

The Story Mode of "Love Between Monks and Layman" in Contemporary Tibetan Female Chinese Novels*

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Abstract—Contemporary Tibetan female Chinese novels, *The Resurrection of Tara* by Padma Lhaze, *Souls Piercing* by Ge Yang, *Coral Runs through the Years* by Mei Zhuo, and *Another Heaven* by Luo Sang Zhuo Ma, have adopted the story mode of "love between monks and layman". The prototype of such a model is largely determined by the influence of acquired religious environment, which is the result of the transformation of the stories of "eminent monks and beautiful lady" in Buddhist scriptures. Through constant changes, female images have changed from evil to good, from passive shaping to active writing, and achieved great breakthrough in the theme.

Keywords—Tibetan; female; Chinese novel; story mode

I. INTRODUCTION

The sixth Dalai Lama, Tsangyang Gyatso, once completely ignored "Triratna" (the Buddha, the dharma, and the sangha) and showed a strong desire for secular life. The relationship between secular people and religious people should bear double pressure, which shows the entanglement and conflict between secular love and religious ideology. Buddhism often uses "Wuchangguan" (Everything that exists in the world is impermanent, not eternal and eternal) and "Bujingguan" (Eliminating one's greed for desire by visualizing all kinds of filth and impurity in one's own body and that of others) to deny desire and cultivate positive results. The story mode of "love between monks and layman" in Tibetan female literature is a challenge to the spiritual taboo of Tibetan Buddhism, showing the irresistible power of human nature, and a discussion of human's spiritual instinct and psychological model.

II. LOVE BETWEEN MONKS AND LAYMAN AND SPIRITUAL TABOO

Long novel *The Resurrection of Tara* by Padma Lhaze has created several characters that are dissociated from religious worship and secularism: Qiongji Baimu, Danzhu Borenqie, Qianluo Zhuoma, and Gan Zhu. Tibet was peacefully liberated and the old system of traditional society

was overthrown. Qiongji Baimu, the lady of Xiwei Manor, runs away from home for refuge and survival, but her life fate can never get rid of the impact of historical disaster. With unsatisfied love, unhappy family, and the deaths of parents and relatives, she pays huge price for her blind pursuit. Sorrow outweighs happiness in her life. The appearance of Danzhu Borenqie makes the spiritual world of Qiongji Baimu no longer confused. To her, he is both divine and masculine, and a crutch. However, the departure of Danzhu Borenqie also caused a complete mental breakdown for Qiongji Baimu. He has no intention to resume secular life. His love for Qiongji Baimu is the same as that for all living beings: do salvation for her family, take care of her sick daughter, and bring precious food for her. Danzhu Borenqie mourns the loss of Qiongji Baimu, but he also foresees his impotence in reincarnation, and the impassable cause and effect of destiny. Qianluo Zhuoma, daughter of Qiongji Baimu, regards love as a game because of rebellion. Lao Yan, Gan Zhu and Bodhisattva prince are not her good match. Among them, Gan Zhu is a reincarnation of living Buddha, with clear voice and pure eyes. Kind-hearted, he releases the captured fish and donates the donor's offering. After taking off his dazzling cassocks, he dressed in fashion, shuttling through the secular dust. His mournful and magnetic voice dazzled Qianluo Zhuoma. The relationship between Qianluo Zhuoma and Gan Zhu is similar to that of Qiongji Baimu and Danzhu Borenqie, but with more differences. Gan Zhu walks out of the monastery with no intention to go back. He appears suddenly and leaves mysteriously. Qianluo Zhuoma, though fascinated by him, does not want to stay.

Souls Piercing by Ge Yang tells such a story: Ordered to find the reincarnation of living Buddha, Abbot Qingcang Renqing comes to the house of Lord Rondo, hoping to meet all the girls under the age of 18. Only Yang, the daughter of Rondo, and Ni, the daughter of the servant Di, meet the requirements. Cang, Rondo's wife, thinks of all the signs before and after the birth of her daughter, Yang, basically confirming that her daughter is the reincarnation of living Buddha. But this time she takes her daughter home with the intention of promoting her marriage to Mr May and making her happy forever. So she gives the tantric drum to Di, letting the latter say at the ceremony that the drum was given by the

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living Buddha herself. Cang also instructs the attendant nun at abbot's side help prove that Ni is the reincarnation of living Buddha. Shortly after entering the monastery, Ni elopes with the apprentice doctor Tsering, who went up the mountain to collect medicine. That love ends when she gives birth to a disabled child. She abandons her husband and children and runs away with Song. There was no love between them, just money and appearances. Until the child was born, she just knows that Song is the son of Lord Rondo. Cang comes to see her grandson. In shock, she tells Lord Rondo that Song's new wife is Ni. Lord Rondo flows into a rage and insists that Song be separated from Ni. Lord Rondo confessed to Di, regretful that the consequence of the mistake he made before comes back to his own child. She leaves the child behind and leaves with Di. With the decline of Rondo family, idle and desperate Song comes to find Ni, angrily insult Ni, and is beaten to death by Di unintentionally. Ni becomes a crazy, silly woman.

Buddhism has spread in Tibetan areas for thousands of years, and its influence is self-evident. Buddhist taboos are deeply rooted in people's hearts. For those who approach and break the taboo, they have a strong desire for the taboo subconsciously, and they fear the punishment of breaking the taboo. "Because Freud noticed that taboo itself was an ambivalent word, it was often associated with what was forbidden and unclean and sacred. Therefore, Freud proposed that a taboo is a 'forbidden activity', and there is a strong desire for this activity in the subconscious mind.' He goes on to point out that taboos and fears are impulses and tendencies that stem from ambivalence, and they are all the result of an 'emotional ambivalence' that, like conscience, has its subconscious roots."¹ In *Souls Piercing*, when Tsering follows the teacher to the Qiong ching cang temple of nuns to see the mother of the abbot, he discovers that the girl he has peeped into the bath was actually a living Buddha in the temple. "Standing in the corner, Tsering's face is hot, and and a sense of shameful guilt overspread his heart."² Facing this beautiful temple and Buddha, his heart was extremely depressed. When the living Buddha expresses hope that Tsering takes her away, Tsering's heart is full of heavy confusion and bitter, "I can't have you. I can have any woman in the world except you."³

Another Heaven by Luo Sang Zhuo depicts two lovers: Juemu Zewang and Duo Ge, and Juemu Ami and Chi Lai, a painter. Zewang's belly is getting bigger and bigger, and everyone shun her as if they were running from the devil, showing her contempt. Zewang is sent out of the temple back home. Her sister-in-law looks disgusted, and her brother even picks up a stick and drives everyone away. Though knowing the matter of Zewang, the power of love makes Ami and Chi Lai desperate to get close to each other. Ami is pregnant, and Chi Lai promised to leave together when the

temple murals are done. When the mural is about to be finished, Chi Lai slips and falls from the sky. Soon afterwards, he dies. Ami gives birth to a daughter in the oratory of the temple's opening ceremony, is kicked out of the temple, and moves around with a sick child. In the end, an old Lama saves the child. In addition, such stories are also described in *Let Love Last* by Ge Yang, and *Tibetan Marriage* by Duo Ji Zhuo Ga. The author does not repeat here.

For a long time, Tibetans have held the sacred and sacrilegious belief as their code of conduct. Both Se Mu's rejection and Tsering's rejection are derived from the power of fear, which is exactly what Freud called "taboo conscience".⁴ People's "guilt" of breaking taboos has a certain inheritance, which is deep in their subconscious. Once someone breaks the taboo, they will awaken the collective unconscious inherited from the ancient times. Freud believes that people who touch taboos themselves will become taboos, and others will become afraid of the person who breaks the taboo. Otherwise, the characteristics of taboo induction and imitation will lead more and more people to imitate the forbidden behaviors, which will even threaten the existing social system. The story mode of "love between monks and layman" can be traced back to the stories of monks and beauties that were tested by lust in Buddhist scriptures, and achieved a breakthrough to the prototype in the process of gradual secularization. Prototype is generated along with the spiritual development in the process of human history development. It takes myths, rituals, images, motif and other recurring associative and reductive communicative units as the existing form and carrier, bearing the common spiritual experience and general psychology of human beings. Thus, myth is the content of prototype, but the content of prototype is not limited to myth. This leads the author to look for patterns and prototypes of literary expression in a broader field of religion, myth, ritual, folklore, and story.

III. SECULARIZATION OF TRADITIONAL RELIGIOUS CULTURE

With the male-centered discourse, the responsibility for monks to break religious discipline is placed on women, who naturally become "witches". With the development of feminist thought, the situation of being "written" and "shaped" is gradually changing. Compared with the stories of eminent monks and beautiful lady in Western literature and Chinese literature, Tibetan female writers in the new era have their own distinct characteristics in touching spiritual taboo subjects.

First, the narrative subject changes and female images are written by women. Most stories of eminent monks and beautiful lady were written by male writers or monks. The women in these stories were seductive, sensual, seduced, and even spurned. In the literary works of Tibetan female writers, women are no longer demonized, but more real female images in real social life. Female writers have innate advantages and personal experience in shaping female

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² [English] Morris, translated by Zhou Guoli. *Religious Anthropology* [M]. Beijing: Today China Publishing House, 1992.215-216.

³ Ge Yang. *The Daughter of Tibet* [M]. Beijing: People's Literature Publishing House, 2003, 201.

⁴ Ge Yang. *The Daughter of Tibet* [M]. Beijing: People's Literature Publishing House, 2003, 205.

images. Qiongji Baimu and Qianluo Zhuoma in *The Resurrection of Tara*, Qu Zhen in *The Road of Lhasa*, and Lan Cuo in *Coral Runs through the Years* are all ordinary Tibetan women. They do not approach monks to satisfy their lust, but human nature urges the development of love. In the previous literary works, male monks are mostly in the position of the leading role, while female serve as supporting roles or accessories to reflect the status or highlight the achievements of men. In the story mode of "love between monks and layman", women occupy a more active position. Even when it comes to spiritual taboos, women face up to the conflict between secularism and religion.

Second, it reflects the change of people's attitude towards religious belief in the new era. Although Ni is not a living Buddha in the true sense, she is also a monk. Her bond with Tsering may have been based on love, but her bond with Song was based solely on desire. The author can examine the reincarnation system of living Buddha through the fate of Ni or Gan Zhu. Although the younger generation of writers is influenced by religious culture, their attitudes towards religion have changed due to their study or life experience. Faith is sacred, but faith and worship are not blind. Tibetan female writers remove the demonization of religion with the prototype of "love between monks and layman" and write about the secularization of religion, which is the subversion and deconstruction of the sanctification of religion. Yang Zhen once said in an interview that "the image of the Tibet is indeed unique, which lies in the interweaving of civilization and barbarism, belief and profanity, conversion and rebellion, life and nature. Its beauty and ugliness lie not precisely in the land, but in the hearts of the people who live there."⁵ The pursuit of novelty and sensationalism, unique existence and exaggeration of differences make Tibetans more and more different from other ethnic groups and difficult to integrate. Curiosity and labeling only make people farther away from the real.

The third is the reverse replacement of the prototype. Prototype replacement can be divided into two types: forward expansion and reverse replacement. Positive displacement is based on the existing direction of the prototype, and excavates deeply in a certain dimension to make the meaning more profound, as the Nora left mentioned before. Reverse displacement is the opposite. The same prototype changes direction, the meaning is opposite, in order to break the traditional meaning that prototype already has. "Love between monks and layman" is an example of a prototype breakthrough. Tibetan female writers are not resistant or blind to religion, nor are faith and reason mutually exclusive. The feelings that transcend secular world are unacceptable by secularism and religion, and are despised by monks and laymen. However, in the narration of Tibetan female literature, such feeling which should be rejected becomes people's breakthrough of taboo, so as to realize the praise and worship of human nature. With sad story and delicate feelings, Tibetan female writers have

changed the original feelings of "love between monks and layman".

IV. CONCLUSION

The Tibetan people believe in Buddhism, and the works of many Tibetan writers also praise the metaphysical spiritual meaning of religious culture. However, if too much emphasis is placed on mystery, the sacred feeling of religious culture will be replaced by curiosity, and literary narration will tend to be simplified. Tibetan women's literature goes against the trend and strengthens the connection between religious culture and daily life. Religious belief still has a deep influence on people, but it is no longer expensive. Religious people also go out of monasteries to a wider life. The prototype model of "love between monks and layman" embodies the conflict between secular desire and spiritual transcendence. However, this is not an abandonment of faith, but a reflection on traditional Tibetan culture in the contemporary cultural context.

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