

Research on the Yulan Hall Manuscript System of the “Supplement to the Class of Banma Characters”

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Abstract—After being collated by Li Zengbo, the “Ban Ma Zi Lei” was renamed “Supplement to the Class of Banma Characters” and published. After the Ming Dynasty, many copies were derived from the Supplement of Banma Character classes, and a complex version system was produced. Among these systems, the Yulan Tang transcript system contains three kinds of transcripts and one printed version, which has the characteristics of high academic value and wide spread. This article conducts a detailed verification and analysis of the main system of the Yulan Hall, providing convenience for the research and application of the “Supplement to the Class of Banma Characters”.

Keywords—“Supplement to the Class of Banma Characters”, Li Zengbo, Version verification

I. INTRODUCTION TO THE “SUPPLEMENT TO THE CLASS OF BANMA CHARACTERS”

The “Ban Ma Zi Lei” is a work written by Lou Ji to solve the difficult-to-understand characters in “Records of the Grand Historian” and “History of the Han Dynasty”. During the Southern Song Dynasty, as the Records of the Grand Historian and the History of the Han Dynasty had been created and circulated for a long time, there were many parts that were difficult for later generations to understand when reading them. Taking this as a starting point, Lou Ji classified and organized the ancient characters, rare characters and borrowed common characters in “Records of the Grand Historian” and “History of the Han Dynasty” according to the four tones, and attached the original annotations to the characters that needed explanation and conducted verification. After the publication of “Ban Ma Zi Lei”, it had a significant impact on the academic circle at that time. Some scholars believed that there was still room for revision and supplementation in “Ban Ma Zi Lei”, among which Li Zengbo’s revision was particularly important. Li Zengbo (1198–1268), styled Changru, was a renowned minister and lyricist in the middle of the Southern Song Dynasty. In the second year of Baoyou (1254), Li Zengbo was traveling on official duties in Sichuan. Under the influence of the local Confucian scholar Wang Kui, Li Zengbo revised and supplemented the errors and deficiencies in the “Ban Ma Zi Lei” and named it “Supplement to the Class of Banma Characters”.

Compared with the “Ban Ma Zi Lei”, the “Banma Character Category Supplement” has re-examined 1,239 characters and corrected many errors in the “Ban Ma Zi Lei” [1]. Weng Fanggang, a scholar of the Qing Dynasty, conducted a detailed examination and revision of the “Supplement to the Class of Banma Characters” without seeing it and wrote it in the “Two Han Dynasty Epigraphic Records”. After comparison, it is found that there are many

similar conclusions in the “Supplement to the Banma Characters” and the “Epigraphic Records of the Han Dynasty”. Moreover, many scholars such as Jiang Guangxu and Li Shengduo have all appraised that the “Supplement to the Class of Banma Characters” has significant academic value [2].

II. RESEARCH VALUE

Although the academic value of “Supplement to the Class of Banma Characters” is higher than that of “Ban Ma Zi Lei”, the speed of their dissemination and influence are exactly the opposite. Take the editions introduced in Guo Guoqing’s “The Origin and Development of the Editions of the ‘Ban Ma Zi Lei’” as an example. Among them, there are twelve published editions and seven copied editions of the “Ban Ma Zi Lei”, while there are only three published editions and as many as ten copied editions of the “Supplement to the Class of Banma Characters”. Among these three editions, the one published by Jiang Guangxu is the most influential. Studying the engraving system of Jiang Guangxu’s printed editions not only helps clarify the problems among various editions and analyze their advantages and disadvantages, but also provides important suggestions for the use of the book.

III. RESEARCH REVIEW

Due to the relatively weak understanding of the “Supplement to the Class of Banma Characters” in the academic circle, there are relatively few related studies. Among them, Guo Guoqing’s “The Origin and Development of the Versions of the ‘Ban Ma Zi Lei’” [3] and Wang Nan’s master’s thesis both systematically sorted out and discussed this issue [4]. However, since the content of the two articles is not detailed enough, there is still room for supplementation.

IV. THE YULAN HALL EDITION AND THE JIANG GUANGXU ENGRAVED EDITION

The “Supplementary Catalogue of Banma Characters” was first published during the Jingding period of the Southern Song Dynasty (1260–1264), and was compiled under the supervision of Pan Jie, a disciple of Li Zengbo. By the time the book reached the Ming Dynasty, it was very rare. Fortunately, many scholars had copied it. Since then, the book has been distributed mainly in the form of a transcript [5].

At present, the earliest copy of the Supplement to Banma Characters in the Ming Dynasty is the copy of Yulan Tang, and the copy of Jiguge Ying in the Ming Dynasty is the most complete one that preserves the original appearance of the Song Dynasty. The photocopy is now collected in the

National Library of China. It is bound in five volumes and has a format of half a page with eight lines of 21 characters each [6]. The notes are typeset in small double lines. When the Commercial Press compiled the “Four Series of Periodicals” in 1936, it selected this copy as the base text for photocopying and publication [7]. Compared with the Ming Dynasty Jigu Pavilion copy, although the Yulan Hall copy did not fully retain the original appearance of the “Supplement to the Class of Characters” printed during the Jingding period of the Song Dynasty, it formed a unique text system in the long-term process of copying and dissemination, demonstrating unique academic research value. This is precisely the important feature of the Yulan Hall copy system.

The core of the Yulan Hall system is the Yulan Hall manuscript from the Ming Dynasty. The Yulan Hall was the collection place of Wen Zhengming, a renowned painter and book collector of the Ming Dynasty. Wen Zhengming has a huge collection of books, with particular emphasis on copying books. Its manuscripts are as renowned as those of Congshutang and Zhutang.

Jiang Guangxu introduced the circulation of the Yulan Hall's copy of the “Supplement to the Class of Banma Characters” when printing the book. In the Yulan Hall copy, there are seals of Yulan Hall and Ji Zhenyi. From this, it can be known that the book was originally in Wen Zhengming's home and later by Ji Zhenyi (1630–?). Save. Ji Zhenyi was an important scholar and book collector in the Qing Dynasty. After the books collected by the Wen family were scattered, some of them ended up in Ji Zhenyi's home. After Ji Zhenyi's collection of books was scattered, this book was transferred to Jiang Guangxu, who then engraved and published it. In 1985, the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom attacked Zhejiang Province, and the entire province was placed under martial law. Jiang Guangxu led his family to take refuge in Guan Tingfen's home. In 1960, Jiang Guangxu's residence was looted and burned, and all his property and books were lost. Since then, the Yulan Hall has vanished without a trace.

Since the Yulan Hall has vanished in the flames of war, can the appearance of this book be restored from the “Supplement to the Banma Characters” printed by Jiang Guangxu? The most common version of “Supplement to the Banma Characters” today was published by the Commercial Press in the 25th year of the Republic of China (1936). In the book, Zhang Yuanji discussed the characteristics of the versions within the Yulan Hall version system. He believes: “Compared with the well-known ‘Ban Ma Zi Lei’, the ‘Supplement to the Banma Characters’ was printed in smaller quantities. Only Jiang Guangxu of Haichang published it based on the Yulan Hall copy during the Daoguang period of the Qing Dynasty.” After Zhang Yuanji's collation, he also realized that there were missing pages in the Yulan Hall manuscript, and the books engraved by Jiang Guangxu completely inherited such a situation. Similarly, Jiang Guangxu also mentioned this point when introducing the process of engraving. He believed that the content of the Yulan Hall manuscript was slightly different from that of the “Ban Ma Zi Lei”, but since there were no other editions of the book to compare with, he chose to follow the original manuscript for publication. It can be seen

that Jiang Guangxu was already aware of the deficiencies in the book before engraving the seal. Therefore, the original appearance of the Yulan Hall manuscript can be seen in the “Supplement to the Banma Characters” published by Jiang Guangxi.

Jiang Guangxi's edition holds an important position in the version system of “The Supplement to the Banma Characters”, but there has never been a definite conclusion on when Jiang Guangxi published this book. If this issue can be clarified, it will undoubtedly provide significant assistance for the dissemination and research of “The Supplement to the Banma Characters”. The Jiang Guangxu edition is recorded as the “Qing Xianfeng Edition” in the “General Catalogue of Ancient Chinese Books”, [8] and the National Library records it as the “Jiang Family Edition from the Daoguang and Xianfeng Periods of the Qing Dynasty”. To determine the exact time when Jiang engraved this book, one should analyze it in combination with Jiang Guangxu's inscription at the end of the book and Qian Taiji's records in “Ganquan Xiangren Gao”. Jiang Guangxu's preface was completed at the end of the 29th year of the Daoguang reign (1849). Qian Taiji wrote in “Ganquan Xiangren Gao”: “Shengmu has been republished and supplemented but has not yet been printed. Record of the tenth month of Gengxu.” Based on Qian Taiji's life story, this year of Gengxu should be 1850, which is the thirtieth year of the Daoguang reign. When Jiang wrote the inscription, it was already the end of the 29th year of the Daoguang reign. By October of the 30th year of the Daoguang reign, it still had not been printed. Based on this, the author infers that the book was engraved in the 30th year of the Daoguang reign.

V. QIAN TAIJI'S COPY

In addition to Jiang Guangxu's collation and publication of the Yulan Hall manuscript, Qian Taiji also collated and transcribed the Yulan Hall manuscript, thus giving birth to the Qian Taiji manuscript. Qian Taiji (1791–1863), styled Fuyi, with the pseudonyms Jingshi and Shenlu, was from Ganquan Township, Jiaxing, Zhejiang Province. He was an expert in collation. He had a close relationship with Jiang Guangxu. The two often collated books together and discussed academic matters. Qian Taiji recorded in his “Ganquan Township People's Draft” the process of copying and collating the Yulan Hall manuscript before Jiang Guangxu's publication and printing. However, this highly valuable copy of Qian Taiji was soon lost in the war between the Qing court and the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom. In the first month of the 11th year of the Xianfeng reign (1861), Qian Yingpu, the son of Qian Taiji, resigned from his official position due to the war and returned to his hometown, persuading Qian Taiji to flee. After repeated persuasion, Qian Taiji fled to Fengshan in February to avoid disaster. In April, he went to Yuyao. In June, he moved to Cixi. In September, he traveled from Ningbo to Shanghai and then to Jiujiang. In December, he temporarily stayed at the home of Mrs. Cheng, the wife of Qian Yingpu, in Xinjian County Township [9]. During his long journey of wandering and hardship, Qian Taiji's collection of books suffered heavy losses. The “Qian Taiji Edition” copied from the Yulan Hall Edition has since vanished without a trace. This is undoubtedly a great loss to the research on the development

of the version of “Supplement to the Banma Characters”.

VI. MANUSCRIPT BY LIU LUFEN

Liu Lufen made bold corrections and supplements when transcribing the missing version published by Jiang Guangxi. Liu Lufen (1827–1879), styled Yanqing and with the pseudonym Maosheng, was a renowned book collector in the late Qing Dynasty and was fond of copying books. Ye Changchi once commented on Liu Lufen, saying, “She was extremely fond of books. Whenever she came across a good copy, she would spare no effort to purchase it. If she couldn’t get one, she would copy it by hand [10].” The “Shilu Jinshi Shuzhi” written by Lin Jun records the status of Liu Lufen’s copying of the “Banma Character Category Supplement [11].” It is written in the text that Liu Lufen copied and used the “Ban Ma Zi Lei” published by the famous book collectors Ma Yueguan and Ma Yuelu during the qianlong period for collation. During the collation process, Liu Lufen found that a page of Jiang Guangxi’s publication was missing. She supplemented the missing part on the manuscript with the content of “Ban Ma Zi Lei”. Based on the book seal in the manuscript recorded by Lin Jun, it can be inferred that this book was copied and proofread by Liu Lufen and then stored in Liu’s “Ancient Red Plum Pavilion”. After Liu Lufen’s death, his collection of books was lost. The book was purchased by Liu Rongcun, the owner of the Bogu Studio and a bookseller (whose birth and death dates are unknown), and was soon sold to Lin Jun, a book collector from Fujian who was living in Shanghai at that time. In 1957, under the facilitation of Zheng Zhenduo, Lin Jun sold all the books and maps he had collected to the state. Today, they are all kept in the Institute of Archaeology of the Chinese Academy of Sciences [12].

VII. ERRORS IN “RESEARCH ON HOMOPHONIC CHARACTERS IN THE ‘BAN MA ZI LEI’”

The “Research on Homophonic Characters in the ‘Ban Ma Zi Lei’” holds that Jiang Guangxu’s edition was engraved based on the “Supplementary Notes to the ‘Ban Ma Zi Lei’” recorded in the “Baojinglou Collection of Books” from the Song Dynasty. In the text, the copy from the Baojinglou Collection is verified as the copy from the Yulan Hall based on information such as the line type. However, Jiang Guangxu’s edition was half a page with 11 lines, each line consisting of 11 large characters and two small characters. In contrast, the “Supplementary Catalogue of the Banma Characters” recorded in the “Baojinglou Collection of Books” was 12 lines per page, with 12 large characters and 18 small characters, and the name of the publisher was also noted [13]. Therefore, it is simply not feasible to argue the relationship between the two based on the wording. Therefore, the “Supplement to the Class of Banma Characters” recorded in the “Baojinglou Collection of Books” is not the Yulan Hall copy, nor can it be the original copy of the Jiang Guangxi

edition. It’s a pity that the old collection of the Baojing Tower has been lost. In the absence of solid evidence, it is impossible to verify the original copy of the Baojinglou Collection.

VIII. CONCLUSION

To sum up, among the many editions of “The Supplement to the Class of Characters”, the Yulan Hall edition system holds significant importance due to the birth and dissemination of the Jiang Guangxu edition. The Yulan Hall copy was copied from the Song Dynasty woodblock edition and one page was missing during the copying process. Qian Taiji gave birth to the Qian Taiji Manuscript through collation and copying. After collation, Jiang Guangxu followed the original appearance of the Yulan Hall copy and engraved it. Liu Lufen copied the version published by Jiang Guangxu as the base text and made supplements through collation. After comparison, the author believes that among the Yulantang version system, the version with the highest quality is the Liu Lufen manuscript, and the one with the widest dissemination and greatest influence in the academic circle is the Jiang Guangxu publication.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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