

A Study on the Narrative of Ecological Community in “The Legend of Bi Ashilaze” from the Perspective of Global-South Theory

Binghua Lu¹¹

Abstract:

Centered on de-colonial epistemology, Global-South Theory reflects on the modernity narrative dominated by Western-centrism and re-explores the contemporary values of local knowledge systems in peripheral regions. As a key text of Yi oral narratives from the Daliang and Xiaoliang Mountains and a national-level intangible cultural heritage, *The Legend of Bi Ashilaze* revolves around Bi Ashilaze, a grand Bimo master, who travels across mountains and wilderness, dispels calamities for communities, and reconciles the relationships among humans, deities and nature. It contains unique notions of ecological community cherished by mountain-dwelling ethnic groups. Based on the epistemological turn of Global-South Theory and breaking away from the theoretical framework of Western eco-criticism, this paper analyzes the narrative construction of “co-existence and mutual maintenance between human beings and nature” embedded in the legend. From three dimensions--the narrative of cosmic order, the imagination of mountain-dwelling life community, and the narrative of indigenous ecological practices--it interprets the cultural conception in traditional Yi narratives that human beings are not conquerors of nature but coordinators within the entire mountain ecological network. Furthermore, it discusses how ethnic-minority oral literature, under the context of post-colonial modernity, engages in dialogues on global ecological discourses with indigenous ecological wisdom, and provides ideological resources of Southern perspectives for building a pluralistic and symbiotic global ecological community.²

Keywords: Global-South Theory; *The Legend of Bi Ashilaze*; Yi folk narratives; ecological community; de-colonial epistemology

Date of Submission: 15-08-2026

Date of Acceptance: 28-09-2026

I. Introduction

Research background and significance

Climate crises and biodiversity loss have become practical dilemmas confronting all humankind. For a long time, the interpretive power over global ecological issues has been largely dominated by modern Western ecological discourses. From Aldo Leopold's land ethic to deep ecology, Western eco-criticism supplies vital intellectual resources for human reflection on human-nature relations. Nevertheless, it often examines non-Western local cultures from a Euro-centric perspective, simplifying traditional ecological notions of ethnic minorities as “primitive and naive nature-worship”, and ignoring the internal logic of such notions as an integrated epistemology of survival. Emerging from reflections on the colonial legacy of modernity, Global-South Theory is put forward by Boaventura de Sousa Santos, who argues that there exists no single universal modern cognitive system. “The understanding of the world is far greater than the Western understanding of the world”. To achieve global social justice, cognitive justice must first be fulfilled, so as to rediscover suppressed knowledge traditions from peripheral regions and indigenous peoples. More than a geographical concept, the Global-South serves as a critical analytical perspective: it refers to societies, cultures and knowledge forms marginalized within the capitalist world-system, and advocates developing problem-consciousness and interpretive approaches different from Western paradigms out of local experiences.

Research issues and objectives

The Legend of Bi Ashilaze prevails in Yi-inhabited areas of Daliang and Xiaoliang Mountains in Sichuan-Yunnan provinces. A treasure-house of oral narratives nurtured by Yi Bimo culture, it has been inscribed on the National-level Intangible Cultural Heritage List. Its prototype Bi Ashilaze is a landmark Bimo

¹ Professor, Panzhihua University, Sichuan Province in China

²This paper is supported by the Fund Project of Pan-xi Culture International Communication Research Center, Panzhihua University (2025): A Study on Pan-xi Yi Culture in The Legend of Bi Ashilaze, Chinese Intangible Cultural Heritage (No.25PXWHYB01).

master in Yi history. Blending historical memories, imaginations of ritual sorcery and mountain-dwelling life experiences, folk narratives record his journeys to collect and sort Yi scriptures, his battles of wits against chieftains, and his sorcery to eliminate disasters. They also preserve numerous fantasy episodes concerning human interactions with mountains, rivers, wind, rain, birds and beasts. In previous Yi studies, academic attention has been mostly paid to its religious connotations, evolution of Bimo institutions and textual research on the origin of Yi writing. Though scattered references are made to ecological thoughts embedded in the text, few scholars conduct close narrative analyses from the de-colonial-epistemology perspective of Global-South Theory against the backdrop of global ecological discourses.

Oral narratives are not merely objects of aesthetic appreciation in literature; they function as carriers for a nation to preserve its wisdom of survival. Amid the alpine-gorge living conditions in Liangshan, Yi ancestors wove mountain-dwelling survival experiences into legendary tales of Bi Ashilaze through generations of oral transmission. Instead of treating nature as an object for human transformation and conquest, the legend constructs a community picture where humans, deities, mountains, rivers, plants, trees, birds and beasts mutually restrain and share weal and woe. This paper attempts to address three questions: first, how to reinterpret the values of ecological narratives in ethnic-minority oral literature from the Global-South-Theory perspective; second, what narrative strategies *The Legend of Bi Ashilaze* adopts to construct the imagination of ecological community peculiar to mountain-dwelling Yi people; third, what Southern ideological resources this indigenous oral narrative can offer for pluralistic global ecological dialogues today. Adopting close textual-reading and drawing upon existing achievements in Yi studies, this research restores folk oral narratives to their socio-cultural contexts of mountain-dwelling societies, avoids the research pitfall of mechanically tailoring indigenous texts with ready-made Western ecological theories, and tries to realize an intertextual dialogue between indigenous narratives and critical Global-South Theory.

II. Global-South Theory: De-Colonial Epistemology and “Cognitive Disentanglement” of Ecological Discourses

The concept of “Global South” was first proposed by Carl Oglesby in 1969 to criticize imperialist hegemony oppressing peripheral regions. Later, dependency theory and world-system theory enriched its dimensions of socio-economic analysis. Entering the 21st century, its focus has gradually extended from economic-political critiques to culture and epistemology. Raewyn Connell, Boaventura de Sousa Santos and other scholars reveal cognitive coloniality inherent in modernity: while completing the “disenchantment of the world”, European modern science labelled indigenous traditional knowledge from non-Western societies as superstition and pre-science, and marginalized holistic thinking that intertwines humans and nature in knowledge systems.

Cognitive coloniality has exerted profound influences on the construction of global ecological discourses. Modern industrial civilization objectifies nature and regards it as a reservoir of resources available for human exploitation, which constitutes an important ideological root triggering ecological crises. When reflecting upon such crises, Western eco-theories have developed sophisticated critical systems. Yet when exported outward, these discourses tend to generate new discursive hegemony. In many cases, survival wisdom accumulated by non-Western nations for generations is treated merely as local illustrations for Western eco-theories, while indigenous problem-consciousness gets obscured. Santos puts forward the conception of “pluriverse”: there is not only one path towards modern development; likewise, there should not be only one standard of eco-ethics from the Global North. Indigenous knowledge from various Global-South nations ought to participate equally in deliberations over global ecological issues.

In Chinese contexts, the Global-South perspective opens up new avenues for re-reading ethnic-minority literature. Living for a long time in relatively harsh mountainous, grassland and plateau environments, various Chinese ethnic minorities have developed philosophies of co-existence with environments over centuries. Some past studies fell into binary frameworks: either romanticizing ethnic-minority cultures as idyllic visions of original ecology, or judging them as backward sorcery and superstition by standards of modern science. The Global-South perspective suggests that we suspend monolithic yardsticks of modernity and take seriously internal logics within oral narratives. Filled with sorcery imaginations, myths and legends are not sheer illusions; they deposit survival experiences and ethical norms of an ethnic group coping with mountain-dwelling environments for thousands of years.

Nevertheless, theoretical self-reflection is indispensable. Originating from foreign post-colonial critical thoughts, Global-South Theory will inevitably face problems of inadaptation if transplanted mechanically into studies on Chinese ethnic-minority literature. Chinese ethnic minorities are not the “South” in the sense of externally-colonized groups in Western discourses. Instead, within a unified multi-ethnic country, they share the matrix of Chinese civilization while retaining their own cultural uniqueness. Therefore, this paper mainly adopts the critical methodology of Global-South Theory--“opposing cognitive hegemony, valuing indigenous endogenous knowledge and promoting dialogues among pluralistic discourses”, rather than copying its complete

post-colonial-narrative framework. Drawing on this perspective, we aim to break free from the research inertia of "applying Western eco-criticism concepts mechanically to Chinese folk texts" and listen to voices from the legend text itself.

The Legend of Bi Ashilaze emerged in alpine-gorge zones of Daliang Mountain. Here mountains tower high while valleys sink deep, with sharp vertical climate differentiation. Floods, landslides, beast-inflicted disasters and plagues threaten the survival of villages at any moment. Under such circumstances, human survival lies not in conquering nature, but in reaching dynamic equilibriums with volatile mountain-dwelling environments. As cultural mediators bridging humans, deities and nature in Yi societies, Bi Ashilaze and his legendary sorcery, on the surface super-natural witchcraft narratives, carry Yi ancestors' understandings of mountains, rivers, wind, rain, beasts and disasters, as well as ethical conceptions about maintaining the order and stability of the entire survival community. Within the legend text, ecological order is intertwined with social ethics and cosmic beliefs, without the radical modern dichotomy between "human and nature". This represents a typical feature of indigenous Southern ecological wisdom.

III. Narrative of Cosmic Order: The Community Foundation of "Mutual Maintenance between Heaven and Humanity"

Imagination of community is first built upon understandings of how the whole universe operates. Modern Western thought places human beings at the center of the world and treats nature as an external objective object. In the narrative universe of *The Legend of Bi Ashilaze*, however, wind, rain, mountains, rivers, rocks, birds, beasts, human ancestors and various deities are embedded in an interconnected network of order. No single species holds absolute dominion. Once any party breaks the balance, disasters will descend upon the whole community.

Folk tales record abundant episodes of Bi Ashilaze manipulating wind, rain, mountains and rivers: "His exhalation stirs wind; his blink brings rain; his raised hand summons thunder; his stamp triggers earthquakes". Spells are chanted to make mountains collapse with a roar, and then sorcery restores collapsed mountains to their lofty posture. At first sight, such plots may easily be mistaken for fantasy episodes glorifying supernatural power. Close reading of narrative details reveals, however, that Bi Ashilaze never remakes mountains and rivers arbitrarily. He mobilizes wind, rain, mountains and rivers almost exclusively to eliminate calamities and restore disrupted cosmic equilibriums. When landslides bury villages, his mountain-moving sorcery is not meant to reshape landforms at will, but to return disrupted mountain-dwelling order to its original state. "One day he chants spells to make mountains roar and fall; another day he restores them to tower aloft". "To cast down mountains" punishes demons perpetrating evils, whereas "to restore mountains" returns land to its original appearance. Destruction and restoration constitute two sides of one coin. Supernatural power exists not for conquering nature, but for upholding inherent equilibriums between heaven and earth.

Behind such narratives lies the traditional Yi cosmic outlook: mountains and rivers possess subjectivity in themselves, rather than being mute material substances. Mountains have mountain deities; trees have tree spirits; wind, rain, thunder and lightning form organic components of cosmic order. The premise of village safety is that human behaviors shall not excessively violate rhythms of heaven and earth. As a grand Bimo, Bi Ashilaze does not stand above nature. Instead, he comprehends operational rules of heaven-earth systems and acts as a mediator between humans and cosmic order. In many versions of tales, even mighty Bimo's sorcery will fail when human desires expand and humans recklessly offend mountain-forest taboos. This establishes an ethical bottom-line for communities at the narrative level: humans are participants in cosmic order, rather than masters of the universe.

It forms a sharp contrast with post-Weberian Western-modern thought, which "disenchants the world" and transforms nature into calculable resources. In the cosmic picture constructed by *The Legend of Bi Ashilaze*, the world remains "enchanted". Mountains-and-forest creatures possess their own wills. Human wisdom manifests itself in compliance and reconciliation, rather than sheer conquest.

From the perspective of Global-South Theory, such holistic cosmic outlook of "mutual maintenance between heaven and humanity" represents indigenous epistemology long marginalized by mainstream Western knowledge systems. Undoubtedly, modern science boasts powerful explanatory capacity, yet it comes at a cost: the subject-object binary opposition between humans and nature provides ideological loopholes for unlimited plunder of nature. Yi oral narratives from Liangshan do not reject human initiatives. Bi Ashilaze actively eliminates disasters and safeguards people's survival. Nevertheless, all his actions are bounded by the principle of not disrupting inherent equilibriums of heaven-earth systems. Repeatedly reminded in narrative texts: destinies of human communities are firmly bound up with destinies of all mountain-and-river creatures. Once cosmic order collapses, no single species can stay safe and sound. Communities are not constructed merely by humans, but life-networks jointly composed of all beings under heaven and earth.

We should also adopt dialectical attitudes. Cosmic narratives in the legend are mixed with sorcery-religious imaginations, which do not equal scientific knowledge of modern ecology. Yet values of

literary narratives do not consist in providing quantifiable scientific conclusions, but in shaping ethical imaginations of communities. Through generations of oral recitations and story-telling, the legend implants the ethic of "humans and all beings share weal and woe" into collective memories of ethnic groups, and shapes psychological schemata of mountain-dwelling peoples in perceiving environments.

IV. Narrative of Mountain-Dwelling Life-Community: Intertwining and Symbiosis among Humans, Beasts and Villages

If Chapter Two discusses grand cosmic narratives in the legend, this chapter descends to concrete mountain-dwelling life-scenarios and analyzes how tales deduce mountain-dwelling life-communities in narrative details. Survival of Yi villages in Liangshan is closely intertwined with wild beasts and mountain-forests. Wild beasts may bring disasters, yet they also constitute indispensable parts of mountain-dwelling ecological systems. A large number of narratives in *The Legend of Bi Ashilaze* revolve around human-wild-animal conflicts. In many versions, Bi Ashilaze travels far and wide with his daughter Shixi, dispelling hazards brought by tigers, bears and venomous snakes to protect villagers.

It is noteworthy that narratives seldom describe indiscriminate massacres of wild beasts. When confronting ferocious animals, Bi Ashilaze gives priority to expulsion and restraint, rather than extermination. *Eulogies to Bimo Ancestors*, a Yi-language scripture, records Bi Ashilaze travelling extensively to eradicate tiger and snake hazards in various regions. Story details reveal subtle attitudes: when wild beasts harass villages, human survival must be protected; but wild beasts themselves are not purely evil. As mountain-dwelling creatures, they ought not to be exterminated as an entire species. In some variant versions, Bi Ashilaze casts sorcery to drive harmful ferocious beasts into remote deep mountains, drawing boundaries: wild beasts dwell in deep mountains, while humans inhabit villages and basins. Each side possesses living spaces and shall not intrude upon the other.

Such narrative logic differentiates itself from two common modes: anthropocentrism which regards wild beasts as enemies to be eliminated and romanticized wilderness narratives that completely exclude human activities from nature. The legend constructs an intermediate-positioned mountain-dwelling community: human beings deserve to survive and multiply; wild beasts also have rights to live in mountain-forests. When conflicts break out, objectives lie not in wiping out the opposite side, but in redrawing boundaries and rebuilding equilibriums between humans and wild animals. Happiness of village communities cannot be built upon total destruction of mountain-forest creatures.

Numerous plants and animals act as spiritual media in narratives. In legends about inheritance of scriptures, Bi Ashilaze's son Gechu encounters mortal perils, yet sacred birds spit blood to write down scriptures. Sacred knowledge is passed down through lives of birds. Far more than simple plot props, sacred birds symbolize profound connections between mountain-forest lives and Yi cultural inheritance. Ethnic-group wisdom does not derive solely from human beings themselves; it is generated and transmitted through interactions and exchanges with mountain-forest creatures. Trees, birds and beasts repeatedly intervene in turning-points of human destinies. Narratives constantly reinforce such conceptions: human cultural communities are rooted in soil of mountain-dwelling life-communities. Prosperity of villages relies on mountain-forests. Once mountain-forest life-systems collapse, foundations of human beliefs, rituals and survival will collapse accordingly.

The legend does not shun internal contradictions within communities, either. Episodes depict Bi Ashilaze matching wits against Chieftain Azi'emo, who represents power elites in societies. Chieftains often plunder mountain-forest resources excessively and exploit common folks. Narratives subtly link social injustices with disturbances to ecological order: greed of ruling classes inflicts sufferings upon human societies; meanwhile, it offends mountain-forest deities and triggers ecological calamities to descend on villages. Thus, folk narratives weave social justice and ecological justice together: genuinely stable communities demand justice among humans, as well as moderate temperance in interactions between humans and all creatures.

From perspectives of Global-South ecological discourses, closely integrating social justice and ecological justice constitutes shared traits of many indigenous thoughts from the Global-South. Some early Western eco-activists once focused merely on wilderness conservation while ignoring survival plights of grassroots masses. In contrast, many indigenous traditions from the Global-South perceived long ago that exploitation of nature is often entangled with oppressions inside human societies. Under mountain-dwelling realities in Liangshan, unrestrained plunder by ruling classes exploits common folks on the one hand, and triggers excessive lumbering and hunting, resulting in degradation of mountain-dwelling ecology on the other hand. With peculiar folk-narrative forms, *The Legend of Bi Ashilaze* captures intrinsic connections between social injustices and ecological disorders.

Oral narratives are living texts, and variant versions circulated in different villages contain plot divergences. Some versions depict intense conflicts and killings of vicious beasts. Even in such texts, however, narratives emphasize that executions target only individuals committing evils, instead of exterminating whole

species. The legend repeatedly warns that humans shall not break long-established survival equilibriums among mountain-dwelling creatures out of selfish desires.

V. Narratives of Indigenous Ecological Practices: Bimo Ritual-Narratives as Community-Regulating Mechanisms

In *The Legend of Bi Ashilaze*, safeguarding ecological-communities is not sheer mental fantasy. It is embodied in narratives of a series of Bimo ritual practices. Bimo preside over calamity-dispelling ceremonies, mountain-forest sacrifices, offerings and purification rituals, which recur repeatedly in tales. Modern-day readers may readily reduce rituals to sorcery and superstition. Epistemology of Global-South Theory reminds us to discard oversimplified judgments and discover symbolic systems of mountain-dwelling-social environmental-governance behind ritual-narratives.

One of Bi Ashilaze's most important achievements was collecting, sorting out and standardizing massive Yi-language Bimo scriptures, a considerable portion of which concern mountain-forest sacrifices and calamity-dispelling against natural disasters. Legendary tales reproduce ritual procedures in large quantities: when landslides, floods, plagues or beast-inflicted disasters break out, Bi Ashilaze arranges sacred branches, chants scriptures, communicates with mountain-forest deities, confesses human faults and prays for peace to be restored on earth. On the surface, ritual-narratives represent communications with supernatural forces. Socially-functionally, they constitute collective actions for whole village-communities to conduct self-reflection and self-restraint when confronting environmental crises.

When disasters befall, narratives do not simply attribute calamities to objective accidents. Many variant texts imply that catastrophes are often associated with human misbehaviours--excessive lumbering, reckless hunting, or reckless violations against mountain-forest taboos. Rituals first realize collective self-examination: communities need to review whether their conducts have transgressed boundaries in interactions with nature. Secondly, sacrificial rituals exert functions of social regulation. Within ritual spaces, village norms are re-affirmed: mountain-forest trees shall not be felled arbitrarily; wild animals shall not be hunted recklessly; mountain-and-river creatures deserve chances to recuperate and multiply. In traditional mountain-dwelling societies without modern environmental-regulations, ritual-narratives and ritual-practices undertake vital roles in disseminating eco-ethics and restraining behaviors of communities.

Boundaries should be clarified here: rituals are symbolic-cultural practices, which cannot physically hold back mountain floods or earthquakes. Yet they are capable of shaping collective awareness of ethnic groups and regulating human-behavior patterns. Similar ritual-ethic systems prevail in numerous pre-modern societies of the Global-South, serving as cultural tools for indigenous societies to cope with ecological risks. The indigenous Southern knowledge suppressed, as mentioned by Santos, does not equal modern empirical science. More often, it constitutes ethic-practice systems teaching communities how to co-exist and cope with volatile environments.

Sorting out scriptures in legend-texts is not meant for Bi Ashilaze to obtain magic handbooks for manipulating nature infinitely. On the contrary, collating classics records and passes down rules governing interactions between humans and all beings under heaven-earth systems, so that later-generation communities understand self-temperance. At the end of many tales, Bi Ashilaze distributes scriptures and ritual-implements to disciples in various regions, hoping such wisdom for maintaining community-equilibriums can be handed-down from generation to generation. Narratives imply anxieties: if descendants forget such co-existence ethics and act arbitrarily, equilibriums of mountain-dwelling-communities will face collapse.

Nevertheless, from contemporary perspectives, we ought to soberly recognize limitations of such traditional practices. Relying on animist beliefs, Bimo rituals cannot be directly applied to tackling complicated modern-day environmental crises. Yet they leave precious ideological legacies for us: crises of communities stem not merely from external environments, but also from inflating desires inside communities. To resolve crises, communities must first accomplish self-reflection and establish survival-ethics of moderate temperance. This still delivers strong enlightenment in an era flooded with consumerism today.

VI. Re-evaluating Contemporary Values of Oral Ecological-Narratives from the Global-South Perspective

Re-reading *The Legend of Bi Ashilaze* against the backdrop of global-ecological dialogues with de-colonial-epistemology perspectives of Global-South Theory helps us break away from two prevalent misconceptions. The first is romanticization: idealizing Yi traditions as flawless ancient Eden's free from pollution, and reducing legends to idyllic symbols. The second is enlightenment- oriented perspectives: labeling sorcery-related elements in legends as benighted superstitions and completely negating their ideological values.

Global-South Theory reminds us that values of ethnic-minority oral-literature do not lie in providing replicable technical-solutions, but in offering alternative paradigms for reflecting upon human-nature relations. Global-ecological discourses dominated by modern industrial-civilization have long been trapped in dilemmas:

on one side, techno-optimism holds that technological advances can continuously repair damaged environments; on the other side, radical eco-pessimism denounces human-beings as scourges of the earth. From indigenous mountain-dwelling-narratives represented by *The Legend of Bi Ashilaze*, we discover a third-way mode of thinking: as inseparable members within communities, human-beings are entitled to pursue survival-and-development, yet they possess no privileges for boundless appropriation. Persistence of communities hinges on constantly adjusting desires and maintaining dynamic equilibriums between humans and all creatures.

Today, global-ecological dialogues are still largely dominated by discourses from the Global-North. In many cases, indigenous-ecological-wisdom from various Global-South nations is treated merely as ornamental-cultural spectacles. Abundant ecological-narratives embedded in oral-literature of various Chinese ethnic-minorities constitute vital components of ideological-treasure- houses of the Global-South. Exploring and interpreting such indigenous-heritages does not mean replacing modern-science with traditions. Instead, it aims to realize cognitive-justice advocated by Santos: enabling pluralistic survival-wisdom to participate equally in global-level ecological- deliberations and breaking monopolies of monolithic modernity-narratives.

Meanwhile, we must be aware of inheritance-crises confronting oral-narratives in modern-day contexts. As national-level intangible-cultural-heritage, *The Legend of Bi Ashilaze* is largely preserved in performances, textual-collations and academic-researches. Modern-modes-of-production-and-life have profoundly transformed societies in Daliang-Xiaoliang Mountains. Traditional Bimo-ritual- practices keep shrinking, and younger-generations are gradually alienated from traditional mountain- dwelling-survival-experiences. If community-ethics contained in legends are confined to library- documents and academic-papers, they will turn into lifeless-knowledge. Their vitality lies in creative transformation: stripping off shells of ancient sorcery, extracting ideological-cores of "temperance, symbiosis, unification of social-justice and ecological-justice", and conducting dialogues with discourses of contemporary ecological-civilization.

In Chinese-local-contexts, imaginations of all-beings-sharing-weal-and-woe in legends can realize cross-temporal resonant-dialogues with our notion that "mountains, rivers, forests, farmlands, lakes, grasslands and sand-lands form life-communities". Though originating from different cultural-sources, they share highly-similar ethical-cores: rejecting human-nature binary-opposition and conceiving the whole-world as interdependent life-networks. The Global-South perspective helps us realize that such ideological-resources are not local-footnotes to Western-theories. Rooted in soil of our own multi-ethnic-civilization, they can contribute unique-voices from Chinese mountain-dwelling- South to global-ecological-thoughts.

Conclusion

Research summary

Global-South Theory supplies vital-critical-tools for us to read ethnic-minority oral-literature. It urges us to break shackles of cognitive-coloniality, learn to listen earnestly to voices from indigenous-narratives themselves, rather than mechanically tailoring indigenous-texts with imported- theoretical-frameworks. Blending sorcery-imaginations, historical-memories and mountain-dwelling- survival-experiences, *The Legend of Bi Ashilaze*, orally-transmitted for generations in Daliang- Xiaoliang Mountains, constructs narrative-worlds where the universe is not split into binary-opposition of humans and external-nature. Mountains, rivers, plants, trees, birds, beasts and human-villages jointly compose life-networks of mutual-restraint and shared-weal-and-woe. As a grand Bimo, Bi Ashilaze exercises supernatural-power not for conquering mountains-and-rivers-and-all-creatures, but for acting as a mediator of communities: once equilibriums are disrupted by desires or calamities, he restores balances among humans, deities and nature through sorcery-rituals and ethical-edification.

Research prospects

Legend-texts inform us that ecological-crises stem not merely from external-nature, but also from infinite-expansion of desires inside-communities. Truly-stable-communities require social-justice among humans, as well as temperate-symbiosis between humans and all-creatures. Such indigenous- imagination of mountain-dwelling-ecological-communities inevitably bears historical- limitations of its times. Grounded in animist-beliefs, it cannot be mechanically copied to resolve complicated modern-day-environmental-crises. Nevertheless, it leaves precious-spiritual-enlightenment for us: human-beings are merely one component within grand-life-networks. While entitled to survival-and- development, they possess no privileges for boundless-appropriation.

Against the backdrop of increasingly-severe global-ecological-crises, global-ecological- thoughts ought not to be confined to monolithic-Western-paradigms. Represented by *The Legend of Bi Ashilaze*, oral-literature of Chinese ethnic-minorities belongs to ideological-treasure-houses of the broad-sense Global-South-world. Conducting researches on narratives from de-colonial-epistemology perspectives aims not at retro-nostalgia, but at extracting endogenous-ecological-wisdom from traditions and promoting creative-transformation of

indigenous-heritages. In this way, ancient- community-imaginings from Chinese-mountains can participate equally in pluralistic-global- ecological-discourse-dialogues, and contribute indigenous-ideological-strength to constructing global- ecological-communities of human-beings-and-nature-in-symbiosis.

References

- [1]. Santos, B. D. S. Epistemological Rupture: From Global-Lines to the Pluriverse [M]. Yu Zhizhong, trans. Beijing: The Commercial Press, 2021.
- [2]. Yang Y Y. Giving Full Play to China’s Leading Role in the Development of the “Global South”-- Guided by the Vision of a Community with a Shared Future for Mankind[J]. Journal of Beijing University of Aeronautics and Astronautics (Social Sciences Edition), 2025,38(03):1-8.
- [3]. Connell, R. Southern Theory: Decolonizing Social Science [M]. Liu Yang, trans. Shanghai: Shanghai People’s Publishing House, 2023.
- [4]. Liu D X. The Global-South Turn of Multi-Ethnic-Literature and World-Literature[J]. Studies of Ethnic-Literature, 2022(02):5-14.
- [5]. Leopold, A. A Sand County Almanac [M]. Hou Wenhui, trans. Changchun: Jilin People’s Publishing House, 1997.
- [6]. A-niu M Z. Collected-Stories of The Legend of Bi Ashilaze [M]. Chengdu: Sichuan Ethnic-Publishing House, 2023.
- [7]. Ji-er T R, Ji-er L G. Records of Asulaze Eliminating Disasters for Folk-People in Eulogies to Bimo Ancestors [J]. Yi-Studies, 2008(01):45-50.
- [8]. Yi M Y. A History of Yi-People [M]. Beijing: Social Sciences Academic Press, 2000.
- [9]. Qie-sa W N. A History of Ancient Yi-Civilization [M]. Beijing: Ethnic-Publishing House, 2002.
- [9]. Wang R. Remapped-Territories--Chinese-Ethnic-Minority-Literature from the Perspective of World-Literature [J]. Studies of Ethnic-Literature, 2019(04):18-26.
- [10]. Xi J P. On Promoting Harmony between Human-Beings and Nature [M]. Beijing: Central Party Literature Press, 2022.
- [11]. Mignolo, W. D. Local Histories-Global Designs: Coloniality, Subaltern Knowledges, and Border Thinking [M]. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000.