

末劫解救——從觀音救劫善書 探討觀音信仰之民間化*

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摘要

清末以降，接踵而至的天災人禍、內憂外患的現實苦難，使民間視為末日劫難的到來。「末劫」當前，時間急迫，「救劫」更形緊要，於是神明救劫類的善書大量出現，呈現著民眾在苦難中，對於神明解於倒懸的高度期待，其中觀世音菩薩是極重要者，相關的觀音救劫善書於焉大量出現傳布。

中國的觀音信仰雖然源自佛教，但清末以來大量出現的觀音救劫善書，主要的推動者卻是民間宗教團體、勸善社團及個別「善人」。觀音原具有悲心並解救苦難眾生的神格特質，隨著觀音救劫善書的傳布，更添加有救劫的角色，使其信仰更為流傳廣遠。而在新舊神格成功的疊合與新詮釋下，中國的觀音信仰遂有了新內涵，也可視為觀音信仰更具有「民間化」的特質。

關鍵詞：觀音菩薩、末劫、救劫、善書

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Doomsday Rescue — A Study of Folklorization of Guanyin Belief from the Morality Books of Goddess Bodhisattva on Rescuing Doomsday

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Abstract

Since the late Qing period, people regarded the natural disasters, and the suffering due to the domestic and outside causes as doomsday catastrophe. Thus, doomsday rescue had become urgently important, and the morality books such as gods rescuing doomsday appeared in large numbers. It shows that people have a high expectation for the gods to save the suffering, and Guanyin Bodhisattva is one of the most important gods in this matter, which resulted in a lot of morality books related to Bodhisattva.

Although the belief in Bodhisattva among Chinese originated from Buddhism, the main promoters for Bodhisattva rescuing doomsday are folk religion societies, charity groups or organizations and individual “believers”. It was manifested by a large number of Bodhisattva morality books since the late Qing period. Bodhisattva had the qualities of compassion in rescuing the suffering people. The spread of morality books about rescuing doomsday in turn promoted the distribution of Bodhisattva belief more widely. As the folk society endowed a new interpretation of Bodhisattva by combining its original meaning with the new ones, the Bodhisattva belief in China thus had a new connotation. We may also regard it as a Bodhisattva belief with more “folk” characteristics.

Keywords: Guanyin Bodhisattva, doomsday, doomsday rescue, morality books