

A Study on the Contract Culture of Dunhuang During the Tibetan Rule

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Abstract: The Dunhuang contract culture during the Tibetan rule had distinct characteristics and reflected the differences of the times. A large number of famous objects contained in the Dunhuang contract text are the epitome of the cultural exchange between the Tang Dynasty and the Tibetan. The study of them can reproduce the interaction between the farming culture of the Tang Dynasty and the nomadic culture of the Tibetan.

Keywords: Tang Dynasty; Tibetan; Cultural exchange; Dunhuang Contract

In 1900, the discovery of the library cave made the Dunhuang documents, which had been dormant for nearly a thousand years, known to the world. The vast and misty Dunhuang documents reproduce the history buried by time, including a large number of contract documents. These contract documents recorded people's daily economic activities such as buying, selling, borrowing, leasing, and hiring at that time, and had significant academic research value. Contract documents in different periods reflect different cultures from contract format to content, and Dunhuang contract culture during the Tibetan rule has distinct characteristics different from the past. However, the Dunhuang contract document is a comprehensive material, which reflects the social status of many aspects. Interpreting it from different angles will get different historical information. Based on the previous studies, This paper hopes to further explore the economic exchanges between Tang and Tibet reflected by the economic crops, livestock, silk fabrics, metals and other items recorded in these contracts and some special phenomena in the contracts, as well as the interaction between Tang Dynasty farming culture and Tibetan nomadic culture behind them, so as to deepen the understanding of this cultural exchange phenomenon.

1. The Social History of Dunhuang during the Tibetan Reign

After the outbreak of the An-Shi Rebellion, Tibet seized the whole Hexi 河西 and Longyou 陇右 areas when the border defense forces of the Tang Dynasty were empty. In 786, Tibet occupied Dunhuang, Tibet began to rule Dunhuang for more than half a century. After Tibet occupied Dunhuang, they adopted a tribal system and established tribes to replace the administrative organizations of "counties, town (xiang 乡), and villages (Li 里)" in the early Tang Dynasty, naming each tribe according to Tibetan own way.

After the Tibet ruled Dunhuang, In order to effectively rule the population in the region, approve the tax standards, levy taxes and corvée, check the population, and set up special officials to check the population and livestock. The taxes levied by the Tibet authorities on the people of Dunhuang mainly include grain and cloth, and the types of taxes paid include Barley, Wheat, broom corn millet, Millet, Flour, Silkworm cocoon, Cloth, Oil, Shortbread, Crushed beans and corn used to feed horse 马 蹄, etc.^[1] There are many records of the above-mentioned products in the Dunhuang contract literature. It can be seen that the above-mentioned products are not only used in the daily life of local people, but also mainly used to pay taxes.

Culturally, Tibet on the one hand carried out the policy of forced assimilation to Han and other ethnic groups, forcing the residents to change habits and customs; On the other hand, they revered Confucianism and has translated some Confucian classics into ancient Tibetan. After the Tibet occupied Dunhuang, the traditional culture of Dunhuang and Tibet culture had a strong collision and fusion. The Jiu Tang Shu 旧唐书 recorded the Tibet "there is no characters, to carve wood tether as the agreement."^[2] After Tibet ruled Dunhuang, while drawing from the Chinese contract writing format, in 832, it issued an order to write contracts with Tibet documents in the future, trying to turn the Chinese contract system into its own contract system.^[3]

2. The study of naming things in Dunhuang contract during the reign of Tibet

A large number of products were recorded in the Dunhuang contract documents. Some of these products were introduced from the Tang Dynasty to the Tibet, and some of them were introduced from the Tibet to the Tang Dynasty. Some of the products also have symbolic significance, which is the direct embodiment of the cultural exchange between the Tang Dynasty and the Tibetan. Through the analysis and research of the naming things in the Dunhuang contract documents, the communication between the Tang Dynasty 's farming culture and the Tibetan nomadic culture can be reproduced.

2.1 Livestock

A variety of cattle, horses, donkeys and other livestock are common in Dunhuang contract documents.

As the " foundation of farming, " cattle are not only a symbol of farming culture, but also play an important role in nomadic culture. There are many kinds of records about cattle in Dunhuang contract documents, but they all belong to the domestic cattle黄牛. S.6233 "(822) Contract of the abbot of the Temple of the Bao'en for the purchase of a cow with a donkey" states that: "a purple bullock"^[4], purple cattle are not common, but there are many purple varieties in today's Anxi cattle. There is no record of introducing other varieties of cattle in Dunhuang area in the historical records. In view of the outstanding adaptability of Anxi cattle to the harsh climate environment, it can be inferred that today 's Anxi cattle is likely to be gradually bred from the domestic cattle varieties recorded in Dunhuang contract documents. There are different opinions on the source of Tibetan cattle. Some scholars believe that there was no domestic cattle before the Tibet Dynasty, and after the relationship with the Tang Dynasty, the domestic cattle were imported from the Tang Dynasty;^[5]It is written in Dharma King Songzan Ganbu's teachings of the deceased法王松赞干布遗训that at the time of Langri Lunzan朗日伦赞, the Tibet had bred male and female deer into domestic cattle,^[6]Although both deer and cattle belong to the order Artiodactyla, they are not in the same family and have a significant difference in appearance. It is unlikely to domesticate deer into cattle, so this statement needs to be debated.The yaks in Tibet are domesticated wild yaks, and later the hybrid breeding of domestic cattle and yaks gave birth to cattle yak犏牛. The cattle yak has a gentle temperament and strong strength, making it the main animal power for Tibetan agriculture. Rgyal Rabs Gsal Bavi Melong西藏王统记: "Drill wood for holes to make a yoke plow, combine two ox yokes to open up wasteland"^[7]钻木为孔作犂犁, 合二牛犂开荒原It can be seen that Tibet adopts the traditional farming method of "two oxen lifting barbels"二牛抬杠in the Central Plains.At the same time, the scale of cattle raising in Tibet was huge. The Tang Dynasty once exchanged Zeng缯silk绢 for a large number of Tibet cattle for the purpose of farming. A large number of cattle produced by Tibet were imported into the Tang Dynasty, which not only solved the shortage of cattle in the borderland of the Tang Dynasty, but also promoted the economic and cultural exchanges between the Tang and Tibet.

Dunhuang area has a long history of horse breeding.P.2685 "(828)The document for the separation of property between the brothers Shanhu and Sui'en":In the city, the houses, family assets, Pommeled Horse, etc. are divided equally between the two families... mare horse草马is distributed to Dalang,^[8]During the Tibet reign, Dunhuang horses were mainly used for transportation and warfare. Dunhuang was the most prosperous international trade city at that time. Horses played an important role in daily economic exchanges, which also gave birth to the development of horse culture.Tibetan horses are excellent in variety, large in number and high in status. Due to the frequent wars in the Tang Dynasty, the supply of war horses was in short supply, so a large number of high-quality war horses were obtained through mutual trade. Tibet paid tribute to the Tang Dynasty many times, with a single number of more than 1,000 horses. Meanwhile, war was also one of the main ways for the Tang Dynasty to obtain horses.The ancient Tibetan texts "The Horse Training" and "The Classic of Medical Horses" unearthed from Dunhuang illustrate that after the Tibetan rule of Dunhuang, Advanced scientific training horses technology and medical techniques were introduced to the Dunhuang region.

During the reign of Tibet, cattle and horses were not only traditionally cultivated and transported, but also sacrificial objects. Horse sacrifice was an important part of the funeral ritual of Bon religion苯教. It was found in the tombs of the Central Plains aristocracy, Tibet, Tuyuhun, Turks and other ethnic groups.

2.2 Textile

"Zanpuzi"recorded :“Originally was a Tibetan soldiers, year after year in the grass, summer felt tent, winter hanging fur.”It is also seen in the Xin Tang Shu: "Its beasts, yaks, famous horses, dogs, sheep, and Pig, and the skin of the rat can be a fur."^[9]There are many records about the Tibetan costume culture in the history books, but the views are almost the same.The natural conditions of the Tibetan region, characterized by frequent thunder, electricity, wind, and hail, as well as snow accumulation, such as the midsummer being like spring in the Central Plains, and the constant ice in the valleys, as well as the production and lifestyle mainly based on animal husbandry, determine the traditional clothing of the Tibetan region, which is mainly made of fur and felt. P.3410 "(840) Monk Chong'en Testament", it is recorded that the relics to be disposed of by Chong'en not only contain traditional silk fabrics such as

damask silk 绫, thin silk 绢, and plain thin silk 纁 from the Central Plains, but also traditional Tibetan fabrics such as fur and felt. It can be seen that during the Tibetan rule, fabrics such as fur and felt had already been introduced to the Dunhuang region, and the clothing culture of Dunhuang had also changed as a result. The influence of Tibet and Tang clothing culture is mutual. In the fifteenth year of the Zhenguan (641), when Songzan Ganbu greeted Princess Wencheng at Bubohai, he marveled at the beauty of Tang Dynasty clothing. After returning, he took off his felt and fur and dressed in fine silk 纨绮. Undoubtedly, the clothing culture of the Central Plains in the pre Tang period had a significant impact on Tibet.

3. Communication between Tang and Tibet seen in Dunhuang contract documents

The Dunhuang contractual documents not only recorded people's economic activities such as buying and selling, borrowing, hiring, and leasing at that time, but also reflected the communication and exchange between different ethnic groups in different periods. The contractual documents during the Tibet reign also reflected the communication and exchange between Tang and Tibet.

P.T.12975 The "Contract for Borrowing a Horse in the Year of the Tiger" is an ancient Tibetan contract, it records: Buddhist novice Zhang Nengxing purchased a mare from Gaoyanglai of the xidongsa buluo 悉董萨部落, and later Yang Lai borrowed it back. He agreed to return the horse to Nengxing's home within August of the Year of the Rabbit. During this period, if the mare dies or is lost, one must be compensated and immediately handed over to Nengxing. . . Yang Lai and La Dang act in accordance with the deed, and the two signed. Luyu Buzang, Lunlabuzang Laxidun, Zhaoxi Nuolai, He Denggong these witnesses seal.^[10] This contract records the buying and selling activities between two Han people, written in ancient Tibetan. The contract involves the participation of Tibetan, and Lunyu Buzang and Lunlabuzang Laxidun played the role of witnesses in this transaction. Based on the research of Wushao Neiren on the types of names in ancient Tibetan contracts,^[11] Zhaoxi Nuolai should be a Han people under the rule of Tibet for a long time. In addition, P.2685 "(828) The document for the separation of property between the brothers Shanhu and Sui'en" also reflects the cultural exchange between the Tang and Tibetan dynasties, This document was a document of the separation of the property of the Han brothers during the Tibet period. The document was written in Chinese characters, followed by a Tibetan signature, the same is true for P.2842.

In summary, the Dunhuang contract documents during the Tibet reign were typical, reflecting the distinct characteristics of Dunhuang contract culture during this period. The communication and exchange between Tang and Tibet led to the fusion and collision of the two cultures, which together formed the Dunhuang contract culture during the Tubo reign.

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