

# On the Historical Data Collection and Study of the Culture of Mountain Tai Heaver

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**Abstract:** Mount Tai in China is a world cultural heritage. "Culture of Load-Bearing Person" has a long history in Mount Tai, and Mount Tai Heaver is also called load-bearing person on Mount Tai and so on. The culture of Mount Tai Heaver is an important part of Mount Tai culture. However, due to the change of historical conditions, Mount Tai Heaver is becoming less and less, and even facing disappearance. The heaver culture is in danger of being lost. This phenomenon makes Taishan culture, a treasure, no longer perfect in the process of worldwide communication. Therefore, through oral interviews, field investigations and other ways to collect and study the data of the existing few Mount Tai Heaver, firstly, it can rescue and consolidate the heaver culture form, protect the integrity of Mount Tai culture, deeply refine the spirit of Mount Tai Heaver, and secondly, it can arouse the attention of government departments and all sectors of society to heaver culture and save heaver culture together. In the course of carrying out this research, the research group collected and sorted out data by oral interview centered on heaver, supplemented by consulting literature and history archives and other ways. Based on the research results of the research group, this paper expounds how to collect, sort out and study the historical data of the culture of Mount Tai Heaver for the purpose of saving and protecting the gradually disappearing culture of Mount Tai Heaver. The paper also puts forward some recommendations on how to change the endangered status of the culture of Mount Tai Heaver.

**Keywords:** Mount Tai Heaver, Heaver Culture, Taishan Culture, Mount Tai

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## 1. Introduction

"Culture of Load-Bearing Person" has a long history in Mount Tai of China. Emperor Wu of the Han Dynasty stood on the big stone table on the top of Mount Tai, and it was difficult to transport it up the mountain without professionals. Load-bearing person on Mount Tai in Han Dynasty was quite mature at that time. In different historical periods, the appellations such as load-bearing person on Mount Tai, heaver, people who carry things up the mountain, carrier, Mount Tai sedan chair driver are slightly different. Load-bearing person is common in historical data. Because the title of Mount Tai Heaver is commonly used in the study and dissemination of regional history and culture, the title of Mount Tai Heaver in this topic includes load-bearing person on Mount Tai, heaver, people who carry things up the mountain, carrier and Mount Tai sedan chair driver.

The research results of Mount Tai Heaver focus on literature, art, folk customs and other fields. However, the

collection and research of the historical data of the culture of Mount Tai Heaver has not been found in these research results. In this way, the historical origin and cultural value of Mount Tai Heaver are bound to be weak.

### 1.1. Domestic Research Status

At present, domestic oral data and research literature on Mount Tai Heaver are very scarce, and the genres are scattered. (1) Compiling categories. There are mainly Yuan Aiguo's "Taishan Customs". This work describes Heaver's hard life and praises Heaver's spirit of taking on heavy responsibilities, defying difficulties, persevering and offering Mount Tai in youth; Textual research on the role of Taishan Mountain sedan chair in mountaineering from emperors and princes to ordinary people; It depicts the historical evolution of the ordinary life scene and professional characteristics of Mount Tai sedan chair driver. Strong historical data. [1] Liang Xuecheng's "Chinese and Foreign Folk Customs" only talks about the pole as a means of transportation, and "carriers" can

be seen in many mountain tourist attractions". [2] In his book *Mount Tai Heaver Chronicle*, Feng Jicai praised Mount Tai Heaver's enterprising spirit of forging ahead bravely, persevering and persevering. The book also describes the working and living conditions of contemporary heaver through oral interviews. However, there is no special historical collation of Mount Tai Heaver. (2) Periodicals. Gao Guojin and others discussed that Mount Tai Heaver improved his popularity through the creation of literary works, inspected the living conditions of Heaver, and pointed out the urgency of excavating and protecting Heaver culture from the aspect of cultural inheritance. [3] Lv Jixiang praised "the spirit of hard-working load-bearing person" in his article "Vigorously Carrying Forward and Cultivating the Spirit of Mount Tai". [4] Li Xiaofang (2007) described the cultural tourism resources in Tai'an in the article "Research on Classification and Evaluation of Tourism Resources in Tai'an City". Wang Meili (2020) pointed out that Mount Tai Heaver is on the verge of extinction, but this industry has become a cultural symbol and produced new social beauty connotations. The culture of Mount Tai Heaver glows with the sublimation, expansion and transcendence of beauty [5] (3) Newspapers. From the perspective of social, historical and cultural development, Zhang Yunpeng expounded that cultural phenomena such as Mount Tai sedan chair driver, coachman and load-bearing person will eventually disappear, leaving only a historical noun. [6] It points out the dilemma and historical urgency of the inheritance of the culture of Mount Tai Heaver. In addition, some magazines have published such articles, such as Yu Hongya's article "Load-Bearing Person on Mount Tai" published in *Qingdao Literature*, No. 7, 2013, etc.

According to the domestic data about Mount Tai Heaver, it mainly has the following characteristics:

### ***1.1.1. Focus on the Protection and Inheritance of Heaver Cultural Values***

Mount Tai culture is an important element of Chinese history and culture. [7] Heaver, as an important part of Taishan culture, is gradually decreasing in number under the influence of various factors such as economic and social development, and is in danger of disappearing, so it must be collected and sorted out for rescue. For example, Gao Guojin discussed the cultural value and continuation of Mount Tai Heaver from three aspects: its historical origin, existing problems and cultural inheritance, and Feng Jicai's *Mount Tai Heaver Chronicle* also talked about this point.

### ***1.1.2. Focus on Elaboration from the Perspective of Folklore***

For example, Yuan Aiguo's "Customs of Mount Tai" tells the origin, brief history, customs and living conditions of Mount Tai Heaver. Liang Xuecheng's *Chinese and Foreign Folk Custom* focuses on the description of pole, which is the means of transportation in mountain labor culture.

### ***1.1.3. Explain the Economic Value of Mount Tai Heaver in Terms of Tourism Resources Development***

From the perspective of improving the competitiveness of

Tai'an as a tourist city, this paper puts forward that Mount Tai should be planned more scientifically as a double heritage tourism resource of world culture and nature, so as to improve the advantages of cultural tourism resources in Mount Tai. For example, Li Xiaofang's article "Research on Classification and Evaluation of Tourism Resources in Tai'an City" makes a comprehensive evaluation and analysis of tourism resources in Tai'an.

## ***1.2. Research Status Abroad***

During the Republic of China, there were a large number of realistic pictures of Mount Tai sedan chair driver and load-bearing person in Japanese and German works and photographs about Mount Tai, which are currently preserved in Tai'an Archives. Due to various restrictions in the storage and access of archives, these data have not yet been seen. The history, function and authority of Mount Tai God belief in Japan are expounded in *Mount Tai Customs* written by Yuan Aiguo. Japanese scholars have made many research achievements on Mount Tai God belief, but there is no mention of Mount Tai Heaver.

Through searching on the Internet, some pictures about Mount Tai Heaver taken by foreign friends during the Anti-Japanese War were collected. These pictures show Mount Tai sedan chair driver carrying Japanese soldiers up the mountain under pressure, Japanese soldiers watching heaver's work, and so on. However, there is no descriptive written data.

To sum up, the research on Mount Tai Heaver at home and abroad, first, Mount Tai carrier has refined high cultural value in literature, art, folk customs and other fields, but its value exploration in national independence and people's liberation revolutionary culture is very insufficient. Second, from the analysis of domestic and foreign research data, there is no complete oral data about Mount Tai Heaver in modern times. There are many pictures, but there are few written descriptions and research data. The research on the culture of Mount Tai Heaver culture generally shows a state of weak research strength and the quality of research results needs to be improved. This topic is to collect the historical data of Mount Tai Heaver mainly through oral history research methods, in order to make up for the deficiencies of the current related research.

## ***2. Mount Tai Heaver Reality Distribution and Historical Data Collection Content***

### ***2.1. The Distribution of Mount Tai Heaver***

According to the investigation, the main distribution area of Mount Tai Heaver is mainly around Mount Tai, and a few are distributed around Mountain Culai, with rural farmers as the main source of work. The specific distribution areas are Dajinkou Township, Xiagang Township, Huangqian Town and Taiqian Office in Taishan Scenic Area, Culai Town in Daiyue District, Wande Town and Zhang Xia Town in Changqing District of Jinan City, Liubu and Zhonggong in

Lixia District of Jinan City. With the assistance of relevant departments in Taishan Scenic Area, the research group confirmed that only 40 people are engaged in heaver occupation at present. After screening, 39 people were identified as oral history interviewers, and field investigations were carried out in their activity areas.

## **2.2. Heaver Historical Data Collection Content**

The collection of historical data of Heaver can be divided into three historical periods. One is the working conditions of Heaver during the Republic of China, especially during the Japanese's encroachment of Tai'an. The second is the working conditions of heaver from 1949 to 1978; Thirdly, from 1978 to now, under the condition that there are fewer and fewer employees in Heaver, the situation of Heaver is investigated.

### **2.2.1. Oral Content**

Heaver narrates the situation of himself and his ancestors engaged in Heaver occupation, including the reasons for engaging in Heaver occupation, working hours, labor intensity, treatment and remuneration, living conditions, social evaluation, self-awareness, seasonal changes of labor, guild organization forms and types of goods, etc. Touch the history and culture of Mount Tai Heaver at zero distance through oral history, [8] touch the pulse of history in the fragments of history.

### **2.2.2. Written and Painted Data**

Heaver data are consulted from historical archives, descriptions of literary and painting works, video data, local cultural and historical data, memoirs of famous people in Mount Tai and inscriptions. In recent years, paintings about Mount Tai Heaver were colorful, with unique aesthetic value and precious historical and cultural value, has become a unique brand of Taishan culture, [9] has important historical value.

### **2.2.3. Physical Objects and Folklore Objects**

Mainly includes heaver poles, ropes, costumes, sedan chairs, rattan baskets and so on.

## **3. The Practical Significance of Collecting and Studying Historical Data of Mount Tai Heaver Culture**

### **3.1. Deepen the Understanding of Taishan Culture**

The connotation of heaver culture is enterprising, responsible, harmonious and inclusive, [10] It is based on the heavy Taishan culture. Heaver culture, with its profound connotation, is the spiritual food of people all over the world. The collection and research of historical data of Mount Tai Heaver culture is a manifestation of the enterprising, responsible, courageous and indomitable spirit contained in the splendid Mount Tai culture.

### **3.2. Enrich the Research Content of Taishan Culture**

At present, the research on Mount Tai culture mainly focuses on history, religion, inscriptions, folk customs,

literature, art, tourism, sacrifice, Confucianism, jade culture, and some scholars have studied from the aspects of heritage protection, the era value of Mount Tai culture, architecture, music, environmental protection, mountain culture comparison, etc. The research on Mount Tai culture has achieved fruitful results. [11] However, there are few research results on Mount Tai Heaver in the Republic of China. The development of this topic will help enrich the research content of Taishan culture.

### **3.3. Broaden the Research Perspective of Mount Tai Heaver**

Studying Mount Tai Heaver from the perspective of collecting and studying historical data of Heaver culture seems to be a forgotten corner in the study of Mount Tai Heaver. Oral historical data are very important for preserving historical memory and scientific research, and are a useful supplement to historical documents. [12] The topic adopts the oral history research method, and depicts the social state of Mount Tai Heaver in a specific historical environment in three historical periods, namely, the growing environment, the heaver group and the audience group. Undoubtedly, this will broaden the perspective of Mount Tai Heaver research.

### **3.4. Inherit the Mount Tai Heaver Culture**

At present, Mount Tai Heaver is in a historical endangered state of rapid extinction, and the perseverance, indomitable personality and persistent struggle spirit carried by Heaver culture will face the danger of extinction. The research of this topic makes up for the shortage of the written data of Mount Tai Heaver, deepens the understanding and understanding of what is Mount Tai Heaver culture and spiritual connotation, and has important practical significance for further cultivating and inheriting Mount Tai Heaver culture.

## **4. To Promote the Overall Collection and Research of Cultural Historical Data of Mount Tai Heaver**

### **4.1. The Unification of History Data and Reality**

The object of collecting and studying the historical data of Mount Tai Heaver culture is the load-bearing person who walks on Mount Tai in history and reality. Before the founding of the People's Republic of China, most of the heaver groups had passed away or lost their communication ability. The oral history research of this group can only be carried out indirectly through the oral historical data of their relatives, descendants and related witnesses, and these indirect historical data are on the verge of being lost. Geographically, it is mainly concentrated in the eastern, southern and western foothills of Mount Tai. The oral content is mainly about the living conditions, mental outlook, core characteristics and professional inheritance of Mount Tai Heaver by the local people around Mount Tai, as well as newspapers, magazines, archives records and pilgrims' memories in different historical periods.

Generally speaking, the research mainly focuses on the following contents.

#### ***4.1.1. Investigation and Analysis of the Living Environment of Mount Tai Heaver***

The geographical environment, folk customs, beliefs, historical and cultural traditions of Mount Tai Heaver are the factors of the survival of Mount Tai Heaver, and they are also the first contents to be investigated. The oral content of this part is mainly to carry out in-depth regional historical and cultural investigation and special topic interview on the villages where Heaver is concentrated, so as to have a more thorough understanding of the geographical environment and traditional social and cultural space on which Mount Tai Heaver depends. It lays a solid data foundation for shaping heaver's image and spiritual world.

#### ***4.1.2. Oral History of Heaver Group***

Heaver and bearers are loosely organized and generally formed spontaneously by the people. Heaver leaders are also elected by the people and produced independently to do some services for everyone. Some heavers are long-term, some are temporary, picking mountains during the slack season and farming during the busy season. Heavers are very United. They are all poor people, working hard to earn food, and there is no dispute between them. There are everything to choose, such as living goods, food, religious articles, pilgrims' luggage, building data, etc. Load-bearing people mainly send pilgrims and dignitaries. Heaver also has a handful of women. Heaver's profession has a certain technical content, and good physical quality and strength are only important conditions. The utensils for picking things and the bundling of articles, as well as the pace of going up and down the mountain, are also very skillful. This part of the research mainly takes people, things and things as the core memory elements, and supplements the lack of history from the perspective of social memory. [13] The oral history interview records of heaver "leaders" and heaver groups are conducted, aiming at excavating the historical memory spread and embedded in the folk.

#### ***4.1.3. An Oral History Study of the Main Audience Groups in Mount Tai Heaver Industry***

The audience of Mount Tai Heaver industry mainly includes pilgrims, villagers, local officials, local cultural workers and so on. Indigenous mountain people who have not been Heaver also have their own views and feelings about Heaver. Most pilgrims' blessing articles are brought by themselves, while large objects that cannot be brought by themselves are picked up to the mountain by heaver, and many pilgrims are carried to the top of the mountain by bearers. Local cultural institutions in Tai'an, especially cultural workers, are the main undertakers of collecting, sorting out and studying historical data of Mount Tai Heaver. Before the founding of the People's Republic of China, local officials made supplies on the mountain, and some of them went up and down the mountain by heaver, villagers and bearers. In the memoirs, diaries and archives of local officials, there will be some historical data with considerable research value.

Studying the oral history of Mount Tai Heaver in different historical periods can not only deepen the examination of the multiple values and meanings of Mount Tai Heaver at that time, but also make the interview perspective of oral history more three-dimensional.

#### ***4.1.4. A Theoretical Review of Mount Tai Heaver's Cultural Research and Inheritance Practice***

On the basis of the above-mentioned oral history research, combined with political science, cultural anthropology, folklore, sociology and other related theories, this paper reflects. It mainly includes: First, reflect on the current research status and existing problems of Mount Tai Heaver, focus on testing its research theories, viewpoints and paradigms, and verify its shortcomings, so as to promote the communication and improvement of related research fields. Second, according to the field cases and data, this paper discusses the mental state and resistance consciousness of Mount Tai Heaver as a special group in different historical periods, so as to show the national spirit and integrity condensed in Mount Tai Heaver.

### ***4.2. Research Perspective and Methodology***

#### ***4.2.1. Basic Thinking***

According to the existing literature, we know the regional distribution, number of people and main residential areas of Mount Tai Heaver. On this basis, oral interviews are conducted according to regions, the oral interview objects are determined, the data obtained from interviews are summarized with other documents, and the summarized data are standardized according to the requirements of sorting out oral historical data, so as to achieve the effects of removing coarseness and extracting essence, removing falsehood and preserving truth. Finally, on the basis of solid historical data, with the help of political science, cultural anthropology, folklore, sociology and other related theoretical analysis framework, this paper studies Mount Tai Heaver's life scene, spiritual temperament and connotation of the times, and makes further refinement and summary.

#### ***4.2.2. The Value of This Study***

The first is to enrich the historical connotation carried by Mount Tai Heaver. Mount Tai Heaver is an important part of Mount Tai culture and has become the most important cultural value of social positive energy. [14] For a long time, the academic circles have neglected the study of Mount Tai Heaver in a specific historical stage. This topic will be different historical periods of Mount Tai Heaver has a specific spiritual temperament the connotation of national self-improvement combing research further enrich the connotation of Mount Tai Heaver culture.

The second is to show the modern spirit contained in Mount Tai Heaver. Mount Tai Heaver, as a profession, its emergence and development are almost synchronized with Chinese civilization, and it has developed from heaver to mountain-picking culture. After a long history, it integrates behavior, culture and spirit, and has the characteristics of long

history and continuity. [15] Mount Tai Heaver's spirit of defying difficulties, perseverance and full of confidence is the condensation of the Chinese national spirit and the common spiritual wealth of the people of the world.

#### **4.2.3. Based on the Above Research Ideas and Viewpoints, the Following Research Methods Are Proposed to Be Adopted**

One is the field investigation method. Ethnological field investigation is the most important and effective method to collect and sort out oral historical data. This research will make full use of this method to conduct in-depth research on the geographical environment, surrounding social environment, traditional culture, production methods, and related oral people of Mount Tai Heaver, so as to deepen the understanding and analysis of the value of oral historical data of Mount Tai Heaver.

Second, oral history method. By setting a scientific interview outline, we can guide relevant oral speakers to recall history, strive to restore the complete image of Mount Tai Heaver in various historical periods, explore Mount Tai Heaver's understanding of important events on Mount Tai, and splice fragmented contents into vivid pictures through memory links.

Mount Tai Heaver lives in a specific area and time, and they are closely related to local religious beliefs, history and culture, production methods, folk customs and so on. Therefore, when studying Mount Tai Heaver, we should comprehensively use political science, cultural anthropology, folklore, sociology and other related theories, and carry out interdisciplinary interview records and analysis research, so as to fully explore the ontological connotation of Mount Tai Heaver.

## **5. Recommendations**

Mount Tai Heaver worked too hard and lacked substantial labor protection, and their bodies were seriously injured. After giving up their work, their physical health is very poor, their bodies are deformed, and many people even lose their ability to speak. Before the founding of the People's Republic of China, few heavers were alive, even their children were in their octogenarian. Therefore, it is a salvage work to collect historical data of Mount Tai Heaver by dictation. As far as the data is concerned, it has not been found that Mount Tai Heaver did data collection and research before the founding of the People's Republic of China. The knowledge of Mount Tai Heaver before the founding of the People's Republic of China was mainly obtained through interviews with his children and other witnesses. This aspect is the shortcoming of Taishan culture research.

In view of this, this study will be further expanded in the following aspects:

First, on the basis of existing research, expand the scope of oral interviews of Mount Tai Heaver, continue to dig deeply and collate historical data of Mount Tai Heaver, and strive to interview all living Mount Tai Heaver.

Secondly, it will inspire the government and academia to

attach importance to and actively carry out the protection, inheritance and research of Mount Tai Heaver culture, and deepen our understanding of the spirit of Mount Tai Heaver.

The third is to conduct in-depth research on the collected data, form research results, and expand the influence of Mount Tai culture. In the new historical period, the spirit of having the courage to take responsibility, making unremitting efforts and being firm and indomitable of Mount Tai Heaver should be carried forward.

More critically, the number of Mount Tai Heaver is decreasing day by day, mainly due to low economic income and high labor intensity. After Heaver quit his job, he still faced problems such as aging, empty nest and insufficient pension funds. In view of the danger that Mount Tai Heaver is on the verge of disappearing, the local government should focus on the protection and inheritance of Mount Tai culture, take economic and cultural measures, improve the treatment level of the existing heaver, or change the identity of heaver, and bring it into the government undertaking preparation and financial budget. For the problem of providing for the aged of heaver, the government should break through the predicament of providing for the aged and explore the new development model of providing for the aged of Mount Tai Heaver.

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