

An Overview of Khampa Writers Group: Concept and Status in Quo

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ABSTRACT

Khampa Writers Group was first put forward in 2011. From the year of 2012 to 2019, 5 book series of Khampa Writers Group have been published, a total of more than 50 literary works, including novel, essay, poetry and literary review, which has aroused wide attention in the literary circle. However, the study on Khampa Writers Group and its literature is at the infant stage, this article aims to present the concept, literature review and outlook of Khampa writers' group, hoping to offer the references to the future research.

Keywords: Khampa Tibetan literature, Khampa Writers Group, Research overview.

1. INTRODUCTION

In 2011, the name of Khampa Writers Group was first put forward, and then Mr. Lv Rulun, the former party secretary of the Sichuan Provincial Writers' Association, included it in the list of national literary organizations. In 2012, the Chinese Writers' Association held a symposium on the works of young and middle-aged Tibetan writers in Beijing, in which four of the eight Tibetan writers discussed were from the Khampa region. From 2012 to 2019, 5 book series of Khampa Writers Group have been published, a total of more than 50 literary works, including novel, essay, poetry and literary review, which have aroused wide attention in the literary circle. However, the study on Khampa Writers Group and its literature is at the infant stage. This article intends to introduce the general information of Khampa Writers Group and its research review in the past ten year, hoping to depict a whole picture of Khampa Writers Group at home and abroad so as to offer the references to the future research.

2. KHAMPA WRITERS GROUP

In traditional geographical concepts, Tibetans divide their residential areas into three major parts: U-Tsang, Amdo, and Khampa. This division is not only a cultural geographical region, but also a geographical boundary between the three major Tibetan dialects (U-Tsang dialect, Amdo dialect,

and Kham dialect) regions, and Khampa refers to the region in which the people mainly speak the Khampa dialect, widely known as the Kham region. The traditional Kham region mainly includes today's Ganzi Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture in Sichuan, Yushu Autonomous Prefecture in Qinghai, Diqing Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture in Yunnan and Changdu city in Tibet. The land of Khampa is diverse, with magnificent landscapes and rich and profound historical and cultural heritage. Thanks to the profound nourishment of historical culture and the hard work of numerous writers, in recent years, a group of Khampa writers with strong creative strength and fruitful achievements have emerged in the Khampa region, forming a beautiful scenery with strong Khampa regional characteristics, bringing fresh aesthetic experience to the Chinese literary world.

Khampa Writers Group was firstly proposed in 2011, and Mr. Lv Rulun, former Party Secretary of the Sichuan Writers Association, included it in the national literary organization. At present, the definition of Khampa Writers Group in the academic circle is still ambiguous. Gao Linjia states that Khampa Writers Group mainly refers to those who were born or have lived in Ganzi Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture in Sichuan, Denqing Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture in Yunnan, Yushu Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture in Qinghai, and Changdu in Tibet, their literary creation are based on the unique Kham Tibetan natural landscape,

ethnic minority cultural factors and realistic circumstances in Khampa area [1]. The following writers are included in the Khampa Writers Group, they are respectively Yixi Zeren, Tudeng Jimei, Zhangge Nima, Gao Xufan, Liemei Pingcuo, Jimi Pingjie, Sangdan, Douling, Ran Zhongjing, Gerong Zhuimei, Da Zhen, Ouyang Meishu, Hu Deming, Huang Dingkun (Gazi), Jiangyang Cairang, Yixi Kanzhuo (Zeren Kangzhu), Waxi Pengcuo (Waxi), Zeren Dawa, Yin Xiangdong, Jiang Xiuying (Liang Jiong Langsa), Guo Changping, He Xianzao, Hu Qinghe, He Zhifu (Zifu), Mesa, Zhao Min, Yongcuo, Nanzeren, Qiujia Cairang, Abu Sinan, Genqiu Duoqi, Luoqia Baima, Daji, Zhaxi Nima, Luoling, Xiajia etc. also including the people who passed away like Zhang Yang, Tudeng Jimei, Renzhen Wangjie etc. The above list includes writers from Ganzi Sichuan, Yushu Qinghai, Changdu Tibet, and Diqing Yunnan. As the number of writers continues to grow, the list of writers will also be expanded. However, in terms of the current Khampa Writers Group, the major creation group is mainly composed of writers from Sichuan Ganzi, and comparatively speaking, the achievements of Sichuan Ganzi writers are relatively outstanding among the Khampa Writers Group. In 2020, *Alai Research* (Volume 12) launched a special study on the Khampa Writers Group, selecting seven Khampa writers who had won national and provincial literary awards. These writers all came from Ganzi, Sichuan and had life experiences in Kangding, the capital of Ganzi Prefecture. Therefore, they were named "Kangding Seven Arrows" including Yixi Zeren, Gao Xufan, Gerong Zhuimei, Da Zhen, Yin Xiangdong, Liemei Pingcuo and Yongcuo.

From 2012 to 2020, the Khampa Writers Group published 5 book series over 50 works, covering different genres like poetry, novels, essays, and review collection. Khampa writers and their works have not only increased in number, but also made breakthroughs in quality. They have successively won more than 20 awards, including the "Horse Award" for National Ethnic Literature Creation, the Sichuan Literature Award, the Sichuan Minority Literature Award, the Ba Jin Literature Award, the "Five Ones" Project Award of Sichuan Province, the Ba-Shu Culture Award of Sichuan Province, the Khampa Literature Award, the Ganzi Literature Award and so on. Among Khampa writers, 6 have won the National Ethnic Literature Creation "Horse Award" 7 times, including Yixi Zeren, Zhangge Nima, Liemei Pingcuo, Dazhen, Li Guiming, and Yongcuo. Yixi Zeren has won the "Horse Award"

twice, short novel collection *Yimu Qiong Qiong* won the second "Horse Award" (1981-1984), and the short stories collection "Pine Ear Stone Necklace" won the third "Horse Award" (1985-1987). Zhangge Nima's *Flowing Love Song* won the 4th "Horse Award" (1988-1990). The poetry collection *Lonely Journey* by Liemei Pingcuo won the 5th "Horse Award" (1991-1994). Da Zhen's long novel *Kangba* and Li Guiming's poetry collection *My Western Yunnan* won the 10th "Horse Award" (2009-2011). Yongcuo's prose collection *Aocun* won the 11th "Horse Award" (2012-2015). Among the six award-winners mentioned above, Li Guiming is from Diqing Prefecture, Yunnan province, while the other five writers are all from Ganzi, Sichuan province. According to the author's statistics, as of 2022, a total of 10 writers from the Khampa Writers Group have become contracted writers at the Ba Jin Academy, including Ge Rong Zhuimei, Yin Xiangdong, Yixi Kanzhuo (Zeren Kangzhu), Zhao Min, He Zhifu (Zifu), Waxi Pengcuo, Zeren Dawa, Da Zhen, Yongcuo, and Nan Zeren. From namelessness to naming, the emergence of Khampa writers not only expands the group of Chinese writers, but also enriches Chinese literature, which is of great significance.

Khampa Writers' Group is growing, and their works are constantly emerging. As the famous Tibetan writer Alai points out, "Looking back a few years later, this must be an important cultural event for Khampa Tibetan writers because they have made their first collective appearance in self-writing after experiencing thousands of years of aphasia and two or three hundred years of "other" writing [2].

3. LITERATURE REVIEW OF KHAMPA WRITERS GROUP

In recent years, the Kham Tibetan area has seen the emergence of a Khampa Writers Group with strong creative strength, forming a literary expression with strong Kham regional characteristics, unique and fresh aesthetic experience, bringing new aesthetic experiences to the literary world. At the same time, it has also provided scholars with new opportunities to appreciate and understand Tibetan literature and culture. Through extensive reading and data collection, the study of the Khampa Writers Group by domestic and foreign scholars is still in its initial stage. Internationally, if searching the keyword Khampa Writers' Group through the google scholar database, there is no relevant article and if

searching through the EBSCO database, there is only one conference proceeding paper called *Opinions on the Research of 'Kangba Writers' Group'*, written by Chinese scholar Kang Liangfang. If changing the keywords Khampa Writers' Group into the name of single writer of it, like Da Zhen or Yong Cuo, there are two pieces of conference proceeding papers. Domestically, when searching the keyword Khampa Writers Group by Chinese CNKI database, a total of 24 papers were published. Searching by the names of single writer with remarkable creative achievements in the Khampa Writers Group, there are a certain number of researches done in the past ten years, 19 articles on Yixi Zeren and his works, 28 on Gerong Zhuimei and his works, 25 articles on Da Zhen and his works, 15 articles on Yin Xiangdong and his works, 5 articles on Leimei Pingcuo and his works, 3 articles on Gao Xufan and his works, and 3 on Yongcuo and her works. It can be seen that, both internationally and domestically, the academic research on the Khampa Writers Group is still getting started. The research findings of Khampa Writers Group can be summarized in the following two aspects.

First, the fragmented research on Khampa Tibetan literature before the name of Khampa Writers Group was put forward. The study of contemporary Tibetan writers' works began in the 1980s, which is also the period when contemporary Tibetan literature began to flourish. Liu Wanqing and Mo Fushan provides a comprehensive analysis of the development of Tibetan literature, discussing and analyzing different genres such as poetry, novels, and essays [3]. Critic Chen Mo places his focus on novels of Jiangbian Jiacao, Yixi Danzeng, Duoji Caidan, and emphasizes the achievements of these three Tibetan writers, who "not only changed the backwardness of the Tibetan writers' literary creation, but also made a significant contribution to Chinese contemporary literary development by their creative practice"[4]. Jiangbian Jiacao and Zhang Xiaoming give a detailed account of the active young Tibetan novelists including Zhaxi Dawa, Sebo, Zhadeng, Yixi Zeren, Canglin, Deji Cuomu etc. and comments on them respectively in terms of their creative techniques, writing characteristics, and the content of their writings [5] p.666. However, all of these commentaries were made from the broad scope of Tibetan writers, did not distinguish authors from different areas of U-Tsang, Amdo, and Khampa. More importantly, the contents of commentaries were relatively

generalized which comment on the Tibetan literature instead of Khampa Tibetan literature.

Second, the research on Khampa Tibetan literature after the name of Khampa Writers Group was put forward. Since the name of the Khampa Tibetan literature came into being, scholars have gradually begun to pay attention to Tibetan writers and their works in Khampa Tibetan region, and Khampa Tibetan writers have attracted widespread attention. As far as monograph is concerned, there are *Khampa Writers Group Commentary Collection* and *Khampa Writers Group Commentary Collection II* (first and second volumes), which contain a total of 109 commentaries. This collection of commentaries mainly focuses on creative techniques, regional characteristics, themes of works, identity. And Gao Linjia adopts Eco-critical theory to analyze the natural ecology, social ecology and spiritual ecology of Khampa Writers Group works in *A Study of the Ecological Thought of the Kampa Writers Group* from ecocriticism, arguing that natural ecology, social ecology and spiritual ecology are closely related with each other, but never completely equal, independent of each other but never replace each other, they are three aspects of a whole, and their harmony and balance together outline a complete picture of ecological holism [6].

As for the journals, Dang Yunfeng expands the academic vision of the novels of the Khampa Writers Group to the theme of multiculturalism and harmonious coexistence, which is also an enhancement and a summary of Khampa Writers Group study [7]. Su Ning discusses the topics of natural narrative, natural scenery, spatial writing on Khampa Writers Group works. Gao Linjia explores the ecological philosophy embodied in the works of Khampa Writers Group from the aspects of land ethic and harmonious co-existence between man and nature [8].

Besides, there are many scholars and critics who study the single writer from Khampa Writers Group and their works. For example, the famous Tibetan writer ALai interprets the authenticity and profoundness of Dazhen's *Khampa* from the perspective of historical concern, portrayal of human nature, and big background of small destiny [9]. Wang Yue analyzes Da Zhen's *Khampa* in terms of its narrative features, ethnic religion and ecological protection [10]. Gao Linjia applies ecocritical theory to interpret the ecological holism from natural ecology, social ecology and sipirtual ecology on Da Zhen's *Khampa* [11].

Aside from Da Zhen, there are some other Khampa writers who have also received varying degrees of attention from academic study such as Yixi Zeren, Zeren Dawa, Jiangyang Cairang, Gerong Zhuimei and so on. Some scholars have analyzed and discussed the female image, folklore color, and realism on Yixi Zeren's novels; and some have interpreted Gerong Zhumei and his novels from the perspective of historical construction of modern Chinese language.

4. CONCLUSION

To summarize, the study of Khampa writers and their works has made a certain progress in the past ten years but compared to the publication of the five series of Khampa writers books (a total of more than 50 works), it is only a very small part, and there exists a very large space for further development. Firstly, in terms of the research object, although a certain number of academic results have been achieved in the past ten years, researchers mainly placed their focus on investigating single writers of Khampa Writers' Group and their works, while ignoring the general characteristics of the whole group. Secondly, in terms of research perspective, most of the research is carried out from the aspects of writing techniques, regional characteristics, ethnical culture or national identity, there still exist various possibilities to explore Khampa Writers' Group and their works by adopting different theoretical framework.

Khampa writers have enlarged the contemporary Chinese writers' group and Khampa Tibetan literature has enriched the contemporary Chinese literature map. Studying Khampa Writers Group helps to enhance people's understanding of Tibetan literature, enrich the academic value and significance of the study of Tibetan literature and culture, and deepen the practical significance of Khampa Tibetan writers Group and their works in the present time.

AUTHOR'S CONTRIBUTIONS

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