

# Opinions on the Research of "Kangba Writer Group"

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## ABSTRACT

At present, the research on the "Kangba Writer Group" in the academic circle is generally showing a hot trend, but there are also some problems, which are mainly reflected in two aspects: one is that people have a whole understanding of the concept of "Kangba Writer Group" and the expression is generalizing and ambiguous; the other is that there are many evaluations and analyses on the content of the works, and relatively few articles are based on reading the original and can use the in-depth research of literary criticism theory. It's believed that, on the one hand, the interpretation of the concept of "Kangba Writer Group" should be explored from multiple perspectives such as the causes, cultural atmosphere, geographical environment, creative style, creative group, and leading figures and so on; on the other hand, the researchers in Kangba area should grasp the advantage that "those on the waterfront are the first to see the rising moon" in the research of the "Kangba Writer Group", avoid the misunderstanding of "a flower inside the wall, the fragrance outside the wall", and do something in terms of building a research team, building a research platform, and cultivating local critics.

**Keywords:** *Kangba Writer Group, Research status, Kangba ethnic colleges and universities.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Some researchers hailed the "Kangba Writer Group" as "bringing new surprises and unique aesthetic experience to the Chinese literary world" and "a dazzling and resounding lightning shining in the Chinese literary world". The academic circles maintain continuous attention and research enthusiasm for the "Kangba Writer Group". Searching on CNKI, hundreds of related research articles with tens of thousands of downloads can be found. Some well-known writers and scholars have participated in the research review of the works of the "Kangba Writer Group". For example, Alai and Mai Jia have written reviews for Da Zhen's novel "Kangba" (《康巴》). Mr. Zeng Zhennan, He Zhenbang, Chen Xiaoming, Zhang Yiwu, etc. commented on the novel "The Predestined" (《命定》) seminar from multiple perspectives. In recent years, there have been many research projects centered on the "Kangba Writer Group" in colleges and universities, such as Huang Qunying of Southwest University of Science and Technology's 2014 Ministry of Education Humanities and Social Science Research General Planning Fund Project

"Research on Sichuan 'Kangba Writers Group'", Yu Bei of East China Normal University's 2015 National Social Science Found Project "Kangba Tibetan Literature Research from a Cross-cultural Perspective", Gao Linjia of Sichuan Minzu College's "Research on the Ecological Awareness and Artistic Expression of the Kangba Writer Group" of the National Social Science Foundation Western Project in 2020, etc. However, there are still some problems in the research. It is believed that the connotation and extension of the new concept of "Kangba Writer Group" should be explored from multiple levels and angles, the literary criticism theory should be used to analyze the text in depth, and the research advantage of colleges and universities in the Kangba area that "those on the waterfront are the first to see the rising moon" should be exploited to the full.

## 2. THE WELL-DEFINED "KANGBA WRITER GROUP" IS NOT YET CLEAR

"Kangba Writer Group" is a proper name, and it is not equivalent to the writer group of Kangba area.

In the sixth issue of *Studies of Ethnic Literature* in 2013, there was Dan Zhencao's "Works Seminar of 'Kangba Writer Group' Held in Beijing"; *Journal of Literature and Art* published Wang Mi's article "'Kangba Writer Group' Expressing Unique National Customs" on November 4, 2013; Xu Qin wrote an article "Summary of the 'Kangba Writer Group' Novel Seminar Conference" in the second issue of *Alai Research* in 2017; Gerong Gyurmey, the vice chairman of the Sichuan Writers Association, the executive vice chairman of the Literary Federation of Garze Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, and the chairman of the Garze Writers Association, wrote in the preface of "Gongga Shan" (《贡嘎山》) (Chinese version) in 2017: "Looking back over the past five years, the sudden rise of the 'Kangba Writer Group' has achieved remarkable results, attracting great attention from various media, Chinese literary circles, and critics. The influence of this literary brand jointly created by the Kangba area has become increasingly widespread." [1] In Liu Chengyong's "Literature Review of the 'Small Regional Writer Group' in the New Century", the "Kangba Writer Group" is regarded as one of the research objects of the "Small Regional Writer Group". The above proves that the academic circles have used "Kangba Writer Group" as a fixed phrase with specific meaning and stereotype, or a proper name.

Obviously, it is not just a word or phrase. It belongs to a singular concept in a logical sense. Since it is a concept, it should have a clear definition. As a new concept, people still have a whole understanding of its extension and connotation at present, and the expression is generalizing and ambiguous. In 2019, Yu Bei and Zhu Xia's "From Nameless to Naming: The Formation of Contemporary Khams-Pa Tibetan Writer Group" is generally a high-level article in this type of research, but it also shows their incomplete understanding and inaccurate expression of the "Kangba Writer Group". The article ends with the following statement: "To sum up, from 1983 to 2012, Kham Tibetan writers have gone through three periods of subjective consciousness, historical consciousness, and collective consciousness. From being nameless to being named, the collective appearance of the Kangba Writer Group has followed the natural course. Finally, in 2011, Gerong Gyurmey and others put forward the idea of Kangba Writer Group. The planning of the book series of the Kangba Writer Group was formally incorporated into the work deployment of the Literary Federation

of Garze Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, which opened a new era in which the Kham Tibetan writers collectively broke through from the periphery to the center". [2] Obviously, the keyword "Khams-Pa Tibetan Writer Group" in the article refers to the "Kangba Writer Group" that has been narrowed down in scope. The authors seem to equate the current "Kangba Writer Group" with contemporary Kham Tibetan writers. In fact, in the first series of "Kangba Writer Group" officially named after "Kangba Writer Group" (published by Writers Publishing House in 2012), there is a poem collection by Dou Ling, a writer of the Hui nationality in Kangding, entitled "Dong Xiao Heng Chui" (《洞箫横吹》). Contemporary *Literary Criticism* in the fourth issue of 2013 also published Cao Jizu's review article "Poetic Principles and Other — Comment on Dou Ling's Poem Collection 'Dong Xiao Heng Chui'". As far as ethnic identity is concerned, the "Kangba writer group" is a literary creation group composed of writers from the Han, Hui, and Yi nationalities with Tibetans as the main body. The Kham land itself embodies the coexistence of all ethnic groups.

In Liu Qian's "Study on the Novels of 'Kangba Writer Group' in the New Era" (2016 master's thesis), it is defined as follows: "Kangba Writer Group" actually refers to a new generation of literary creation groups with writers born in Qamdo in Tibet, Diqing in Yunnan, Yushu in Qinghai, and Garze Tibetan area in Sichuan as the main body, and the original life and reality of the Kham Tibetan area as the master copy for literary creation after the 1970s. Representative writers include the older generation writers Yixi Zeren, young and middle-aged writers Da Zhen, Gerong Gyurmey, Yin Xiangdong, Liemei Pingcuo, Liangjiong Langsa, Zeren Dawa, Wa Xi, Jiangyang Cairang, He Xianzao, Zhao Min, Renzhen Wangjie, Luosang Zhuoma, Yong Cuo, etc. [3] In the foregoing paragraph, the listed writers such as Da Zhen, Gerong Gyurmey, Yin Xiangdong, Liemei Pingcuo, Liangjiong Langsa, etc. are among the writers of the "Kangba Writer Group" who are highly influential, active and have achieved remarkable results, and who have been the focus of critical attention; however, they all belong to the generation after 60s. The references to the birth year and place of birth of the main writer in Liu Qian's article are at least logically not rigorous enough and need to be carefully weighed. Expanding or narrowing the extension of the concept cannot be accurate for the definition of the

"Kangba Writer Group" emerging in the background of a specific era.

Since the beginning of the 21st century, "Kangba study" has emerged. In this context, a group of Kangba writers, mainly writers from the Garze Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture in Sichuan, gradually used the region as an identify label, assigned their names, and made a collective appearance. Finally, in 2012, through the "Kangba Writer Group" works seminar and book launch held in Chengdu by the Sichuan Writers Association and the Propaganda Department of the Garze Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture Committee of the Communist Party of China, the "Kangba Writer Group", a literary creation group, was officially launched. As of 2019, they have released five series of the Kangba Writer Group book series published by Beijing Writers Publishing House. In the preface of the book series, Alai referred to the "Kangba Writer Group" as "the collective appearance of self-writers of the people on this land". It should be mentioned that the writing of Kangba by Kangba people in the new era is a significant symbol of this literary creation group.

Liu Xie, a literary theorist from the Southern and Northern Dynasties, used a comparative method to illustrate the relationship between region and literature in "Wen Xin Diao Long" (《文心雕龙》). In the introduction to "History of English Literature", French 19th-century literature historian Taine put geography, race, and era as the three major factors that determine literature. The connotation of the concept of "Kangba Writer Group" is inseparable from the characteristics of regional character, national character and epochal character. From the perspective of regional character, the writers belonging to the "Kangba Writer Group" are writers of various ethnic groups living or having lived in the Garze Tibetan area of Sichuan, Qamdo of Tibet, Diqing of Yunnan, and Yushu of Qinghai; the works are based on writing about Kangba and presenting its natural and humanistic landscape, with strong regional cultural characteristics and deep Kangba feelings. Some researchers have said that "The dominance of natural characteristics over the work of the Kangba writers is particularly evident, and it can be said that their work is a product of the natural mind, which I call the culture fable of the natural mind. The understanding of nature comes from the unique national life experience, which is closely related to the physical geography in which they live". [4] The academic circles generally agree that in the current Sichuan literary creation, the "Kangba Writer

Group" has brought a new pattern to Sichuan literary creation due to the distinctive regional characteristics of their works. [5] As far as the national character is concerned, the main body of this literary creation group is the native-born Tibetan writers, mainly represented by Tibetan writers in the Garze Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture in Sichuan, such as the older generation writers Yixi Zeren and the young and middle-aged writers Liangjiong Langsa, Da Zhen, Gerong Gyurmey, Liemei Pingcuo, Sangdan, Yin Xiangdong, Zeren Dawa, Wa Xi, Zhao Min, Yong Cuo, Nan Zeren, Luoja Baima, etc. Most of them use the national common language to create, and the national character is more reflected in the content of their writing. Of course, their verbal expressions also reveal the color of Tibetan culture. When commenting on the creation of "Kangba Writer Group", the critic Tenzin said that "The humor, flexibility, agility and image of the language of Kangba region are the biggest characteristics of the Kangba community language". [6] He Xianzao pointed out when commenting on the "Time in Qinghai-Tibet" (《青藏时光》) by Gerong Gyurmey: Although the narrative is in Chinese grammar, it can be read that it is from the tone of Tibetan folklore. The statements are full of the linguistic wisdom of a people, both in terms of Bixing and allusion. [7] As for the epochal character, Alai said in this passage about the "Kangba Writer Group": "On the vast and majestic plateau of Garze, there are more and more writers of all ethnic groups writing about this land as the master of this land, writing about the unprecedented radical changes as well as the unprecedented life in this land..." [8] The era in which they live will surely brand the writers' thoughts and ideas and project them in their literary works. Yan Xiuying believes that: "Gerong Gyurmey pursues beauty and takes root in tradition, facing reality, and in the effective use of historical narrative and folk narrative, he has established his own 'contemporary' national position and value orientation". [9] This is exactly the affirmation of the epochal character of Gerong Gyurmey's works of chasing beauty, which is also reflected in the works of "Kangba Writer Group" writers such as Da Zhen, Liemei Pingcuo, Liangjiong Langsa, Yin Xiangdong, and Yong Cuo and so on.

Some researchers believe that the "Small Regional Writer Group" like the "Kangba Writer Group" is the result of literary system restriction, authoritative naming, theoretical advocacy, government promotion, and cultural support. [10]

This is exactly what happened. Therefore, to define the "Kangba Writer Group", one must explore the reasons for its emergence and consider from multiple perspectives such as cultural atmosphere, geographical environment, creative style, creative group, leading figures, reviews, publications, awards, and reprints and so on.

### **3. THE RESEARCH ON "KANGBA WRITER GROUP" SHOWS A CONCENTRATED AND BROAD TREND**

To study the current research status of the "Kangba Writer Group", one can focus on two sets of review collection on the "Kangba Writer Group". The first set is the "Review Collection of the Kangba Writer Group" in the second series of the Kangba Writer Group book series published by Writers Publishing House in 2013, edited by Gerong Gyurmey. The second set is the first and the second volume in the "Review Collection of the Kangba Writer Group" of the fifth series of Kangba Writer Group book series published by Writers Publishing House in 2019, edited by Ouyang Meishu. The former collected 41 review articles of Chinese well-known writers and critics Alai, Mai Jia, Liu Huo, Li Mingquan, etc., targeting 20 writers including Yixi Zeren, Liemei Pingcuo, Gerong Gyurmey, Da Zhen, Liangjiong Langsa, Sang Dan, Dou Ling, He Xianzao, Yin Xiangdong, Zeren Dawa, etc. from the "Kangba Writer Group". This review collection, as the editor said, covers the academic comments on important representative writers of the Kangba Writer Group. The review articles make detailed comments on the individual creations of Kangba writers in terms of subject matter, techniques, areas of concern and expression, and the gains and losses of creation, and summarize the overall creative direction of Kangba writers in a point-to-area manner. The latter contains 69 relevant research articles since 2015. The book is nearly 570,000 words and covers reviews of works by 18 writers, plus four comprehensive reviews. The book is set in four main sections: novel, poetry, prose and comprehensive research. "Novel Review" includes 43 review articles by 9 writers including Gerong Gyurmey, Da Zhen and Yin Xiangdong and so on. "Poetry Review" includes 13 review articles by 7 writers including Liemei Pingcuo, Ran Zhongjing and Dou Ling and so on. "Prose Review" includes 9 review articles by two young female writers, Yong Cuo and Nan Zeren. And there are 4 articles in "Comprehensive Review". On the whole, novel research is relatively concentrated

and the research power is relatively strong. For example, there are 16 articles on the study of Gerong Gyurmey's novels, and all of them have been published in open academic journals, and some of them have been published in core journals of Peking University, such as "The Village History of A Tibetan: On the Writings of skal-bzang-vgyur-med" by Yan Yingxiu in the first issue of Studies of Ethnic Literature in 2018. From the perspective of individual writers, the situation of being paid attention to and researched is also different. Obviously, various leading figures such as Gerong Gyurmey, Da Zhen, Yin Xiangdong, Liemei Pingcuo, and Yong Cuo are the focus of the critics' attention. Compared to 2013, the 2019 edition of the "Review Collection of the Kangba Writer Group" has increased in word count by 429,000 words, the number of writers involved in the review has decreased, and the research tends to be more concentrated and more systematic.

In general, the study of the Kangba Writer Group shows a concentrated and broad trend. By "concentrated", it means that the books and periodicals, researchers, and research objects involved are relatively concentrated. From the perspective of research books and periodicals, in addition to the two sets of review collection mentioned above, a series of related research articles have been published more intensively in publications such as Contemporary Literary Criticism and Alai Research. In addition, it can be found in CNKI in recent years that many of the master's and doctoral dissertations of Chinese language and literature also involve relevant research. From the perspective of researchers, the main research power is teachers in colleges and universities, such as Yan Yingxiu of Lanzhou University of Arts and Science and Xu Qin of Xizang Minzu University who continue to study "Kangba Writer Group". There are also a group of graduate students studying for master's and doctoral degrees among the researchers. From the perspective of the research objects, the number of research articles on the leading figures of novel, poetry, and prose in the "Kangba Writer Group" is obviously much higher. The so-called "broad" mainly refers to the generality of the content of the work from the perspective of research content, and relatively few articles are based on reading the original and can use the in-depth research of literary criticism theory.

#### **4. COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES IN THE KANGBA AREA CAN GIVE PLAY TO THE RESEARCH ADVANTAGE THAT "THOSE ON THE WATERFRONT ARE THE FIRST TO SEE THE RISING MOON"**

The "Kangba Writer Group" based on the profound Kangba culture has been exposed in contemporary literary circles and has become a noticeable existence among the literary creation teams of all ethnic groups in China. In Garze Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture with a population of 1.1 million, there are more than a thousand writers engaged in literary creation. Among them, there are more than 10 members of the Chinese Writers Association and more than 60 members of the Sichuan Writers Association. The works of more than 20 writers have been included in the "Volume of Chinese Tibetan Literature", and more than 80 books by writers from Garze Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture have been collected by the China Nationality Library. "Looking for Kangba Fellows" (《寻找康巴汉子》), "The Hidden Face" (《隐蔽的脸》), and "Kangba" have been published abroad. In recent years, Da Zhen's novel "Kangba" and Yong Cuo's collection of essays "Village Ao" (《凹村》) have won the National Minority Literary Creation Steed Award; Yin Xiangdong's novel "Wind Horse" (《风马》) and Yong Cuo's collection of essays "Village Ao" won the Sichuan Literature Award; Luo Jia Baima's collection of poems "Snow-covered Dream Garden" (《雪覆盖的梦园》), Zhaxi Gangwang's novel "Tibetan Mastiff and Wolf" (《藏獒与狼》), and Yixi Kanzhuo's novel "Drunkard Wangzha" (《酒鬼汪扎》) won the Sichuan Minority Literature Award. Among them, Zhaxi's novel "Tibetan Mastiff and Wolf" written in Tibetan won a Tibetan Work Award. The good creation momentum and achievements of the "Kangba Writer Group" cannot be ignored. It has become a cultural brand that promotes the social, economic and cultural development of the Kangba area, which is of great benefit to the improvement of regional soft power. Liu Chuan'e wrote in Guangming Daily to point out that "Small Regional Writer Group should be the focus of attention and research in the future" [11]. In this regard, ethnic colleges and universities in the Kangba area can give play to the research advantages that "those on the waterfront are the first to see the rising moon"

On the one hand, they must make every effort to create conditions for teachers and students to

understand and get acquainted with the Kangba culture. The Kangba area, which uses the Tibetan Kang dialect, is rich in history and culture, and has a unique Kangba culture. The new era has given Kangba culture new connotations. "Kangba Writer Group is produced in the context of globalization and the blending of different civilizations. Multiplex symbiosis is the subject term in the works of Kangba Writer Group". [12] Reading and studying the works of "Kangba Writer Group" is a good way to understand and familiarize with Kangba culture. Moreover, for those who are engaged in contemporary Kangba writers' literary criticism, in addition to the necessary literary accomplishment and theoretical foundation, familiarity with this culture should be a necessary condition. Colleges and universities can systematically purchase relevant books and materials, offer courses, hold lectures, organize surveys, and conduct seminars to help teachers and students gain a broad understanding and in-depth research on local culture.

On the other hand, it is necessary to build a research team, build a research platform, and cultivate local critics. In the field of Kangba cultural studies, efforts should be made to make the "Kangba Writer Group" research as one of the research focuses, use the existing research foundation to organize and build a research team, and apply for higher-level research projects to build an influential academic research team, so as to form research results with social benefits, boost Kangba literature, and promote local social, economic, and cultural development. In terms of building a research platform, advice from others can be learned from, such as the research of the "Zhoukou Writer Group" in Henan: the Journal of Zhoukou Normal University has been setting up a research column of "Zhoukou Writer Group" since 2014. By the end of 2019, more than 60 related research articles have been published. Similarly, there are Zhaotong University's researches on "Zhaotong Writer Group" and Wenzhou University's researches on "Wenzhou Writer Group". [13] In addition, Sichuan Province and the Literary Federation of Garze Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture have published a series of research articles to promote the study of the "Kangba Writer Group", relying on such prestigious journals as Contemporary Literary Criticism and Alai Research. This approach can also be learned from. It is feasible for colleges and universities to consciously cultivate a team of local literary critics. The advantage of local critics lies in the convenience of

close interviews with writers, grasping writers' creative dynamics, reading new works by writers, and having a comprehensive and in-depth understanding of the writer's background. It is also easy for local critics to grasp the relationship between regional characteristics and literary creation more accurately. Colleges and universities should consciously cooperate with local governments to jointly build research teams.

In addition, the study of "Kangba Writer Group" can promote the professional construction of colleges and universities. Research is not only related to Chinese language and literature majors, but also highly related to Tibetan language and literature, foreign literature, tourism, history and culture, and other majors. The works of "Kangba Writer Group" such as Gerong Gyurmey, Da Zhen, Liangjiong Langsa, etc. have been translated into foreign languages and published abroad; some Tibetan works of Kangba writers also have Chinese versions. Works that are also influential by writers written in Chinese are translated and published in Tibetan, such as the Tibetan version of Da Zhen's novel "Kangba" which was just released in 2020. There is a Translation Award in the National Minority Literary Creation Steed Award, and the Sichuan Minority Literature Award has a Tibetan Work Award. It can be seen that the colleges and universities located in the Kangba area can do many things in the research field of "Kangba Writer Group".

## 5. CONCLUSION

From an overall point of view, the research community has insufficient knowledge and understanding of the "Kangba Writer Group", the text-based theoretical research is not yet in-depth, and the advantageous role of the colleges and universities in the Kangba area in the study of the "Kangba Writer Group" has not yet been fully utilized, meaning that there remains a lot to do in the research in this field.

## AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS

This paper is independently completed by Liangfang Kang.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This article is one of the phased results of the "Research on the Ecological Awareness and Artistic Expression of the Kangba Writer Group" of

the National Social Science Foundation Western Project. Project number: 20XZW034.

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