

# “*Da Nao*”: The Internal Structure and Cultural Code of “*Re Nao*”<sup>1</sup>

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The essence of the character “Nao” had already been fostered in the western Han Dynasty. It is the latter word of the expression “Re Nao”, which essentially refers to lively and bustling with excitement in folklore, maintains immensely prolific social functions. Re Nao (jollification) exists as an integral part in the internal structure of rite of passage or the adult rituals of transit. Re Nao aids in devising a warm atmosphere and reorganizing the living environment. It is the way to go through the threshold stage, which leads to the entrance to a new stage, while the ceremonial undertakings under this threshold stage help in eradicating pollution and restoring cleanliness. The internal mechanism of Re Nao includes the transitional ceremonies in the perilous double test of nature and society: while in the folk custom ceremony, the ritualistic suppressing and trapping of demons is completed by the shaman. Da Nao (causing chaos and noise) breeds danger to vitality and harmony or chaos for the coexistence of humans and gods. “Da Nao” and “Re Nao” are popular complementary representations of folk ceremonial activities. It was witnessed in the past, celebrations like New Year’s Eve, Lantern Festival, Fang Xiangshi (Chinese ritual exorcist—one who sees evil in all four directions), Tongzi (cosplay done by the villagers) and the festival demonstrating invisible transcendence of the world (world of ghosts) displayed fierce spirit and were eminently lively. It can be said that for the spiritual time and sacred space of the traditional society, it is vital to periodically perform the rites of “Da Nao—beheaded demon”: and perform the scenes of “Re Nao” ceremony through Da Nao rites to fulfill the purpose of purification.

*Keywords:* Nao, Da Nao, Re Nao, Threshold, Cultural codes

While speaking of *Re Nao* (jollification), the foremost image that occupies the mind is that of the bustling crowd, exuberant atmosphere, family reunion, festival celebrations and so on. The vivacious occasion may seem like a large temple fair, a gathering of acquaintances, or more likely a wedding; including an aesthetic form of celebrating objects, where the scenario incorporates exciting people, vehicles, drums and music. In a nutshell, the surface of this lively occasion firstly portrays a warm atmosphere, followed by a large number of people, and finally the framework is completed by the inner part of traditional society. The backdrop of the novel suggests that the text describing the buoyant occasion is nothing more than connected narrative frames of

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fierce confrontations, stories of people standing up to injustice, raising up to revolt, or plunder and rob others' houses, etc. Careful analysis of these narrative plots exhibits their internal show often as “Nao” (noisy) or “*Da Nao*” (tremendous uproar). In the 25th episode of “A Dream in Red Mansions”, the essence of the text “the magical sister and brother meet five ghosts, and in the dream of the red mansion, they meet two true souls”, can be described as very exhilarating. The original text is listed as follows:

Suddenly, Baoyu let out a cry “Oh, what a headache! I will die!” He jumped three to four feet off the ground and started talking nonsense. At this time, Wang Ziteng's wife was also present. When everyone came together, Baoyu became even worse and took a knife and stick, making a fuss around the place. On seeing this scene, Mrs. Jia and Mrs. Wang trembled and cried out “my son” and “my dear”.

People were busy dealing with the chaos, while the scene turned upside down, but the faint sound of Muyu was audible, and someone said: “Bodhisattva could solve the issue with evil but there is no solution in the south. We are able to heal those who are ill spoken, those whose houses are unstable, those who are in danger, and those who are wicked.” When Mrs. Jia and Mrs. Wang heard these words, they were able to withstand them and let the people in. When the crowd raised their eyes, it turned out to be a Toad monk in rags with a lame Taoist.<sup>3</sup>

What is the relationship of “Re Nao” and “Da Nao” with “Nao”? What is the internal mechanism of Re Nao? This article intends to have further discussion on this issue in order to see its reference to Fang's family.<sup>4</sup>

## I . The Social Function of “Lively”

“闹” (Nao) in traditional Chinese character is “鬧” which is interpreted in the word and expression: “鬧 means clamorous (not quiet), and it follows “市” (market) and “鬥” (door)” Its original meaning should be quarrel or fight. In *Ri Ji Mu Jian*, “Bu Nao Ruo Shang” (on each unitary day, one should pay attention to taboos and refrain from inviting guests, or there will be quarrels and people would get hurt) uses its original meaning. In *Zi Yuan*: “Xu Xuan said, ‘鬧’ also means not quiet, it follows “市” and “鬥” with the interpretation of being noisy due to the fight and quarrel in the market.” Based on the investigation of unearthed literature, the character “鬧” seems to have appeared no later than in the Western Han Dynasty.<sup>5</sup> Since the Han era, the northern multi-ethnic music, juggling, illusion, etc., had generated important influences on the formation of Chinese aesthetic and entertainment interests. Judging from the perspective of the later word of the expression “Re Nao”, especially Re Nao with regard to folklore, it was affected by the ceremonial culture of the ancient times and holds a rich social significance and function even today.

First of all, Re Nao exists as an integral part of the internal structure of the rite of passage or the adult rituals, whereas for individuals, its social function lies in the way of getting through the customs and overcoming the evil spirit. In an anthropological sense, it infers going through adolescence, from being

<sup>3</sup> “The magical sister and brother meet five ghosts, and in the dream of the red mansion, they meet two true souls”, (Qing) Cao Xueqin, *A dream of red mansions*, People's Literature Press, 2008, p. 343-346.

<sup>4</sup> After a preliminary discussion on the catastrophe suppressing structure in the paper “Da Nao” and suppressing demons: the averted calamity structure of Zhang Sijie's *Da Nao in Tokyo Scroll*”, the author further attempts to make a theoretical summary. See “Da Nao” and suppressing demons: the averted calamity structure of Zhang Sijie's *Da Nao in Tokyo Scroll*”, folk custom research, No.3, 2018.

<sup>5</sup> The *Riji Wood Scripts* in *Weiwu Bamboo Scripts of Hanjian* are four-character rhymes, and the recorded contents are the daily taboos popular among the people. In *No. Bing Script*, it writes, “On the unitary day, people should not convene guest, if there is no Nao, there would be dispute.” Generally speaking, on the unitary day, people should pay attention to taboos and don't call the guests, otherwise, it will lead to quarrels and fights, thus being hurt. The customs of the Han people are very particular about day and date taboos. A large number of books in *Shuihudi Bamboo Scripts* from the Qin Tombs are abundant records of this custom. It can be seen that the word “nao”, originally should be from the civil, was later absorbed in written language.

immature to mature, one experiences worry, confusion and conflict; including adolescent rebelliousness and resistance to parental authority, while sometimes experiencing emotional responses such as melancholy, mania and resentment as well.

Considering a traditional society, in order to let children embrace the acquaintance setup and form “one of their own groups” in the family, the Han cultural circle has set up many vibrant transitional ceremonies for people to fulfill this purpose. They believe that children are blessed to safely pass through many evil spirits in reality or imagination, such as a “broken bridge”, “water and fire”, “short life”, “ghost pass” and so on, through reverential ceremonies like fostering, naming, singing “pass song” and other vivacious gatherings.

Entering an acquaintance society deals with a lot of specific measures; such as during the growing process, children should have “full-moon-birth feast”, “having meals from one hundred families”, and wearing “Bai Na Yi”—that is the varied colored clothing collected from monks. People in Shanxi and other places are obliged to conduct this “thirteen-year old” ceremony for children. Utilizing the spirit of these lively rituals like Bai Na Yi and other intensive and vivid ceremonies, the children are introduced to the acquaintance circle. Furthermore, children are accepted, blessed, assured and praised by uncles and aunts. At the same time, during the course of the acceptance and recognition ceremony, children gradually realize that they have grown up and attain the sense of independently communicating with the opposite sex, while also assuming the responsibilities and obligations of the family, clan and society.<sup>6</sup>

Secondly, Re Nao facilitates the creation of a warm atmosphere and reorganization of the sentient environment. In traditional society, the most typical lively activity was “Nao Dong Fang” (teasing the bride and the bridegroom on the wedding night). “Nao Dong Fang” must be enthusiastic, fervent, fiery and jolly. Among traditional folks, Nao Dong Fang is still popular for sayings like “more lively, more happy”, “the more noise, the better”, “no Nao, no prosperity” or “no Nao, no peace (ward off evil)”, “no Nao, no lively atmosphere” and so on.<sup>7</sup> The folk rituals of most of the regions suggest that the bride must undertake the essence of the “lively” and “flourishing” atmosphere while entering the groom’s home, such as “crossing the fire basin”, “crossing the torch”, “crossing the fire pile”, “crossing the fire smoke”, “being stopped at the door” and so on. Re Nao in this context infers the meaning of “Nao Re”, where Re Nao refers to creating a warm atmosphere and reorganizing the environment. This is similar to the Zhuang Chu’s “Re” (warm) village, house and land.<sup>8</sup>

In the countryside, people build their own houses; thus when “setting up the wood”, they are required to invite as many people as possible to “help” with these chores. On the contrary, people volunteer to help around with anything possible, and everybody gets invited to banquets together, sharing the warmth and happiness. Re Nao here, to some extent, is useful to suppress evil and brighten the living environment depending upon the number of people they have. As for moving into a new home, people in traditional society involve in activities of “Nao” (creating noise in) for the new house to make it lively. For folks afraid of the trouble created by the disaster evil spirit in a new house, they would provide a suitable sacrifice and request the mage to suppress the evils at night.

<sup>6</sup> Zhou Xing, The “unnaturalness”, “half raw” and “maturity” of people in Han culture, folk custom research, No. 3 issue, 2015.

<sup>7</sup> Xie, Guoxian, “Stepping out of the garden of Eden: sex and folklore”, Sichuan People’s Publishing House, 2002, p. 53-55.

<sup>8</sup> In the Zhuang ethnic group, if a family organization carries out “poetry recitation” at their home, it can be called “Re (warm) house”. If it is a village organization and “reciting poems” is carried out in the village public space, it can be called “warm village”. If it is an organization of the country fair and “reciting poems” is carried out in the public space of the country fair, then “warm country fair” can be adopted. See Lu Xiaolin, “reciting poems” and “warmth”: ethnography investigation of gathering custom of Zhuang nationality in Dejing area of Guangxi, Fuangxi normal university press, 2016 edition, page 217.

Finally, Re Nao is a way for groups to help each other pass through the threshold stage. Just like what the anthropologist Qiao Jian described, “For people to deal with the wedding and funeral festivals, for the village community to deal with the Greeting God Ceremony Society”, the busy time nodes mostly involve major festivals or important life stages. These threshold stages are spiritual time of efficiency or sacred spaces, such as the Wax Festival, Dragon Boat Festival, Spring Festival and other festivals, birth, marriage, funeral and other life ceremonies. Considering the filial piety songs in Southern Shaanxi, there is a dutiful son “A scene before Dawn” (Figure 1). Passing of the threshold stage is obligatory to enter a new stage. In the threshold stage, ritual participants return to the sacred space, while huge praying activities are undertaken by the people in order to eliminate environmental pollution and restore cleanliness.



Kyoto, hometown to the Japanese Yamato people (the descendants of the people that followed the first emperor leading them to the Yamato plain in Nara-Kyoto region, leading to the establishment of the “Japanese” nation ), has the most prestigious festival called Gion Festival (Gion Matsuri) in Japan.<sup>9</sup> The whole city is crowded in July. The melodious “hayashi” (playing of flute) gets louder and clearer, while the parade consisting of grand Yamaboko floats (magnificent floats) seems to be never-ending. Women dressed in yukata (summer kimono) with head-pinned flowers and feet in clogs, walk around the bustling night market, laughing and teasing each other, while savoring the Yamaboko floats. Interestingly, the 9th grotto of Dunhuang Mogao Grottoes boasts of the acclaimed Buddhism wall painting “Fresco of Gion”, which depicts Raudraksa’s battle with Sariputra. In addition, the 3784th scroll of Paris Bo contains the same transformation (a popular form of narrative literature flourishing in the Tang Dynasty (618-907), with alternate prose and rhymed parts for recitation and singing) as that of “Fresco of Gion”, which is prominently known as “Transformation on

<sup>9</sup> Also known as Gion festival, it is held on July 1 to 29 each year. In 869, Japan was hit by an epidemic, and numerous people died of the disease. So people held an imperial spirit sacrifice to pray for the elimination of evil. After 970, Gion festival became a regular blessing festival. In the Japanese view, the so-called “imperial spirit” refers to the soul that died unjustly, namely the ghost of grievance. The sudden scourge, the pestilence, and especially the pestilence, were thought to be the evil spirits that did it. Therefore, with fear and awe, he called them the imperial spirits, and tried his best to appease them and pray that they would not do harm to the living. The appellation of “imperial spirit sacrifice” exactly indicates the original intention of the origin of garden sacrifice: offering sacrifices to ghosts and spirits of the dead and eliminating plague disasters.

Vanquishing Mara” with the subject at the end of the paper marked as “The origin of Gion”.<sup>10</sup> Amidst the realization of the prophecy in traditional society, there were repeated public narrations in the form of performances about “Chaos-killing devil”, presenting ancient myths and folk songs. The “storyteller” creates the required boisterous atmosphere in order to maintain the threshold of the contest between good and evil so as to mobilize the mysterious power for the realization of “trial” in a sense of ordeal. By doing so, the ghost and goblins can be defeated, the evil can be eliminated, and the disaster can be vanquished.

Since ancient times, it is believed that danger is derived from moral and ethical “mistakes”. This disaster is considered to be the result of adultery and incest or the one caused by violating prevailing taboos. Likewise, a certain meteorological disaster can occur due to political infidelity. For those too obscure to be classified or determined within the zone of “the boundary of different categories”, almost every part of the world embraces them as “contamination” and “danger.”<sup>11</sup> Figure 1 song of filial piety from Shannan *A Scene before Dawn*, cover <sup>12</sup> (photographed in Danfeng, Shanxi Province, May 2015).

In traditional Chinese culture, ways suggested to get through the “contamination” and “danger” threshold include organizing of fruitful activities, people “bustling” around, overcoming of various distinctions, identity clarification and environment restructuring, in the hope of achieving blessings and community wellbeing. “Long shadows of Mulberry extend at dusk. As the Day of She in spring is over, the people drunk with joy stumble along their way back home with the help of their families.”<sup>13</sup> *Day of She* by Wang Jia (or Zhang Yan), poet of Late Tang Dynasty, vividly demonstrates the enthusiasm and excitement of people gathering for the performance and meal on the lively Day of She; acting in traditional Chinese opera has been an indispensable part of folk lives.

Dr. Guo Mingjun undertook surveys in Jiexiu, Shanxi Province, including Hongshan Village, Yi’an Village, Zhangbi Village, Zhaojiabao Village, Xialihou Village, east part of Tun Village, Litun Village, Na Village and Luowangzhuang Village. Spring Festival is the definition of “organizing festival activities”. From midnight until the afternoon of the 15th day of the 1st month of the lunar year, people from all households in Lihou Village start to lay offerings on the altar for warm wishes and blessings. Afterwards, the activities begin, ranging from singing Jiexiu Yangko, modern opera, riding a bamboo hobbyhorse, land boat dancing to Yellow River lamp (lamp in the shape of 卍), etc.<sup>14</sup> The festival celebrations are depicted in the form of decorative patterns, expressing complex characters of humans, animals and plants. It is comprised of auspicious patterns and adds to the festive atmosphere, which is considered harmonious by the people for a larger family and for the beautiful vision of prosperity for thriving generations ahead.

On the tomb-sweeping day of 2018, the author went to Jingjiang to conduct field survey. The people held a very lively “conducting ceremony” in this area. According to the needs of each ceremony, they chant the corresponding Baojuan (scriptures of folk). In the “Pentecostal narrative”, the readers of folk scriptures light incense and candles to invite various gods (Figure 2), and are believed to have invited at most 108 gods, before

<sup>10</sup> Jin Weinuo, “Notes and variations on Gion Drawing”, Cultural Heritage Reference Materials, No. 6, 1958.

<sup>11</sup> (U.K) Victor Turner: THE RITUAL PROCESS Structure and Anti-Structure, translated by Huang Jianbo & Liu Boyun, China Renmin University Press, 2006, p109.

<sup>12</sup> There are three procedures in the funeral songs, namely “Kailu Song”, “Song of Filial Piety” and “Return Yang”.

<sup>13</sup> Zhonghua Publishing House, Editorial Department of Zhonghua Publishing House, Vol. 690, Revised Edition, Zhonghua Publishing House, 1999, p. 7988.

<sup>14</sup> Guo Mingjun, “Re Nao” is not “carnival”—the Case of Jie Xiu, a Loess Civilization Village Custom from the Perspective of Multi-Ethnic, “Ethnic Art”, No. 2, 2015.

the beginning of the sermon. According to the master of ceremony investigated by the author, the paper horses<sup>15</sup> invited to the hall include Sakyamin Buddha, Amitabha Buddha, Guanyin, Manjushri, Puxian, Dizang, Sizhou Great Sage, Weituo, Sanmao, Sanguan, Fengdu Ten Kings, City God, Dongyue, Zitong, Three Circles of Heaven and Earth, East Kitchen (Kitchen God), Jiatang (Master Saint), Taisui, Leizu, Door God, God of Wealth, Plus Two, Land and Longevity Gods. In addition to the various gods invited to this hall, one can notice “Tuan Ma” on the east wall outside the south door of the master of the house’s room, referring to the gods with dense dots, which signifies the invitation for the gods from all dimensions to arrive. At the end of the ceremony, the statues of the worshipped gods must be burnt and given to the Buddha gods. In the middle of the ceremony, the gathering prays for longevity, breaking the *Xue Hu*, for stars, crossing gates, binding ties, dispersing flowers and solving knots, at the request of the master conducting the ceremony (family who conducts the ceremony).



Figure 2. The deity at the ceremony of breaking *Xue Hu* in Jingjiang (photo taken by the author in April 2018 in Jingjiang, Jiangsu Province)

## II. Internal Mechanism of Re Nao

The internal mechanism of Re Nao is concentrated on getting through the threshold stages in order to enter a new stage. According to anthropologist Van Gennep, the internal structure of “rites of passage”, such as birth ceremony, puberty rites, wedding ceremonies and funeral ceremonies, consists of three parts: pre-threshold stage (separation stage), threshold stage (transition stage) and post-threshold stage (reorganization stage). The “transition” stage is the threshold stage or the connected link of entrance between the other two stages. In the ceremony, this stage represents a state of personal identity ambiguity, transformation, and suspense. It signifies that the person no longer belongs to the society to which he or she once belonged, nor has he or she reintegrated into it.<sup>16</sup>

According to the author’s analysis, the ceremony of eliminating the ambiguous state and obtaining a clear identity or cultural classification mainly includes the “transitional ritual” stage in the life of an individual, the “ritual of conquering and suppressing demons” in folk activities, human beings and god are inseparable in the living space, and the chaos still remains unsolved. These activities have the characteristics of a group, their scenes are relatively grand, crisis threshold of internal convergence, competition, and conflict is high. A summary is given below:

<sup>15</sup> Translator note: paper printed with images of god for sacrifice.

<sup>16</sup> (France) Arnold Van Genapp, *Les rites de passage*, translated by Zhang Juwen, Commercial Press, 2010, p. 17.

### 1. Harsh Natural and Social Double Test in the Transition Ceremony:

Considering the rites of passage around the world, people tend to follow a variety of tests, including isolation, perforation of the lips or nose, circumcision, washing, flogging, and anesthesia. Anthropologists have taken a more detailed look at indigenous tribes: Segregation, flogging, circumcision and other tests conducted by a shaman or master of ceremonies are the rites of partition, followed by the rites of convergence. There exists a transitional period between the two ceremonies. In the transitional period, when all the new members are gathered together, some groups require the subjects to put on white ash, wander in the village, speak special languages and eat special food, while in some cases the boys are kept in the house for four days. This process of undertaking various activities of the transitional period takes several months to complete, including ceremonies of separating from the previous environment and assembling into the new environment, which forms the most critical part of the whole process.

Cole has obtained a detailed account of the ceremony in which the Okibuwe people of Australia joined the “covenant of the Medes”. Some of the highlights include building of sacred huts, tying the rite of passage children to wooden boards, and undergoing various forms of torture. The participants dressed in various costumes and painted their bodies for the ceremony. They would then march into the hut. The chieftains and shamans symbolically kill all the participants, allowing them to regenerate one by one. During this process, everyone would beat the sacred drum and sing a prayer song. The child’s grandfather would make a public appeal for divine favor and the child is given a new name post the ceremony of regeneration.<sup>17</sup>

To become a member of the secret society, it is mandatory to go through a ceremony similar to the transitional ceremony. Only through the purification by the “mysterious ceremony”, the new members of the secret society can complete the conversion from the secular world to the sacred world, acquire new identities. In the course of the adult rites of the Greek Erucis, new members were put together and separated from those who had unclean hands and could not speak well. The new recruits were then taken to the Arusian temple and blessed with holy water placed at the door, while phrases like “sea, mysterious sea” were shouted, since they were taken to the seashore for the purpose of “releasing” or “discarding” the old self. This ritual is still interpreted as “casting off evil, demons, or evil spirits”. Furthermore, the newcomers would bathe at sea, purify themselves by means of “eliminating ominousness” and make their way back to the Arusian temple, where they would end their journey of transition or the threshold period by making a ritual offering.<sup>18</sup>

In the rite of passage, the deceased new members are reborn through Hades, following which they enter the sacred world. The process comprises of all kinds of ritualistic ceremonies, such as singing, dancing, parade and so on. From this point of view, the narrative structure of the Chinese folk scrolls contains many incomprehensible tales of voyages to the underworld, for example, the northwest folk scroll, “Mu Lian Baojuan”, “Ten Kings scroll”, “Guanyin Baojuan”, “Baojuan of the King of Tang’s Tours to the Hell”, “Zhang Sijie’s Da Nao in Tokyo Treasure Scroll”, “Baojuan of splitting the mountain to save the mother”, “Baojuan of Bao Gong Mistakenly Judged on Cha Yansan”, “Liu Quan Jin Gua Baojuan”, “Kui Hua Baojuan”, and so on. If we trace back to the origin, the motive of “going to hell” involves leaving and returning, which denotes ritualistic death and rebirth. In connection with the motif of enlightenment, it is evident that traveling to the underworld should be a part of the secret enlightenment ritual prior to the actual enlightenment ceremony.

<sup>17</sup> (France) Arnold Van Genapp, *Les rites de passage*, translated by Zhang Juwen, Commercial Press, 2010, p. 60.

<sup>18</sup> (France) Arnold Van Genapp, *Les rites de passage*, translated by Zhang Juwen, Commercial Press, 2010, p. 70.

Funeral rites are also considered a form of transitional ceremony, since these rites aim at integrating the dead into the world of the dead through rituals. The elemental meaning of the ancient Egyptian funeral rites is to identify Osiris with the dead, as well as identify the dead with the sun. To experience the “resurrection” of the day like the sun, the ancient Egyptians’ funeral was conducted for the daily resurrection of the “Sun–Osiris”. This is exactly identical to the funeral rites, where both bring the dead to life, deify them through mummification in addition to other rituals, and then recombine with night to regenerate them, in order to prevent the actual final death. Therefore, in funeral rites, daily worship, temple lighting and coronation ceremonies, there are many parallel elements, such as the sun, Osiris, the king, the priest and the simultaneous death and rebirth of each “holy” death. These rituals are unequivocally the most complex, incomprehensible and dramatic examples of death and rebirth to have been ever known.<sup>19</sup>

In this kind of transitional ceremony, the traditional society passes through the threshold stage with a vibrant atmosphere, so the internal system of *Re Nao* is a kind of undefined structure that is in transition.

## 2. In Folk Custom, Ritual Suppressing Ceremonies of Disasters to Eliminate Demons

Early civilizations reckoned the concept of theology of diseases, which believed that different sorts of demons lurked in the natural world unleashing diseases on to the people violating gods or moral taboos, or some of which were transformed by the spirits of the dead. Incest and the killing of animals were condemned by god or by gods.<sup>20</sup> Fortunately, early mythological ideas reckoned that there are ritualistic remedial measures for most of the pollution caused by humans in reality such as inversion, resolution, burial, cleaning, cancellation, and incense.<sup>21</sup> Shaman Da Nao—Suppressing demon-subjugation is the most common form of decontamination in Chinese cultural tradition.<sup>22</sup> As a result, China is full of cultural texts and the influence of Da Nao.

Crossing the threshold of “Nao” (Da Nao), along with other folk ceremonies is a traditional Chinese folk activity to survive and eradicate the danger of pollution. “Da Nao”, therefore, is essentially the threshold stage, which has the function of purifying, suppressing, and solving. The drama of “Hua-Qiang (florid ornamentation in Chinese opera singing) Drum” and “five ghosts disturb the judgement” is the most typical and approved exorcism dance performance in Zhaokang Town, Xiangfen County, Linfen City, in Shanxi Province. This play, with its core essence set as “Nao”, is performed annually in the village. “Nao” basically is to shout out when there is injustice of any form, to catch monsters if any, to fight ghosts, and behead the demons.<sup>23</sup> In the exorcising ceremony of Ming Dynasty, it is also mandatory to narrate the drama of Da Nao (great disturbance) - trial - suppress devils. In 1986, in Nanshe Village, Lucheng County, in Shanxi Province, people discovered a hand-written copy of “Greeting god ceremony book forty palace tune” written in the Wanli second year of the Ming Dynasty (1574). In “Bi Yue Wu”, this transcript contains the drama “Whipping the yellow tuberculosis

<sup>19</sup> (France) Arnold Van Genapp, *Les rites de passage*, translated by Zhang Juwen, Commercial Press, 2010, pp. 115-119.

<sup>20</sup> NEMET-NEJET K R. Daily life in Ancient Mesopotamia. Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, 1998, p.177.

<sup>21</sup> (U.K) Mary Douglas, Cleanliness and danger, translated by Huang Jianbo, Liu Bo Yun and Lu Chen, Commercial Press, 2018, p. 144.

<sup>22</sup> Demons are the true enemies of humanity. According to Eliad’s research, shamanism protects life, protects health, protects the “bright” world, and fights against death, disease, poverty, disaster and the “dark” world. Shaman belligerence sometimes even turned into a mania. In some Siberian traditions, shamans are believed to challenge another person in the form of an animal. The struggle between shamans and what we call “evil forces” is fundamental and universal. It ensures that humanity is not alone in an alien world surrounded by demons and “evil forces.” (U.S) Mircea Eliade, *Shamanism: the ancient ecstasy*, translated by Duan Manfu, Social Sciences Academic Press, 2018 edition, p. 591.

<sup>23</sup> Wang Luwei, Investigation report on Zhao Xiong’s “Hua Qiang Drum” in Xiangfen, Shanxi, Chinese Opera, vol. 40.

ghost” of the team of light provision.<sup>24</sup> This play is a drama played when, in Shanxi Shangdang area, people worship for twenty-eight nights in front of the temple. It is vivid, since the mere spirit of this play helps people in removal of their diseases during the performance.

On analyzing Nao plays such as Guan Yun Chang Defeat Chi You, Scholar Rong Shicheng came to believe that in fact, “defeating Chiyu” and “Guan gong beheaded the demon” are “a re-enactment of Fang Xiang exorcising the ghosts and chasing the epidemic disease in an ancient ceremony of Nuo sacrifice”. “Around the narrative structure and performance, the opposite concepts of auspicious/unlucky, safe/dangerous and more fundamental life/death constitute a meaningful network. In the entire exorcism ceremony, it builds the significance, and finally, through the performance of the drama ceremony, surrenders or beheads all the major evil spirits of ominous and evil, symbolically dissolving the above opposition.”<sup>25</sup>

Evidence of the rest of the world’s beliefs passed on by earlier generations can be found by witnessing the annual custom of banishing the evil spirits of Arunachal at the cape coast fort on the gold coast: At eight o’clock in the evening, people light fire crackers at the castle, muskets are set up in the houses, all the furniture is taken outdoors, sticks are struck in every corner of the houses, and people tend to be as loud as they can be, to frighten the devil. As the devil is about to leave the house, people rush out on to the street, throwing the torches about, shouting, and beating the sticks and old pots, while creating a scene in order to drive the goblin out of the town into the sea.<sup>26</sup>

On the whole, whether it is a ritualistic fighting between two groups of lion dance teams in Ying Sai Shen (welcoming gods) club, the roaring gongs and drums in Shehuo performance, or the group competition between Suona groups, crowds of people in various sects of the world make noises or cause loud disturbances to drive out the devil. The internal structure of Re Nao remains the most profound dualistic thinking ceremonial structure of human beings, which is ritualistic and practically helpful, at the same time, in aiding removal of pollution. Also, through “anti-structure” and “threshold period”, holiness can be restored, social inequality can be temporarily eliminated, and social structure can be remolded. In his discourse on ritual and communion, Turner cites the Barotzelans of Western Zambia, who had the right to throw into the water any of their royal peers who “in past years had offended them or violated their sense of justice”. “The holy beggar”, “the third son”, “the little tailor”, and “the fool”, these tore off the haughty faces of high and noble officials, and reduced them to the level of basic humanity and morality bringing equality and justice to the prevailing system. Finally, they eliminated the injustice of affairs and the secular tyrant, who oppressed the common people, and reached a peaceful state of moral and political balance.<sup>27</sup>

In the threshold stage, the relationship between people adjusts to a “special relationship”. The gods, who were favored by certain people, would go to trial on a temporary basis, and these judgments reversed the rigid social structure bringing flexibility to the system. In ancient Sumer, the sun god Shamash and the moon god Xin regained the authority and became the heroes of evil suppression.<sup>28</sup> When the ceremony ends, the social

<sup>24</sup> “Greeting god ceremony book forty palace tune”, see the third volume of Chinese Opera, Shanxi People’s Publishing House, 1987.

<sup>25</sup> A preliminary study of the anthropology of opera: ritual, theater and community, Guangxi Normal University Press, 2003, pp. 22-23.

<sup>26</sup> (U.K) Frazier, J.G. The golden bough: a study of witchcraft and religion, Commercial Press, 2012, p. 863.

<sup>27</sup> (U.K) Victor Turner: THE RITUAL PROCESS Structure and Anti-Structure, translated by Huang Jianbo & Liu Boyun, China Renmin University Press, 2006, p. 111.

<sup>28</sup> BLACK J., GREEN A. God, Demons and Symbols of Ancients of Mesopotamia: An Illustrated Dictionary, British Museum Press, 1992, pp. 210-211.

structure is restored, the “special relationship” is terminated, and the usual social structure is rebuilt. From the perspective of ritualistic performance, the confrontation between good and evil—“Da Nao” is the ritualistic narration of this threshold field. Therefore, the ritualistic confrontation between suppressing demon and beheading devils is the internal structure of “Re Nao”.

### 3. Da Nao Breeds Danger and Vitality of Harmony or Chaos of Human and Gods

In the west, Omphalos (world center) is the navel or belly button in Greek. The god of heaven created the world in Hun Dun (chaos), which was called “none”, without order or center. It can be said that prior to coming out of the Garden of Eden, man and god were in harmony, but chaos was not deciphered. Although disorder was present, it meant all kinds of possibilities, and it was full of complex energy from chaos to order. A random disturbance of elements may breed a “strange monster” with the potential to subvert the established order, and produce consequences that are substantially tough. So, the threshold of gestation is filled with chance, change, differentiation, and recombination, just as sperm and egg combine to form an embryo and then develop from an embryo into a fully formed baby. The uncertainty is fascinating, anxious, scary, and inexplicable. In Lao Tzu, it writes, “Dao is thing which is blur and ethereal. In its blur and ethereal nature, there is Xiang (image). In its blur and ethereal nature, there is thing. It reveals the chaos in the birth of things. In its obscure chaos, there is Jing (essence) which is quite truth. Among truth, there is Xin (honesty)”<sup>29</sup> which reveals the chaos in the birth of things.

Van Gennep also believed that danger refers to things in a transitional state, because a transition stage is a predicament that cannot be classified or defined making it unpredictable. People who move from one state to another are themselves in danger, and pose a threat to others as well—“Re” (heat). In the traditional society, dangerous infectious diseases are collectively referred to as “fever” in the expression of diseases. In the movie *Favorite*, villagers refer to AIDS as “fever”, which is a clear proof.

The senile mother was a creation of god who ended chaos. In the first year of Tianqi in Ming Dynasty (1621), the *Ancient Buddha Danglai gave birth to Maitreya Baojuan*; it describes the goddess of creation as: “From the beginning of none, everything was embraced in chaos; there was no sky or earth. There was a gas, then combined as a stone of thousands hectares large. There were red and white tracks that radiated light in five colors.” “The stone split into two, then the senile mother was born. The heaven and gas combine into marriage, and then there were sun, moon, stars, three kings and five emperors controlling the five fields and creating all the things present as well as the ethical and moral principles for humans. She then sent buddhas and bodhisattvas to help the world.”<sup>30</sup>

The stage of human self-gestation is the most direct symbol of chaos. Hence, the worldwide taboos against pregnant women are just another way of describing this poorly differentiated and uncertain order. The Lehrer people believed that the unborn child and its mother are in constant danger, but they could also not deny the fickle malice of the unborn child, which makes it a bigger threat to others. Similar beliefs are recorded among the Nyakyusa, an African linguistic group. It is believed that a pregnant woman’s access to grain will reduce the amount of grain available to her because her fetus would act greedy and would grab the grain. She is not allowed to talk to the harvesters and brewers until the danger is removed. They describe the presence of a fetus

<sup>29</sup> Zhu Qian-zhi, Interpretation of Lao Tzu, Zhonghua Publishing House, 1984, p. 88-89.

<sup>30</sup> “*Ancient Buddha Danglai gave birth to Maitreya Baojuan Baojuan*”, Qing Zhao Yuanzhai edition. Quote from “The folk religions of the Ming and Qing dynasties,” vol. 1, Wang Jianchuan, Ed., Taiwan New Wenfeng Publishing Co., 1999, p. 155.

grabbing food with its jaws wide open and interpret it as an inevitable direct struggle between an “internal seed” and an “external seed”. “The fetus in the womb is like a witch; it will spoil the food like witchcraft, the beer will be spoiled, the food will not grow, the iron will not work in the blacksmith’s shop, and the milk will turn bad.” Even when a woman is pregnant, the child’s father is in danger during war and hunting.<sup>31</sup>

As Douglas said, we recognize that chaos and disorder are destructive and aggressive to existing patterns, and we reckon that disorder has the potential to symbolize both danger and power.<sup>32</sup> From the universe as a whole, “the unity of heaven and man” in the chaotic unclear state to “existence”, from the disorder to the orderly change, this threshold stage is the anthropological “very” stage. In order to deeply understand pollution and the efforts required to eliminate it, we must profoundly understand the ritual of separation which has been left behind since ancient times and which is being carried out in a turning or ambiguous manner. In traditional society, this kind of a ceremony is presided over by a shaman. In a state of enthusiastic gathering, brawling, confrontation, games, irony, cynicism and so on, the identity differences such as social hierarchy are suddenly eliminated, which goes back to the state of “harmony between man and god” and “perfect at the beginning”, which has fervent anthropological connotations.

### III. The cultural code of “Re Nao”:

Ceremonies of “Nao” and “Re Nao” (lively and vibrant activities) are presented as “lively” scenes in “sacred space” and “sacred time” in traditional Chinese culture. The internal mechanism of “Re Nao” in the aesthetic category has been discussed above, such as the signifier of pronunciation, pigment, drawing and text, the symbolic structure to interpret the meaning led by the cultural coding of human actions, and of course, the “signified” behavior of “one thing representing another”. Therefore, cultural coding can only be grasped and adapted through first-hand public interaction and immersive experience for understanding it better.<sup>33</sup>

Following the interaction between the subject and the object, the cultural code with Re Nao at its core is constantly generated and evolved into a definite cultural code system. It is quite evident that “Da Nao” is at the core of Re Nao, the cultural coding text and human thinking structure in the deepest layer of binary thinking, and this code is rooted in the most primitive, the most simple, and the most usual order - the law of the alternation of day and night. There are also Yin and Yang, good and evil, bright and dark, rivers and lakes and the official code structure. These codes are scattered among the cultural texts of folklore, myth, ritual, literature, paintings and sculptures.

From the perspective of genetic science and sacrificial ceremony drama, the great disturbance removal ceremony is the original code of Re Nao. In “*Zhong Kui catches little ghosts*” in Guichi, Anhui Province, Zhong Kui wears a melon green mask, a hunchback chicken breast, a sword in his hand, and “colorful money” hanging from his body, while the little ghost wears ghost masks and dance on drums and gongs. First Zhong Kui pointed his sword at the little ghost who kept begging for mercy. Zhong Kui relied on his superiority and the ghost bowed and scraped, presenting the two forms in a sharp contrast. Before long the ghost seizes the sword from the hands of Zhong Kui, and Zhong Kui begs for mercy from the ghost instead. Finally, Zhong Kui

<sup>31</sup> (U.K) Mary Douglas, *Cleanliness and danger*, translated by Huang Jian-Bo, Liu Bo-Yun, Lu Chen, Commercial Press, 2018, p. 108.

<sup>32</sup> (U.K) Mary Douglas, *Cleanliness and danger*, translated by Huang Jian-Bo, Liu Bo-Yun, Lu Chen, Commercial Press, 2018, p. 106.

<sup>33</sup> Preface to translation of *Hercules’ cultural interpretation of Hercules*, translated by (U.S) Nadebirigo, from *Clifford Hercules’ local knowledge: Essays on interpreting anthropology*, translated by Yang Derei, Commercial Press, 2014, p. 11.

shows resourcefulness and mindfulness in an emergency, takes the sword back from the ghost, and kills it. Although the performance infuses the element of worldly materialistic feeling, but the basic plot of the performance still celebrates the spirit of the ghost “Nao” (cause troubles) Zhong Kui, and Zhong Kui “beheads ghost”.<sup>34</sup>

In Chapter 56 of the *Golden Bough*, it specially enumerates the folk rituals of exorcising evil spirits that are widely spread among the public. The natives of New Caledonia believed that all evil spirits were forms of powerful demons. In order to safeguard themselves, they would dig a great pit from time to time, and all the people would gather around it. After swearing at the devil, they would fill up the pit with earth, which they called “burying the goblins.”<sup>35</sup> At a certain time of the year in Europe, a public demon exorcism is held. On the first day of the New Year, Bohemian boy’s fire into the air with their guns, which is called “shooting the demons”. The twelfth day or “twelfth night” between Christmas and the restoration of Epiphany, is most commonly the day chosen in many European villages for exorcism. In the village of Lulun on Lake Lucerne, the boys march in procession, torching fires, blowing horns, and ringing bells, to make loud noises to frighten away the banshee of the two woods, Stradelli and Strattery. “They were shouting, hoping that this way they would drive away all the ghosts and demons from the town.”<sup>36</sup>

Ritual and verbal “pandemics” are the far end of the cultural code, the superficial surface of which is the writing culture aimed at exorcising evil spirits and restoring cleanliness. They are closer to ethnography and poetry, and are extremely numerous.

In Mo Yan’s novel “Wearisome life and death”, it was killed after being wronged. After six rounds of reincarnation, sustaining as a donkey, a cow, a pig, a dog, a monkey, it was finally born a landlord, who was born with a big head baby with an incurable congenital disease, and was named “Xi Men Nao”. “The soul of Xi Men Nao’s grievance”, the novel says, “runs like hot lava within the body of the donkey, whose habits and tastes are hardly repressed, and thrives. I vacillate between donkey and man, donkey consciousness and human memory mixed together, always wanting to split, but the intention to split always leads to a more intimate fusion.”<sup>37</sup> Compared to the above mentioned 25<sup>th</sup> chapter of “Dream of red mansions”, describing the scene in Jia’s house, “Nao” in the name of “Xi Men Nao” has long lasting significance in terms of ghost exorcism.

In the Song and Yuan dynasties, there was a drama named “Song Si Gong’s disturbance in Jin Hun Zhang”; in the Yuan Dynasty, there was a drama named “Shen nu’er’s disturbance in Kaifeng mansion”; in the Ming Dynasty, there was a novel named “New carved five rats’ disturbance in Tokyo” (Figure 3). In the Dream of the red chamber, there is Zhao Yi-Niang making a scene in the Yi-hong Yuan and Wang Xifeng making a scene in the Ningguo Mansion. Of the four great books of the Ming dynasty in China, *Water Margin* (Shui Hu Zhuan) is a novel that describes chaos at its extreme. Among them, 10 are “great disturbances”, 3 are “night disturbances”, 1 is “tea disturbance” and 1 is “disturbance in Huashan mountain”, the western Yue. In the chapters, there are “Li Kui Yuan made scene in Tokyo”, Lu Zhi Shen made a scene in “Wutai mountain”, “make a scene in peach blossom village,” “Da Nao (made a scene) in wild boar forest”, “Jiu Wen Long made a scene in Shi Village”, “Yun elder brother make the guanting grant”, “Yun Ge made scene in Shou Guan Ting”,

<sup>34</sup> “Da Nao” and “Suppressing Demons”: the structure of averting calamity in the Zhang Sijie’s Da Nao in Tokyo treasure scroll, *Folkloric Studies*, 3rd issue, 2018.

<sup>35</sup> (U.K) J.G. Frazier, *The golden branch*, translated by Wang Peiji, Xu Yuxin and Zhang Zeshi, Commercial Press, 2012, p. 854.

<sup>36</sup> (U.K) J.G. Frazier, *The golden branch*, translated by Wang Peiji, Xu Yuxin and Zhang Zeshi, Commercial Press, 2012, pp. 869-871.

<sup>37</sup> Mo Yan: *Wearisome life and death*, Author’s Publishing House, 2012, pp. 16-17.

“Hua Rong made a scene in Qing Feng Zhai”, “Wu Song made scene in Feiyun Pu”, “Zhen San Shane made a scene in Qingzhou avenue”, “Bing Guan Suo made scene in Cui Pingshan” and so on. .

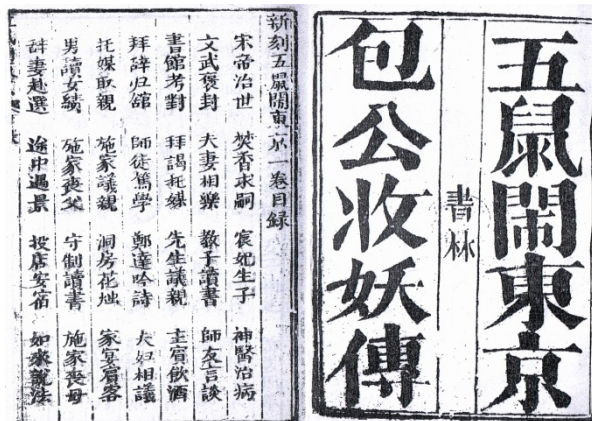


Figure 3. Copy of “five mice making scene in Tokyo” (cover of the novel “five mice making scene in Tokyo” photographed in the British museum)

There is no Da Nao (big disturbance) mentioned in these chapters. But there is an actual Da Nao in the first chapter in *Water Margin*: Taoist master Zhang prayed to eliminate the plague, Commandant Hong expelled demons accidentally”. In the third year of Jiayou (1058), plague prevails in the world, military officials report to the king, asking to pray to eliminate the plague. Everybody asks Hong to go up Long Hu Mountain to ask Zhang, but out of expectations, Hong makes a scene (Da Nao) in the “Hall of suppressing demons” (Fu Mo Hall): asking 36 gods to come to the earthly world, 72 Di Sha come to human world, to disturb the Song Dynasty, and make a scene for the cause of Zhao’s empire.”<sup>38</sup> “Da Nao” and “Nao” make characters of *Water Margin* vivid and lively, full of vigor, vibrancy, and vitality.

Considering the social function, the age of faith, the disturbance (Re Nao or scene) in the holidays and turning points in one’s life, these factors, are indirectly added propellants for the evolution of social structure. Modern society lacks the sacred field, and the dynamics of social evolution is decaying into external order—law, norms, and so on. Now classified and refined into the aesthetic category, “Re Nao” comes from the field survey in rural society. This aesthetic interest adapts to the spontaneous evolution mode of traditional society relying on endogenous order. In terms of time, it is only a relic or fossil of cultural tradition, although it is related to the word “lively”, which is a commonly used phrase in contemporary society.

### Conclusion

Literature is only the surface of the cultural archetype code, while the original code of “great disturbance” originated from ancient myths and sacrificial rituals. Historically, the scenes on Dragon Boat Festival, New Year’s Eve, Lantern Festival and other festivals, the Fang Xiang family, Tongzi and the ceremonies such as invisible transcendental world of conflict are very intense, buoyant and fiery. During the period of the Republic of China, the people of Guang ‘anzhou pray to the rain as they perform “Dong Chuang drama”; to drive away epidemics, they would perform the “Mu Lian Drama”<sup>39</sup>. At the Dongyue Temple outside the north gate of Chengdu, Sichuan Province, people play Mu Lian Jiu Mu (save the mother), a forking (fork) play every year to

<sup>38</sup> (Ming) Shi Naian. *Water Margin*. People’s Literature Press, 1997, p. 3.

<sup>39</sup> (Qing) Zhou Kekun et al, compiled new records of Guang ‘anzhou, vol. 34, the 9th year of the Republic of China (1920).

exorcise evil, pray for a good harvest, pay god to fulfill a wish, and the audience tends to be excited” with a belief that “if people do not participate in this play (Mu Lian Jiu Mu), evil can’t be expelled, and luck can’t be restored”.<sup>40</sup>

Today, in Changshu area, on the ceremonies of expelling ghosts, devil and demon, people submit Shu Wen in particular (Figure 4), to connect humans and gods. The transcript is as follows:

Based on the detailed information, we submit this Shu Wen (memorial to the throne), hoping Tai Shang (emperor of the heaven) to send real Qi to us. We sincerely submit and report, and you majesty received our report which is delivered to the great Dao of Wu Ji (infiniteness). The San Bao emperors of the heaven, gold supreme, four Si Yu emperors, master of all stars, Wu Ji fist emperor, Zi Wei star in the sky, and the Great emperor of immortality at the arctic area. In this morning, your majesty has blessing from your star of life.<sup>41</sup>

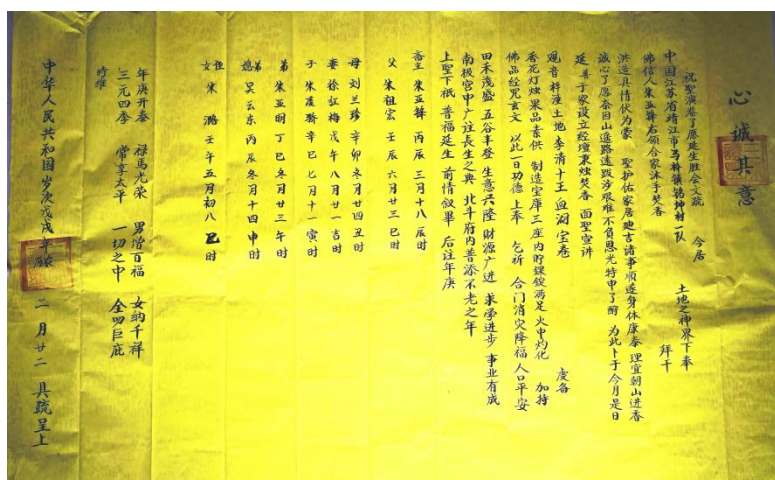


Figure 4. Shuwen used in the ceremony of breaking Xue Hu in Jingjiang, Jiangsu (photographed in Jingjiang on the tomb-sweeping day 2018)

The folk secret religious ceremony in west Guangxi also has Shu as revealed in the saying like “to prostrate, it needs to follow the rules and Shu rituals”: “the holy god advocates amity to sweep all the communicable diseases. Then rode on the loong and back to Luo Yang. Therefore, all happiness were descend to the people and auspicious luck were collected”, “There were two gods in the heaven who can eliminate communicable diseases and fire, the emperor of heaven order and talisman is in charge of real god of life, and the on the Yin and Yang dragon boat farewell ceremony, they decide everything”, and other sayings.<sup>42</sup>

From the internal perspective of local knowledge, the cultural codes of each social group differ from each other, and “Da Nao” also represents different expressions. “Re Nao” is the expression of the aesthetic psychology of the Han nationality. In the Wu dialect, similar words like “Nao Mang”, “Nao Meng”, “Nao Meng” and “Nao Nuan” are still used. “Yang” and “Nuan” are the expressions of Dong and Zhuang, respectively. Re Nao makes good and evil blend, ego and identity infiltrate each other, creation and destruction coexist, like the chicken fight in Bali Island, becomes the arena for Han people to publicize their subjectivity.

<sup>40</sup> Liu Zhen, Chinese Folk Mulian Culture, Beijing Times, 2015, p. 51.

<sup>41</sup> Changshu Baojuan of China, edited by Changshu Culture, Radio, Film and Television News Bureau, Gu Wu Xuan Press, 2015, p. 2212.

<sup>42</sup> Wang Xiyuan, Folk Secret Religion in West Guangxi. Guangxi Normal University Press, 1994, p. 543.

The European folk customs recorded in *Golden Branch* are more vibrant in the ritualistic level of exorcism—“the great disturbance” (Da Nao). Therefore, “Re Nao” is the confluence of man and god, and “Da Nao” in its structure is the binary structure of man and god (ghost). Turner’s analysis of ritualistic structure focuses on the “threshold” or “transformation” stage in the three stages described by Van Gennep. The diachronic development of the three stages—“pre-threshold (daily state)—threshold limit (ritual state)—post-threshold (daily state)” is the dialectical process of “order” and “disorder”—“structure-antistructure-structure”. This structure not only reveals the context in which the early literature was developed, but also profoundly explains the internal procedures of myths, folk customs and rituals. It further demonstrates the internal perspective of “creating a new world” and is a prelude to the dynamic game process of various elements within society. Following this, from “Nao” and “Da Nao” to “Re Nao” and then to “Nao Re”, it presents a dialectical structure and process of opposition, convergence, integration and unity of things. Besides, both behavior and text production behind the construction and expression refers to eliminating disasters.

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