

芥川龍之介の『地獄変』における中国古典の変貌

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武文

発表要旨

『地獄変』は芥川龍之介の代表作の一つである。絵仏師良秀という主人公は果たして冷酷な芸術至上者かどうかをめぐっては、様々の論争が繰り広げられてきた。この問題を解く鍵は、良秀の娘の死はいったい大殿の意思によるものか、それとも良秀かの意志によるものだったのかを明らかにすることだったと考える。従来の研究では良秀と主張する研究者と大殿と主張する研究者との二派に分かれている。しかしどちらの立場にしても、テキストの内容を十分に説明できないところがあると思われる。

しかし筆者は、この「殺し」は地獄変屏風を作るために良秀と大殿が共謀して行ったものだと考える。それを考察するために、中国の古典『独異誌』に収められた「画聖」呉道子の物語に着目し、物語の構図と人物像を中心に『地獄変』との比較を行い、両者の興味深い類似性を検討した結果、『地獄変』は呉道子の物語の影響も大いに受けていることが明らかになった。これまでの研究では『宇治拾遺物語』の影響の指摘がなされてきたが、この中国古典の物語も『地獄変』成立に多大な影響を与えたと筆者は考える。

呉道子の物語は画師呉道子と將軍裴旻が協力して地獄変壁画を成立させる物語である。『地獄変』を地獄変屏風の成立物語という視点から見ると、良秀と大殿は娘をめぐって争いを繰り返し表向きには対立しつつも、地獄変屏風の制作過程においては二人は実是一種の「協力関係」にあると捉えられる。地獄変屏風を完成させるために、二人とも意図的に、時には無意識的に娘を犠牲にしようとしたと考える。呉道子の物語の視点を踏まえれば、従来の研究で『地獄変』の内容を十分に解釈できない物語の筋も説明できると筆者が考えて、それが本研究の意義だと結論した。

Comparing *Hell Screen* and the Story of Wu Daozi

Wu Wen

Introduction

Researchers have argued for a long time over the question of whether Yoshihide is a stony-hearted artist or not. However, the key point in regard to this question is to establish whether the originator of the tragedy is Yoshihide or the archduke. The author himself suggests that the responsibility for the death of Yoshihide's daughter does not simply lie on either one of them, but lies rather on the complicity of them both, whose tacit objective being to create the matchless folding 'hell screen'. Here, the author has cited the story of Wu Daozi, who was the most famous Buddhist artist in China during the Tang Dynasty, in order to attest this viewpoint.

Hell Screen, one of the representative works of Akutagawa Ryunosuke, uses the creation of a folding screen depicting hell as the main thread of the story. Telling the story of Yoshihide's daughter, it depicts the confrontation between power, represented by the archduke Horigawa, and art, represented by the painter Yoshihide, and represents Akutagawa's views on art and life. *Hell Screen* is an enigmatic work of fiction, and most previous research considers that the painter Yoshihide and the archduke are in opposing positions, and thus could be divided into two factions, which, it is suggested, are led by Yoshihide and the archduke respectively. Researchers have different views about the significance of Yoshihide's dream and the person who intended to rape Yoshihide's daughter, and have not yet come to a consensus. If we consider Yoshihide to be a stony-hearted artist sacrificing his daughter on his own initiative, it would not conform to Akutagawa's original idea, because Akutagawa mentioned the 'instruction of brightness' and the 'instruction of dark'¹ when he reviewed this work, and told us clearly that the inflating of the archduke is indeed to show the outrageousness of his essential character. From the story, we may understand that the archduke is the prime criminal in the killing of the Yoshihide's daughter. However, we cannot consider that the archduke planned the death of Yoshihide's daughter as a retaliation, because the archduke did not know Yoshihide to be unable to 'effectively paint anything he has not seen' when he instructed Yoshihide to paint the folding screen, and for this reason, it could not be a plot. On the other hand, it was in fact Yoshihide who offered to burn the cart and bring about his daughter's death. Therefore, who actually caused the death of Yoshihide's daughter, the archduke or Yoshihide?

Content

Akutagawa was good at Sinology, and had great accomplishments in Chinese history and Chinese literati paintings. He often referred to things related to China, for instance, an shaman from China who took on the spirit of the famous doctor Huatuo and who opened up a patient's legs to cut out the tumour (華陀の術を伝へた震旦の

僧に、御腿の瘡を御切らせになつた事²⁾”, and hell officials in Tang-dynasty dress (唐めいた冥官). Considering that some of Akutagawa’s stories came from Chinese classical literature, and that there are even ~~much~~ more such expressions ~~like these~~ in *Hell Screen* than in other works, we should establish whether *Hell Screen* is related to any Chinese story. Here, we shall consider the story of Wu Daozi, who lived during the Tang Dynasty and painted the first hell screen in Chinese history. This story is recorded in *Duyizhi*³ which is contained in a collection belonging to Akutagawa named *Taipingguangji*.

This record is similar to Akutagawa’s *Hell Screen* in respect to the characters and the structure. Firstly, the two characters in the story, Pei Qian as the General and Wu Daozi the artist, are similar to the archduke and Yoshihide respectively, and both sets exemplify the idea of ‘superman versus genius’. Secondly, the structure of the story – introduction, development, turn and conclusion (起承転結) – is similar. The main framework of the works may be compared in detail:

The introduction (起): in *Hell Screen*, the archduke orders Yoshihide to paint the folding hell screen; similarly, in the story of Wu Daozi, General Pei asks Wu Daozi to paint the hell screen fresco.

The development (承): Yoshihide agrees to paint; Wu Daozi also agrees.

The turn (転): Yoshihide cannot imagine the lady in the burning cart, and asks the archduke to carry this out; Wu Daozi says that he has not painted for a long time and wishes General Pei to perform a sword-dance in order to ‘get to hell’. Both wishes are approved. Yoshihide wished to see the actual image of the lady in the fire, while Wu Daozi wanted to feel the conditions of hell from the sword dance.

The conclusion (結): the archduke burns Yoshihide’s daughter to death, after which Yoshihide devotes his life to finishing the masterpiece and then commits suicide himself; General Pei performs a sword-dance and Wu Daozi continues painting the masterpiece throughout his life.

From the above, we can see that the development of both works is almost the same, not only in their structure, but also in their characters. Firstly, the characters Wu Daozi and Yoshihide are both the most famous painters of their time. Wu Daozi (685?-758) a sage of Chinese Painting, is famous for his Buddhist murals and landscape paintings. Furthermore, Yoshihide is considered to be the most talented painter in the world. Secondly, both of them are so eccentric that they do not believe in gods or demons. Wu Daozi painted his own face on the face of the Bodhisattva in the fresco, which indicated that he did not believe in any god. Meanwhile Yoshihide is depicted similarly in *Hell Screen*. ‘In his opinion, it is a lie that gods can transmit themselves to common people. The reason for this is that he is a person who draws Lakshmi as a

scoundrel and Acalanatha as a depraved buffoon, and who does things oddly on purpose'. From this comparison, we may discover that there are so many similarities between Yoshihide and Wu Daozi, including in the details of their depiction, that these similarities are even more important than the ones with Japanese classical literature. Here is a comparison:

According to a previous study, *Hell Screen* comes from: a story from the *Uji Shūi Monogatari*, volume 3, “Ryōshū, a Buddhist Artist who was Glad to see his Home ~~been~~ Burnt Down”; the story “A Buddhist Named Ryōshū” in Chapter 6 of *Jikkishō*; and the story of a painter called Hiroataka in chapter 11 of *Kokon Chomonjū*. According to the textual research of Nagano Shōichi⁴, the parts related with *Uji Shūi Monogatari* are merely the characteristics of Yoshihide and the fact that the painter realized his destiny. Because the complex story of *Hell Screen* could not be created using Yoshihide alone, it is highly possible that the figure of the archduke is related to *Duyizhi*. Actually, Akutagawa seems to emphasize the relation between his story and Chinese classical literature, and the image of the archduke as Qin Shi Huang and Sui Yang Di (two famous emperors during the Tang and the Sui Dynasty). Also, Akutagawa provided Yoshihide the nickname of ‘chiraeiju’, which is a name for tengu coming from China. These facts hint that these two figures came from China. Of course, *Duyizhi* is only one of the origins of *Hell Screen*. The depiction of the archduke was greatly altered, and the figures of Yoshihide’s daughter, the little monkey, and the monk are Akutagawa’s own creation.

Finally, we come back to the issue mentioned in the beginning: who caused the death of Yoshihide’s daughter, the archduke or Yoshihide? The reason why it is extremely difficult to answer this question lies in the fact that they are considered as opposites, a good and an evil character, of which one of them brought about the tragedy. However, the relation between Wu Daozi and General Pei provides us with the inspiration that both sides make great efforts to create the hell screen, and thus have a cooperative relationship. If we consider *Hell Screen* as a story of the birth of a famous painting, in which both Yoshihide and the archduke are keen to give birth to the hell screen, and are even willing to sacrifice Yoshihide’s daughter, they are actually complicit. From this point of view, we may find an answer. The maxim ‘art for art’s sake’ means that art is everything for an artist, and there is nothing that cannot be sacrificed for art. In Akutagawa’s thought, this is the optimal spirit for an artist.

Conclusion

<Hell Screen> was written under the influence of both Japanese and Chinese classical literatures. <Duyizhi> influenced <Hell Screen> in two ways: one is on the plot of ‘genius versus superman’, it filled the figure of Yoshihide with characteristics of Wu Daozi and made the character of Archduke out of General Pei Qian. The other is that it gives us a new point of view. If we consider Yoshihide and Archduke as accomplices, it would be very easy to explain the question in the beginning. Yoshihide and Archduke sacrificed Yoshihide’s daughter just because they want to get the ‘Hell Screen’, a precious artwork.

What the Akutagawa wanted to highlight is the pursuit of artistic creation, no matter how difficult it is, never give up. Yoshihide is just the real artist with such a great spirit.

Reference

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