

A Combination of Rites of Zhou, Customs of Qi and Beliefs of Buddhism--on the Origin of Funeral Rite “guiding-road” in Shandong Peninsula

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Abstract—“Guiding-road” is a kind of funeral rite. Based on documental records and field investigation, this artical makes a preliminary study of the content and origin of “guiding-road” in Shandong, especially the guilding words "go southwest".

Keywords—*Guiding-road, Zhilu, Funeral, Origin, Shandong*

I. INTRODUCTION

“Guiding-road” (pronounced zhilu in chinese)is a ritual performed in rural funerals. People of specific roles intend to direct the dead’s soul to the road to the long journey. “Guiding-road”custom is often observed in ethnic minorities, such as Yi, Naxi, in southwestern China. Actually,“Guiding-road”custom also exist in Han people’s funeral in Shandong peninsula. And the guiding words “go southwest” are of strong local characteristics. Through the ages, no one knows how many people of Shandong used such ritual as the end of this life and the starting point of the other shore.MoYan's novel Red Sorghum places this rare-known ancient rite of eastern China in front of the world.As a grass growing in this land, after numerous tears, the author decided to interpret this ritual related to homeland and life from the perspective of folklore.

II. SEND-OFF SONG FROM FUNERAL

The rite "guiding-road" is common in Shandong province, especially in the peninsula region.The custom also slightly exists in northern Jiangsu province and southern Hebei province, which are adjacent to Shandong, as well as Northeastern China where Shandong immigrants concentrate. Many netizens from Shandong commented on a song adapted from Red Sorghum, saying they could not help weeping. Besides the artistic appeal of the work itself, more strongly it evokes our childhood memories. It's a scene we've all been there, but never observe it from a third-party perspective. Fortunately, there is a MoYan in our land, showing the death and life of this group of people incisively and vividly. It not only shocked people outside the land, but also shocked ourselves.

Description of the guiding-road ceremony in Red Sorghum:

“Dressed in mourning clothes, Father stood facing southwest on a high bench and thumped the wax wood butt of his spire on the ground as he shouted:

Mother!

go southwest!

a broad highway,

a long treasure boat!

a fleet-footed steed,

lots of traving money!

Mother!

rest in sweetness,

buy off your pain.

The funeral master had ordered him to sing this send-off song three times, since only a loved one’s calls can guide the spirit to the southwestern paradise.But he got through it only once before choking on hot, sour tears of grief. Another long-drawn-out “Mother” escaped from his lips, fanned out, and glided unsteadily in the air like a scarlet butterfly, its wings carrying it to the southwest, where the wilerness was broad and the airstream swirled, and where the bright sunlight raised a white seen over the Black Water River”.[1]

The novel's description of actions, language and even emotion in the process of guiding-road is true to life, which can be considered as custom history in literature.The custom of zhilu is still common in rural Shandong, but rare in written records. Local records of the Ming and Qing dynasties in each county of Shandong mostly focused on the elite and upper cultures, with

little record of the zhilu custom. From the era before 1949 to the present, with the rise of the study of folk customs, the ritual started to be slightly recorded.

The following is a paragraph from Jinan Folklore Record written by Hu Pu'an: "Funerals are rather ancient. When just dead, the body was clothed with inner and outer garments. The dutiful son drape loose hair, run to the courtyard, called his dead parent's name and shouted "go southwest", which was called guiding-road. After three shouts, he beat his chest, stamped his foot and burst into tears. This may have followed the ancient ritual of crying on the roof, but the form has changed slightly". [2]

It is not clear whether this document was recorded at 1940s or derived from ancient local Chronicles. In Qing dynasty, Chinese men had to wear Manchu pigtailed. In 1911-1949, Chinese men began to have haircut instead. Only according to the original Han Chinese customs, men had their long hair pinned. This passage may be based on materials of the Ming dynasty. Hu Pu'an thought the prototype of zhilu is the ancient ritual "crying on the roof", but it is changed a little. And he tell the truth. The phrase "thump one's chest and stamp one's foot" comes from the very ancient funeral rite. Nowadays, Chinese people, especially women, still beat their chest and stamp their feet in funeral. Such way of expression are rarely seen in other nations in the world, except ancient Egypt.

Shandong Folk Customs written by Li Wanpeng record:

"In some places, after the deceased's body is arranged, a prayer flag is set up in front of the door, or a veil is hung, and a string of paper money is affixed on the prayer flag, and the amount of money is equal to the age of the deceased. In other places, they go up on the roofs and shout for the souls of the dead to go home. After the shout is zhilu. "zhilu" is to show the ghost the way to heaven. In Linqu County, the ceremony is usually presided over by clan elders. Firstly, put paper-horse before the body, let the younger generation of the dead's relatives (except the firstborn son) kneel down. Then, the eldest son of the dead hands "long money" dragging back and forth on the body, and puts the "money" in an old dress of the dead. People stretch hands to hold the dress, move to the door, put it on the paper-horse at once. One of the dead's nephews, with three sticks of incense in his hand, stop at a place about twenty metres from the house. The neighbors pile the straw beside the horses, set fire to the straw, and burn the paper horses, old clothes and long money together. The eldest son stand on a high bench near the door of the courtyard, and hold up a flaming corn stalk, pointing towards the southwest sky, crying, "father (or mother), go southwest!" And, after several shouts, throw away the stalk, and go back to the mourning church in great pain, and, when the others return to the mourning church, weep together". [3]

This record, taking Linqu as an example, basically reflects the shape of the guiding-road rite in Shandong. There are differences, of course. Most of the peninsula, for example, has no spirit-evocation, only zhilu. Those who officiate at ceremonies may be clan elders or funeral masters in the countryside. Only the firstborn son of the dead has the right to guide road. This description confuses the concepts of "guiding-road" and "send travel money", which is operated 3 days later. These two are both send-off rites, but at different times. It is relatively simple to perform zhilu. The "send travel money" is more spectacular because it has already prepared lots of paper horses and other funerary instruments after a few days.

III. THIS LAND

Shandong peninsula is a mysterious land. It is the homeland of the Dongyi (literally, eastern barbarians) people, a tribe with bird and sun as their totems. It's believed the legendary monarch Shun was of Dongyi blood, and born at Zhufeng in Shandong. The Shang people who established Shang dynasty was also a branch of Dongyi. Zhou people's matriarchal ancestor Jiangyuan was Dongyi too. Later, Zhou invaded the eastern territory, entrusting Jiang Taigong and Zhou Gong respectively to build Qi State and Lu State in the land of the Dongyi people. That is why Shandong peninsula has been called QiLu by Chinese people for thousands of years. Throughout the Zhou dynasty, the Dongyi people did not die out. There were Laiyi in the northeast of the peninsula, Ju State in the southeast, and Xu State in the southwest, all of which were states established by Dongyi people. Although Jiang Taigong came from the west, his ancestors were actually Shang nobles. Dongyi was an ethnic group closely related to the Yanhuang group and one of the main components of Huaxia nationality, which was different from the concept "ethnic minorities" mentioned in modern time. Confucius was a descendant of the nobles of Song state. Song state was founded by Zhou dynasty who enfeoffed the descendants of Shang in order to show their mercy at former rulers. Shang people was a branch of Dongyi, so Confucius was also a descendant of Dongyi.

The governing strategy of the Qi State was adapted to local conditions, and there were many preservations about the customs of the eastern tribes. In addition, the duke Jiang Taigong himself was a legendary figure like a god, which directly led to the fact that this region has been a land where ghosts and gods have been rampant since ancient times. Though with an appearance of institutionalized religions of Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism, the region is still popular with the primitive and mysterious beliefs of spirits, demons and ghosts. During the Qin and Han dynasties, there appeared many hermits in Shandong, such as Xu Fu, Dongfang Shuo, Anqi Sheng and so on. In the Jin and Yuan dynasties, the creation and dissemination of Quanzhen Taoism in Shandong peninsula was also related to the cultural atmosphere of this region.

Geography is the carrier of history and culture. Although many Shandong people originated from the immigration in the early Ming dynasty, the distinctive surnames such as Jiang, Tian, Kong and Meng are still mainly in Shandong, which also reflects that people and land are not completely unrelated. Besides, after five or six hundred years, even immigrants still inherit the cultural spirit of this land. For example, village gossip is still inseparable from ghosts and foxes. So it's no surprise that Strange Tales of Liao-Zhai was born here. It's just a record of the daily chitchat in the Shandong countryside.

As for the mysterious tradition of this land, there is another person who has also shocked me, the poet Zang Kejia, a native

of Zhucheng County in Shandong. He has a little poem "night in the village", which seems rather ordinary, but touches my heart directly. It is a true description of the terror of the rural night in the cultural atmosphere of Shandong peninsula.

“The sun just set,
The adults locked the child in the bed with the horrible story,
(the little heart, dreaming of
the shadow of the trees and the moon beyond)
Turn the light down,
Hardly hold up the ten thousand catties eyelid,
Connect the heart to the ear,
Be alert to the dog's bark ”[4]

When I was young, I heard many ghost stories told by old people in the village. For example, there was an earthworm goblin called "flat-face", which was characterized by no face, and it would follow you in the alley. The living was possessed by the ghost and speak like a dead person he was acquainted with. You have to burn paper to get rid of it. A scholar passed a bridge under which a young woman had sex with him and exchanged handkerchiefs. He went home and saw that the handkerchief turned yellow paper(a kind of paper burnt for dead people), and he died. There is a half-wolf, half-ghost, child - eating monster called mahu. And so on. The above is about stories. And also, the ambience of the environment is closely related to death. In the old days, rural villages in Shandong province, the riverside outside the village was full of tombs, shelin (the place for abandoning dead children), and sometimes you could actually see some bones, ghost-fire and so on. So, in the countryside, the horror of death can be felt everywhere, and I felt it when I was a child.

As for mourning, the oldest stories related are also in Shandong peninsula. The original story of "Meng Jiangnv crying down the Great Wall" took place in Qi. The people of Qi are apt to cry, and the cry is accompanied by words.

In The research collection of Meng Jiangnv stories, Prof.Gu Jiegang considered that “Qi people were good at singing crying-tunes”[5], and cited the following ancient documents:

In Mencius, Chunyu Kun said, "the wives of Hua Zhou and Qi Liang were good at weeping their husbands and changed into national customs.”[6]

According to the book Huai-nan-zi, a man from Yongmen was hired by Duke Mengchang for being good at crying. His cries were accompanied by moving lyrics, and the duke was moved to tears by the weeping-song.[7]

In Lie-zi, a story about crying-tunes was recorded: “Xue Tan learned singing from Qin Qing, and had not yet reached graduation level. But feeling that he was doing well, he took his leave, intending to go home. The teacher did not stop him, and gave a banquet in the suburbs to see him off and sang a solemn and stirring song. The song made the trees tremble and the clouds stop. Ashamed, Xue Tan said he would continue studying and never dare to go back home. Qin Qing said to his friend: Once upon a time, Han E went to Qi, and food lacked. He went to Yongmen, and sang to make a living. The sound of the music was still around the beams as he left, and it didn't stop for three days, and people thought he wasn't leaving and still singing. Passing by a village on the way, locals insulted him. Han E then cried and sang in a long voice. The whole village was sad and weeping, and could not eat for three days. Villagers went after him. He returned and sang long voice songs. The whole village danced and danced happily, unable to control themselves, and forgot their sadness. The villagers gave him a generous fare. Therefore, the people of Yongmen are good at singing crying-songs, which is to imitate Han E's singing.”[8]

It can be concluded that the people of Qi not only have the folk custom of being good at crying, but also have used crying as a vocal art. Han E, Qin Qing and Xue Tan are masters of this art.

Today, maoqiang, a local opera having been popular in Shandong peninsula, is still featuring women crying out their grievances. In villages, some elderly women cry with narrative words and a maoqiang tune.

IV. THE FORM OF GULDING-ROAD

The conjuring ritual of the Han people can be traced back to ancient times. The book of rites (zhouli)contains a record of "fu"(literally, come back). "When he died, his son climbed to the roof and shouted his name: xx, come back!”[9].This custom continues at least until the Tang dynasty, and still remains today. Poems of the state of Chu, such as zhaohun, dazhao are both related to this ritual.

The Han-chinese conjuring ritual is still preserved in many parts of the country. In Shandong province, the ritual also remains in some places, namely running to the roof and shouting "xx! Come back!” This is identical with the ancient rite“fu”. Unable to summon the spirit, he continued his zhilu on the ground. The idea of "sending the dead on the road" is common in Han people, but the ceremony of zhilu is especially common in Shandong province.

The form of zhilu is much the same: Place a high table or a high stool on the ground, or stack them on top of each other. The eldest son stood on it, holding in his hand a slender object, usually a yoke, and sometimes corn stacks, bamboo poles, and

even brooms, or libra. Some tie with incense or mirror on top of the object, some does not. Lift this object to the sky and shout three times: "Father(Mother)!go southwest! Bright highway!" This is the critical part of the instructions, including three parts: the first is the orientation, the second is the road, and the third is special instructions.

About orientation: most places say "head southwest", and some places say "head west".

About the road: the first is with the adjective description, "bright road", "everbright road", "wide road", "take the middle road", this is peninsula area usage. Others give specific destinations directly: "take the yaochi road", which is obviously Western Queen Mother's residence Jade Pool. The "horse ticket"(the passport of the dead) recited in some areas in southwest of Shandong said that "from Purvavideha(Sanskrit word, meaning eastern part of human world, usually referring to China), via Aparagodaniya(Sanskrit word, meaning western part of human world), to Jambudvipa(Sanskrit word, meaning southern part of human world, usually referring to India)", also directly pointed out the direction and destination of "southwest". Clearly, the "southwest" destination is the "western paradise", India.

Special instruction: "Rest in sweetness, buy off your pain." Shandong rural old people are usually frugal, not willing to consume much. So tell them to spend money in case of suffering on the road .

"A fleet-footed steed, lots of traveling money!" That is not an empty reference, but a reference to paper horses and oxen, palanquins and ingots, and so on. In southeast Shandong, red dates and peanuts are prepared to feed dogs in the road. The "horse ticket" says that stay away from the wolf-teeth trees, the falcons and other hell -torment. Most of the zhilu words in the peninsula do not specify the accurate destination, and the "horse ticket" in southern Shandong can be used as a reference.

Number of shouts: three.After three shouts, then cry. Therefore, the description in Red Sorghum that "The funeral master had ordered him to sing this send-off song three times" faithfully reflects the reality. According to the Book of Rites, the funeral rite "fu" was also three times, but most places in Shandong mixed the form of this "fu" with the connotation of "guiding road".

The passage Sang-da-ji (literally, great records of funeral rites)records "fu, if there are foothills, then gardeners set steps". If the house is on a slope, the steps need to be built. In a Shandong guiding-road rite, there is no "crying on the roof", just standing on high stools or tables. It's possible that the stools and tables here served as steps or ladders from ancient times. In modern times, the tools used to climb to the roof have changed, but the purpose of climbing high has not.

Long object is not limited to certain kind of object. People just use it to indicate direction. In addition, there is a symbolic meaning of "passage"--from living to death. In some places of Shandong, the other end of the long object is tied with the plain cloth, which is spread all the way to the side of the dead, which is obviously a road for the dead to travel. And it's similar to the practice of some southwest ethnic minorities, such as the Naxi people, who also lay road maps on the ground. Of course, tying white cloth on the direct-pole is not a common practice in Shandong.

As for the incense bound upon the long object, it is but a light that illumines the way.

Therefore, guiding-road is actually based on the rite "fu" of Zhou li, and added the content of guiding direction, or directly replace the conjuring with guiding direction. The soul can not be brought back to life, so it is better to guild the direction for him. On the one hand, it reflects the different thoughts of folk customs and upper etiquette. On the other hand, it also shows the simple and unadorned personality of Shandong people.

V. WHY "GO SOUTHWEST"?

Why go southwest? Because this problem has not fully entered the academic field, the author mainly through consulting village elders and online inquiry to understand the public's views. There are many opinions, all of which can help us understand. Because even those who perform the ritual may not know exactly what it means.

One theory is that the southwest refers to the ancestral home of immigrants. Some villagers think that going to the southwest means returning to their hometown. The current population structure of Shandong was formed in the early Ming dynasty, and more than half of the villages were built in Ming dynasty. According to local chronicles, genealogy book and legend, the main sources of immigration are: Yunnan, Jiangsu, Shanxi and other places. From Yunnan were mainly troops and their families who came to garrisons. The Ming army conquered Yunnan and went to Shandong to continue fighting and stayed there. They may not all be Yunnan natives, and there may be more Yunnan natives and even minorities in the matriarchal system. In some regions of the Shandong peninsula, sea shells are called "ba" in dialects, consistent with the names given to them by some ethnic minorities in Yunnan. Both dalu village in Haizhou of Jiangsu province and dahuaishu in Shanxi province are only places where the immigrants are officially gathered, and they are not necessarily the original homes of immigrants. No matter where the immigrants come from, the geographical position of Shandong peninsula protruding from northeast of Eurasia and its northeast trend, any other place outside this region is southwest. So the homeland outside the peninsula, of course, is southwest.

It is worth noting that minorities in the southwest, such as the Naxi, Yi and Miao, all have guiding-road scriptures. At the funeral, the scrolls were spread out, and religious teachers, such as dongba and bimo, read the scriptures. The scriptures recorded the name of the place where the soul would pass by. It is thought to reflect the migration routes of the people's ancestors. Scholars generally regard soul-sending and guiding-road as a special custom of the southwest minorities, but Han people in Shandong have similar customs. In particular, the practice of some places in Shandong province to tie a white cloth to the dead on the road poles, which has a striking similarity with some of the southwest minority's guiding-road rituals. And we

can't help wondering whether these similarities have a common origin. The direction of the guiding-road of the southwest minorities is northeast, while the direction of the guiding-road of the Han people in Shandong is southwest. They point to one another in the direction of the physical or spiritual home, implying that "us" contains "them" and "them" contains "us". Prof. Fei Xiaotong's theory of the multi-unity of the Chinese nation[10] still gives us profound enlightenment.

The second is the buddhist western paradise. According to a funeral master in Jiaonan county, the southwest is India where Xuanzang, a Tang dynasty monk, went to get scriptures. India is located to the southwest of China, which is in line with the route of "from Purvavideha, via Aparagodaniya, to Jambudvipa". In addition, the expression of "western bright road" in some guiding words reminds us more of the western paradise of Amitabha, which means the Buddha of infinite light. Red Sorghum also described it as "the paradise of the southwest". The reason for repeated orders to walk along the avenue of light is that some evil spirits will also come to fetch the dead. Therefore, it is necessary to remind the dead to recognize the Amitabha road, and not to follow the wrong path with evil spirits. It is said that in Thailand, when people die, family members should also shout "Buddha! Buddha! Buddha!" to prevent the dead from going the wrong way.

Some buddhists in Shandong believe that the rite of guiding-road is actually a metaphor of "dan cheng fo hao"("literally, only calling Buddha's name"), "dan" is represented by a pole, "cheng" is represented by a libra, "fo" is represented by "the eldest son stands on the table, and the table is supported by a person nearby", and "hao" is represented by "crying". This is just one of the interpretations. In fact, the operators of the guiding ceremony often do not have much awareness of the meaning of the ceremony. According to the statistics of National Religious Administration in 2014, there are more than 60 buddhist temples per million people in Zhejiang, more than 30 in Sichuan and only 2 in Shandong. According to the author's observation, there is no buddhist temple in many counties of Shandong peninsula, and people have little faith in Buddhism even in the most superficial form. Why does the guiding-road rite point to India? I consider that the social material conditions of the origin of traditional customs are not in the contemporary era and should be looked for in the more distant history. Although the contemporary buddhist belief in Shandong peninsula is extremely weak, this kind of folk custom comes from a more ancient time, and our ancestors at that time was affected by Buddhism to a deeper extent. Even before 1949, there were far more buddhist monasteries in Shandong than there are today. But after the tide of buddhist belief receded, only a trace of waves remained in the mourning ceremony.

The third view, hell: the dead need to go to hell. The traditional Chinese god of death was first in Mount Tai, which was later moved to Fengdu in the south. Mount Tai is in the Midwest of Shandong, which makes sense. However, it cannot be explained why some places in southwestern Shandong also say "go southwest", because they are located to the southwest of Mount Tai. This is not very explanatory.

Therefore, the author consider that the influence of Buddhism and the memory of immigration are the main factors for the formation of the guiding words "go southwest". "Southwest" has the dual meaning of buddhist pureland and ancestral homeland.

VI. CONCLUSIONS

The mourning ceremony of Shandong peninsula has the common character of the funeral ceremony of Han nationality, that is, taking the rite "fu" of Zhouli as the prototype. However, the change from conjuring to guiding is with distinct local characteristics and under the influence of religion. The custom of "go southwest" was mainly distributed in Shandong province, and the population pattern of Shandong province was formed in the great migration in the early Ming dynasty, so it can be inferred that this kind of folk custom was formed in the Ming and Qing dynasties. "Go southwest" is obviously influenced by Buddhism, but Shandong is a region with weak buddhist influence. To explain this paradox, we can only look for it from a longer history. However, the interpretation of "go southwest" only based on the influence of Buddhism cannot explain why many regions with stronger buddhist atmosphere do not have guiding-road rituals. Therefore, the geographical location of Shandong peninsula and the history of immigration in the early Ming dynasty must be combined to further explore the immigrant memories and ancestor worship contained in this custom. In short, a seemingly simple guiding-road rite contains what Max Mueller called "three components of folk customs": the inherent component is the "fu" of Zhou li, the new component is the immigration history of Shandong peninsula, and the foreign component is the buddhist western belief. These components, in terms of formation time, are overlapping, and in terms of composition, they are organically combined.

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