

Interpretations on the Rainbow's Cultural Image From Literary Anthropology*

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A cultural image is a kind of cultural symbol and cognitive schema, which can make the national wisdom and historical memory get together. From the view of literary anthropology, the article applies quadruple-evidence approaches to interpret cultural images of rainbow multi-dimensionally and systematically in the field of the great tradition. Meanwhile, in order to break through the concealment and misleadingness of ancient documentary records, we need rely on the multi-ethnic living ethnography from generation to generation and jade Huang (玉璜, semi-annular jade pendant) narrative in the form of hierophany. So we can find that the rainbow represents luckiness, a bumper harvest, and sexual intercourse. Moreover, we conclude that faith in rainbow culture in ancient times is the headstream of faith in dragon culture that rooted in the heart of all Chinese. Hence, quadruple-evidence approaches play more significant roles in the reconstruction and rebuilding of Chinese great tradition's view of culture than before.

Keywords: quadruple-evidence approach, great tradition, cultural image, faith in rainbow culture, jade Huang narrative

“When *Didong* Appears in the East, No One Dares to Reach Out to It” (蟠螭在東，莫之敢指): A New Breakthrough in Text Occlusion

Classical handed-down documents have been the only legal source of traditional scholarship. However, this single old research paradigm has been broken. But its powerful function of textual narrative still needs enough attention of scholars. In ancient literature, the rainbow is also known as “*hong* (虹)”, “*didong* (蟠螭)”, “*didong* (蝮螭)”, “*hongni* (虹蜺)”, “*yu* (雩)”, etc. There are many similar cultural images with their class, such as the dragonsnake with two heads (雙首龍蛇), the beauty, the bridge, the sky bow, the jade Huang, etc., which are very complicated. At the same time, there is no agreement on the meaning of the binary opposition such as auspiciousness, disaster, love, and adultery. In the voluminous literature, how to correctly interpret the rainbow cultural image to find out the original meaning of the rainbow? And how to eliminate one of the subjective imaginary ingredients to the wall fiction, the success of breaking the cover of the little tradition?

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In the concept of Chinese civilization, dragons and snakes have the same deity, so the dragon can be regarded as the virtualization of the snake. Nowadays, people usually refer to the Chinese zodiac snake as a little dragon that dragons and snakes mutual recognition of the concept Continuation certificate. The most important scholar in 20th-century goddess research came to be Marija Gimbutas of the United States, teaching *The Living Goddesses*, *The Language of the Goddess* and other series of writings, the snakes were interpreted as the main incarnation of the prehistoric goddess. This apparently provides the dragon snake with a powerful symbol of the sacred symbols of similar evidence, which dragon snakes could be mixed together.

The Mountains-Seas Book says: "Rainbow in its north, each rainbow has two heads, there is a saying is in the north of the gentleman country" (《山海經·海外東經》). Yuan Ke cases: "蜃" is another form of the word rainbow. This definitive account of the rainbow as two animal images, thick mythology, after all, before oracle having been successfully interpreted, it is not possible to fully delineate the specific imagery of the rainbow. According to historical records, when double rainbow merged in the sky, the bright-colored people were male, and the name was "虹". The relatively dim color was female, and the name was "蜺". The ancients thought rainbow's appearance means "coalesce of Yin and Yang". *Huainan Tzu* says: "Yin and Yang make the rainbow" (《淮南·說山篇》). The ancients divided the appearance of the rainbow into female Yin and male Yang, and because the rainbow was the dragonsnake with two heads, it could naturally transform into the shape of two dragonsnakes copulate. *Analytical Dictionary of Characters Language* says: "rainbow is *didong* which looks like a worm" (《說文解字》). Duan Yucai directly confirms the rainbow as the serpent said, just not points out its two heads.

Since the rainbow is regarded as the dragonsnake with two heads, so the myths and legends of ancient emperors feel rainbow, it will be filled with the color of the destiny of the dragon. *Book of the Song Dynasty* contains:

Emperor Zhi's name was Shao Hao. His mother named Nv Jie, saw the stars crossing the rainbow, running down to Hua Zhu, then dreamed and got a sense of something. So Shao Hao was born at that time. Emperor Shun's mother named Wo Deng saw the rainbow and got pregnant, then gave birth to Shun in Yao Xu. Shun had two pupils each eye, so his mother named him Chong Hua. Chong Hua looked like a dragon, having a big mouth. His face was black, and his height was six feet and one inch. (Shen, 2010, pp. 461-362)

Such legends that wise emperors were born after a sensory of the rainbow, are in fact, similar with the story dream dragons born wise, which still cannot be divorced from the scope of the dragon totem.

Also, rainbow is gorgeous and has many colors, and also has the shape looks like the sleeves that are flying; the ancients often associated it with the beauty, which is reasonable. At least in the Han Dynasty, beauty rainbow had already appeared. Rainbow began to have the symbolism related to women and became the exclusive word of women at that time. People of the Song Dynasty gradually upgraded the beauty to a fairy. *Taiping Imperial Encyclopaedia* reads:

In the first year of the Huguang reign of Emperor Ling, he saw a cyan red rainbow in front of the imperial court in a broad daylight, asked his minister Cai Yi, Cai Yi answered: "虹蜺 is the image of narrow-minded person or women." (Li et al., 1960, p. 72)

These legendary stories not only happened by chance, but precisely reflected that the myth of the beauty rainbow came down in one continuous line. The ancients believed that the forerunner had the magic of

rain-giving, and the rainbow after the rain showed that the two had a causal relationship with each other in time. Therefore, the rainbow was regarded as the forerunner. In fact, the rainbow as phosgene, the gods cannot see, but our ancestors were convinced that phosgene is a manifestation of the deceased mother, and rainbow as the god of women, which is in line with the theory of Goddess.

From the above analysis, it can be seen that relying on classics and documents solely shows limited persuasion, people may even turn to the opposite path because of the shadowing and misleading effects of text message transmission. It is mainly manifested in two aspects: first is a sign of elopement, second is a sign of disaster.

The Book of Songs contains:

When the rainbow appears in the east, no one dares to reach out to it. The girl is to be married, far away from her parents and brothers. When the rainbow appears in the west, it will be rained throughout the morning. The girl is to be married, far away from her brothers and parents. An unwomanly girl like her, destroying marriage etiquette, does not care for her chastity. Simply no reasons, the girl even does not obey her parents! (Ruan, 1980, p. 318)

The ancient and modern writers viewed it as the elopement of women against the orders of their parents and non-compliance with the slogans of their mates or compared them with the marital disorder and ethical disorders. Mao Heng (毛亨), Zhu Xi (朱熹), Yao Shunmu (姚舜牧), GaoHeng (高亨) and so many other scholars agreed with it conformably. Some scholars even extended this behavior to a chaotic feminist situation. The rainbow became synonym of the beauty who gave rise to the disaster of the nation, and “no one daring to point at it” has gone from disdain and shame to the worry about the evolution of the harem. A variant of interpretation focused on disasters and wars. Browsing through *Twenty-five Histories* for information causally, we will find that, except the place whose names have special referential meanings, the most frequent occurrence of the word should be “white rainbow appearing with the sun”. White rainbow is the most dangerous rainbow. Its emergence is gradually regarded as a symptom of the advent of disaster, which not only indicates the fact of military involvement, but also indicates that the country is dead, the monarch collapses, and the people suffer. Therefore, “no one daring to point at it” refers to the sinister meaning of the rainbow gradually.

People's arguments must be theorized according to a concept that they had existed before. For the later generations, the rainbow implies obscenity, evil, and many are misled by the traditional concepts of small traditional knowledge recorded in the previous literature. So it is hard for the ancients to separate themselves from the sinister words of “no one daring to point at it”, and it is understandable that the ancients viewed the rainbow belief as the rainbow taboo. However, today's scholars need to break through the shackles of the ancients' writings. In the perspective of great tradition, rainbow is an auspicious sign of God's will and divination in Chinese traditional culture.

He Xingliang (1992) pointed out: “The dragonsnake is the original figure of the rainbow” (p. 299). The rainbow is regarded as the dragonsnake with two heads, linking the appearance of the rainbow to the dragon's drinking water. And it connects the magic dragon symbol which does not exist in real life and the perfect longing for the embodiment of graft together. By comparing rainbow as a beautiful person, from deep-seated mythological significance analysis, it embodies the worship of the goddess of the original “soul of deceased mother”, and becomes the deification of the rainbow belief. Also, the rainbow as the lever, the bow, and other images, are intended to show the rainbow's deity. However, the simplistic text narration is apt to fall into the

self-discourse circle of “documentary evidence”, so the full analysis and proof of other material evidence are urgently needed.

Regain the Lost “Rainbow” Memory of Many Nations

With the promotion of interdisciplinary research, the study of literary anthropology pays more attention to multi-ethnic and folk-spoken materials besides written records including myths, legends, and rituals, which are increasingly placed on the category of “living ethnography”. From the comparative mythology, religious anthropology, knowledge archeology, and other disciplinary perspective, the multi-interpretation and multi-dimensional root-seeking of inter-ethnic culture are closely related to the purpose of the protection of intangible cultural heritage advocated today.

Canadian archaeologist Bruce G. Trigger (2014, p. 426) argued that the use of writing in early civilizations kept pace with the continued oral transmission of knowledge that continued to be emphasized in the absence of written early civilization and written early civilization in the illiterate underclass, oral tradition is the only way to preserve knowledge. This is universal for the multi-ethnic cultures in the world represented by the multi-ethnic composition of our country. Regrettably, these precious treasures of ethnic eloquence continue to drain away as the process of “civilization” accelerates, so it is imminent to regain the lost memory of the mouth.

In Chinese multi-ethnic oral narratives, the myths and legends about rainbow are numerous and the folk stories are undeniable. Each nation has its own ethnic colorful live ethnography, and this can gradually get rid of the flaws of the Chinese characters in the handed down documents. The myths of the rainbow metaphor dragonsnake are mostly presented in the narrative form of the myth of dragon drinking water. This kind of cultural image is ubiquitous in all ethnic cultures:

湘西苗语: ta¹z_{oŋ}² (龙) xu³⁷ (喝) u¹ (水)

侗语: ljoŋ² (龙) ti¹ (吃) nam⁴ (水)

仡佬语: tsuŋ³¹ (龙) ku²⁴ (喝) uŋ³³ (水)

壮语 (三江地区): loŋ² (龙) kən¹ (吃) lam⁴ (水)

According to linguist Saussure, any linguistic sign consists of signifier and signified. In Gelao (仡佬族) language, the word “虹” is pronounced tu⁵⁵plie⁵zam⁵⁵eŋ⁵⁵, and the concept of “虹” reflected in the language refers to signify. It is clear that zam⁵⁵eŋ⁵⁵ stands for “drinking water”, so its specific meaning of “rainbow drinking water” is clear. Rainbow drinking water is a direct reflection of the imagination of dragon drinking water in reality, which has the same or similar expression in other ethnic minority myths. In addition, the Dai (傣族) views the rainbow in the sky as “Hong Jingneng (rainbow draft)”. The Lisu (傈僳族) ethnic group believes that the rainbow after the rain is the dragon’s absorption of water. The Naxi (纳西族) people believe the myths and legends of the long rainbow drinking large river, which all indicate the magical nature of the rainbow.

Rainbow is the mythical of the beauty and the fairy which is further extended to a beautiful symbol of procreation and reproduction, good sex, and love and it can be found directly in the multi-ethnic oral traditions, or similar variants. In the Hani (哈尼族) folk legend of Rainbow God, when the phenomenon of the rainbow crossing after rain occurs to women who drink water in the mountains, their belly will get larger, this should be the no doubt folk variant of the story named “feeling a rainbow”. The Lisu family think that rainbow was born at Nirvana girl that created the world; Aquarium think that fairy who marries folk guy turns into the rainbow

because the folk guy breaches taboo; Dai's legend is more magical, the rainbow is the princess injured when she met the dragon and bled into the river. This reflects the rainbow as the god of women's living heritage in the folk. In the folk tales of Amis in Taiwan, the theme of gender equality and love represented by rainbow is reproduced vividly:


God don't have the heart to see the poor Amis suffering from the natural disasters. He changed his face to a handsome guy to help the Amis people. Then he fell in love with an Amis beautiful girl and they got married. However, something unfortunate happened to them when they splitted up. The girl died, God felt so sad that he sows cloud rainfall silently waiting for her come back (Chen, 1989, pp. 403-409).

Ye Shuxian (2012a) believes that according to the truth that if the ceremony is lost, then the acquisition of knowledge needs go to the private visit, the myth interpretation of the rainbow serves as a reference for complementing and interpreting the related account in the Chinese dictionary. He emphasized that in addition to interpretation, it must be supplemented. It is necessary to refer to the cultural imagery of Rainbow Bridge. In the written records, associated with the appearance of "bar", "long beam" is not enough. In Taiwan's Atayal, the traditional religion is centered on the ancestral spirits. The tribe believes that the ultimate meaning of subsistence lies in following the ancestral spirit into the world of gods smoothly. The only way to pass through is the sacred Rainbow Bridge. Only the benevolent Talent can embark on the Rainbow Bridge and get ancestral blessing. Similarly, at the Miao (苗族) funeral in the southeast of Guizhou province, a song of "burning a towel" was sung: "My mom wants to go to heaven, go first to the Far East, first go to her ancestral home, say goodbye to her ancestral home, climb the Rainbow Bridge and ascend to Rainbow God" (Pan, 2007, pp. 161-165). The ultimate goal of the soul is to climb the rainbow and reach the heaven, along the Rainbow Bridge, climb from the first floor after twelfth, and eventually reach the moon—the paradise. By comparing with mythological perspectives, the legends about Rainbow Bridge do exist in the Navajo North American Indian, South American Amazon, and many indigenous tribes in Oceania, Japan, and Siberia. Therefore, the Rainbow Bridge has become the sacred medium connecting the world and the god man, its existence has the special significance of ancestor worship. This is similar to the mythological narration of the ancients' going to heaven by dragon, which is missing in the classic ancient literature.

“Rainbow” Prototype Reproduction—Jade Huang Narrative

It should be said that archaeological artifacts and images, as the fourth most important evidence, have greatly enhanced the effectiveness of the argument. If the living ethnology focuses on the anthropological field of vision and its practice, the evidence must reflect the re-reflection and breakthrough of "things" which is as evidence. Therefore, the fullness of the fourth evidence is related to the success or failure of the overall proof of the quadruple-evidence approach. In the theory of "N-level coding theory" of literary anthropology, artifacts and images in the era of no words were "first-level encoding" and have a cultural prototype encoding effect (Ye, 2003, p. 6). From the perspective of evidence jurisprudence, if you compare it to a lawsuit, the most convincing factual basis is not the written record of "black and white", nor is it oral tradition material. It's the heaviest weight, the most critical "material evidence".

Mircea Eliade (2002), a Romanian religious scientist, points out that "every sacred space means a hierophany that implies sacred access to space" (p. 4). The hierophany is giving God the sacred media communication function, it can be the dragon, Phoenix unicorn, and other virtual creature, it also can be the exquisite appliances which were made of jade bronze and silver and other fine ceremony. Among the many

hierophanies, jade Huang which combines both spirituality and sentiment, has attracted the attention of contemporary scholars for its similar functions to the dragon. Ye Shuxian (2012b) combined with the combination of mythological text analysis, summarized the basic paradigm of the myth of the unity of heaven and man, expressed in three related motifs: that ascended the throne—riding the dragon—wearing jade Huang. Today the docking of literary anthropology and archeology, makes scholars have the honor to resort to the jade Huang narrative, to find out its original statement, the original code, that is, Oracle “” such as “the dragonsnake with two heads bend down to drink water” visual image, so jade Huang as the initial imagination prototype is evidence-based, and further, jade Huang cultural beliefs and dragon cultural beliefs both come from rainbow cultural beliefs!

Taiping Imperial Encyclopaedia reads: “Confucius fasting, thanks to the Northern Dipper, reported in the sky. There is a red aura, from top to bottom, into jade, engraved, Confucius knelt and granted it” (Li et al., 1960, p. 72). Gan Bao’s view of “Rainbow becomes jade Huang” does not rule out the possibility of a fake, but it can be deduced that the ancient people have the concept that jade Huang looks like rainbow, which have also been confirmed by Yu Xingwu. Throughout the Chinese archeology jade Huang unearthed, especially jade Huang in Shang and Zhou dynasties, they are mostly found in the form of the dragonsnake with two heads or other beasts, which can confirm that rainbow has two heads in ancient literature by the morphological level. However, can we confirm rainbow’s deeply cultural image by jade Huang’s nature level? The answer is yes.

According to Chen Chun and Kong Dezhen (2006), the function of jade Huang as a sacrificial offering and accessory is also based on the historical records and the findings of archaeological discoveries. It cannot be deduced that the prehistoric jade Huang also has similar functions according to the jade Huang’s sacrificial offering function recorded in historical records. So the nature of funerary objects is generally a personal accessory (Chen & Kong, 2006). This is reasonable, but it is only one statement, there is also more evidence of archaeological data. In fact, jade Huang as an accessory can be understood well, regardless of the early single-piece Huang, or later elements of the jade group constituting elements, the current real problem is Jade Huang’s sacrificial functions. *Rites of Zhou* contains “using jade Huang with variable color to sacrifice the north”, so scholars don’t need to argue the authenticity of the written records, do not jump off the ritual about the use of jade, but by combing specific archaeological relics to find a convincing basis, so as to get out of the value judgments type circle:

(1) From the 5,000-year-old Dongshanzui site in Kazuo, Liaoning province, a jade Huang using the dragonsnake with two heads, was unearthed in the inner side of the southern base of the square base, pale green, 4 cm in length (Guo & Zhang, 1984). Both ends of jade carved the same shape of dragon, and its long mouth raised up. The Hongshan culture jade Huang was unearthed in a circular altar, which also comes with a pottery nude pregnant women, so that it makes people easily connect with the Statue of Goddess unearthed Niuhefang, so the jade Huang unearthed in the altar has more possibility of being associated with Goddess beliefs.

(2) Almost at the same time, after five excavations in Anhui Hanshan Lingjiatan site, unearthed jade Huang 76, 87M15, 87M4, 87M17, 07M23 four funerary objects were buried in addition to a larger number of jade. Basically the shape of the jade is Re-etiquette. Therefore, it is inferred that the tomb owner may be the leader of the political, military, and theocratic divisions such as chiefs and witchcraft. In the top tombs 07M23, there are up to 10 exquisite jade Huang combiners distributed on the neck of the tomb of the south side. Assuming that the status of the leader of the divine leader of the chief god of the graveyard can be confirmed, the sacred religious meaning of the jade emblem will be more prominent.

(3) About 4,000 years ago in Gansu Qijia cultural sites, the jade Huang is all made in the form of fan-shaped, perforated parts, partially rendered one-third or one-quarter of the surface of the jade carvings, and simply the three Huang couplet form, which shows that jade Huang in the family culture is the identity of the ceremony, not a simple ornament. This is a more mature concept of jade and etiquette. The jade Huang in the Qijia culture does not have the function of decorative features but the function of being a hierophany.

(4) Shenmu Shimao sites, which were widely noticed by people in China at that time, were almost at the same time with Qijia. In 2012, a complete jade was found in the collapsed Dongchengmen, at the same time a broken Huang was found in the collapsed northern section of the wall. It can be explained that these jades placed between the walls were apparently not accessories, in addition, more than one jade shovel was found between the walls of the city wall. There are 48 human skulls buried in two places under the wall, and the skulls were mostly young women, but archeology experts believe that these skulls are used for the foundation or sacrificial activities. Thus, jade Huang can use its spirituality to play the role of spiritual defense of evil spirits barrier with other jade together.

In Neolithic, civilization was distribution of the Huaxia earth in the form of “starry”, whether it is the Central Plains, or the Quartet, unearthed jade Huang was not only accessories, also played an important role in hierophany, hosted the good moral about bless caregivers peace, and prayed for the deceased ascension, and this moral was the same strain with the mythological meaning about the situation that the rainbow’s appearance represents health and happiness of strangers, the dead find the destination through the Rainbow Bridge. From the belief of rainbow culture in the ancient times, it evolved into the faith of Huang culture dating back to the 7th and 8th centuries and continued to the dragon culture belief today. In the sequential development and evolution of “the rainbow belief—jade Huang belief—dragon faith”, it is enough to reflect the great tradition of jade cultural belief represented by jade Huang and to re-examine the importance of writing tradition in later literary.

Summary: Reconstruction of a New Vision of Traditional Culture by Quadruple-Evidence Approach

It has been more than 10 years since the Quadrilateral Evidence Approach was formally put forward in 2005. Literary anthropologists continue to break through the restrictions of small traditional symbols and make full use of the fourfold mutual evidences of handed down documents, unearthed documents, oral and folk materials, cultural relics, and image materials. They verify each other, explaining evidence and systematically interpreting Chinese culture in a specific “field” which is a set of maturing and interdisciplinary significance new methodology. In response, Ye Shuxian (2015a) stated unequivocally that if you want to ask the difference between the effect of the new method of quadrilateral evidence and the traditional paradigm of traditional Chinese studies at the core of Confucian classics, that is, the purely written interpretation from books to books, to a kind of opening up the text narrative and image narrative, thereby evolved a new realm which has both the rational understanding of the specific intuitive perception of the three-dimensional interpretation.

In a new perspective of the great tradition, the systematic interpretation of rainbow Culture’s literary anthropology can help scholars to make use of the post-triple evidence to reflect objectively and verifiably the classical literature, break through the constraints of the literary court, and move towards the new cultural vision. The transmission of the image of the dragonsnake with two heads in both sides of Oracle expresses out the

features about the divinity and shelter bumper harvest of rainbow successfully; Miao, Zhuang (壮族), Hani, Taiyia, Ami, and other multi-ethnic oral narratives of rainbow culture genes rendered rainbow of drinking water and the god narrative about the soul of the tribal people soaring by the rainbow bridge perfectly; a large number of jade Huang were unearthed, which were always playing the sacred psychic role of the “sacred objects” by its sacrificial functions, and the rainbow as the prototype of the imagination was confirmed. The integration and reconstruction of the quadrilateral-evidence approach and the new traditional view of the great tradition make it possible for Chinese people to trace back to the origin of the Chinese nation's cultural identity. Chinese descendants are proud of the dragon culture which was from the rainbow culture in ancient times, in other words, the rainbow with the divinity of the world is the prototype and foundation of the dragon's belief.

Nowadays, when we advocate cross-cutting research, it is clear that the corner of our own disciplines is out of date. Breaking the barrier of disciplines and mutual academic “support” is the trend of the times. Even archeologist have to admit that the exploration of history is not limited solely to the lack of material and inadequacies, but in many ways are confined to the world view of the researcher and the limitations of analytical and interpretive methods. Therefore, this way of reconstructing and stereoscopic interpretation by knowledge archetype can prove its effectiveness. At the same time, it can explain it theoretically with many successful cases. It can be said that general methodology of humanities gives meaning to quadrilateral-evidence approach successfully to achieve the paradigm shift in the pursuit of literary anthropology (Gong, 2015). At the same time, under the current “One Belt, One Road” national major strategy, literary anthropologists should actively exert their own strengths and actively explore the road to jade. With the help of the quadruple-evidence approach, the new vision of traditional Chinese culture should be rebuilt and trace the root of civilization of the Chinese nation, restating the Chinese story!

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