

# *The Evolution of Legends and Beliefs: Take the Legend of the Qimu, Shaoyi and Qiniang in the Songshan Area as an Example*

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**Abstract:** There is a folk that in the Songshan area, Qi's mother, sister of Qi's mother and Qiniang are all Dayu's wives. The legend of Yu's wives is an important part of Dayu legend, but the plot of "Yu marrying Tushan" in the literature is single, which has evolved into genealogies, characters, and plots that are different from other places and can not be seen in any literature, and legends and beliefs of one, two, and three wives appeared. This paper selects the Songshan area where Yu's wives are rich in beliefs and legends for fieldwork, including Dengfeng, Yuzhou, Jia County, Gongyi, Yanshi and other counties and cities, to explore the process of localization of Dayu legends.

## **1. Localization of legends and beliefs: The cumulative evolution of "Yu marries Tu Shan"**

The legend of Dayu controlling water is the common memory of the Chinese nation, and the legend of Yu's wife as the theme of marriage is an important part of it, and the core plot of the early legend is "Yu marries Tu Shan". "When I married my wife Tushan Clan at the beginning of my business, I only lived at home for four days; When my son was born, I had no time to take care of it, and devoted myself to splitting mountains and dividing waters"[1] in "Shangshu Yushu Gao Taomo" is an earlier record in the extant literature. "Songs of Chu Tianwen" contains "Dayu inspects the water situation below; How did he meet Tushan's daughter and commit adultery with her in Sanglin."[2] "Lü's Spring and Autumn Yinchu" contains "Yu inspected the water control, and on the way married the daughter of the Tushan clan. Yu did not have time to hold a wedding ceremony with her, so he went to the south to inspect it. The Tushan woman saw that Dayu had not responded, so she asked her maid to go to the south of Tushan to wait for Yu's return, and sang a song she had composed, the content of which was: 'I am waiting for you'"[3]. Judging from early literature, "Yu marries Tu Shan" is the core plot; the second is that Dayu met the Tushan clan on the way to cure the water and consummated his marriage in Tushan; The third is the birth of the Qi. By the Two Han Dynasty, the legend of Yu's wife had undergone obvious changes, such as "Yu married the daughter of the Tushan clan, called the Nvjiao clan, and gave birth to Qi" in the "The Book of Rites of Dadai and Emperor System"[4]. The Tushan clan has the name "Nvjiao clan", the plot of Qi's birth is prominent, and the dual identities of "Yu's wife" and "Qi's mother" are clear. After that, "Spring and Autumn Annals of Wu and Yue States: A Side Story of Wuyu, the Emperor of Yue State" added a lot of new content while following the

records of the previous dynasty, which is representative in the process of legend evolution:

Dayu was not yet married, and when he came to Tushan, he thought that he would be against the law of propriety if he did not marry a wife and start a family and have children, so he prayed to heaven: "If I should marry a wife, God will reveal something to enlighten me." Sure enough, a nine-tailed white fox appeared in front of him. Yu said: "White is exactly the color of my uniform, and the nine tails are the symbol of the king. " Isn't Tu Shan sung such a folk song, "A white fox looking for a mate with nine large fluffy tails. The good guests who come to us, they will surely be kings in the future. Just start a family here, Tushan people can help you achieve a career. What is the correspondence between heaven and man, this is what it means!" Yu now understood, so he married a local woman from Tushan, her name was Nvjiao. After marrying, he went out to control the flood after only three or four days. Nvjiao gave birth to her son Qi, and When Qi was born, he did not see his father and cried day and night. [5]

King Yue had no time to trace back to his ancestors and suggests that he was born extraordinary by virtue of the identity of Dayu and Nvjiao as "all saints are in one". The identity of Tushan Nvjiao as "Yu's wife" and "Qi'mother" is highlighted, and the performance after the birth of Qi is vividly described.

## 2. The Change of Yu's Wife Legend and Belief in Songshan Area: From Qi's mother to the Theory of Two Wives and the Theory of Three Wives

The legend and belief of the Tushan family of Qi's mother can be seen in various documents and spread around the country. Although there are regional differences, there are "common denominator", that is, "Yu married Tushan" and "Tushan born Xia Qi". The localization of the legend is mostly based on records in historical books. However, the legends and beliefs of two wives and three wives are rarely seen in historical books. The theory of two wives is still recorded in local documents, while the theory of three wives is only reflected in oral singing, folk beliefs and local landscapes.

### 2.1. The legend of Qimu

The legend of the Tushan family that spreads around the Songshan area is "Qi's mother turns into stone". There is a huge stone at the foot of Longevity Peak of Songshan Mountain in Dengfeng City, which is divided into two parts, one half of which stands vertically, about 10 meters high, and the other half lies flat on the ground, about 20 square meters in size. The fracture surface of the two parts is consistent, known as "Qimu Stone". It is said that in order to drain the flood in the south of Songshan Mountain to the Yellow River, Dayu dug the Huanyuan Pass and turned it into a bear. He agreed with Tu Shan to send rice with the sound of a drum. One day, Dayu accidentally knocked a stone off the drum. Tu Shan heard about it and came to send rice. Seeing Dayu turn into a bear, she felt ashamed and turned into a big stone in fear. When she was already pregnant, Dayu shouted at the stone, 'Return my son! Give it back to my son! Give it back to my son! ' Three times in a row, the stone split from the north, and Xia Qi was born. <sup>1</sup>This legend is an account of Chang Songmu, the inheritor of the legend of Dayu, the "intangible cultural heritage". There are still many different texts in the local area, with little difference in important plots. It basically includes Dayu's digging of the Yuanguan Pass (mountain), Tu Shanjiao sending meals, drum sound as a signal, Dayu turning into a bear, stone mistakenly hitting the drum, Qi's mother turning into a stone, and stone cracking and Qi's birth and other plots. It is said that Qi's mother turning into stone is magical and touching. People were very moved by it and built temples to worship her. The Qimu belief in Songshan has a long history. It is said that Qimu Temple is located in the north of Qi's mother Stone, and the temple is no

<sup>1</sup> Oral speaker: Chang Songmu, male, 52 years old, from Changzhai Village, Junzhao Township, Dengfeng City; Place: Huanyuan Pass; Time: September 12, 2020.

longer there. But people still carry incense foil and offerings to pray under Qimu Stone on the first and fifteenth days of each month. The Qimu Palace, as the gate of the temple, remains today. It is located on the south side of Qimu Stone, with the inscription of "Qimu Temple (Kaimu Temple)" built in the second year of Yanguang in the Eastern Han Dynasty.

The legend of Qi's mother turning into stone is the basis of the legend of Dayu in Dengfeng. The legend and belief of Yu's wife radiate from the Huanyuan Pass to Song County in the west, Yanshi and Gongyi in the north, and Yuzhou and Jiaxian in the south. Located at the junction of Dengfeng, Yanshi and Gongyi, the Huanyuan Pass is a dangerous terrain. It is an ancient official road and military fortress, and one of the "eight sights" in Dengfeng. There is a "Huanyuan Pass Temple" in the pass. The plaque of "Ancient Huanyuan Pass" in the 15th year of Qianlong's reign has been hung on the door. Qimu is Yu's wife in a general sense, but it is only part of the legend of Yu's wife in Songshan area. There is also the "two wives theory" that Tushan sisters are Yu's wife, and the "three wives theory" that Tushan sisters and Qiniang form.

## 2.2. Two Wives Theory: Legend of Qimu and Shaoyi

The main body of Song Mountain is located in Dengfeng City. The east and the west of it are called Taishi Mountain and Shaoshi Mountain respectively. It is said that the two mountains were named after Qimu and Tu Shanyao. Tu Shanjiao and Tu Shanyao once lived at the bottom of the two mountains respectively. They are called "Taishi" and "Shaoshi" because of the difference between legal wife and the second aunt. In order to commemorate the merits and virtues of the two sisters in helping Yu to control the flood, Qimu Temple and Shaoyi Temple were built. Both temples are no longer there, but the stone towers in front of the temples are still there, namely Qimu Tower and Shaoshi Tower. The theory of Qimu and Shaoyi spread in Dengfeng, Yuzhou, Yanshi, Gongyi and other places.

### 2.2.1. The Legend and Belief of Qimu and Shaoyi in Dengfeng

It is said that Qimu and Shaoyi are sisters. After Qi's mother turning into stone, her sister married Dayu to take care of Dayu and Xia Qi; It is also said that the Tushan sisters married Dayu at the same time. After Qi's mother turning into stone, Xia Qi was raised by her sister. The legend of "Baby Raising by My Sister" passed down in Dengfeng is quite representative in various variants: "Tu Shanjiao turned into a stone. Xia Qi was just born, and Dayu wanted to control the flood, so the baby was left unattended. His sister-in-law Tu Shanyao voluntarily married Dayu, took care of Xia Qi and Dayu, and moved from Taishi Mountain to Shaoshi Mountain to live in order to dig the Duyuan Pass."<sup>2</sup>"Baby Raising by My Sister" is a sequel to the legend of "Qi's mother turning into stone". Qi's mother turned into a stone, and Xia Qi was born after the stone was broken. The plot ends abruptly, solemn and mysterious. "What happened to Dayu and Qi later?" does not explain. "Every incompleteness or question in the plot will become a 'missing'. In folk narratives, as long as there is a missing, there will be 'tension', and each tension will inevitably introduce one or more new motif chains to resolve it"[6]. "Baby Raising by My Sister" filled the missing of Yu's wife and missing of Qi's mother. Dayu continued to control the flood. People worried that his aunt would repeat the tragedy of Qimu, and produced the legend of Five Finger Ridge: "Dayu turned into a bear when he was controlling the flood in the North Five Finger Ridge of Tangzhuang Township. Tu Shanyao and Xia Qi came to visit Dayu. Dayu saw the mother and son, and was afraid that Tu Shanyao would follow her sister's path, so he hurriedly shrank back and deformed. In a hurry, a bear's paw did not change back and stayed in the mountain to become the Five Finger Ridge."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Oral speaker: Chang Songmu; Place: In front of Qimu Hall; Date: June 14, 2020.

<sup>3</sup> Oral speaker: Chang Songmu; Place: In front of Qimu Hall; Date: July 14, 2020.

In addition to the legend, the belief of Qimu and Shaoyi in Dengfeng is popular. There are many relevant records in local chronicles. According to "The Unified Annals of the Ming Dynasty", "Qimu Temple is located at the foot of Song Mountain in the north of Dengfeng County." "Shaoyi Temple is in the southeast of Fucheng, and there is Shaoyi Temple in Yanshi, Gong and Dengfeng counties." [7]Yang Jiong's "Stele of Shaoyi Temple in Shaoshi Mountain" in the Tang Dynasty clarified the identity of "Shaoyi" as the sister of Qimu and the reason for worship, which is consistent with the legend of two wives that has been handed down to this day. The Tushan sisters all married Dayu, which may be a legacy of the concubine marriage system. In "The Legend of Gongyang in the Spring and Autumn Period, the 19th Year of Duke Zhuang", "When a vassal of one country marries a woman of another country as his wife, the party who marries the woman must also have two countries with the same surname send the woman and man to marry with him. The woman who marries with him is called Di, and the man who marries with him is called nephew. Generally, princes can marry nine wives and concubines at one time, and then they will not marry again.[8]" In ancient times, it is common for sisters to marry a husband together, such as Empress E, daughter of Emperor Yao, and Lady Ying, daughter of Emperor Yao, to marry together in Shun. The evolution of Dayu's theory of monogamy is the need for the lack of legendary plots, the reflection and legacy of the ancient marriage system, and more importantly, the needs of the people's emotions.

### 2.2.2. Yanshi, Gongyi and Yuzhou: the Acceptance and Regeneration of the Theory of Two Wives

In Shuangta Village, Yanshifudian Town, there is the "Eryi Temple", also known as the "Ermu Temple". Now the temple is empty. On the left of the gate is "The Record of Rebuilding the Stele of the Summer Ermu Temple" in the 16th year of Kangxi (1677), and on the right of the gate is "The Record of the Statue of Empress Xia Tushan in Golden Makeup" in the 56th year of Qianlong (1791). "The Record of Rebuilding the Stele of the Summer Ermu Temple" records that Qimu gave birth to and raised Xiaqi, and Dayu managed the flood without worries. Xia Qi "is not similar to" Dan Zhu, son of Yao, and Shang Jun, son of Shun. It is Qimu's contribution to make Xia Qi become a virtuous person. The people worship Qimu for this, but they also worship Shaoyi. "People seem to hear the traces of Empress E and Lady Ying", which is the result of the people's imitation of worshipping Shun's two wives, and is different from the plots of Qimu turning into a stone and Shaoyi raising baby instead of his sister in Dengfeng. In "The Legend of the Statue of Empress Xia Tushan in Golden Makeup", Qimu is called "Empress Xia Tushan". It recounts that Qimu taught her children well, and Xia Qi's talent is worthy of his position. It adds the legend that "Qimu's Tomb is in Yangcheng". Now there is Qimu's Tomb in Yeshang Village of Gaocheng Town of Dengfeng City. There is a "Yiyi Temple" in Yiyi Temple Village, Goushi Town, Yanshi. "It used to be called Shaoyi Temple and Aunt Temple, and the Empress and Aunt worshiped by people" is the emperor's aunt. It was moved from two miles north to the current site and renamed as "Yiyi Temple"<sup>4</sup>. Few people in the villagers know that whether Shaoyi is related to Dayu and Xia Qi, and the Yiyi Temple has been generally called Nainai Temple. Similar to the Ermu Temple in Yanshi, there are eight murals painted on the walls of the "Qimu Shaoyi Temple" in Boyu Village, Huiguo Town, Gongyi. They are: Yu Wang splits the mountain, opens the Heishiguan Pass, refuses to enter the Three Kingdoms' home, Qimu delivers meals, Shaoyi picks mulberry trees, teaches children, locks dragons, and cuts dragons. So far, the temple is full of incense. On the Baishan Mountain in the south of Yuzhou City, there is a "Shaoyi Temple", which is divided into upper and lower floors. On the first floor, two Tushan sisters sit side by side in the main hall; On the second floor, Dayu sat upright, Xia Qi occupied the east, and King Heilong occupied the west; At the entrance of the temple stands a stone tablet, "The Stele of Shaoyi Temple". In the east of

<sup>4</sup> Oral speaker: Li Shaopeng, male, 69 years old, from Yimiao Village, Yangou Town, Henan Province; Place: In front of Yanshi Yiyi Temple; Time: April 10, 2021.

the temple is a five story octagonal brick tower built in the 14th year of Emperor Qianlong of the Qing Dynasty. It is said that there were three Qing Dynasty theaters in the south of the temple. Shaoyi Temple is also known as Eryi Temple. "It is said that Dayu was controlling the flood outside, and his wife died after she was born to Xia Qi. Shaoyi held Xia Qi in search of Dayu and raised Xia Qi on Baita Mountain."<sup>5</sup>

Yanshi, Gongyi and Yuzhou accepted Dengfeng's theory of "two wives". Dengfeng's legend tells the reason and process of the marriage between Shaoyi and Dayu, and they built temples separately. While the three places directly took Yu having two wives as the premise, and the two wives shared the sacrifice. Regardless of whether the Yiyi Temple was dedicated to Qimu or not, if there is Shaoyi, there must be Qimu, and they still believed in the theory of "two wives. From monogamy to bigamy, Shao Yi can be regarded as the derivation of Qimu, and Shao Yi is the continuation of Qimu.

### 2.3. Three Wives Theory: Qimu, Shaoyi and Qiniang

"Three wives" is the addition of Qiniang on the basis of "two wives". The legend of Qiniang only depends on word of mouth. Qiniang has no status as the wife of Dayu. There is a local saying that "The Saint without leaving his name is Qiniang". It is said that Qiniang's family is a family named Li in Lichangzhuang, Jiaxian County. They are called Miss Qi and Qi aunt locally. She married Dayu in the area of Lvliang Mountain, Xiaolv Town, Yuzhou City. The people in Yuzhou called her Qiniang, Qi grandma and Qi's mother. There is a Qiniang Temple in Lvxi Village, Xiaolv Town, on the bank of the Lvliang River. According to the old man's memory, it was demolished three times in the past hundred years. When it was serious, nothing remained. Later, it was all repaired by local people. There was a local song that said, "Qiniang judged that there was a lack of strong generals and elite soldiers during the Western Expedition. She sowed a lot of beans, which turned them into countless soldiers. With the addition of generals and troops, the soldiers were magnificent and powerful. The soldiers were overwhelming, and the enemies were wiped out." <sup>6</sup>

It is said that Qiniang has a distinctive personality, is both talented and martial, independent and resolute. Dayu went out to control the water. She managed the Lvliang River in her hometown, taught Xia Qi to practice martial arts, trained soldiers to fight, and paved the way for Xia Qi, focusing on showing that Qiniang is both brave and intelligent. It was also because of "culture and martial arts" that she took over Xia Qi from Shaoyi; The image of two wives is vague. Legends like helping Yu to control the flood, raising Xia Qi, and teaching people to grow crops highlight the character of being virtuous, caring for the mother, and loving the people. This is a group image of traditional Chinese women, with full commonality and insufficient individuality. In contrast, the two wives are "Yu's wife" and "Qimu", the female image standing behind Dayu and Xia Qi, while the Qiniang is "strong woman" who can manage the floods side by side with Dayu and remove obstacles for Xia Qi. She can train soldiers and fight, and she can "turn a bean into a soldier". "A lot of beans are sown, and there are countless soldiers", deifying the Qiniang, highlighting her femininity, which is different from the two wives or traditional women. If the theory of bigamy is the continuation and development of the theory of monogamy, there is a rupture and confrontation between the theory of three wives and the theory of two wives. The theory of three wives changed the common saying that "Shaoyi raise Xia Qi", and believed that Qi was "born by his mother, held by Shaoyi, and raised by Qiniang". The legend does not deny the existence and significance of Shaoyi, but Shaoyi holding Xia Qi only is a transition, and finally leave it to Qiniang. The sense of confrontation is obvious. Both Qiniang Temple and Shaoyi Temple are located in the south of Yuzhou City, not more than ten miles away. Shaoyi

<sup>5</sup> Oral speaker: Liu Xinfang, 71 years old, from Liupo Village, Xiaolu Town, Yuzhou City; Place: In front of Wenfeng Pagoda, Baita Mountain; Time: September 15, 2020.

<sup>6</sup> Oral speaker: Gao Guohe, male, 72 years old, from Dalu Street, Xiaolu Town, Yuzhou City; Place: In front of the Qiniang Temple in Yuzhou; Date: March 28, 2020.

Temple has a theater and Wenfeng Tower of the Qing Dynasty. However, Qiniang Temple has been destroyed and rebuilt several times. There are differences in the acceptance of the mainstream culture between the two. In reality, there is tension, which shows fracture and confrontation in legends.

In a word, the related documents of the legend of Yu's wife only include Tu Shan, the Qimu. The plot is simple. However, the theory of two wives and the theory of three wives derived in the Songshan area, reflecting the evolution of the legend in the upper layers of time and space. On the whole, the legend follows the characteristics from simple to complex, from single to diverse. Moreover, the legend and belief are linked, forming a close relationship of interaction and symbiosis. From monogamy to bigamy and then to triandry, there is a relationship between inheritance and growth, but there are also obvious fractures and confrontations, which is inseparable from the complexity and multi-directional nature of legendary growth. The legend of Yu's wife is inherited and spread based on folk beliefs, especially the theory of two wives and three wives. The only few stone tablets in the temple of Yu's wife have been recorded sporadically, which has been passed down to this day. At present, word of mouth is concentrated on the temple fair day of the temple, scattered in daily life, and continuously interacts with the belief. The interaction between legend and belief is just like that they are at one end of the scale. Changes on one side will inevitably break the balance, thus causing or facilitating changes on the other side. According to the field results, legends will affect the maintenance or change of belief rituals, and ritual changes will promote the growth of legends, or construct and create legends to explain the changes of rituals, so that they continue to evolve.

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