Abstract

The love story of the herdboy and the weaving maid has always been a popular folk legend. But how did the story originate? How has it been enriched and rationalised throughout the process of evolution? And what significance does it have in modern times?

This dissertation attempts to provide some answers to all the questions by comparing and analysing relevant sources in various forms of Chinese literary works and genres, dating from early Han dynasty (BC 206 - 220 AD) to modern times.

Information obtained from all the relevant sources to trace the evolution of the story is arranged in a chronological order. The dissertation also takes into consideration how the unique social and historical backgrounds of different dynasty have influenced the development of the story.

The findings show that the plot and characters have indeed been enriched throughout the process of evolution. The fact that most Chinese today still celebrate this festival on every 7th day of the 7th lunar month shows that the story has its modern significance.