

The Evil Spirit in *The Tale of Genji*

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Abstract—Based on the investigation of the distribution of "evil spirit" and "ghost" in the book, the paper is aimed to investigate "evil spirit" in *The Tale of Genji*. For this reason, first of all, it is necessary to find out all the use cases of "evil spirit" and "ghosts". Through the analysis, it can be found that the appearance of "evil spirit" in *The Tale of Genji* is regular. In the fifty-four chapters of the book, from "Yuugao" of the fourth chapter to "Yumenoukihasi" of the final chapter, "evil spirit" appears in the beginning, middle and end of the full text in a form closely related to the structure of the full text. It can be concluded that "evil spirit" is one of the themes throughout the story. In the full text, there are the most use cases about Lady Rokujo, which is described as the representative use cases of "evil spirit" in *The Tale of Genji*. Lady Rokujo was deeply loved by Genji. But she incarnated as living beings before death and become evil spirit after death. She hated and cursed the women around Genji and controlled his life, which was very impressive image who influenced the fate of Genji.

Keywords—*The Tale of Genji*; evil spirit; Lady Rokujo

I. INTRODUCTION

In the fifty-fourth chapter of *The Tale of Genji*, from "Yuugao" of the fourth chapter to "Yumenoukihasi" of the final chapter, "evil spirit" appeared in many places of the full text. What is "evil spirit"?

All along, scholars have carried out various researches on "evil spirit" in Japanese literary works; while "evil spirit" in *The Tale of Genji*, especially "evil spirit" related to Lady Rokujo, have the most research materials.

Lady Rokujo was one of the indispensable figures in the study of *The Tale of Genji*, so it is necessary to know the actual situation of "evil spirit" related to her. For this reason, it is necessary to understand the relevant situation of "evil spirit" in the full text of *The Tale of Genji*. However, such detailed data or analysis results haven't been found in the actual research and investigation. Only by solving this problem it is able to have an overall understanding of "evil spirit" in *The Tale of Genji*. But through actual investigation, the paper finally discovered an interesting phenomenon.

In this study, a new collection of Japanese classical literature, *The Tale of Genji* 1-6 (first published on March 1, 1994, and second published on March 1, 2002, primary school museum), is used as the survey text. The number of copies and pages shown in the use case in this paper are all from this. According to the need, the paper also refers to the

first volume to the fifth volume of *The Tale of Genji* (issued on August 31, 28th Zhaohe Year, central commune, Ikeda).

II. THE DISTRIBUTION OF "EVIL SPIRIT" IN *THE TALE OF GENJI*

In the whole text, search terms related to "evil spirit" and there are 29 examples of "evil spirit" and 24 examples of "sacred evil spirit", one example of "ghost" and one example of "sacred ghost" with same meaning.

At the moment, the three-part constitution is the most authoritative. The first part is from the first chapter "Kiritubo" to the thirty-three chapter "Fujinouraba", including Genji's birth, youth and his update to emperor. The second part is from the thirty-fourth chapter "Wakana I" to the forty-first chapter "Maborosi", with Genji's son Xi Wu and Tou Zhongjiang's son Bai Mu as leading roles. The third part is from the forty-second chapter "Nihofuhyoubukyou" to the fifty-fourth chapter "Yumenoukihasi", including the period of active movement of Xu Jun and the emperor's son after the death of Genji. The distribution of "evil spirit" and related term "(sacred) ghost" is analyzed in the full text. After analysis, it is found that the appearance of "(sacred) evil spirit" and "(sacred) ghost" is regular, which can also be divided into three parts.

By analysis of distribution of "(sacred) evil spirit" and "(sacred) ghost" in the full text, the results are as follows:

There were 12 cases of "(sacred) evil spirit" in the first group from "Yuugao" to "Akaisi". Among them, there are three examples of "evil spirit" and nine examples of "sacred evil spirit". There are two examples of "ghost" and one example of "sacred ghost" in the ninth chapter "Aoi" of the first group.

There are 30 examples of "(sacred) evil spirit" in the second group from "Makibasira" to "Minori". Among them, there are 19 examples of "evil spirit" and 11 examples of "sacred evil spirit".

There are 9 examples of "(sacred) evil spirit" in the third group from "Yadorigi" to "Yumenoukihasi". Among them, there are 6 examples of "evil spirit" and 3 examples of "sacred evil spirit".

The three parts of *The Tale of Genji* and the distribution of "evil spirit" are basically overlapping except for in "Makibasira" of the second group. Thus, it is possible to say that "evil spirit" appear most frequently in the second group of the second part. Except for in "Suzumusi" (the thirty-

eighth chapter) and "Maborosi" (the forty-first chapter), it almost appears in every chapter. There are 55 examples totally, occupying above half proportion.

In the first part, women of all identities came on stage. Young Genji met new women in every chapter. Among them, Xi Yan and Kui Ji were the most important two women to Genji and they all died because of the curse of Lady Rokujo, an evil spirit.

The second part, as mentioned above, has the most examples. It is a very important part from the perspective of "evil spirit". Due to the power of the dead ghost Lady Rokujo, Genji's wife Zi Ji died and the third princess became a nun.

To the third part, the main character is not Genji. The story continues to write the stories of Genji's descendants. In this part "evil spirit" or wizard is not clear. The evil spirit of Lady Rokujo doesn't appear again.

Next, the examples of each group will be discussed according to the order of chapter.

III. DISTRIBUTION OF "EVIL SPIRIT" IN EACH GROUP

A. *The First Group*

The first group describes the stories from the first appearance of Lady Rokujo to the exile of Genji to Xumo about ten years. It includes stories of Genji from 17 to 28. In this part, two women (Xi Yan, Kui Ji), important to Genji, died because of the curse of the evil spirit who was just Lady Rokujo.

Genji was expelled to Xumo. Empress Suzaku dreamed her dead father in Tonghu Yard and then suffered from eye disease. At the same time, Emperor Mother was also bewitched in Honghui Palace and frequently had illness. It doesn't write it is because of evil spirit. But in fact, it is the curse from "evil spirit" in Tonghu Yard.

Moreover, Genji, Empress Tenghu, Long Yueye and some other persons were all bewitched by "evil spirit" which didn't exist in story really and was only speculated and discussed by people. Or say people at that time couldn't explain them and so they said it was because of "evil spirit".

The first group appeared the following symptoms after being bewitched by "evil spirit". The names in brackets are the subject with such phenomena.

- Face slimming down, crying (Genji and Kui Ji)
- Having disease (Empress Tenghu, Kui Ji, Emperor Zhuque, Emperor Mother in Honghui Palace)
- Look pale (Empress Tenghu, Kui Ji and Long Yueye)
- Death (Xi Yan and Kui Ji)
- having difficult labour or child can't born in scheduled month (Kui Ji and Empress Tenghu)

In the peaceful period, the cause of the disease and sickness is caused by bad conditions of the body. But people are more willing to believe it is because of "evil spirit". For

unknown disease or death, many people thought it was because of the possession of "evil spirit" and cause the illness or death of patients.

B. *The Second Group*

The second group describes the stories of Genji, from his 35 to his 51 in fall. In this group people possessed by "evil spirit" are black-moustache first wife, Emperor Zhuque, Zi Ji, Bai Mu and the third princess in Zhuque Yard (hereinafter referred to as the third princess), little prince and Yitiao Lady. Among them, it clearly writes that Zi Ji and the third princess are caused by the evil spirit of Lady Rokujo, and others are not clear.

Here, two points are needed to be paid attention to. First, "evil spirit" in the first part of "Makibasira" is not clear, and it is not the evil spirit of Lady Rokujo. Second, starting from "Wakana II", the evil spirit of Lady Rokujo appeared again.

The second group appeared the following symptoms after being bewitched by "evil spirit" such as the following phenomena.

- Loss of nature (black-moustache first wife)
- Having diseases (Emperor Zhuque, Zi Ji, Bai Mu, the third princess and Yitiao Lady)
- Crying (little girl, little prince, Bai My, black-moustache first wife)
- falling into the state of fake death (Zi Ji)
- Death (Zi Ji, Yitiao Lady and Bai Mu)
- becoming a nun (Emperor Zhuque and the third princess)

Seen from persons possessed by "evil spirit", pregnant woman (Ming Shiji), children (little girl and little boy) and the weak (Zi Ji and the third princess) are easy to be bewitched by "evil spirit". People don't know the truth and they often think that these diseases and death are caused by the possession of "evil spirit". And the author of this book often put these ideas in his heart and created all kinds of scenes.

C. *The Third Group*

The third group continues the stories of Genji's descendants. In this group, persons possessed by "evil spirit" are Tenghu Nvyu, Fu Zhou, wife of General Zuojin, Prince Xiongqin and Princess Yipin. Among them it describes Fu Zhou the most, and five examples of ten examples are describing Fu Zhou. Sad and worn Fu Zhou was possessed by the evil spirit of wizard when he went out alone. Others are not clearly shown who possessed in their body, or people just speculated and discussed them.

The third group appeared the following symptoms after being bewitched by "evil spirit" such as the following phenomena.

- Pale face and slim body (Fu Zhou)

- Death (Tenghu Nvyu)
- Comatose state (Prince Xiongqin and Fu Zhou)
- Having diseases (Princess Yipin)
- Crying (Prince Xiongqin and Fu Zhou)
- Becoming a nun (Fu Zhou)

IV. "(SACRED) EVIL SPIRIT" AND "(SACRED) GHOST" IN *THE TALE OF GENJI*

A. *The Subject of "(Sacred) Evil Spirit" and "(Sacred) Ghost"*

Among the fifty-five examples of the full text, there are thirty-one examples of unidentified "evil spirit". There are above one third of examples of "evil spirit" and "sacred evil spirit" whose subject is Lady Rokujo, and totally 19 examples. In addition, there is one example in Tonghu Yard and two examples of wizard.

There is one example of unidentified "ghost" and one example of "sacred ghost" of Lady Rokujo.

B. *Objects Possessed by Evil Spirit*

In *The Tale of Genji*, total 18 persons are possessed by "evil spirits". Among them, the examples of Kui Ji in the first group, Zi Ji in the second group and Fu Zhou in the third group are the most in each group. Thus, it can be said that they are center roles possessed by "evil spirit". Others, including Teng Hu, Long Yueye, Genji, Bai Mu and Prince Xiongqin, are also possessed by "evil spirit". People around speculated they are possessed by "evil spirit".

Seen from objects possessed by "evil spirit", pregnant women (Teng Hu, Zi Ji, Mingshi Nvyu, Wife of General Zuojin), children (little girl and little boy) and the weak (Zi Ji and the third princess) are more likely possessed by "evil spirit".

C. *Results of Being Possessed*

Seen from the results of being possessed, some are pale in face, some cry, some have slim face, some have diseases and lost nature, some fall into state of fake death, some have labour difficulty, some die and some became nun.

Five people died because of possession of "evil spirit" and three became nun. The person who becomes nun is to give up worldly life and live in secular life. They discard all worries of life and enter into another world. In a sense, it is same with the result of death.

D. *Use of "Sacred"*

In the thirty-three examples of "sacred evil spirit", except for one example, they all show respect to "evil spirit" who possessed them. An exceptional example is to show respect to "evil spirit" of Lady Rokujo. After "sacred evil spirit", it continues to write a passage of speech spoken by "evil spirit" of Lady Rokujo. Thus, it is thought that "sacred evil spirit" is to show respect of speaker to Lady Rokujo.

V. CONCLUSION

It is clearly that appearance of "evil spirit" is not at will in *The Tale of Genji* but is regular. Generally it can be divided into three groups. In the fifty-four chapter of full text, from the fourth chapter "Yuugao" to the final chapter "Yumenoukihasi", "(sacred) evil spirit" has a close relationship to the structure of full text and respectively appear in the beginning, middle and end, and one of theme of the book.

In the whole story, 18 people are clearly possessed by "evil spirit". Seen from objects possessed by "evil spirit", pregnant women, children and the weak are more likely possessed by "evil spirit".

In all examples of "evil spirit", there are many examples of the subject of Lady Rokujo, accounting for above one third of 53 examples, totally 19 examples. Among the 53 examples, there are 31 example of unidentified subject. Thus, "evil spirit" of Lady Rokujo has a deep meaning. Therefore, it can be said that Lady Rokujo is representative example of "evil spirit" in *The Tale of Genji*.

Five people died because of possession of "evil spirit" and three became nun. The death of three people, Kui Ji, Zi Ji and Xi Yan, are clearly cause by "evil spirit" of Lady Rokujo. The third princess who becomes nun is also because of "evil spirit" of Lady Rokujo. Three women died and one became nun, and they were most important women for Genji. Lady Rokujo's "evil spirit" changed life of Genji. Other two women (Lady Yitiao and Tenghu Nvyu) died and two (Emperor Zhuque and Fu Zhou) became nun, which are caused by unidentified subject or "evil spirit" of wizard.

Because of deep love for Genji, Lady Rokujo incarnated as a living creature and became a dead spirit after death. One after another she possessed women around Genji, causing them being jealous and cursed to death, and controlled the fate of Genji.

"Evil spirit" possessed Teng Hu, Long Yueye, Genji, Bai Mu and Prince Qingwang are not real ghost, which are speculated from speech of people around them and only found "evil spirit" from language description. For unexplained death and diseases, people at that time thought it was because of the possession of "evil spirit". The appearance of "evil spirit" in *The Tale of Genji* proved this point. And the author of this book often put these ideas in his heart and created all kinds of scenes.

The distribution and functions of "evil spirit" in *The Tale of Genji* are analyzed from the full text. Only two examples of "ghost" in *The Tale of Genji* are also discussed. Further searches are also need to deepen the research.

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