

PREFACE

Centuries ago, while the meticulous Chinese ancestors were that exploring their living land, they created the artistic miracle of Pre-Qin fables.

Pre-Qin fables possess a long history and rich resources. From it, we can observe the footprints of the development of the Chinese civilization. Our ancestors, initially, for the purpose and need in their the real lives, exploited the most direct way of thought- objective thought - to create these marvelous works of art.

With the development of the social manpower and the elevation of human ability, the main subjects of people's thought steered from gods to human beings, from nature to society and from the thought of mythology to the arts. Therefore they were able to create the pre-Qin fables.

In the aspect of arts, the pre-Qin fable is another precious product following on from the creation of ancient myths in the phase which tuen from the ignorant to the civilized. We find out that those ancient masters generally utilized fables as medium to express their "crystallized thoughts". The fables composed, by the masters such as Mengzi, Zhuangzi and HanFeizi, are all an objective medium of their thoughts.

This thesis is divided into three main chapters to cover the research into pre-Qin fables: "The interpretation of research in fables and the pre-Qin fables", "The conception of the pre-Qin fables and its features" and "The general development circumstances of pre-Qin fables as an objective medium of thought".

The first chapter describes the Stages of sorting and research into pre-Qin fables. Its points out the sorting was initiated in the Meng and Ching dynasties and that the larger and most effective one was started in New Literature Period. Besides, enthusiastic researches into pre-Qin fables were also initiated during New Literature Period.

The second chapter analyzes the differences in definition between fables and pre-Qin fables in detail. It indicates that

While fables feature stories, philosophies and implications, Pre-Qin fables share these characteristics, and also have a "personality" of non-story, non-independence and periphery. This is the first theory that has been put forward in this thesis. I think pre-Qin fables differ from other general fables we usually mention. The differences are that they can be stories in detailed poles or a catalogue with implications, and this is the theory I have raised here.

The third chapter, at first renders the emergence and the reason for popularity of pre-Qin fables, and secondly the stages of pre-Qin fable development. It shows that pre-Qin fables, in general terms, experience three periods during their development from emergence to maturity:

First period: Initiation - Shang dynasty

Second period: Progress - Chun Qiu

Third period: Maturity - Zhan Guo

This is what I have tried to distinguish the stages of pre-Qin fable development with the study of the stages of pre-Qin society. For this, I aim to give learners and researchers of pre-Qin fables a clear conception of time. This is, finally, the third theory that I have proposed.

Pre-Qin fables are a climax in the history of Chinese fables and as well an invaluable legacy of classical Chinese literature. We can still see their importance nowadays, and I believe this type of literature that illuminate people's thoughts will shine on our lives with the need of human mental lives and the elevation of thoughts. However, the research into pre-Qin fables so far have not yet been sufficient. With this thesis, I will endeavor to follow the precedents and remark on the exploration of pre-Qin fables, of course, there must be some errors in this thesis and I would appreciate all readers rectifying them or me.