中國神話母題編目資料庫的設計、實施及應用

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摘要

中國神話母題編目資料庫的設計與實施，主要是基於《中國神話母題編目》的中國各民族神話資料庫建設專案。其基本內容包括中國神話母題的編碼設計、中國各民族神話以文本為主體兼及圖片、音視頻等的資料化資源檢索與呈現平台建設。

關鍵字：神話、母題、編目、索引、資料庫

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Motif-index of China Mythologies Database: Design, Implementation and Applications

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Abstract

Mythology is an important early human art form, as well as a form of oral and intangible cultural heritage, carrying rich historical and cultural information. A “motif” is the basic unit of which a mythology is composed, and motifs appear repeatedly in mythologies from different time periods, regions and cultures. Motifs can exist independently in the process of handing down, and can also be represented or combined within other popular narrative genres such as epics, legends, folktales, and ballads. The “motif” is favored by scholars due to its representativeness and universality and has become a convenient tool. The 56 different ethnic groups in China have numerous mythologies, both rich in content and handed down in various forms. Historically, literatures of the Han people have enjoyed a high degree of attention, while the collection and research of mythologies from ethnic minorities has been poorer. Most of these ethnic groups have not developed their own written languages and their mythologies can only be passed on orally. Even ethnic groups with written language forms often pass on their mythologies orally. Such oral mythologies are known as “living myths”. Handing them down is an unstable process and this makes them extremely precious.

Important work was needed to provide the comprehensive sorting, archiving and preserving of mythologies from ethnic groups in China, to

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present a panorama of the handing down of these myths and to promote the establishment of the discipline of mythology and the reconsideration of ethnic culture. The Center for Studies in China Ethnic Culture and Language, which is affiliated to Chinese Academy of Social Sciences(CASS), has set up Digitizing Documentation Working Team for “Wang’s Motif-index of China Mythologies Digital Archiving Project”. Based on Dr. Wang Xianzhao’s book *Wang’s Catalogue: Motif in China’s Mythology (Wmotif)*, the working team designed and implemented “Wang’s Motif-index of China Mythologies Database”(WMCMDB). There are 33,469 mythological motifs stored and systematically organized in the database, extracted from 12,600 myths from different ethnic groups in China, and divided into ten groups, three levels. It allows multi-dimensional searches and is available via open access on the internet, for the convenience of researchers. The database enables the systematic display of common and individual features for each ethnic group’s mythologies and examines how these mythologies have spread and changed. It aids the macro research and comparative analysis of China mythologies, and promotes dialogue and communication about China mythologies and other world mythologies.

The paper will give a detailed introduction to the design principles, the process of motif extraction and database construction. It will also show the interface, the search mechanisms provided by the database, and the typical applications within mythologies and other relevant disciplines. Users can browse or search for motifs in various ways, including: 1) search according to motif group and sub-groups; 2) finding a motif directly from its order in the “Motif chart”; 3) Search via related motifs; 4) Using a key word search to find a precise motif. Furthermore, clicking on the ethnic group names under references on the motif code table will also provide quick retrieval of all mythological motifs of that ethnic group.

WMCMDB is not limited to mythology researchers, it is also available for mythology enthusiasts. It can be used for the research of mythology, motif, and literature, as well as fields such as ethnology, study of religion, folkloristics and communications, providing the researcher with a means to look for patterns and carry out in-depth research and analysis.
Using the WMCMDB, the project team plans to add mythological texts, pictures, audios and videos, as well as mythology research books and articles, thus establishing a “Database on Mythologies of China”. Embedding motif codes into these mythological texts, pictures, audio and video materials, and linking them via the WMCMDB will connect all this data, enabling interactive multimedia retrieval, automatically generating extensive research information, creating characteristic data, and ultimately a convenient channel for the comparative study of mythologies in the digital age. Researchers can take the motif-index as a basis to construct new mythology research databases with individual characteristics.

Keywords: Mythology, Motif, Catalogue, Index, Database