

A Study on Structural Changes of Chinese Local Plays in Chiang-nan 江南 during the 15th and 16th Centuries (V)

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In the previous two chapters (II & III), the author came to the conclusion that the scripts of local dramas had been differentiated into three kinds; (1) the classical type of scripts with naive expressions to be used for the performance of village community plays, (2) the new type of scripts with elegant expressions for landlord's clan plays, and (3) vulgar scripts with licentious and rebellious expressions for market plays. Under these circumstances, it would be natural to suppose that from one basic text there had come out variations of popular drama used for the performance of all kinds of plays. Sufficient clues to resolve this problem can be found in the critical notes of P'an-k'ê-shih-jên 槃邁碩人 on P'i-p'a chi 琵琶記 and Hsi-hsiang chi 西廂記, in which the reviser described the differences in words and phrases as regional variants, such as Texts of Metropolitan Drama 京本, Min Drama 閩本, Hui Drama 徽本, Wu Drama 吳本, etc. These notes lead us to take note that regional variations corresponded with each of the above-mentioned kinds of scripts according to the basis of social class.

Thus, in the supplementary part of Chapter IV, the author makes a careful analysis of the variants of both P'i-p'a chi and Hsi-hsiang chi texts to examine the relation between regional and social divisions among local dramas.

(1) The first group of texts with naive and unrefined expressions are identified with Wu Drama Texts (or Old Drama Texts 旧本).

Their words and phrases might have originated from immature performances at the *shê-miao* 社廟 plays, and thus they can be regarded as the scripts for village community plays.

(2) The second group of texts, which corresponded with Min Drama Texts, would be used mainly for clan plays in landowners' residences, for crude and simple expressions of Wu Drama Texts were generally revised into elegant and noble ones in Min Drama Texts. But there were still found some unrefined words well suited for village community plays. Therefore we presume that this group were formed in the transitional stage of the development from village community plays to landlord's clan plays.

(3) The third group of texts, which corresponded with Metropolitan Drama Texts, must be regarded as an ideal script for the performance of the clan plays of the landowner class. In these texts whole vulgar words were perfectly deleted or revised into the most elegant ones, which were used to flatter the establishment. We may say that this group were the final achievement in the process of revision on the side of landlord class.

(4) The fourth group of texts having common expressions with Hui Drama Texts can be considered as market play scripts to be performed for peasants and merchants, because the most licentious and rebellious expressions were found in these texts, especially in parts of inserted speeches. So it may be said that this group was the achievement of the poor and lower classes.

Generally speaking, the elegant scripts of landlord clan plays were written by the intellectuals in such urban places as Nan-king 南京, while the vulgar scripts had been developed at the hands of anonymous writers for the poor and lower classes in rural market places of Min and An-hui Provinces. From the viewpoint of the history of Chinese local drama, Hui Drama Texts would be estimated as the most impor-

tant script among all groups. We can say from the analysis of words and phrases that the group of *I-yang ch'iang* 弋陽腔 Texts came out from Hui Drama Texts and then were succeeded by *Gao ch'iang* 高腔 Drama, which is one of the most popular local dramas in modern times.

In the concluding chapter of this article, the author will deal with the problem of what class of people made the An-hui—I-yang dramas popular throughout almost all the country in the Ming and Ch'ing periods.