

On the Rewriting of The Character Image of Akutagawa Ryunosuke's "Du Zichun" and The Reasons

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Abstract: Akutagawa Ryunosuke's classic short story "Du Zichun" is based on the classical Chinese Tang legend "The Legend of Du Zichun", and is also a children's literature work. Akutagawa rewrote the image of the protagonist Du Zichun and the immortal incarnate in the original text, which is significantly different from the original work. The rewritten Du Zichun has independent ideas, and the immortal incarnate becomes an enlightener, abandoning the Taoist ideas in the original work. This article explores and analyzes the reasons for the rewriting, including Akutagawa's concern for children's enlightenment and education, his call for maternal love, and his deep interest in classical Chinese literature.

Keywords: Akutagawa Ryunosuke, Du Zichun, Rewrite, Persona.

1. Introduction

Akutagawa Ryunosuke (1892-1927) is a Japanese short story writer during the Taisho period (1912-1926) and one of the most influential Japanese writers in Chinese culture. Due to the influence of his family environment, he is proficient in sinology. His works often draw on historical themes, including a rewriting of the classic Chinese Tang legend Du Zichun. The research perspective can be divided into two categories: "influence communication theory" and "work variation theory". The former focuses on the influence of classical Chinese elements on Akutagawa's work, while the latter explores the change in the storyline in Akutagawa's work relative to the original. Both focus on the origin of Akutagawa's "Du Zichun", as well as the similarities and differences in the storylines between "The Legend of Du Zichun" and "Du Zichun". In previous studies, more attention was paid to the comparison of storylines and there is little analysis on character image rewriting. In "Du Zichun", Akutagawa removes the Taoist ideas in the original work, and rewrites and reshapes the characters of Du Zichun and the immortal. By studying this complex process of rejection, acceptance or alteration of foreign works, it is possible to fully exploit the potential of works and understand the characteristics of different cultural systems. (Le Daiyun, 2003: 6)

In Akutagawa's writing, Du Zichun has his own independent thoughts, no longer absolutely obedient to the immortal as in the original work. The immortal had emerged from the image of a Taoist leader who only seeks immortality, to an enlightener with the perspective of God, enriching the characters in the novel and reconstructing and deepening the spiritual connotation of the original work. Akutagawa's radical rewriting of the character is intended to enlighten children, which involves the element of Akutagawa's own call for love.

2. Du Zichun's Image Rewrite

Based on the literary context and social background of the Taisho period, Akutagawa's "Du Zichun" rewrites the Tang legend "The Biography of Du Zichun". In a fairy tale work

published in the ninth year of Taisho (1920) in the first issue of the fifth volume of the magazine "Akatori", Wasakawa himself noted that "two-thirds of the story is created." Therefore, there is a big difference between the two in the shaping of the character image, and through the analysis of Du Zichun's language, psychological activities, behavior, etc., it can be found that Wasakawa rewrites the character image of Du Zichun.

Wasakawa is good at rewriting characters, not only rewriting the Japanese folk tale Momotaro but also a series of classical Chinese literature, giving new ideas to characters and reconstructing characters. In folk tales, Momotaro is a little hero who goes to the ghost island to eliminate harm to the people. But in Akutagawa's writing, Momotaro is no longer a single positive hero image, who goes to the ghost island because he is lazy and does not want to work. In his article, the target of the conquest is demonized as "ghost", and the "ghost" is portrayed as a peace-loving race. This is a fabricated excuse for the nameless conquest of the teacher (Lin Xiaoxuan, 2011: 115-119) Momotaro becomes a demon who burns and loots for profit. It subverted the previous public vision and completely rewrote Momotaro's character.

In "Du Zichun", although the quality of the character image is not completely reversed like in "Momotaro", the character image of Du Zichun is also rewritten, making it very different from the image in the original work. By analyzing Du Zichun's dialogue in the original work, it can be found that he obeys the orders of the immortal like a puppet. When the immortal gave him money, he repeatedly hesitated and could not decide the amount of money. And when the immortal said that he wanted to give money for the third time, Du Zichun still chose to passively accept it. And the third time he chose to change his appearance and relieve the poor, only because the immortal warned Du Zichun that this was the last time to give him money. The initiative has always been in the hands of the immortal. However, in Akutagawa's writing, the third when the immortal wanted to give Du Zichun gold again, Du Zichun did not passively accept, but felt disappointed in the cool and thin human feelings of this world, bravely expressed his dislike for the people of the world, and actively wanted to become a disciple of the immortal to become an immortal and

stay away from the cool world. In addition, in the adaptation of "Du Zichun" by Akutagawa, many psychological descriptions of characters have been added. Before encountering the immortal, Du Zichun had wild thoughts and tried to throw himself into the river to finish everything and in the process of undergoing tests for becoming an immortal, Akutagawa delicately portrayed Du Zichun's psychological changes: from unwaveringly insisting on comforting and encouraging himself, to seeing his parents tormented by himself, but still thinking about himself, and being moved by his mother's ambition and strength. Finally, analyzing Du Zichun's behavior, it can be found that Du Zichun's tempering results in both works are failures, but the behavioral reactions to this result are completely different. Du Zichun in the Tang legend feels that he is sorry for the immortal, annoyed that he forgot the instructions of the immortal, and even wants to find the immortal to make up for his mistakes. However, in Akutagawa's writing, Du Zichun accepted the result of the failure of the training, and admitted that he couldn't be silent in the face of his parents' whipping, but after this, Du Zichun planned to live a dignified and proper life.

By analyzing Du Zichun's description of language, psychology and action behavior, it can be seen that Akutagawa has endowed Du Zichun with a fuller human nature and has his own independent thoughts. The final "silent" trial result of Du Zichun written by Akutagawa is the same as in the original work, where Du Zichun failed to become an immortal. But in this process, Du Zichun himself decides whether to accept the gold given by the immortal, and also makes an act of rejecting gold, and has the desire to become an immortal to get rid of the indifferent world. This makes Du Zichun's image more vivid, injects the consciousness of independent thinking into the character of Du Zichun, and has the independent thinking that ordinary people should have. From a passive recipient who only knows how to obey the orders of immortal, he becomes an active person who can make independent judgments and is good at thinking about the value of living.

3. Immortal Image Rewrite

As mentioned earlier, the rewriting of the character of the protagonist Du Zichun lies in the fact that he turns passive into active, and Du Zichun has his own independent ideas in the pen of Akutagawa. Du Zichun in "The Legend of Du Zichun" is guided by the thoughts of the immortal, and accepting the silent trial is also to repay the immortal, who have always been in a dominant position. In the Tang legend "The Legend of Du Zichun", the immortal appears as an old man living in the Persian province, and the first time he appears as a god is when the old man becomes an immortal master wearing a yellow Taoist robe and a Daoist crown on his head. That the immortal master let Du Zichun undergo the tempering of "silent" is also to cultivate the elixir. "Dao robe and Dao crown" are Taoist attire, and "elixir, alchemy furnace, and Yuntai peak" are also related to Taoism. By honing Du Zichun, the immortal master wants him to become an immortal, and at the same time wants to refine the elixir, which is in line with the characteristics of Taoist thought: through various cultivations, he can achieve the supreme perfection of eternal immortality.

Akutagawa's "Du Zichun" also greatly rewrote the shaping of the image of immortals. After the rewriting, Du Zichun completely deleted the Taoist ideas contained in the original work, and the immortal initially appeared as the "one-eyed

old man", and also had a specific name "Iron Crown". Why is it a "one-eyed old man" but not an ordinary able-bodied old man, the question is worth pondering. In Chinese Taoism and Chinese mythology, there are eight immortals, all of whom are mortals, representing men, women, young and old, poor and rich. One of the Eight Immortals, Tie Zhu Li, is a lame disabled person who often holds an iron crutch, like a person called Huazi, representing poverty. The names of Tie Guanzi and Tie Guan Li are very similar, and both immortals are disabled, although it is not certain that the prototype of Tie Guanzi is Tie Guan Li, but it can be speculated that the two should be related.

In addition, the original intention of Tie Guanzi to let Du Zichun undergo trials is only to make Du Zichun an immortal, which does not involve one's own interests. And after Du Zichun made a voice, the attitude of Tie Guanzi after the failure of the grind was appreciative. Although Du Zichun could not become an immortal, Tie Guanzi did not blame, but praised him. In the original article, it was written that "If Lang Jun really doesn't make a sound..." Tie Guanzi suddenly looked solemn, looked at Du Zichun intently and said, "I thought, if you really don't make a sound, I will immediately take your life." It can be seen that the reason why Tie Guanzi let Du Zichun undergo tempering was not to make him an immortal, but to enlighten Du Zichun and let him find the value of living and the meaning of human nature. It is from the plot of the final gift of Tie Guanzi to the hut that can be seen that Tie Guanzi is satisfied with the results of Du Zichun's enlightenment. It can be seen that Tie Guanzi does not want Du Zichun to really become an immortal, but to enlighten Du Zichun and make him understand the meaning of being a human being.

4. Rephrase the Reason Analysis

Overall, Akutagawa's "Du Zichun" is a fairy tale published in the children's literature magazine "Red Bird" for the purpose of reading by children. Therefore, in the shaping of the main characters, the complex character relationships and Taoism-related content in the original work are deleted, and the writing method of narrating the story in chronological order was adopted to make it easier for children to read. There are three main reasons why Wasakawa rewrote the Chinese Tang legend "The Biography of Du Zichun". Firstly, Du Zichun was to be published in a children's literature magazine, which contains Akutagawa's ideas on enlightenment education for children. In particular, "Du Zichun" was included in the Chinese textbooks of elementary and middle schools in Japan (Kaga Valley いづみ, 2016: 28-48), and the work contains elements suitable for students, such as moderate length, appropriate content, and easy to understand composition. The second is Akutagawa's own keen interest on Chinese classical literature. The reason why Wasakawa rewrote the characters in classical Chinese novels is inseparable from his reading of classical Chinese masterpieces since he was a child. Akutagawa mentioned the reason for borrowing from classical literature in his "Miscellaneous Records of Chengjiang Hall", as follows:

Most of the subjects I collect from the "ancient past" are motivated by the same needs as this "ancient past". For example, I have now captured a subject and turned it into a novel, and in order to express the subject in the most powerful artistic way, a bizarre event is required. However, it is too bizarre to describe it as an event that occurred in

contemporary Japan. If reluctantly done, most occasions it will make the reader feel unnatural. As a result, even rare themes have plummeted in value. In order to overcome this difficulty, as the aforementioned bizarre event "it is difficult to describe it as an event that occurred in contemporary Japan," one can only resort to events that occurred in the "ancient past" (and very few "future" events), or events that occurred in foreign countries, or events that occurred outside ancient Japan. I wrote novels with themes from "ancient past", and I was probably forced to avoid the "unnatural" obstacle, and set the stage of my work in "ancient past". (Akutagawa Ryunosuke, 2005:322-324)

It can be seen that the reason why Akutagawa's novels are based on the past is that historical novels require "bizarre events" in order to present the most artistic themes. But he cannot use the present as the background of the story. In order to avoid readers' sense of conflict when reading, he use the past as the stage for the creation of historical novels. The third reason is the lack of Akutagawa's own sense of belonging and maternal love. After Akutagawa's birth, his mother went crazy, so he was raised by her adoptive mother. Later he was forced to break up with her first love because of her adoptive mother, which made him fall into doubt about her adoptive mother's love. Bring own experience to Du Zichun and let Du Zichun have complete and great maternal love. This awakened Du Zichun to give up the idea of becoming an immortal and become a person with independent thoughts.

4.1. Enlightenment of children

Akutagawa published his first fairy tale in July 1918 in "Red Bird", and this can be called the white eyebrow of his kind. Du Zichun was published in 1920, by which time Wasakawa was already familiar with the writing style of such children's literature and clarified the purpose of writing for children. At the same time, in terms of character shaping, it also contains the idea of enlightenment for children. Commissioned by Mieyoshi Suzuki, Wasakawa completed the novel "Toko Haru" and published it in the children's literature magazine "Akatori", and its significance for children's enlightenment and education is self-evident. Enlightenment has no more than two functions: one is to impart knowledge and enlighten the mind; The other is to critically reflect on the existing civilization and culture, and rationally obtain new ideas and new cultures that meet the needs of the times. In Akutagawa's "Du Zichun", the immortal Iron Crown plays the role of an enlightener, enlightening Du Zichun through affirmative enlightenment. Starting from giving Du Zichun gold, there were no requirements for the use of gold, but Du Zichun made his own decisions. Even if he was extremely extravagant twice, he did not criticize Du Zichun. Later, Du Zichun himself had an epiphany and was disappointed with the coldness of human nature in the world, and wanted to become an immortal, and the immortal Tie Guanzi also had a positive attitude and provided him the opportunity to become an immortal. In the end, the tempering failed. Through the language of Immortal Iron Crown Zi, it can be seen that he did not really want Du Zichun to become an immortal. Instead, he honed and enlightened Du Zichun, allowing him to experience the warmth of the world and rediscover the meaning of life. This is the enlightenment of Tie Guanzi to Du Zichun, and at the same time to children, enlightening them not to be afraid of difficulties, bravely accept the ordeal, even if they fail, they will gain something.

4.2. Calling for "love"

Influenced by his own experience, Wasakawa has always lacked a sense of belonging because he is a stepson. When Akutagawa was growing up, he lacked the love of his biological parents. His adopted father served as the Chief of Civil Engineering in Tokyo Prefecture, and his family was a declining old family. Although he had a small fortune, he still had to live frugally. According to Akutagawa, the adoptive family belongs to the lower middle class and has to endure extra hardships to maintain dignity. Such a family, with complicated etiquette and strict tutoring, as an adopted son, had to learn to endure many things. In reality, Akutagawa lacks the love from his parents, but in the rewritten "Du Zichun", Akutagawa makes up for his misfortune and portrays Du Zichun as a person loved by his parents, and his mother can endure punishment and torture for his own happiness. This is Akutagawa's call for maternal love.

Growing up in Akutagawa there were three mothers, the first being his biological mother Tomihisa Akutagawa; The second is his adoptive mother, who is the sister-in-law of Akutagawa Ryunosuke's biological mother, who is actually his aunt. Together with another aunt (the third) who lived in her uncle's house and never married, they painstakingly raised Akutagawa. What Akutagawa says in the Book of Point Ghosts; "My mother was crazy. I have never felt the warmth of a mother from her (Liu Qingmei, 2013: 82-88) It can be seen that Akutagawa is lonely and has never enjoyed the love of her biological mother. In the rewritten "Du Zichun", Du Zichun felt the coldness and materialism in the world, but at the same time, in the process of being tempered, he felt the maternal love of willing dedication.

4.3. The influence of classical Chinese literary literacy

Wasakawa has excelled in his studies since he was a child, and his level of Chinese is extraordinary, so he has read a lot of Chinese classical literature since he was a child. When he was in elementary school, he has read classical Chinese masterpieces such as "Journey to the West" and "Water Margin". And when in middle school, he developed a strong interest in Chinese poetry, and began to dabble in various weird novels. After entering university, he read classical masterpieces such as "Xixian Ji" and "Pipa Xing". It can be seen from this that Wasakawa has been reading Chinese literature continuously since he was a child. Therefore, it had a great influence on the literary creation of Akutagawa. Many of Akutagawa's early historical novels were taken from classical Chinese literature, and the sources of literary works related to Akutagawa's historical novels have been clarified, organized as follows: "Du Zichun" is based on the Tang legend "The Legend of Du Zichun"; "Immortals" is based on "Rat Play" and "Rain Money" from the second volume of "Liaozhai Zhi Yi"; "Wine Worm" is based on "Wine Worm" in volume 14 of "Liaozhai Zhi Yi"; "Huangli Dream" is based on "Pillow Notes"; "Heroic Weapon" is based on volume XII of the "Popular Han Chu Military Talks"; "The Story of Losing Your Head" is based on the third volume of "Liaozhai Zhi Yi" "A Certain Jia in Zhucheng"; "Letter of Epilogue" is based on the "Biography of Su Qin" in the "History"; "Autumn Mountain Map" is based on "Remembering the Beginning and End of Autumn Mountain Map"; "Adventure" is based on "Weitang Adventure" in "Cutting the Lights". It can be seen that Akutagawa knows a lot about classical

Chinese literature and is widely used in his own literary works.

5. Summary

Under the rewriting of Akutagawa, the characters of Du Zichun and Xianren have undergone great changes, raising the charm of literature to new heights. Wasakawa rewrote classical Chinese literature with the aim of excavating classical Chinese literature to suit his own historical novels, implying enlightenment ideas and educational significance for children's readers.

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