

THE CONCEPT OF GOOD AND EVIL IN CHINESE MING DYNASTY OPERA

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There are a large number of plots in Chinese Ming Dynasty operas in which good and evil are rewarded. These operas contain educational ideas and encourage people to be cautious in their words and deeds, which to a certain extent have the effect of stabilizing social order. This article gives examples of Ming Dynasty operas that contain «good» and «evil» plots, and analyzes the Ming Dynasty's views on good and evil.

Keywords: China, Ming Dynasty, opera, good and evil, thought.

«Good and evil» is one of the main contents of Chinese ethical and moral thought. The concept of good and evil in Chinese ethics has gone through a process of continuous evolution from ancient times to the present. Confucianism (儒家)¹ defines goodness based on inner nature of mind. Taoism (道家)² defines goodness by following nature. Legalism (法家)³ replaces goodness with law. etc. These ideas all provide different theoretical foundations for the development and enrichment of traditional Chinese ethics «goodness», among which Confucianism has the greatest influence.

As Confucianism developed into the Ming dynasties (明朝1368 CE-1644 CE), Neo-Confucianism (理學)⁴ took the dominant position. Later, Lu Jiuyuan (陸九淵)⁵ and Wang Yangming (王陽明)⁶ changed the objective «Li

(理)» into the subjective «mind(心)». Human conscience becomes the standard for judging right and wrong, good and evil.

The Ming Dynasty was influenced by social trends such as Neo-Confucianism and Buddhism. The concept of good and evil also had a profound impact on people's minds. People always believed that «good will be rewarded with good and evil will be rewarded with evil». Therefore, for people living in poverty, doing good deeds will be rewarded, which is undoubtedly a kind of spiritual comfort for them. Therefore, the Ming Dynasty operas also vigorously promoted the concept of good and evil.

1. Good will be rewarded with good

In Chinese Ming Dynasty operas, playwrights portrayed many characters who eventually got good endings due to their good intentions or frequent good deeds.

¹Confucianism: The school of thought founded by Confucius in the late Spring and Autumn Period of China. Advocates rule by etiquette and emphasizes ethical relationships. The longest-lasting and most influential school of thought in Chinese history.

²Taoism: A school of thought formed during the Spring and Autumn Period and the Warring States Period, represented by Laozi. Advocating nature, advocating tranquility and inaction, and opposing struggle.

³Legalism: The main school advocating the rule of law in the late Spring and Autumn Period and the Warring States Period. Legalist political theory that is opposed to Confucian «rule by virtue».

⁴Neo-Confucianism: idealist philosophical thought. It is the product of the fusion of Chinese Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism.

⁵Lu Jiuyuan (1139-1193 CE): Philosopher of the Southern Song Dynasty. He is the founder of «Xin Xue(心學)». Taking «xin (心)» as the origin of all things in the universe.

⁶Wang Yangming (1472-1529 CE): Philosopher of Ming Dynasty. Developed Lu Jiuyuan's philosophy of mind

Such as in «Pipa Ji(琵琶記)⁷», Zhao Wuniang serves her parents-in-law under difficult circumstances and fulfills her filial piety. In the end, all the hardships are rewarded and the whole family is able to shine :

「蔡邕授中郎將，妻趙氏封陳留郡夫人，牛氏封河南郡夫人，限日赴京。父崇簡賜十六勳，母秦氏贈天水郡夫人。」[1, p. 165].

Also in this opera, Zhang Guangcai (張廣才) provided material and spiritual help to his neighbors when they were suffering, and later received a golden vat from the prime minister in return.

In «QianJin Ji(千金記)⁸», an old woman gave Han Xin(韓信)a bowl of rice when he was in poverty and encouraged him to work hard. Later, when Han Xin (韓信) became famous, he not only gave her a thousand pieces of gold, but also provided for her until the end of her life.

「昔城南釣魚，不勝感戴，當初患難蒙看待。把千金報母，把千金報母，與受兩應該。況兼母年邁，且收留送老……。」[2, p. 150].

In «MaiJian Ji(埋劍記)⁹», Guo Shun(郭順) is willing to die for his master when he is in danger, and finally gets a lot of gold and silver.

The reason why Chinese playwrights of the Ming Dynasty arranged such plots in operas was to tell the people that even if there are many difficulties in life, as long as they do more good deeds, they will eventually be rewarded. Give a glimmer of hope to people living in difficulty.

2. Evil will be rewarded with evil.

In the development of the plot of the opera, there will naturally be corresponding villains, making the protagonist in the play suffer hardships. But the playwright usually makes these bad guys get the punishment they deserve.

In «ShuangXiong Ji(雙雄記)¹⁰», Dan Youwo(丹有我) and Liu Bangxing killed(劉幫興) Danxin's (丹信)wife. Liu Bangxing (劉幫興) was eventually beaten to death by lightning, and Dan Youwo(丹有我) finally committed suicide.

In «Looking for Relatives(尋親記)¹¹», Zhang Min(張敏) wanted to kill Zhou Yu(周羽), but after several twists and turns, Zhou Yu(周羽) returned to his hometown and reunited with his wife and children, while Zhang Min(張敏)was sentenced to a heavy sentence.

「供狀人，名張敏，年四十，圖家慶。自不合強占民田，高擡米價。又不合逼人家女子婚配，私置牢獄，將人禁，是此供招。」[3, p. 111].

There are many operas in the Ming Dynasty that contain this kind of thinking. The plot setting of «good will be rewarded with good and evil will be punished with evil» in the opera not only encourages people to be careful in their words and deeds, but also helps to awaken people's active concern for their own destiny, making them People are willing to do good and fear to do evil, which to a certain extent also has the effect of stabilizing social order.

⁷Pipa Ji : Ming Dynasty opera script. Written by Gao Zecheng (高则诚) .

⁸QianJin Ji : Ming Dynasty opera script. Written by Shen Cai (沈采) .

⁹MaiJian Ji : Ming Dynasty opera script. Written by Shen Jing (沈璟) .

¹⁰ShuangXiong Ji : Ming Dynasty opera script, written by Feng Menglong (冯梦龙) .

¹¹Looking for Relatives : Ming Dynasty opera script, written by Anonymous

КОНЦЕПЦИЯ ДОБРА И ЗЛА В КИТАЙСКОЙ ОПЕРЕ ДИНАСТИИ МИН

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В китайских операх династии Мин имеется большое количество сюжетов, в которых вознаграждаются добро и зло. Эти оперы содержат просветительские идеи и призывают людей к осторожности в своих словах и поступках, что в определенной степени имеет эффект стабилизации общественного порядка. В статье приводятся примеры опер династии Мин, содержащих «добрые» и «злые» сюжеты, а также анализируются взгляды династии Мин на добро и зло.

Ключевые слова: Китай, династия Мин, опера, добро и зло, мысль.