

An Analysis of the Charity Activities of Biaoju in the Late Qing Dynasty from the Perspective of Shun Pao

Jinyang Shen

College of History, Xinjiang University, Urumqi, Xinjiang, 830046, China

Keywords: Shun pao, Biaoju, charity

Abstract: In the late Qing Dynasty, the Biaoju experienced a process from prosperity to decline. Due to its special social position, it actively participated in charity activities to integrate into mainstream society. The reports on the Biaoju's charity activities in "Shun Pao" covered multiple aspects such as the transportation of disaster relief silver, the delivery of information in disaster-stricken areas, and the collection of charitable donations. The Biaoju had multiple motives for participating in charity activities, including beautifying its own image and fulfilling social responsibilities, and showed diverse participation methods and characteristics, such as multi-level participation, a strong sense of social responsibility, as well as long-term and sustainable nature. These charity activities had certain impacts on the Biaoju itself and the society. Although they were helpful in establishing a good image and strengthening cooperative relationships, they failed to change its fate of decline. The social activities of the Biaoju in the late Qing Dynasty and its role in history need further in-depth study.

1. Introduction

The Biaoju played an indispensable role in commercial activities in the late Qing Dynasty, shouldering the important task of transporting goods to ensure the safety of merchants' property. Academic research on the Biaoju mainly relied on unofficial historical novels and historical materials related to Shanxi merchants, focusing on the relationships between the Biaoju and Shanxi merchants and between the Biaoju and martial arts.[1] To a certain extent, this research orientation has restricted in-depth exploration of the Biaoju. As an important newspaper in the late Qing Dynasty, "Shun Pao" widely reported news in various fields at home and abroad in China, including politics, society, culture, and economy, etc., and had great influence. The news about the Biaoju presented in "Shun Pao" not only covered social unrest and public security problems but also deeply reflected the development challenges faced by the Biaoju industry. The reports in "Shun Pao" on the Biaoju's participation in social charity undertakings have provided important historical materials for us to study the social activities of the Biaoju. Previous studies have paid less attention to this issue. How the motives, characteristics, and impacts of the Biaoju's participation in charity undertakings in the late Qing Dynasty still need to be clarified. This article attempts to discuss the above-mentioned issues starting from the charity news about the Biaoju in "Shun Pao".

2. An Analysis of the Late Qing Dynasty Biaoju and Its Charitable Motivation

The late Qing Dynasty was the prosperous period of the Biaoju. In the existing bodyguard memoirs, the prosperity of the Beijing Biaoju was mentioned. Li Yaochen said when he recalled the situation of the Biaoju of the Huiyou at that time, ' When I entered the Biaoju, it was the most prosperous era of the Huiyou, and there were semicolons in Nanjing, Shanghai, Xian and Tianjin '[2]At that time, there were eight Biaoju in the Beijing Qianmen area. In other parts of the north, the Biaoju also entered a period of prosperity. In 1922, a survey in Japan recorded that the Biaoju in the northeast region ' initially appeared in Fakumen, Yingkou, Kuanchengzi, Tongjiangkou, and other places, and then gradually expanded to the commercial center area. The boom period of the Biaoju was about twenty years ago. '[3]

The prosperity of the Biaoju was not only the result of social unrest but also related to the relative backwardness of the transportation and financial industries in the late Qing Dynasty. After the gradual opening of the railway and postage business, the traditional Biaoju business has been greatly impacted. According to Li Yaochen's recollection of the situation at that time, ' However, after the opening of trains and foreign ships, the merchants did not have to hire civilian ships early, and the business of bodyguards became less and less. Finally, specializes in the sale of care homes. The Biaoju bureau also gradually decreased, leaving only Huiyou. '[2]In the face of new financial and transportation modes such as trains and ships, the original business model of the Biaoju bureau was completely untenable, and it could only decline rapidly, from prosperity to end in the late Qing Dynasty and the early Republic of China.

In short, the prosperity of the Biaoju in the late Qing Dynasty was closely related to its commercial operation and adaptation to the social environment at that time. However, there is a deep crisis hidden under the surface of prosperity. With the collapse of social order and the impact of new transportation and financial methods, the Biaoju gradually decline.

Although ' Biaoju and thieves use each other in this way ', the two are, as Li Yaochen said, ' but the Biaoju and thieves are two different things '.The Biaoju have been trying to draw a line with the forces of rivers and lakes, but they have always fallen into a dilemma, which has largely restricted the development of the Biaoju.In order to get rid of this embarrassing situation, the Biaoju often integrates into the mainstream social order by actively participating in social affairs, and philanthropy is an important field in which the Biaoju is deeply involved. The motivation of Biaoju ' participation in charity can be analyzed from multiple perspectives:

First of all, the Biaoju has the purpose of beautifying its own image and diluting the negative impact through charitable activities. As a commercial entity, Biaoju deeply recognizes the importance of good social reputation for its survival and development. By actively participating in charitable activities, the Biaoju hopes to establish a trustworthy image in society. In the process of ' Zoubiao ' in the Biaoju, they often face the robbers of the bandits, which becomes the main source of the negative news of the Biaoju in Shun Pao report. For example, in 1880, a Biaoju in the capital escorted officials to be robbed on their way to duty. Shun Pao focused on reporting that ' Biaoju was robbed by more than thirty thieves, more than three thousand two, and three people were seriously injured. '[4] This is undoubtedly a crisis of confidence in the business ability of the Biaoju. Even the official property Biaoju cannot protect it. What about the merchant's money? There are numerous reports on the loss of Biaoju in Shun Pao .This repeated property loss will undoubtedly lead to social doubts about the reliability of its business. At the same time, rumors of collusion between Biaoju and bandits are also rampant.

Secondly, the Biaoju gives back to the society through charity, which is a kind of fulfillment of social responsibility. The Biaoju is closely connected with the local society and understands the social needs. Most of the practitioners in the Biaoju are martial arts teachers. Their original

intention of practicing martial arts is to protect the home and defend the country in addition to physical fitness. As Li Yaochen said, 'one can defend oneself and the other can defend the hometown' [2] When a disaster occurs, the Biaoju actively participates in charity, which can be regarded as a manifestation of its original intention.

On the whole, in the late Qing Dynasty, the active participation of the Biaoju in philanthropy has both 'public welfare' and 'utilitarian', which is not only the promotion of its social responsibility, but also the actual choice to maintain its good image. The two are not contradictory, but complement each other.

3. The Biaoju's participation in charity in "Shun Pao"

As an important folk force in society, the Biaoju actively participates in social philanthropy with its unique business model and extensive contact with all parties in the society in a turbulent social environment. The Biaoju not only played an important role in ensuring the safe transportation of merchants' property but also demonstrated its responsibility in social public affairs by providing services such as material transportation and information transmission during social unrest, especially in emergencies such as disaster relief. These activities not only enhanced the social image of the Biaoju, but also promoted its cooperation with the government and social elites, and won more trust and support for itself.

Fan Qingcheng Biaoju is a typical example of indirect participation in charitable activities in Shun Pao Biaoju. As early as in the famous "Ding-Wu Disaster" in the Guangxu Dynasty, the Biaoju provided great help for the transmission of information in the disaster areas of Henan and the delivery of disaster relief silver. Since then, many Biaojus have been invested in disaster relief.

In providing information on the disaster area, Fan Qingcheng Biaoju actively collects detailed information about the disaster area in the process of Biaoju, and transmits this information to relevant charities or governments to help the disaster area obtain assistance more accurately. In the end of 1877, a special report on the disaster in Henan Province, "The situation of famine in Henan Province," recorded that Fan Qingcheng's Bureau friend, had no grass in the wild within 400 miles since Huaiqing's departure, that is, the root was also dug up. The hungry people were forced to ask for food by the sharp edge of the way, and the five buckets of grain were immediately snatched away, so that they could go south to transport grain but escaped. 'The report describes what Fan Qingcheng Biaoju saw and heard in the process of Biaoju. Among them, 'four hundred miles of no grass in the field' and 'the car with miscellaneous grains and five buckets are immediately grabbed' show the excellent character of the people in the Biaoju.

On the delivery of disaster relief silver, Fan Qingcheng Biaoju has maintained close cooperation with various charities and governments to ensure the smooth delivery and transparent use of disaster relief funds. This can be reflected in the detailed rules of the credit record. 'Here, the collection of funds is based on the total score of the two joint receipts, the exchange of silver, the exchange of interest, the exchange of Baoyuan, Lv Kang, Rongtaizhuang, the release of funds, the collection of letters and receipts of the Bian Bureau and the collection of future relief bureaus, and the contract and detailed account of the parting fee and Yangli. 'In addition to the detailed account records, Suzhou Taohuawu Cooperative Relief Office will also publish relevant information in time in Shun Pao, which also provides us with more detailed information.

On June 18, 1878, Shun Pao published a record of 'the number of accesses and exits of relief services in Henan Province handled by Ding Chou's copy of 'Sucheng's Sabbath' on October 10, Wu Yin's copy on May 13, and the number of accesses and exits of relief services in Henan Province'. On April 8, Fan Qingcheng's Biaoju remitted silver 2050 plus silver 30, which was handed over to Yan Junbaozhi and Jiang Junzibin outside the south gate of Bian Province. In

addition to the normal cost of Biaoju, there are also the daily expenses of the relevant personnel. In the ' Qiyu Jinzhi Disaster Relief Credit Report ', the alcohol expenses of the Shanghai Relief Bureau to the Biaoju were recorded. This can be seen as an additional tip to the silver in the Biaoju.

Fan Qingcheng Biaoju also established a good relationship with the local gentry in the process of transporting silver. In the process of disaster relief, the Biaoju should also maintain close communication with all parties to ensure that the disaster relief silver can reach the destination safely and on schedule. In the process of disaster relief, Fan Qingcheng's excellent performance was widely recognized by the society, which can be seen as the close linkage between the Biaoju, the government and the social forces in the disaster relief activities. The Biaoju made their relationship with the social sages closer by transporting the disaster relief silver, and also demonstrated the important role of the Biaoju in the special period.

In addition to indirect contracting, there are also cases in which the Biaoju directly chartered disaster relief silver. 'Junior three, fine. Morning parting bureau He 's surname sent a letter and remitted to the relief silver four thousand two.[4] At this time, the Biaoju mainly played the role of ' executor ' in disaster relief affairs, but it was enough to see the enthusiasm of the Biaoju to participate in charity.

It is worth noting that the original association into the Biaoju should not be involved in the delivery of disaster relief silver, but it is related to emergency relief. Later, the Henan Relief Office specially requested the association into the Biaoju to transport, and the association into the Biaoju was still willing to accept. Since then, the Agency has resumed the eighth batch of disaster relief silver pairs. From this, it is calculated that the total rate of the disaster relief silver pairs transported by the Agency is still less than 1 %. It can be seen that it attaches great importance to the task of transporting disaster relief silver pairs and regards it as its incumbent responsibility to perform. The role of the Biaoju in this disaster relief activity was fully affirmed, which reflected the good relationship of cooperation between the two sides and the reliability and efficiency of the Biaoju in the transportation of donations.

In short, through the delivery of disaster relief silver, the Biaoju has a good start in participating in charitable activities. It not only opens up relations with the officials, but also wins a good social reputation for itself. Since then, the participation of the Biaoju in charitable activities has gradually deepened. The main role of the Biaoju in charitable activities in the late Qing Dynasty began to change from the ' executor ' who carried the disaster relief silver to the ' philanthropist ' who participated in donations.

Fan Qingcheng Biaoju concluded a cooperative relationship with the government through the form of low-cost relief silver, and at the same time gained a good social reputation for itself. The rest of the Biaoju have also joined the charity, their way is more direct, mainly to raise donations. The role of the Biaoju at this stage can be divided into two types: ' donor ' and ' collector '.

Most Biaoju are involved in charity through direct donations. In 1883, in the list of disaster relief donations issued by Shun Pao, ' Suzhou Telegraph Bureau received the list of Shandong disaster relief from the first to the fifth day of August ', the record of the donation of ' Taisheng Biaoju 3yuan ' appeared for the first time. Although there are few reports on the charity activities of the Biaoju in the ' declaration ' after the demise of the Qing Dynasty, the charity activities for such a long time still show the strong sense of social responsibility of the Biaoju.

4. The Characteristics and Influence of the Charity Activities of the Biaoju

In the late Qing Dynasty, the Biaoju showed multi-level participation and support in charitable activities, not only limited to traditional financial donations but also included various forms such as intelligence collection and safe transportation of disaster relief materials. Because of its unique

business characteristics, the Biaoju has played an irreplaceable role in philanthropy, especially in the safe delivery of charitable funds, becoming the 'last mile' between donors and recipients. At the same time, the social responsibility displayed by the Biaoju in philanthropic activities, as well as the inheritance of chivalrous spirit by its members, further highlights that the Biaoju is not only a commercial organization but also a social force with potential charitable attributes. Through long-term continuous charity participation, the Biaoju not only established a good social image, but also established a close cooperative relationship with other forces in the society, and contributed its strength to solving social problems.

The Biaojus show multi-level participation in charitable activities. This feature is not only reflected in monetary donations but also in the provision of intelligence, delivery of disaster relief materials, and other aspects of support. Compared with general commercial organizations, due to the particularity of the business, the Biaoju can not only provide financial assistance but also be more competent for key tasks such as the delivery of charitable funds, making it an indispensable 'last mile' supporter in charitable activities and providing solid support for charitable causes.

In addition, the Biaojus show a strong sense of social responsibility in charitable activities. Most of the members are martial arts practitioners. The advocacy of chivalry and the positive measures in maintaining local security have shown that the Biaoju is not only a commercial organization but also an institution with potential charitable attributes. The case of the Biaoju 'chivalry and the action of participating in disaster relief mentioned in the previous article confirm this point. The low-rate policy represented by Fan Qingcheng's Biaoju further highlights the public welfare nature of its charitable participation, which is close to the point of voluntary disaster relief.

It is worth noting that the charity activities of the Biaoju are not only diverse in form but also long-term and sustainable. A series of reports in the "declaration" clearly show the continued participation of the Biaoju in the field of charity, and this long-term effort reflects its practical practice of social responsibility. The low-rate policy represented by Fan Qingcheng's Biaoju further highlights the public welfare nature of its charitable participation, which is close to the point of voluntary disaster relief. For example, after participating in the "Ding-Wu Disaster" disaster relief silver two transshipment, Fan Qingcheng Biaoju published an advertisement in the "declaration" stating the reliability and safety of its business. Behind this public commitment is the confidence in the successful delivery of disaster relief silver.

In the late Qing Dynasty, as an important force in society, the Biaoju actively participated in charitable affairs, demonstrated its ability and social responsibility in charitable activities, and accumulated a certain social reputation through its extensive participation at multiple levels, which played a positive role in the smooth progress of its own business and social stability.

First, the Biaoju has established a good social image through charitable activities and enhanced the public's recognition of its reliability and social responsibility. Taking Fan Qingcheng's Biaoju as an example, shortly after participating in the "Ding-Wu Disaster" disaster relief silver two transshipments, it published an advertisement in the "declaration" to "bring the dry road cargo to the provinces," stating the reliability of its bodyguard service. If there is no endorsement of the excellent performance of transporting disaster relief silver, Fan Qingcheng's Biaoju has published such a heroic advertisement. The Biaoju relies on the performance of charitable activities to win a certain social reputation for itself and also promote the good development of its business.

Second, the Biaoju has strengthened its partnership with other commercial organizations, non-profit organizations, and government departments in society through charitable activities. This helps to solve social problems together, expand the influence of charitable activities, and increase the survival of the Biaoju. In the process of participating in disaster relief affairs, it is inevitable to deal with local governments. With the experience of participating in charity activities together, the operation of the Biaoju can reduce many obstacles in the future, which not only increases its

influence in society but also expands a broader social network in the business circle.

In general, the charity activities of the Biaoju have had a certain positive impact, including establishing a good image, enhancing social identity, and expanding partnerships. However, there are also a lot of negative events mentioned in the 'declaration' news, such as the loss of Biaoju, collusion with bandits, and so on. This shows that the status and image of the Biaoju in society are complex, with both positive and negative effects.

5. Conclusions

When discussing the charity activities of the bodyguard industry in the late Qing Dynasty, we must comprehensively consider its role in society and its impact. Through the in-depth analysis of the special role of 'half out of order' of the Biaoju,[5] we see that when the bodyguard industry participates in charitable activities, 'public welfare' and 'utilitarian' coexist. This complex characteristic not only highlights the attitude of the Biaoju bureau in social responsibility but also reflects its efforts to integrate into the mainstream social order.

With its profound historical background, the Biaoju Bureau has created a unique brand image in society. The chivalrous spirit inherited by the ancient martial arts masters has added affinity and credibility to the Biaoju after years of precipitation, which is of vital significance to its commercial operation and social influence. The charity activities of the Biaoju show a diversified form, not limited to material assistance. It actively participates in many fields such as information transmission and social services in disaster areas, which greatly broadens the scope of charitable participation and provides more ideas and ways to solve social problems.

This paper attempts to make a preliminary discussion on the charity activities of the industry Biaoju in the late Qing Dynasty from the perspective of Shun Pao. Future research can further deepen the comprehensive understanding of the social role and influence of the Biaoju in this historical period through more abundant and diverse data sources. It is hoped that this study can provide useful enlightenment for academic colleagues and promote more research and discussion on the social activities of the bodyguard industry in the late Qing Dynasty.

References

- [1] Li Jinlong, Liu Yinghai, *Biaoju and Shanxi Wushu in Qing Dynasty*. Beijing: Beijing Sport University Press, 2007.
- [2] The National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference on Literature and History Research Association, *Selected Works of Literature and History No. 75*. Beijing: Literature and History Materials Publishing House, 1981, pp. 229–244.
- [3] South Manchuria Railway Co., Ltd. room survey class, *Manmeng Encyclopedia*, Vol. 5. Dalian: Manchu Mongolian Cultural Association, 1922, pp. 1271–1272.
- [4] Li Wenhui, Xia Mingfang, Zhu Hu, *China Famine Policy Book Integration*, Vol. 8. Tianjin: Tianjin Ancient Books Publishing House, 2010, pp. 5475–6219.
- [5] Wang Xuetai, *Traveller Culture and Chinese Society*. Shanxi: Shanxi People's Publishing House, 2014, pp. 70–71.