

蓮生敘事：比較宗教象徵研究*

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摘要

本文運用比較宗教的手法，考究埃及與中國佛道二教傳統有關的蓮生神話敘事，試圖指出蓮花生是橫跨亞洲許多不同宗教文化所共享的宗教象徵。其次，本文嘗試提出蓮在宗教象徵方面，特別跟生命有關；常表現為神聖生命的創生或生命的轉化。而蓮一開一合的生長特點，很容易被想像為生死循環、生死二元的象徵。此外，蓮出污泥而不染的離垢清淨特性，也形成染淨與迷覺的二元結構想像，甚至成為凡俗世界到終極世界的宗教象徵。就因這種種關聯性，不同古代宗教文化都曾以蓮花為宗教象徵。

但本文也指出需要注意不同種類的蓮花，影響不同地區的宗教想像，這些物質基礎，影響其上層的宗教建築。是以埃及的蓮花生，僅涉及花朵，而佛教與中土民間神魔敘事的蓮花化身，就常涉及蓮花的葉子與蓮藕，至於淨土的蓮胎說法，就顯出其如來藏的傳統了。

總之，蓮花確實是古代宗教的重要象徵，其植物特性，譬如

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開闔運動，發散香氣，以及蓮花的不同部位，都影響其在宗教傳說的地位。但無論差別何在，其共通之處，就在於蓮與創生生命及再生生命有關，而此又涉及通過蓮花的跨界想像，無論是跨越凡俗到神聖，跨過污染到清淨，還是跨越死亡到再生，再再顯示蓮在比較宗教象徵方面的特殊意義。

關鍵字：蓮生、哪吒、轉化再生、象徵、宗教現象學

The Religious Narratives of Lotus-birth: A Comparative Study of Religious Symbol

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Abstract

This paper employs the method of comparative religious study to examine the mythological narratives concerning the lotus-birth in Egypt and Chinese Buddhism and Daoism. It has attempted to put forward the idea that the lotus is an important religious symbol shared across different Asian cultures, as witnessed in the cases of ancient Egypt, Chinese Buddhism and Daoism. It is especially related to the idea of life. It signifies the idea of creation of sacred life or the transformation of life. The paper has also shown that some special characteristics of the plant, such as its being open in the morning and closed at night, have made the plant an easy metaphor for the cycle of life and death, a symbol of the duality of life and death. In addition, since the lotus is not contaminated even though it grows in a mud pond and the flowers have a unique fragrance, this dualistic structure can easily be used to express an idea of moving from the profane world to the sacred world, or leaving the world of the dead and gaining resurrection. This type of duality can easily acquire symbolic correlation from the characteristics of the lotus. On account of this correlation, the lotus symbol is used across different

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religions.

But this paper has also shown that it is important to note that different types of lotus bear influence upon the narratives of religious symbols in different geographical locations. The water-lily has neither seed pod nor lotus root and, naturally, in the ancient Egyptian narratives, these two parts of the plant are never mentioned. However, different parts of the lotus are used in Buddhist and Daoist narratives. The mentioning of lotus seed/embryo in Pure Land Buddhist tradition is a reflection of their belief in *tathāgatagarbha*.

Keywords: Lotus-birth, Nuozha, transformative rebirth, Symbol, Phenomenology of Religion