

DOCTORAL THESIS

清代廣嗣思想研究

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清代廣嗣思想研究

**ON GUANGSI: A STUDY OF THE IDEAS OF
MULTIPLYING DESCENDANTS IN QING CHINA**

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中文提要

中國人常用的祝賀辭如“五代同堂”、“五世其昌”、“百子千孫”等，均表達了子孫繁盛的期望。以“宜男”、“弄璋”、“百子”等為題的藝術作品與日俱增，用以宣揚廣嗣思想，亦表達人們對多子多孫的訴求。俗語有云：“養兒防老，積穀防饑”，生兒育女是為老年有所依靠而作準備。所以為求晚年生活得到保障，於是千方百計去找尋廣嗣之法。廣嗣思想在中國根深柢固，無論婚姻生活、日常起居、醫學發展等範疇，無不與廣嗣思想扯上關係。

廣嗣思想是跨政治史、經濟史、婚姻史、醫學史、宗教史、民俗史等眾多領域的議題，有關清代廣嗣思想的研究資料，除法律文榜、地方史志、醫學典籍等文字紀錄之外，也有畫作、日常傢具等非文字的紀錄，牽涉的層面極為廣泛，而且互相關連。本文以廣嗣思想為經，四個主要議題包括社會習俗、婚姻制度、醫學理論和因果報應思想為緯，將各類史料作歸納和分類，對廣嗣思想作深入的探討。

ABSTRACT

In traditional Chinese society, bearing numerous children guarantees the flourishing of a clan, leading to prosperity of the entire country. According to the conventional Chinese beliefs, “multiplying descendants,”¹ or in Chinese known as *guangsi*, is a symbol of fortune. The character *si* means “inheritor.” Only male descendants are expected to inherit their clans. Therefore, giving birth to a son becomes one of the most important targets of the Chinese people. This is especially true for the women because childless is a major reason for divorcing a wife. Alternatively, concubinage, rental and mortgage of a fertile woman, adopting a son-in-law in the wife’s family as well as the adoption of a young relative, could possibly prevent the principal wife from being divorced.

When our ancestors decided to gestate a baby, they would explore different means to achieve the purpose of *guangsi*. Praying to child-giving deities were common methods for urging a son. Some people believed that the sexual distinction of a fetus was not fixed during the first three months of

¹ The English translation of *guangsi*, “multiplying descendants,” is adopted from Charlotte Furth’s *A Flourishing Yin: Gender in China’s Medical History 960-1665* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), p. 187.

pregnancy, so that they could change the female fetus into male fetus superstitiously and magically, by prenatal education and having medicine. No matter these methods were effective or not, they undoubtedly expressed the Chinese's desire of having a son.

Guangsi is culturally and socio-economically significant. Therefore, my research has intensively made use of various kinds of materials, including ancient Chinese classics, literary anthologies, medical books, local gazettes, genealogies, paintings, folklores, and so on.

This thesis examines the phenomenon of *guangsi* in marriageable and child-bearing age as well as some special forms of marriage. It also investigates the relationship among *guangsi*, urging-son activities, paintings, and fortune-telling practices in the Qing period. Moreover, a large amount of Qing medical texts have been utilized to explore how medical theories were related to the promotion of *guangsi*. Finally, this thesis discusses the idea of viewing *guangsi* as a reward for committing kind and charitable deeds.

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