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# The Nánzhào ‘Storehouse Tablet’

*An Annotated Translation of the 《仓贮碑》*

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## The Yúnnán Papers

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This text is part of a series of translations of historical Chinese texts concerning Yúnnán.

This series does not aim to present any new research but to allow an English-speaking audience to better understand Yúnnán’s history and culture through original texts. The texts are heavily annotated, giving geographical, historical and cultural background information and references to contemporary academic discussions.

The texts in this series are currently in draft and undergoing revision. Those translations that have reached a certain state of maturity can be found on my website at

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## 1 Introduction

The 'Storehouse Tablet' 《仓贮碑》 is a Nánzhào 南诏 relic discovered by accident in 2001 near the ruins of Nánzhào's first capital Tàihé 太和.<sup>(1)</sup> It records information regarding a granary.

The text is carved on a local gneiss stone, uncut and unpolished, about 57cm high and 40cm wide at the widest point. The stone is currently exhibited at the Dàlǐ Prefecture Museum 大理州博物馆 in Dàlǐ City 大理市, see illustration 1.



Illustration 1:  
The 'Storehouse Tablet' at the Dàlǐ Prefecture Museum

Source: Photo taken March 2026 by the author.

The text on the front side is complete and almost without damage. It consists of seven columns of text, between 6 and 13 characters per column, in total 70 characters. There is no text on the back.

The text consists of three parts:

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<sup>(1)</sup> This text is based on Tián Huáiqīng 田怀清 (2003) and Yáng Déwén 杨德文 (2006), which describe the discovery of the tablet, the historical background and analyse its text. The full text of the tablet is also copied from these articles.

- The first part records the appointment of officers in charge of the granary.
- The second part records the grain provisions stored in the granary.
- The third part names the officials who commissioned the text of this tablet.

The tablet does not provide any information about when it was written, but Yáng Déwén 杨德文 argues that it must have been during the period Tàihé was the capital of Nánzhào, i.e. 739–779 CE. Tián Huáiqīng 田怀清 narrows the date range to 752–766 CE, the early period of Nánzhào.

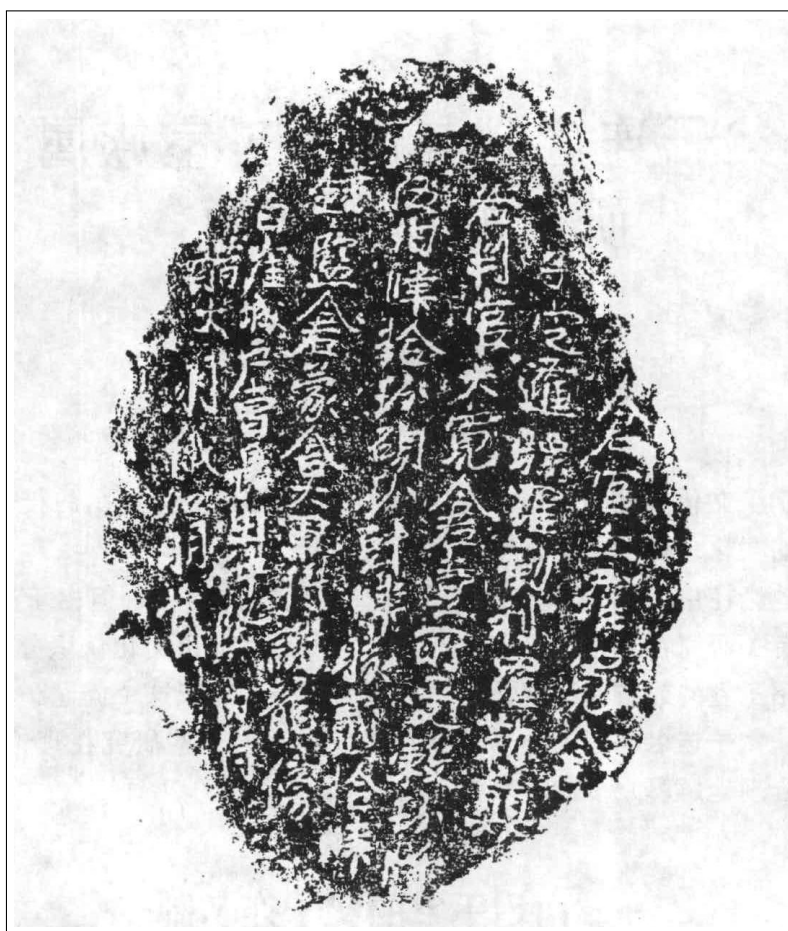


Illustration 2:  
A rubbing of the 'Storehouse Tablet' 《仓贮碑》

Source: Yáng Déwén 杨德文 (2006)

## 2 Annotated Translation

### 2.1 Simplified Version of the Original Text

The text on the tablet uses a number of alternate character forms 别字, which make the text impossible to typeset in its original as these characters are not part of modern fonts. In these cases I have, based on the analysis by Tián Huáiqīng 田怀清 and Yáng Déwén 杨德文, substituted alternate characters. The original text can be seen in illustration 2 on page 6.

After a thorough textual analysis Yáng Déwén 杨德文 derived a simplified version of the text of the 《仓贮碑》, which is given on the right hand side.

倉官丘羅寬倉	倉官丘罗宽，仓	
子芝邏騾羅勸利羅勒顛	子定罗骡、罗劝利、罗勒颠。	
谷判官大寬倉壹所受穀玖仟	谷判官大宽，仓一所受谷玖仟	
伍佰肆拾玖硯玖斗肆騰貳拾肆	伍佰肆拾玖石玖斗肆升貳拾肆	
钱监仓蒙舍大军将谢龙傍	钱。监仓蒙舍大军将谢龙傍	仓贮碑 5
白崖城户曹长生仲坚内侍	白崖城户曹长生仲坚内侍	
醋大羽儀加朋首	醋大羽仪加朋首。	

### 2.2 Translation of the Simplified Version

The following is my translation of the simplified version.

倉官丘羅寬，倉子定羅騾、羅勸利、羅勒顛，谷判官大寬。	The Granary Overseer Qiū Luōkuān, the granary assistants Dìng Luōluó, Luō Quànlì and Luō Lèdiān, and the Grain Adjutant Dàkuān:	仓贮碑 10
倉一所受谷玖仟伍佰肆拾玖石玖斗肆升貳拾肆钱。	The number one granary has received nine thousand five hundred forty-nine <i>dàn</i> , nine <i>dǒu</i> and twenty-four <i>qián</i> .	
监仓蒙舍大军将谢龙傍、白崖城户曹长生仲坚。内侍醋大羽仪加朋首	The Granary supervisor and senior commander of Méngshè Xiè Lóngbàng; the Head of the Revenue <i>Cáo</i> of Báiyá Town Shēng Zhòngjiān; the attendant Cùdà feather fan bearer Jiā Péng.	仓贮碑 15
	<b>Official Announcement.</b>	

[1: 丘] 别字 - The inscription can be read as 丘, in which case it should be read as a name, but Yáng Déwén 杨德文 argues that it is here an elaborate way of writing 立, changing the text's meaning, the official's name then would just be Luó Kuān.

[4: 肆] 别字 - the meaning of this character is unclear, it seems to serve as measure word.

[4: 硯] 别字 -

[4: 斗] 别字 -

[4: 肆] 别字 - Even though it is written a little different to the character annotated above, it seems essentially the same.

[4: 騰] 别字 -

[4: 肆] 别字 - See note above.

[6: 坚] 别字 -

r15: Cùdà ] It is unclear what this is supposed to mean, Yáng Déwén 杨德文 (2006) thinks that this is part of his title.

r16: Official Announcement. ] Yáng Déwén 杨德文 (2006) thinks that this is a floskel used at the end of a proclamation to express that this has been written with approval of the king of Nánzhào.

While the meaning of some of the characters on the stone is not entirely clear, the text still reveals not only that Nánzhào not only held significant amounts of grain in centralized granaries, but also that a grain administration with a hierarchy based on the Chinese model, using Chinese measurements was in place at the time.

### 3 Glossary

- Báiyá** 白崖: pre-Nánzhào polity, thought to have been in present-day Mídù 弥渡 valley, – see page 7
- Cāngzhǔ Bēi** 《仓贮碑》: ‘Storehouse Tablet’, small stone with inscription regarding a storehouse, found at Tàihé 太和, – see page 5, 9
- cáo** 曹: *cáo*, Nánzhào term unit of government, akin to a department, apparently modelled on the Táng dynasty administrative system, – see page 9
- Dà Jūnjiāng** 大军将: senior commander, Jūnjiāng 军将 is ‘an ad hoc designation for a military commander’, see Hucker (1985), 1745 – see page 7, 9
- Dàlǐ** 大理: , –
- Dàlǐ Zhōu Bówùguǎn** 大理州博物馆: Dàlǐ Prefecture Museum, regional museum in Dàlǐ Shì 大理市, – see page 5, 9
- Dàlǐ Shì** 大理市: Dàlǐ City, current capital of Dàlǐ Zhōu 大理州, – see page 5, 9
- Dàlǐ Zhōu** 大理州: Dàlǐ Prefecture, current administrative unit, – see page 9
- Dìng Luōluó** 定罗骡: name mentioned on the 《仓贮碑》, – see page 7
- Ērhǎi** 洱海: Lake Ērhǎi, highland lake in western Yúnnán with the center of Nánzhào on its western side. It was also called Xīěr 西洱, Xīěr Hé, – see page 9
- Hùcáo** 户曹: revenue *Cáo*, one of six *cáo* in Nánzhào, ‘responsible for overseeing regional or local fiscal management’, see Hucker (1985), 2798 see = 曹 – see page 7, 9
- Jiā Péng** 加朋: name mentioned on the 仓贮碑, – see page 7
- Jiànnán** 剑南: Táng dynasty commandery in present-day Sìchuān, –
- Luō Lèdiān** 罗勒颠: name mentioned on the 《仓贮碑》, – see page 7
- Luō Quànlì** 罗劝利: name mentioned on the 《仓贮碑》, – see page 7
- Méngshè** 蒙舍: one of the five Zhào, in the present-day basin of Wēishān 巍山, excavations believed to be the settlement of the Méng 蒙 clan have been made south of the present county town 田怀清 (2011), – see page 7
- Mídù** 弥渡: valley south of Ērhǎi, –
- Nánzhào** 南诏: southern *zhào*, regional power with its center on Ērhǎi during the 8th and 9th centuries, – see pages 5, 6, 8, 9
- Nánzhào Wáng** 南诏王: king of Nánzhào, official title conferred to some of the rulers of Nánzhào by the Táng dynasty, – see page 7, 9
- Qiū Luōkuān** 丘罗宽: name mentioned on the 《仓贮碑》, – see page 7
- Shēng Zhòngjiān** 生仲坚: name mentioned on the 《仓贮碑》, – see page 7
- Shěng** 省: province, administrative division, – see page 9
- Sìchuān** 四川: Chinese province, –
- Tàihé** 太和: first capital of Nánzhào, – see page 5, 6
- Táng Cháo** 唐朝: Táng dynasty, Chinese dynasty, 618–907, – see page 9
- Wēibǎoshān** 巍宝山: Wēibǎo mountain, holy mountain in today’s Wēishān 巍山, – see page 9

- Wēishān** 巍山: mount Wēi, mountain south of Ěrhǎi, in the historic context probably not what is called Wēibǎoshān 巍宝山, – see page 10
- Xīěr** 西洱: shorter form of Xīěr Hé, a reference to Ěrhǎi, –
- Xīěr Hé** 西洱河: Xīěr River, historic name for Ěrhǎi, now in use for the river that flows out of the lake, – see page 10
- Xiàn** 县: county, administrative unit, – see page 10
- Xiè Lóngbàng** 谢龙傍: name mentioned on the 《仓贮碑》, – see page 7
- Yǔyí** 羽仪: feather fan bearer, title court official during Nánzhào, – see page 7, 10
- Yuán Cháo** 元朝: Yuán dynasty, Chinese dynasty, 1279–1368, – see page 10
- Yúnnán** 云南: since the Yuán Cháo 元朝 a southwestern Chinese province, at the time of the Táng dynasty the name for the geographic region south of its Jiànnán district, –
- Zhǎng** 长: head, ‘lit., senior. ... Common suffix indicating the chief official of whatever is designated by what precedes: Head, Chief, Director, Magistrate, etc.’, , see Hucker (1985), 84 – see page 7, 10
- zhào** 诏: *zhào*, term for a local ruler or his realm, – see page 10
- zhōu** 州: prefecture, administrative unit, – see page 10

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