On peasant uprising in history and modern folk literature

Abstract

As for the peasant uprisings in history, we put more emphasis on the pursuit of truth, insisted that the masses were an important driving force for the development of social history, and highly praised all peasant uprisings for quite a long time, which naturally had sufficient reasons. Therefore, we intentionally or unintentionally avoid or ignore their negative impact on social development. For a time, the important mass struggles such as the Taiping Rebellion, the Nianjun Rebellion, and the Boxer Rebellion, which appeared in the history of modern Chinese society, made unrealistic elevation and deification, and in fact violated the reality of historical development. In recent years, there has been an anti-historical tradition of theoretical thought, completely obliterate the historical achievements of these peasant uprisings in the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom. It completely put aside the specific conditions of social and historical development, and unreasonably asked the peasants in history to show their ideological realm beyond the reality of the times, which is in itself a disregard of the reality of historical development.

Introduction

To deal with the issue of historical development, we should emphasize the important role played by history by the masses. Is history created by heroes or heroes created by history? Is the hero overcoming the blindness of the masses, or does the hero come from the masses and become the embodiment of the feelings, will and beliefs of the masses? In dealing with the peasant uprising in the historical development, we have chosen a new way that is, taking the people’s evaluation as an important basis, rather than simply basing on historical documents and using so-called materials to speak. Moreover, it especially emphasizes the significance of oral history and the collection of folk literature among the masses which are not moved by the rulers.

One

How to treat the peasant uprising and folk literature is not only an important issue in the study of modern Chinese folk literature, but also a very important issue in the history of Chinese folk literature, and a difficult problem we are facing. It should be said that with the development of social history and culture, especially the deepening of academic research diversification, more and more people break the one-way thinking of the unification, and pay more attention to put some important events affecting the development of social history into a broader context and conditions to ponder its value significance. Under the conditions of official opposition, the proletariat has become the most important force in the Chinese revolution. As for the peasant uprisings in history, we have put more emphasis on the attitude of historical truth, insisted that the masses are an important driving force for the development of social history, and praised all peasant uprisings highly for a long time, which naturally has sufficient reasons. Therefore, we intentionally or unintentionally avoid or ignore their negative impact on social development. For a time, the important mass struggles such as the Taiping Rebellion, the Nianjun Rebellion, and the Boxer Rebellion, which appeared in the history of modern Chinese society, made unrealistic elevation and deification, and in fact violated the reality of historical development. One of the important manifestations is that in the years of class struggle, the advanced nature of the peasant class or the proletariat was overemphasized, and its negative effects were ignored. Even the “folk literature” in the peasant uprising movement, which was understood and expressed by modern people, was artificially fabricated. This is a fairly common social and cultural phenomenon, which violates not only historical truth, but also the basic principle of faithful record in the collection and collation of folk literature. It can only be a common cultural reading, and cannot be regarded as folk literature. Moreover, such fabrication forms irresponsible behavior for history and culture, and brings great difficulties for later generations to study the discrimination and analysis of folk literature. The seriousness of scientific research has been seriously injured.

In recent years, there has been an anti-historical tradition of theoretical thought, completely obliterate the historical achievements of these peasant uprisings in the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom. Some scholars feel that in the history of peasant uprisings, mysterious jargon and folk beliefs appeared, including their pride and lust in separating the world from power and gaining profits, totally ignoring their rational demands of resisting the dark rule and striving for national independence and freedom, and regard them as sinners of social development. It should be said that this kind of behavior from one extreme to another is also not conducive to the scientific significance of historical and cultural research. The history of the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom is very rich. According to the political documents in it, Hong Xiuquan was not so great. In some ways, they were no different from the old rulers, even crueler. This is a historical fact, and we do not need to defend anything for him. However, the peasant uprising is ultimately a struggle against the times and a rebellion against the mainstream politics. The leaders of the peasant uprising often choose an effective way more suitable for mobilizing more social groups in terms of social experience, knowledge and experience, so as to spread their ideological and cultural propositions and achieve their propaganda and drum movements as soon as possible. Usd. Then, borrowing the traditional concept of divine instruction, forming a more effective social and cultural centripetal force and cohesion, is not only a serious limitation of the stage of social and historical development, but also a convenient means it has to use, is the result of a thorough and careful summary and grasp of social and cultural psychology. Apart from the specific conditions of social and historical development, it is unreasonable to ask the peasants in history to show their ideological realm beyond the reality of the times, which is in itself a disregard of the reality of historical development. Such as Hong Xiuquan borrowing.
Two

In modern China, internal and external troubles cannot be calm. In other words, where there is oppression, there is resistance and struggle; when various social contradictions and ideological and cultural conflicts are intertwined and increasingly irreconcilable, it is easy to form large-scale group events and extreme phenomena. The peasant uprising movement such as Taiping Heavenly Kingdom is such an irreconcilable contradiction product. The peasant uprisings in the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom, as expressed in modern folk literature, are not necessarily so glorious, nor are they necessarily so dirty. Restoring the historical truth is not the ultimate goal of the study of folk literature theory. However, any extreme statement and its expression against the historical truth will damage the scientific nature of folk literature. Therefore, the search for historical truth is not contrary to the study of folk literature. In the history of modern Chinese folk literature, there are two basic forms of describing and expressing peasant uprisings. On the one hand, the government cursed the peasant uprisers with hatred, calling them “street thieves”, “long hair”, “twister bandits”, “boxer bandits” and “bandits”. Later generations of writers who took the world as their own pretensions, and so on. On the other hand, the legends and folk ballads of peasant uprisings arranged by later generations of cultural workers were published in the form of cultural readings, and their revolutionary nature was praised vigorously, even their unrestricted beautification and deification, and their various acts were narrated revolutionarily. The Eight Route Army in the revolutionary history of China is highly typical manifestation of the duality in folk literature. On the one hand, the government and the peasantry is targeting the rich and inhumane, and how can it get their approval? In the social investigation, the author learned a common phenomenon, many places of ancient tombs are stolen by the peasant rebels, because they need to raise military funds, have to be so “borrowed”. In the eyes of the peasant revolutionaries, how can these rich and rich people who still enjoy endless wealth after their death, and the gold and silver they possess, not extract the blood and sweat of millions of laborers? Therefore, we have repeatedly stressed the value stand of folk literature research. Li Zicheng is like this. So is Hong Xiuquan. Almost all peasant uprisings are unavoidable. The oral narrative of folk literature about the peasant uprising is first of all the voice of the poor; they are not absolute hatred of wealth. As can be seen in the traditional New Year pictures posted by thousands of households, such as “demolishing the king’s cart”, “the Golden Toad in the bang opera” and “the treasure-pot”. What the poor yearn for most is wealth and fairness! What they hate is the inequality as the background of all kinds of rich and unknown and oppression of the innocent, is the hope and expectation of equality of personality and material abundance, which still has its rationality today. As people say, there is no love and hatred for no reason in the world; the peasant rebellion, risking enormous life risks, is not a necessity, will never embark on such a difficult road! There are many seemingly complex problems, but in fact, the reason is very simple.

Four

The rise of the peasant uprising in the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom was the result of the long-term deliberation of the civil society, which was extremely dissatisfied with the decadent politics and dark reality of the Qing Dynasty. Before, in Zhejiang, there were “thirty weapons and eight parties”. Arranging the white horse to receive the song “Red Sheep” and the twelve heroes to become more powerful, some collectors introduced it: “This is a folk song circulated in Zhejiang Province in the twenty-eighth year of Daoguang (1848). “Thirty” refers to the Thirty Years of Daoguang (1850), “Red Sheep” refers to the Taiping Revolution led by Hong Xiuquan and Yang Xiuqing. This means that in the twenty-eight years of Daoguang, it has been “foreseen” that in the thirty years of Daoguang, uprisings will take place everywhere, and “swords and soldiers will be mobilized in all directions” to meet the Taiping Revolution and “receive the red sheep”. In fact, of course, it is impossible to foresee such a specific and accurate way. The original religious secret organization of the people is called ‘Red Sheep Religion’, and there is also the so-called ‘Red Sheep robbery’, so here’s the word ‘Red Sheep’ Eryu and ‘Hong Yang’ homonyms, but accidental coincidence. Once upon a time, when the people had revolutionary demands, they often expressed with a prophetic rumor. This ballad belongs to this situation. It shows that before the Taiping Rebellion, the people of Zhejiang had foreseen a large-scale uprising due to the sharp class contradictions. Indeed, folk ballads have the meaning of prophecy, and often form a psychological hint in the process of their dissemination, arousing people’s enthusiasm.

The Taiping Heavenly Kingdom, which lasted fourteen years and spanned eighteen provinces, was once a mass movement in full swing against the dark politics of the Qing Dynasty. The biggest
difference between Bailian religion and many peasant uprisings in history is that the ideological basis for opposing feudal autocracy is the Church of God worship. In name, God is not a Chinese cultural tradition, but a product of Hong Xiuquan and Feng Yunshan who used Western religious culture to transform Chinese society and culture. In the 1840s, Hong Xiuquan founded the Society of Worship of God. He wrote the thoughts and theories of the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom, such as the Song of Savior of the Original Way, the Exegesis of Awakening the Original Way, and the Exegesis of Awakening the Original Way. Of course, they use the so-called “God worship” propaganda, in fact, combined with Chinese traditional culture. In other words, Hong Xiuquan and Yang Xiuying in history may be the typical representatives of the peasant class against the dark forces, but they are not necessarily true national heroes; as historical legends, they represent the will and desire of the people, but may not be able to represent the future and direction of social and historical development. However, its pursuit of equality and impartiality is always the sacred ideological and cultural wealth of the Chinese nation. Therefore, many politicians and revolutionaries take them as examples, and many excellent writers enthusiastically praise the peasant uprising’s resistance and struggle against the dark forces.

Sun Zhongshan has repeatedly called himself “Hongyang Hou”. In November 1894, he traveled from Shanghai to Honolulu, organized the Anti-Qing Revolutionary Group Xinhong Association, and began to lead a rising which in the main content was over crowding. In October 1895, the Guangzhou uprising was organized, and after the uprising failed, it went abroad. In August 1905 in Tokyo organized and planned to merge the revolutionary groups such as the Xingzhong Society, the Huaxing Society and the Restoration Society into the Chinese League, and was elected Prime Minister. Beginning in 1906, the Alliance, led by him, mainly operated in various parts of South China, joined with secret organizations such as the Brotherhood and Triad, and held many armed uprisings. After the outbreak of the 1911 Revolution, Sun Yat-sen rushed back from the United States to establish the Interim Government of the Republic of China in Nanjing and was elected as the Interim President of the Republic of China. Later, he cooperated with Yuan Shikai and soon broke up with him. His organization was called the Second Revolution. The Qing Dynasty was corrupt, sexy, weak and incompetent outside, cruel and ruthless inside, and its retrograde actions aroused strong opposition from the people. The Western imperialist powers coveted China like glutony, destroyed the heavens and things, plundered immensely, and aggravated the disaster of the Chinese nation, the Chinese nation is in danger. In this sense, the peasant uprisings of the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom and the Boxer Rebellion are the inevitable resistance of the people and the normal safeguard of the national rights and interests of the people. Therefore, Sun Yat-sen admired their courage to rebel and struggle, singing in the “Yongzhi,” said: “All things cannot be swept away by the haze, red sheep looting each other. A man who is a great man must turn the universe around. “ Here, Sun Zhongshan used the allusion of “red sheep robbery”. This is a legendary concept borrowed from the national calamity. The ancients thought that it was the year when the country suffered more disasters. In folk beliefs, CUHK is red and red. It is not a sheep, so it is called red sheep. For example, Yin Yaofan in the Tang Dynasty in “Li Jie Ping Fan Poetry” singing: “Taiping from then on sell armour, remember the red sheep for a year of robbery.” Chai Wang, a writer in the Southern Song Dynasty, once asked about the Yangtze River and its autumn scenery in his poem Fishing for Fishes. Who will break the silk willow and collect money, and the bank was full of 52, but not the thief. The man gave the rice a day and drove him forward to build the city. The woman gave rice one day and drove her to watch the night. Women do not want to solve their feet, but they are enough to show their wives. The boatman and his conspiracy to escape, carry his corpse to show the boat. The Cantonese bandits are rich and proud, but they do not regard the two sides of Sanjiang as a dog. This cruelty and cruelty is exaggerated to the extent that no one with blood has ever heard of it without pain. Since the three generations of Tang Yu, saints have supported the Confucian classics, and the relationship among the people, the monarchs, the fathers and the sons, the superiors and the inferiors have been irreversible. Cantonese bandits steal foreign language and worship God. Since his hypocritical monarch and hypocritical minister, under the arrest of soldiers and pawns, are called brothers, that is, only heaven can be called the father, in addition to all the father of the people are brothers, all the mother of the people are sisters. Farmers can’t cultivate their own land to receive Fu, but the land is the land of the King of Heaven; businessmen can’t buy their own land to take interest, but the goods are all the goods of the King of Heaven; scholars can’t recite Confucius’sutra, and there is no such thing as the saying of Jesus or the book of the New Testament, for example, the books of rites and ethics of thousands of years in China, once the land is swept away. The change of the Qing Dynasty was a miracle change of Confucius and Mencius, who cried bitterly at Jiuyuan. All those who read and read can sit still without thinking about doing anything. It is naturally the grand theoretical basis for the change. The saying “merits and virtues since ancient times have not been gods, kingly and spiritually, and spiritually governed exclusively” is said by Confucius and Mencius. The poor and the ugly are often afraid of the gods. Li Zicheng did not make sacrifices to Qufu, and Zhang Xianzhong to Zitong also
offered sacrifices to Wenchang. Cantonese bandits burned Chenzhou officials, destroyed Xuan Xuan’s Wooden master, ten philosophers two, and scattered everywhere. The ancestors of the county destroyed the temple first, that is, loyal officials and righteous men, such as Guan Emperor and Yue King’s awe, also polluted their palaces and mutilated their heads. Even Buddhist temples, Taoist gardens, city gods and social circles, there is no fire, no image is immortal. The spirits of the two spirits are angry, and if they want to have a snow, those who are in the dark will be in fact. This is Zeng Guofan’s specific exposition of social customs, including his theoretical thoughts on the important role of Customs in the development of social culture, and is a part of the ideological theory of modern Chinese folk literature. Hong Xiuquan pretended to be a devil, and Zeng Guofan was also full of words. If you want to add a sin, why not? It should be said that since ancient times, the government has been forcing the people to oppose it. For a long time, ideological and cultural studies were full of serious autocratic tendencies. Some scholars tried their best to beautify the cultural image of Zeng Guofan and other people, restore his “Zeng Wenzheng Gong” feudal courtiers, and strongly denounced the peasant uprising’s demands for the most basic social and cultural ideas of equality and prosperity. It is reasonable for the feudal autocracy to retrograde the social development and put people’s lives at a scratchy pace, and what monstrous crime is the broad masses of peasants’ resistance to exploitation and oppression. Or, history needs dialectics. However, no matter what kind of dialectics, we need clear ideological and cultural standpoints. No matter how many ideological and cultural defects the peasant uprising has, it can be understood as long as it represents the will and beliefs of millions of people. A scholar who takes social development as his responsibility, ignoring the life and death of millions of people, relishing social stability and totally forgetting the grace of the people, is as indifferent, selfish and narrow as those greedy, brazen, proud and obscene officials, which are all great moral imperfections.

**Epilogue**

On the surface, the peasant uprising in the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom appeared “Buddhist temples, Taoist monasteries, city gods, social circles, burning all the dynasties, as if not destroyed,” destroying Chinese traditional culture, whatever its basis, is not entirely desirable attitude. But is Zeng Guofan’s Xiang army and Li Hongzhang’s Huai army really strict and clear? At the same time, we blindly deify or vilify the social development of the peasant uprising in the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom, including the compilation of so-called folk stories and folk songs, to prove a certain speech, which is not a serious historical and cultural study. On the issue of folk literature in the peasant uprising of the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom, there is still a long way to go in the study of oral historical materials. Respect for historical facts is an important prerequisite for scientific research, and any form of fiction will damage the scientific nature of the theoretical study of folk literature. The peasant uprising in Taiping Heavenly Kingdom is like this. The rebellion of Nian Army and folk literature are the same.¹⁹

**Acknowledgments**

None.

**Conflicts of interest**

The author declares that there is no conflicts of interest.

**References**

5. Wang Dingan’s. The book of the disciples of the emperor que Zhai is four volumes. And the two edition of Longwen Zhai in Qing Dynasty.