

Concept and Understanding: “Kabba” Exchange in Liangshan Yi Society

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ABSTRACT. *The term “Kabba” in Liangshan Yi society is generally translated with the word “gift”, but the unidirectional, immediate reward and reward characteristics of “Kabba” are different from the ordinary gift concept. This different unity comes from a different understanding of the concept of gifts. The “Kabba” gift of the Liangshan Yi society just shows that each culture has its own specific interpretation of the concept of gifts, and these understandings are the core of the exchange of gifts in the local society. This also proves that the gift makes the concept of the gift different because of its different cultures and concepts.*

KEYWORDS: *Gift concept; Liangshan Yi; Kabba*

1. Introduction

From the “spirit” of Moss's gift, to the reciprocal principle of Malinowski, to the discussion of Gregory's economic and social merchandise trade, to the exchange theory of Peter M. Blau's large society [2]. What we see is a process in which the scope of gifts continues to expand. It is an invisible non-physical exchange, such as service, emotion, intimacy, treatment, benefits, etc., which can be involved in the exchange of gifts by the mutual exchange of objects between people we know. [3] In this process, scholars use the principle of exchange as the benchmark to understand the social function of gifts. Specifically, they focus on the principle and motivation of gift exchange [4]. As well as the discussion of the relationship among power, wealth, rank, status, obligation, emotion and so on, little attention has been paid to the conceptual attributes and definitions of gifts themselves [5]. Until Yan Yunxiang defined the word “gift” in his book *The Flow of Gifts*, “etymologically speaking, this Chinese word implies that gift is not only a material gift, it carries cultural rules (etiquette) and involves ceremony [6]. So, the rude thing is an object, not a gift. He grasps the relationship between “etiquette and ceremony”, uses four phrases of “expressiveness”, “instrumentality”, “ritualization” and “non-ritualization” as the basis for understanding gifts, and interprets the human connotation of gifts from different ceremonial occasions [7]. This method highlights the importance of the concept of gifts and makes people realize that the interpretation of the concept of gifts in their own culture has such far-reaching significance, which implies the cultural outlook held by local gifts [8]. From this perspective, this paper tries to

analyze and sort out the gifts called “Kabba” by the local people in Liangshan Yi Society from the aspects of etymology, concept definition, etc. [9]. In this way, we can get the understanding of gifts in accordance with the local social culture, and provide more basis for the interpretation of the concept of gifts in anthropology [10].

2. Initially Involved in “Kabba”

In 2016, when I first investigated gift exchange in Meigu County, Liangshan, I encountered an interesting problem. When asked how to say the word “gifts” in the Yi language, the local people generally answered “Kabba”. But when I classify the “kabba” gifts for weddings and funerals, I find that not all gift exchange phenomena can be called “kabba”. There are also two other kinds of gifts called “Erpu” and “Loer” in the local Yi language. “Kabba” gifts account for the largest proportion of local social life, almost every occasion can find “Kabba” gifts figure, and “Kabba” gifts under a more detailed classification. At the same time, I can also understand what the locals mean by the “Emp” and “Lol” gifts. This makes the author more curious. Since there are three types of gift exchanges in the local area, why do local people only mention “Kabba” when they understand the word “Chinese”, instead of mentioning the other two categories? This seems to indicate that “Kabba” is closer to the locals' understanding of the concept of gifts. In contrast, Yan Yunxiang's understanding of gifts is to extend the gift to the ritual to understand, and thus distinguish between expressive and instrumental gifts. However, the reference to instrumentality has different opinions in Yang Meihui's view. She does not take all utilitarian gifts as a form of gift. It distinguishes the difference between the Latin relationship and the “bribery”: it is considered that the two are based on a kind of favor and transaction, and bribery is a kind of transaction. It can be that the relationship between strangers is “only a relationship of material interests, characterized by direct and immediate payment”, while the relationship between strangers has a certain basis of “uncertainty in the structure of return”. This distinction implies the question of gift definition: what kind of exchange can be called gift exchange? Therefore, starting from the local interpretation, we can find some basis to answer. The local people's understanding of “Kabba” fully conforms to Wuda's description. In his article “The Change of the Form of “Erpu” in Yi Society”, he defines “Kabba” as “only gifts given to the younger generation by the elders (such as New Year's money) or rewards given to the warriors by the elders”. “A one-way gift from top to bottom in terms of age, seniority or class status is somewhat similar to India's “Tanshi” and Japan's “En” rites. “Kabba is a one-way gift that cannot be returned or not sought.” When we compare this understanding with the other two kinds of gifts, we can find that “Erpu” and “Loll” have a common feature, which is not what “Kabba” has. The “Erpu” Wuda has also been described in detail. The obligation and reciprocity of this kind of gifts are strongly stipulated through mutual consultation. And it has a specific group, the traditional “Erpu” is the same branch, so not to pay “Erpu” will be severely punished by the family support. The “Loer” gifts mainly refer to the wedding gifts, which are classified as “expressive” gifts in Yan Yunxiang's gift classification, while in the local Yi society there is a clear distinction between “Kabba”. Local “Lower” also has the

characteristics of compulsion, but its compulsion is much less than the prescriptive obligation of “Erpu”. It tends to be a customary convention. In contrast, the understanding of the Kabba reward does not have such a mandatory feature. This is the key basis for local people to distinguish between gifts. But what kind of attributes the gift defined by the locals has, we still don't know, this requires a more detailed analysis of the “Kabba” gift, in order to provide a reliable basis for the definition of the gift.

3. Various Explanations of “Kabba”

Enlightened by Yan Yunxiang's etymological analysis of “gifts”, etymological analysis can often lead to some characteristics of gifts, especially the retrospect of the old local vocabulary such as “kabba”, which will surely reveal more about the original attributes of gifts. The understanding that “Kabba” is regarded as a reward does not have any difference in the whole society of Liangshan Yi people. However, when asked about the etymology of “Kabba”, no one can clearly answer it. Looking through the past articles and books, we can not find out the relevant meanings. According to the local people, we only know that this is a saying passed down from a long time ago, but we do not know its meaning. So you can only look for clues from the existing semantic background. “Card” has the meaning of “requirement and acceptance” in the current proverb. Similarly, “ba” has the meaning of “concomitant”. Together, it can be understood as “acceptance of acceptance” or “acceptance of exchange.” Accompanying means the establishment of a mutual relationship, and it is also a kind of understanding that is more realistic from the relationship of rights generated by the gift, and if the exchange is established, it is straightforward to express the essence of the gift. For this explanation, local people have suggested that they should use another pronunciation to understand the “card”, meaning “happy, happy.” And “Kabba” is a kind of “happy to give”: those who hold this view think that “card (kha33, Zhongping)” and “kha55 (high-level)”, in their original words: “‘Kabba’ It is a kind of giving in a happy occasion, it is good. It is not a good place, like a person who is called “Erp” when you die, you can't call it 'Kabba'.” This understanding is not alone. Pakistan explained that it was only a general statement of its own. But this statement has also been approved by some people, because this understanding at least reflects the social position of the “Kabba” gift from the side, which involves the local people's classification of the occasion of the gift. So far, there are two interpretations of the etymology of “Kabba”, “Accepting Accompaniment” and “Happy Giving”, although it is not clear which one is the most original understanding. But from the local people think that there are certain reasons for the two statements, they are different interpretations of the “Kabba” gift. Therefore, from the etymological retrospect, it can be seen that “Kabba” is a gift exchange with certain rights on specific occasions. But this definition seems a little different from the local people's view that “kabba” is a kind of reward, because the reward does not seem to embody the right relationship of gifts. This leads to the next question, where does the reward of Kabba come from?

4. The Principle of Exchange of “Kabba” Gift

The interpretation of the “Kabba” reward needs to be analyzed as a whole, and this holistic grasp can only be discussed in the ABSTRACT.deep structure. First of all, we can analyze the structure from the most common sayings. This is the “Kabba” gift that the elders often give to the younger generation during the New Year. If you understand the exchange of gifts in this sentence, it is easy to be misled. From a literal point of view, the elders sent out the “Kabba” gift for the reward of the younger generation, which sounds like “old money.” The younger generation does not have to pay back. According to this perspective, it is easy to draw a one-way gift and unrewardable conclusion. From the structure of the gift exchange, it will be found that only the gift has no return. This asymmetrical structure is exactly like “Tan” and “Gen” used to question the principle of reciprocity. But if we ask from it: Why do elders want to reward younger generations? What does he want to reward? There is a precondition for the reward to be drawn, and with this premise, the reward can take place. According to this idea, we can jump out of this misleading to see the whole process of the whole event and restore its true structure. According to local customs, whenever the past years, the younger generation will carry their own pork and food to the elders' home for the New Year, pork and food for the elders, and the elders will give the “Kabba” return, this is the whole event. Detailed process. At this point, you can understand that “Kabba” is not a so-called one-way gift, nor is it unrewardable. This is only the wishful thinking of the local people. Kabba is only a kind of return in the whole gift exchange. It is in the disposition of return. The local people's understanding of Kabba's non-return comes from treating return as a gift. This interesting change seems to hide some reason, and the local people seem to be intentionally ignoring or changing the structure of this exchange. When Bourdieu discussed the time interval of return in the exchange of gifts and gifts, he thought that “the time interval is to make the giver think that his gift is a gift without return, and to make the giver think that his gift is not motivated, but not determined by the initial gift.” For this reason, he also analyzed the “structural nature” of the Taoist gift-return, which seems to be suppressed by the collective. People only assume that the giver and the recipient unconsciously cooperate and conceal together in order to deny the truth of the exchange and deny the courtesy of the termination of the exchange of gifts. From Bourdieu's understanding, it seems that we can find the motivation for the local people to ignore the gift exchange of “Kabba”, but Bourdieu argues from the time interval of return, while the time interval of return of “Kabba” is almost an instant return. But as a result, both of them have achieved the effect of denying the existence of returns. Bourdieu cut off the existence of switching structures by the difference of time intervals, while “Kabba” turned returns into gifts to deny the existence of switching structures. In this way, we can understand the root of the transformation of “Kabba”'s return relationship, but we can not fully understand the reasons for the formation of “Kabba”'s reward, which requires a deeper perspective to clarify the process.

We also take the “Kabba” gift for example. In the local custom of carrying meat to the elders during the Spring Festival, there is a phenomenon worthy of deep analysis, that is, the phenomenon of sending pigs' head. This custom can be seen not

only in the years of Yi Dynasty, but also in the daily life of local people when entertaining guests. The origin of the custom of sending pig heads is relatively early. Professor Jia Mu Ji has made a deep description and analysis of this custom: “the Liangshan Yi family will cut the pig head of the new year pig into a symmetrical two halves. Before the democratic reform, half of them will be sent to the chiefs of Chieftain, Black Yi and so on to show their obedience. Most of the black Yi would also give half of the pig heads to local chiefs and officials for political protection. Therefore, who gives half of the pig's head indicates the political ownership of the Yi people? Secondly, we can find a similar statement in the relevant literature: “Every family must send half of the pig's head to the master during the Spring Festival, which symbolizes the subordinate relationship to the master.” It can be seen that the pig head is a useful means of expressing the relationship of “submission” in the previous era. The two ends of the pig head gift represent the insurmountable gradation difference. However, in the current society, the party that accepts the pig head has been transformed from the past toast and the master to the elders and guests, although the subordination of the surrender has been lost. But we can still see that it retains certain characteristics. The party that accepts the pig's head is always superior in terms of status, because accepting the pig's head locally is a symbol of status and identity. It is only this level of structure that is no longer class-oriented, but rather the relationship between the age, generation and status that Wu Da said. From the previous discussion of gifts in anthropology, it is known that gifts of gifts can make the recipients fall into the debt repayment relationship, and the gift-living psychology of the recipients can often produce the dependency of rights, and the gift creates an unequal relationship. relationship. Throughout the past, the practice of sending pig heads to express surrender, this can see similar scenes in the dynasties, and the neighboring countries tribute to the central dynasty to show their surrender. From the point of view of gifts, this is consistent with the form of sending pig heads, and the central way of handling is the immediate reward of the other country's envoys to show the style and identity of the great country, the process and the “Kabba” gift. It is so similar. If we analyze this case, the gift seems to have this power to change this status relationship, so that the recipient can deny the existence of the gift exchange in order to maintain its status and identity advantage. They accept surrender rather than gifts, and transform themselves from the role of the recipient to the rewarder, so that the other party is in a debt and unrewardable position to consolidate and enhance their position. This is undoubtedly an artistic ruling strategy. In the same way, the party accepted in “Kabba” will also cause inferior rights relations according to common sense, but as a party with high status and rank, such things will never be allowed to happen. Moreover, from the current view of order, the order between the younger generation and the elders will not be allowed to reverse. This means that the identity, status, and level of the recipient of the “Kabba” gift can make the “Kabba” gift transition to reward, because the reward strategy is a good way to avoid the risk of subversion. Secondly, immediate returns also help to understand this evasion. In his discussion, Blau said “the excessive return on grace – which means refusing to pay a debt for a period of time”, which means immediate return is equivalent A rejection of the gift claim relationship. Therefore, in the “Kabba” gift, the other party refuses to exchange, but can not

express it, so it accepts the existence of the premise that is taken for granted and deliberately ignored. It also transforms the reward into a generous reward to achieve this perfect transformation, so the “Kabba” gift is consistent with the local understanding. So far, we have cleared up the doubts between the etymology and concept of “Kabba”, and through the analysis of the causes of “Kabba” reward, we can see that gift is a subjective denial of the attribute of exchange. The reason for subjective denial is that in terms of deep structure, it still conforms to the principle of exchange. This may be the key to the concept of local gifts, because it can be found with a little deliberation that this feature is also the dividing point between gift giving and other forms of exchange. At the same time, we can also feel that the important role of human concept in the formation of gift concept is due to the artificial meaning, gift exchange has become as unique as “Kabba”.

5. Conclusion

In Liangshan Yi society, “Kabba”, which is understood as a gift by local people, contradicts the explanation of etymology and concept. After some analysis, it is found that both of them are well-founded, but the former is the understanding at the structural level, and the latter is the understanding at the human level. From the whole process of “Kabba” gift, “Kabba” indeed constitutes an exchange structure, and exchange means the emergence of a right relationship, which can be interpreted etymologically. But on the subjective level, people strategically deny and change this exchange relationship, which makes “Kabba” a kind of reward that local people think is not rewarding. Therefore, we can say that “Kabba” is a kind of exchange in structure, but it is strongly denied and concealed at the level of human outlook. The aim is to distinguish between straightforward and compulsory transactions, which is why the “Erpu” and “Loll” types of exchanges are not included in the local gift concept. On the contrary, Yan Yunxiang's study of Xiajia Village's gifts reveals that the etiquette in Chinese is related to ritual occasions such as etiquette. This and the “Kappa” etymology understanding of the “happy” understanding is common, both reveal that the gift has a certain occasion, and in different places in Liangshan, it has become a distinction between “Kabba” and other types of exchange. One of the bases. Yan Yunxiang distinguishes between “expressive” and “instrumental” gifts from gifts, which is actually a description of the attributes of gifts. In his gift, expression is embodied in the expression of a relationship of human relationships, while instrumentality is reflected in the purpose of utilitarian gifts. In the analysis of the “Kabba” pig head, the gift has an expressive side and a tool side. Expressiveness is embodied in a different meaning given to the gift by subjective will, while instrumentality is reflected in the gift as a medium and means of transforming the status of the two parties. Secondly, through Bourdieu and Blau's view of the return time interval, it is also combed out that the cause and immediate return of the “Kabba” reward stems from a subjective negation of exchange. This is also the same argument in the understanding of the “valuable” etymology of “Kabba”, which makes the gift unmeasurable and hides its price. According to Bourdieu, “When people give gifts, tearing off the price tag is to eliminate the exchange.” From this point of view, it is found that the gift has been trying to avoid or ignore the existence

of the exchange (transaction) from the beginning. Therefore, the process of gift giving and returning is done in a hidden state that is concealed and unspeakable. Once someone breaks this state, it is no longer a gift, but a transaction without emotion. Perhaps people put a special feeling and meaning on the gift, and they are not willing to make it a situation of ruthless trading. It can be seen that the gift emerges as a kind of human view. People give the gift with a special meaning to make it a gift in the true sense.

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