

Bei Ge Yi Minority Pula People's Concept of Soul

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ABSTRACT. *The concept of soul is a kind of thinking consciousness shared by all human beings. The concept of soul that is shaped and immortal is the cornerstone of Yi minority religious belief. As a branch of Yi minority, Pula people have many same or similar soul concepts. At the same time, they are influenced by geographical environment, social development, historical culture and other factors. Their concept of soul has its own branch characteristics, which is mainly reflected in the generation, manifestation and destination of the dead.*

KEYWORDS: *Yi Minority; Pula people; Soul*

1. Introduction

Pula people is a cross-border ethnic group, mainly distributed in southern Yunnan, Southeast Yunnan and northern Vietnam mountains. The Pula people in Yunnan belong to a branch of Yi nationality, with a population of more than 300000, mainly living in the surrounding area of Daheishan at the junction of Honghe Prefecture in South Yunnan and Wenshan Prefecture in Southeast Yunnan. Bei Ge Township in the eastern part of Kaiyuan and its surrounding areas are Pula villages in southern Yunnan and the areas with the most concentrated population distribution.

2. Bei Ge Yi Region and Pula People Overview

Bei Ge township is located at 103 36' east longitude and 23 41' north latitude, with an average altitude of 2210 meters. It is the highest altitude area in Kaiyuan city. The whole township is a mountainous area and the southwest is a high and cold mountain area. Its terrain inclines from northwest to southeast, which is a typical karst landform. It has a north temperate climate with an annual average temperature of 14 °C and an extreme minimum temperature of - 6.4 °C. The annual precipitation is 1450mm. Although the rainfall is abundant, the water conservancy conditions are poor and the water resources are scarce. It is a high and cold mountain area with resource shortage, which is not conducive to the growth and development of crops. "There are many stones in the mountain, so when you go out, you climb hills, plant a

big slope in spring, and harvest a big basket in autumn" [1]. It is a true portrayal of Bei Ge's agricultural production. Up to now, horses, mules and cattle are still important local production and transportation means.

"Bei Ge" in Pula means "a little past Shishan". The township now has jurisdiction over Bei Ge, Jia Ji, Lugu Mu, Luopo Dong, Xiaozhai and Xie Mi Zhu, 6 village committees and 41 natural villages, with a total of 14,360 people, of whom Pula people are local aborigines, accounting for 97.3% of the total population. Beige pul people used to divide it into upper and lower half townships: the upper half township pul people is called "Laba Po", which means "Pu minority people living on the highest mountain"; The lower township of Pula people is called "Daizhan Po", which means "people who live far away from the clouds". In addition, there are two kinds of Pula people in the lower half of the township, one is "Di Gaopo" and the other is "dixi zhaopo", which means "people living in relatively flat places". In Bei Ge, although the Pula people are divided into several small branches, claiming that they are different from each other, in the eyes of these Pula people, they are the same ethnic group and share the same belief and custom, in which the concept of soul is the basis of their belief and custom, and their worship form has been popular in the local area.

3. The Emergence of the Concept of Soul

The concept of soul is a kind of thinking consciousness shared by human beings. Regarding the generation of the concept of soul, some foreign scholars believe that the concept of human soul originates from the reverie of images. Or originated from the confusion of death; Or originated from the puzzle of dreams. For example, Taylor thinks about the view of soul from the image of human beings. He defines the soul as follows: "The soul is the image of an elusive and illusory human being, which is essentially nothing like steam, mist or shadow; It is the source of life and thought that gives life to individuals. It independently supports the past and present individual consciousness and will of the physical owner; It can leave the body and move quickly from one place to another. Most of it is invisible, it also shows material strength, especially a person who looks like awake or asleep, a ghost that leaves the body but is similar to the body. It continues to exist and live in the body of people after death; It can enter another person's body, enter animals or even objects, dominate them and affect them [2]." For another example, Malinowski said: "barbarians are afraid of death, probably because of the deep-rooted instinct of both human and animal. Barbarians are unwilling to admit that death is the end of life, and can't believe that death is completely eliminated. In this way, we should adopt the concept of spirit, the concept of the existence of soul, the consistent continuation of spirit and the life after death. " [3] Another example, Engels pointed out: "In ancient times, people still did not know the structure of their bodies at all, and were affected by dreams. Therefore, they came up with an idea that their thoughts and feelings were not the activities of their bodies, but the unique activities of souls residing in this body and leaving the body when people died. From this time on, people have to think about the relationship between the soul and the outside world.

Since the soul leaves the body and continues to live when a person dies, there is no reason to imagine that it will die, thus creating the idea that the soul is immortal. "[4]

The concept of soul in the early form of Yi minority ancestors is also related to images, dreams, names, etc. They believe that soul is a real, invisible and intangible non-material thing in human's physical body, which makes human have life and vitality. For example, in the ancient Yi Book Zu yuan Shen Liu, it is recorded that "everything has a soul, no soul can't live, the soul of life comes and goes, the soul of death goes first", "there is a shadow in the world, the soul also appears", "you follow the shadow, the soul is attached to the body", "no shadow can't live, no soul can't live", "the shadow is gone, the soul enters the western sky". [5] it can be seen that the generation of Yi minority's ancestors' concept of soul is related to the cognition of shadow, which seems to be equal to soul, and without shadow, there is no soul. [6] Among Bei Ge people, the people of Pula also generally believe that the soul is like the shadow of a human being, accompanying him and coming from his mother's body. The existence of life is determined by the soul. In the daily life of the local people, people pay more attention to their own shadow. They are afraid that others trample on their own shadow, believing that it will hurt their bodies and even their lives. In normal times, if a person often can't see his own shadow, it means that his soul is lost, so he needs to ask beima to call for soul; if he can't see his own shadow all the time, it means that he will die soon. At the same time, Pula people are also taboo to see their own reflection in the water, because they are afraid that ghosts in the water will drag their own image away, causing them to lose their soul and lose their lives. For example, Huang Haizhi, a villager in Bei Ge Village, tells the story:

We have a naturally formed pool in the middle of Bei Ge village. From a distance, this pool looks like a big pot cover. The water in the middle is very deep, and the water in it will not dry all year round. Bei Ge is short of water. There are few natural pools like this here, but usually nothing happens. People in the village dare not go to the pool. Because this pool is very strange, many people have died in it. A few years ago, three students from No.8 Middle School were playing with water and water by the pool. They somehow fell in and drowned. Only last year did a man die. At that time, I heard him say it was too hot. I went to the water's edge for a walk. As soon as he reached the edge of the pool, he bowed his head and fell to his death. People in the village say that there are ghosts in the pool. When they see the reflection of the people near the pool, they will drag the soul of people into the bottom of the water along the shadow, and people will plant it like a lost soul, and then they will be eaten by the ghosts. There are a lot of fish in this pool. No one feeds them, but they grow very big. Usually no one dares to salvage it. Everyone is afraid of being dragged and eaten by ghosts in the water.

As can be seen from this case, Pula people believes that the soul is born by image, and the image of a person is his soul. In addition to images, the production of the soul concept of Pula people is also related to dreams. They regard the behavior of the dreamer as the behavior of the soul temporarily leaving the body. They think that the scene in the dream is an omen of realistic phenomena, such as the dream described by Wang Nisheng, a villager in Jiayi Village:

My husband runs outside to transport goods and often travels far away. One night I had a dream that I would always roll down the mountain for a whole night. The next morning, when the old waiter was about to go out, I told him, "I had a bad dream last night, so don't go." He didn't listen to me, and I was worried, so I followed him. On the way, suddenly rushed out of a cow, I haven't reaction to come over, the car rolled over on the side of the road. The cow was killed, but fortunately no one was hurt. The things in the dream still need to be believed, and many times they will become true. And my husband's brother died a few years ago. Before he died, I often dreamt that he would beg for pig food and carry firewood in the mountains. When he went, he would not come back. One night I dreamt that the dog in my house had pooped in the yard, so I asked him to go out and sweep it. He went out with a shovel and never came back. In a few days, he will die of illness.

Wang Nisheng's dream, Bei Ge many Pula people have told the author similar situation. In their view, the soul is closely related to the dream, and the soul comes from the dream. In his sleep, there is always another "I" outside of himself, which is real, invisible and untouchable. It leaves the body and wanders around. It is the soul, that is, the "oneself" in the dream. In addition, Pula people also believes that a person's soul is closely related to his name, which is the soul. When a person loses his soul, he should call out his name when calling or evoking the soul. At the same time, Pula people are not allowed to shout names in the wild at night. If you hear someone calling your name, you usually think it's a ghost calling. If you agree, the ghost will be captured by the ghost calling the person's name. For example, Wang Zhengguang, a villager in Jiaji village, talks about his experience of being called by the ghost:

A few years ago, I went to my relatives to help him guard Sanqi garden. In the middle of the night, I heard strangers calling my name from afar. At that time, I thought there was no one I knew, so I didn't promise. Later, I asked my relatives if he called me at night. He said, "No, there are some people in the barren hills, even ghosts." After listening, I didn't care either. After a few nights, someone called me again. At that time, it was too late, I was confused in my sleep, so I readily agreed. The next day, I found that my waist hurt and I couldn't move. I can't get out of bed after a few days. I couldn't move back, so I came back. Looking for a beima, he said he lost his soul and called me soul. It took a few days for the soul to recover.

4. The Expression Form of Soul

According to Yi minority, people, animals, plants and even all things have souls. The soul is attached to the form and can exist without the form. When the soul and body are integrated, people or things have vitality and vitality and are in a healthy and active state. If the soul leaves the form, people or things will be weak and withering, lack of vitality and even die. In a certain sense, soul is health and life. [7] In the belief world of Pula people, people are the combination of soul and body, and they have multiple souls when they are alive. The soul is invisible. It comes and goes without a trace. It cannot be seen or touched. It depends on human body or various objects. When people are in the wild, the soul is easy to be lost in the wild.

They need to pick up something from the activity place, such as leaves, branches, grass, stones, soil, rice grains, spiders, etc., so that the soul can be attached to it and brought back. It is a very lucky thing to find spiders, especially those little spiders that can't bite people, can't weave webs, and only crawl on the ground. Because in the concept of Pula people, this spider is the most spiritual, it is the soul of all creatures. The person who finds a spider can not only attach his soul to it and bring it home, but also be full of life and vitality like a spider without getting sick. In addition, there is also the custom of worshipping the spirit tree in the Pula people's home. The spirit tree is called "Ye Nazai", which is the place where the souls of the family are concentrated. In the morning, picking a chestnut fruit tree or a white chestnut tree symbolizes a sacred tree, that is, a sacred tree, and placing it on a sacred table or binding it on a central pillar (a sacred pillar) of the old man's house. When Pula people go out, whether they are going to work in production or participate in sacrificial activities, they will pick some leaves or branches to take home and put them on the pillar of soul at the end of the activities. Leaves or branches symbolize bringing back the soul of the person holding the leaves or branches so that he will not be ill.

Yi minority believes that the soul belongs to the life. When the soul and the body are combined, people are healthy and safe, and the soul and the body are separated, either in sleep, or sick or dead. [8] Pula people also believes that if a person falls ill for no reason or suffers from mental malaise or loss of mind, it is generally believed that his soul has left his body and his body has lost its support, so he needs to perform a soul calling ceremony to call back his soul. In Bei Ge, Pula people are usually invited to beima when they are ill. Among them, Jiayi Village's soul-calling ceremony is called with a golden bamboo leaf tied with egg shells. The golden bamboo leaf is equivalent to a soul tree, with an egg shell tied to it, and a little corn flour placed inside the egg shell, which is then inserted next to the table. The table was placed in the courtyard with three cups of wine and three cups of tea on top. Rub wormwood and prickly ash together to wipe the whole body of the patient. The patient bowed to all directions first. If the patient could not move, relatives would take the place of bowing. Then beima killed chickens and chanted incantations to let the soul leave the body return to pray for the recovery. And the call for soul of a Chi Village people is to hold the clothes of patients and call for three times. If a person is ill, but does not know when and where to dye it, he will carry the patient's clothes to the outside of the stockade, to the back of the house, and to the door to cry for soul; if he is clearly frightened in some place, he will cry for soul in the frightened place. After the soul call, we usually have to do the "liquid nag" ceremony, which means "let the soul not be disturbed within the specified time". The sign is to hang a thin bamboo hat or straw hat on the door of the home. For 3-5 days, outsiders are not allowed to enter. This is because the patient's soul has just called back and the illness happens. If outsiders come during the period, the patient's soul will be scared away again.

In Bei GePula people, not only those who have lost their souls due to illness but also those who have not should be prevented. That is, every year, a soul-calling ceremony will be held regularly or irregularly, taking the family or the collective as

a unit, so that the soul can settle down in its place to relieve the anxiety of lost souls and prevent diseases and dangers. Among them, the family-based calling is in the sixth month of the lunar calendar every year, and every Pula people family will invite Beima to call on them during the two days of June 24, 26 and 28. When she called, bema stood more than 10 meters away from the door, carrying a small dustpan with her hands, with a pair of incense, a bunch of chestnut leaves, a dress, a bowl of wine, a pair of chopsticks, a bowl of rice, with chicken, pork and tofu on it. Beima looked ahead, carrying a dustpan and crying for soul, which was called cow soul, horse soul, buckwheat soul, valley soul, human soul, etc. if she was sick or not, she would cry. After the call, Beima entered the door, placed a small dustpan at the foot of the pillar of the soul, and put leaves on the pillar of the soul to show that the soul had gone home, thus praying for a good animal, a good grain harvest, a safe population, and no disasters or difficulties. Another regular group call is the Pula people in Jiaji Village, which is called the village spirit on the first rat day in February of the lunar calendar every year. For details, see Wang Zhengguang, a villager in the village:

The village head organizes the soul calling activity in our village. Beima is in charge of chanting scriptures. Each family should send a male representative to participate. Women are not allowed to go. They go to the top of the village "Mei Debo" mountain to call for the soul of the village. When we arrived at the soul calling place, all of us were facing the distance. Beima thought: "Oh - Oh - Oh -" three times, to tell the sky, the earth and the surrounding mountains, trees, rocks and grass, we are soul calling. Later, beima chanted sutras to summon souls. Participants casually picked a white chestnut branch, tied a red thread on it, and then inserted it on the ground. Sacrifices such as chicken, wine, rice and incense were placed on the ground. Incense was burned to offer sacrifices to the soul. After the offering, everyone started rummaging through the mountains for small spiders that didn't bite, to see if they had found any to judge if their souls had called back. After the call, people will take the spider and the white chestnut branches home and put them at the foot of the pillar of the soul to show that the village soul we called and our own soul have returned. The soul of the village will come back to protect the health of his family. The return of his soul means that he will not get sick.

In addition, in the funeral activities of Pula people, evocation runs through the whole ceremony. In order to prevent the living soul from following the dead, Beima or his elders should call the living soul in due course. For example, when the coffin was nailed, my uncle cried for my nephew's red line. Beima, as the host of the funeral ceremony, should not only guide the dead to summon their souls, but also seize the opportunity to summon Sammy for all the living who took part in the activity. When turning the mountain, in order to avoid being taken away by the dead soul, the mourner and the coffin carrier should throw the twigs (or grass, stone, soil, etc.) around them to the front, meaning to beat out the ghost and call their soul home; on the day of helping the mountain, they should go to the grave to sacrifice, and leave some wine to take home, meaning to call their soul home... Sending the dead and calling the living are the ritual themes of the funeral activities of Pula people, whose purpose is to prevent the souls of the living from being hurt or lost.

5. The End-result of the Dead

In Yi people's concept, the soul is the manipulator and master of people's survival and activities. The soul can exist apart from the human body and will not disappear with the death of people, but once the soul does not return from the body, it means death. [9] There are many different records about the fate of the dead in Yi literature. In Zu Shen Yuanliu, on the one hand, it is said that the dead will go with the eagle ancestors (eagle totem ancestors) after death, and on the other hand, it is also said that the dead will return to the ancestral home guided by Bimo. In Jilong Jing, it is believed that the soul lives with the dragon ancestors after death. The Liangshan Yi language Divination Scripture has records of ancestors transforming into various animals. The scriptures in Luoping and Xuanwei areas in Yunnan are said to be reincarnated after death. To sum up, the return of the dead has the following circumstances:

- (1) Totem ancestors. Return to bamboo, tiger, eagle, gourd, etc.
- (2) Return to one's ancestral homeland. The "Zhili Scripture" all over the country guides the dead to return to the birthplace of national ancestors.
- (3) Attached to the spirit tablet for home.
- (4) To haunt graves and burning fields.
- (5) The reincarnation of a reincarnated animal.

Looking at the Yi literature and the funeral customs existing among the local people, the concept consciousness of Yi minority ancestral belief is more consistent with the "three spirits" theory, that is, the concept of "three spirits when one dies" and the concept that the three spirits have different destinations. [10] Bei gepula people share the same belief. In the process of investigation, the author found that Pula people has no clear concept of several souls of living people, and there are three, three and many souls. Most Pula people think that people have many souls when they are alive, and they are attached to different objects. However, regarding several souls after death, Pula people have the same cognition: there are three souls after death. In particular, Beima, they can clearly explain the fate of the three dead. For example, Beima Wang Shaoxian of Jiayi Village said:

When a man is alive, his soul is on him. After death, there are three souls. They will not die, but they will leave the human body and float everywhere. What Beima wants to do is to settle these three souls. The first soul, we will chant sutras, tell it how to get there, send it to the underworld, and then forbid it to come back. The second soul is to be carried up the mountain and buried with its body in the grave; the third soul, on the day after the body is carried out, is to make it into a "Na she tower" (Pula language, meaning ""Spirit card") for home and present it with food during the new year's festival.

According to Wang Shaoxian and Beima, the destination of the dead is: the first soul goes to the underworld; The second soul buried in the grave; The third soul is made into a spirit card. For this, Bei Ge, some Beima have slightly different views on

the first destination of the soul: some say to go to "Sheol";Some said to "ghost";Others said go to "heaven". When asked where are "Sheol", "Ghosts" and "Heaven" The Beimas all said, "Where is the old ancestor?" It can be seen that the names "hell", "hell", "ghost capital" and "heaven" are different expressions of Pula people influenced by Han nationality's concept. They all refer to "the place where our ancestors were" or "the origin of our ancestors". To sum up, the end-result of the dead soul of Pula is basically the same, that is, one soul returns to the ancestral land, one soul guards the tomb, and one soul guards the sign.

In addition, in Bei Ge Pula people's view, human death is not the end of life, but the result of the soul leaving the body. After the death of human body, the soul will continue to exist and never die. After Pula people's death, they must promptly invite Beima to summon their souls, guide them to the road, and make spiritual cards so that the three spirits can each have their place. If these souls can't find their own home, they will wander around and become ghosts that persecute their families or others. For example, according to Wang Yuwen of bema in Jiaji Village:

I'm the main bereaved beima. I'm invited to do it when my family is gone. We must invite beima to recite the sutras for the funeral of Pula people. If beima does not come to chant scriptures, the souls of these dead people will not know where to go, and they will become ghosts wandering around and harming people everywhere. So in the process of the funeral, we must make it clear to these souls where you should go and where you are. In particular, the first soul is the most important, and the most important thing is to tell him clearly how to get to Sheol and not to go wrong. Only when it goes to the grave to reunite with its ancestors can it become a family god to protect the prosperity of future generations. If it goes wrong and doesn't go to the grave, it will return to its home by the same route, become a ghost, and make the family suffer.

There is also a third soul. In the past, every family had to make it into a "Nasheta" (spirit tablet) and then "raise" it at home. In the absence of several elderly people, we "raise" several. The children and grandchildren will take the next generation of "the shed tower" to their parents' grave and burn it down so that they can "live" with their ancestors. Let them protect us from disasters and disasters, and we will have good luck and peace. Later, in the cultural revolution, the red guards' scribes burned many "Na she towers". A few years ago, we had a lot of new houses built here, so we didn't keep them anymore. Now there are fewer people here who want to do "Na she tower" for funeral. Therefore, in recent years, there have been many strange and strange diseases in our neighborhood: I heard later which cattle and horses died; One moment we heard which one had cancer, the other moment we heard which one had AIDS. We have never heard of these diseases before. Sometimes, we have to carry two people a day.

In the local Pula people's concept, after death, the destination of the first dead soul is of vital importance to them. Whether the dead return to the ancestral land or not is closely related to the living conditions of the family, because only the dead who return to the ancestral land of Sheol can become the family gods to protect the prosperity of future generations, while those who do not return to the ancestral land

of Sheol can only become the ghosts and become the scourges of the family.

In addition, Pula people also believes that the souls of the dead, especially those wandering around, can become good ghosts and evil ghosts according to their good and evil before death, the time of death and the cause of death. The kind and normal dead in their lifetime are generally believed to become good ghosts. As long as the priest Beima is invited in time to guide them, send their souls, make spirit cards and be calm, they can protect future generations. But the souls of the dead, the souls of the dead, the souls of the dead, the souls of the dead without sacrifice or inheritance, and the souls without reassurance will become evil spirits, causing various disasters such as poverty and disease to people. Only by adopting corresponding rituals such as relieving and expelling, can we get rid of the disasters and avoid the disasters caused by the ghosts and evils.

6. Conclusion

Generally speaking, the concept of soul which is immortal is the cornerstone of Yi minority religious belief. Based on this idea of immortal soul, Yi minority has derived the belief customs of ghost worship, ancestor worship, and spirit worship. As a branch of Yi minority with a large population and a wide distribution, Pula people's spiritual concept has both the cultural elements of Yi minority's "big tradition" and its own cultural characteristics of "small tradition". The "big tradition" and "small tradition" can complement each other.

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