

“Forbidden” and “Punishment” in the Ming-Qing Faith inscriptions

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Abstract

There are a large number of informal and formal laws among the Ming-Qing Faith inscriptions. Thereinto, the nongovernmental proscriptive steles demonstrate that *choushenyishi* (酬神議事) and *yanxiliyue* (演戲立約) is an important path to generate the informal laws. Apologetic action to pray to God is the most powerful and informative punishment which civil society can imagine to violators. Meanwhile, governmental proscriptive steles contain a few of rules to forbidden some behaviors, such as illegal worship, blasphemy, self-sacrifice for God and embezzlement of temples' property. It reveals the conflict and adjustment between realities and prohibitions about belief. at the same time, it also reflexs the close connection among divine constraint, prohibition law and proscriptive steles. All of above are indispensable means to govern society. Consequently, legal steels not only have the literature property that commonly existing in all steels, but also possess institution features, that other inscriptions do not have. Furtherly, the independence of legal steels can be proved.

Keyword: Faith inscriptions, Divine punishment, prohibition law, Proscriptive Steles

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