Abstract

The myth of Pan Gu is one of the most intriguing Chinese myth among its peers, sending scholars throughout the decades into deep speculation on the origins of Pan Gu.

Pan Gu had made his way into the Chinese historical records relatively late, because it was only during the Three Kingdom era that the first written account of Pan Gu appeared in the Chinese mythic record. Moreover, Pan Gu did not appear in earlier records, further adding onto the possibility that he belonged to an imported mythic tradition.

This thesis aims to present all the different views on the different aspects of the myth of Pan Gu, mainly investigating his origins by assessing the possibility of every theory broached by scholars during the past decades. I hope that by doing so, it would bring light to the issue and draw more attention to the myth of Pan Gu as there are yet many questions to be answered. These questions can only be solved by archeological discoveries and by conducting field work looking into the present Pan Gu myth circulation in all parts of China, both of which I was not able to achieve at this point of time.

Firstly, there is the discussion of the erroneous concept on the absence of creation myth, or even myth in China. It is due to the culture differences and religious practices between the East and the West that the fallacy is formed. Next in line are the discussion of the term “creation myth” and the relevance of its use in the myth of Pan Gu. Both discussions may seem irrelevant but in truth, it would set the stage for the discussion of Pan Gu myth and draw clearer lines to the discussion of his origins.
Before tackling the main problem, I present the different explanations that scholars have on Pan Gu. These different views include the feminist view on Pan Gu taking over the importance of Nü Wa, the view that adopts Freudian theory to explain Pan Gu, and also how the Non-Chinese tribes develop and infuse Pan Gu myth into their own culture. Subsequently, the different views on the origin of Pan Gu will be discussed. Two views dominate the rests, being the Indian origin view and "Non-Chinese tribal origin" view. Besides presenting this two views, I have dedicated a section to the discussion of heterodox opinions on the origins on Pan Gu myth, namely by two scholars Du Er Wei (杜而未) and Wang Hui (王晖).

Next is the discussion of the comparison between myth of Pan Gu with two other mythical figures, that is Pan Hu (盘瓠) and Fu Xi (伏羲). This part of the thesis acts as a supplement to the previous chapter on the discussion of Pan Gu myth origin.