

Ancestor Worship of Pula People of the Yi Minority in Southern Yunnan

Taking Beige Villlage, Kaiyuan City, Yunnan Province as an Example*

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Abstract—Beige refers to Pula Village of Yi minority in southern Yunnan Province and the area distributed with the most centralized population. The harsh natural environment and the backward means of livelihood make Pula people mainly rely on the worship of nature and ancestors and deities for a good harvest. Ancestor worship has always been prevailing in the local area. The ancestor worship of Pula people builds on the faith that the souls of parents are immortal. Up to now, they still maintain a set of funeral ceremony that pleases souls of the dead. Besides, a variety of ceremonies of sacrifice and praying for souls of ancestors are annually conducted in special festivals such as the Spring Festival, the Mid-July Days and the Winter Solstice Festival.

Keywords—Yi Minority in southern Yunnan; Pula people, ancestor worship

I. INTRODUCTION

Being 80 kilometers away from Kaiyuan City, Beige Village is located in the east of Kaiyuan City in Hani-Yi Autonomous Prefecture of Honghe in southern Yunnan, with Yanshan County of Zhuang-Miao Autonomous Prefecture of Wenshan on the east, Yangshan Village and Dazhuang Village of Kaiyuan City on the south, Zhongheying Town on the west and north. The township government is located in Beige Village. As the only cold highland area in Kaiyuan City, this village has the east-west span of 20.8 kilometers, the south-north span of 17.4 kilometers, the land area of 242 square kilometers, the lowest altitude of 1,650 meters, the highest altitude of over 2,700 meters, the annual lowest temperature of 6 below zero degree centigrade, the highest temperature of 24 degree centigrade, and the annual precipitation of 1,300 to 1,600 millimeters. The village has the prominent karst landform with precipitous mountains: most land is divided by strip-shaped valleys, with many header stones; the mountain is high and steep, having harst development, severe leakage and water and soil loss, which greatly restrict the agricultural production. "With high mountains and plenty of stones, people have to climb when going out. They plant a sea of crops on the mountain slope in spring, but only harvest several bamboo baskets of crops in autumn"[1][p250] is the authentic depiction

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of the agricultural production in Beige. Moreover, horses, mules and cows have been so far the crucial tools of production and transportation. They are put in a suitable place to breed at ordinary times, and coarse cereals are added to the food for them during busy season. The local Pula people mainly made a living through collecting and hunting before 1950s when the farming technique was still in the period of shifting cultivation and slash-and-burn cultivation. Afterwards, tillage method had been changed. With the absence of machine tillage and irrigation system, the local people are still using cattle tillage and traditional farm tools such as hoes and pickaxes. In the production process, men carry things on the shoulder and women on the back, and things are put on the back of horses when they need to be carried to places far away from home. People spend 10 months in doing farm work annually. The harsh natural environment and the backward means of livelihood make Pula people mainly rely on the worship of nature and ancestors as well as deities for a good harvest.

Beige Village governs 6 village committees including Beige, Jiaji, Lugumu, Luopodong, Xiaozhai and Xiamizhe, 41 natural villages with a total of 14,360 people. Pula people is the aborigine and accounts for 97.3% of the total population. In Pula language, "Beige" means "the place a bit over the rocky mountains". The local Pula people get used to dividing Beige into the upper and the lower two half villages. Pula people call the upper half village "Labapo" which means "the Pula people living on the highest mountain" and which includes three village committees of Jiaji, Lugumu and Luopodong in the west of Beige Village; Pula people call the lower half village "Daizhanpo" which means "the people living in the far place beyond the cloud" and which includes three village committees of Beige, Xiaozhai and Xiamizhe in the middle and east of Beige Village. Among them, people in the lower half village are divided into two kinds, one is "Di Gao Po" who live in and around the place where the township government locates; the other is "Di Xi Zuo Po" which means "people living in the flat land" and who lives in Xiamizhe area. In Beige, Pula people are subdivided into several branches with different appellations of themselves and others, but Pula people think they are the same ethnic group and have the same ancestors. Ancestor worship has been prevailing in the local area for a long time.

II. PULA PEOPLE'S CONCEPT OF SOUL

Ancestor worship builds on the belief that the souls of parents are immortal and refers to the respect and belief in ancestors' souls. Soul is called "Yina" in Pula language in Beige. As a branch of Yi Minority, Pula people have many concepts of soul that are same or similar to it, mainly including:

Firstly, Pula people think human is the combination of soul and body. People have many souls when they are alive; people's souls are easily lost in the wild when they do activities there, so they have to pick one thing in the place of activity up and bring it back. It is said that the souls would be attached to it. Pula people have the custom of consecrating soul worship tree in their home. The soul worship tree is also named "Yi Na Zai" where the souls of a family concentrate. In the morning, some branches of chestnut are collected and symbolize a sacred tree, also called the soul worship tree, which is put on the altar or bound on the center pillar (soul pillar) of the room where the old live. Every year the new soul worship tree is bound on the center pillar of the former year, and they accumulate year after year and would not be taken down. Furthermore, when going out no matter for production or participating in funeral and fete ceremony, Pula people always pick some leaves or branches and bring them home and put them on the soul pillar after the activities finish. Leaves or branches symbolize bringing souls of people who take leaves or branches back, so he will not get ill.

Secondly, from the perspective of Pula people, when someone fall ill or suffer from cachexia or is in a state of utter stupefaction for no reason, it is generally assumed that his soul leaves his body, so a ceremony must be performed to call the soul back. In Beige, a golden bamboo leaf with egg shell tied on it is used the ceremony of calling the soul back performed by Pula people in Jiaji Village. The golden bamboo leaf is inserted beside the table, and wine is put in three cups without handle and so is tea. People scrub the whole body of the sick via the mixture of sagebrush and Sichuan pepper, and then kill chickens and incant to make the soul leaving the body return, praying the recovery of the sick. When calling the soul back, Pula people in Achi Village call by holding the clothes of the sick for three times outside the village, behind the house and in the doorway. After calling the soul back, they usually perform the ceremony of "Yi Na Ge" which means "making the soul undisturbed within the specific time". The symbol is that people hang a hat made of thin bamboo strip or a straw hat in the doorway for 3 to 5 days and outsiders are not allowed to come in. This is because the soul of the sick is just found and the sick just recovers for a while, the soul of the sick would be scared away if outsiders come in during this period.

Lastly, in the concept of Pula people, souls can exist after separating from human body and would not disappear with people's death, while it means death once the soul leaves the body and never comes back; people have three souls after death: one guards the grave, one goes back to ancestral place and one guards the memorial tablet; there are three spirits relevant to three souls, namely vagrant spirit, home spirit and family spirit. Vagrant spirit refers to souls of ancestors that are vagrant before the memorial tablet is made; home spirit refers to souls of ancestors that are attached to the memorial tablet

and are consecrated in home; family spirit means souls of ancestors that memorial tablets are sent to ancestral places and becomes the common ancestral spirit of the same family, enjoying the worship of all family members. After Pula people pass away, presbyter bei mo (called "Beng Mao" in Pula language, "bei mo" in pronunciation) must be invited timely to call back souls of the dead and direct the way as well as make memorial tablet, in order to make them become ancestral spirits (specially make it become home spirit and family spirit) that bless their descendants, or the souls of the death would wander all the time and become ghosts that persecute family members.

III. FUNERAL TO PLEASE ANCESTRAL SPIRITS

In Beige, Pula people attach great importance to funeral ceremony of the old in family. Otherwise, people in this family will be inevitably reproached by other people in the village. So far, they still maintain a set of funeral ceremony to please souls of the dead. It is said that "This is the rule set by ancestors and cannot be violated, or the descendants will be punished unquestionably."¹

A. Funeral Ceremony

In homes of Pula people, the relatives must serve by the side when the old approach their ends. Their relatives must wail when the old die. At the same time, people among the relatives would immediately catch a hen and make it fall to death. Instead of being eaten by family members, this chicken can be eaten by outsiders and is called "the chicken sending the ghost away". If people in the family fail to see the death of the old in time, after they arrive home, other family member will take a chicken and make it die by striking it on the pillar, representing "see, your father (mother) dies like this", then the latecomers will sorrow.

Before a coffin containing the corpse of the dead is carried to the cemetery, the location of it depends on the situation that people die. If people dies naturally at home, the coffin is often placed in the central room and covered by a dead quilt; if people dies unnaturally outside, the corpse cannot be taken home but put on the open ground outside the house or the village, or adversity will be brought for family members. Sacrificial offerings such as incense, wine, meal and animals prepared by family members of the dead will be placed in front of the coffin. The animals for sacrifice usually include a raw pig head along with a pigtail and a sheepskin or cowhide with head and feet. Some families specially use a complete piggy for sacrifice, meaning "letting the dead have crowds of animals to feed, so that they will not be too poor to demand from their family members alive and to make them suffer from adversities". If the dead has a daughter who is married to a man outside the village, she must return the parental home immediately in the first night of her parent's death and sacrifice the night snack. The sacrificial offerings are put in a small sifter and include three incenses, an underdone chicken, half bowl of wine and a bowl of rice. The time of offering a sacrifice is after midnight and before cock crow. Reputedly, ghosts eat midday meal during that period. The son-in-law of

¹ Said by local Pula people Wang Zhoushun.

the dead would put the small sifter in front of the coffin gently and the daughter of the dead kneels beside the coffin, crying and saying, "Papa (Mama)! We come back to see you. Please have your meal here, drink your wine here..."

When people carry a coffin to the cemetery, cereals, jar and wine are placed in the house of the dead first for sacrifice. After Be Ma recites scriptures for a while, the wine is poured into the jar to expiate the sins of the dead. On the way to the cemetery, the head of the dead must face towards its house. People who carry the coffin stop twice from the central room to the mountain where the cemetery locates, one in the village, another outside the village. The former is called "Changhao (playing suona horn)", the latter is called "Zhuanshan", meaning "the head of the dead turns to distant place from here". In the process of Zhuanshan, the coffin is put down outside the village, bei mo scatters rice while walking and other people collect rice through hands, hats and aprons. The rice scattered by bei mo represent souls of people who attend the burial ceremony, and the more rice they collect, the better it is. If people fail to collect any rice, it means the souls of there are not on their bodies, so they must grab dust grey on the ground and put it in the pocket and whisper, "My soul comes back! Come back!" After scattering the rice, bei mo continues to recite Scripture of Directing the Way, "We pass... and reach..." After reciting, people change direction of the coffin, with the head of the dead towards the place outside the village, which indicates the dead says goodbye to people in the village and begins the journey. After the direction of the coffin changes, bei mo returns, followed by other people who cannot look back.

In the process of burying the dead, the one who first digs the grave with a hoe must be a widower. If the dead is a man, people will dig with a hoe for 9 times; if the dead is a woman, people dig with a hoe for 7 times. Before the coffin is put in the grave, the family members of the dead must use rooster to practice geomancy for the cemetery of the dead. If the geomancy is not good, bei mo will be invited later to divine and move the grave. After checking the geomancy, people can bury the coffin and build the grave by laying stones, the number of which is singular in most cases and the layer of which often does not exceed 5. Since Pula people do not have their character, most of the gravestones are inscribed by Chinese characters. Bei mo must be invited to make memorial tablet for sacrifice on the second day after the burial. After three days, a ceremony called Fushan must be performed to sacrifice the dead again and call souls of the living back. The latter uses a pair of chickens and a goat, and people says "the dead has gone, the living comes back". So far, the funeral ceremony of Pula people has called an end.

B. Soul Returning to Ancestral Place

In the funeral ceremony of Pula people, presbyter bei mo is the core person in the whole system. In order to prevent souls of the dead from wandering in the wild all the time and from becoming vagrant spirits or ghosts that persecute family members, both rich and poor Pula people would invite bei mo to the funeral to call back the spirit of the dead and direct the way as well as expiate the sins of the dead, so that the soul of the dead will get rid of pains and adversities. On the funeral,

mainly through reciting Scripture of Directing the Way, bei mo guides the soul of the dead to return to its ancestors' place of residence and reunite with them, and to understand its homeward journey; Bei mo also explains places where the dead passes and matters needing attention on the way. Finally, the dead reaches the ancestral place and settle down again to begin a new life. For example, the Scripture of Directing the Way recited by Wang Shaoxian, Bei mo of Jiaji Village is:

"...You walk along,

Do not look back.

You must walk to the north,

It is the place where your ancestors live.

You have to pass Lansiai Puerto in Achi Village,

Where cool and refreshing water flow along the stone crack,

You can have a rest and drink water if you are tired and thirsty.

You also have to pass Feizidao Puerto in Luopodong Village,

And the puerto in Sanjia Village,

And Songpinaike Puerto,

And Nangpencaibo Mountain,

Then you have walked half of your journey

...

Walk to the capital Guoannangtianlong,

When the gate is closed, you can let roosters crow to make people inside open the gate.

After reaching there, you should get along well with others,

Raise your animals and manage your money,

Bless your family members who are alive safe.

We will send your money on winter solstice every year.

Go, go, walk your way.

You can only look forward, do not look back..." [2] [P154-155]

Most of the Scripture of Directing the Way recited by bei mo for the dead is spread from mouth to mouth. The route that directs soul of the dead depicts the migration route of ancestors of Pula people, "You must walk to the north. It is the place where your ancestors live..." The destination "Guoannangtianlong" is also the place where ancestors of Pula people live. No historical materials exist to research the specific place. But it says in the Records of Kaiyuan City, "Pulapo in Kaiyuan flowed from Kunming in ancient times and referred to the ancient indigenous people who live in the place for generations." [3] [P618] which shows "Guoannangtianlong" here refers to Kunming. Besides, bei mo Wang Shaoxian introduces, "Guoannangtianlong" refers to 'the capital of ghosts in the nether world', located in

Yinyang Street of Dali." It has reflected some ancestors of Pula people once lived in Dali, which is also recorded in relevant historical materials. It says in Manuscript of Records of Menghua, "there are two kinds of Luoluo, one is the ancient Luoluomo, which is one of the nine clans of Ailao, the Xinuluo in Nanzhao during Tang Dynasty; the other is Puluoman, namely the descendants of Gupu...Epu is Pu, with different but similar customs." [4] [P125] "Luoluomo" refers to Yi minority without doubt; "Puluoman" is regarded as "Pula", mainly distributed in Weishan of Dali. The Pictures of Nationalities in Qing Dynasty records, "仆喇 (Pula) is also called 扑喇 (Pula), Gupuna, the descendants of Jiulong. Meng family in Nanzhao was located in Xundian and yielded surrender at early Yuan Dynasty. This minority also exists in Linan, Guangxi, Guangnan and Linjiang prefectures." [5] [P39] The place under the administration of Linan Prefecture in Qing Dynasty refers to today's southern Yunnan, which shows Pula people had migrated to Kaiyuan City during the period of Ming and Qing Dynasty. In ancient times, all the Pula people in Kaiyuan called themselves "Misapo, Puwapo". [6] [P187] "Misapo" means Mengshe people, the main minority that participated in establishing the country of Nanzhao. In ancient times, Weishan is the ruins of Nanzhao. The name of "Misapo" has reflected the migration route of Pula people from Weishan of Dali to Kaiyuan in southern Yunan. To sum up, we can see Kunming and Weishan in ancient times are the habitation of ancestors of Yi minority as well as the ancestral place where souls of Pula people return.

C. Memorial Tablet "Nasheta"

Except for directing the way for souls of the dead, another indispensable link in the funeral ceremony of Pula people is to make memorial tablet. On the second day after the burial of the dead, Pula people use crab apple to make memorial tablet for sacrifice. The crab apple is often fetched by son-in-law of the dead, and bei mo is invited to make: first cut the branch to make a batten; then carefully break open one head of the batter so that it can clamp a small sack with buckwheat, corn and rice inside; then put bones of chicken and pig that are used by bei mo for sacrifice of the dead in the funeral procession in the sack to make memorial tablet, which is called "Nasheta" by Pula people. The memorial tablet is often inserted into the wall or soul pillar on right side of the host's room. The dead that dies at home would be worshiped (consecrate, called "worshiped" locally) at home, while the dead that dies outside would be worshiped on the outer wall in the doorway, showing souls of the dead exist with their family members (family soul), for sacrifice at any time. The material used by Pula people to make memorial tablet must be crab apple. They firmly believe that crab apple has relationship with their ancestors of the same clan, which is related to the locally widespread myth about flood:

In ancient times, there were many evildoers who stole the horse of deity Zhugasuo. The deity was very angry and created flood to wipe out human beings. Seeing the flood was irresistible, evildoers robbed all the iron and copper tubes. A pair of kind-hearted Pula brother and sister only picked up a wooden tube. When the flood rushed, the brother and the sister rapidly got in the wooden tube to escape, waiting for the

domination of destiny. Evildoers who robbed iron and copper tubes sank into the water and were drowned because of the heaviness, while the brother and the sister floated on the surface of the water safely all the time. After the flood disappeared, the wooden tube of the brother and the sister was warded off by a crab apple and did not fall off, which saved their lives. The deity sent the subordinate Shai Laopeng to inspect on the ground. After seeing human beings nearly died out, he persuaded the brother and the sister to marry each other. At first, they opposed and later they have no choice but to get married after it was confirmed that they were suitable for each other through rolling the millstone and dustpan. After they got married, 9 pairs of twins were born. Afterwards, human increased continuously in number and were divided into different nationalities.²

In the myth, the crab apple is regarded by Pula people as the tree that brings luck and auspice and saves the day. In order to remember that the crab apple saves their ancestors' lives, when people pass away, Pula descendants would use crab apple to make memorial tablet "Nasheta" for sacrifice. "Nasheta" is not accumulated. Descendants would burn up the "Nasheta" of the former generation in front of the grave, meaning "sending memorial tablet to the ancestral place", in order to let them live with foregone ancestors and turn them into family spirits that "protect descendants from suffering from adversities and bless them".³ Moreover, the worship of crab apple also reflects the value of Pula people: The crab apple bears fruits with many seeds (called Zi in Chinese, sharing the same pronunciation with children in Chinese) and has high yield, which implies that there will be numerous children and blessings.

IV. SACRIFICE AND PRAYING

In the life with ceremonies, sacrifice often accompanies with praying. People offer presents and words of praying for the bliss of deities. [7] [P80] To make parents' souls become deities that protect and bless descendants and prevent them from becoming ghosts that persecute people, the descendants always sacrifice for them ceaselessly with a devout heart. [8] Ancestor worship is very prevalent among Pula people who sacrifice and pray at home or on the cemetery hill on festivals.

A. Ancestor Worship on Spring Festival

During the Spring Festival, every Pula family in Beige would insert a pine tree in the courtyard, which is called "Tao Shi Kuo Wo Tou" which means "tree of Nian". People have to worship the tree of Nian and their ancestors before having meals, first saying words of praying and worshipping Nian in the courtyard and then saying words of praying and worshipping ancestors in the central room. When worshipping Nian, family members raise the bamboo sieve in which is put two pairs of incenses, two bowls of wine, two half bowls of rice, with chopsticks and cooked chicken on the rice. The host holds the burning incenses and makes a bow in front of the pine tree and recites "Gu Zhu La Pai He", which means "deity puts down Nian". As the gift of deity, "Nian" is regarded as

² Narrated by local Pula people Wang Liqing

³ Said by local Pula people Yang Songlin

divinity by local Pula people; meanwhile, the integration of Nian worship and ancestor worship makes the tree of Nian become the sacred tree of the family.

After the Nian worship, family members enter the room for ancestor worship. They first worship the memorial tablet "Nasheta" and then worship ancestors on altar (or the foot of soul pillar). "Nasheta" symbolizes souls of ancestors of Pula people. Pula people must worship "Nasheta" first whenever they worship ancestors. During the worship, they should take down "Nasheta" and carefully check whether it is complete (Is it damaged by worms? Does the sack have holes? Are the cereals in the sack still there? Is the rope for binding loose?) If damage exists, they have to repair timely; and then smear sacrificial offerings such as rice, wine and meat on the sack of "Nasheta", to "feed ancestors". The memorial tablets are worshipped through the above-mentioned steps in order to eliminate discomfort for ancestral spirits and make them "eat and live well" so that they will bless the safety of family members.

After the worship of the memorial tablet, family members move to the place beside the altar against the wall and conduct the ceremony of ancestor worship. The altar refers to a small wooden rectangle-shaped table, on which a bamboo basket filled with buckwheat is placed. Incenses and four peeled corns are inserted into the pile of buckwheat. Besides, articles like candies, money and egg shells are placed on it. These are offered for ancestors. The bamboo basket is the object of worship. Family members worship ancestors by facing it, with two hands holding incenses and making a bow and reciting, "Here comes the grand festival. You my ancestors, please bless us to have a good harvest, to make a fortune when working outside, and to raise cattle and chickens well and to be healthy..." Then they go out and insert incenses in the place beside the root of the pine tree in the courtyard. The ancestor worship ends.

B. Ancestor Worship on Mid-July Days

The ancestor worship on Mid-July Days is also called "taking ancestors home" by local Pula people. It means picking ancestors who live in the ancestral place home and worshipping. The local Pula people say their ancestors come from afar, so they have to pick ancestors of three generations home successively and worship from the first day of July in lunar calendar and send them away half a month later, namely at the night of the fourteenth day of July in lunar calendar.

The sacrificial offerings on the first day of July in lunar calendar mainly include paper clothes, paper money (paper made to resemble money and burned as an offering to the dead) and fruits. The suit of paper clothes depends on the number of couples among ancestors of three generations. Paper money is offered according to the number of generation of ancestors, and each generation gets a part. Fruits must be three kinds, namely apple, litchi and pomegranate. Apple means ancestors after eating the apple would bring safety for family members and livestock; litchi means ancestors after eating litchi would bless family members to be sharp-eyed and clear-headed so that they would not go astray; pomegranate means descendants would be numerous just like the number of pomegranate seeds.

From the first day to the fourteenth day of July in lunar calendar, family members have to kneel down and kowtow in face of the sacrificial offerings on the altar in the morning, at noon and in the evening every day. People with a good family financial situation would offer meals for three times every day. Two eggplants, one collybia albuminosa and one red rooster are added to the sacrificial offerings on the fourteenth day of July in lunar calendar. They represent a pair of buckets, one umbrella and one packhorse offered for ancestors. Sacrificial offerings such as paper money, clothes and fruits are carried by the rooster and the packhorse.

People send ancestors away at midnight of the fourteenth day of July in lunar calendar. When it begins, they scatter the firewood ash to form 4 circles, three points and one line towards the direction of ancestors' grave; then they insert a row of incenses on the ground in front, and these incenses are marks that direct the way for ancestors. After igniting the incenses, they burn paper clothes and paper money in the circles according to the sequence of great-great-grandfather, great-grandfather and grandfather. When the offerings are burning, all the family members must face the direction of ash circles and incenses at the gate and kneel down according to status of generation in the family and age. After the offerings are burnt out, the host takes a bowl of wine or water and splashes it on the ashes while saying, "Our ancestors! Wish all things go smoothly when and after you go back. Please protect your family members and their livestock from suffering from adversities and make them safe all the year round." After this link, people who kneel down get up and return their homes and close the door. The task of picking ancestors home and sending them away in that year is finished.

C. Ancestor Worship on the Winter Solstice Festival

During the ancestor worship on the Winter Solstice Festival, Pula people mainly use sacrificial offerings such as incenses, wine, meal, chicken and paper money to worship on the cemetery hill.

God of Mountains must be worshiped first before ancestor worship. God of Mountains refers to a tree or a stone on high above the ancestral grave. When offering up a sacrifice, people insert a pair of incenses on the ground and paste a piece of paper money on the tree or stone and burn paper money while saying, "God of Mountains! I offer incense to you and send you money. Please protect our ancestors' houses and prevent snakes from getting in, ants from nesting, water from rushing and animals from treading. Please expel them when you see them coming. Please! Please!"

In the process of ancestor worship, people first ignite three incenses in front of the grave to show their ancestors, "your descendants come to see you". Then they place the sacrificial offerings one by one in front of the grave. After that, the "Paitu" (expel the evil spirit) ceremony is conducted: to put a small part of meal, fruits and wine in a bowl and splash towards the place about several meters away from the ancestral grave, saying "Go, go, go...! Do not rob meals of my ancestors! Give you these to eat. Go there to eat. Go...!" And then they burn paper money while say, "Grandpa and grandma! All the ancestors! Your wine and meals are here, please enjoy. Your

money is here, please take it and use." "You should get along well with each other and do not quarrel." "We will send you money every year. Please do not ask for money from us and please bless your descendants to be safe."

After the worship, people have to add soil to the ancestral grave and clip weeds. Before returning home, they should put a small part of sacrificial offerings including meal, fruits and wine in the bowl in front of the grave and see whether small spiders that do not bite exist among the small worms that gather after smelling the aroma of the food. It would be the most favorable auspices if these spiders are seen. Pula people reckon that small spiders are the incarnation of people's souls and would scramble to take them back after seeing them. Those who do not find or catch will gather up a handful of soil on the ground and pack into their pockets, indicating their souls are not lost in the wild. After returning home, they pour out the soil and place it on the foot of the soul pillar, which means their souls come home with them.

V. CONCLUSION

The ancestor worship of Pula people builds on the faith that the souls of parents are immortal. Therefore, Pula people still maintain a set of funeral ceremony to please souls of their parents. On the funeral, through timely inviting presbyter bei mo to call back the spirit of the dead, direct the way and make memorial tablets, descendants make their parents' souls have their home, or guarding the grave, or returning to ancestral place or guarding the memorial tablets, so that they will not become evil or ghosts that persecute family members. From the viewpoint of Pula people, souls of their ancestors can both bless descendants and incur adversities for descendants. In order to make souls of ancestors become deities that bless descendants, Pula people with a devout heart perform ceremonies of sacrifice and praying for souls of ancestors in special festivals such as the Spring Festival, the Mid-July Days and the Winter Solstice Festival. They aim at praying for bliss for descendants, the development of families, good harvests and thriving domestic animals. Meanwhile, the frequent activities of ancestor worship of Pula people also indicate their strong desire of pursuing happy life under harsh environment.

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