

Study on Literariness of Imperial Edict in Qing Dynasty and Its Related Story Works

Zhengfan Chen

Central University of Finance and Economics, Beijing 102206, China

1911986746@qq.com

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Abstract: In recent years, with the further broadening of scholars' academic horizons and the development of the collection, collation and textual research of preaching novels, the research on preaching novels has gradually entered the right track. As one of the social education measures of the rulers, the imperial edict preaching in Qing Dynasty, as a unique cultural phenomenon, its development and evolution process and the story-like preaching text that emerged with it deserve more in-depth and detailed analysis and combing. This paper studies the literariness of imperial edict in Qing Dynasty and its related story works. Firstly, it puts forward the origin and development of the imperial edict in Qing Dynasty, and then discusses the literariness of the imperial edict in Qing Dynasty. Finally, the article analyzes the story text of the imperial edict to discuss the material source and literary value of the research on the related story works of the imperial edict in Qing Dynasty.

1. Introduction

In the Qing Dynasty, there appeared a unique novel type in the field of novels, that is, novels explaining the political education thought of the supreme ruler. This kind of novels took Article 16 of imperial edict promulgated by Emperor Kangxi as the main theme, and made the people subtly accept the idea of imperial edict by perfunctory karma stories [1]. Because propaganda novels are often spread among the people as imperial edict, the quality of publication and preservation are not optimistic, so there are few studies on propaganda novels, which are scattered in the discussion of other topics.

In recent years, with the further broadening of scholars' academic horizons and the development of the collection, collation and textual research of preaching novels, the research on preaching novels has gradually entered the right track [2]. The preaching of imperial edict was a very important political and cultural activity in Qing Dynasty, and its folk evolution and works were of great significance in the history of vernacular short stories, folk art and linguistics. As one of the social education measures of the rulers, the imperial edict preaching in Qing Dynasty, as a unique cultural phenomenon, its development and evolution process and the story-like preaching text that emerged with it deserve more in-depth and detailed analysis and combing.

2. The Origin and Development of Imperial Edict Preaching in Qing Dynasty

At the beginning of the Qing Dynasty, in order to stabilize the political power, the imperial edict propaganda policy of the Ming Dynasty was adopted, that is, the people were gathered to preach the emperor's edict with the township contract as the unit, so as to persuade the people to be filial to their parents, respect their elders and live in harmony in the countryside. With the popularity of imperial edict preaching in the Qing Dynasty, a unique novel type, namely, the preaching novel, was produced, which was a collection or adaptation of evidence stories after the confluence of imperial edict preaching and folk imperial edict [3-4]. In 1652, in the ninth year of Qing Dynasty, the emperor shunzhi issued "Six Training Courses of imperial edict" to instruct the people. Since then, the preaching of imperial edict has entered people's field of vision as a unique educational

system and cultural phenomenon. The rulers of the Qing Dynasty preached the activities of imperial edict to educate the people, and turned the education of the common people into a system and put it under their direct control, hoping that the people would imperceptibly take imperial edict as the norm of their daily behavior.

By the end of Emperor Kangxi, due to the long-term loose policy, the social atmosphere was declining, and gambling, robbers and other things happened frequently. After yongzheng emperor acceded to the throne, the “Sixteen Articles of imperial edict” was extended to extensive training, which has far-reaching significance and practical characteristics. The world has been stable, and moral education has a long way to go, which requires the rulers to take certain measures to establish a nationwide all-round moral education system with Confucian ethics as the core [5].

Emperors in the Qing Dynasty regarded respecting Confucianism and valuing Taoism as the theme of ruling China, and the emperor shunzhi, Emperor Kangxi and yongzheng emperor, who founded the country after living in the Central Plains, were the main founders of this thought, and all the later emperors could inherit the cultural policies of their ancestors. At the beginning of the eighteenth century, the ideological and academic circles were in the process of evolution, from the unrestrained, pragmatic and anti-empty talk academic thought and style in the early Qing Dynasty to the more simple, empirical, but cumbersome Sinology or Textual Research in the Qing Dynasty.

3. Literariness of Imperial Edict in Qing Dynasty

3.1 Popularization of Preaching Content

“imperial edict preaching” is a concept with specific connotation and reference. In a word, it refers to the moral education system of reciting and giving speeches to ordinary people, such as Zhu Yuanzhang's “Six words of imperial edict”, the emperor shunzhi's “Six Articles of imperial edict”, Emperor Kangxi's “Article 16 of imperial edict” and yongzheng emperor's “Imperial edict sermon”. Imperial edict preached in the form of holding township conventions, gathered people in various township conventions, and read out imperial edict and its deductive texts [6-7]. This stage lasted the longest, starting from Wanli and Jiaqing years in the middle of Ming Dynasty and ending in the third stage in the middle and late Qing Dynasty.

In order to adapt to the people faster and better, imperial edict naturally chose the imperial edict, which merged with imperial edict, and its function of persuading good was improved, benefiting customs and human feelings. Not only that, the story in the novel is clear and clear, and the theme is clear. No matter what class, it can understand its meaning and feel kind. Although the contents of the book are rich and varied, there are no twists and turns, and the characteristics of its classical Chinese contradict the education level of ordinary people, so it can not be used in preaching. If it is to be used as the basic text of preaching, it is not only necessary to translate the imperial edict regulations into classical Chinese, but also to preach in popular spoken language and even dialects, which requires the practicality of vernacular Chinese.

3.2 Diversification of Character Types

Although the preaching of imperial edict is enforced by the government, it seems that it is not easy for ordinary people with low educational level to truly accept the abstract and profound meaning of imperial edict, which requires an easy-to-understand way of speaking. Therefore, telling the story of karma in preaching has become an important way to spread the imperial edict, and the original version used in telling the story or the text compiled on this basis for people to read has also come into being. This kind of story text is the imperial edict preaching novel [8]. Before the Opium War, the imperial edict preaching system in Lingnan was slack, and local officials regarded it as a prose. After the Opium War, foreign cultural thoughts kept pouring in, and local officials took it as a tool to resist the spread of new thoughts and began to pay attention to the imperial edict propaganda activities.

Story characters are the main actors of the text content. In order to show the subjective expression of the author's plays, the story characters to some extent bear the carrier of conveying

the author's feelings, including their emotional attitude and rational evaluation and analysis. As a result, the characters naturally tend to be “typed”. Although the characters are lack of richness and complexity, they always show that the author emphasizes the moral consciousness and order concept of the common people, and there are always opposing roles of the above characters in the novel, and the images of good and evil characters are clear, which increases the conflicts and contradictions in the novel.

3.3 Promote the Concept of Persuading Good and Accumulating Virtue

After Manchu entered the customs, it was urgent to stabilize the grass-roots order and ease the ethnic contradictions between Manchu and Han. Therefore, the “Six words of imperial edict” and the effective “Hometown Dating Theory” inherited by the Qing government after simple transformation. Both the form of “setting up a rural convention” and the content of preaching “still explaining according to the old version” clearly show the consistency between the imperial edict preaching in the early Qing Dynasty and that in the Ming Dynasty [9]. Of course, in practice, all localities still carry out educational activities within the framework of township conventions, but the general program of township conventions is imperial edict, and the main body of activities has become imperial edict preaching. As a result, the consciousness of moral education has been strengthened, and at the same time, the autonomous organization attribute of “rural convention” has been weakened, and “rural convention” has become synonymous with imperial edict preaching.

China literature has been shouldering the effect of moral education since ancient times. Taking novels as an example, as early as the Song and Yuan Dynasties, it has been clearly pointed out that novel creation is based on the purpose of changing customs. Among the items listed for the squire, there are items such as advocating righteous deeds, printing imperial edict, helping the poor, setting up a school, setting up a righteous family, giving medicinal materials, giving clothes, giving coffins, giving tea, building roads and bridges, helping the weak and helping the poor.

As an important social group in the Ming and Qing Dynasties, the squire's behavior often had an important influence. If he advocated good deeds in the local area, he would get twice the result with half the effort. With the spread of imperial edict, the idea of accumulated merits and retribution advocated by imperial edict in Qing Dynasty has been deeply rooted in people's hearts, which has also attracted a group of good people to actively participate in all kinds of good deeds and jointly promoted the development of ancient charity in China.

4. The Text of the Story Preached by Imperial Edict

4.1 Imperial Edict Preaches the Story of “Twenty-Four Filial Piety” in the Novel

Preaching novel is a special novel type which is popular in the civil society under the background of imperial edict preaching in Qing Dynasty. In the first article of imperial edict, the emperor of Qing Dynasty put forward the imperial edicts of “filial piety to parents” and “showing filial piety to people”. Therefore, persuading people to be filial to their parents has become a great kindness advocated by the novel, and filial piety and disobedience to parents have become important themes in the novel. Most of the cases of advising filial piety in the novel are taken from the story of “Twenty-four Filial Piety”, some are directly adapted from the story of “Twenty-four Filial Piety”, and some are indirectly inherited from the story of “Twenty-four Filial Piety”.

According to the information available, the propaganda novels such as “Highlights of preaching”, “Preaching and gleaning”, “Filial piety” and “The complete book of preaching” are greatly influenced by “Diary story”. As an auxiliary story copy used to persuade the good when preaching imperial edict, its content is closely related to the imperial edict regulations, and the imperial edict preaching first mentioned the regulations of filial piety has also become the focus of preaching novel texts to persuade the people to educate. The new plot makes the narrative of the story more detailed and complete. Through the description of daily things, it is more touching and easy to persuade people to be filial.

4.2 Sichuan Preaching Novels

Sichuan's propaganda novels are not only the product of the times against this change under the background of the loose bottom order in the late Qing Dynasty and the continuous decline of traditional moral and ethical binding force, but also the result of Sichuan's unique regional culture. The existence of Sichuan preaching novels is a beneficial supplement to the completeness and richness of Sichuan literature history writing.

The significance of writing the history of local literature lies in: firstly, we can summarize the literary traditions within the region and highlight the characteristics of regional culture. Therefore, in this sense, the history of local literature, as a literary style in chronological order, can sort out and explain the writers and literary works in this place for thousands of years, and then summarize and summarize the literary style and aesthetic orientation belonging to this place.

As a novel type with a large volume, the Sichuan preaching novel excavated in 1998 shows the diversity of Sichuan literature creation in the Qing Dynasty, and shows that novels in Sichuan region had a prosperous period, but it is a kind of popular literature, hidden among the people and unknown [10]. As early as the end of last century, scholars have done a lot of research on dialect vocabulary in "Spring platform", and there are more than ten single papers. However, because "Spring platform" has always been regarded as a "fictional novel", scholars' vision has not extended to preaching novels.

The value of Sichuan's preaching novels also lies in that it shows the spirit and practice of saving the nation of traditional Confucian scholars from a literary perspective. It shows us the national salvation spirit and practice of traditional Confucian scholars different from newcomers, and then objectively shows their patriotic feelings behind the stubborn, conservative and backward image of traditional Confucian scholars.

4.3 Lingnan Imperial Edict Preaching Novels

The prosperity of lingnan imperial edict preaching is closely related to lingnan folk good church organizations. The Shantang organization in Lingnan flourished in the late Qing Dynasty. The imperial edict lecture hosted by the folk Shantang organization could not be forced by the official means, and it could only attract the people by telling lively and interesting stories. Therefore, storytelling, especially the story of karma that conforms to the aesthetic psychology of ordinary people, has become an important way to attract the people.

When the non-governmental organizations turn the imperial edict preaching into a non-mandatory folk activity with ordinary people as the main body, the imperial edict preaching must be attached to the public and pay attention to the public's acceptance psychology. Therefore, imperial edict's preaching novels are different from the self-entertainment or handed down from generation to generation of literati novels, but the direct purpose is public acceptance. Lingnan imperial edict's preaching novels mainly include "auspicious flowers", "The Essence of the Six Articles of Imperial Edict" and "preaching the afterwords".

From the Tongzhi period to the early Republic of China, "Common sayings" and "auspicious flowers" were republished many times, and they were circulated for nearly 50 years. They were published not only in Guangdong, but also in Shanghai, with a view to calling on people to work together in Qi Xin to save people in danger. Because these authors are all lower-class people, they are familiar with and can face real life, so the novels widely reflect the social conditions of the towns and villages in Lingnan in the late Qing Dynasty, such as corruption in official management, the accumulation of wealth by the gentry, the depression of the countryside, the rampant bandits, the decline of social morality, and the miserable life of the people.

5. Conclusions

Because propaganda novels are often spread among the people as imperial edict, the quality of publication and preservation are not optimistic, so there are few studies on propaganda novels, which are scattered in the discussion of other topics. The preaching of imperial edict was a very important political and cultural activity in Qing Dynasty, and its folk evolution and works were of great significance in the history of vernacular short stories, folk art and linguistics. Imperial edict

preaching novel is a very unique novel type, which integrates political education and literary aesthetic entertainment. In addition, imperial edict's preaching novels are also a unique phenomenon in the history of culture and thought, which vividly reflects the cultural and spiritual state in the late Qing Dynasty.

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