

Research on the National Culture of Nishan Shaman

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Abstract: As an important chapter of Manchu folk literature, the myth of Nishan shaman is widely spread in Northeast Asia in the form of oral communication, which is a myth of the original Manchu shaman culture. It is an important data for the study of the primitive beliefs of the nation of northern China. As a form of folk literature, myth's seemingly fictional plot is likely to be a reflection of real life, and to express or record the original culture of the nation and the ethnic group by the form of myth. The myth contains a large number of early Manchu real life, customs, and beliefs, while restoring the real Manchu shaman rituals through the process of describing the Nishan shaman rituals. This article aims to initially explore the mysterious shaman world through the original shaman belief of the Manchu people in the myth of Nishan shaman.

Keywords: Nishan shaman, Manchu, Shamanism, Manchu oral culture

1. The shaman belief in The Nishan shaman

Manchu was born in northeast China, the Manchu ancestors and its settlement for a long time in the primitive social stage, its productivity development low level. The winter of northeast China is cold, and with the poor living conditions, when living in the northeast of the Manchu ancestors mainly rely on natural resources, after the original processing, as a source of production and living. In a large part, this way of production and life depends on nature. When the intelligence of primitive human beings has not been a breakthrough development, it cannot scientifically interpret and understand the phenomena existing in nature, so the primitive human beings can not correctly understand some objective existence at that time, and then produce the interpretation of mysticism." In the eyes of primitive people, all phenomena in nature have their own personality. They not only think that people and animals live, but also think that all other things live. This is a characteristic feature of primitive human thought." [1] Because of the idea, they produce the "animism" theory. This is the historical background and theoretical basis of shamanism. Since the Manchu belief in shamanism for a long time, the influence of shamanism on the Manchu is very profound. Even affect the creation of folk literature. Many folk stories of the Manchu nationality reflect the content of shamanism, and the myth of the Nishan shaman is one of the more widely sung stories. Thus it can be seen that the root cause of Manchu literature is deeply rooted in the historical soil of Manchu. If we want to deeply understand its ideological and cultural connotation, we must start from the history and culture of Manchu. The representative research on Nishan Shaman in the academic circle mainly includes research on the Manchu folklore beliefs [2] and figures [3] in the myth. But the study of national culture still needs further research.

When it comes to the Manchu culture, the oral inheritance literature of the Manchu oral culture is a very important part of it. In the early days, the Manchu did not use the words to record events. Before the Manchu script was formed and it was popularized among the public, the inheritance method of word of mouth was of great significance. At the same time, the Manchu people are also used to passing on in this way. The way is a necessary way to exchange ideas and spread information between people. Oral inheritance activities, communication between both parties can achieve the purpose of sharing information. The inheritance of folk literature depends on this way.

Nishan shaman myth comes from the Manchu oral culture. It mainly in the form of oral transmission, because of its word of mouth, and each generation of myth narrator is different, so there are different transliteration versions, but the central content is Nishan shaman show its strong shaman power to Yin fu and to help rescue fei Yanggu. Oral literature from Manchu literature is not history, and its inheritors are not historians. However, they pass on the myths, legends and stories from generation to generation, which can intuitively feel the ancient life, production and cultural customs, which are important reference materials that are difficult to be intuitively reflected in historical documents, and it's also a folk culture that history books can't show. The myth very carefully depicts every detail of the Nishan shaman behavior,

such as her dress; the divine song, dance; superb divination, the guard of the Gods in the Yin fu, to reflect her high witchcraft ability.

To depict the shaman image, firstly, this reflected in her "shaman" dress up: "shaman wear ghost clothes, tied to the waist bell, female skirt, wearing nine finch hat." [4] Secondly, the shaman dance posture and God song, "thin twist like spring shake willow branches, calling, voice, or whisper soft voice, euphemism." [4] Also reflected in the Nishan shaman inviting the God plot: "Finished speaking, wash the face eyes, decoration incense case, throw the round chess pieces into the water, put the bench in the middle of the house. Holding the hand drum in her right hand, wrapped the elm drum hammer in her left hand, sat in her seat, beat the hand drum, began to whisper, singing "huobage" in a beautiful voice, and repeatedly shouted "deyangku", begging the God to join herself." [4] Nishan shaman under the protection of the Gods to the Yin fu: "Nishan shaman holding the chicken, dog, sauce on her shoulder, paper, the Gods follow around, to the Yin fu to find the king of Yanluo. The beast God runs, the bird God flies, and the snake snail moves like a whirlwind." [4] Nishan shaman went to the Yin fu to rescue Fei Yanggu, and it has been mentioned as Xie yi three paper, three pieces of sauce. In addition to some characteristics of Manchu mythology, there is also a strong shaman cultural background. Its shaman dress, the singing of divine songs, and the God dance are mixed with a lot of shaman belief elements.

The cultural inheritance of folk beliefs has a remarkable feature. Even if times change, the culture of folk beliefs will continue to be inherited in the people. This is true of the shaman culture, which is still preserved in some northern ethnic minority areas. They choose the inherited shaman culture in their special way and inherit the shaman culture from generation to generation. Manchu oral culture has created a large number of God heroes similar to Nishan and magic shamans. Some of its myths and the imperial myths produced because of the royal worship, which are an important way for the Manchu ancestors to carry forward the national spirit of perseverance and self-improvement. The word of mouth is also a form of expression of its national culture from generation to generation.

Worship of Main character in the myth, the description of the shaman magic reflects the Manchu ancestors desire to transcend reality and their own wishes, the Manchu said myth is not static, the myth of the Nishan shaman and the Heaven war and other Gods show very different characteristics. And the emperor myth such as the biography of Nurgaci and show new characteristics. The changes in the description of the image of the Main character in various types of myths, and it truly reflect the changes of the social and historical development of the Manchu people and the change process of the cultural value orientation of the Manchu people. The shaping and transmission of different hero images in the myth of the Manchu oral culture from generation to generation, this is also the inheritance of the history and culture of the Manchu people.

2. The ending of The *Nishan shaman*

The spread form of Manchu oral culture originates from the longer history of Manchu folk telling form —— "Jiang gu". Jiang gu, the Manchu language called it "ulabun". The elderly of the family or shamans in the family would become the "Jiang gu", telling the deeds of their own nation or family in history. Before entering the central plains, Manchu have almost no habit of recording their own history in written form. The Manchu oral culture is in this form that folk long-length rap forms are produced, the worship and praise of heroes by the Manchu people, reflected in the Manchu oral culture, from the creation of the God, to the ancestors of the half God ancestor, to the king God emperor and extraordinary superhuman folk hero. Each type of myth has its own unique narrative mode and narrative characteristics. In the myth of the Manchu oral culture, more hero worship elements plays a leading role, as is the image of Nishan in Nishan shaman, but the difference is that the ending of the myth is very different from other Manchu myths. The plot of Nishan shaman going to the Yin fu in the myth is the most exciting part of the book and the climax of the myth. Nishan shaman went to the Yin fu, eventually rescued Fei Yanggu, and met his husband. Because his corpse has decayed and cannot be brought back to life, so she had to entangle with her husband in the Yin fu, and forced to break up her husband's soul. This also paved the way for the plot of the Nishan shaman who was finally punished for throwing into the well. The plot, written in a commonplace way, Describe the process of arguing between the Nishan and her husband in detail, and uses very secular words to outline the whole picture of Nishan's confrontation with her husband.

In the myth, the scene in which the shaman of Nishan was forced to disperse the soul of his husband in the Yin fu is actually quite different from the plot described by the whole mythology. A lot of words are used to describe Nishan. The shaman's ability is great, but in the ending of "Nishan Shaman", her

mother-in-law heard that Nishan killed her husband twice in the Yin fu, and went to the capital to file a complaint, so that she was sentenced to be thrown into a well. Even though shamans are so "different", they are still bound by human etiquette and rules. Even if it is a female shaman of the sky, the female society is still gone forever. In the patriarchal society where the patriarchy is in power, Nishan shamans are not allowed to "behave" towards their husbands. The resulting punishment is a proof, and it does punish the Nishan shaman, which is also noteworthy. The main characters of the whole story are completely female, but there is a distinction between good and evil. This should be the form of mythology produced in the period of the patriarchal society, which contains the relics of the matriarchal society, such as the creation of powerful characters such as female shamans. It also contains the severe punishment that women face after making mistakes in a patriarchal society, so as to warn women and restrain their behavior. The myths of other beliefs often portray the protagonist as a sacred, non-human image, but the shaman is different from this, and its existence shows more of a human nature.

Shaman also need to live, die and get married in the way of human life, and are restricted by human laws, the image of shaman has never been beyond the scope of people. When Nishan shaman first appeared in the myth, it described that "Baledubayan saw a small wing in the east, where a young sister drying clothes on the pole."¹ Nishan shaman in a very market image, then through the mouth of others Baledubayan just know the hang clothes sister is Nishan shaman, folk literature never from the folk, this actually and the image of the shaman will not detached too much, Nishan shaman appeared in a very marketable image, and then through the mouth of others ,the Baledubayan know that the sister who was drying clothes was Nishan shaman. In fact, this is not too detached from the image of the shaman in reality, they are ordinary and mysterious beings, who have never been separated from production and life, just like shamanic culture, showing the worship of primitive culture and never separated from it. It comes from nature, and it will eventually belong to nature.

As mentioned earlier, the Nishan shaman myth comes from the Manchu oral culture. So how did it come about? Because this aspect is extremely lack of data, it is difficult to textual research. In my opinion, at least in the existing myths, the myth of Nishan shaman shows a different characteristic from other types of myths. In fact, it may not be created by one person, but the product of the collective wisdom of the masses. We have reason to say that the myth of Nishan shaman originated from the appeal of human nature. And with the passage of time, the unique form of word of mouth is constantly enriching the characters in the myth, and the myth of Nishan shaman is also constantly enriched and developed in the mouths of the narrators towards what they want them to be. Its bud may be derived from the original faith worship, but in the process of generation to generation, although the Manchu already entered the feudal society, but there is still the shadow of slave society, The depiction of the number of slaves in the wealthy Baledubayan's family in mythology has become the representative image of the slave owner. Then into the feudal society, the mythical emperor, Baledubayan's identity, the background of the story of the Ming Dynasty, are very prominently marked with the feudal landlord class brand.

Due to the influence of Buddhism on the Manchus, the theory of cause and effect, the theory of good and evil, and the idea of reincarnation of life and death continue to affect the Manchus. In the mythology, such as Nishan's visit to the palace of the Empress of the Descendants, ordering Dahe to capture her husband and throw her into Fengdu City, and never give up reincarnation, these plots permeate the mythology of Nishan Shaman. The content of the myth grew enriched through the mouth of generations of Manchu speakers. Although "Nishan Shaman" is smeared with a layer of shamanistic mysticism on the surface, the text uses a large number of text descriptions for Nishan's magic power, and its essence is not to describe the image of shaman in real life. Rather, it is shaping the image of Nishan, a female shaman in mythology, who becomes a bright moon in the dark reality of women, illuminating the hearts of the oppressed. The story of the Nishan shaman is likely to face the female group. As Manchu oral literature and art, the narrators and listeners of inheritance may be more attractive to women. The myth itself also reflects the origin of women's perception of real life. It seems to be a literary work that promotes shamanic culture. The text seems to be absurd, like a shaman dancing to the gods, but its essence is not divorced from real life. In real life, in addition to presiding over the sacrificial activities of "jumping gods", shamans also have to participate in production and life labor, and enjoy the same labor results as ordinary people. Its mythological connotation directly points to the real problems of women in the Manchu society at that time. The myth of Nishan shaman actually has a very profound realistic concern and literary value.

In a long historical period, probably not just Manchu women's in the low social status. In the

¹ Zhao Zhan translation, Luo Lida proofreader. The Nishan shaman biography [M]. Shenyang: Liaoning Nationalities Press, 1988: 115.

patriarchal society at that time, it was difficult for women to achieve equal status with men. No matter where they were, women could not get respect. This performance of Manchu is more distinctive. After women become "daughter-in-law", they almost undertake the heavy housework of the whole family. In addition, the Manchu family has many rules and constraints on women, if the "daughter-in-law" makes mistakes, she will be punished by "family law". Women's life as a "daughter-in-law" is really unbearable. In particular, widows have no social status, and even in some customs and sacrificial activities, The participation of widows is forbidden, and "widow" has become a synonym for discrimination. No matter why her husband died, always blame the daughter-in-law. In those days, women had few human rights, and it is unknown how many women died because of the so-called "rules" and "family laws". Problems existing in society are often reflected in folk literature. People have demands but cannot realize them, so they will turn to realize the second rebirth of life in literary creation. In Manchu folk literature, in order to express women's inner dissatisfaction, some folk myths will be produced to reflect women's expectations and demands, and the myth of Nishan Shaman highlights this aspect.

Nishan shaman has successfully created a female image of Nishan. She is neither humble nor arrogant in the face of high-ranking people. With her superb skills, she can come and go freely almost anywhere. In fact, shamans are not easy to act as shamans. If you understand the shamanic culture, you will know that it takes hard work to cultivate a strong shaman. The myth arranged such a plot, Facing the old man's accusation that the Yuanwai did not invite the shaman, Yuanwai said: " where is a good shaman? In our village, ...not only can they not save people, they don't even know when they will die. I beg if the old man knows that there are outstanding shamans, please advise!" The old man said," Brother Bayan, why don't you know? Not far from here, living on the banks of the Nissi Sea, there is a female shaman named Tawang, who is of great ability to save the dead, why not go to find her? If the shaman wants to come, not only one person, but also ten people can be saved! Go there quickly, please!" After he finished speaking, he walked out of the gate calmly, sat on the colorful clouds and went up to the sky.[4] The essence of this plot in the myth is not to portray the image of the shaman in real life, but to contrast the image of the female shaman in the myth of Nishan. If the theme of the myth is the shaman, then these incompetent shaman images will not appear in it. It is precisely because the real theme of the myth is to highlight Nishan that such a plot is designed. In fact, the essence of this myth is to reveal the demands of women, rather than the appearance of the mystical shaman belief, but the Manchu shaman belief has a long history, and the combination of the two forms the image of the main character in The Nishan shaman. As sung in the sacred words of Nishan Shaman, she pursues a free life, a happy life, a high life, she faces anyone, everything is not humble, not overbearing, no fear, never contained by the secular world. The Manchu oral culture created the mythical figure of Nishan Shaman, which comes from the spiritual sustenance of women's long-term hard life, and it is also a literary expression of women's struggle against injustice in real life.

3. The main female character of *Nishan shaman*

In fact, the image of female shaman not only appears in the myth of Manchu, but also in the universal existence of female shaman image among the people of shaman belief, which is a very prominent phenomenon. The shaman culture originated from the matriarchal society, which can be confirmed by the female shaman myth of some ethnic groups, and the shaman people in the early stage are mostly women, and the shaman costumes often have distinct female characteristics.

The female shaman myth is common among many shamanic people. In the Siber myth, the original shaman is a female shaman dressed in a divine dress and holding a divine drum. Shaber shamans need to go through the "knife ladder", so that they can become a recognized shaman, they need to stand on the blade of the top floor and face to south. Then the old shaman shouted loudly below, and asked him what he saw southward, and he saw "Yisangzhumamayiboye," that means the physical meaning of the female ancestor shaman. Shamanic culture originated in a matriarchal society, so the image of the original shaman God is often portrayed as women. Early shamans were often held by women, and were often presented in the form of church and state during the matriarchal society. Even in the time of the patriarchal clan society, men began to step into this field, but they still had to follow some rules based on female characteristics. So that among some ethnic groups, male shamans need to wear very feminine clothes to host the sacrifice. The remains of the early female characteristics, which are still visible in the shaman costumes of some ethnic groups, such as God skirts, may be the remains of the original shamans for women. But the more society advances, the fewer female shamans, gradually replaced by male shamans. Shaman clothing gradually evolved into a form of combat, such as divine knife and staff, which should have been the evolution of paternal society. The shift in shamans is not accidental, but linked to the social context of shaman origins.

Accordingly, the female appearance of Nishan in the myth of Nishan shaman is precisely responsible for this. But she is different from the Goddess "AbuKahehe" in Heaven war at the profound historical background. Of course, not only The Heaven war, many of the "Goddess" myths of the Manchu people are deformed under the same motif, but the Nishan shaman is telling the story of people, instead of focusing only on the Gods. The myth of Nishan shaman is set in the Ming Dynasty. However, the Central Plains is undoubtedly the dominant patriarchal society, but the Manchu people in the northeast region still tell the fairy tales of female shamans. The myth created a powerful and spell superb female shaman image, which is not uncommon in the Manchu mythology, probably derived from the Goddess belief in the primitive culture, which can be found from many Manchu myths. In the Manchu myth spread by mouth, there are very many stories of female shamans, which is not only a mythological motif, but also reflects the value orientation of the Manchu people. In mythology, the images of Goddesses are often complex, which may have the characteristics of the creation God, but they are also the master of everything. In mythology, they are also described as the Gods of life, or the female shamans like Nishan. Because of the Animistic concept of shaman culture, they will shape the image of the Goddess in the myth as the mother of heaven, earth, human and the universe. In the myth, everything in the world is created by the Goddess, so the image of the Goddess created in the myth will have the characteristics of the creation God and be the master of all things. Some scholars believe that the cultural spirit of this "Goddess" is a unique ideological spirit that is different from other literary works.[5]

The image of the Goddess in the Manchu myth should come from the worship of the matriarchal society in northeast China. This view can also be demonstrated from the archaeological data. The worship of female Goddesses is also representative in the archaeological objects in northeast China. The archaeological discovery of the heads of large Goddesses and numerous nude pottery statues of reproductive Goddesses in western Liaoning province. That enables people to find a large number of strong heroine figures of ancient ethnic minorities in northeast China, myths and legends, and find its historical root. Because these ethnic minorities were deeply influenced by the Goddess of Niuheiang culture, and relatively less influenced by the feudal culture such as the Han ethnic preference for sons, they retained the Goddess worship for a long period of time, which was reflected in all aspects of their myths and beliefs. The Goddess culture in northeast China gradually communicated and integrated with the shaman world, forming the worship of female shaman Gods, which was then reflected in the folk mythology in northeast China. The Goddess statue unearthed in Niuheiang should show the Goddess worship belief in the same line. As a folk literature, Nishan shaman consists of an important part of the folk belief culture in northeast China.

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