Eco-environmental Protection Awareness for Yi Language Inscriptions in Regions of Dian (Yunnan)-Qian (Guizhou)-Gui (Guangxi)

Jia-jue FANG¹, Shu-wu LI¹ and Peng LIU²,*

¹Guangxi Science & Technology Normal University, Laibin, Guangxi, PRC
²Guangxi College for Preschool Education, Nanning, Guangxi, PRC
*Corresponding author

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Abstract. There are a large number of national inscriptions in the literature, which describes the local political, economic, military, religious, and many other aspects of social relations, especially the ancient Yi language inscriptions in Dian, Qian and Gui (short for D.Q.G). It is an important part of national literatures in China. Yi folk always have a simple and primitive ecological consciousness, which guides people to get along with nature. The idea to develop village regulations and agreements still has an important guiding role up to now. The Yi inscription is the true reflection of the Yi people's ecological environmental protection culture. It still could be reference for the protection of contemporary ecological environment.

Outline

The inscription refers to the cultural information, such as tablets and words, designs, religious statues carved on stone walls, also known as stone engraving. The inscription is mainly composed of three elements: the stone material, exquisitely carved painting and cultural information such as text, symbol, pattern, image and so forth. The main categories of the inscription include stone tablets, cliffside carvings, epitaph, building with Buddhism lection and joss, statues, Tiji and so on. As a special form of literature, the inscription has the deep characteristics of times, geography and preservation. It has an irreplaceable position to other forms of literature as well as the extremely important value in many aspects, such as history, literature, philology and art.

D.Q.G has been a multi-ethnic area since ancient times. The inscription literature remains down through the ages, which almost all has a direct or indirect connection with the central government, all national regime, and local national history. In the Han dynasty, the central government came down. Village regulations and agreements of various nationalities and the mountain forest protection tablets were scattered except for the chronicles of the Chinese characters for the performance and using troops of southwest China inscribed on. At the time of Ming and Qing dynasty, the inscription of literati inscriptions also gradually increased, involving temple, Daoqiao, epitaph, etc. The importance of some minority characters of stone tablets tended to be ignored as the Han’s Jinshi and bibliographer misunderstood each other, accompanying with a relatively small amount of literature and the reason of the remote location. The existing kinds of inscriptions on tablets involving politics, economy, military, culture, religion, genealogy, ecological environment protection, etc., which is an important part of the study on the history of D.Q.G nationalities.

A Classification of Yi inscriptions in D.Q.G

With regard to the origin of Yi character, there is no definite record of the Yi books and Chinese historical annals, even a lot of disagreement. For example, Southwest Yi Zhi says Yi Awu’s sages created Yi language as well as Heng Ben Alu. But from Tuo A Zhe Ji Gong Tablet in Jian Xin’s Bin Wu (226 AD), it already formed a mature system of Yi language. From that, we can conclude that Yi was done, and even a system of its own before Shu-Han or at least in Han dynasty.

Yi nationality lived mostly in the mountains or the Mid-levels in the history. Distribution was large distribution but small concentration. Some in Yunnan was mainly distributed in Eshan,
kengtung, Chuxiong, Honghe river and other places; Some in Guizhou mainly in Bijie, Anshun, Liu Panshui, etc; Some in Guangxi mainly in Longlin, Baise, etc. Due to the limited natural conditions and permanent preservation need, Yi people often carved the more important events on stone tablets or rocks. Nowadays, most of these inscriptions are scattered in the rocks, tombs, mountains and a small amount of them is found in the local department of Relics and Museology. Some of the inscriptions have been designated as provincial, municipal and county-level cultural relics protection units. To date, there has been a definite year of Yi inscription, which could be traced back to the Jiaxing’s Binnian of the Shu Han dynasty (226 AD), Tuo A Zhe Ji Gong Tablet. There were 177 words of Yi languages that is located in Dafang county, Guizhou. According to the time statistics, the Yi inscriptions at the Ming and Qing dynasties are the most, especially in the Qing dynasty, and the lower floor is the seventh year of the republic of China at the latest. For example, Yi inscriptions in Guizhou, according to incomplete statistics at present, are about 490 Yutong (blocks), which are mainly distributed in Dafang county, Narong county and Qianxi county, and concentrated in Yi ethnicity of the northwest of Qian. The Dafang is the most, which has been found more than 300 blocks so far. Tombstone materials are stone.

Comprehensive analysis of Yi inscriptions and its carriers, there are three main types: The first kind is a cliffside carving. For example, in the upper reaches of Huang Guoshu waterfall in Guizhou, Lan Long Bridge Tablet, was engraved in the late of Kaiqing of Nansong dynasty; Juan Dong Men Yan in the 38th year of Jiaqing of the Ming dynasty in Zhijin county; Xuan Wei Yan Shi Carving in the 39th year of Jiaqing and so on. The earliest stone carvings of the cliffside carving in Yunnan were made in Lukao county. Luo Xian Dai Inscription was made by Chieftain of Wu Ding feng Shi in the Ming dynasty (from the orthodox year to the beginning of Jingtai). These stone carvings were carved on the rock wall of the mountains. The highest one, Xuan Wei Rock Carving, was about 5.3 meters away from the floor. The second type is a solitary inscription. For example, Dafang county’s Tuo A Zhe Ji Gong Tablet; The forty-fourth year of Luo Shi Fen Tai Tablet in Jiaqing of the Ming dynasty in Lubao county; The twenty-second year of Ge Y Yi in Daoguang of the Qing Dynasty in Laping county. Nanjian county’s The Twelve Animals Calendar Tablet and so on. The second type is carved into a monument and has a unique inscription. The third type is the most numerous tombstones. After the deaths of the chieftains, most of the monuments for them were written, and the wealthy Yi people too. This was due to the migration and resettlement policies of the Ming and Ding dynasties. With the increase of the Han population, the burial was gradually prevalent among the Yi nationality. For instance, Xiao Long Ga Yi inscription was at the thirty-ninth year of Qian Long in the Qing Dynasty in Zhongshan, Luoping county; Long Shi Tombstone at the fifty-ninth year of Qian Long in the Qing Dynasty in Bi Jie Lin Kou town; Jue Bu Tombstone at the sixteenth year of Jiaqing in the Qing Dynasty in Na Rong county and so on. Yi gravestones in Wuding county of the state of Chuxiong In Yunnan province are the most. There are around 420 pieces including Lee’s ancestral tombstones of Yi nationality in the old part of Xinhua office in Tianzheng village.

Yi inscriptions can be divided into tombstones, mountain God tablets, mountain boundary tablets, calendar tablets, origin tablets (the history of family migration) and so on. The engraving process of them is relatively crude in general. Engraving tombstones are usually simple curve and triangular patterns, such as Tianzi Perpetual Tombstone, Lee Nobei Tombstone. There are some individual words with circles, or two or four symbols of happiness or auspiciousness. The cap and roof of steles are mainly three kinds: the tiles roofs of houses, the Bija mountain type, and the fan-shaped ware style. The rest are flat plates. The engraving of the tablet is mainly engraved with the cap and top of it, which is bold and natural. It is carved into the shape of a roof ridge. The text is written directly on the stone, without copying process. In addition to the sculpture patterns and the engraving of simple patterns, the text sculpture is mainly in the form ‘Yin’, accounting for more time 85% of the founded inscriptions.

Most of the Yi’s inscriptions provide valuable materials for the study of the origin of ancient Yi, especially the normative and orthographic methods of them. There has been only one type of inscriptions, “Roman typeface” in Yi so far. In term of typefaces, the calligraphy style of is relatively simple and the formed system is basically a “Roman typeface.” Yi’s calligraphy is also
The Ecological Environmental Protection Consciousness in the Yi Inscription

Yi nationality people generationally live in such hard environment which is more mountainous and less agrarian. Therefore, there is livelihood in surrounding “living from what the land and maintain what we cost” and the tradition of protecting the forest. Even through this ecological maintenance practice is original and inornate, this livelihood shows clearly ecological consciousness and has certain ecological cultural consciousness. There have been many inscriptions of Qing Dynasty forest reservation still remaining in China up to now.

The Qing dynasty implemented a policy of return. It changed the precious social structure and livelihood. A large number of immigrants migrated to the Yunan-Guizhou plateau from Jiangxi, Hunan and Suchuan. The suitable land for plating grain crops, such as stream valley, stank or hill slope etc., was developed to farmland, the corn and potato, and cultivation promotion later. This circumstance brought the development to Yi nationality. Although it caused the population of Yi nationality large increase, the land largely reclaimed. The original forest area declined and the forest was destroyed seriously. At that time, not only did the history record, but also the Forest Reservation Stele was recorded, at the eighteenth year of Jiaqin in Manjiu Yi village, Jinpin, Jingdong Yi Autonomous county, that: “the forest has been felled and rent unlawfully. The roots have been uprooted. That is common. This situation causes the ungrown trees in the forest as usual.” According to this record, it can be considered that the forest destruction in Yi region was quite serious. This circumstance caused the attention of local government and people. The Forest Reservation inscription recorded: “The villagers near the forest have the common proposal that we close fire, and stone, reserved the forest for the future”, “don’t fall into the same old trap and get a profit at the moment, but gain a benefit for thousand years.” “After forest reservation for several years, the forest would be luxuriant growth.” “All people should be standing as one. The father passed his son; the elder brother admonished the young one; the end would be known all.” All society and people should have a common ecological consciousness, carrying out the restoration of ecological activities of all people to prevent the ecology continuous deterioration.

Diaocao Yi nationality autonomous Country, Dali City, established Forever Protection Forest Inscription in the first year of Xianfeng, Qing dynasty. It recorded: “...My ancestors immigrate to this land, named as Diaocao country, also known as Xinglong country. The country is depended on it. We provide the military coal supplies. This is the important situation. We should operate it cautiously and conscientiously. However, there are some unlawfully people for cutting the trees. If we do not protect these trees, the forest will be destroyed. Our livelihood will be non-dependent, and our responsibilities of military charcoal supplies will be affected. Therefore we decide to donate some funds to protect the forest for public interests and establish this inscription to notice people.” This inscription admonished people that the forest is the fundamental of national livelihood, and should be strictly abided. The forest cannot be cut optionally. The inscription, in Baila 13st bay of Chuxiong Village at 51st year of Qianlong, says: “stealing one big tree will be penalty for one tael silver; cutting one small tree will be penalty for five coins; cutting one branch will be penalty for three coins; breaking one end of branch will be penalty for three coins; collecting leaves of treetop will be penalty for one coins. If a master pampers men, women, and vaqueros to cut or trample trees, the penalty will be double.” In order to protect the forest, this inscription warned people will be a penalty for their privately cutting behaviors, and not be allowed to optionally graze. All these regulations were avoided to destroy the forest. The inscription, at the 23rd year of Jiaqing in Modaojing, Chuxiong county, says: “After forest reservation, the forest cannot be privately cutting. If people privately cut, they will be a penalty according to public common regulations, and also
cannot be concealed and unreported. If people conceal and don’t report, the penalty will be according to the regulations. If people don’t obey the regulations, others have rights to report to the government, and criminal will be the penalty for double. ” This inscription stipulates no one can privately cut the trees in forest reservation. If people infract the regulations, the criminal will be condemned by the villagers, even the government will intervene for these illegal behaviors. If people conceal and don’t report, the insider will be punished either. There are hundred words in the forest reservation inscription, Immortal, in Qi Longjing, Yongren county, but its contents abound. The general meaning is as follows: Firstly, it states the functions of forest for beautifying the environment and impoundment. Secondly, it stipulates that the trees cannot be cut. Kilning and digging should be permitted by the local government.

Moreover, Wan Huzhuang of Yiliang County established Wan Huzhuang Regulation Stele at the 14th year of Qianlong; Planing Tree Stele at the 54th year of Qianlong; Old Manjiu Village of Jingping, Jingdong Town established Jingdong Forest Reservation Stele at the 22nd year of Daoguang; En Duomo Village of Xiangyun County established Xiangyun East Mountain Yi Water Stele at the 18th year of Guangxu, etc. These inscriptions belong to folk regulations. Yi nationality summarizes them from a long-term social livelihood, social practice and communication or conflicting. The implementation of these regulations naturally depends on villagers and government. It means they have stronger consciousness and self-discipline for forest ecological protection and environmental protection. Hence, they establish the inscriptions for admonishing the descendants.

In conclusion, the inscriptions of D.Q.G for Mountain and forest protection are mainly divided to three types:

1. The damaged situation of current forest and water resources, etc.
2. Advocating forest reservation and impoundment.
3. Enacting the regulations of forest reservation and standardizing public behaviors.

The main function of the inscriptions is to provide necessary protection for forest and water resources. In order to fulfill this purpose, some are condemned by villagers moral, and they set patrollers to implement surveillance. The inscription also has the education function except legal function. Local government and villagers join, during the processes of protection and chastisement. Some inscriptions states that the Yi’s convention and living habit is closely related to the environment. These inscriptions reflect that Yi people have their own clear opinions on ecological culture and environmental protection. The ecological inscriptions show that the ancestors of Yi nationality have inornate protection consciousness for the environment. These inscriptions are the harmony stele between humans and environment.

Conclusion

Yi inscriptions with a long history and rich contents aid to study on the historical evolution of Yi people, the social form, languages and religious belief and others. Among them there are some important historical materials. Government leaders and the chief of all nationalities had the important persons or things engraved on stone tablets and cliffs, in order to let more people known in the future. Its reliability is higher. Although remain of some inscriptions are a fewer words, all are useful materials, especially in the aspect of the research on history of the Yi languages. The consciousness of environmental protection in Yi inscriptions reflects on the cognition degree of protecting the environment and maintaining the ecological balance, which embodies the practice and consciousness of the relationship between the Yi people and nature. These simple ecological consciousness, environmental consciousness, the concept of the unity of heaven and men, and natural religion thoughts for the environmental protection played a certain role at that time. Until now they still have played a certain role in the local rules. The simple ecological knowledge and wisdom still are worth using for reference.
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