

Study on the Image of Mountain Gods in Shanhai Jing

ShuYan Yi *, Bing Han, Jing Wang

Changchun Humanities and Sciences College, Changchun 130117, China

* Corresponding Author Email: yishuyan2013@126.com

Abstract. Shanhai Jing is an ancient document in pre-Qin period, known as one of the "Three Wonderful Books". As a masterpiece of mythological scriptures, Shanhai Jing contains rich mythological stories and images of gods and humans. The Wuzang Mountain Classics records many mountain gods and their sacrificial processes, which is an important part of its contents. This paper mainly takes this as the research object, and pays full attention to the relevant texts of the Wuzang Mountain Classic from the outside to the inside through the classification of the image of mountain gods, analysis of the sacrificial ceremony process and exploration of the reasons for sacrificial ceremonies. The paper provides a deeper analysis of the ancient "animism of all things" as a way of worshipping the ancestors. This type of research not only deepens the understanding of the text of the Shanhai Jing, but also provides a specific grasp of the ancient Chinese sacrificial culture, which has certain research value.

Keywords: Shanhai Jing, Sacrificial culture, Mountain god images, Wuzang Mountain Classic.

1. Introduction

Shanhai Jing, as the oldest ancient mythological book, has a strong original ecological image of God and man, which has important literature value. It proves to us the characteristics of the early ancestors' religious worship thought, which has irreplaceable research value in mythology and religion. In view of this, this paper takes the mountain gods in the "Wuzang Mountain Classic" as the research object, and mainly analyzing the interpretation of the image of the mountain gods, the worship ceremony of the mountain gods, and the reasons for their worship.

2. Narrative characteristics of the text of the Wuzang Mountain Classics

The so-called 'great affairs of a country lie in gods and wars'. The worship of gods is of great significance for a tribe or even a political power. As a mythical expression of political geography, the sacrificial information recorded in Shanhai Jing has inexplicable political significance.[1] The "Wuzang Mountain Classic" is the earliest part of the entire process of writing the "Shanhai Jing", with content and style completely different from the later "Hai Jing" and "Huang Jing", and the importance of this geographical connotation in the ancient knowledge system and the minds of relevant researchers is unquestionable. The entire text of the "Wuzang Mountain Classic" consists of over 15000 words, covering a total of 347 mountains. The content of this section is presented in a very neat and uniform manner, with an overall design of a mountain system in five directions: south, west, north, east, and central. Many mountains in each system are further divided into several sutras, each describing their beginning, direction, distance of miles, and ending in sequence. The narrative pattern of each section is basically like this, which roughly includes five aspects of information: 1) How many miles have you traveled in which direction, what mountains are there, what rivers are connected to, and which river merges with this one. 2) What mineral deposits are there on the mountain. 3) What kind of plants grow on the mountain, what do they look like, and what are their uses. 4) What kind of animals are there on the mountain, what they look like, and what magical effects people can have when eating or seeing them. Who are the mountain gods on the mountain and how they are worshipped.[2]

3. Analysis of the Image of Mountain Gods in the Wuzang Mountain Classic

The "Wuzang Mountain Classic" preserves us with rich images of mountain gods, many of which are based on animals in nature. According to the text, it can be found that the mountain gods in the "Shanhai Jing" can be roughly divided into two types: "human animal combination" and "animal animal combination". This will be discussed in detail below.

3.1. Mountain god images with the combination of beasts and beasts

3.1.1 Mountain God Image of the Bird Dragon Combination

The mountain gods involved in the combination of birds and dragons appeared three times, namely the "Southern First Classic", "Southern Second Classic", and "Middle Twelve Classic". The parts involved are the heads and bodies of these two animals. There are two mountain gods that appear in the form of "bird body and dragon head", and one that appears in the form of "bird head and dragon body".

3.1.2 Mountain God Image of the Snake Pig Combination

This form of mountain god appeared once, belonging to tenth of the 44 mountain gods in charge of the "Northern Three Classics" mountain system. According to the classical text, it is "swine body with eight foot and snake head". When sacrificing related mountain gods, jade needs to be buried underground and raw sticky rice is used as a sacrifice. This image of the mountain god further reflects the important relationship between the northern mountain system and snakes.

3.1.3 Mountain God Image of the Dragon Horse Combination

The mountain god who combines these two animal images is located in the Ninth part of Zhongshan Jing, and the mountain gods in charge of the sixteen mountains in this realm are all "horse body dragon heads". Dragons and horses are two types of beasts with extraordinary abilities. One is capable of running at an extremely fast speed on land, and the other is capable of flying freely and quickly in the air. Although the two belong to different territorial ranges, they possess speeds that other animals cannot match. The book also explains the worship of this mountain god. It is not difficult to see the importance of this mountain god from the solemnity of the precious level of its offerings

3.2. Mountain god images with the combination of humans and animals

The image of this kind of mountain god is mainly composed of human and animal body organs. Most of the gods have facial features, appearing up to 12 times in the relevant text. In addition, there is one god in the form of "human head" and two in "human body". In this case, various kinds of beasts and human beings have different forms of body combination, as shown in table 1.

Table 1. Statistics of animal species integrated with human beings

Numble	Animal name	Number of occurrences
1	Dragon	2
2	Bird	2
3	Horse	2
4	Cattle	1
5	Sheep	2
6	Snake	2
7	Pig	3

3.2.1 God image of human-snake combination

There are two mountain gods with human face and snake body, which mainly appear in the "North Times Once Classic" and "North Times Second Classic" of the "Beishan Classic". The reason why the snake-body mountain gods mostly appear in the geographical position in the north is that "in the natural environment where snakes live, the proportion of 'no vegetation' is the highest in the north".

In ancient times, people's depictions of the appearance of the human-snake combination gods were based on the snakes seen in the mountains, which further emphasized the position of snakes in the hearts of ancient people. Combined with the rendering of the terrifying sound of snakes in the text and the harsh living environment, we can see the primitive ancestors' mysterious cognition of the snake. The mystery of snakes is not only reflected in their place of residence, sound, and form, but also in the appearance or consumption of the snake can bring some utility. There are multiple records in Shanhai Jing that suggest that consuming snakes can cure certain diseases.[3] In addition, the appearance of snakes can also indicate good or bad luck. Although it is impossible to generalize whether the appearance of snakes brings good luck or disaster, according to the probability statistics of their appearance ratio, in most cases the appearance of snakes brings bad phenomena. [4] Therefore, the records of snakes in Shanhai Jing convey the profound fear of ancestors. It is this adoration for terror that leads to the combination of the snake body and the human face in shaping the mountain god, making the mountain god into a powerful authoritative image in fantasy, and then gaining the favor of the snake through the behavior of offering sacrifices, thus gaining the protection of the mysterious and powerful snake and enhancing the survival ability of the ancients in harsh environments.

3.2.2 God image of human-pig combination

In Shanhai Jing, the God image of human-pig combination mostly appears as the image of pig body and human face. In the text, the author uses boars (pig) and sows (swine) to refine the types of pigs involved in the image of Mountain God. This indicates that the ancient people had a deep understanding of pigs and utilized their practicality through different aspects. Whether it is the daily use of pigs as an important source of food, or the formal ceremonial placement of large male pigs in prominent positions in the sacrificial field, it indicates a very close relationship between pigs and primitive ancestors. So, while receiving food satisfaction, the ancients did not forget to sacrifice it to the mountain god who provided people with abundant resources, and depicted the mountain god they worshipped with its pig appearance.

3.2.3 God image of human-horse combination

Man and horse are mainly combined in the form of "horse body and human face", which appears twice in the text: once in the "Western Second Classics", "the ten gods are all human faces and horses", which shows that there are ten such gods; Once located in the "Northern Three Classics", there were 20 mountain gods in charge of the third series of mountain gods in the north, all of whom had horse bodies and human faces. Horse is a kind of animal that is good at running, and the ancients knew it very carefully and deeply. China is one of the earliest countries to domesticate horses. After taking it as a reliable riding tool, it plays a great role in improving human hunting situation and improving human survival ability. In this regard, the primitive ancestors were grateful. The existence of such feelings led them to add the image of horse to the image of mountain gods.

3.2.4 God image of human-bird combination

In Shanhai Jing, the God image of human-bird combination mainly appears in the Second Classic of Zhongci and the Eighth Classic of Zhongci. Among them, the sacrificial process of the latter is relatively rich. Sacrificing this mountain god requires the cock to be buried in the ground, the algae GUI as a sacrifice, and the rice as a staple food to worship the god. "Bird Totem" is a very important religious worship thought in ancient times. The Book of Songs "Ode to Shang Dynasty" is the evidence that the Shang tribe regards the mysterious bird as the origin of the tribe. Historical Records of Yin Benji records the pregnancy process of the mother of the ancestor of the Shang tribe in more detail. Birds have important edible value and medicinal value in the minds of primitive ancestors. Their meat can not only provide delicious food for people, but also cure various diseases of the body. More importantly, the Classic of Mountains and Seas also records a variety of birds of spirit, such as phoenix, the Luan bird and bluebird, which have the magical effect of "seeing makes the world peaceful". All kinds of factors together doomed the bird to be a unique existence in ancient times.

3.2.5 God image of human-sheep combination

There are two mountain gods that appear in this form: one appears in the "Eastern Third Classic", and the mountain god in charge of this mountain system appears in the form of "human body with sheep horn". The shape of this mountain god is mostly taken from the human body, and the parts related to the sheep are only the horns of the sheep. The introduction of the sacrificial process related to this mountain god is very simple, only involving two types of sacrificial offerings: ram and millet. However, at the end of the text, the negative effects of this mountain god are specifically explained as "wind, rain, and water lead to defeat".

3.2.6 God image of human-cattle combination

This form of deity only appears once, appearing in the position of the "Western Second Canon". The seven mountain gods in charge of this series, named "Flying Beast Gods," appear in the form of "human face and cow body". The scripture records the external images of these mountain gods in detail, and also adds words such as "four legs and one arm, walking with a staff" to freeze the image of the first combination of man and cow.

Looking at the image combinations of mountain gods listed above, we can find that most of the animals involved are in frequent contact with primitive ancestors in their daily lives, which is of great significance and value to the survival of primitive ancestors.

3.3. Mountain god with human face

In addition to the two types mentioned above, there is also a very rare mountain god in Mountain Classic, which is a single image of god and man in the form of human face. This mountain god only appeared once, specifically located in the "Middle Seven Classics" and responsible for "Kushan, Shaoshi, and Taishi". In this system, three mountain god groups appeared in human form, but unlike normal people, he had three heads, known as "three heads with human face".

In summary, through quantitative statistics and qualitative analysis of the relevant mountain god texts in the Wuzang Mountain Classic, we can find that the frequency of the appearance of the three types of mountain god images, namely animal and animal combinations, human animal combinations, and human face mountain gods, varies. The mountain god of the combination of man and beast appeared the most, with a total of 14 times, followed by the mountain god of the combination of beast and beast, with a total of 5 times, and the mountain god of the human face appeared the least, only once. The summary of the law of the appearance of the mountain god image is helpful for people today to understand the development process of the ancient nature worship. We can clearly see that in the process of fighting against nature, people's self-confidence is gradually established. From the complete absolute worship of animals to the gradual realization of their own strength, but this absolute confidence has not been fully established, which leads to the richest number of mountain gods in the combination of man and beast.

4. The Sacrificial Culture of Mountain Gods in Wuzang Mountain Classic

In addition to describing the appearance of mountain gods in various mountain systems, the "Wuzang Mountain Classic" also records the sacrificial ceremonies of mountain gods. What is mainly talked about in the sacrificial ceremony is the use of sacrifices. The classic situation of the use of livestock sacrifice in five mountain systems is summarized in the following table 2.

Table 2. The sacrificial rites of the main mountain gods in Wuzang Mountain Classic

Numble	mountain system	Sacrificial etiquette
1	The first part of Nanshan Jing	Bury animal fur with jade, put polished rice aside, and use rice and cogongrass as the bottom below.
2	The Second part of Xishan Jing	Using sheep and pigs as sacrificial offerings, and using white thatch to pave the seats of mountain gods.
3	The first part of Beishan Jing	Use a rooster and a pig as sacrificial offerings, bury them and a colorful piece of jade underground without the need for refined rice.
4	The Second part of Dongshan Jing	Use a rooster as a sacrifice and a jade pendant as an ornament tied to the neck of the mountain god. After the sacrifice is completed, bury it underground.
5	The Ninth part of Zhongshan Jing	To toast to the mountain god, with pigs, cattle and sheep all three sacrificial too fast, with a piece of jade as hanging on the mountain God's neck ornaments. During the sacrifice, they danced with shields in hand in order to eliminate the war. While praying, dance while holding a good name and wearing a top hat.

Through the enumeration of representative texts, it can be found that the offerings mainly involve three types, namely animals, rice, and jade. In addition, it will also involve the use of alcohol, music, and dance.

The types of animals used involve pigs, cattle, sheep, chickens and dogs. In the use of animals, sometimes emphasize the color of animals, some will emphasize the sex of animals. In addition to the requirements for this external image of animals, the use of sacrifices will also be involved in the process of sacrifice, including buried in the ground, smeared with animal blood, raw food, and so on. Jade is mainly a decorative existence, which is presented together with animal sacrifices in most cases except alone. In addition to expressing devotion to the mountain gods in the details of the handling of sacrifices mentioned above, it is sometimes necessary to put sacrifices on mats to show respect. Sometimes, after the offerings are placed, dynamic behaviors such as dancing are needed to continue to show piety to the gods.

The sacrificial ceremony of mountain God in Wuzang Mountain Classic is a kind of culture derived from the influence of animism.[5] The Shanhai Jing records and affects people's thinking and cognition, and places all kinds of feelings of respect and fear of nature into this "magical" sacrificial ceremony, which is one of the important channels for people to express their wishes to the gods. [6] the sacrifice used in the sacrifice, the display and use of the sacrifice, the procedure of sacrifice all reflect the respect and desire of human beings for life. It carries people's hope for life, highlighting the ancestors' pursuit of life and longing for a better life.

5. Conclusion

In short, through the above analysis of the related texts of mountain gods in Mountain Classic, we not only summarized and presented the various appearances of different mountain gods, but also briefly analyzed the sacrificial ceremonies of related mountain gods, giving their causes and background values. Relevant documents and materials have precious historical data and ideological value, which show us the original ecological nature worship and vividly reproduce the thought of "the unity of things and me" in that period. This perspective of thinking about the relationship between man and the surrounding world has strong enlightenment significance for today.

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