry it. The white horse did it. Her father came home, but angrily killed the white horse, and he pelt the skin and hanged in the courtyard. When the girl passed the courtyard, the horse suddenly wrapped in the girl, the final metamorphosis into silkworm. In the story of Huzhou Hanshan *Silkworm Flower Princess*, a girl lived at the foot of the Hanshan, her father fought in twenty miles away in the town; but the girl's father was adapted as a businessman who went out to do business in the story of Jiaxing Haiyan *White Horse Chance Silkworm*. Through the above description, these myths and legends in the figure and the location are marked with local features in Zhejiang.

The legend of karma in weaving industry

There were a lot of karma types of textile industry legend in the Yangtze River Delta, it aimed at the world with good deeds, such as *Dragon silkworm*, *the God of Silkworm Told Grievance*, *Colored Cocoon* and so on. These legends reflected people’s good and evil views of the industry naive in the Yangtze River Delta region. The version of *Dragon silkworm* in Tongxiang Jiaxing was most vivid and concrete. A long time ago, there were two sisters in law, the elder sister-in-law is never breed silkworm, she asked younger sister-in-law to breed silkworm. But because elder sister-in-law is sinister and ruthless, she received only a silkworm. However, the silkworm was surprisingly large, it was considered to be dragon silkworm. The eldest sister-in-law brutally killed the Dragon silkworm. But to the silkworm, the younger sister-in-law save silkworm. This is a kind of world view that good will be rewarded with good, evil with evil. Another in Hangjiahu widely circulated legend *the God of Silkworm Told Grievance* was more interesting, it told that the silkworm household felt sericulture was cost-effective than selling mulberry, and silkworms were poured into the river. When he was on the way home after sold the mulberry, there was a fish, it jumped into his boat, but just as he was happy, he was caught, because fish unexpectedly was a corpse. He breaks the law, almost bankrupt.[2] Obviously, these two legends admonish sericulturist to love silkworm.

*Colored cocoon* is a story that the Ming Dynasty (AD1368-AD1644) Emperor Chongzhen (AD1611 -AD1644, AD1627 to AD1644 reigns) is cupidity and oppresses the sericulturist and the weavers in the south of the Yangtze River. In a year of natural disasters, only a family harvested five doll arms the size of cocoon. But it was snatch away by the weaving officer. Officials gave it to the emperor as a treasure. The emperor knit it into a colored belt. But when Li Zicheng (AD1606-AD1645) attacked into Beijing, the emperor was to use this belt to hang in Meishan wryneck tree.[3] Legend about *colored cocoon* reflected wishes of silkworm township people that God can punish tyrants. In addition, there was a kind of good man rewarded. Huzhou Deqing had the legend about "filial daughter", the Ming Dynasty Tianshun
These reflected a phenomenon that the legend of the textile industry of karma in the Yangtze River Delta region was very much, after all, the region was since the Song Dynasty, the most developed region of China's textile industry. The author believes that this type of karma legends is mainly two aspects: firstly, the karma thought in Chinese society is deeply rooted. Although the karma is the basic theory of Buddhism, but in ancient China very early exists similar ideas. China has long had the idea that “Accumulation of good deeds the family must have a lot of good luck things; evil scarred family will have a lot of disasters.” when Buddhism was not introduced into China. this kind of thought in China has a profound cultural soil. During the Eastern Han Dynasty, with Buddhism began popular in China, thought of karma is commonly accepted in all sectors of society. It was no exaggeration to say, almost all of China's ancient every novel there is karma to admonish and preach. Secondly, dyeing and weaving industry in the Yangtze River Delta region of the artisans worked very hard, but also they were subjected to the cruel oppression and exploitation by the feudal forces. However, they are unable to resist. Therefore, the artisans always use the legend of karma to express their dissatisfaction and resentment of the ruling class.

The love story in textile industry

Love is an eternal topic, the Yangtze River Delta textile industry mainly had two types of love. The first was the fairy and the mortal love story, such as the Cowherd and the Weaver Girl, Dongyong and the Seventh Fairy in the Yangtze River Delta region were widespread, it told the story of the beautiful and kind-hearted fairy fell in love with the hard-working and fairy hero. Meanwhile, fairy taught the skills of spinning weaving, and ultimately because of the love of God to break the rules by God's punishment, singing the praises of the tragic romance between man and God. The second was dyeing industry craftsmen and rich girl love legend. Such as Wenzhou GaoJi and Wu Sanchun story, it told the love story of the silk weaving craftsman and Wu Sanchun in the late Ming period silk industry. Because their love was stopped by Sanchun's parents, and in the end, GaoJi went mad, Sanchun committed suicide. The author believes that these stories, on the one hand, praises the pure love, reflects desire and longing of the dyeing and weaving craftsmen for pure love; on the other hand, explains the dyeing and weaving craftsmen of the low social status and the tragic fate, these love stories have a strong resistance to the criteria for choosing a mate of "Properly matched marriage".

SUMMARY

China's Yangtze River Delta region created a brilliant culture of dyeing and weaving, and produced profound influence on Chinese civilization. In this area, credibility about myths and legends of weaving culture was not too high, but it reflected the idea of the
dyeing and weaving industry—loving life, resistance to oppression, the pursuit of love and kindness. In a word, Myths and legends had influenced the thought of dyeing and weaving craftsmen in the Yangtze River Delta region from all aspects of life, on the one hand, it reflected the low of its social, on the other hand, it reflected itself for a better life yearning and the helpless of reality.

REFERENCES