
The Equality of Kowtow: Bodily Practices and Mentality of the *Zushiye* Belief

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Abstract:

Although the *Zushiye* (Grand Masters) belief is in some degree similar with the Worship of Ancestors, it obviously has its own characteristics. Before the mid-twentieth century, the belief of King Zhuang of Zhou (696BC-682BC), the *Zushiye* of many talking and singing sectors, shows that except for the group cult, the *Zushiye* belief which is bodily practiced in the form of kowtow as a basic action also dispersed in the group everyday life system, including acknowledging a master (*Baishi*), art-learning (*Xueyi*), marriage, performance, identity censorship (*Pandao*) and master-apprentice relationship, etc. Furthermore, the *Zushiye* belief is not only an explicit rite but also an implicit one: a thinking symbol of the entire society, special groups and the individuals, and a method to express the self and the world in inter-group communication. The *Zushiye* belief is not only “the nature of mind” or “the mentality”, but also a metaphor of ideas and eagerness for equality, as well as relevant behaviors.

Key Words: Belief, Bodily practices, Everyday life, Legends, Subjective experience

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1. INTRODUCTION

Based on the fact of many social practices of kinship in China, the academia not only considers the kinship emphasizing paternity as the basic character of Chinese culture externally when making cross-cultural comparison but also often concludes that Chinese society is a “*Ni qinshu shehui*” (fictive kinship society) internally, especially when comparing God of sectors (*Hangye shen*) with the ancestors worshiped in kinship.¹ However, just as “*Ni qinshu shehui*” is not equal to “*Qinshu*” (kinship), the *Zushiye* (Grand masters) of some sectors differs greatly from the *Kaijizu* (ancestors) of kinship.

For carriers or owners of culture, *Zushiye* is also often called *Zushi*, which refers to alive men who are worshiped by the carriers of culture, and who started the skills they perform and professions they take. *Zushiye* is a sign and symbol of a basic principle of the order formation, actions and communications of a group. Transcending the everyday life of a group, *Zushiye* is the God up above worshiped by a group. In the everyday life, *Zushiye*, disciplining all aspects of group life, is an available real existence of individuals everywhere. Due to the relevance to specific professions or sectors from time to time, *Zushiye* is called *Hangye shen* (the God of sectors) in the academia.

At present, there are many writings about all kinds of *Zushiye* beliefs in traditional society with a majority limited to related legends and stories that are lacking in details and systematic fieldwork, let alone the corresponding studies.² For the studies we can get, most of them are based on the written material including inscriptions and combined with relevant legends and stories. They just conduct studies from the origin, make a brief analysis of the diversity, characters and influence of *Zushiye*, and make a rough analysis of functions of *Zushiye* in integrating and maintaining a special group or sector and enhancing the social status in a social system with differences and hierarchy in the cultural comparison among different groups on different levels, by etic approaches.³ Obviously, these functional studies that are descriptive, objective, and emphasized in the whole are necessary, but they are far from making a clean sweep of the rich social practices and connotation of *Zushiye* belief in Chinese traditional society.

¹ See Hsu, F. L. K., *Clan, Caste, and Club*, New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1963; Ma Guoqing, *Home and the Social Structure of China*, Beijing: Wenwu Press, 1999.

² Such as Chen Delai, *The Legends of Grand Masters of 360 Trades*, Hangzhou: Zhejiang Literature and Art Press, 1985; Ren Cheng, *The Legends of Grand Masters of 72 Trades*, Zhengzhou: Hai Yan Press, 1986; Wang Zuoji, *The Grand Masters of Trades in China*, Beijing: Chinese Literature and History Press, 2007.

³ Li Qiao, A Brief Summary of the Gods of Trades in the History of China, *Social Science of Beijing*, 1988 (4): 122-127; Li Qiao, *The Religious Worship of the Gods of Trades in China*, Beijing: China Overseas Chinese Publishing Company, 1990; Li Qiao, *The Religious Worship of the Gods of Trades: the Study of the Gods' Creation Movement of Chinese People*, Beijing: China Literature & Art United Press, 2000; Li Qiao, The Religious Worship of the Gods of Trades in China, *Encyclopedic Knowledge*, 2006(6): 42-44.

Among the studies performed, the one by Liujia Chongzhang, which is specialized in the *Zushiye* belief in a couple of professions in Peiping half a century ago, is especially worth noting.⁴ This investigation has paid attention not only to the social and cultural background essential for the existence of a profession, but also to the internal differences, with a bright sense of western “extending” situational analysis that is still widely circulated in the academic circle in China today. Moreover, this investigation takes notice of the deviation between the official and the folk and respects the expressions of the persons concerned without distortion or amendments. More importantly, Liu has been aware that the *Zushiye* belief is more than historical legends and the group worship. He links the professional characters with *Zushiye* and notices *Zushiye* in everyday work and life that is “the popular belief in everyday life”.⁵

Apparently, this pioneering and classical investigation has much to learn from. This paper plans to take the belief of the King Zhuang of Zhou Dynasty (696BC-682BC) who is worshiped as the *Zushiye* of talking and singing (*Shuochang*) sectors or trades for an example to explain how the *Zushiye* belief inscribed in bodily practices like kowtow as its basic action besides group worship is presented in group everyday life such as acknowledging a master and apprenticeship, marriage, performance, interrogation and master-prentice relationship, etc.⁶ While revealing what *Zushiye* means to everyday life of groups in connection with professions and consisted of individuals, this paper also plans to explain *Zushiye*, which implies both hierarchy and equality, is not only individuals’ thinking pattern and symbol in a profession, but also the “nature of mind” or “mentality” of a group and the whole society surrounded methodologically.

2. KOWTOW: BODILY PRACTICES IN THE *ZUSHIYE* BELIEF

Although the division of social labor is getting finer and various new sectors still come out, there is a whole transition of traditional values, mode of production and ways of living. Today, as a belief related to the “mentality”, the *Zushiye* is disappearing gradually in many sectors and industries, worshiped by fewer and fewer people. It is really hard to find a *Zushiye* belief which

⁴ Liujia Chongzhang, *The Research Summary of the Grand Masters of All Trades in Beijing*, Volume 8, manuscript, Capital Library Collection, 1961.

⁵ Yue Yongyi, *Efficaciousness ·Kowtow ·Legend: the Double Facets of Popular Belief*, Beijing: SDX Joint Publishing Company, 2010, pp.169-240; Yue Yongyi, 《家中過會：生活の流れにおける民眾信仰》, 載《比較民俗研究》(for *Folklore Studies of ASIA*) vol.24(2010): 71-122.

⁶ I’d like to particularly point out the study by Zhao Shiyu and Deng Qingping on the Lu Ban belief. Their purpose of study is to “positively analyze the worship activities of Lu Ban *Hui* as an organization in worship” and exploit the deep social meaning to cause “the thinking of the degree of social development in the period from late Qing Dynasty to the Republican era”. It overcomes the previous shortcomings brought about by singular-origin study and functional analysis in the study of Lu Ban belief in many sectors. On the other hand, the study on *Hui* with particular stress on group activities makes the individuals anonymous. Obviously, there exists difference on methodology between their study and this paper which advocates “everyday life and individuals” and studies the *Zushiye* in everyday life from the perspective of the mentality of individuals and groups. See Zhao Shiyu and Deng Qingping, *Lu Ban Hui: Guilds and Sacrificial Organizations in Beijing during the Qing Dynasty and Early Republican Period*, *History of Qing Dynasty Studies*, 2001(1): 1-12.

used to be popular in many particular sectors in the traditional society. Therefore, the term "the *Zushiye* belief in everyday life" is mainly discussed on the level of epistemology and methodology, instead of attempting to recollect concrete details. This paper tries to outline the *Zushiye* belief in everyday life, based on rare records and memories of the past life.

An apprentice's professional study starts with *Baishi*, a ceremony of acknowledging a master. He would be taught many principal facts about his profession, such as its origin, its *Zushiye* and its inheritance system. The performance of the *Baishi* ceremony, which seems to involve only real persons, is considered to act for the *Zushiye* in people's mind. The master accepts his apprentice on behalf of the *Zushiye*. The props of his profession, too, are related to the *Zushiye* as materialized symbols.

According to the description of a peregrinator, Yun Youke, who experienced many careers in his youth, we can know more about such a ceremony.⁷ In the early twentieth century, if a *Dagu* (bass-drum) entertainer wanted to accept an apprentice and hold a *Baishi* ceremony, he must send invitation to various people in his trade, including the aged, the middle-aged and the under-aged. A table was laid in the room with a memorial tablet of King Zhuang of Zhou, *Xianzi* (a kind of three-stringed plucked instrument), a drum, and a *Xingmu* (story-teller's gavel) on the top. When putting *Xianzi* on the table, the emcee of the rite would say a formula called *Cizan* (a kind of hymn):

Ancient musical instruments are made of eight different kinds all in all,
Shi Kuang, who received respect from *Sanhuang*, is a master of them all.⁸
 With sixteen words left in the world,
 He, the musician, set the hierarchy in the court.
 Seven strings of Guqin represent a lot,
 For the universe they shall stand.
Zushi left the arts behind him,
 Only to help the descendants support their family themselves.
 Although some have made great accomplishments,
 Among the disciples who have learned the skills,
 Everyone is supposed to worship the *Xianzi* in front,
 So that he can start to perform in the world.

⁷ Yun Youke, *Jianghu Cong Tan*, Volume 1, Peiping: Peiping Shiyuan Press, 1936, pp. 125.

⁸ Shi Kuang is an ancient blind musician living in the Spring and Autumn Period (770 BC-476BC). There are at least seven versions about *Sanhuang* (three Emperors) in China, one of which is *Fu Xi*, *Nv Wa*, and *Shen Nong*.

There were also formulas when putting down the drum and the story-teller's gavel. The novice should write “*Zi'r*”(or *Baishi tie*), a kind of card to show his willingness to be a good disciple, then make a kowtow to the *Zushiye*, and say a formula. The tenor of his speech reads:

Pan Gu created the whole world;
 Fu Xi invented the Eight Diagrams.
 Eight Diagram stand for eight things:
 The Heaven, earth, water, hill,
 the fire, thunder, wind and lake in the end.
 Above colorful clouds the God comes,
 When the incense lingering in the air.
 Zushiye, King of Zhuang of Zhou,
 Please have your seat of honor in front,
 I will cense and pray before all around.

Similar *Cizan* could also be found even in the end of the twentieth century.⁹ In Beijing City, many aged artists performing in *Tianqiao* (Sky Bridge)area, where was a *Zabadi'r* in the late Qing Dynasty and Republic China, used *Cizan* as an indispensable part in their *Baishi* ceremony.¹⁰

Guan Xuezheng, the dean of *Qinshu* (story-telling in the form of ballads song with musical accompaniment) in Beijing, experienced a *Baishi* ceremony when he was a child. He was supposed to keep on making Kowtows to the *Zushiye*, his master, his introducer (*Yinshi*), guarantor (*Baoshi*), substitute master (*Daishi*), and to the master's brothers. So the *Baishi* ceremony was also often called “to Koutow and carry the card of acknowledging a master on the novice's head”(*Ketou ding datie*) in old Beijing. A piece of red paper called *Shenma* was a token of *Zushiye*. There were names of several gods such as *Qingyin tongzi*, *Guban langjun*, etc., on this piece of paper and in the center is *the King of Zhuang*. A board was hung up on the wall with the red paper stuck to it. Under the board there was usually an incense burner or a bowl.¹¹

⁹ See Yue Yongyi, *Space, Self and Society: the Production and Genealogy of the Tianqiao Street-Entertainers*, Beijing: Central Compilation & Translation Press, 2007, pp.57; Yue Yongyi, *The Zabadi of Old Beijing: the Memory and Interpretation of Sky Bridge*, Beijing: SDX Joint Publishing Company, 2011, pp. 118.

¹⁰ For the complicated means of “Zabadi'r” of Old Beijing see Yue Yongyi, Urban Physiology and the “Lower Body” Characteristics of “Zabadi”: A Case Study of the Sky Bridge District of Modern Peking, *Journal of Chinese Ritual, Theatre and Folklore* (Min-su ch'ü-i), 2006(154): 201-252; Yue Yongyi, *The Zabadi of Old Beijing: the Memory and Interpretation of Sky Bridge*, , pp. 309-355.

¹¹ Interviewee: Guan Xuezheng. Interviewer: Yue Yongyi. Date: Oct.18th, 2000. Site: Yangqiao, South 3rd Ring Road, Beijing.

Similarly with Guan's memories, there are three steps in a *Baishi* ceremony of Huangmei Opera (*Huangmeixi*) profession: making a kowtow to the *Zushiye's* tablet, one's own master, and then to the other masters present. Usually, the tablet was made by red paper and yellow silk, and was pasted up on the wall. Sometimes, there was a wooden statue of the *Zushiye*, looking like the personated old man, and a male opera role, who were adorned in marshal costume and wears a black beard. In front of the tablet, there was a pair of red candles and a incense burner. The apprentice should light candles and burn incense first, then burn some yellow papers for worshipping, light a firecracker, and make a kowtow to the *Zushiye*.¹²

In the *Baishi* ceremony, the *Zushiye* is an indispensable symbol and key element of the sphere of ritual ceremony. Besides, it is the object which the novice should kneel to and feel by heart, and which all members should remember and cherish. Considering the fact that this ceremony is a symbolic or actual detachment from his former social space, social life and group, for the novice, it will not be hard for us to understand the fact that the worship of ancestors, emphasized in traditional Chinese society, would be replaced by the *Zushiye* belief quickly when a person enters a new group.¹³ Both of them regard “kowtow” as their basic bodily practices.¹⁴ A novice realizes group identification and gains his new role-- a “new self” but not an “old self”--totally based on the *Zushiye* belief.

Usually, after *Baishi* ceremony, the disciple should worship the *Zushiye* at home (if any). On some special days such as birthday or memorial days, he needs to make a kowtow to *Zushiye* at home, besides attending group worship. In the 1950s, Ma Guibao acknowledged Bao San, a famous Chinese tumbling and flagpole waving (*Zhongfan*) entertainer as his master, and then worshiped the *Zushiye*—Yue Fei (1103—1142)—at home. On the first day and the fifteenth day of each month, he made a kowtow to the *Shenma* of Yue Fei and censed in front of it.¹⁵

During the learning process, both the master and the disciple, maintain their status and roles in the name of *Zushiye*, giving a scared legitimacy to the complicated structural conflict between them, like the ones between father and son, or master and servant. Coordinated by the *Zushiye*,

¹² Zhou Yan, The Brief Introduction of the Origin and Evolution of the Grand Master of Huangmei Opera— Additionally the Practical Essence of the Customary Worship of Grand Masters, *Huangmei Opera Arts*, 1989 (2): 48-59.

¹³ Yue Yongyi, Separation and Incorporation: Construction of Modern City Street-Entertainers' Identity— Tianqiao Street-Entertainers of Beijing as a Case, *Journal of Chinese Ritual, Theatre and Folklore* (Min-su ch'ü-i), 2003(142): 207-272.

¹⁴ See Yue Yongyi, *Space, Self and Society: the Production and Genealogy of the Tianqiao Street-Entertainers*, pp.215. Based on the *Chaxu geju* (the differential mode of association) of Fei Xiaotong, Ma Guoqing notices the “permutation” too. He believes the Chinese society is built on the “pattern” and “analogy”. A guild or a secret society is established by imitation of the kinship. And the *Zushiye* resembles the ancestor in a family. Ma considers the *Zushiye* belief as a religion against everyday life: “the guild, centered on the belief of patron, bears the stamp of religion. It regards *Zushiye* as the founder of the sector, especially during some ceremonies related to *Zushiye*. See Fei Xiaotong, *From the Soil: the Foundation of Chinese Society Bearing System*, Beijing: Beijing University Press, 1998, pp.24-30; Ma Guoqing, *Home and the Social Structure of China*, pp.136-142.

¹⁵ Interviewee: Ma Guibao. Interviewer: Yue Yongyi. Date: Aug.15th -17th, 2005. Site: Xisi, Xicheng District, Beijing.

those advantages and disadvantages of their relationships will accompany them lifelong. In the past, it seemed to be natural for those apprentices to get a thrashing from their masters, who thought that they got such power from the *Zushiye*. In a sense, it is the *Zushiye* who wants to punish his apprentices, rather than the master. And the master is the incarnation or extended hands of *Zushiye*. Cheng Lianbao, an acrobat in the *Tianqiao* area, often knelt in front of the *Zushiye*'s (Lv Dongbin) memorial tablet, and suffered beating from his master when he was a child. However, the master would never beat him on the fourteenth day of the fourth lunar month, which is believed to be the *Zushiye*'s birthday.¹⁶

Sometimes, the junior artists or apprentices, as a social vulnerable group, may use *Zushiye* as their “powerful weapon” against the elders or their masters. For example, among the acrobat group in the Wuqiao county, Hebei province, there was a special ceremony called *Xuanzu* (hanging the *Zushiye*'s Shenma). Such ceremony would be held in the situations as below: 1) the whole group encountered a big problem; 2) the manager of a theatrical troupe was thought to be unruly; 3) two unacquainted troupes were in disagreement when they interrogated each other (*Pandao*, identity censorship).¹⁷ At this ceremony, many artists gathered together, burn incenses, made kowtows, and laid the *Shenma* of Lv Dongbin—their *Zushiye*. After worshiping the *Zushiye*, everyone present got the right to express his view freely. Even the junior artists had a say in blaming the elders for punishing them when there was no misbehavior. It explains why nowadays there is a saying circulated among acrobats in Wuqiao area that “the artists fear the *Xuanzu*”.

Until the 1950s, artists must worship their *Zushiye* and pray for a smooth trip before they went out for a performance. Not only did rappers or other artists usually have a memorial tablet of *Zushiye*—the King of Zhuang—in the backstage area, but everyone also should make a kowtow to it before his performance, and “pray to *Zushiye* for a successful show”.¹⁸ If there was any mistake during the performance, one would accept punishment in front of the memorial tablet. When coming across sudden accidents, people's first thought was to make a kowtow to *Zushiye* and pray.¹⁹ On the first day and the fifteenth day of each lunar month, the manager of a theatrical troupe must offer up a sacrifice to *Zushiye*. The leading role in a troupe also offered up an offering if good things happened in his life. Some lords and ladies in the audience offered up a sacrifice on occasion to parade their wealth. Artists often prayed to *Zushiye* for health when they were sick.²⁰ Sometimes, the *Zushiye* even acted as a witness of a wedding ceremony. There is a little story about it. A female itinerant artist named Zhang Rongkui was forced to

¹⁶ Bai Ye, and Shen Yin, *Tianqiao*, Beijing: Xinhua Press, 1986, pp. 131-132.

¹⁷ Yang Shuangyin, Yang Liu, *Acrobatics Performers in Wuqiao, Hebei Province*, In *The bottom Class and Marginal Society: The Tradition and Modern*, Qiao Jian, ed., Taipei: Lixu Cultural Enterprises Corporation, 2007, pp. 149.

¹⁸ Sun Shuyun Dictated, Bao Chengxie Collated, *The Ups and Downs of the Stage Life*, Beijing: Chinese Folk Art Press, 1986, pp. 31.

¹⁹ Xin Fengxia, *Memories of Xin Fengxia*, Beijing: Beijing Press, 1982, pp. 150.

²⁰ Xin Fengxia, *When I Was a Little Actress*, Beijing: SDX Joint Publishing Company, 1985, pp. 174.

marry a bully. In order to escape from that marriage, she decided to get married with a man she loved in her troupe. They made a kowtow to *Zushiye* in backstage and held their own wedding ceremony in front of the *Zushiye*'s tablet.²¹

If an artist had never experienced a *Baishi* ceremony to establish a relationship with the *Zushiye*, he would not have become a professional performer. In the old Beijing, an artist who had no master would face discrimination by others in his profession before 1949 by being called as “a child without a father” or *Hai Qingtui*'r (a kind of wild eagle). No matter how skilled he was, he had no right to perform in *Tianqiao* area formally. Therefore, a Chinese cross-talk(*Xiangsheng*) entertainer named Gao Deming had to acknowledge a late artist Feng Kunzhi as his master and made a kowtow at Feng's grave, although he had already learn how to perform a cross-talk from his father.²² Ma Sanli, a famous cross-talk performer after 1949 also acknowledged Zhou Deshan as his master, after learning skills from his father Ma Delu and brother Ma Guiyuan.²³ Zhao Yuming, who has performed for several years as a traveling artist after she completed her study from her father, had to make a kowtow to Wang Wenrui and went through a *Baishi* ceremony.²⁴

The relationship with the *Zushiye* has an impact on artists' division of income. In a Huangmei Opera troupe, one's income was measured by “*Li*”. A leading role might only get eight *Li* if he or she had no master, while other roles were likely to get nine point five *Li* if they had undergone a *Baishi* ceremony before. A clapper performer (*Guban shifu*) could get ten *Li*, a whole share, because he was the chief conductor of the whole show and was considered as the representative of the *Zushiye*.²⁵

In order to discuss that how societies remember, especially “how the memories [are] accumulated in the body”, Paul Connerton, after elaborating on the commemorative ceremonies, divides “bodily practices” into “incorporating practices” and “inscribing practices” to construct his theoretical system. Incorporating practices are messages that a sender or senders impart by means of their own current bodily activities. Inscribe practices refer to situations in which we trap and hold information by printing or photos long after the human organism has stopped informing. Therefore, he thinks that the transition from incorporating to inscribe practices is “a transition from an oral culture to a literate culture”.²⁶

²¹ Xin Fengxia, *Memories of Xin Fengxia*, pp. 217.

²² Zhang Furen, The Chinese Crosstalk Artists in Tianqiao, in *Literature and History of Xuanwu Distric*, Volume 2, The Xuanwu District of Beijing Committee of Cultural and Historical Data of CPPCC, ed., 1993, pp. 149.

²³ Ma Sanli, The Stage Life, in *Cultural and Historical Date of Tianjin*, Vol. 23, pp.196-243, Tianjin Committee of Cultural and Historical Data of CPPCC ed., Tianjin: Tianjin People's Publishing House, 1983.

²⁴ Zhao Yuming Dictated, Meng Ran Collated, *The Pursuit of Arts—the Sixty Years of Zhao Yuming on Stage*. Beijing: Xinhua Press, 1997, pp. 44.

²⁵ Zhou Yan, The Brief Introduction of the Origin and Evolution of the Grand Master of Huangmei Opera—Additionally the Practical Essence of the Customary Worship of Grand Masters.

²⁶ Connerton, P., *How Societies Remember*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989, pp. 72-102.

Obviously, not only the cultural inheritance of skills, but also those behaviors mentioned above like kneeling and kowtow are incorporating practices. The kowtow which masters make to the *Zushiye* is a kind of demonstration passing information to his apprentices so that an apprentice knows that he should also make a kowtow to the *Zushiye* and his master. Through those incorporating practices, the *Zushiye* belief is embedded in novices' sensitive world, and such practices become daily activities of this group. Almost all service industries in the traditional Chinese society were excluded from the written traditions by the mainstream society, especially because many people in those industries were illiterate. However, bodily practices and feelings related to the *Zushiye* are often accompanied by inscribing practices, such as building a temple to embody the *Zushiye*, or dedicating a monument to the *Zushiye* with the help of some literate people. That is the reason why in Beijing, a densely populated and richly historical city with numerous guilds, we can find a series of temples built for those *Zushiyes* in the Dongyue Temple, such as Lu Ban palace and Xi Shen (the God of Joy) palace. Many stone memorials of Lu Ban--a *Zushiye*--are also found in this temple.²⁷ We can see that, in China, a country with a long history and written tradition, paper and writing are highly respected. In this context, everyday memory, practices and feelings related to the *Zushiye* in a specific profession, can be seen as results of interaction between incorporating and inscribing practices, or of interaction among heterogeneous groups across different social ranks. These results are considered as people's active group identity and passive choice, both explicit and implicit, rather than as a one-way linear evolutionary process from incorporating practices to inscribing practices.²⁸

For everyone in a certain profession, he can present himself to the *Zushiye* several times, both in the shared public space and personal private space, through the *Baishi* ceremony--a kind of the Rites of Passage at a critical point--and everyday bodily practices.²⁹ Whenever one listens to the *Cizan*, makes a kowtow, or accepts kowtow from the other, both his body and mind are inscribed and refreshed by the *Zushiye* belief over and over again. For each individual, the *Zushiye* realizes a concretization or embodiment through the sensitive and touchable life, and becomes "the trueness of experience", instead of an existence in idea or imagination.

While indicating a series of relationships based on the master-apprentice system, such as that of the dominance and submission, of majority groups and vulnerable groups, the *Zushiye* shows a *Chaxu geju* (the differential mode of association). But the *Zushiye* is also a symbol of equality,

²⁷ Dongyue Temple (Beijing Folklore Museum) ed., *The Compile of Inscribed Steles of Dongyue Temple and Mount Tai Belief in Beijing*, Beijing: Chinese Bookstore, 2004, pp. 75-142.

²⁸ Dongyue Temple (Beijing Folklore Museum) once organized a discussion about the *Zushiye* in traditional opera circles—Xi Shen. Memories of many old men support the idea that, "the *Zushiye* in the life aspect" means that "the *Zushiye* exists in everyday life rather than not out of it". For the details of this discussion, see <http://tech.163.com/04/1028/12/13PFNOKS0009rt.html>. Memories and experiences of those old men are incorporating practices what Connerton has talked about, and interpretation of stone memorials in Xi Shen Palace by Chen Bali shows us clearly the "inscribing practices" of Xi Shen. See Chen Bali, The Interpretation of the Stone Memorials in Xishen Palace, Dongyue Temple, Beijing, *Folklore Studies*, 2006(3): 195-201.

²⁹ Van Gennep, A., *The Rites of Passage*, Trans. Vizedom, M. B., and Caffee, G. L., Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960.

despite the fact that this equality, shown by *Xuanzu* ceremony or something alike, may be moderate and compromising. The *Zushiye* is the source and fundamental element of the knowledge system in a certain profession, and the inner group's basic guide when people communicate with each other. Therefore, the *Zushiye* is finally internalized as something that everyone should grasp and seek for actively, and it helps them to identify themselves and their group in turn. When this group converses with others in different ranks, this identification will be further intensified by external force, and show much the "nature of mind" or mentality of this group.

3. GOLDEN-PLATED: THE *ZUSHIYE* BELIEF AS A NATURE OF MIND

In everyday life of a profession which used to be active, many static legends recorded at present about *Zushiye* actually are dynamic for quite a long time. They are far more than just telling the history of a profession. As was said, for individuals in a profession, these *Zushiye* legends are "trueness of imagination" and "trueness of experience" as well. What's more, these legends are symbols and tools which emphasize their identities and roles and are employed to communicate with outsiders; these legends are steles of reasonable things and conditions; these legends are strategies and ways of political struggles with other groups in a social system with hierarchies and differences. Their values as reasons and tools co-exist.

In a certain sense, for quite a long historical period, different from the dualism of purity (the touchable) and impurity (the untouchable) in Indian society, the opposition of manual workers and mental workers develops into the dualism of "the serving" and "the served".³⁰ This deviation in Chinese society also dictates that Chinese social statuses are not different by the standards of gifted role expectations and group identities. The hierarchical system, featured by the division of gentry and rabble in household registered system and patters popular among the folk such as *Sanjiao Jiuliu*, a kind of folk song, has always been transmitted and practiced in the traditional society.³¹

In a bottom-up social system, these itinerant entertainers making a living on skills, especially those of talking and singing, have been divided into the rabble and the lower nine ranks (*Xia Jiuliu*). What's more, there are also hierarchies among the rabble who are scorned by the gentry like the officials, farmers, workers and businessmen. Until the mid-twentieth century, the Peking Opera performers still looked down upon the *Dagu* and *Pingju* Opera entertainers who degraded into Chinese crosstalk entertainers, who in turn despised the *Shulaibao* (rhythmic

³⁰ Qiao Jian, The Status and Roles of Musicians in Chinese Traditional Society, *Chinese Studies*, 16.2(1998): 267-285.

³¹ The professions are divided into three classes in the folk, with nine in the upper rank, nine in the middle and another nine in the lower rank. The upper nine classes include: the Buddha, the immortal, the King, the official, the worker, the businessmen, and the farmer, etc. The middle nine classes include: the doctor, the fortune-teller, the monk, the musician, the chess player, and the Taoist, etc. The lower nine class include: the horse-riding performers, comedians in training monkeys, the hairdresser, the magician, the beggar, the opera jester, the prostitute and the instrument player, etc..

storytelling to clapper accompaniment) entertainers. Besides, the internal hierarchies also have an impact on the living space, especially the division of superiority and inferiority of the performing space.³² The class differences, with overlapping and blending of the internal and the external, passive submission and initiative identity, endow more symbolic meanings on the narrations of the *Zushiye* legends for all professions. In fact, they are declarations and confessions of practitioners' attitude and mentality.

Most of the monologue story-tellers (*Shuoshu yiren*) in the north regard King Zhuang of Zhou as *Zushiye*. The most common version of the reason is from Zhang Fukui, who performed for Empress Dowager Cixi of the Qing Dynasty (1835-1908) and later ended up performing in *Tianqiao* of Beijing. Here is his narration:

Actually, we, monologue story-tellers, are not of low status. I heard from an aged eunuch that the fifteenth King of Zhou Dynasty is *Jituo*, King of Zhuang, who is a filial son, especially to his mother. When his mother was sick, he would come to her and tell her stories to relieve the pain. His mother was so pleased that she started to recover. As time went by, he had told all he knew. However, she still wanted more. Then the King asked the four officials with the following surnames, Mei, Qing, Hu, and Zhao, to tell stories in turn. Afterwards, the filial King passed away. The new King, considering these four officials had made no contribution to the court but story-telling, planned to cancel their salaries and dismiss them out of the court. The four people replied that they were ordered to tell stories to ordinary people by the passed King and they presented the evidence. Then Mei, Qing, Hu, Zhao, these four officials became the *Zushiye* of the four groups of the performing field. It is said that the story-teller's fan represents the arrow of the King of Zhuang and the *Xingmu* stands for the official seal. In the very beginning, since the state offered the performers with salary, how could they be ranked in the lower class (*Xia Jiuliu*)?³³

Besides the explanation for the origin, the origin of different groups, and the prototypes of the props used in performance, these legends also explained the original identities of the performers—the noble such as the king and the officials, the character of the performers—filial piety which is totally in compliance with the traditional Confucian moral ideas, and implied information such as the mandate of the new King. Since it promoted filial piety, kindness of the King, and the tolerance of the new King, which were appreciated by the mainstream ideology, this legend connecting the marginal group with the mainstream was accepted by the mainstream society, which makes the legend be handed down further. The stories are told to the disciples in order to let them gain confidence, courage and self-respect to survive in ruthless situations rather than just to let them know who the *Zushiye* are and how the profession

³² Yue Yongyi, *Space, Self and Society: the Production and Genealogy of the Tianqiao Street-Entertainers*, pp.196-214.

³³ Cui Jinsheng, Song Xiangchen and Her *Zhuban Shu*, in *The Book of Quyi of Beijing City*, Volume of Profiles, (Printed Copies), 1990, pp. 133.

originated or to ask them to be grateful. At the same time, both the legends and telling the legends expressed the wish that the present, even the future, should be the same as the past.

Besides telling the legend of the King of Zhuang in the rituals of acknowledging masters and group worship, most of memories and narrations are told internally when the performers are teased or looked down upon. The Tianjin-born performer Song Laiting performed in Tianjin-Tangu area in the very beginning. However, his younger uncle hated him as an entertainer. He thought of his performance as a shame to the Song family so that he made troubles for him and even beat him. Afterwards, Song fled to Beijing for another performer Zhang Fukui in *Tianqiao*. It is in such a rough condition where he had lost all the confidence that Song was told the above legend of King of Zhuang by Zhang Fukui.

The *Shulaibao* entertainers of the *Qiongjia Men* (poor family) are divided into many different schools. The Jiang Bei (in the north of Yangtze River) and the Jiang Nan (in the south of the Yangtze River) schools differ greatly in that they worship Fan Dan and Zhu Yuanzhang respectively. It is said that Fan Dan was a famous wise man in the Spring and Autumn period(770BC-476BC) from whom Confucius once borrowed rice during his travelling in many kingdoms. With the proviso that his disciples could beg for food from the Kong family with a “dog-beating stick” (*dagou bang*), Fan Dan lent Confucius a bamboo tube of rice (or silver) with regenerating power and saved the lives of Confucius and his disciples. Therefore, the men of *Qiongjia Men* are supposed to beg for their living from the noble and stores. Besides, they beg with great confidence, trying to maintain dignity, and they despise those beggars lacking self-esteem. The reason why Zhu Yuanzhang, the first Emperor of Ming Dynasty, was worshiped as the *Zushiye* of *Qiongjia Men* is mainly that people believe he was saved by two aged beggars with leftovers apart from the fact that he was a beggar himself. Therefore, after being crowned as an Emperor, he conferred a title upon the two beggars. Begging, therefore, became an official profession.

Apparently, as *Zushiye*, the King of Zhuang, Fan Dan, and Zhu Yuanzhang in those legends express the harmony among primitive professions. The repetitive telling of these legends not only places an emphasis on the imaginative social equality but also serves as an accusation of the living conditions, and dreams and actions for equality. For the two *Zushiye* in begging, Wang Xuezhi who had ever learned the skill of *Qiongjia Bang*, once drew a comparison between *Qiongjia Bang* and *Yaofan De*. He said:

The *Yaofan De* does nothing but beg for rice. We, *Qiongjia Men*, do not beg for rice but money. The *Qiongjia Men* says Fan Dan is their *Zushiye*. That’s what they do to bring distinction to themselves. It does not mean that Fan Dan is the real *Zushiye*. It is *Qiongjia Men* members trying to bring honor to themselves! In fact, it’s not true. It is not recorded in the history. It’s only said by the gang. Then who is the *Zushiye*? It’s Zhu Hongwu, Zhu Yuanzhang. Why? Wasn’t he saved by two beggars? Some said that he was trapped in a

temple. But this history is shorter than our saying. In my view, I won't say Zhu Yuanzhang; I will say Fan Dan, the *Zushiye*.³⁴

In fact, the account of Yun Youke about eighty years ago records that other entertainers mixed the entertainers of *Shulaibao* with *Qiongjia Men* and prevented them from begging for money in the streets for a long time.³⁵ The fact refers to the internal hierarchy in the society despised by the mainstream society. In view of Yun's account, the expression of Wang Xuezhi becomes more meaningful: in inferior and humble living conditions, *Qiongjia Men* brings honor to themselves in the name of Fan Dan or Zhu Yuanzhang to express that the once-existent elegance, equality, and at least attitude of being "not humble" are sacred, legal and rational in the profession. The expression is a cry where hope and despair co-existed to struggle for the living power and opportunities in a changeable modern society.

Zushiye is a tool of communicating and expressing externally. *Zushiye* also facilitates the communication within a profession across different places. The particular items used in a profession also become a dual medium in interrogation. The shape of the materialized props also becomes the focus of the process, which is called *Pandao*. In 1920s, the mobile begging around Henan Province believed in Hong Ma as *Zushiye* and the four pieces of ferula were granted by Cao Guojiu, one of the Eight Immortals(*Baxian*). These beggars asked one another about the *Zushiye*, rules and related knowledge of the ferula when they met by chance.³⁶ In the early period of the twentieth century, around Peiping and Tientsin, a monologue story-teller performing on the streets would experience such a process if he was new there:

When a story-teller sees another strange story-teller in the performing area, he would cover the *Xingmu* with the towel on the table and put a fan across the towel, wandering what the new performer would do. If the new one had no idea and confessed that he had never acknowledged a master, the story-teller would take away the performing props together with the earned money and forbid him from performing, which is called *Shou Poluo*. However, if the new performer has a master and knows the rules, he would take up the fan with his left hand and start to perform eleven lines of the opening. After performing four lines (A fan as a sword, the King of Zhuang used to command, all ancestors are in one family, thousands of peach blossoms are in one tree), he would drop the fan, take up the towel and put it on the left. In the end of the opening (No need to attach to others, the Confucius propagated in the kingdoms, Zi Lu cultivated people on the way. Liu Jingting argued with a group of thieves, Su Ji united the world by speeches. Zhou Jituo (the King of Zhuang) handed down the story-telling; we learn it from ancient till now), he would tap with the *Xingmu* before continuing. After observing all these, the

³⁴ Yue Yongyi, *The Zhabadi of Old Beijing: the Memory and Interpretation of Sky Bridge*, pp. 122.

³⁵ Yun Youke, *Jianghu Cong Tan*, Volume 1, pp. 76-77; Yun Youke, *Jianghu Cong Tan*, Volume 2, Peiping: Peiping Shiyuan Press, 1936, pp. 75.

³⁶ Huang Shaonian, *The Beggars*, in *Folklore*, Periodical 15th and 16th (11 July, 1928): 17-25.

interrogator would be discouraged to say anything. What's more, if the new performer is cunning enough to cover the *Xingmu* with the towel with the fan on it and ask the interrogator to take them away, the later is also supposed to perform another eight lines by customary rule. (*Xingmu* supports a career, together with a fan; everywhere is the home, no fear of the troubles. Created by the genius, with no ornaments, with it on the hand, all the officials can be members of our group.) After that, the interrogator should tap with the *Xingmu* and tell another story for the new one. If he fails to do both things, he is supposed to compensate the new one for the loss of the day.³⁷

The source of *Zushiye* shares a general character in that most of them are Kings and Sages of the mainstream society. Except from the *Zushiyes* of two professions--story-telling and *Qiongjia Men*, there is well-known Lu Ban, the *Zushiye* of carpentry, architecture, etc; Laotse, the *Zushiye* of blacksmith, silversmith, goldsmith, etc; Liu Bowen, the one of sugar-figure craftsmen; Liu An, the one worshiped as Tofu *Zushiye* in south China; Peng Zu of chefs in Xuzhou; Yiya of chefs in Tianjin; Wu Liang of the foretelling in Yongdeng county, Gansu Province, etc. The political appeal symbolized and embodied by the connection with the noble and the sage from upper culture is the general mentality of worshiping *Zushiye* in all walks of life. In the following pairs of opposite cultures such as upper and lower, superior and inferior, mainstream and subculture or counterculture, they show the penetration of the former into the latter as well as attachment, active reaction, adjustment, transformation, and imitation of the latter reacted on the former. To cater to the meaning and possibility of "equality," which is generally transmitted, is also the signifier and signified of the old Chinese saying: "There are three hundred and sixty trades and every profession produces its own topmost master". With the help of *Zushiye*, different professions insist on emphasizing their relationships with the mainstream society to stress on their survival in the mainstream society as "the power of the weak" to entertain the society in the end.³⁸

Watson's case study in Hong Kong and Zhao Shiyu's analysis of the Giant Locust Tree (*Da huai shu*) legend in Hongtong county, Shanxi Province, from different angles, explained that in some certain historical background, in order to unite the descendants and to experience the feeling of one's group in communication with others, ancestors are selected and their "survival chance" are dependent on their descendants.³⁹ Therefore, as far as the choice of ancestor is

³⁷ Yun Youke, *Jianghu Cong Tan*, Volume 1, pp. 32-33.

³⁸ Turner, V. W., *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure*, London, Routledge & K. Paul, 1969, pp. 108-111.

³⁹ See Watson, R.S., *Remembering the Dead: Graves and Politics in South-eastern China*, In *Death Ritual in Late Imperial and Modern China*, pp. 203-237, Watson, J.L., & Rawski E.S., eds., California: University of California Press, 1988; Zhao Shiyu, *Little Tradition and Great Tradition: the Ideas, Methods and Practices of the History of Regional Society*, Beijing: SDX Joint Publishing Company, 2006, pp. 96-124.

concerned, an occupation group and a paternity one share a similar process of long-term identity and selection. Besides, the “hidden transcripts” of process are the same.⁴⁰

Not only groups stress on the origin of *Zushiye*, individuals also have many accounts of “noble” jobs or higher social positions they themselves or others have taken or of relationships with the superior—especially the court—they themselves or others have. Apparently, the oral history of the collective memory of the disadvantaged groups, i.e. the narrative of their connection with the court and the upper class, is not only a mode but also a struggle tactics and actions in real living conditions. These tactics and actions include building temples according to the legends, materializing *Zushiye* as statues, textualizing *Zushiye* on steles or biographies, making *Zushiye* sacred by kowtow and kneeling, secularizing *Zushiye* by transmitting him into repeated words and deeds on such occasions as master acknowledgment, interrogation, and performance, and combination and interaction in the stated aspects. In these narrations, everyone in the upper class is just a supporting role of a legend or an element of a narration, and every group or individual in these groups is expressing “I myself”. As the object of these actions, *Zushiye* then becomes a romantic but actual creation of a profession.

Differing from the *Zushiye* which symbolizes both differences and mild, compromising and partial equality inside a profession, the external *Zushiye* in a hierarchical society declares the importance, legality and reason of “I” and “my group”, which transforms it into a mentality of self-esteem and self-reliance, strategies of communication and political struggle, and “Weapons of the Weak” to gain the power in typical everyday life.⁴¹

For the Chinese traditional society that is comprised of all trades as a whole, *Zushiye* actually seems to originate from a variant and argot of “equality” and “human rights” in western culture. As local expressions such as *Zabadi’r* and *Shenshen*, *Zushiye* that we use in everyday life not only has tool rationality but also possesses value rationality.⁴² As a system, an idea and a cultural tradition, it not only maintains the normal function of a structural society, but also contains the basic cause of the development of the society as well as predicts the necessity of the modernization initiated by extraneous forces in the Chinese society. In legends of many manufacturing sectors like bell casting, pottery and porcelain, there is always “human sacrifice” (to devote oneself to the God by jumping into furnace) to make sure the success of the casting. Similarly, the *Zushiye* belief embedded in the traditional culture becomes one of the internal forces in promoting the changes of the traditional culture and society—modernization. In the process of Chinese modernization, *Zushiye* sacrifices itself together with the forms and glories it once had in a way similar to the Nirvana of a Phoenix.

⁴⁰ Scott, J. C., *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1990.

⁴¹ Scott, J. C., *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1985.

⁴² For the *Shenshen* see Yue Yongyi, *Efficaciousness ·Kowtow ·Legend: the Double Facets of Popular Belief*, pp. 187-224.

Because of the inequality in opportunities and roughness of life, the royally-originated *Zushiye* has materialized in all respects of life and has become a physical combination of many abstract things. To acknowledge a *Zushiye* is not a symbolic action or a dull ancient idolatry any more but an incarnation and a “ghost” haunting people’s life in the form of a lively and active body with absolute strength, power, affinity, and appeal. Meanwhile, due to the natural collective attitude of a profession, the regular group worship becomes possible and real. The group worship highlighted and stressed by predecessors is neither the start nor the end but just a node. For a group, the identity of the group and an individual’s self-identity take *Zushiye* as both a start and an end. The *Zushiye* belief is not only an external form on individuals of certain groups but an internal platform, a sword of the individuals and group, and a thinking tool and symbol of certain groups and the whole society. While being used in the communication with other groups, *Zushiye* is also appropriated in completing group internality, shaping individuals, and ensuring continuous, balanced and mild social development.

4. CONCLUSION: THE TRUENESS OF EXPERIENCE

When we investigate it from the perspective of “the returned everyday life of specific groups” or “the flow of life” to experience and understand the experience of the insiders, the *Zushiye* belief, as one of the Chinese popular religions, vividly embodies a unique kind of mentality.

Differing from other complex popular religions which focus on utilitarianism and reciprocity of *Lingyan* (miraculous response), *Xuyuan* (making a vow to a God), and *Huanyuan* (redeeming a vow to a God), the *Zushiye* belief transmitted in certain sectors does not emphasize this kind of issues.⁴³ The expressed information of natural and social oppression and the presented idea of Ancestors worship and merits are neither its basic cause nor its essence. The essence of this belief lies in the subjective experience of a group or a kind of mentality when they face the real situation, acquire professional skills and communicate with insiders and outsiders. The subjective experience is based on chronological accumulation, historical transmission and long-term selection. In other words, the *Zushiye* belief emphasizes the relationships among people, instead of the highlighted relationship between gods and people as the case in other popular religions in China.

This kind of subjective experience that originated from “the trueness of imagination” is then externalized in the real life and further evolves into the “trueness of experience”. It swirls around practitioners in materialized forms such as props. It is also an origin for them to construct their own values. With the concentrated representation of cyclical ritual repetitions such as acknowledging a master, finishing apprenticeship (*Chushi*), interrogation, and performance, *Zushiye* is always related to the individual’s life, which reveals a complex dual relationship. Different from the separate and interactive relationship between god and man, the

⁴³ There are many investigations of *Lingyan*, *Xuyuan*, and *Huanyuan* in modern Chinese popular religion, such as Chau, A. Y., *Miraculous Response: Doing Popular Religion in Contemporary China*, Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2006, pp.59-76,99-123; Yue Yongyi, 《家中過會：生活の流れにおける民眾信仰》.

Zushiye belief forbids subjective choice. Similar to the situation that individuals are unable to choose their ancestors, the *Zushiye* belief has inherent imperatives which demand experience and obedience. Such a belief naturally permeates all aspects of life in a sector. In this sense, the so-called rules and jargon are just other expressions and variants of the *Zushiye* belief.

When an individual moves in and out of a profession, the *Zushiye* externalized as many figures returns to an ideal level, and becomes a mentality, a thinking symbol and method, and a strategy in communicating with other groups. The individuals, together with *Zushiye*, form an offensive and defensive alliance in the hierarchical society and express themselves with self-confidence and self-esteem. In this way, the individuals in every conversation and occasion symbolize *Zushiye* and are empowered to make contributions with their writings, virtues, and conducts. As a mentality, *Zushiye* actually uses the bodily practices of humble Kowtow to mock social hierarchy and social inequality such as that caused by eminence of birth. It is a powerful weapon for the weak, as a panacea or a moral victory. The reason why the *Zushiye* belief is apparently different from the Worship of Ancestors is that both individual and group experience the process of detachment from the primitive social systems in a special profession.

In everyday life, we habitually pose our body in appropriate manners on different occasions, Proper bodily positions not only comply with etiquette and culture and show respect for others, but they also make ourselves feel comfortable since we use our body to express the sense of belonging to a community, together with the question of “who am I.” The question is not exclusive to sages. It further leads to the conclusion that the long institutionalized gesture of Kowtow becomes the most basic action of the Chinese and a fundamental feature in distinguishing the Chinese and the Western culture.

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GLOSSARY

Baxian	八仙	Da huaishu	大槐树
Baishi	拜师	Daishi	代师
Baishi tie	拜师帖	Fu Xi	伏羲
Baoshi	保师	Guban langjun	鼓板郎君
Chaxu geju	差序格局	Guban shifu	鼓板师父
Chushi	出师	Hai Qingtui'r	海青腿儿
Cizan	词赞	Hangye shen	行业神
dagou bang	打狗棒	Huangmeixi	黄梅戏
Dagu	大鼓	Huanyuan	还愿

Hui	会	Shuochang	说唱
Jituo	姬佗	Shulaibao	数来宝
Kaijizu	开基祖	Shuoshu yiren	说书艺人
Ketou ding datie	磕头顶大贴	Tianqiao	天桥
Li	厘	Xianzi	弦子
Lingyan	灵验	Xi Shen	喜神
Ni qinshu shehui	拟亲属社会	Xia Jiuliu	下九流
Nv Wa	女娲	Xiangsheng	相声
Pandao	盘道	Xingmu	醒目
Pingju	评剧	Xuanzu	悬祖
Qingyin tongzi	清音童子	Xueyi	学艺
Qinshu	琴书	Xuyuan	许愿
Qiongjia Men	穷家门	Yaofan De	要饭的
Qiongjia Bang	穷家帮	Yinshi	引师
Sanhuang	三皇	Zabadi'r	杂吧地儿
Sanjiao Jiuliu	三教九流	Zhongfan	中幡
Shenma	神马	Zhuban shu	竹板书
Shen Nong	神龙	Zi'r	字儿
Shi Kuang	师旷	Zushi	祖师
Shou Poluo	收筐箩	Zushiye	祖师爷