



Intense Love Portrayed on the Eve of Chinese QI XI Festival of Oral Tradition

KEYWORDS

The Qi Xi Festival, the oral tradition, true love

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ABSTRACT *"Love" is the word referring specifically to passionate desire and intimacy of romantic affection. History of China dates back since 5000 years. There are various stories that had been told in oral format from generation to generation in the long run. The Qi Xi Festival is one of the Chinese traditional Festivals, demonstrating the eternal love between Niu Lang and Zhi nu and touching upon affections of thousands and thousands of natives and people all around the world. This paper focuses on importance of the Qi Xi Festival, which emphasizes on the attitudes of love that is shared on the eve of Qi Xi festival as well as the story behind the origin of that festival. The author has highlighted the social value of the society in the period of time and unfolding the expressions and beliefs from bottom of hearts of people in the modern society. The story illustrates the firm and sincere attitudes towards the love, expressing the traditional social value towards love and pinning strong wishes for the couple together. The oral tradition is a vital aspect for people's understanding of social value of the society they live.*

INTRODUCTION:

There are various stories that had been told in oral format from one generation to another in the long run. "Histories and stories of a people that come to people in a form that is spoken or sung is called oral traditions." Oral tradition means that the information as well as the stories are spoken aloud rather than written down.

There are more than 5000 years of history for China. Love maintains a mysterious, a passionate desire and an intimacy of romantic affection all the time, which is the longing for many human beings though their lives. There is a story with full of romance about the Chinese Valentine's day-the Qi Xi Festival that named as "Double seventh Festival" as well, is on the 7th of the 7th Chinese lunar month and it often goes into August in the Gregorian calendar.

The Qi Xi Festival is based on an ancient Chinese fairy tale about the love story between a farm boy named Niu Lang and a fairy named Zhi Nu living in the Heaven. The God of heaven became angry at the two lovers and separated them with the Milky Way. Thus, the lovers could meet only once a year on the seventh day of the seventh lunar month, when magpies formed a bridge for them to pass over the barrier.

THE LOVE STORY OF THE QI XI FESTIVAL:

Once upon a time, there was an honest and kind-hearted fellow named Niu Lang whose parents died when he was just a small child. There was no other choice for him, living with his brother and the sister-in-law. However, after a few months, Niu Lang was driven out of the home by his sister-in-law and lamented over his lonely and poor life only with a very senior cow- the only friend of him and the companion. The young lad treated the cow genuinely and spoke from the heart with nothing concealed to that cow everyday. One day, the cow started to speak to him and he was astonished. The magical cow told him mildly of a way to find a beautiful and gentle woman to be his life companion. Under the guidance of the magical cow, Niu Lang went to the riverside on an evening, where the seven fairies slipped out of the heavenly palace to bathe. He quietly took one piece among the colorful silk dresses of the fairies who left the bank. When the fairies left the water, there was a fairy named Zhi Nu who could not find her clothes and had to see her sisters fly back to heaven without her and was the youngest of seven daughters of the Queen of Heaven and worked to weave clouds in the sky. Just then Niu Lang came out with the dress and asked to Zhi Nu whether she wanted to be with him. Zhi Nu fell in

love with him at first sight and came down secretly to earth and married him. So during the happy time, Niu Lang farmed in the field and the Zhi Nu weaved at home. Niu Lang and Zhi Nu lived peacefully and happily and had two children. Several years passed on the earth, which were only a few days in heaven. The Queen of Heaven discovered Zhi Nu's absence very soon. The Queen of Heaven became intense rage and ordered soldiers in heaven to bring Zhi Nu back to the Heaven. Seeing his beloved wife taking away from him to the Heaven, Niu Lang was terrified. He recalled the magical cow words which told him before dying of old age that please keep the cow hide for emergency use. He quickly caught the cow hide hanging on the wall inside his cottage and put his two small children into the two baskets of the shoulder pole, putting the cow hide on, suddenly he fled from the ground with his two small children, chasing his wife. With the help off the cow hide, Niu Lang was able to follow Zhi Nu into the Heaven. When he was about to reach his wife, the Queen observed the scene and showed up, pulling off her hair pin to draw a line on the sky between this couple. The line became the silver River in Heaven-the Milky Way in a minute, Niu Lang could not fly across the River.

Zhi Nu missed her husband across the Silver River so much and she sadly went back to the Heaven, weaving the clouds on the heaven. The clouds that she weaved seemed to be sad so well. Niu Lang kept on looking upon the sky and the silver River in Heaven with their children day by day. Soon tens of thousands of magpies moved by the loyalty and true love of that couple formed a bridge of magpies over the silver River for the Cowhand and Weaver Maid to meet each other. The Queen Mother was eventually moved as well, allowed them to meet on the 7th of the 7th lunar month each year. Hence the day for meeting of the two lovers after a long departure has been called "the Qi Xi" (the Chinese Valentine's Day).

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE QI XI FESTIVAL:

The love story about Niu Lang, mortal coward and Zhi Nu, a celestial waver has been handed down for nearly 2 millenniums, having been told from generation to generation in oral form and has renowned to both literate and illiterate, as well as well-known in home and abroad in modern society. There are various visions for this eternal romantic story, since it started with an oral way. "Some scholars have shown the Double Seventh Festival originated from the Han Dynasty (206 BC-AD220); Some considered the Festival originated from the Song (960-1279) or other dynasties. There was one of the articles regarding to the "Qi Xi" appeared on markets

in the capital, which said that the bustling markets demonstrated the significance of the festival."

When the Qi Xi Festival is coming, people would like to admire beauty of the stars when the Milky Way has shown clearly spanning from the north to the south. There are two bright stars which see each other from afar on the two sides of the Milky Way, which brings people to recall the romantic and sorrowful love story. The Chinese people believe that the star Vega at the east of the Milky Way, is Zhi Nu and on the western side of the Milky Way, Niu Lang is waiting for his wife and they could see each other on the day each year.

Every year for Chinese people, they celebrate the festival by appreciating the shining stars and holding feasts with their lovers and family members. It is the time for them to cherish the family and their lovable friends around them and to recall their sweet memories. Thus people realize they should cherish every moment in life.

CHINESE ATTITUDES TOWARDS LOVE THROUGH THE ROMANTIC STORY

The moonlight stands for their love and their loyal heart on the evening of the Qi Xi Festival. It is not the time to feel pity about remaining days of a year could not see each other to the lovers, but the time should be smile because they have had the most happy and the best time while being together. People dream about love and also maintain a perfect ending by seeing two lovers together once a year, which unfolds the strong belief that lover, should be gathering forever without disturbance.

They hold the minds to wait across the River to see each other a year after a year, though there are thousands of difficulties ahead. It demonstrates love may need to wait a chance or an opportunity and to cherish the time of gathering. It may not happen to be together for the entire life, nevertheless still they live and stay for the sake of each other, for the chance of meeting each other, for the beliefs and faiths they keep, for the name of love. They keep themselves alive with the pain, the sorrow adding a ray of hope as well as the glimpse

of comfort. Love in depth exists in the pattern of that conquering distance between couples. The story reveals there is no perfect image and condition for mortal beings, living in the society. Some people may have the fortune to find their true love; however in a variety of circumstances, the lovers even need sacrifice themselves to hold the deep emotion and to gain a perfect love. People admire the firm and deep love between Niu Lang and Zhi Nu and the sacrifice which they did for each other. People dream that they could also have the same firm and deep love like Niu Lang and Zhi Nu. However, it is difficult to have the perfect and ideal image of love in the real world. In the reality, it seems could happen in rarely.

The most difficult matter in the world is the most precious thing which people eagerly wants to obtain. Thus people have the sweet wishes for the lovers and celebrate the firm and sincere attitudes to pursue true love in the Qi Xi Festival, which demonstrates aspects of social value and strong affection and desire of people towards love.

CONCLUSION:

The Chinese traditional Festival-the Qi Xi Festival uncovers the eternal love between Niu Lang and Zhi Nu, touching upon sympathy and deep emotions of thousands and thousands of natives and people all around world. The story maintaining more vivid, more dynamic and fresher in the way of the oral tradition is a rich vein to discover the social value of people and the attitude towards the true love. The Qi Xi Festival brings perfect love images and wishes to unfold expressions and beliefs of people from bottom of the hearts.

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