

Two-part Allegorical Saying of Livestock in Northeast Dialect and Its Cultural Implication

——Take Pigs, Cattle and Dogs as Examples

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ABSTRACT

Two-part allegorical saying of animal word uses animal images or actions to explain things. It is vivid, humorous and can effectively enhance the expression effect. Two-part allegorical saying of animal word in Northeast dialect is based on folk, and its language is popular, but it contains rich culture. Combined with the word theory, this paper focuses on the interpretation of the allegorical sayings containing pigs, cattle and dogs.

Keywords: Northeast dialect, Two-part allegorical saying of livestock, Cultural implication

1. INTRODUCTION

“A bumper grain harvest, the domestic animals are all thriving” is a beautiful wish message in the new year. So what do “six animals” mean? *Zuo Zhuan · Twenty Five Years of Zhao Gong*: “for six livestock, five animals and three victims, in order to offer five flavors.” Du Yu explained, “six livestock: horses, cattle, sheep, chickens, dogs and pigs.” Wang Yinglin of the Southern Song Dynasty also pointed out in the *Three Character Classic*: “horses, cattle, sheep, chickens, dogs and pigs. These six livestock are fed by people.” *The modern Chinese dictionary* also holds that “six livestock” refer to pigs, cattle, sheep, horses, chickens and dogs.

2. TWO-PART ALLEGORICAL SAYINGS OF PIG AND ITS CULTURAL CONNOTATION

In ancient society, agriculture was the main form, and food was the most important thing for the people, the proverb “six livestock thrive, led by pigs; bumper grains and food take the lead” illustrates this problem. Pigs were the first animals that humans tamed and used for us. They are called “*shi*” in oracle bone inscriptions, for example, the idiom “the pigs dash and the wolves rush (run like a pig, run like a wolf, it describes groups

of bad people rushing and scratching everywhere.)” uses the original meaning of “*shi*”. Pig is one of the “three animals” used in sacrifice. The word “*jia* ‘home’” combined by “*mian* ‘house’” and “*shi* ‘boar’” means that boar has been kept in captivity for a long time. “*zhu*” that consists of two parts “*shi*” and “*zhe*” is the variant form of a Chinese character “*zhu* ‘pig’”. It originated from the sound of “*shi*” and “*zhe*”, which was recorded earlier in the Warring States period and in the small seal script. The Chinese radical of “*zhu* ‘pig’” is “*dog*” late, probably in the Tang and Song dynasties. Since the agricultural era, the main function of pigs is for human consumption, the Northern Dynasty folk song *Mu Lan poem* recorded: “The little brother heard his sister coming and sharpened his knife to the pigs and sheep.” Two-part allegorical saying “Reading Buddhist scriptures while eating pork -- pretending to be a good man” is a metaphor for being cruel but pretending to be a good man. “The fat pig enters the slaughterhouse -- the goods that suffer from the knife” is a metaphor for being cheated and punished arbitrarily. “Cutting ass when killing a pig -- ass is down (the matter has been settled)”, “ass” and “be settled” sound the same with “*ding*”, which means that the two sides have discussed something. “Killing the pig and holding its thigh -- just boast”. “Killing pigs don’t need a iron bar (*ting zi*) -- stretching (retreating)”. “Stabbing (*nang*) ass when

killing a pig -- pretending to be a general man” is derived from the scene of early pig killing.^[1]“Iron bar (*ting zi*)” refers to the iron bar poked into the pig’s skin. When killing a pig, firstly cut a small hole in the pig’s hind leg, and then insert it with “iron bar” in order to separate the skin from the meat, and blow it round with your mouth to stretch the pig’s hair. “Killing the pig and holding its thigh -- just boast” is a pun, which means bragging and boasting. “Killing pigs don’t need a iron bar -- stretching (retreating), “stretching” originally refers to removing hair slowly, “stretching” is the sounds like “retreating”, and “retreating” means quietly withdrawing. “*Nang*” means “stabbing”. When killing a pig, a key link is to insert a pig knife into the heart from the pig’s neck. If you start from the ass, it is obviously a layman. “Be a general man” means “understand”, “Stabbing ass when killing a pig -- pretending to be a general man” means pretending to understand. “Cutting ass when killing a pig -- pretending to be a general man” is derived from the scene of early pig killing. Some Two-part allegorical sayings have also been created according to the characteristics of pigs, “The old sow lifts the door curtain -- her mouth is advanced”, which describes hearing her voice before seeing her. “Old sow pees -- rush”, a pun, means a rushing power. Pigs are omnivores, that for eat have a large amount of food and a small range of activities. Their daily living state is eating and sleeping, and their temperament is gentle, thus, Two-part allegorical saying “Catch up with the pig -- remember to eat or not to fight” describes this habit of pigs. It is precisely because of these habits that pigs are endowed with the characteristics of stupidity, laziness, greed, foolishness and ugliness. Two-part allegorical saying in dialect also contains derogatory color, “Riding an old sow and playing with scales -- look at your war horse, saber and gun”, describes backward equipment. Because it is an animal that provide human meat, the growth rate is one of the most concerned problems of breeders. Breeding pigs save energy for reproduction, but eating more, growing slowly. It will be irritable during estrus, and even don’t sleep or eat. There are also related Two-part allegorical sayings about this behavior, such as “Pigs without reproductive organs have their ears cut off -- suffering at both ends”.^[2]This refers to suffering at both the head and tail, and turning refers to something not good at both aspects. Although pigs are not as big as elephants, they are also fat and strong, the Two-part allegorical saying “Pig nose with scallions -- pretending to gentle air (elephant)” is related to the selection of pigs rather than other animals that “elephant” and “air” is homophonic in Chinese, and “pretending to gentle air” means affectation or pretending not to know.^[3]The fur colors of pigs include white, black, brown, pink, mix color and so on. The pig involved in “Crow falls on the pig ass -- seeing others black and not seeing yourself black” should be a black pig. Some Two-part allegorical sayings only use pigs to express its meaning, which is not related to the

characteristics of pigs. For example, “The old sow chews the *wan chan zi* -- the mouth is full of porcelain fragments (words)”, and “*wan chan zi*” is a broken bowl. “Porcelain fragments” is homonymous with “words” in Chinese pronunciation. It’s a metaphor for writing articles or talking only focus on words without paying attention to practical meaning. Another example is “Old sows drink sharpening water -- there is internal rust (intelligent)”, “rust” is homonymous with “intelligent”, which means that people are rough in appearance and cultured in heart. “The old sow drill a fence -- be in a dilemma” means that someone is in an embarrassing situation. The “fence” means a fence enclosing the home with boards or sticks.

3. TWO-PART ALLEGORICAL SAYINGS OF CATTLE AND ITS CULTURAL CONNOTATION

Cattle are one of the animals that were domesticated and used by human beings earlier. Some oracle bone inscriptions dating back more than 3000 years are engraved on cattle’s bovine scapulae. In the oracle bone inscriptions of the Shang Dynasty, “cattle” is different from the words “horse”, “deer”, “tiger” and “dog”. It only outlines the shape of a cattle head rather than the whole body, which may take into account the sacrificial function of the cattle, sheep and pig. The pure colored livestock should be used during sacrifice, which is called “sacrificial livestock”, before sacrifice the selected “sacrificial livestock” needs to be raised in the “*lao* ‘prison’”, so the ancients also called it “*lao* ‘composed of *mian* and *niu* in chinese’”. The word is a ideographic character. The upper word is “*mian* ‘home’”, the lower word is “*niu* ‘cow’”. It means a place where livestock are kept in captivity. This is the original meaning of “*wang yang bu lao* ‘mend the fold after the sheep have been stolen’” and “*lao long* ‘cage’”. In the farming era, cattle played an important role in farming, divination, sacrifice, military and transportation. A trained adult cow by letting the cow pull the cart. If untrained calves were used, they would mess up the rope. The two-part allegorical saying “Calves pull carts -- mess up” means to mess up the rules and order.

Stubborn is one of the characteristics of cattle. For example, the word “*jiang*”, following the “*niu*” and “*qiang*” pronunciation, means stubborn, such as stubborn mouth, stubborn spirit and stubborn temper. “Bull temper” refers to pride, stubbornness and obstinate. Two-part allegorical saying “Hold the cattle’s head to drink water -- can’t force” was created from this characteristic of the cattle. When the cattle is thirsty, it will naturally drink water. It is difficult to succeed by holding down the its head to drinking water forcibly. The Two-part allegorical saying is a metaphor that means that everything should follow the law and can’t act reluctantly.

A cow has great strength. For example, when describing a person's great strength and power, it can be said that "strength is as great as a cattle", the Two-part allegorical saying "An old cow falls into a dry well -- there is no place to use strength (you can't use it with strength)" was created by using this feature. Although cattle are powerful, they are bulky because of their large size, the Two-part allegorical saying "The calf pours on the butterfly -- the mind sensitive and body stupid" means that it is not difficult to know, but difficult to do. In other words, something looks easy but hard to do, can be thought of but may not be done. Cattle horns are sharp and hard. It become very smooth after being coated with sesame oil, Two-part allegorical saying "Put sesame oil on the old cattle horn -- sharp (treacherous) and slippery" turns to refer to or satirize people's treachery and cunning.

4. TWO-PART ALLEGORICAL SAYINGS OF DOG AND ITS CULTURAL CONNOTATION

"Dog (*gou*)" is also one of the earliest tame livestock of mankind. In the oracle period, it is called "*quan*". In other words, the word "*gou*" appears later than the word "*quan*". The word "*quan*" in oracle bone inscriptions is like the shape of a dog, with head up, tail down and legs to the left, and in inscriptions on bronze period highlighted the distinguishing features of dogs, and the tail rolled up to the right. The word "*gou*" came into being later, and have no examples in oracle bone inscriptions. *The Houma alliance* unearthed from Houma, Shanxi may be the earliest document recording the word. There is a view that the original meaning of the word "*gou*" is a puppy, and "*quan*" is a big dog. It is recorded in *Er ya·shi chu* that "dogs, without hair" means a dog without a long and sharp hair, which is named "*gou*". The ancients often used the figurative meaning of the word "dog", such as "dog son" to calling one's son, which is a humble title, and "dog and horse" to express loyalty. "Dog" is very quick in sight and hearing. When it was used by humans, it was mainly worked for hunting, and "*quan*" was often used as Chinese character components. For example, the original meaning of "*shou*" refers to hunting in winter, and then generally refers to hunting and so on; "*lie*" means capturing wild animals in the past, then usually refers to hunting and extended to pursuit and so on; the original meaning of "*kuang*" is a noun, which means mad dog. It is extended to the madness dog and further refers to madness and debauchery; the first meaning of "*meng*" refers to a strong dog, which is later extended to fierce, sudden and so on; the meaning of "*tu*" refers to a dog jumping out of the cave, which was extended to rush, drum and so on. In addition to hunting, dogs are also used to guard the house. *Three character classic* written by Wang Yinglin of the Song Dynasty, it is said that "dogs watch the night and chickens watch the

morning", which means that dogs guard the door for people at night and chickens report the dawn coming in the morning. In Chinese traditional culture, the understanding of dogs is divided into two categories: one is commendatory and the other is derogatory. Commendatory meanings, such as "dogs don't dislike poverty" and "in order to return, the horse lowered the rope and the dog wet the grass". In a derogatory sense, for example, "dog tail continued mink" refers to make defective products after treasures, which are mostly used in literary works. "Dog skin plaster" is a deceptive fake. "A dog can't spit out ivory" is an ironic term, satirizing someone no good words, such as truth, swearing, etc. "Dogs rely on human's power" means that bad people bully others by relying on certain forces.

There are many Two-part allegorical sayings about "dog" in Northeast dialect. It is mainly divided into three categories:

First, using the dog's actions to express a certain reason. It can be divided into two part, one is the dog's active behavior, that is, it can complete the action independently. For example, "Dogs drive ducks -- quack", "drive" means to catch up, "quack" is an onomatopoeic word. Ducks often make a sound when chased by dogs. It is a pun. "Quack" is mostly used to praise one's high ability or good quality of goods.^[4] "Dogs lick the millstone -- turn round and round". The millstone is round. Dogs turn around in order to lick the food on the millstone. "Turn round and round" is a pun, which mostly describes the performance of being at a loss. "Mad dog jumps over the wall -- eyes are red with anxiety", which means someone is very anxious. The latter part can also be said to be "forced out", which means being forced and helpless. "Dog bites urinary tract -- empty joy", urinary tract is the bladder, which is called "*chui ba*" in some dialects. It's a metaphor for happiness in vain. "A dog bites a hedgehog -- there is no place to bite", which means that things are difficult to do and there is no place to start. "Stupid dog chases rabbit -- can't touch it", stupid dog generally refers to the collective name of local dogs in rural areas. Compared with rabbits, the running speed of dogs is quite different from rabbits. It's a metaphor for that there is a big gap between two people or things, and no comparability. "Pug lifts the door curtain -- it all depends on one mouth", the second half can also be said to be "Kung Fu on the mouth". It's not easy for a dog to lift the door curtain with its mouth. It describes a man who have a glib tongue and rely on this ability. "Pug lifts the door curtain -- show a little". It is hard for the dog to lift the door curtain by mouth or grasping. It describes that taking the opportunity to show one's talents. "Pug sits in a sedan chair -- he doesn't know how to lift". The dog is naturally active, so it is difficult for the dog to be carried and sit firmly in the sedan chair without escaping. It is a metaphor for does not understand others' kindness to themselves. "Dog urine -- cast-in-situ (delivery), "cast"

is homonymous with “delivery”, which means that people are too realistic. “Dog bites egg -- Just stuck in the crotch (proper)” and “egg” sounds “*luan*” in Chinese as well as means the testicle, and “crotch” is homonymous with “proper”. The metaphor is just right. One is passive behavior, which can only be completed after human intervention. For example, “Dogs wear hats -- pretend to be a person”. Hats are originally used by humans for warmth preservation, protection and decoration. The pun of “pretend to be a person” satirizes that the bad man pretends to be good people. “A dog wears a bit -- hold casually”.^[5]The bit was originally used for horses, cattle and other livestock, which is an iron chain was placed in the mouth of dogs for easy control. “Hold casually” is a pun, which means nonsense.

Second, using the image of dogs to make up events in order to explain truth. Such as “Dog has horns -- sheep (foreign) appearance”, “sheep” is homonymous with “foreign” in Chinese pronunciation, a metaphor for making a fool of yourself and making a joke. “Dog with horns -- sheep (foreign) style” is a metaphor for foreign style compared with Chinese traditional style. “Kissing on dog’s ass -- I don’t know how sweet or smelly it is”, which means that I don’t know right or wrong and also don’t know how good it is.

Third, explaining things through the habits of dogs. For example, “A dog goes a thousand miles to eat shit, and a wolf goes a thousand miles to eat meat -- it’s hard to change their nature”, the two allusions refer to the fact that human nature is impossible to change.

5. CONCLUSION

The greatest feature of Two-part allegorical saying is humor and profound meaning. There are many Two-part allegorical saying in Northeast dialect with strong regional color. The first half of the Two-part allegorical saying of livestock takes livestock as the object of expression, and explains the truth by means of homophony, semantic pun and so on. From the corpus we collected, there are more about “pig”, “cow” and “dog” and less about “sheep”, “horse” and “chicken” in the Two-part allegorical saying in Northeast dialect. This paper focuses on the interpretation of these three kinds of Two-part allegorical sayings.

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